

The Effect of Work Environment on Employees' Productivity

Dr. Serhan A. Al-Shammari

Deanship of Faculty and personnel Affairs, University of Hail, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Abstract: *Aim: The aim of this review is to provide an indication of current situation and deviations occurring in the work environment and its impact on employee achievement. The explanatory hints on borderline issues such as measurement of positive and negative changes in work environment and employee satisfaction continuously influencing employee productivity. Methodology: This review interprets the existing state of work environment in relation to the work load and employee satisfaction. The review depends on a collection of data involving variety of experiences and current knowledge and situation in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). This review is anticipated to apprise readers to inspire for further output in this area. Findings: The review provides an essence of strategic orientation in the existent route of research, helping to advise readers about what is known, what is need to be known, and gaps for further enquiry. Value: The study offers an overview of recent understanding of these concepts in the area of human resources utilities.*

Keywords: Work environment, employee, Saudi Arabia

1. Introduction

In 2013 the population of the KSA was estimated at 29,994,272 with immigrants representing 32.4%, due to the reliance on imported workforce (Saudi Arabia Central Department for statistics and Information, 2013). Although, this is the most recent official figure; however, collecting accurate statistics is challenging due to regular traffic over the Saudi borders, and the number of foreigners who extend their work visa for several years in state of the generally two years. Notably, the World Factbook estimates the total workforce for the KSA in 2011 at 7.63 million, 80 per cent of whom were foreigners (World Factbook, 2011). In 2009, the Central Department of Statistics and Information (2009) estimated the total workforce at 8.61million, half of whom were foreigners (Saudi Arabia Central Department for statistics and Information, 2009). However, in KSA there is a lack of employee satisfaction modelling, and there is little research on the effects of Nitaqat system. Here are wide research prospects: in the business sectors targeted by Nitaqat, in the employment accessible in urbanized and regional environments, in the social restraints, and in the effects of technological revolution. Therefore this review aims at opening up a new outlet for theoretical and pragmatic research.

Alterations in the employment relationship over latest years have amplified the frequency of "precarious work." Precarious work has little or no job security, can have pay systems that transfer risk and instabilities in customer and product market stresses from the employer to the employee (Lambert, 2008), as well as, unpredictable unfamiliar schedules (Kalleberg, 2009;2011). The rising economic burdens of globalization have increased economic disturbances where employers have reduced the connection to employees at all ends of the staff. At the lower end of the wage band, numerous employees aspect what is known as "underemployment," where workforces cannot get sufficient work times and reimbursement to match their skill counterparts or economic desires. Work plans that limit labor expenses and escape overtime wages are widespread. Strict work schedules and deficiency of

health care benefits in some western countries, where benefits are connected to occupation and employer's cost structures make it hard for employees to care for their families or themselves.

The Key outcomes pointers of employee productivity in a particular administration can be measured through several factors including; work commitment (Schaufeli et al. 2006), work related family struggle (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985), work identity, depressive signs (Radloff, 1977), individual-job fitting (Kristof-Brown et al. , 2006), and job satisfaction (Hackman and Oldham, 1976), and positive linkages or escape over between the work environment and family satisfaction (Olson and Wilson, 1982) and life satisfaction (Kossek and Ozeki, 1998). These outcome measures reflect whether, workplaces can be planned to stimulate effectiveness on and off the job.

However, work environment has been regarded as an forerunner of employee achievement (Ángel del Brío, et al. 2007) and an inverse relationship between employee productivity and job dissatisfaction amongst different employees has been reported (Böckerman and Ilmakunnas, 2012). Greater levels of complicated job satisfactions were related to lower employee achievements and reduced assurance to continue in the job for a long-term (Blase, 1982; Manthei, and Solmon 1988).

Furthermore, there are debates whether low productivity arises from the fit-or more precisely misfit between an individual's work environment (Sturman and Walsh, 2014). This misfit arises at different levels such that stress can occur, if there is mismatch between the demands employed on an individual and his or her capacities, as well as, reward to encounter those demands. Gap between the objective genuineness of the work environment and individual's subjective feelings of the work environment also can lead to low productivity. Outcomes of all these factors, such job dissatisfactions and work environment measures can results in psychological worries which indicate negative feelings that employees have regarding their jobs and its related achievements (Abowd, et al. 1999).

Consequently, the present review focus on indications of current situation and deviations occurring in the work environment and its impact on employee achievement.

2. Methodology

This review depend up on the use of work environment related literature search using Medline, PsycINFO, Web of Science, and Econlit to identify original studies investigating the association between work environment and employee productivity with its related factors. These factors included: Work commitment; job satisfaction; individual-job fitting; work environment; work related family struggle, work stress, and workforce training. The search included studies in English that have been published in peer-reviewed scientific journals. Each database was searched up to May 2015, without using a specific start date and using a combination of search terms (MeSH and keywords) related to work environment factors.

Furthermore, the authors scrutinized all of the titles and abstracts to classify all relevant studies accomplishing the inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria were that the studies had to include an investigation of the relationship of all seven factors: Work commitment; job satisfaction; individual-job fitting; work environment; work related family struggle, work stress, and workforce training.

Studies were excluded based on: studies measuring sick leave or presentism without analyzing this within the concept of work environment.

Forty published articles of relevance were identified, from which this review was built. This review has a narrow focus on the elements of work productivity criticism and does not explore links between productivity and the resulting performance but mainly focused on providing an image for the whole story.

3. Theoretical Context and Related literature

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 Vella-Brodrick2013). 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 guarantees 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 (Shuck and Rose, 2013).

3.1. 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 suggested by (Meyer and Allen, 1991) 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 (Meyer and Allen, 1991). 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 (Meyer, et al. 2007). 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 (Dirani and Kuchinke, 2011; Veličković, et al. 2014).

3.2. 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 explanations individuals provide for leaving a job is dissatisfaction (Dirani and Kuchinke, 2011). 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 (Hulin and Judge, 2003). 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 persons have about their job (Thompson and Phua, 2012; Kalleberg, 1997). 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 For" 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 (KEY FINDINGS 2012).

3.3. Individual-Job Fitting

Individual-job fit refers to the compatibility between a person's characteristics and specificity of a job (Kristof-Brown and Guay, 2011). 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 (Anderson, et al. 2008). This is also referred to as a person-environment fit (Cable and Parsons, 2001). 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 (Anderson, et al. 2008). 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.

3.4. 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" (Paul Jackson and Reima Suomi, 2004). 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 (Schaufeli et al. (2006) 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 (Kossek et al., 2001). They have positive emotional characteristics with their jobs and perceive positive conduction and crossover of liveliness, emotion, and abilities between work and family (Westman et al. 2009). Such individuals believe that they are appreciated at work and their jobs are a good fit with their capabilities and interests.

3.5. 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 (Pew Research Centre (2013).

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 (Iek Sandra Wilczyńska, 2014).

3.6. 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 (Michie, 2002). There are some principles

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 (Gardell and Gustavsen, 1980).

3.7. 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 (Boone and Hartog, 2011). 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 (Kristof-Brown and Guay, 2011).

3.8. 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 behaviors (Kossek and Hammer, 2008; Hammer *et al.*, 2011). 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' well-being 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).

4. 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.

Reference

- [1] 36-Aleksandra Wilczyńska (2014). Work-Family Balance of Knowledge Workers in Poland. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*;5(22):2014.
- [2] Abowd, J.M; Kramarz, F; David N. (1999). Margolis. High Wage Workers and High Wage Firms. *Econometrica*; 67(2):251-334.
- [3] Amible, T. and Kramer, S. (2011), "Do happier people work harder", *New York Times*, available at: www.nytimes.com/2011/09/04/opinion/sunday/do-happier-people-work-harder.html (accessed April 20, 2012).
- [4] Anderson, C, Flynn, F, Spataro, S (2008). Personality and Organizational Culture as Determinants of Influence. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 53 (3).
- [5] Ángel del Brío, J. Fernández, E. & Junquera, B. (2007). Management and employee involvement in achieving an environmental action-based competitive advantage: an empirical study. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*;18(4):491-522.
- [6] Blase, J.J.,1982.,A social-psychological grounded theory of teacher stress and burnout. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 18:93-113.
- [7] Böckerman, P. and Ilmakunnas, P. (2012). The Job Satisfaction-Productivity Nexus: A Study Using Matched Survey and Register Data. *ILR Review*; 65(2): 244-262.
- [8] Boon, C., & Den Hartog, D. N. (2011). Human resource management, person-environment fit, and trust. *Trust and human resource management*, 109-121.
- [9] Cable, D. M., & Parsons, C. K. (2001). Socialization tactics and person-organization fit. *Personnel Psychology*, 54(1): 1-23, Spring.
- [10] Dirani, K. M.; Kuchinke, K. P. (2011). "Job satisfaction and organizational commitment: Validating the Arabic satisfaction and commitment questionnaire (ASCQ), testing the correlations, and investigating the effects of demographic variables in the Lebanese banking sector". *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 22 (5): 1180.
- [11] Gardell B, Gustavsen B (1980). Work environment research and social change: current developments in Scandinavia. *J Occup Behav* 1980;1:3-17.
- [12] Greenhaus, J. and Beutell, N. (1985), "Sources of conflict between work and family roles", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 76-88.
- [13] Hackman, J.R. and Oldham, G.R. (1976), "Motivation through the design of work: test of a theory", *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, Vol. 16, pp. 250-79.

- [14] Hammer, L.B., Kossek, E.E., Bodner, T., Anger, K. and Zimmerman, K. (2011), "Clarifying work-family intervention processes: the roles of work-family conflict and family supportive supervisor behaviors", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 96 No. 1, pp. 134-50.
- [15] Hulin, C. L., & Judge, T. A. (2003). Job attitudes. In W. C. Borman, D. R. Liden, & R. J. Klimoski (Eds.), *Handbook of psychology: Industrial and organizational psychology* (pp. 255-276). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- [16] Kalleberg, A.L. (1977). "Work values and job rewards—Theory of job satisfaction". *American Sociological Review* 42: 124–143. doi:10.2307/2117735.
- [17] Kalleberg, A.L. (2009), "Precarious work, insecure workers: employment relations in transition", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 74 No. 1, pp. 1-22.
- [18] Kalleberg, A.L. (2011), *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs: The Rise of Polarized and Precarious Employment Systems in the United States, 1970s to 2000s*, Sage Press, New York, NY.
- [19] KEY FINDINGS Linking Employee Satisfaction with Productivity, Performance, and Customer Satisfaction .". (PDF). Retrieved 11 July 2012.
- [20] Kossek, E. and Hammer, L. (2008), "Work/life training for supervisors gets big results", *Harvard Business Review*, November, Vol. 86 No. 11, p. 36.
- [21] Kossek, E., Colquitt, J.A. and Noe, R.A. (2001), "Caregiving decisions, well-being, and performance: the effects of place and provider as a function of dependent type and work-family climates", *Academy Of Management Journal*, Vol. 44, pp. 29-44.
- [22] Kossek, E.E. and Ozeki, C. (1998), "Work-family conflict, policies, and the job-life satisfaction relationship: A review and directions for organizational behavior-human resources research", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 83 No. 2, pp. 139-49.
- [23] Kristof-Brown, A., & Guay, R. P. (2011). Person-environment fit. *APA handbook of industrial and organizational psychology*, 3, 3-50. doi:10.1037/12171-001
- [24] Kristof-Brown, A., Zimmerman, R. and Johnson, E. (2006), "Consequences of individuals' fit at work: a meta-analysis of person-job, person-organization, person-group, and person-supervisor fit", *Personnel Psychology*, Vol. 58 No. 2, pp. 281-342.
- [25] Lambert, S. (2008), "Passing the buck: labor flexibility practices that transfer risk onto hourly workers", *Human Relations*, Vol. 61 No. 9, pp. 1203-27.
- [26] Manthei, R., Solmon, R., 1988, Teachers stress and negative outcomes in Canterbury state schools New Zealand. *Journal of Educational Studies*, 23, 145-163.
- [27] Meyer, J. P.; Allen, N. J. (1991). "A three-component conceptualization of organizational commitment". *Human Resource Management Review* 1: 61. doi:10.1016/1053-4822(91)90011-Z.
- [28] Meyer, J. P.; Srinivas, E. S.; Lal, J. B.; Topolnysky, L. (2007). "Employee commitment and support for an organizational change: Test of the three-component model in two cultures". *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 80 (2): 185.
- [29] Michie S (2002). Causes And Management Of Stress At Work. *Occup Environ Med*;59:67-72 doi:10.1136/oem.59.1.67.
- [30] Olson, D.H. and Wilson, M. (1982), "Family satisfaction", in Olson, D.H. (Ed.), *Families: What Makes Them Work*, Sage Publishing, Newbury Park, CA.
- [31] Page KM, Vella-Brodrick DA (2013). The working for wellness program: RCT of an employee well-being intervention. *J Happiness Stud*, 14(3):1007-1031.
- [32] Paul Jackson, Reima Suomi, (2004). *e-Business and Workplace Redesign*, p. 37.
- [33] Pew Research Centre (2013). *Modern Parenthood. Roles of Moms and Dads Converge as They Balance Work and Family*; available at: <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2013/03/14/modern-parenthood-roles-of-moms-and-dads-converge-as-they-balance-work-and-family/>
- [34] Radloff, L. (1977), "The CES-d scale: a self-report depression scale for research in the general population", *Applied Psychological Measurement*, Vol. 1 No. 3, pp. 385-401.
- [35] Saudi Arabia Central Department for statistics and Information, estimates 2009; <http://www.cdsi.gov.sa/english/index.php>
- [36] Schaufeli, W., Bakker, A. and Salanova, M. (2006), "The measurement of work engagement with a short questionnaire: a cross-national study", *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, Vol. 66 No. 4, pp. 701-16.
- [37] Shuck B. and Rose K (2013). Engagement within the Context of Meaning and Purpose: Implications for HRD. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*; 15(4) 341–355.
- [38] Sturman, M. and Walsh, K. (2014). Kate Walsh. Strengthening the employment relationship: The effects of work-hours fit on key employee attitudes *Journal of Organizational Behavior*; 35(6). DOI: 10.1002/job.1925.
- [39] Thompson, E.R.; Phua F.T.T. (2012). "A Brief Index of Affective Job Satisfaction". *Group & Organization Management* 37 (3): 275–307. doi:10.1177/1059601111434201.
- [40] Veličković, V. M.; Višnjić, A.; Jović, S. A.; Radulović, O.; Šargić, Č.; Mihajlović, J.; Mladenović, J. (2014). "Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction Among Nurses in Serbia: A Factor Analysis". *Nursing Outlook*.
- [41] Westman, M., Brough, P. and Kalliath, T. (2009), "Expert commentary on work - life balance and crossover of emotions and experiences: theoretical and practice advancements", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 30 No. 5, pp. 587-95.
- [42] World Factbook. Central Intelligence Agency, 2011; <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sa.html>