

The Factors Affecting Employee Work Environment & It's Relation with Employee Productivity

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Abstract: *The quality and quantity of work generated by employees are influenced by the work environment while poor environmental conditions can cause inefficient worker productivity as well as reduce their job satisfaction. This paper will describe some elements of the work environment that can impact on employee productivity and will address lighting, noise, color, and air quality. furniture and equipment as the key physical factors in the organization will discuss as well. four factors of the work environment under which it has impact on employee productivity that are: lighting, noise, color, and air quality. All of these factors cannot be treated separately, as they connect with each other. The work environment plays a very important role if the organization would like to maintain better productivity as many employees spend most of their time on generating activities in the organization.*

Keywords: Work Environment, Productivity, Job satisfaction

1. Introduction

The physical aspects of a workplace environment can have a direct impact on the productivity, health and safety, comfort, concentration, job satisfaction and morale of the people within it. Important factors in the work environment that should be considered include building design and age, workplace layout, workstation set-up, furniture and equipment design and quality, space, temperature, ventilation, lighting, noise, vibration, radiation, air quality.

The office environment in which employees work and undertake most of their activities can impact on their productivity. The quality and quantity of work generated by employees are influenced by the office environment and poor environmental conditions can cause inefficient worker productivity as well as reduce their job satisfaction, which in turn will impact on the financial well-being of the organisation

Extensive research concerning the effect of an unfavorable workplace environment on employee productivity has been undertaken worldwide. The majority of research found that there were several elements known to contribute both positively and negatively to productivity. Some researchers discovered that these elements affected both the psychological and physiological welfare of the workers, causing such conditions as eyestrain, fatigue, headache, back pain, and nausea. It is important to solve these problems, otherwise it will place the organisation in a bad situation as many people in the office may become sick due to inadequate office conditions. Administrative Office Managers should be able to organise the workplace based on an ergonomically sound office environment. **Ergonomics** is the study of the relationship between people, the equipment they use and the physical environment in which they work. Applying ergonomic principles to the design, modification and maintenance of workplace environments, has a benefit on people's work performance and short- and long-term health and safety.

This paper will describe some elements of the work environment that can impact on employee productivity and will address lighting, noise, color, and air quality. Office furniture and equipment as the key physical factors in the office will discuss as well.

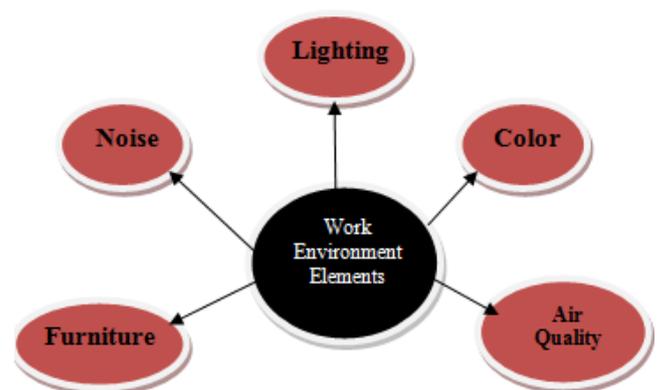


Figure: Work Environment Elements

2. Research Methodology

This is descriptive research. The source of information is secondary data from different sources like websites & books mentioned at the end.

The Impact of work Environment on Employee Productivity

When people are working in situations that suit their physical and mental abilities, the correct fit between the person and the work task is accomplished. People are then in the optimum situation for learning, working and achieving, without adverse health consequences, e.g. injury, illness. The following are the work environment elements & how they affect employee productivity.

1. Noise

Noise is element of the work environment, which has an important role in affecting employee productivity. Too much noise, such as sound from equipment, tools, and people's conversation, may prevent workers concentrating on their jobs, consequently decreasing their productivity. However, according to Keeling and Kallaus (1996) people cannot achieve good performance in a silent environment, because at some level, sound may generate a healthy background and can also assist employees accomplish their work.

In general, noise can influence employees while doing their work and the impact can be both positive and negative. If there is soft background sound, which is coming from instrumental music, and there is an employee who has to tackle claims from some inpatient customers, the background sound in turn, will assist him/her to become more relaxed in solving the customer's problems. In contrast, if the sound background is quite hard, which may develop from the telephone ringing and loud conversation among people in the same room, this situation can hamper both the employee and customers. There are several methods for controlling the noise in the office: proper contraction, sound-absorbing materials, sound-absorbing devices, and masking.

2. Lighting

Working in dim or overbright work environments can result in eyestrain, headaches, irritability and, inevitably, reduced productivity. Light sources, including the sun, can create unwanted reflections, glare and shadows in the workplace that can cause discomfort and distraction, and can interfere with the performance of visual tasks. Low levels of lighting can cause depression, which for some people may be severe.

There are two kinds of light that are available to office: natural light and artificial light. Natural light is a free resource that enters the office through window or skylight, whereas artificial light is the kind of light which is produced and designed by manufacturing.

A poor lighting system may reduce employee performance as well as productivity, because those who have to work related with reading might have a serious problem with their vision, which in turn may cause fatigue or eyestrain. point out that Administrative Office Managers should also take into account the amount of light as well as the quality of lighting. More lights, for some workers, may be helpful in overcoming their tasks. However, for the rest of them, especially those who have to work in front of computers, excessive light may cause difficulties viewing the characters on the screen. In addition, those employees who work in a better quality of lighting are likely to create faster work with fewer errors, compared to those work in a poor lighting.

3. Color

Another element of the work environment, which has impact on employee productivity, is color. The majority of workers are only concerned about the physical effect of color, while many of them do not pay more attention to its psychological impact. In fact, color plays a very important role on the human body, mind, and spirit, because it can impact both productivity and wellness.

For some people, different colors can have a different meaning; for example, those who prefer red color means that the people are energetic, aggressive, and brave. Those who like the blue color mean that they are very loyal people or faithful. In the work environments, different colors can also have a different impact, specifically for those involved in particular rooms. Choosing inadequate colors may impact on worker health, such as, eyestrain, headache, and fatigue.

However, it is very difficult for Administrative Office Managers to facilitate desirable colors for every worker. There are three factors which Administrative Office Managers need to aware of before choosing an appropriate color for the office environment these are: work functions, physical location, and type of emotion desire.

Different activities need a different color environment. Activities which need more concentration, such as accounting, will be best with cool color, for instance, blue and green, while some creative work, such as, advertising, software design, and fashion design, will be successful with warm color environments, for example, red and orange. An intelligent choosing of color environments in turn will enhance creativity, as well as productivity, while at the same time reducing fatigue and other health problems.

4. Air Quality

The last element of the work environment, which has impact on employee productivity, is air quality. Poor air quality can raise a negative impact on employee health in the form of respiratory problems, headaches, and, fatigue, which in the long periods will reduce productivity. The air quality contains four factors that are: temperature, humidity, ventilation, and cleanliness.

High Temperature Levels

Employee lethargy and tiredness as a result of increased body temperature lead to possible efficiency decreases.

Low Temperature Levels

Low Temperature Levels decrease in efficiency due to cooler body heat and shivering.

High Humidity

In itself may not be a direct problem, but it does increase our susceptibility to high temperature levels as evaporation of body sweat is impeded.

Low Humidity

Levels have a debilitating effect on our ability to breathe and swallow without discomfort as our mouths and noses can become dry due to the increased level of evaporation in the surrounding environment.

A comfortable work environment is a building or room in which workers can generate their work properly as it clean, with proper range of temperature, enough ventilation, and an adequate humidity. Too little humidity level may causes magnetic tapes and disks to stick during processing operation, whereas too much humidity, on the other hand, produces condensation on the electronic parts of the equipment and causes shortcircuiting.

Ventilation is important for the control of dust, fumes, gases, aerosols, climate and thermal comfort factors. Exposure to different types of dust can result in fibrosis of the lung, allergic reactions and asthma attacks. Various vapours, gases and aerosols have the ability to cause respiratory and skin damage. Extremes of heat can reduce concentration and motivation and cause a number of heat-related illnesses. Extremes of heat can also reduce tolerance to chemical and noise exposure, and increase the risk of heart attacks.

After the temperature level in an office has been set-up properly within the favorable level of humidity, the air in the office still needs to be circulated, otherwise it can increase the temperature, which in turn may cause discomfort. Air circulation is also essential as it can avoid people inhaling inadequate air. Moreover, smoking must be prohibited in the office. Some small offices still use electric fans to make sure that the air is circulated well.

Air cleanliness is also becoming one consideration of office management to develop better air quality. Due to technological advances, many devices have been developed to clean the air. These devices clean the air of germs, dust, and dirt.

5. Office Furniture

Office furniture comprises of desks chairs, the filing system, shelves, drawers, etc. All these components have a specific role to play in the proper functioning of any office and the productivity and the efficiency of the employees. And, one of the most important thing to be considered while buying office furniture is to ensure whether it is ergonomic or not. Ergonomics of office furniture is important because an employee has to work with them for the entire time that he is on office, and if they are uncomfortable and not user friendly, their working style and efficiency gets hampered considerably, in turn affecting the overall organizations. Non-ergonomic office furniture can also lead to health problems of employees, which again has an adverse effect on the productivity. Ergonomic office furniture ensures that each employee gets well with the things around him, like desks, chairs, computer alignment and even environmental factors. If the employee is uncomfortable due to any reason, his work is bound to get affected. If all factors surrounding the employee are ergonomically correct, then the employee will be comfortable and remain motivated to give his best. These days' organizations consult, and even employ ergonomic experts that advice people on how to improve their office ergonomics and what type of furniture would be suitable to make the ergonomics of a work place better. Having ergonomic office furniture reduces the chances of any risk injury. They are designed in manner that makes them safe to be had around and also reduce the possibility of any accidents in the work place. Office furniture like desks can be designed to give greater leg room and adequate support to the elbows while working on the computer. The positioning of the computer monitor and the mouse should also be adequate, so that the user does not have to strain his vision to view and stretch uncomfortably far to reach them. Office furniture helps the organization tremendously in increasing its productivity, and at the same time taking care of the employees' health.

3. Conclusion

Employees are very important assets that the organization has. A good organisation is one that can nurture its employees. One technique to nurture the employee is by paying attention to the office environment. Many employees spend most of their time on generating activities in the office. Thus, the office environment plays a very important role if the organisation would like to maintain better productivity.

There are four factors of the office environment under which it has impact on employee productivity that are: lighting, noise, color, and air quality. All of these factors cannot be treated separately, as they connect with each other. For instance, even though the lighting system of the office is desirable as it meets employee needs, the noise in the office still has to maintain to ensure that employees can work in favorable sound. An adequate lighting system, noise, color, as well as air quality can impact employees both physically and psychologically, and some health problems that may occur are headaches, as a result of poor lighting system and undesirable noise, respiratory problems as a consequence of poor air quality, fatigue as a result of inappropriate of selecting color, and so forth. In the long term, these problems will impact the financial well being of the organisation. In addition, in order to maintain employee productivity, Administrative Office Managers are recommended to organize the office environment based-on an ergonomically sound office in which all of the office environment aspects can be appropriate for employee.

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