

The Effect of the Working Environment on the Productivity of the Employees



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Abstract

It is crystal clear that the condition of the work environment affecting the productivity of the workers. This also inspires the workers to reduce the absenteeism, attendance to work, accidents and other negative attitudes. Therefore, this article confirms the importance of improving the work environment and its impact on the productivity of the workers.

Introduction

It is a fact that human workforce is needed in some way to drive any organization. Thus, every activity that they do, follows the targets of the organization. Hence, the work environment in which they perform helps to enhance the productivity. Therefore, the condition of the work environment has a direct contribution to achieve the set targets of the organization.

The working environment includes the infrastructure, noise levels, dust, temperature, and ventilation, so on. Even though, some of the organizations are reluctant to invest on improving the working environment thinking that they will not gain any profit, it is the prime responsibility of the employer to improve the working environment to facilitate the employees as it directly affecting to achieve the given targets. It is same as the two sides of a coin. Moreover, the employer is legally bound to provide safe and sound work environment to the workers.

Furthermore, the experiences are shown the workers perform more efficiently in sound working environments, whereas low productivity observed, in poor working environments.

Types of work Environments

There are two categories of work environments. Such as;

- Internal
- External

➤ The Internal work environment

Internal work environment is seen as the surroundings such as; things concerned with the operation. Molokwu (1993) viewed internal work environment as buildings, furniture, layout, as well as the physical conditions under which employees operate.

➤ The External work environment

Molokwu (1993) sees external work environment as a result of factors such as customs and laws of the community within which the business operates, weather conditions, policies, etc. outside the work environment.

Kochan (1980) was of the opinion that external work environment exhaustively discussed as under the contexts such as economic context, public, policy context, etc.

Factors in the work environment that influence the productivity of the employees

➤ Safety measures

It is obvious that the safety measures are one of the key elements of an organization. In addition, this is considered as a legal requirement as per the Factories Ordinance No. 45 of 1942. Hence the employer is responsible for assuring the health and safety of the workers by complying with the relevant guidelines related to work environment and providing awareness with necessary PPEs. That definitely improve the moral of the employees. As result, the employees will immensely contribute towards the success of the organization.

➤ Preventing the Overcrowding

Molokwu (1993) emphasizes that there should be an enough space for movements of both workers and materials also, to enhance the effective operational process. As per the Factories ordinance No. 45 of 1942 PART II Section 07 speaks about the Overcrowding. As

per the regulation there should be 400 cubic meters per person. Hence it is understood that the workers should be provided enough space in the working environment to relieve their working stress and to perform their operation in more safe and productive manner.

➤ Ventilation

Grott (1964) Stated that stuffy atmosphere reduces capacity to think and act, this reduces the output of workers. He went on stating that, proper ventilation, makes for a healthy working environment, avoid fatigue, laziness, etc. and consequently promotes worker efficiency.

As per the Factories Ordinance PART II Section 12 there should be an effective and suitable provision made for securing and maintaining by the circulation of fresh air in each workroom, the adequate ventilation of the room and for rendering harmless, so far as practicable all fumes, dust and other impurities injurious to health that may be generated in the course of any process or work carried-on in the factory.

➤ Adequate light Levels

Infact there should be a suitable light level in the working environment in order to perform any operation. Also the required light level defers from activity to activity considering sensitivity. Onibon (1974) pointed out that inadequate lighting affects workers' interest and attitude towards their work and make them suffer from degree of age strains and fatigue.

As per the Factories Ordinance Part II Section 13, effective provision shall be made for securing and maintaining sufficient and suitable lighting, whether natural or artificial in every part of a factory in which persons are working or passing. As per the Sri Lankan Gazette No. 2142/90 published in September 27, 2019, tasks wise light levels are defined.

SCHEDULE		
	Area of workplace	Level of Illuminance
a	Stores	100 to 150 lux
b	Rough work or heavy work (tasks with limited visual requirements)	150 to 300 lux
c	Factory including cubicles/ rooms of office and Cashiers, kitchens, class rooms, dining rooms, computer rooms	300 to 500 lux

d	Factory assembly lines, grinding, sewing, drilling enameling, machine work (tasks with normal visual requirements)	500 to 750 lux
e	Instrument assembly lines, fine work	750 to 1000 lux
f	Very fine work, Color matching, fabric inspection Jewelry assembling and repairing (task with special visual requirements)	1000 to 2000 lux
g	Micro - electronics, watch making etc. (Prolong tasks that require precision)	2000 to 3000 lux

➤ Noise Level

Noise also plays a vital role in relation to job performance of the employees, as high noise can generate additional pressure towards the job performance of the employees. And that can slow down the productivity.

According to Betts (1995) noise has been criticized as having detrimental effect on mental and physical health mechanism of employees. And overall productivity. For him, the effect of noise on productivity include, irritation, different in concentration, fatigue and low moral on employees.

As per the Sri Lankan Gazette No. 2142/90 published in September 27, 2019 permissible noise level for 8 hours is 85dB. If the employees exposing more than 85dB in their work places, relevant engineering controls, administrative controls and PPEs are to be implemented by the employer as the high noise can slow down the productivity and increases the risk level for health and safety of the employees. Therefore, sound pressure level wise exposing time is defined.

Schedule	
Maximum Permissible Sound Pressure Levels	
Duration per day (in hours)	Equivalent Sound pressure level dB (A) slow/TWA
8	85
4	88
2	91
1	94
½	97
¼	100

➤ **Back ground Coloration**

Coloration in the working area also has an impact on the performance of the workers. As Molokwu (1993) states that bright and cheerful color base have great effect on employees' efficiency. Even these types of factors also having concern towards job performance.

➤ **House keeping**

As per the Factories Ordinance No.45 1942 this is a legal requirement. Apart from that cleanliness of the work environment has a significant impact for the job performance of the employees too. If the working environment is full of dust and dirt the job performance of the employees will be reduced as they find uneasy to work. Also their focus for the job is gone.

As per Molokwu (1993) unclean environment affects employees' life and health condition. Poor sanitary facilities will reduce the employees' productivity.

Developing a positive work environment

It is the responsibility of the management to create a positive work environment for the workers. In other words, it is setting the right tone at the work place. The best motivation and platform that the management can provide to the workers is to providing a well maintained and well-conditioned working environment in order achieve their set goals.

They say even for the cricketers to play the match the pitch has to be in standard condition.

Hence, it is understood, that the working environment has a direct influence on the job performance of the employees. A positive work environment helps to yield better performance and results for both employees and employer.

Characteristics of Positive work environment as follows;

➤ **Clear communication**

The effective communication from top to bottom and bottom to top is an essential phenomenon for developing a Positive environment. Employees need to identify the expectation of the employer and vice versa. That drives the way to achieve the planned goals of the Organization.

➤ **Rewarding**

In an Organization it is a need to have a system to evaluate the job performance of the employees through which we can appreciate and reward the workers for their dedicated work. Definitely that will motivate the employees to go extra mile with the organization and to keep up their dedicated work.

➤ **Engagement**

They say that the happier worker perform well. Therefore it is a need of an organization to develop an engaged work force. For that the management has to plan different activities other than the routine job. Specially by implementing the tools of team games, 5S, Cell systems, Quality circles etc, the management can build an engaged work force and that will do wonders within the organization. In addition, their creative ideas will strengthen the organization.

It has been revealed that the depressing and defected work environment reduces employee's moral and promote absenteeism, lateness, low labor turn over, waste of resources and other negative attitudes among employees. Whereas the provision of good working environment increases the moral, interests and job performance of the employees. Furthermore each of the various factors related to the work environment has significant impact in enhancing the employee's "morale". By improving the work environment, the capacity of the group of workers who are persistently moving ahead to achieve the given targets can be further enhanced. Thereby the employer is able to create the work place as an ideal home to enhance the job satisfaction and motivation for the workers.

Conclusion

From the perspective of workers, the working environment is of utmost important as that can impact their health and safety aspects. It's a challenge for most of the organizations to spend money on developing the factory work environments due to the present financial crisis. But still, it is required by the law itself.

On the other hand for achieving the organizational goals and targets work, environment plays a vital role. If the workers are provided with good environment that will carry a long way to enhance their moral and performance. If the work environment is neat and tidy, properly arranged, well illuminated and ventilated, the employees will feel a sense of belonging and this will make them to work efficiently and effectively towards the betterment of the organization. Hence, amidst of all the financial challenges, the investments for improving the work environment of the employees will yield priceless abundant fruits of success for the Organization.

References

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