

A Healthy Workplace Environment: Impact on Employee and Organizational Performance

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Abstract- *A healthy workplace environment is ideal when it comes to maintaining a positive outcome in a stressful atmosphere. The most important thing that influences employee motivation and happiness, and how productive and efficient they can be, all goes down to their working Environment. A healthy workplace environment is good for your company as it could lead to bringing sales for business. A healthy workplace environment improves productivity and reduces costs related to absenteeism, turnover, workers' compensation, and medical claims. Every company has their own corporate culture that determines its value and it usually creates a standard that employees generally follow. When you have created a positive workplace culture that is being practiced by employees as well as yourself, the environment of the workplace tends to be healthier as everyone would have nothing to be upset or unhappy about. A great company culture can keep employees productive and even help your company retain the best employees and happy workers are also more likely to stick around.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Workplace environment is the sum of the interrelationships that exists within the employees and the environment in which they work. According to Heath, this environment involves the physical location as well as the immediate surroundings, behavioral procedures, policies, rules, culture, resources, working relationships, work location, all of which influence the ways employees perform their work. The quality of the workplace environment impacts on employees' performance and subsequently influences the organization competitiveness. An effective workplace environment management entails making work environment attractive, comfortable, satisfactory and motivating to employees so as to give employees a sense of pride and purpose in what they do. Employees will and are always contented when they feel their

immediate environment; both physical sensations and emotional states are in tandem with their obligations and how well employees connect with their organization's immediate workplace environment, influences to a great extent their error rate levels, efficiency and innovativeness, collaboration with other employees, absenteeism and, ultimately their retention. The type of workplace environment in which employees operate determines whether or not such organizations will prosper. Physical workplace environment contextualizes the office layout and design while psychosocial factors include working condition, role congruity and social support from supervisors. Policies encompass employment conditions of employees derived from industrial instruments and agreements negotiated with employees and unions, along with our Gitahi Njenga. Employees spend fifty percent of their lives within indoor environments, which greatly influence their performance capabilities. Better physical workplace environment will boost employees' performance and ultimately improve their productivity. A healthy workplace environment makes good business sense and is characterised by respect that supports employee engagement and creates a high performance culture that encourages innovation and creativity. Organisations deemed as a positive place to work will more likely have a competitive edge since they are in a better position to attract and retain highly skilled employees. This is a significant consideration in the current tight labour market. A positive workplace environment is likely to result in less employee turnover, fewer cases of fraud, better safety practices, easier to attract and retain qualified employees and improved employees' wellbeing. In almost all high performing banks, one message holds true above them all "People are an organization's most important asset. Employee performance is the combined result of effort, ability, and perception of tasks. Employees' performance is imperative for organizational outcomes and success. Many factors influence

employee performance; and workplace environment factors stands out as the key determinants of performance. It is the key multi character factor intended to attain outcomes and has a major connection with planned objectives of the organization. Favourable workplace environment guarantees the wellbeing of employees as well as enables them to exert themselves to their roles with all energy that may translate to higher performance.

II. ELABORATIVE APPROACH

Government or organizations administrations are more productive and gainful if they are capable of designing a workplace that creates equivalence in the line of prospect between employer and employee interests. This means that the work environment is designed where employees believe they will get financial and psychological advantage if the organization is profitable and prosperous. In such work environment, employee well-being is enriched when some conditions are encountered (page and VellaBrodrick2013). Consequently, individuals feel they are acknowledged and appreciated for worthy work. This in addition to the fact that, people believe they are able to have a career with their employer with mutual optimistic social exchange in the employment relationship where they are fairly salaried, and do not have to sacrifice their personal and family well-being in order to perform their jobs. Furthermore, persons are able to develop skills and knowledge that saves them employable for a long-lasting career. Thus, designing the workplace to support employee well-being must be combined with a high-performing caring culture as this guarantee's employability for employees. Overall, productive organizations that use human capital excellently take a stretched term perspective on the employment relationship where excellence human resources are seen as a core proficiency of the institute. In such a perspective, people are seen as an asset to be nurtured and developed rather than just a cost to be reduced. Employee and institute well-being and performance are portion of a dual agenda where interests between employees and the employer are realized as courtesy.

The workplace environment is the employees immediate surrounding where he performs his work. Employees' workplace environment is a key

determinant of the quality of their work and their level of productivity. Improper surroundings introduce hazards which make the workplace environment unsafe and impede the productivity rate of the employee. Hence, the workplace needs an environment in which the employee can carry out his work without any hindrance. An effective workplace is required to have an environment where the expected results can be achieved comfortably. Physical environment affects how employees in an organization interact, perform tasks, and are led. Physical environment as an aspect of the work environment has a direct effect on the human sense and it delicately changes interpersonal interactions and thus productivity. This is so because the characteristics of the workplace have consequences regarding productivity and satisfaction level. The workplace environment is the most critical factor for the employees to perform.

The physical aspects of a workplace environment have a direct impact on the employees' productivity, performance, health and safety, comfort, concentration, job satisfaction, and morale. A proper, helpful, conducive workplace environment brings improvements to the employees' physical and mental capabilities in performing their daily routine. An improper and unfavourable workplace environment leads to work stress. It also causes errors being committed by the employees. Also, unfavourable workplace environment, results into under-utilization of the capabilities available with the employees. It also induces work related stress in the employees. Important factors in the workplace environment include building design and age, workplace layout, cleanliness, workstation set-up, equipment design and quality, space, temperature, ventilation, lighting, noise, vibration, radiation, and air quality etc.

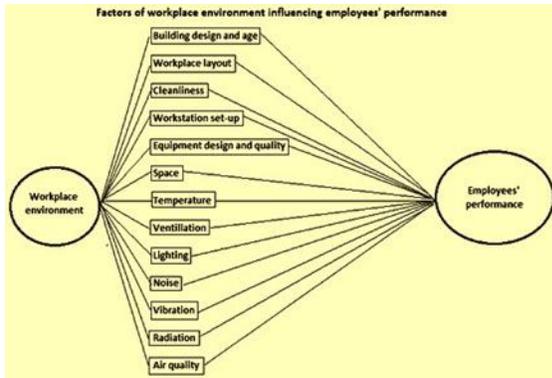


Fig.1 Factors of workplace environment influencing employees' performance

Employees are driven into job engagement using acceptable physical working environment. A physical conducive workplace environment which is comfortable, flexible and aesthetic to the employee encourages their mobility, concentration, sensory and physical connection to work roles and foster employees' engagement. It enhances the physical and mental well-being of the employees. It not only provides support for the development and maintenance of their working capacity but also enhances it. This happens since the work environment affects one's cognitive, emotional and physical well-being. A properly designed user-friendly physical workplace environment is central to employee engagement and consequently organizational success.

Noise is one of the leading causes of employees' distraction, leading to reduced productivity, serious inaccuracies, and increased job-related stress. High noise level at workplace reduces employees' productivity, and increase errors. Also, the employees' productivity improves with the availability of natural light and good ventilation at the workplace.

Effective workplace communication is another key factor to improve workplace environment. An organization which communicates throughout the workplace in an effective manner is more likely to avoid problems with completing the daily procedures, and is less likely to have a problem with improper occurrences. Such an organization generates a stronger morale and a more positive attitude of employees towards work. When employees communicate effectively with each other, productivity of the employees increases since the effective

communication means less complains and more work getting done. It removes confusion and frees up wasted time which would have been otherwise spent on explanation or argument. It makes workplace more enjoyable, less anxiety among co-workers which in turn means positive attitude towards work and increased productivity. Besides, another aspect of communication which affects productivity is noise level. Noise has negative influence on communication, frustration levels increase while productivity decreases in relation to persistence and loudness of noise. A reason given for this is that spoken communication becomes progressively more difficult as noise levels increase.

Workplace environment has an effect on the 'ergonomics' which can be defined as the science of designing to fit the employee, rather than physically forcing the employee's body to fit the job. It also can be considered as physical and mental capabilities which it limits in the employee as he interacts with tools, equipment, work methods, tasks and the workplace environment. If the ergonomics issues are not addressed then the employees act on a subconscious level, adapting their behaviour to lighten the pain thus affect their performance and reduce productivity. The work stress in the employees increases. Work stress is defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses which occur when job requirement do not match the employees' capabilities, resources, and needs. The increase in the work stress is caused by the work design and workplace environment.

The issues related to the ergonomics at the workplace deals with the human body's responses to physical and physiological stress. Employees experience stress if they perceive negatively towards their workplace environment. The stress slows down the responses of the employees and hence affects their work efficiency. Stress generated at the workplace can affect the employees' productivity, morale and motivation which in turn reflect in the performance and the productivity of the employees.

The factors connected with ergonomics contributing to the reduction in work stress include, (i) availability of things at a place which is easy to access, (ii) working in an environment which is comfortable, (iii)

availability of an environment which promotes reduction in use of an excessive force, (iv) the available work environment facilitates working at proper heights and in good postures, (v) availability of working environment which minimizes fatigue, (vi) availability of working place which is clean, clear and which facilitates easy movement, (vii) availability of working environment which is comfortable and which enhances clarity and understanding, and (viii) availability of systematic working methods at the workplace resulting into improved work organization.

‘Seven S’ (7S) methodology is adopted in some of the organizations for the improvement of the workplace environment (Fig 2). This is carried out by eliminating or reducing the waste, inconsistency, and physical strain. The implementation of 7S methodology consists of seven phases namely (i) sort, (ii) set in order, (iii) shine, (iv) standardize, (v) sustain or self-discipline, (vi) safety, and (vii) spirit or team spirit. Each phase of 7S methodology continuously improves the performance of the organization by eliminating wastages of searching, waiting, transportation, motion, and work in progress inventory etc. The 7S methodology makes the working environment clean and safe which improves the morale of the employees and hence has a positive effect on their performance. The improvement is in the quantitative form as well as in the qualitative form. The quantifiable variables are searching, movement, and waiting time, cycle time, lead time, production rate, productivity, and quality etc. while the qualitative variables are working environment, communication, and morale etc.



Fig. 2. 7S methodology for improvement of the work place environment

In the 7S methodology ‘sort’ means distinguishing or sorting out between wanted and unwanted materials at the workplace and removal of unwanted materials. The ‘set in order’ means arranging and labeling items in such a manner that they are easy to find and use. The meaning of ‘shine’ is removal of dirt, strain, filth, soot and dust at the workplace. This includes cleaning and care for equipment and facilities as well as also inspecting them for abnormalities. In a way, it also includes primary maintenance of equipment. The term of ‘standardize’ under 7S methodology means the systematizing of the practices. This means ensuring that whatever cleanliness and orderliness is achieved is required to be maintained. Hence, the working methods are to support the practices and turn them into habits. The purpose of standardization is to make sure that all the employees of the organization follows the same procedure, the same names of items, the same size of signalization/floor marking, shapes, colours, etc. Standardize also helps to do the right thing the right way every time. The term ‘sustain or self-discipline’ of 7S methodology denotes commitment from the employees to maintain orderliness and to practice the procedures with discipline and sincerity. The term ‘safety’ under 7S methodology means the condition of being protected against physical, social, spiritual, financial, political, emotional, occupational, psychological, educational, or other types or consequences of failure, damage, error, accident, harm, or any other event which can be considered non-desirable. The seventh term under 7S methodology is ‘spirit or team spirit’ which means the willingness of the employees to cooperate and work as part of a team. Team working constitutes a set of activities of the group of individuals, which includes effective communication/interaction amongst the team members for knowledge sharing, understanding each other on personal level, helping others in achieving a level of perfection, building a sense of unity in the team and working towards common objectives.

III. FINDINGS

1. Work Commitment:

Work commitment is defined as the employee's positive emotional connection to the employer or organization. The aim of many of studies in this context was to discover ways to improve how workers feel about their jobs so that these workers would

become more committed to their work provider. There are three different components of work commitment that match up with diverse psychological states. These components include; Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment and Normative Commitment. This model was created for two aims; to help in the interpretation of existing research and to serve as a framework for future research. These three "mind sets" can characterize an employee's commitment to the organization. Employer commitment predicts work variables such as turnover, organizational citizenship behavior, and job performance. Some of the aspects such as person stress, empowerment, job insecurity and employability, and sharing of leadership have been shown to be connected to a worker's sense of organizational commitment. Moreover, Scientists have studied work commitment in term of Job satisfaction for the past several decades. A considerable literature on the relationship between commitment and satisfaction with individual's job shows that if employee is satisfied he develops stronger commitment to his work. Several studies found a strong correlation between job satisfaction and organizational commitment of workers in several countries. Moreover, some studies produced results indicating a strong correlation between job commitment and job satisfaction and that satisfaction was a reliable predictor of commitment.

2. Job Satisfactions

The perception of job satisfaction has been established in many ways by numerous different researchers and practitioners. Job satisfaction is generally defined as the degree to which employees like their work. Studies have been dedicated to supposing out the extents of job satisfaction, antecedents of job satisfaction, and the relationship between satisfaction and commitment. Satisfaction has also been studied under different demographics of education, race, gender, age, and work capability. Most research on job satisfaction has been designed towards the person-environment fit paradigm. Job satisfaction has been found to be an essential area of research because one of the highest explanation's individuals provide for leaving a job is dissatisfaction. Job satisfaction includes multidimensional psychological responses to a one's job, and that these personal responses have cognitive (evaluative), affective (or emotional), and behavioral

components. Job satisfaction measures differ in the scope to which they evaluate the affective feelings about the job or the cognitive judgment of the job. Affective job satisfaction is a personal concept representing an emotional feeling person have about their job. Hereafter, affective job satisfaction for individuals reflects the level of pleasure or happiness their job overall brings. Furthermore, a positive outcome between a shared and flexible work environment and an increase in shareholder value was identified. Proposing that employee satisfaction is directly correlated with financial achievement. Over 40% of the companies listed in the top 100 of Fortune magazine's, —America's Best Companies to Work Forl also appear on the Fortune 500. It is likely that successful workers enjoy working at successful companies, however, the Watson Wyatt Worldwide Human Capital Index study claims that effective human resources practices, such as employee recognition programs, lead to positive financial outcomes more often than positive financial outcomes lead to good practices.

3. Individual-Job Fitting

Individual-job fit refers to the compatibility between a person's characteristics and specificity of a job. The person-job fit theory assumes that a person's personality characters will disclose insight as to adaptability within an organization. The degree of union between a person and the organization is expressed as their Person-Organization (P-O) fit. This is also referred to as a person-environment fit. A mutual measure of the P-O fit is workplace efficacy; the rate at which workers are capable of completing tasks. These tasks are mitigated by workplace environments such as, a worker who works more efficiently as an individual than in a team will have a higher P-O fit for a workplace that stresses individual tasks. By matching the right personality with the right job, company workers can achieve a better teamwork and escape drawbacks such as high turnover and low job satisfaction. Employees are more likely to stay dedicated to organizations if the level of fit is sensible. If the Individual shows a high P-O fit, it can be said that the individual would most likely be able to adjust to the company environment and work culture, and would be able to achieve at a greatest level.

4. Work Environment

The work Environment or workplace is the physical location where somebody works. Such a place can be ranged from a home office to a large office building or company. The workplace is one of the most important social spaces other than the home, establishing "a central concept for a number of things: the worker and his/her family, the employing organization, the customers of the organization, and the society as a whole". The development of new communication technologies have led to the development of the virtual workplace, a workplace that is not located in any one physical space. Typically involves other factors relating to the place of employment, such as the quality of the air, noise level, and additional perks and benefits of employment such as free child care or unlimited coffee, or adequate parking. In fit work environments, employee feels engaged in his job, a well as, in his home live. He feels an enthusiastic joining to his work and family activities and practice what engagement scholars refer to as "absorption, dedication and vigor" in how they address work and nonwork roles. People, who work in fit work environments, have confidence in that their job demands are not excessive and that they do not have to sacrifice their family lives or other meaningful non-work roles in order to achieve well on their jobs. They have positive emotional characteristics with their jobs and perceive positive conduction and crossover of liveliness, emotion, and abilities between work and family. Such individuals believe that they are appreciated at work and their jobs are a good fit with their capabilities and interests.

5. Work Related Family Struggle

The Pew Research survey finds that about half (53%) of all working parents with children under age 18 say it is difficult for them to balance the responsibilities of their job with the responsibilities of their family. There is no significant gap in attitudes between mothers and fathers: 56% of mothers and 50% of fathers say juggling work and family life is difficult for them. Various models of work-family balance have been created. Yet, the most broadly used, and possibly the most practicable are models that measure balance by its absence. In a recent study, the work to family conflict model was used to examine how work disturbs the family life. The relation between working hours and struggling with family problems has turned out to be non-linear and changing depending on the work

environment insight. The results recommend that in general knowledge workers, who report work problems, have higher probability of struggling with problems in family than individuals who do not. The workers, who do not perceive their work as problematic, are more likely to have problems in family long very long hours. The individuals who work long hours are less likely to be subject to family problems, if they do not struggle with work-related problems.

6. Job Stress

Stress is the psychological and physical state that results when the resources of the individual are not sufficient to cope with the demands and pressures of the situation. Thus, stress is more likely in some situations than others and in some individuals than others. Stress can weaken the achievement of goals, both for individuals and for organizations.

Licensed Under Creative Commons Attribution CC BY used to prevent work stress including; Working conditions are adapted to people's differing physical and mental aptitudes; Employee is given the opportunity to participate in the design of his/her own work situation, and in the processes of change and development affecting his/her work; Technology, work organization, and job content are designed so that the employee is not exposed to physical or mental strains that may lead to illness or accidents. Forms of remuneration and the distribution of working hours are taken into account; closely controlled or restricted work is avoided or limited; Work should provide opportunities for variety, social contact, and cooperation as well as coherence between different working operations; Working conditions should provide opportunities for personal and vocational development, as well as for self-determination and professional responsibility.

7. Workforce Training

Training and development on the job can be used to bring up to date or improve skills or knowledge so employees are more in harmony with the requirements and demands of their jobs, or to prepare them to make the changeover into innovative ones. Training can be used as a socialization method, or as a way of making the employee aware of the organization's desired values, which would help in increasing person-

organization fit. As people learn about the organization, they are working for through either company-initiated or self-initiated socialization, they should be able to be more precise in their appraisal of fit or misfit. Likewise, there is evidence that employees come to recognize with their organization over time by reflecting its values, and socialization is a critical measure of this progression.

8. Other Negative and Positive Influences

A recent study reported (Amible and Kramer, 2011), that employees perform better when they are positively spiritually engaged at work. It was found that managers must be facilitators of employees' work by facilitating to remove barriers, offering support, and assistance and identifying high level of effort. Supporting employees' personal lives as whole people can also lead to higher performance. One study showed that training leaders to be more supportive of family life lead to higher job satisfaction, performance, and lower turnover in grocery stores when compared to those stores where managers were less family supportive in their behaviours. Productivity can also be improved when managers warrant that employees are happily engaged at work. This does not cost a lot of money according to Amible and Kramer but workers' wellbeing depends, in large part, on managers' ability and willingness to facilitate workers' accomplishments - by removing obstacles, providing help and acknowledging strong effort (Amible and Kramer, 2011).

CONCLUSION

There are strong evidences regarding the important of the work environment in employee productivity. Work environment has broad dimensions and the exact degree to which one component or a combination of factors has a larger or smaller influence on the overall work environment and productivity. Creating appropriate work environment can be a balancing act and is relatively the only essential factor to upgrade the organization prosperity. There a lack of literature regarding this topic in Saudi Arabia and the current review may enlighten the future prospective in this context.

APPENDIX

Diagram: Fig. 1.1
Fig. 1.2

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