



Access Online



Article DOI:

10.5281/zenodo.19607261

¹ Ph.D. Research Scholar, JG University, Ahmedabad, Gujarat

² Assistant Professor, JG University, Ahmedabad, Gujarat

How to Cite:

Anirban Banerjee & Dr. Pratik Darji (2026), Workplace Sports Participation and Its Effect on Employee Engagement in Organisations, International Educational Applied Scientific & Research Journal (IEASRJ), Vol: 11, Issue: 3, 77-83

WORKPLACE SPORTS PARTICIPATION AND ITS EFFECT ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN ORGANISATIONS

Anirban Banerjee¹, Dr. Pratik Darji²

ABSTRACT

Employee engagement has become a critical factor influencing organizational performance, productivity, and employee retention in modern workplaces. Organizations are increasingly focusing on innovative strategies to enhance engagement while promoting employee well-being. Workplace sports participation has emerged as an effective approach to improve both physical and psychological health of employees. This review-based article examines the concept of workplace sports participation and its effect on employee engagement in organizations. The study discusses the meaning and importance of employee engagement, overview of workplace sports participation, and the relationship between sports activities and engagement levels. It highlights how participation in sports activities contributes to stress reduction, improved teamwork, better communication, and enhanced job satisfaction. The article also identifies various benefits of workplace sports programs for both employees and organizations, including improved productivity, reduced absenteeism, and stronger organizational culture. In addition, challenges in implementing workplace sports programs such as time constraints, budget limitations, and lack of participation are discussed. The article further suggests strategies to promote workplace sports participation, including management support, infrastructure development, inclusive activities, and awareness initiatives. The review concludes that workplace sports participation plays a significant role in strengthening employee engagement and creating a positive and collaborative work environment.

KEYWORDS: Employee Engagement, Workplace Sports, Sports Participation, Organizational Performance, Employee Well-being, Teamwork, Workplace Activities, Organizational Culture

1. INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement has emerged as one of the most critical factors influencing organisational success in the modern business environment. Organisations today operate in highly competitive and dynamic conditions where the performance, creativity, and commitment of employees play a vital role in achieving strategic objectives. Employee engagement refers to the emotional, cognitive, and behavioural involvement of employees in their work and organisation. Engaged employees demonstrate enthusiasm, dedication, and

a strong sense of responsibility toward their roles, which ultimately contributes to improved productivity and organisational effectiveness. As organisations increasingly recognize the importance of human capital, they are adopting various initiatives to enhance engagement levels and create a positive work culture.

In modern organisations, employee well-being and workplace environment have gained significant importance. A supportive and healthy workplace not only improves employee satisfaction but also enhances motivation and performance.

Employee well-being includes physical health, mental health, emotional balance, and social relationships within the organisation. When employees experience stress, fatigue, and lack of work-life balance, their engagement and productivity may decline. Therefore, organisations are focusing on creating environments that promote wellness, collaboration, and job satisfaction. A positive workplace environment encourages teamwork, reduces absenteeism, and fosters a sense of belonging among employees, which ultimately strengthens organisational performance.

One of the emerging approaches to improving employee well-being and engagement is workplace sports participation. Workplace sports participation refers to the involvement of employees in sports and physical activities organised by the organisation either during or after working hours. These activities may include indoor games, outdoor sports, fitness sessions, recreational competitions, and team-building sports events. Such initiatives provide employees with opportunities to relax, interact with colleagues, and develop stronger interpersonal relationships. Workplace sports activities also help in reducing stress, improving morale, and promoting a healthy organisational culture. As a result, many organisations are integrating sports and wellness programs into their human resource practices.

Physical activities conducted at the workplace are closely linked to organisational performance. Participation in sports and fitness activities improves employees' physical health, reduces stress levels, and enhances mental alertness. Healthy employees tend to be more energetic, focused, and motivated in their work. Moreover, sports participation promotes teamwork, communication, leadership skills, and cooperation among employees. These qualities are essential for improving collaboration and achieving organisational goals. Consequently, organisations that encourage workplace sports participation often experience higher levels of employee engagement, improved job satisfaction, and enhanced productivity. Thus, workplace sports participation has become an important strategy for organisations aiming to strengthen employee engagement and overall organisational performance.

2. CONCEPT OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Employee engagement is a crucial concept in modern organizational management that reflects the level of employees' emotional and intellectual commitment toward their work and the organization. It goes beyond simple job satisfaction and focuses on how deeply employees are involved in their roles, how motivated they feel, and how willing they are to contribute to organizational success. Engaged employees are enthusiastic about their work, take initiative, and show a strong sense of responsibility toward achieving organizational goals. They are not only concerned with completing assigned tasks but also actively participate in improving processes, supporting colleagues, and enhancing overall performance.

The concept of employee engagement gained prominence as organizations began to recognize that employee commitment plays a significant role in productivity and competitiveness. In today's dynamic work environment, organizations require employees who are proactive, innovative, and dedicated. Employee engagement helps create such a workforce by fostering a positive psychological connection between employees and their work. This connection encourages employees to invest their energy, skills, and creativity in their roles. When employees feel valued, supported, and recognized, they are more likely to develop a strong attachment to the organization, which enhances both individual and organizational outcomes.

Employee engagement involves three important dimensions: emotional engagement, cognitive engagement, and behavioural engagement. Emotional engagement refers to the feelings employees have toward their organization, such as pride, loyalty, and enthusiasm. Cognitive engagement reflects the level of attention and focus employees give to their work, including their willingness to learn and improve. Behavioural engagement is demonstrated through employees' actions, such as taking initiative, participating in organizational activities, and putting extra effort into their work. When these dimensions are present, employees are more committed and contribute effectively to organizational success.

Organizations with high levels of employee

engagement often experience improved productivity, reduced absenteeism, lower employee turnover, and better teamwork. Engaged employees tend to show higher levels of job satisfaction and are more willing to collaborate with others. They also demonstrate adaptability and resilience in challenging situations. Therefore, employee engagement has become a key focus area for human resource management, with organizations implementing various strategies such as recognition programs, training and development, supportive leadership, and wellness initiatives. Among these initiatives, workplace sports participation is increasingly being recognized as an effective tool for enhancing employee engagement by promoting interaction, teamwork, and employee well-being.

3. OVERVIEW OF WORKPLACE SPORTS PARTICIPATION

Workplace sports participation refers to the involvement of employees in sports, fitness, and recreational activities organized within or supported by an organization. In recent years, organizations have increasingly recognized the importance of promoting physical activities among employees as part of workplace wellness and engagement strategies. These activities may be conducted during working hours, after office hours, or as part of special events such as annual sports days, tournaments, and team-building programs. Workplace sports participation provides employees with opportunities to relax, socialize, and maintain physical fitness, thereby contributing to a healthier and more productive work environment.

The growing emphasis on workplace sports participation is largely driven by the need to improve employee well-being and reduce work-related stress. Modern work environments often involve long working hours, sedentary lifestyles, and high performance expectations, which can negatively affect employees' physical and mental health. Sports and recreational activities help employees take a break from routine work, reduce stress, and refresh their minds. Participation in such activities also promotes work-life balance and enhances overall job satisfaction. As employees feel more energized and motivated, their engagement with organizational goals and tasks tends to improve.

Workplace sports participation includes a wide range of activities designed to suit diverse employee interests and organizational capabilities. These may include indoor games such as table tennis, chess, and carrom, as well as outdoor sports like cricket, football, badminton, and volleyball. In addition, organizations may provide fitness-related activities such as yoga sessions, aerobics, walking clubs, and gym facilities. Recreational events, fun games, and team competitions are also common forms of workplace sports participation. These activities encourage interaction among employees across departments, strengthen interpersonal relationships, and foster teamwork.

Another important aspect of workplace sports participation is its role in developing a positive organizational culture. When employees participate in sports together, they build trust, improve communication, and develop a sense of belonging. Sports activities also encourage healthy competition, leadership development, and collaboration. Such experiences help employees connect beyond formal work roles, which improves teamwork and coordination in professional tasks. Consequently, organizations that promote workplace sports participation often experience improved morale, stronger employee relationships, and enhanced engagement, ultimately contributing to better organizational performance.

4. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORKPLACE SPORTS PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Workplace sports participation plays an important role in strengthening employee engagement by promoting physical well-being, social interaction, and emotional connection within the organisation. When employees take part in sports and recreational activities, they experience a break from routine work pressures, which helps reduce stress and mental fatigue. This relaxation improves employees' mood, increases enthusiasm, and enhances their willingness to participate actively in organisational activities. As a result, employees develop a more positive attitude toward their work and feel more connected to the organisation, leading to higher levels of engagement.

Participation in workplace sports also enhances

teamwork and collaboration among employees. Sports activities often require cooperation, coordination, and communication, which help employees build stronger interpersonal relationships. When employees interact in an informal environment such as sports events, they develop trust and mutual understanding. These improved relationships carry over into the workplace, making it easier for employees to work together effectively. Strong teamwork fosters a sense of belonging and shared responsibility, both of which are essential components of employee engagement.

Workplace sports participation further contributes to employee motivation and job satisfaction. Engaging in sports activities creates a sense of enjoyment and excitement, which can increase employees' overall satisfaction with the organisation. Employees who feel that their organisation cares about their well-being are more likely to remain committed and motivated. Sports activities also provide opportunities for recognition, achievement, and healthy competition, which encourage employees to perform better. This positive reinforcement enhances employees' emotional attachment to the organisation and strengthens their engagement.

Another important aspect of the relationship between workplace sports participation and employee engagement is the development of organisational commitment. Employees who participate in sports activities often feel more connected to their colleagues and the organisation's culture. These activities promote inclusiveness and strengthen the emotional bond between employees and management. When employees experience a supportive and enjoyable work environment, they are more likely to remain loyal and actively contribute to organisational goals. Consequently, workplace sports participation not only improves employee engagement but also enhances productivity, reduces absenteeism, and supports overall organisational performance.

5. BENEFITS OF WORKPLACE SPORTS PARTICIPATION

- Workplace sports activities help employees stay physically active and maintain better health. This reduces lifestyle-related problems and improves overall energy levels at work.
- Participation in sports provides relaxation and

helps employees relieve work-related stress. It refreshes the mind and improves focus and concentration.

- Sports activities create enthusiasm and strengthen employees' emotional connection with the organisation. Engaged employees are more committed and productive.
- Sports encourage cooperation, coordination, and communication among employees. This improves workplace relationships and teamwork.
- Employees feel happier and more satisfied when organisations support recreational activities. This leads to a positive work attitude and improved morale.
- Healthy and motivated employees perform better in their roles. Sports participation helps improve efficiency and overall organisational performance.
- Workplace sports create a friendly and inclusive environment. This promotes a positive organisational culture and sense of belonging.
- Regular physical activities improve employees' health and reduce sickness. This leads to fewer absences and consistent work performance.
- Sports activities help employees balance professional responsibilities and personal well-being. This improves overall quality of work life.
- Organizations that promote sports and wellness programs are more attractive to employees. This increases loyalty and reduces employee turnover.

6. CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING WORKPLACE SPORTS PROGRAMS

- Employees often have heavy workloads and tight schedules, making it difficult to participate in sports activities. Limited time availability reduces overall participation.
- Organising sports programs requires financial investment for equipment, facilities, and events. Some organisations may find it difficult to allocate sufficient funds.
- Not all employees may be interested in sports or physical activities. Low motivation and participation can reduce the effectiveness of such programs.
- Many organisations do not have adequate space or facilities for conducting sports activities. Lack of infrastructure becomes a major barrier.
- High work pressure and strict deadlines may

discourage employees from participating. Employees may prioritize work over recreational activities.

- Without strong support from top management, sports initiatives may not be implemented effectively. Lack of encouragement reduces employee involvement.
- Organisations may hesitate to conduct sports activities due to risk of injuries. Safety concerns may limit participation or scope of activities.
- Employees may have different interests, age groups, and fitness levels. Designing activities suitable for everyone becomes challenging.
- Finding a common time suitable for all departments can be difficult. Shift-based or flexible work schedules complicate planning.
- Employees may not be aware of available sports programs. Poor communication and promotion can lead to low participation.

7. STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE WORKPLACE SPORTS PARTICIPATION

Promoting workplace sports participation requires strong commitment from organizational leadership and the integration of sports activities into the overall employee engagement strategy. Management plays a crucial role in creating a supportive environment where employees feel encouraged to participate in sports without fear of affecting their work responsibilities. When leaders actively promote sports initiatives and even participate in activities themselves, it sends a positive message to employees about the importance of health and well-being. Organizations can develop formal policies that allocate time for sports activities, include wellness goals in HR strategies, and emphasize the value of physical activities as part of organizational culture. Such support enhances participation and ensures sustainability of workplace sports programs.

Another effective strategy is organizing regular and structured sports events within the organization. These may include inter-departmental tournaments, annual sports days, weekly fitness sessions, and recreational competitions. Regularly scheduled activities help build anticipation and encourage employees to actively participate. Organizations can also rotate different types of sports to accommodate diverse interests and preferences. Friendly

competitions, team-based games, and fun activities create enthusiasm and promote collaboration among employees. These events not only improve physical fitness but also strengthen relationships and enhance team spirit across departments.

Providing adequate infrastructure and facilities is also essential for promoting workplace sports participation. Organizations can create dedicated spaces for indoor games, fitness rooms, or outdoor sports activities depending on available resources. Even small initiatives such as installing table tennis boards, carrom boards, or organizing walking tracks can encourage participation. In addition, organizations may collaborate with nearby sports complexes, gyms, or fitness centers to provide employees with access to facilities. When employees have convenient access to sports infrastructure, they are more likely to participate regularly and develop healthy habits.

Offering incentives and recognition for participation can further motivate employees to engage in workplace sports activities. Organizations can introduce awards for active participation, winning teams, or consistent involvement in fitness programs. Recognition through certificates, appreciation messages, or small rewards can increase enthusiasm and create a sense of achievement. Incentives do not necessarily need to be financial; public recognition, team celebrations, and highlighting achievements in internal communication channels can also encourage employees. Such initiatives help create a competitive yet positive environment that motivates employees to participate more actively.

Creating inclusive sports programs that cater to employees of different age groups, fitness levels, and interests is another important strategy. Not all employees may prefer competitive sports, so organizations should offer a variety of options such as yoga, meditation, walking clubs, and recreational games. Inclusive activities ensure that everyone feels comfortable participating regardless of physical ability. Organizations can also encourage participation by forming mixed teams across departments and hierarchical levels, which promotes interaction and removes communication barriers. Inclusivity enhances engagement and ensures wider

participation across the organization.

Effective communication and awareness programs are also necessary to promote workplace sports participation. Organizations should regularly inform employees about upcoming sports events, schedules, and benefits of participation through emails, notice boards, and internal portals. Sharing success stories, photographs, and achievements from previous events can generate interest and enthusiasm. Encouraging employee feedback regarding preferred sports activities can also improve participation. When employees feel involved in planning and decision-making, they are more likely to take ownership of sports initiatives.

Finally, integrating workplace sports participation into broader wellness and employee engagement programs can strengthen its impact. Organizations can combine sports activities with health campaigns, fitness challenges, and team-building initiatives. For example, step-count competitions, wellness weeks, and fitness goals can encourage continuous participation. Flexible scheduling, such as allowing short activity breaks or organizing events after working hours, can also support participation without affecting productivity. By embedding sports participation into the organizational culture, companies can enhance employee engagement, improve well-being, and create a more dynamic and collaborative workplace environment.

8. CONCLUSION

Workplace sports participation has emerged as an effective approach for enhancing employee engagement and promoting a healthy organizational environment. In modern organizations, where employees often face work pressure, long working hours, and sedentary lifestyles, sports and recreational activities provide an opportunity to maintain physical and mental well-being. Participation in such activities helps employees reduce stress, improve morale, and develop positive relationships with colleagues. As a result, employees become more motivated, committed, and actively involved in their work, which strengthens overall engagement within the organization.

The review highlights that workplace sports

participation contributes significantly to teamwork, communication, and organizational commitment. Sports activities encourage collaboration and interaction among employees across different departments and hierarchical levels. These informal interactions help build trust and strengthen interpersonal relationships, which positively influence workplace dynamics. Additionally, employees who feel supported through wellness initiatives tend to experience higher job satisfaction and a stronger sense of belonging. This ultimately leads to improved productivity, reduced absenteeism, and better organizational performance.

Despite the numerous benefits, organizations may face certain challenges such as limited resources, time constraints, and varying employee interests while implementing workplace sports programs. However, with proper planning, management support, and inclusive strategies, these challenges can be effectively addressed. Providing adequate infrastructure, organizing regular events, offering incentives, and promoting awareness can significantly enhance participation levels. When workplace sports activities are integrated into employee engagement strategies, they contribute to creating a positive organizational culture.

Overall, workplace sports participation plays a vital role in strengthening employee engagement and improving organizational effectiveness. Organizations that encourage sports and physical activities create a supportive and energetic work environment that promotes employee well-being and collaboration. By adopting structured and inclusive sports initiatives, organizations can enhance employee motivation, build strong teams, and achieve long-term organizational success.

REFERENCES

1. Andersen, L. L., Poulsen, O. M., Sundstrup, E., & Brandt, M. (2015). Effect of physical exercise on workplace productivity and engagement: A randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 57(6), 666–672.
2. Chen, Y., & Li, X. (2020). Workplace sports participation and employee engagement: Evidence from corporate wellness programs. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 10(2), 45–62.
3. Gubler, T., Larkin, I., & Pierce, L. (2018). Doing well by making well: The impact of corporate wellness programs

- on employee engagement. *Management Science*, 64(11), 4967–4989.
4. Marin-Farrona, M., Garcia-Unanue, J., Felipe, J. L., & López-Fernández, J. (2023). Effectiveness of workplace sports programs on employee health and engagement: A systematic review. *Systematic Reviews*, 12(87), 1–15.
 5. Malik, S. H., Blake, H., & Suggs, L. S. (2014). Workplace health promotion interventions for increasing physical activity and engagement: A systematic review. *British Journal of Health Psychology*, 19(1), 149–180.
 6. Parks, K. M., & Steelman, L. A. (2008). Organizational wellness programs: A meta-analysis of employee engagement outcomes. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 13(1), 58–68.
 7. Pronk, N. P. (2015). Physical activity promotion in business and industry: Evidence and recommendations for employee engagement. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 29(4), 1–12.
 8. Ramezani, M., Tayefi, B., Zandian, E., SoleimanvandiAzar, N., Khalili, N., & Rampisheh, Z. (2022). Workplace interventions for increasing physical activity and engagement in employees: A systematic review. *Journal of Occupational Health*, 64(1), e12358.
 9. Sonnentag, S., & Fritz, C. (2007). The recovery experience questionnaire: Development and validation of a measure for sports and leisure engagement at work. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 12(3), 204–221.
 10. Toker, S., & Biron, M. (2012). Job burnout and sports participation: The mediating role of employee engagement. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 97(3), 505–522.