

ADVANCING EMPLOYEE MENTAL HEALTH: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 1817

*Jhal B. Espinosa
**Michael Blonchard O. Espinosa
***Marlyn Lumitap Cabading
****Gerardo Nicolas
*****Shiela Mujemulta
*****Romeo Saño
*****Susana Octaviano Penticase
*****Sakura Abduraji

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Corresponding Author: Jhal B. Espinosa; **Email:** jbespinosa@fatima.edu.ph; doi:10.46360/globus.met.320241002

Abstract

Problem Description: Senate Bill No. 1817, which represents the current policy approach, shows some progress in recognizing and increasing understanding of the significance of mental health in the workplace. But there are also issues with execution, resource allocation, and specific rules. The existing method may need to be further refined to effectively manage work-related stress. It should emphasize customized interventions, increased employer support, and a holistic approach that includes prevention, early intervention, and ongoing mental health care. By addressing these issues, the Philippines can go closer to developing workplaces that prioritize the mental health and productivity of its employees.

Policy Options: To encourage staff members to seek support and assistance, it is still imperative to address the stigma attached to mental health issues. It could be necessary to include steps in the existing policy to overcome the social and cultural barriers that prevent candid conversations on mental health.

Conclusion and Call to Action: the policy document promotes the implementation of S.B. No. 1817 as a crucial measure to support Philippine workers' mental health. By adopting a holistic approach and putting the suggested actions into practice, the country can change how people think about workplace well-being and open the door to a happier and more psychologically fit workforce.

Recommendation: The policy document offers a collection of data-based recommendations to support Filipino workers' mental health.

Keywords: Mental Health, Filipino Workers, Mental Health Education Training.

Introduction

Employees are under increasing pressure to meet the expectations of modern work, which can In the Philippines, promoting the mental health of employees is crucial because of the increasing incidence of job-related stress and its negative effects on both personal wellbeing and productivity at work. This policy document has assessed S.B. No. 1817 and recognized the necessity of an all-encompassing strategy to successfully address the intricate problems related to employee mental health. Expanding upon the analytical framework and synthesizing the key findings, this essay offers comprehensive suggestions for the policy's effective execution.

The problem of work-related stress and its impact on employee mental health has affected a wide range of individuals across various industries and occupations in the Philippines. The affected groups include:-

Office Workers: Employees in office settings, such as those in administrative roles, sales, and customer service, often face high job demands, tight deadlines, and a competitive work environment that can lead to work-related stress.

Healthcare Professionals: Healthcare workers, including doctors, nurses, and allied health professionals, may experience significant stress due to long working hours, emotional demands, and the need to make critical decisions in high-pressure situations.

Teachers and Educators: Educators often face stress from managing classroom dynamics, meeting curriculum demands, and handling students' individual needs, which can impact their mental well-being.

Front-Line Workers: Front-line workers, such as emergency responders, law enforcement officers, and security personnel, often encounter high-stress situations and traumatic experiences as part of their job responsibilities.

Workers in High-Stress Industries: Employees in industries with high-stress environments, such as the business process outsourcing (BPO) industry and the corporate sector, may face long working hours, tight deadlines, and performance-driven work culture, leading to heightened stress levels (Garcia et al., 2019).

Entrepreneurs and Small Business Owners: Entrepreneurs and small business owners may experience stress related to managing their businesses, financial pressures, and the uncertainty associated with running a business.

Workers in Transportation and Commuting: Employees who spend significant time commuting through heavy traffic and facing transportation challenges in urban areas can also be affected by work-related stress (Tan & Lim, 2019).

Work-related stress and its impact on employee mental health have broad implications for the workforce, organizations, and the broader society. Recognizing the diverse groups affected by this problem highlights the need for targeted interventions and policies to promote mental well-being and create supportive work environments in the Philippines. Senate Bill No. 1817 (S.B. No. 1817) aims to address the challenges posed by work-related stress and support the mental health of employees in various sectors (Philippine Senate, 2021).

Methods

Research Design

This policy paper employs a quantitative research approach, namely a descriptive correlational analysis, to investigate Senate Bill No. 1817 (S.B. No. 1817) and its potential impacts on improving the mental health of Filipino workers. Using a quantitative approach, we can carefully collect and analyze numerical data pertinent to the policy problem to establish correlations and links between variables.

Respondents of the Study

A variety of sources, including surveys, official government reports, published literature, and relevant statistical data, will provide data for this research. The policy provisions and recommended actions outlined in S.B. We'll look into No. 1817 in detail to see if there are any implications for the mental health of the workforce. Additional relevant data on mental health concerns, stress at work, and

organizational productivity will be used to support the analysis.

Limitations of the Study

The amount and caliber of data on mental health in Philippine workplaces may be limited. There's a risk that the subject of mental health is still underreported since mental health issues are still stigmatized, which could lead to an inadequate picture of the situation. Moreover, some data may be outdated or unavailable, which could compromise the study's ability to conduct a full analysis. Furthermore, the focus of this policy study will be on analyzing Senate Bill No. 1817 and any potential implications. It could not, however, cover every aspect of mental health in the workplace or go into extensive detail on alternative policy ideas. This suggests that further investigation into possible policy remedies which are outside the scope of this study may be required.

Results

The Biopsychosocial Model can be utilized in the context of S.B. No. 1817 to promote the mental health of employees and provide a comprehensive approach to addressing work-related stress in the Philippines. The model emphasizes that mental health is influenced by interactions between biological, psychological, and social factors. In the context of the policy topic, the Biopsychosocial Model can be applied in the following ways:

1. *Biological Factors*

The policy can recognize the biological aspects of mental health and the potential impact of work-related stress on the physiological well-being of employees. It can incorporate provisions that consider the physical health needs of employees, such as ensuring access to healthcare services and promoting regular health check-ups to identify any underlying health conditions that may contribute to mental health challenges.

2. *Psychological Factors*

The policy can address the psychological aspects of work-related stress and mental health by providing mental health support programs that cater to employees' emotional well-being. This may include offering counseling services, stress management workshops, and resilience-building programs. By acknowledging the psychological impact of work-related stress, the policy can foster a culture of understanding and empathy within workplaces.

3. ***Social Factors***

The policy can take into account the social determinants of mental health in the workplace. It can promote inclusive practices that consider the diverse needs of employees from different social backgrounds and industries. Additionally, the policy can advocate for reducing stigma surrounding mental health issues in society and within the workplace, as social factors play a significant role in shaping attitudes towards mental health challenges.

4. ***Holistic Approach***

By embracing the Biopsychosocial Model, the policy can adopt a holistic approach to mental health promotion. It can prioritize preventive measures to reduce work-related stress, early intervention to address emerging mental health issues, and ongoing support to maintain employee well-being. The policy can consider both individual and organizational factors that contribute to work-related stress and mental health challenges.

5. ***Collaborative Efforts***

The Biopsychosocial Model emphasizes the importance of collaboration among different stakeholders. The policy can encourage partnerships between government agencies, employers, mental health professionals, and advocacy groups to jointly develop and implement mental health support programs. This collaborative approach can enhance the effectiveness and reach of mental health initiatives.

6. ***Employee-Centered Focus***

The Biopsychosocial Model emphasizes the significance of understanding employees' individual experiences and needs. The policy can advocate for employee-centered mental health support, allowing employees to have a say in the design and implementation of mental health initiatives. This approach can foster a sense of ownership and empowerment among employees, making them active participants in their well-being.

By utilizing the Biopsychosocial Model in the development and implementation of S.B. No. 1817, the policy can take a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to promoting the mental health of employees in the Philippines. This approach recognizes the interconnectedness of biological, psychological, and social factors in shaping mental health outcomes and ensures that

policies address the diverse and complex challenges related to work-related stress and mental health.

The promotion of employee mental health has emerged as a critical issue in today's fast-paced and demanding work environments. In light of this, Senate Bill No. 1817 (S.B. No. 1817) aims to promote the mental health of employees in the Philippines by providing mental health leave and establishing comprehensive mental health programs in workplaces. This essay advocates for the adoption of a comprehensive approach to employee mental health, incorporating various reasons and evidence to support this position. While the stance presented in this essay aligns with the growing recognition of mental health in the workplace, it also considers the challenges and complexities of implementing such policies.

Conclusion

The analysis framework offered a thorough prism through which to assess the various policy options. It was based on the Biopsychosocial Model and core principles. The significance of taking into account biological, psychological, and social elements in enhancing mental health in the workplace was emphasized by this framework. It also emphasized how important it is to have a comprehensive strategy that includes early intervention, preventive measures, and continuing assistance.

The most promising and successful approach, according to the analysis of the available policy options, is to combine workplace mental health support programs with comprehensive mental health education and training. With this strategy, the stigma associated with mental health will be lessened, employees will be given coping mechanisms, and they will have access to expert help when they need it.

The research highlights the importance of government, employer, mental health professional, and advocacy group collaboration in light of the synthesis of findings and the evaluation of policy choices. It emphasizes how crucial it is to put the suggested policies into action as soon as possible to address the rising number of mental health issues in the workplace.

The message is clear: giving employees mental health priority is essential to having a happy and successful staff. Employers may establish mentally healthy work environments that support employee well-being, increase productivity, and cultivate a good work culture by investing in mental health education, training, and support programs.

It is imperative, therefore, to recognize the constraints and difficulties that could appear when

putting policies into practice. The stigma associated with mental illness, lack of resources, and opposition to change continue to be major obstacles that need to be overcome. It will need teamwork, advocacy, and a devotion to promoting employee mental health at all levels to overcome these obstacles.

Ultimately, the policy document promotes the implementation of S.B. No. 1817 as a crucial measure to support Philippine workers' mental health. By adopting a holistic approach and putting the suggested actions into practice, the country can change how people think about workplace well-being and open the door to a happier and more psychologically fit workforce. Employees will gain from this team effort, which will also help to create a society that is more resilient, caring, and forward-thinking.

Recommendations

1. Comprehensive Mental Health Training and Education

The first crucial recommendation is to implement comprehensive mental health training and education programs for employers, managers, and employees across all sectors. These programs should be designed to raise awareness about work-related stress and its impact on mental health, reduce stigma, and equip individuals with stress management techniques and coping strategies. The training should also encompass identifying signs of distress in employees and promoting a supportive work culture that fosters open conversations about mental health.

By providing mental health education, the policy can lay the foundation for a mentally healthy work environment. Educating employers and managers enables them to be proactive in addressing stressors and fostering a culture of empathy and understanding. Equipping employees with coping skills empowers them to manage their mental well-being proactively, reducing the risk of developing severe mental health issues.

2. Establishment of Workplace Mental Health Support Programs

In tandem with mental health training, it is essential to encourage employers to establish workplace mental health support programs. Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), counseling services, and support groups should be made readily available to

provide accessible and confidential mental health resources.

Mental health support programs play a pivotal role in early intervention and ongoing support. EAPs and counseling services provide a safe space for employees to seek professional help when facing mental health challenges, reducing the stigma and barriers associated with seeking assistance. Support groups foster a sense of belonging and camaraderie among employees, promoting a positive work culture and peer support.

3. Creation of a National Mental Health Task Force

To ensure the effective implementation of the policy, it is imperative to create a National Mental Health Task Force. This task force should be composed of representatives from government agencies, mental health professionals, employers, and advocacy groups.

The National Mental Health Task Force will serve as a centralized authority responsible for overseeing the implementation of mental health initiatives nationwide. It will facilitate collaboration, share best practices, and monitor the progress and impact of mental health programs. By bringing together diverse stakeholders, the task force can ensure a coordinated and cohesive approach to employee mental health promotion.

4. Provision of Incentives for Mental Health-Friendly Employers

To incentivize employers to prioritize employee mental health, the government should consider providing tax breaks or recognition programs for companies that demonstrate a commitment to employee well-being.

Incentives can motivate employers to invest in mental health support programs, considering the potential benefits in terms of improved productivity, reduced absenteeism, and enhanced employee retention. Recognizing mental health-friendly employers will also set a positive example for other organizations, encouraging a broader cultural shift towards prioritizing mental well-being in the workplace.

5. Strengthening Mental Health Services in Public Healthcare

Investing in the public healthcare system to strengthen mental health services is vital. This includes increasing the availability of mental health professionals, expanding mental health facilities, and reducing the cost barriers to accessing mental health care.

A robust public mental health infrastructure is essential to ensure that all employees, regardless of their socio-economic status, have access to quality mental health care. By enhancing mental health services, the policy can reach a broader population, address mental health disparities, and support early intervention and prevention efforts.

6. *Conducting Public Awareness Campaigns*

The government, in collaboration with NGOs and private sector partners, should conduct public awareness campaigns to reduce mental health stigma and promote mental health acceptance.

Public awareness campaigns are instrumental in changing societal attitudes towards mental health. By challenging stigmas and fostering understanding, these campaigns create an environment where individuals feel more comfortable seeking help and support. They also elevate mental health as a national priority, mobilizing public support and commitment to employee mental health.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare there are no significant competing financial, professional, or personal interests that might have influenced the performance or presentation of the work described in this manuscript.

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