



## Article

# Corporate Well-Being Programme in COVID-19 Times. The Mahou San Miguel Case Study

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**Abstract:** Employees' health is being affected not only by the possibility of contracting COVID-19, but by all the negative consequences that this pandemic has brought, such as confinement, social distancing, and self-isolation. In recent decades, more companies have opted for corporate well-being programmes in their workplaces, improving the health and quality of life of their employees. The effects generated by the current COVID-19 pandemic require these programmes to adapt to this new situation. The objective of this case study is to analyse the corporate well-being programme, in times of COVID-19, of Mahou San Miguel, a benchmark company in corporate well-being in Spain. A mixed method approach to data collection was used. The findings show the benefits achieved in its adaptation to this new physical-virtual environment. This paper could help other companies around the world to adapt their corporate well-being programmes to the new reality brought about by COVID-19.

**Keywords:** corporate well-being; COVID-19; telework; worker's health; physical inactivity; corporate well-being programmes



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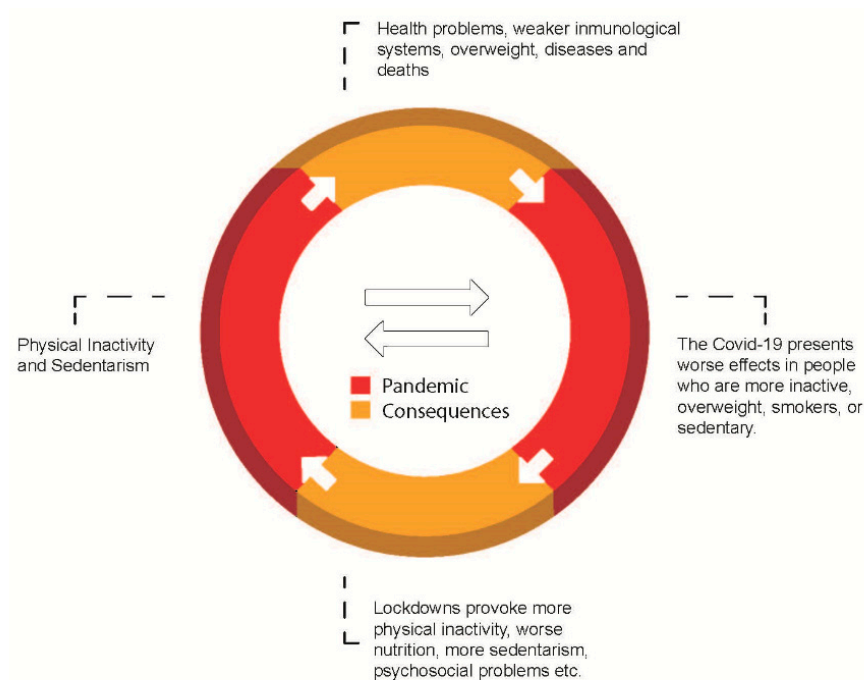


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## 1. Introduction

On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic [1]. This global pandemic coincides with the one declared by the same institution in 2012 as a pandemic due to physical inactivity and a sedentary lifestyle, the latter being of a very different nature from that of COVID-19. The Lancet Journal even published a series of investigations to help fight this global pandemic of physical inactivity since it is the fourth leading cause of death worldwide [2]. The most worrying aspect is that both pandemics have influences on each other: Physical inactivity affects the immune system, and therefore one would be more exposed to COVID-19, and the confinement caused by COVID-19 causes an increase in sedentary lifestyles and decreases physical activity (Figure 1).

Spain has been one of the countries most affected by COVID-19, establishing a nationwide state of alarm on 14 March 2020. Quarantine measures in Spain were radical and the strict stay-at-home instruction for most of the citizens lasted almost two months, ending with a progressive de-confinement process starting in the first week of May 2020 [3]. This circle, with physical inactivity triggered by COVID-19, and its negative influence on the quality of life and people's well-being, suggests a new scenario in society, and therefore in corporate well-being in companies.



**Figure 1.** The circle of physical inactivity and COVID-19.

The challenge for organisations is to share best practices for risk reduction during the current pandemic [4,5]. Companies that are updating and renewing their pandemic plan can significantly reduce the impacts that harm their work environment, and thereby play a key role in protecting the health and safety of employees and customers by limiting the negative impact of a pandemic in the community and the economy [5].

The objective of this work is to describe, through a case study, the corporate well-being programme of the company Mahou San Miguel adopted in times of COVID-19. To do so, corporate well-being programmes are presented and the relationships between physical activity and the psychological and physical well-being of employees are set out. The study shows how one of the pioneering companies and benchmark in corporate welfare in Spain has adapted its programme to the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

## 2. Theoretical Foundation

Promoting physical activity in the workplace has a long tradition in eastern and western countries [6–8]. However, although it is developing gradually in Spain, there are still few companies that promote physical activity in the workplace [9]. In this sense, the implementation of workplace well-being programmes should be a vital part of an organizations' infrastructure within its policies. In fact, efficiently and with good management, you can become self-sufficient [10]. This situation is due to the fact that a workplace is an environment conducive to the promotion of physical activity aimed at greater productivity and improved health, all due to its great physical and psychological benefits [11–13].

Given all the above, the benefits of incorporating corporate well-being programmes into companies should be taken into account. In the first place, workplace well-being programmes have an impact on economic aspects. Several research works indicate that the practice of physical activity is positively related to an increase in labour productivity [14,15], decreases absenteeism [16,17], increases job satisfaction [18,19], and raises work capacity [20]. Some organisations mandate or strongly incentivise recreation activities (e.g., fitness programmes) for utilitarian ends as an activity aimed at improving employee health and decreasing associated health care costs [21]. It is important that workplace wellness programmes, in addition to offering sports facilities in the workplace, are areas where interpersonal relationships are fostered through activities that generate fun and improve

the working. Leisure at Work Activities (LAW) have the ability to promote the development of organisational commitment, work engagement, and resilience among employees [22].

Second, workplace well-being programmes have an impact on organisational and business aspects, as remarked in the research carried out by Watanabe and Kawakami [23], which highlights that such programmes create awareness and improve access to physical activity both at work and outside of work. These programmes also reduce the perceived difficulty of performing tasks [24]. In this sense, it must be emphasised that most companies are implementing physical activity programmes with little help from the Public Administration, which is obviously a barrier. On the other hand, it should be noted that the successful implementation of workplace well-being programmes and physical activity initiatives are usually achieved through the participation of managers or bosses, the contributions of employees and the support of organisational policies [25]. Along the same lines, a research carried out by Sharma et al. [26] indicated the enormous deficiencies in policies and practices of physical activity and nutrition in hospitals in the United States and stressed that those which have organisational support in their policies related to the practice of physical activity and nutrition have a more active staff with greater well-being. Furthermore, the presence of wellness support has been associated with better outcomes, suggesting the value of initiatives to manage workload and support the well-being of surgical resident physicians [27]. If companies, through their internal policies, facilitate the use of different supports for the practice of physical activity (e.g., mineral water fountains, changing rooms, or sports facilities), they are considered to be companies in which their employees carry out more physical activity [28,29]. Therefore, it is evident that support is needed in business policies at various levels to make physical activity an integral part of organisations [30].

Third, workplace well-being programmes have a positive impact on psychosocial aspects, such as emotional stability, optimism, enthusiasm and psychological well-being [31], trust [32], a greater perception of the ability to control memory [33], the will to work, the feeling of well-being and interpersonal relationships [24], and an improvement in the resilience of employees [34]. Furthermore, Gil-Beltrán et al. [11] showed that regular physical activity is required to reduce stress levels, improve job satisfaction levels and make job emotions more positive. Likewise, employees who exercise are more empathetic and engaged compared to sedentary employees [35].

Fourth, workplace well-being programmes impact on some employees' health aspects, improving their muscle tone and general physical condition [36,37], their perception of health and general health [38–41], reducing health risks [42], improving psychophysiological and social parameters related to the relief of musculoskeletal pain [23], a reduction of overweight [43], improving the body mass index, body weight, fat mass, cholesterol, fitness and quality of sleep [44], and enhancing the ability to control weight [45]. Furthermore, previous physical activity training with high levels of cardiorespiratory fitness is probably immunoprotective in patients who contract COVID-19 [46].

Fifth, employees desire leaders who value their well-being [47] and their explicit engagement in and consideration of employees' well-being has a meaningful impact on employees' psychological and physical well-being over and above other forms of such positive leadership behaviours [48,49]. The common understanding of how important health support in the workplace is for the company will lead employees to show more self-care behaviour and it is expected that employees' self-care behaviour will foster their work engagement and reduce their exhaustion [47].

### *2.1. COVID-19: Relationship with Physical Inactivity and Sedentary Lifestyle*

The WHO has been warning of all the problems associated with physical inactivity and not taking care of nutrition regarding many diseases, handicaps, and even deaths. For this reason, they have published different documents related to health, physical activity, and diet [50,51].

In this vein, the WHO published a document in 2013 [52] to reduce non-communicable diseases, as well as carrying out a call to reduce physical inactivity by 10% by 2025. Later, they published a global action plan that aimed to reduce physical inactivity in adults and adolescents by 15%, increasing this by 5% when extended until 2030 [53]. However, different experts indicate the impossibility of meeting these objectives due to the increase in physical inactivity induced by COVID-19 [54].

Maintaining a routine of physical activity at home is an important strategy to combat citizens' long hours at home, which are having an impact on depression, physical inactivity, and anxiety, leading to a sedentary lifestyle [55]. Recently, in 2020, the WHO published different recommendations related to physical activity, diet, tobacco, and mental health during confinement [56]. More specifically, the Spanish Government (2020) published recommendations for workers on emotional well-being, well-being at work, and physical and mental well-being [57].

Despite all the efforts and recommendations of international and national public organisations and of the numerous scientific studies on the importance of maintaining adequate physical activity, there are studies that warn about the increase in physical inactivity and sedentary lifestyle derived from confinement and telework. An example is the research carried out by Tison et al., which concludes that there has been a clear and collective decrease in individual daily step counts [58]. On the other hand, Ammar et al. highlighted the negative effect of home confinement in relation to physical activity and diet, impacting on a more sedentary lifestyle [59]. Specifically, in Spain, in 2020, the Spanish Society of Obesity (SEEDO) [60] noted in recent research that 44% of Spaniards have increased their weight during confinement, this being generated by bad habits (an increase in alcohol consumption), a decrease of physical activity [61], more time sitting, and more time watching television.

Based on the above and as can be seen in Figure 2, it seems advisable for companies to adapt all their programmes to this new situation, in order to continue taking care of the health and well-being of their workers. This adaptation will not only be at work (workplace), but companies will also have to direct their efforts to developing the welfare of their workers in their own homes (telework).

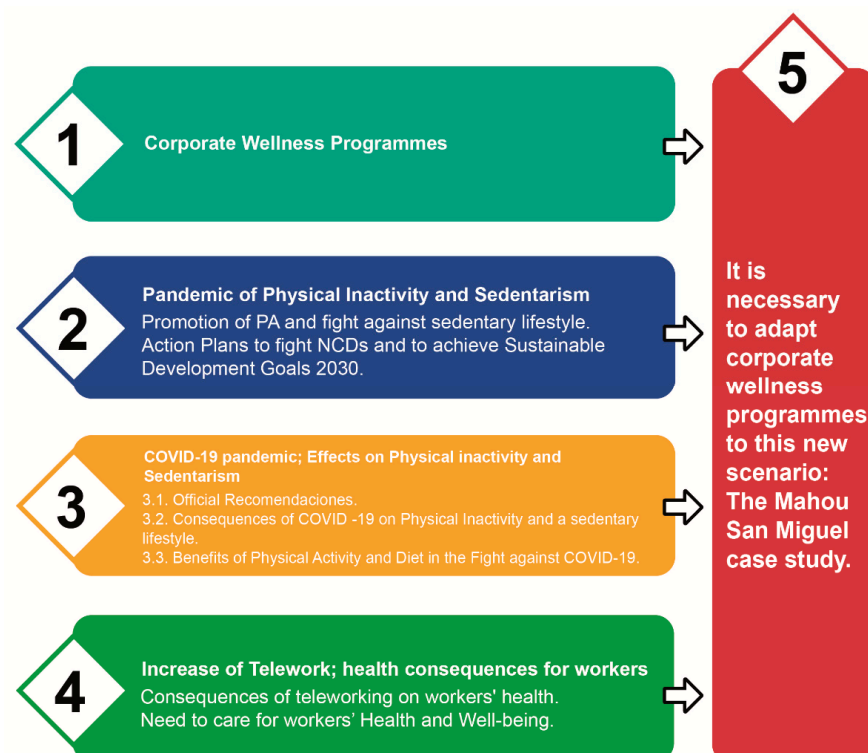


Figure 2. Factors influencing the need to adapt corporate wellness programmes.

## 2.2. Increase in Teleworking and Its Implications on Worker Health

Telework or remote work can be defined as the work performed through the use of information communication technology (ICT's) such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, and desktop computers) outside the employer's premises [62]. Teleworking, working from a distance [63], consists of carrying out work in a place distant from the central or production buildings, where workers do not have physical interaction with their co-workers, but rather communicate with them electronically [64]. In this sense, mobile work based on new technologies has been emerging as smaller and medium-sized wireless devices such as laptops and mobile phones allow employees to work not only from home, but practically from any location where they need to do so [65], making telecommuting a popular and growing alternative to the traditional work style [66].

Given the authorities' need to contain the spread of the virus and minimise labour and economic implications, teleworking (remote work) has become widespread. This means that more time is spent in front of screens and less time doing physical activity. The International Labour Organization (ILO) declared that due to the COVID-19 outbreak, as an organisational measure of physical distancing aimed at preventing coronavirus contagion at workplaces, the resource of telework arrangements had substantially increased [67].

Due to the circumstances brought about by the pandemic, the massive and worldwide experience of telecommuting has meant that millions of employees have been forced to work from home. This experience has been a success that has surprised the majority of business leaders [68]. This promotion/obligation of teleworking has even triggered a reduction in risks, being implemented by a large number of countries [69]. In this context, telework has suddenly experienced a rebound, as a result of the measures to protect citizens from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). In the beginning of 2020, several governments recommended that companies facilitate teleworking to avoid employees gathering together in the same place [70].

According to a recent report (2020) by The Adecco Group [71], it has been concluded that after the pandemic, 75% of employees want flexibility between work in the office and working remotely (hybrid model). In Spain, this percentage reaches 78%. Almost half of the respondents, 49%, want the ratio to be 50%/50% of the time in the office/remote. Seventy-four percent think that support for mental well-being after the pandemic is important. However, 54% of leaders felt that it was not easy to effectively advise their employees on mental well-being during the pandemic. Finally, maintaining physical health is among the five most important aspects for their working life after the pandemic for 80% of the Spanish workers surveyed, 81% of workers in the United States, and 77% in the United Kingdom. The main conclusion of the study is that the future of work is flexible: The world is ready for hybrid work [71].

With all these data and this research, it is expected that, in the immediate future, a large number of jobs will be hybrids, which would mean that workers would have two workplaces: Their office and their home. This implies a revolution in the way of developing an area that is not yet very widespread in Spain and in other developed countries, such as corporate welfare programmes. This means that a research effort is necessary to develop corporate well-being programmes adapted to this new reality. In this sense, we could call them hybrid corporate well-being programmes.

## 3. Method

### 3.1. The Case Study's Parameters

The history of Mahou San Miguel officially begins in 1890. Today it is the leading Spanish company in the beer sector in Spain, with more than 34% of the market share, and the most international, with a presence in more than 70 countries. As the company indicates, "they are a family of more than 4,250 professionals spread over different locations and production centres. Its values are the drive for innovation, believing in people, the search for excellence, enjoying doing things well and creating sustainable businesses and environments".

Both the corporate well-being programmes “A tu salud (To your health)” and “Cuidarme” (Take care of me) have obtained various national awards, which has driven the company to constantly continue to improve its programmes. Among the awards received in these 20 years of history are the National Expansion and Employment Award of 2007, the National Strategy NAOS Award of the Ministry of Health in 2010, recognition as the first company in the sector certified as a Healthy Company of 2012, the 2016 My Company is Healthy award, and the 2019 National Human Resources Award by CEDERED.

Mahou San Miguel has been named “the best brewery to work for” for several years by international Corporate Reputation Observatories, such as the Merco Business Monitor. A good part of these results is due precisely to projects such as “Cuidarme (Take care of me)”.

In 2010, managers of the Spanish Sports and Health Area of the Superior Sports Council (Consejo Superior de Deportes), the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, in collaboration with the Spanish National Institute of Social Security and Hygiene at Work (Instituto Nacional de Seguridad Social e Higiene en el Trabajo), being aware of the need to promote physical activity corporate programmes, and of the innovative development in the application of Exercise Prescription programmes in the company, worked with the programme data to conclude in a benchmark study in Spain, and unique in Europe, that investing in corporate well-being has a positive ROI (Return of Investment) for the [72] company.

This is why this case study is unique in corporate well-being and physical activity programmes.

### 3.2. Procedures and Methods

This research addresses the study of a unique case concerning a large Spanish corporation, Mahou San Miguel. Following Bartunek et al. [73], when the theory is built from case studies these are often reflected as one of the most interesting research methods, since they allow us to build our understanding inductively from the data rather than deductively through theoretical tests [74,75]. In addition, they have been widely used in management research as a source of knowledge in various areas, as a sample of what can happen and as a source of experience [76].

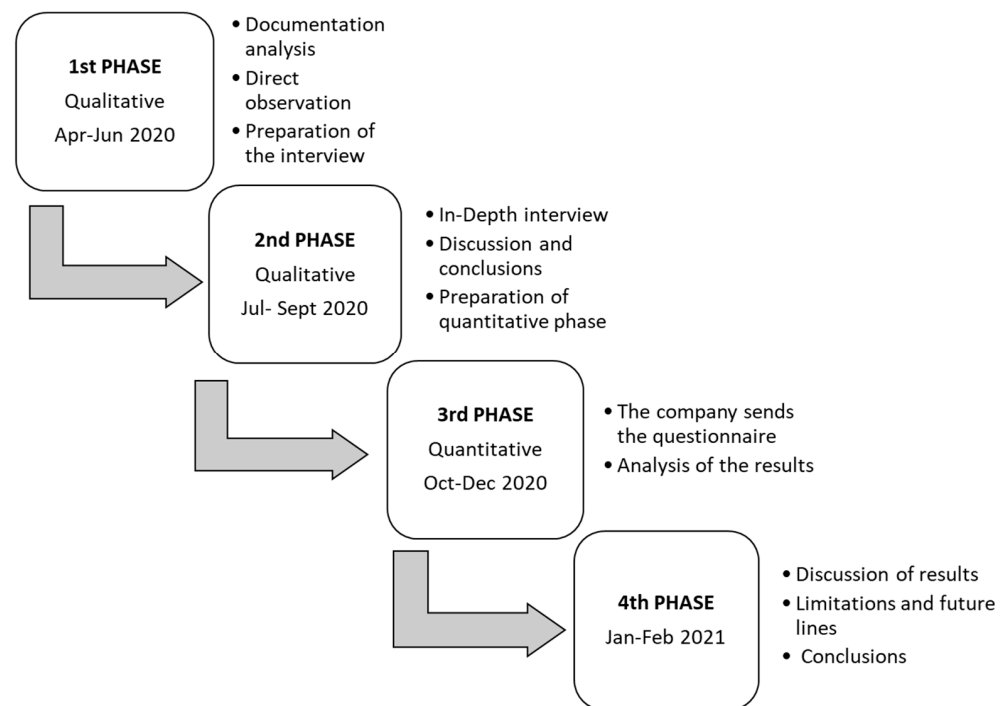
The case study presented introduced the implementation of corporate well-being programmes in Spain before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Bryman and Bell [77] a case study is appropriate to understand a phenomenon and the subsequent collection of multiple data points is necessary to allow for the corroboration and triangulation of data [78].

A mixed-method approach was used to address data collection and the research was done sequentially, in 4 phases, as described in Figure 3.

The first phase began in April 2020 with a documentary analysis, site visits, and direct observation. Subsequently, in July, the second phase started with a qualitative approach through an in-depth interview with Jesús Domingo, General Director of People and the one most responsible for the success of the company’s corporate well-being and happiness programmes.

The third phase began with the aim of contrasting the statements made in the interview with the opinion of the workers and of achieving the research objectives. It took place from October to December 2020.

The last phase began with the final analysis and subsequent discussion of results. The research was concluded in February 2021.



**Figure 3.** Research phases.

### 3.3. Data Collection

For the qualitative data collection, the research started with direct observation. It is the oldest, and remains the most common, instrument of scientific research [79]. At the same time, a documentary analysis was done in order to prepare the interview with the General Director of People, Jesús Domingo. The instrument chosen was an in-depth semi-structured interview format. This was considered the most appropriate means to support, contrast, and expand various aspects of the analysis previously carried out and direct the objective of exploring corporate welfare programmes during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was decided to interview Jesús Domingo, after this previous observation phase, because he is the one most responsible for the success of the company's corporate well-being and happiness programmes. The interview was conducted telematically due to mobility restrictions in Spain in June 2020, lasted two hours, and was transcribed and then discussed by the authors.

For the quantitative approach, data were collected by means of a self-administered questionnaire to all employees at the Madrid headquarters. The questions were discussed, authorised, and then sent by email from the company to 695 employees, from which 253 responses were obtained (36.4%) from October 16th to November 20th. Of this sample, 63.7% were male and 36.3% female, 71.9% had mostly been teleworking and 68.3% of them had been working for the company for more than 5 years, of which 45.8% had been working there for more than 10 years. This last figure is particularly important as the corporate volunteering programme started in the company more than 20 years ago.

In this phase, four variables are analysed, these being the ones the researchers considered to be the most important for the objective of the research and to be able to contrast the success of the programme in times of COVID-19. The variables chosen were programme satisfaction, satisfaction with the company's support during this pandemic, evolution of physical activity, and level of participation.

The variables satisfaction with the service as well as the company's support during this period were chosen following García-Fernandez. et al. [80]. A 6-point Likert-type scale, where 0 is the lowest score and 6 the highest, was used to measure the degree of satisfaction of the workers and their evaluation of the company's accompaniment during this period.

Likert items and scales were selected as they represent useful means for researchers seeking information on subjects' attitudes [81].

The variable evolution of physical activity during COVID-19 was chosen following Castañeda et al. [61]. To measure the evolution of physical activity practice in this period, it was considered appropriate to facilitate the response by asking workers to answer whether physical activity at the time of the pandemic was lower, similar, or higher than before the pandemic.

Finally, the variable of participation in the programmes was chosen following Robroek et al. [82]. In this case, the employees only had to indicate whether or not they had participated in the programme.

The study respects the ethical principles of scientific research and followed the requirements established by the American Psychological Association in 2002.

#### 4. Results

The results will be described in two different phases. Firstly, the semi-structured interview and the subsequent Figure 4 constructed by the researchers is presented. Secondly, the questionnaire outcomes will be described.

The interview started with the Director of People introducing the Cuidarme (Take care of me) programme as an innovative well-being programme integrated into the Mahou San Miguel people development model that proposes accompanying them in the process of improving their own health. The programme addresses all the dimensions of well-being: Physical, emotional, social, and professional.

In this sense, the Director of People pointed out:

“Our actions are aimed at making all professionals feel safer, healthier and happier. In this way we respond to the commitment of the Management to guarantee that all the people of Mahou San Miguel are prepared to face current and future challenges within sustainable work and organisational environments. It is about putting people at the centre of the strategy so that they are safe, healthy and happy”.

The “Take care of me” programme is a key tool when it comes to promoting the experience that professionals get when working in the company. This dimension makes even more sense in the new post-Covid reality, in which the company's proposal has been to accompany all professionals in their new day-to-day life and help them to be competent, competitive, and balanced professionals.

Regarding the origin of the implementation process, it should be noted that the first Wellness programme “A Tu Salud (To your health)” practically began with the creation of Mahou San Miguel as a company in 2000. After three decades immersed in corporate well-being, the 2017 programme “Take care of me” was a natural evolution of the previous one. Technological assistance and the adaptation of programmes to the generational and labour change that takes place in the company and in society have been key tools in this transformation.

The company indicates: “The generational, socio-labour, organisational and technological changes made an updated model necessary. In well-being and health, it has gone from “you have to do” to “I want to do.” Companies have become more humane and allow adopting a change to more holistic versions of life and help people to commit to their well-being”.

The “Take care of me” programme brings a new approach to all these operations, making people themselves the protagonists. Each professional is ultimately responsible for their own well-being and the organisation accompanies them with all the mechanisms at its disposal to help them achieve their objectives. In this way, health and well-being are combined as the best talent. Digitalisation has been a strategic pillar of the company and one of the clearest commitments to strengthen the user experience.

Another essential aspect when addressing corporate well-being is the resources invested. The company directly invests 200,000 euros distributed in the financing of subprogrammes, technology, and health spaces, without counting the investment that is necessary



to make in the monitoring of all the dedication in the time of Mahou San Miguel's own team. The current ROI (Return of Investment) is 2.9 per euro invested, also achieving a decrease in absenteeism and an increase in productivity [72]. The sense of belonging to the company must also be noted as very remarkable.

The work climate and commitment survey, DILO, is carried out every year by the Company. This reflects during the last ten years that the Corporate Well-being programmes are the most valued in the health area, with approval rates higher than 80%.

All this is reflected in an increase in overall health, with a decrease in absenteeism and a high level of participation in the programmes. Currently, 38% of the staff follow the Corporate Welfare programmes, with the main objective of participation being the application of various resources, both human (own medical service) and material, in addition to the control and monitoring of their action plans in the area of welfare and health.

One of the main concerns that the company has had and still has when facing the current situation of the pandemic has been to preserve the health of the professionals all the time. Everyone who could telework did so, even before the declaration of the state of alarm. Furthermore, during the confinement, various online initiatives were launched to encourage physical activity at home. In the unprecedented pandemic situation caused by COVID-19, the company has shown a very strong position to ensure emotional well-being. This is indicated by the person in charge of people: "a very relevant commitment was made to the psychological accompaniment of our professionals through a telephone line via which people had the support of company professionals certified as coaches to overcome this difficult situation".

In the case of people who had to continue working in the worksite, the company has been providing all the protection elements within its reach to minimise risks and guarantee the health of all the professionals, as well as that of their environment. Job protection has been one of the guidelines that they have maintained during this difficult situation. Therefore, no ERTE (Expediente Regulación Temporal de Empleo; Temporary Regulation of Employment) has been carried out during this period.

Various organisational and strategic measures were taken in Mahou San Miguel during the pandemic. The welfare programme "Cuidarme (Take care of me)" acquired special relevance in the face of the new situation and all possible actions were moved to people's homes through the Cuidarme (Take care of me) web platform and the Cuidarme (Take care of me) App.

The Communication, Physical and emotional well-being, Talent, and Prevention and Health teams participated in the project in a transversal way. The aim of this remote programme was to accompany people 24 h a day to look after their well-being and health.

Once the risks of confinement were identified, multiple actions of the "Cuidarme (Take care of me)" programme were implemented, taking advantage of the benefits of technology. A challenge during this period was to collect information on the results in order to take advantage of post-COVID-19 learning and incorporate it into the company's daily activities.

Among the main risks for workers that this programme aims to avoid are the possible emotional impact due to the situation of uncertainty and also an increase in sedentariness and overweight.

This is the first time that a situation of these characteristics has been faced and therefore one of the main focuses was to minimise the impact of an extreme situation.

The main areas in which they work are:

- Global actions affecting workers: Information from Mahou San Miguel's communication team on various activities.
- Actions for physical well-being: Physical activity promotion and Physical activity programme with App Cuidarme (Take care of me). Personalised plans, live and recorded classes.
- Nutrition: Advice and plans through Web Cuidarme (Take care of me) and App.

- Actions for emotional well-being (Happiness): Emotional coach service with coaches from the company itself and Daily Mindfulness sessions early in the morning.
- Actions for psycho-social well-being: Conducting a psychosocial survey.
- Promote Productivity
- Measurement and control of well-being: Number of calls registered on a 24-h emergency telephone number. Number of resolutions to the calls. Participants in streaming, use of App and their individual sport coach, and visualisations of collective online recorded classes.

Regarding the monitoring, among the indicators established, those responsible for the programme indicate: “they have been mainly those referring to the participation in activities such as streaming, visualisations of the different programmes of physical activity, both online and recorded, visualisations of healthy eating plans in times of Covid, requests for emotional coaching and a survey of psychosocial risk during confinement”.

The data are currently being analysed, although they advance that there is a high percentage of participation that suggests that the measures implemented have been successful.

Digitalisation has enabled communications and activities to be carried out in real time with excellent results. Different platforms have also been set up, such as Webex, M365 Teams, mobile apps, etc.

In relation to the level of satisfaction of employees throughout the process, follow-up surveys were carried out to find out the degree of acceptance of the professionals, obtaining ratings above 8.5 for all dimensions and with peaks even higher than 9.3.

Regarding the resources allocated during the crisis, the situation has made it necessary to reduce expenses to a minimum and 90% of them have been internal actions with the collaboration of their own staff.

Focusing on the new normality, the company points out that “One of the most important lessons we have learned in our daily work is the need to be flexible and adapt quickly to the situation. What is clear to us, as a leading company in the sector, is that we will continue to contribute to getting back to the longed-for normality as soon as possible”.

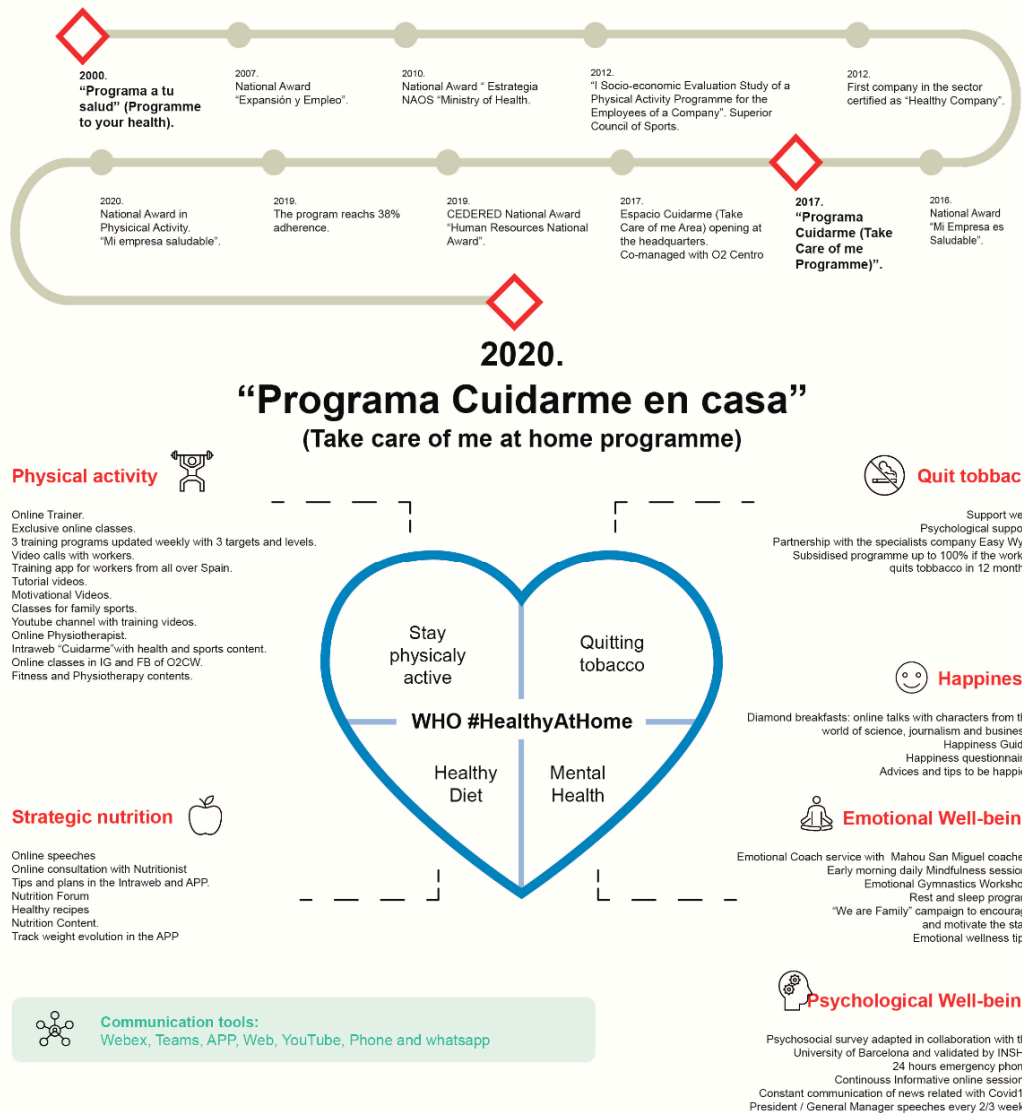
They are, at the moment, immersed in a plan to return to the various headquarters and offices, always having health and safety at the heart of the strategy. Continuing to face and analyse the circumstances required at each moment is part of their current mission. The main point of its strategies continues to be preserving the well-being and health of the people in their organisation.

The incorporation of the employees into presential work has required a personalised follow-up of each individual, in order to know their state of health and also a follow-up of all the cases of contagion that have occurred in the staff. Teleworking is a reality that has come to stay. However, the company started to implement it successfully years ago with the objective of promoting a work–life balance by granting one day of teleworking per week. More than 50% of the professionals with jobs that could be done remotely were already doing so more than a year ago. The recent results have been satisfactory, so this option will be maintained once normality returns.

For the company “teleworking is one more opportunity in the development of this programme allowing, through technology, the encouraging of the monitoring of the employees and, even more, making the rest of the members of the family unit benefit”.

With the observation and interview having been completed, we can summarise the evolution of the programme in Figure 4, including the most important milestones, and detail the programme and actions that are being carried out, superimposing the recommendations given by the WHO in 2020 [53] at the beginning of the pandemic. We can see that the programme has been extensive and one of the keys to its success has been its transversal perspective.

## Evolution of the Mahou San Miguel Corporate Well-being Programme



**Figure 4.** Evolution of the Mahou San Miguel Corporate Well-being Programme from 2000 to date, adapted to the COVID-19 environment breakdown of actions of the Caring for Me at Home Programme (Cuidarme) in comparison with the recommendations of the WHO (WHO 2020) [50] in its proposal #Healthyathome.

Cuidarme (Take care of me) is a programme in continuous evolution and is part of the philosophy of continuous improvement that is worked on in the company. For Mahou San Miguel, people are the most important and any way to contribute to their well-being and health is essential in their professional development during the time that they spend in the company. That is why learning from the “CUIDARME en casa (Take care of me at home)” programme is critical for future improvements. All these improvements are aimed at ensuring that all the people at Mahou San Miguel continue to do their job in the best

possible way, demonstrating that they are competent, competitive, and balanced leaders and, above all, happy.

Although there are currently other companies that also implement corporate well-being programmes, Mahou is proud to have been able to pave the way for many of them, and they point out that the company was a pioneer in this field, as evidenced by the 20 years of experience that they have. This is how the interview finished.

Once the results of the qualitative research have been described, the quantitative outcomes are summarised in Figure 5.

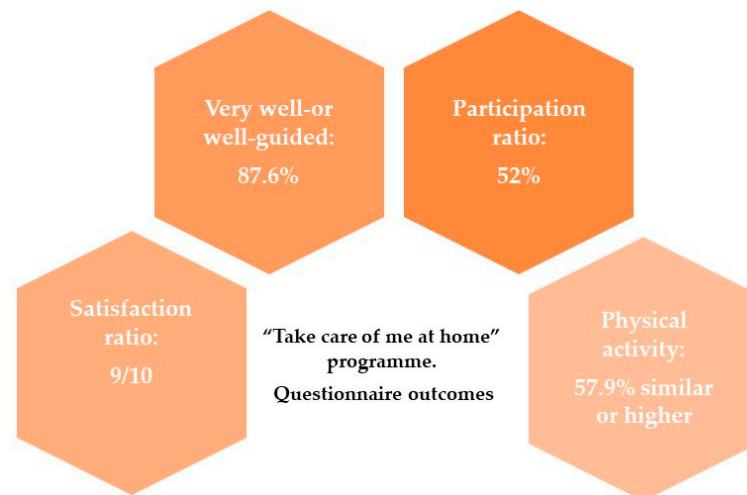


Figure 5. Questionnaire outcomes.

One of the main findings highlighted in the interview was the high percentage of participation, namely 38% of the workforce follows the “Take of me” (Cuidarme) programme and attends the gym at the company’s headquarters. The survey conducted showed a participation rate of 52%, more than half of the staff at the company’s headquarters.

On the other hand, the interview indicated that the main objective of everyone in the organisation was to accompany people 24 h a day to look after their wellbeing and health. We were able to confirm the fulfilment of this objective since a large majority of the respondents, 87.6% to be precise, stated that they felt well or very well guided by the company during this period. As for the results obtained in terms of physical activity, 20.7% stated that their regular practice was higher than usual, while 37.2% stated that it was similar. This means that 57.9% of the workers’ sports practice was similar or even higher than usual.

The satisfaction ratio of the workers at different times in recent years had been very high, specifically with ratings above 8.5 out of 10, and with peaks even higher than 9.3, although these data did not correspond specifically to the period studied. This is the reason why this variable was included in the questionnaire to measure the level of satisfaction with the programme adapted to COVID-19, and it continued to be very positive, despite the difficulties, with 53% of those surveyed giving a score of 10 out of 10. The overall satisfaction ratio was 9 out of 10. The satisfaction of the employees enrolled in the programme is 9.6 out of 10, compared with the 8.4 given by the employees not enrolled in the programme. This is in line with the high degree of satisfaction declared by the company.

## 5. Discussion

At present, a number of factors directly and seriously affect workers’ health. These are the COVID-19 pandemic, the pandemic of physical inactivity and sedentary lifestyle, and the spread of telework. There is evidence that physical inactivity is a strong modifiable risk factor for severe COVID-19 [83].

All of these factors have generated numerous recommendations from the WHO [56] concerned about the devastating effects that confinement can have on people's health. It has been detected that for several years, and increasingly so, many companies have implemented corporate welfare programmes in the world to take care of their employees' health, benefiting directly from this. The results obtained in the Socio-economic assessment of a Physical Activity Programme for the employees of company research (CSD & INSHT, 2013) show a positive return of investment (ROI) of 2.9 € per 1 euro invested, with a decrease in absenteeism, as well as an improvement in productivity [72]. These findings are in line with research by Laroche et al. [14], Whitsel et al. [15], López-Bueno et al. [16], and Van Amelsvoort et al. [17]. The job satisfaction and sense of belonging shown in the company also coincide with that indicated by Gómez-Chacón et al. [18,19] and Laroche et al. [14]. On the other hand, the recent scientific literature [55] agrees on the main consequences of confinement and teleworking on health and shows that physical activity is the best natural medicine to prevent these consequences from arising. Finally, it also highlights the urgent need at the global level to share good practices to assist in the fight against this global pandemic. The findings of this research are consistent with Salas-Nicás et al. [84].

Taking into account all these factors, this research was initiated with the aim of showing other companies and institutions a practical case study successfully applied in this difficult context. Since no proposal could be found in the scientific literature that could facilitate the objective, contact was made with the heads of this benchmark welfare programmes in Spain, in order to find out about it, share their experience, and show a model of corporate welfare adapted to the times of crisis produced by COVID-19. This programme is managed in the physical activity section by one of the leading fitness and wellness companies in Spain (O2 Centro Wellness). In order to adapt to this new situation, the company has relied on new technologies. It has been possible to see how the company has complied with and even extended the 2020 WHO [56] recommendations for health care in times of COVID-19 (#healthyathome). It has been achieved with a high degree of worker satisfaction of 9 out of 10, reaching 9.6 in employees enrolled in the programme. In addition, 87.6% of workers feel well or very well guided by the company during this period and 57.9% have increased or maintained their physical activity prior to the pandemic, which contrasts the worsening aggravation of physical inactivity as a relevant "adverse effect" of the social isolation measures taken to combat the spread of COVID-19 [85] and also the study carried out in 2020 by Castañeda et al. [61] with 3,800 adults in Spain in which a decrease in physical activity was observed. The percentage of workers in this programme is 52%. This percentage contrasts with those reported in other studies, which range from 10% [86] to 19% [87]. It can be concluded that the data obtained through the surveys carried out are in line with the answers given by the company during the interview.

Among the qualitative phase outcomes, it was found that the company's actions "are aimed at making all professionals feel safer, healthier and happier. In this way we respond to the commitment of the Management to guarantee that all the people of Mahou San Miguel are prepared to face current and future challenges within sustainable work and organisational environments". This outcome is in line with Freeman [88] and Singh et al. [89]. According to Freeman [88] the core interest of organisations is stakeholder well-being, and companies seek every possible opportunity in the competitive business world to increase organisational performance. Mahou San Miguel employees' health and wellbeing is one of the strategic lines of the company's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), included in its Strategic Sustainability Framework. According to Singh et al. [89] this internal CSR, or CSR towards employees, relates to employee well-being and business ethics allowing management to guide and serve employees better.

The Cuidarme (Take care of me) programme is aimed at ensuring that all the people at Mahou San Miguel continue to do their job in the best possible way, demonstrating that they are competent, competitive, and balanced leaders and, above all, happy. It is about people being the core of the strategy. One of the company's main concerns when facing the current situation of the pandemic was to preserve their employees' health. This is in

line with Kaluza et al. [47] as employees desire leaders who value their well-being, and health-oriented leadership goes beyond the actual management task and, in contrast to other leadership styles, puts the employees' well-being first. By prioritising and actively promoting the employees' well-being, leaders show behaviour that goes beyond contractually defined obligations, and thus, contributes to the creation of interpersonal bonds [47]. This will lead employees to show more self-care behaviour. In Mahou-San Miguel, each professional is ultimately responsible for their own well-being and the organisation supports them with all the mechanisms at their disposal to help them achieve their objectives. Following Franke et al. [90], health-oriented leadership improves employees' health and well-being through the employees' own self-care behaviour, namely their concern for their own health, how they handle demands and resources at work, and how they take care of their own well-being. This is of greater importance as the majority of employees were teleworking.

#### *Limitations and Future Lines of Research*

Although this study is a pioneer in the analysis of corporate programmes in companies in COVID-19 times, it is not free from limitations. Among them, it is worth noting that the objective of the work was to analyse, through a case study, the corporate welfare programme of the company Mahou San Miguel, adopted to the times of COVID-19. Although the study reflects the company's adaptation, it is true that the COVID-19 pandemic is still active and therefore it should be borne in mind that the company can continue to create and adopt new measures. It would therefore be of interest to professionals and academics to update the findings of this study as well as to provide more quantitative assessments of the implementation of the programme in the company once the pandemic is over.

The fact that Mahou-Miguel, a pioneering company with more than 20 years of experience in the management of corporate wellbeing programmes, and a benchmark in Spain, is a large company and therefore has more resources than other smaller companies, could limit the adoption of the model, at least in its entirety, by other companies of different sizes and with less developed corporate wellbeing programmes.

This research has shed light on the relevance of this type of programmes in the actual context, but it would be interesting for scholars to analyse other similar case studies and their results. Following Singh and Mira [89], another possible future research line could be to investigate the link between this internal Corporate Social Responsibility and operational performance during the pandemic. Finally, scholars could, based on their case study findings and these Mahou-San Miguel case study findings, design a model adoptable by small, medium, or large companies in accordance with Brooksbank [91].

## **6. Conclusions**

The final intention of this research is to help other companies to adapt their corporate physical well-being programmes to the new digital environment brought about by the confinement caused by COVID-19 and the increase in teleworking, which, according to numerous studies, is here to stay in companies. Physical inactivity and increased sedentary lifestyles triggered by COVID-19 and teleworking are having negative consequences for the physical and mental health of employees, which is why it is essential for companies that want to look after the health of their employees, while they work at home, to adapt their wellness programmes to the new situation as soon as possible. This will prevent the occurrence of all these negative consequences for the health of their employees.

Thanks to the findings of this paper, the authors conclude that it is possible to adapt corporate welfare programmes to the new situation successfully. Corporate well-being programmes have been shown to have a very positive impact on the organisations that implement them as well as on the health and well-being of the employees that they target. These positive benefits have not only been demonstrated in physical aspects, but in factors linked to psychosocial aspects. For this reason, the knowledge of proposals from a leading

company in corporate well-being programmes is of interest as they can be replicated in other companies in different sectors.

The current pandemic has posed a challenge for organisations around the world. They must adapt their activity to the limitations provoked by the pandemic. An important part of this activity should be the adaptation of their welfare programmes to offer their employees a programme through which they can also continue to care for their health at a distance.

#### *Management Implications*

This research's outcomes, based on a case study, may have important implications for practitioners as they could be adopted by companies all over the world, in different sectors but with similar characteristics, to adapt their traditional well-being programmes to the new scenario triggered by COVID-19.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent increase in telework implies an increase in physical inactivity and sedentarism, with very negative consequences for the workforce wellness. Therefore, if they wish to take care of their employees, Human Resources departments should adapt their workplace well-being programmes to the new situation. Otherwise, their employees' health could be affected and hence the company's health too.

Furthermore, and due to the increase of telework, well-being corporate programmes should become hybrid (workplace and digital). Therefore, after this pandemic, employers should offer these wellness programmes to their employees regardless of whether they are working or teleworking. Our findings suggest that companies should work on this line in the near future.

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