Analysing Impact of the Workplace Environment on Employee's Welfare, Performance, and Productivity

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Abstract

The study examined the impact of the work environment on employee wellbeing and productivity of HDFC bank employees in U.P west region. To aid in the research, two research questions are posed. The study used an ex post facto descriptive survey research design. The method of random sampling was employed to get 350 respondents. Data were gathered using a standardised questionnaire with three sub-sections, and mean values and straightforward percentages were utilised to analyse the results. The findings demonstrated the impact of workplace characteristics and a strong communication network on employee welfare, health, morale, productivity, and efficiency. It was advised that industrial social workers should lobby management to establish a welcoming workplace environment and effective communication system that will draw talent, keep it, and motivate workers toward a healthy lifestyle and increased productivity and ensure virtuous workers, enthused employers, and the survival of the business.

Introduction

Man manipulates his immediate surroundings, or environment, in order to survive. Unlawful manipulation poses dangers that make the surroundings dangerous and reduce worker productivity. Therefore, the workplace includes the atmosphere in which an employee executes his or her duties (Chapins, 1995), whereas an effective workplace is one in which outcomes can be obtained that meet management expectations (Mike, 2010; Shikdar, 2002). Physical surroundings have an impact on how people interact, carry out duties, and are managed in an organisation. The physical environment, which is a component of the workplace, has a direct impact on human perception and slightly alters interpersonal relationships and productivity. This is true because the qualities of a room or gathering space for a group can affect output and level of satisfaction.

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In today's business environment, the most important aspect in maintaining employee satisfaction is the work environment. The workplace of today is unique, diversified, and ever-evolving. The traditional employer-employee relationship has changed drastically. Workers can choose from nearly endless work alternatives in a developing economy. This confluence of elements has produced a situation in which the company needs its employees more than the employees need the company (Smith, 2011).

Numerous researches on the workplace have revealed that users and employees are content with particular workspace elements. Lighting, ventilation rates, access to natural light, and acoustic environment are the aspects that users prefer most, and these factors have a substantial impact on their productivity and contentment with their workstation (Becker, 1981; Humphries, 2005; Veitch, Charles, Newsham, Marquardt &Geerts, 2004; Karasek& Theorell, 1990). (Dilani, 2004; Milton, Glencross, & Walters, 2000; Veitch &Newsham, 2000) It has been discovered that lighting and other elements, such as ergonomic furniture, have a favourable impact on employees' health and, as a result, on productivity. This is true because light has a significant effect on people's/workers' overall performance at the workplace as well as their physical, physiological, and psychological wellbeing. There is evidence that certain physical aspects of the workplace, such as lighting, temperature, the presence of windows, and the free circulation of air, may have an impact on employees' attitudes, behaviours, satisfaction, performance, and productivity (Larsen, Adams, Deal, Kweon& Tyler, 1998; Veitch & Gifford, 1996).

A closed office floor design gives staff members more privacy than an open plan office layout, whether there are a few employees in each closed office or each employee gets their own office. They have the opportunity to work quietly, which helps them stay focused on the job at hand and prevents them from being overly distracted by what their coworkers are doing. It allows workers to think freely or be creative without being constantly interrupted (Mwbex, 2010). The presence of noise in an open workplace layout is distracting and demoralising, has a high level of disturbance, and offers little solitude (Evans & Johnson, 2000).

The workplace is changing quickly due to technological advancement, novel communication techniques, virtual reality, improved e-commerce, and alternate work patterns (Challenger, 2000). Organizations have increasingly opted for a particular type of workplace, such open office space, to support these quick changes while preserving or improving results

(Terricone and Luca, 2002). In contrast to totally enclosed private offices, this sort of work environment enables flexible workplaces and new working styles by allowing for easier communication and access to coworkers. Compared to closed office spaces, the open plan office change has enhanced staff productivity (Becker, 2002). Additionally, communicating with someone you can see clearly is easier than communicating with someone who is close by, far away, or who is separated from you by an object (J'Istvan in Business (2010). The egalitarian framework that the open office establishes ensures that everyone has equal access to resources, facilitates communication among staff members, and eliminates physical distance (Brennan, Chugh& Kline, 2002, Hedge, 1986, 2000).

One of the most common distractions for workers is noise, which has a negative impact on accuracy, productivity, and stress from the job. According to Bruce (2008), research shows that workplace distractions increase errors by 27% and reduce employee productivity by as much as 40%. Additionally, a study from 2003 by Loftness, cited by Moloney (2011), supported the significance of ventilation and natural light for worker productivity. According to the study, day lighting systems increase productivity in buildings by 3 to 18%.

Building success and professionalism in the workplace requires effective workplace communication (Canadian Centre for Communication, 2003). An organisation that effectively communicates inside the workplace is more likely to avoid issues with performing the daily tasks, is less likely to experience issues with improper occurrences, and will provide higher employee morale and a more positive outlook on the workplace. Employee productivity will rise when there is efficient communication between them since it results in fewer complaints and more completed work (Quilan, 2001). It clears up confusion and saves time that would have otherwise been used for justification or debate (Fleming & Larder, 1999). It improves job satisfaction and reduces workplace anxiety, which results in a more favourable work environment and higher productivity (Makin, 2006; Taylerson, 2012). Noise level is another another communication factor that has an impact on productivity. Communication is negatively impacted by noise, and as the volume and persistence of the noise increases, so does irritation and productivity. This is explained by the fact that as noise levels rise, spoken communication gets progressively harder.

According to Hughes (2007), nine out of ten workers agreed that a workspace's quality affected their coworkers' attitudes and increased productivity. Chandraseker (2011)

further confirms that unhealthy and risky working conditions, such as inadequate ventilation, poor lighting, excessive noise, etc., have an impact on employees' productivity and health. In a 2009 study of 31 bank branches, Hameed and Amjad found that ergonomic and comfortable office design significantly improved employee motivation and performance. Based on these findings and the literature review, it is clear that most studies on workplace environments and productivity have focused on for-profit businesses rather than social service providers. Against this backdrop, this study will examine the impact of workplace environments on employee welfare and productivity in U.P west region of HDFC bank employees.

To aid in the research, the following two research questions are posed:

 I. How do workplace characteristics affect employee welfare, performance, and productivity?

II. How do workplace communications affect employee welfare, performance, and productivity?

Methodology

The research used a descriptive survey research design of the ex post facto type to examine how the working environment (communication and workspace) affects employee welfare, performance, and productivity. Employees of HDFC bank of U.P west region make up the study's population. A total of three hundred and sixty respondents were obtained by randomly selecting one hundred and twenty respondents (management, middle, and junior cadres) from each bank unit.For data analysis, 350 respondents returned questionnaires that were properly filled out. The respondents were between the ages of 22 and 55. The participants' average ages were 35.45, with a standard deviation of 4.18. Their level of academic achievement spans from holders of a first degree to secondary school certificates.

The three-part (A–C) questionnaire utilised for the study was constructed using pre-existing structured scales with the correct psychometric qualities. Age, educational background, and marital status are just a few of the sociodemographic traits that respondents were asked about in Section A. Six questions from the "Work Environment Survey by Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency (NLSA) 2008" made up Section B. A pilot research yielded a re-established psychometric characteristic of 0.87. Nine questions from the "Work Environment Survey by Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency, 2008" make up Section C. This survey's revalidated psychometric property is 0.89. To determine the opinion and examine their sentiments, each item in the questionnaire was analysed using

simple percentages and the mean. compared to the performance of the workers and the independent variables.

Analysis of Results

<p style="text-align:center">TABLE 1: WORKPLACE FEATURES AND WORKERS' PRODUCTIVITY</p>

	WORKSPACE	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN
1	Closed office layout	58 (14.8)	202 (50.8)	99 (24.8)	39 (9.8)	3.29
2	A tidy and attractive office	76 (19.3)	202 (50.3)	100 (25.0)	22 (5.5)	3.28
3	Lighting	71 (17.5)	171 (42.5)	107 (26.8)	53 (13.3)	3.36
4	No noise was heard in the workplace.	51 (13.0)	207 (51.5)	99 (24.8)	43 (10.8)	3.33
5	Airflow and a moderate room temperature	83 (21.0)	152 (37.8)	134 (33.5)	31 (7.8)	3.17
6	An open office layout	92 (22.8)	206 (51.3)	67 (16.8)	37 (9.3)	3.12

Table 1 shows that staff received the highest rankings. Lighting as the aspect in the workplace that will have the biggest impact on workers' performance (mean 3.36). This is so that employees' health, the number of accidents at work, and productivity can all be improved by appropriate lighting. The absence of noise in the office is the second factor that will affect them under this subheading (mean 3.33). Less outside distractions allow for complete focus on the tasks at hand. In descending order of the magnitude of the mean, the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth characteristics are close office space plan (mean 3.29), clean and attractive office (mean 3.28), moderate room temperature/ventilation (mean 3.17) and open office space (mean 3.12). These results demonstrate the importance of optimum ventilation for worker health and efficiency in every workplace. By reducing exposure to airborne hazardous substances, a well-designed and effective ventilation system decreases the risk of occupational disease, absenteeism, and turnover.

TABLE 2: WORKPLACE COMMUN ICATION AND WORKERS' PERFORMANCE

	COMMUNICATION	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN
1	Staff meetings are regularly scheduled in my Division	87 (22.0)	211 (52.5)	88 (22.0)	14 (3.5)	3.07
2	I feel that my department does a poor job of orienting new employees	57 (14.5)	228 (56.8)	98 (24.5)	17 (4.3)	3.19
3	When I am given a task at work, I know what I am expected to achieve	65 (16.5)	218 (54.8)	97 (24.3)	18 (4.5)	3.17
4	Essential information flows effectively from senior leadership to staff	56 (14.3)	201 (50.0)	119 (29.8)	24 (6.0)	3.27
5	I receive meaningful recognition for work well done	54 (13.8)	203 (50.5)	104 (26.0)	39 (9.8)	3.32
6	If I were to suggest ways to improve how we do things, my manager or supervisor would take them seriously	101 (25.5)	215 (53.5)	74 (18.5)	10 (2.5)	2.98
7	I know how my work contribute to the achievement of my department's goals	66 (16.8)	240 (59.8)	80 (20.8)	14 (3.8)	3.10
8	I have opportunities to provide input into decisions that affect my work	83 (21.0)	197 (49.0)	98 (24.5)	22 (5.5)	3.14
9	I receive useful feedback from my manager or supervisor on my job performance	113 (28.5)	198 (49.3)	67 (16.8)	22 (5.5)	2.99
10	Easy receipt of feedback for job done	104 (26.0)	171 (42.8)	109 (27.3)	16 (4.0)	3.09

With a mean of 3.32, meaningful appreciation for well-done work received the most significant results. The majority of respondents (79.0%) concur that showing them appreciation for a job well done inspires them to work harder and perform better. Senior leadership personnel, ranked second with a mean score of 3.27, efficiently communicates vital information because such a structure encourages employees to feel appreciated and valued by management. Third place, with a mean score of 3.19, goes to the belief that insufficient orientation of new hires has an impact on workers' performance. This demonstrates the need of having effective communication with new hires in order to encourage their productive performance at work. Knowing what to accomplish from a task assigned at work is next in importance. Its average value is 3.17. The workers' concentration is on achieving the stated objective at work since task designation and outcomes are made obvious for their knowledge, which leads to good performance and productivity. Having the ability to influence decisions that have an impact on employees' jobs came in fifth with a mean of 3.14. This demonstrates how decision-making process involvement inspires workers to deliver effective work. This is closely related to employees' awareness of how their individual efforts, with a mean score of 3.10, help the department achieve its objectives, which ranks sixth.

The usual staff meeting schedule, with a mean of 3.07, is presented next. Employees are free to converse and express their thoughts here. They are encouraged to perform well and boost productivity when group decisions are made and discussions are held. Having employees provide feedback to their managers or/and supervisors (mean = 2.99) and having managers or supervisors take suggestions from employees on how to improve things (mean = 2.98) were ranked eighth and ninth, respectively. Since both managers and employees are showing mutual trust in one another and providing each other the chance to contribute their ideas to the production, worker performance and productivity have improved.

Discussion of findings

The research demonstrates that a quality lighting scheme will increase organisational productivity by reducing worker weariness and eyestrain and boosting productivity and performance. Improved illumination at work will aid workers' eye-hand coordination, which will increase productivity and decrease rejection/defect rates. It will also help prevent accidents. The business also has intangible advantages such as higher employee morale and a decline in accident rates as a result of workers' improved ability to see their own

performance. This is consistent with Hameed and Amjeed's (2009) conclusion that workers experience eyestrain, headaches, and irritation when performing routine tasks in low light. The performance of employees suffers substantially as a result of these discomforts.

The results demonstrated that the absence of noise boosted worker productivity since there were fewer distractions and fewer stress-related issues at work. It is consistent with Bruce's (2008) research, which showed that a reduction in workplace noise can lower physical symptoms of stress by as much as 27% and enhance accuracy by 10% in data entry employees' performance. Similar to this, excellent ventilation and a comfortable room temperature boost productivity and lessen employee stress. This was validated by Moloney (2012), who found that thermal comfort and lighting system controllability increased worker productivity by 0.18 to 3.12%.

Employees dislike "open plan" offices because of distractions that make it difficult for them to focus on their work, but the prevalence of this finding demonstrates that employers prefer them because they are less expensive to build and more flexible to reconfigure than the traditional private or cellular office layout, while employees prefer them because they encourage communication and allow workers to e Some workers concurred that having the company's managing director working in the same area as the newest employee keeps everyone on the same level. This result is consistent with Mwbex (2010) and O'Neil (2008) who found that open plan offices encourage informal interactions amongst staff members and encourage a climate of support and cooperation. In general, an improvement in employees' productivity and organisational performance is guaranteed by the physical design of the workplace and effective management procedures (Gensler, 2006; Uzee, 1999).

Another finding from the study was that communication is crucial to the accomplishment of any workplace programme or set of procedures. This is consistent with Taylerson's (2012) assertion that good workplace communication aids firms in selecting and customising their programmes and policies to suit the individual needs of their workforce. By attending to employees' needs, an organisation can increase production since morale is raised and workers are psychologically and emotionally stable to perform successfully and efficiently at work. Additionally, it was shown that a strong communication network fosters stronger rapport among employees, which in turn makes them more content and effective in their jobs. Employee loyalty to the company is increased as a result of higher morale. According to Dunne (2011), good communication helps employees become more knowledgeable, naturally

more trusting of their co-workers, and more certain that any dependent job is being completed. This position is forcing the company to be adamant about both its existence and the welfare of its people.

Findings' Implications for Industrial Social Work

➢ The industrial social worker should step in to ensure that workers are not negatively impacted by the adoption of new technologies and employers' intention to cut operational costs. For instance, decisions about workspaces should be made with an eye toward improving the quality of life for employees. Additionally, the workplace should be physically conducive to improving employee health. It would manifest in the form of ergonomic furniture, lighting, and indoor air quality (open office space).

➢ Because investing in lighting will increase safety, industrial social workers should promote excellent lighting in the workplace. Accident rates are significantly lowered, resulting in lower insurance premium payments and decreased absenteeism due to fewer accidents. Nothing but improving employee wellbeing is being pursued here.

➢ The components of the workspace are intended to foster interpersonal relationships and teamwork without jeopardising productivity. Because it encourages mentoring, problem-solving, routine communication, and information sharing, the industrial social worker should push for it. The outdoors promotes social interaction, spontaneity, and productivity.

➢ The industrial social worker should lobby management to take notice of the need to establish a workplace that draws in, retains, and inspires its personnel. This is done in an effort to help employees love their work (job happiness), feel as though their work matters (goal orientation), take pride in their work (job accomplishment), and be able to fulfil their potential (self-actualisation).

Conclusion

Poor job conditions have a huge negative impact on workers, their families, and the national economy. A pleasant workplace atmosphere that supports work performance naturally increases productivity. It also leads to fewer rejects, increased safety, decreased insurance costs, better morale, and higher customer satisfaction. Virile employees, enthusiastic employers, and the maintenance of the organisation will all be involved in effective workplace communication as well as the development and implementation of healthy workplace practises.

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