Literature Review on Remote Working & Effective Workplace Environment

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Abstract

The concept of Work from Home is possible in certain areas, such as IT and finance, but in others, such as dairy, healthcare, and banking, it may not be possible owing to nature of work. Research has shown that working from home options have allowed women to maintain their jobs after having children and getting married. Research papers and articles on working remotely will be discussed in this review to get an understanding of the major aspects that affect organizational productivity and employee happiness when employees work from home. While a drab, stressful, and competitive work environment might leave people feeling miserable, a productive and healthy work environment is more likely to make them happy. This paper will not only review the remote working during COVID-19 but also brief about the workplace culture aspects and their effect on employees.

Keyword: Work from Home, Remote Working, Working Environment, COVID-19

Introduction

This form of the flexible working arrangement enables employees to work from a place other than the company's corporate headquarters, such as at home or on the road. Work-life balance, professional advancement, and lower transportation expenses are all possible benefits for workers who may do their tasks remotely. The advantages to the firm involve higher employee satisfaction and retention, productivity improvements, and also the savings on the physical resources. Temporary, part time, permanent, and full-time remote employment solutions are all possible. Policies controlling the usage of equipment, network security, and also performance requirements are required for remote work.

An ideal contemporary workplace consists of a combination of technical, physical, and also the psychological factors aimed at maximizing production and also efficiency while ensuring employee pleasure. Current and future organizations and workers have different demands, and as a result, the features of a contemporary workplace are always changing. The notion of the activity-based working is likely to be incorporated into modern workplaces. This design blends larger open areas, and designated areas for certain activities, within a single space. Open workstations become quiet areas (like a library) while enclosed rooms become places for dialogue and seclusion in activity-based workplace paradigm. Active working is the newest concept to emerge from workplace design world.

COVID-19 pandemic and work from home

Several countries, including India, have used a variety of approaches to combat and guard against COVID-19 outbreak. On 27 January 2020, COVID-19 was discovered in India for the first time. India has already been exposed to the virus several times. The second wave is taking shape because of current conditions. While India's neighbours have responded with the spread in a variety of ways, India has remained consistent. Additionally, in addition to lockdown, the government has imposed limitations on public meetings and shut down schools.

It has also implemented novel work arrangements, such as "WFH" or "remote working", for city workers. In the beginnings, India seemed to be able to prevent the spread of the illness and also keep infection rates low. Until the second wave of infections, rural populations were in good health. After the high prevalence of infection, schools reopened and the social distance was eased.

India has been hailed as the success story whenever it comes to halting spread of COVID-19. The government's quick reaction to COVID-19 crisis has been lauded by some. Second wave of COVID-19 expanded throughout India within a few months, resulting in the government of various states requiring stringent execution of COVID-19 rules and prohibitions from the federal government. A lot of people, particularly those who couldn't attend WFH because of their work schedules, grumbled about the inconvenience and lack of the places to eat as a consequence of government restrictions, like the suspension of the dine-in eating services. The administration decided to reinstate daytime dine-in services only one day after a new rule went into force. When questioned about the global employment trend of 2018, 85% of workers in big cities said that they were obliged to perform inside regular office hours with no flexible working options available by the end of July, some anti-epidemic activities were loosened, including the massive vaccine push.

Only a few individuals had access to WFH before epidemic. Early in the new millennium, the government published a document predicting that Indians would've been slow to adopt teleworking. Several individuals have been affected by the coronavirus. University and government personnel (except those delivering emergency and vital public services) were the very first in India to be allowed to participate in WFH program as a means of reducing viral transmission. Only a few private firms let their staff participate in WFH mode. There might be an increased focus on working alternative firms pick after an outbreak. A number of large global businesses seem to choose WFH as their preferred online platform. According to independent research conducted in India during the second wave of an epidemic, the majority of workers polled had experienced WFH for at least one day every week and expected to continue to suffer WFH for at least one or even two days every week after the pandemic. In a major city, it is conceivable for a significant portion of population to do so, that has sparked fresh debate over the viability of such work patterns. In the debate over work-life balance, a few have suggested that the WFH not only enhances employee productivity, but also allows for more flexibility in the working arrangements. As a result of their technical expertise, Indians are able to quickly adopt WFH, that was established as a response to the pandemic.(Tripathy & Rohidas, 2021)

Working environment or place

Workplaces must be places where workers want to be. Others think of the work environment as everything which surrounds the firm. Most prior research has focused on the influence of the workplace environment on different components of happiness. Working conditions, pay, and happiness at work may all contribute to high employee turnover rates. In industrial firms, the quality of work environment has a strong positive association with promotion, work pressure, career development, and involvement in the decision-making, training, occupational safety, employment stability, and remuneration. There is a direct correlation between employee performance at work and the quality of their work environment and also motivation. As a result, it may be concluded that the company's performance is influenced by its work environment.

Evaluating Work Areas

Many instruments that are required to drive the ergonomic process depending on the risk assessment and also approaches that successfully improve the process of work improvement have indeed been examined. Work spaces may also be evaluated and also counter-measures designed to mitigate the ergonomic risk factors can be put in place. The following tools are used in this project:

➢ Calculate how ergonomics improves productivity at work.
➢ Prioritize the workplace ergonomic concerns
➢ When making changes to, specifying, or acquiring new equipment, follow ergonomic design requirements.

Overall, ergonomics in workplace should be addressed by most businesses. In order to minimise injuries, enhance productivity and retain personnel or comply with the local and state regulatory systems, that might be the driving force.

Tools for effective work place ergonomics

Tools and practices that have been proved to be successful in improving workplace ergonomics include –

1. Getting Proactive

Most ergonomics programmes 15 to 30 years ago focused on the MSD injuries and used a reactive strategy. As a way to identify problems, solve them and assess their

performance in the early stages of implementation, early programmes relied on a variety of qualitative measures and responded mostly to injuries and complaints from employees. Leaders in today's business world take action. Before an accident happens, they employ quantitative techniques to assess their workers' exposure to MSD risk factors and afterwards work to make changes to their working environment that will limit that exposure. Ergonomics programmes are becoming more efficient and successful as they grow, and this transition is substantial, monumental, and critical. Organizations have a tendency to become closer to a proactive technique on a regular basis-

> Developing proactive methods to the industrial ergonomic risk reduction
> Using the ergonomic risk assessment methods, assessing, quantifying, and ranking
> Ergonomic risk may be reduced by finding the fundamental cause and developing appropriate solution.

2. Integrating the Process

It is common for companies with successful ergonomic programmes to manage the ergonomics as process which is connected with, or incorporated into, their current improvement initiatives. Lean Manufacturing, Continuous Improvement, Six Sigma, and the Safety Management Systems are all examples of improvement techniques. As a result of the move to manage the system as just a process, the procedures are sustainable over time, maintain pace with the business demands, are integrated into business activities, and also are not reliant on a few individuals. Ideally, it should give a rational framework for measuring and improving performance. Advanced Ergonomic Approach businesses are evolving as the program advances, and also an integrated process linked with the continuous and continuing development is taking the natural laws in stride.

3. Engaging others and Shifting Ownership

People at various levels of business are involved in ergonomic procedures, from the site manager to an individual employee. As a result of the distinct responsibilities that every employee plays, the workplace has the lower incidence of MSDs. Traditional ergonomics programmes relied on on-site "experts" who were generally team leaders. In today's successful companies, ergonomics now includes those outside the company and those within it. An excellent illustration of this may be found in this paper.

There are two key components of safety and environmental systems: employee participation and also the management leadership. They're also essential to a productive ergonomics procedure. Employees may become engaged in a variety of ways, for as by adjusting their personal workstations, joining an ergonomics or the safety team, or participating in the Kaizen event for the ergonomic design of the workplace. Employee teams are established and trained by majority of benchmarked organisations in order to undertake ergonomic evaluations and implement workplace modifications.

During the last decade, the ergonomics management has seen a dramatic shift in the ownership to Engineering. Ergonomics has always been the responsibility of safety specialists, but they have always been the wrong individuals to do it. Ergonomics is a branch of engineering that focuses on human factors. For several major organisations and businesses, ergonomic programmes are now under the control of engineering operations or the mainstream engineering division.

4. Moving Upstream

In sophisticated businesses, ergonomics is addressed consistently throughout the design phase of the new processes, layouts, equipment, and products. In order to do this, they use basic ergonomic design criteria (force, reach, work height, weight limitations, etc.) and a method to hold the engineers responsible for quality control (level of the MSD risk factors). Good upstream design has the greatest benefit since it makes ergonomic improvements cheaper to implement. Changing equipment and layout once it is already in place is more expensive than starting from scratch. Projects and employees are held responsible for developing workplaces and activities that are minimal in exposure to the MSD risk factors or the Workplace Injuries.

5. Addressing the Office

An increasing number of companies are implementing the employee-driven ergonomics evaluations and also the workplace modifications in order to prevent work-related injuries and MSDs. Employers are giving employees the tools they need to make the initial steps toward customizing their workstations to meet their unique needs by making training and evaluations available to employees online. In the workplace, it has been found that:

> Less reliance on one-on-one evaluations.
> Adjustable workstations and chairs are standard.
> The usage of computers informs the design of office workstations.
> The goal of employee education is to empower employees to make adjustments to the workstations under their own.

Literature Review

(Al- Rfou, 2021) Workers have started working from home because of COVID 19 epidemic that has brought new obstacles to the workplace. With the COVID-19 epidemic in full swing, this research sets out to identify and quantify the unique obstacles that distant workers face, taking into account factors such as gender and job description. At an end of 2020, 11 Jordanian IT firms were surveyed for this research. The study relied on a predetermined sample of 125 reliable questionnaires. Respondents' impressions of distant work problems in context of COVID-19 pandemic remained high, according to the survey findings. It's worth noting that there are the statistically significant differences between males and females in the degree of difficulty of working remotely (0.05) and across employment levels in favor of females. Increasing productivity in remote work environment requires collaboration among all stakeholders, including workers, their families, and the management.

(Tripathy & Rohidas, 2021) Pandemic on a global scale many employees have been unable to go to work because of COVID-19, which is helping to keep the virus from spreading. Companies and people alike are searching for new ways to earn a living in today's fast-paced cities. Employees were compelled to work from home because of the outbreak. Since then, most companies have turned their attention to the strategic importance of work from home. WFH must be taken into account when making arrangements for businesses and workers. Perform-from-home options are now widely accessible, but present circumstances provide the unique opportunity to evaluate how effectively they work. This data might be valuable in the development of new legislation which affects the current working hour's arrangement. A SWOT analysis and the exploratory method are both necessary when examining the issues that Indian companies and workers confront. Additionally, determining whether or not this work arrangement is short-term or long-term is a consideration.

(Eriksson & Santesson, 2021) There are various theories on how an organization's culture affects its entire performance and profitability, and this is a topic that is becoming more and more relevant. The worldwide COVID-19 epidemic which broke out in 2020 sparked the concept for this investigation. There has been a shortage of study regarding remote work's impact on organisational culture, which led to research question: How much does remote work impact organisational culture? As a result of COVID-19 outbreak, there has been a lot of talk about a more flexible approach towards the remote work, and we wanted to learn more about it. This study's theoretical framework is centered on the three-perspective approach, which takes a look at organisational culture from three distinct angles. There were the nine semi-structured interviews done as part of the research. Remote employment has had an impact on corporate culture, according to the findings. The authors advise that a similar study be conducted in future, albeit at later date, in order to better understand the long-term and long-lasting consequences of remote work on corporate culture.

(Vischer & Wifi, 2017) Since 1980s, researchers have looked into the 'objective' and 'subjective' effects that a person's worksite's physical environment has on them. Workers' "quality of life" (QoL) was a focus of "Quality of Work Life" idea at the time, which stressed the impact that the company's workplace design and also environmental characteristics had on employee morale and productivity. Quality of life research has created a range of methods for assessing how effectively human goals and needs are satisfied. A better workplace design and an enhanced quality of life for employees may be achieved by fulfilling building users' environmental demands at work. Numerous characteristics of the worker's QWL are thought to be influenced by workplace environmental quality studies. While environmental quality (EQ) research grows, the ways wherein the environmental circumstances impact and the affect employees and their responses to those environmental situations are becoming clearer. People's perceptions play a significant role in both the person-environment interaction and their QoL experience, therefore both the objective and also subjective measurements are employed to evaluate them. Functional comfort, or even the degree to which the Workspace elements either aid or make it more difficult for the occupants to get their job done, is one technique to measuring EQ. Uncomfortable working conditions increase workplace stress, which lowers one's quality of life (QWL). As a conclusion, the section includes the need-based methodology for measuring EQ and sums up the ways wherein workplace EQ contributes to quality of life (QoL) via increasing QWL.

(Dr M Varaprasada Rao et al., 2015) It is increasingly difficult for industrial organisations to keep workers healthy and productive while integrating new technology into the workplace and accommodating a broad variety of the work styles. As a result, it is critical to have a deeper understanding of the needs of workers and also the environment in which they work before making the necessary adjustments to ensure the healthy workforce. In addition, this is motivated by need to keep workers safe, increase productivity, keep them happy, or meet the

standards of local, state, and federal regulatory systems. In this study, five tried-and-true ways for enhancing workplace ergonomics.

There are many examples of the "pre-assignment musculoskeletal disorders" which have indeed been studied by the author in numerous public and the private limited firms. The majority of these employees simply resign after simple training of ninety days or earlier because they cannot continue to work with the pre-injury in the current work environment that is further deriving them into the huge issues and is one of the reasons for the workforce erosion.

There are new chances to decrease injuries and new ergonomic obstacles. Increasing numbers of young workers are joining the workforce with the pre-existing or nascent medical conditions. These workers are increasingly relying on mobile devices, videoconferencing, and several computer screens. A larger range of interactions within the wider range of workplace types are reflected in the more complicated work styles that are becoming the norm. Workstations and seating configurations have indeed been proposed in this study with suitable ergonomic design considerations and the future usage in mind.

(Oludeyi, 2015) Worker commitments in the wage labor have been the subject of several empirical research, which have highlighted several areas for the improvements. Work-related occurrences that occur inside a firm's 4 walls are significant among such topics. However, there is the shortage of empirical studies that investigate the work environment of the citadels of learning in order to explain the job commitments of personnel. The purpose of this study was to evaluate existing ideas, concepts, and empirical studies in the domain of campus work environments and employee commitment. By doing more empirical research, we may increase the breadth of our knowledge, better understand the level of employee commitment at the educational institutions, and prepare for any potential downward trends that may be revealed as a result.

Conclusion

Work freedom, interpersonal trust, and stress were shown to have a slight positive correlation with the virtual work experience. Increasing the ergonomics of workplace is in best interest of all contemporary businesses. A company's ability to retain a trained staff and prevent employee turnover depends on its ability to implement the proactive ergonomics programme in today's corporate environment, which is heavily reliant on electronic devices and computerised technology. Quality production and effective time management are directly linked to customer pleasure and profitability; thus, this would have the direct influence on the organisation.

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