Effect Of Mindful Workplace And Employee Well-Being Thereby Foster Productivity

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Abstract:

In today's world, everyone including the established Multinational Corporations to even the smallest business isin this quest to succeed and achieve the maximum. But are they asking themselves the right questions to achieve this quantum leap? Employees drive the performance of a company. A properly designed user-friendly physical workplace environment is central to employee engagement and consequently organizational success. Therefore, poorly designed workstations, with lack of room for bringing out every employee's potential is harmful for both the organization and the employee. In order to retain top talent and create a motivated, healthy workforce; finding a balance between work and personal life is sometimes challenging to accomplish. Positive working environments provide several benefits for both employees and employers. It is the quality of the work environment that has the greatest impact on the employee's level of motivation and subsequently, performance. With employees spending such a large proportion of their lives at work, a displeasing work environment can decrease employee performance. So how is this ongoing unhealthy trend reversed?Ensuring that employees are valued and appreciated during work transitions and in their working environment is critical to keeping them engaged. A platform to express and validate their opinions is a priority for employee satisfaction and organizational prosperity. A conducive workplace with employees aligned with the organization's vision is a precursor to overall success.

*Keywords:*Teamwork, Mindful workplace, productivity, performance, healthy environment.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The workplace environment significantly influences employees' well-being, attitude towards their job and coworkers, performance, happiness, motivation & engagement levels. If your work culture is positive, you'll stay productive. The workplace environment or workplace culture is the force that surrounds us at all times and drives our performance. A positive and engaging workplace culture improves teamwork, raises employee morale; mental stability boosts productivity, efficiency and enhances employee retention.

1.2 DEFINITION:

An organization's environment refers to a healthy work environment with underlying values, attitudes, behavior systems, and goals that lay its foundation. It's an invisible yet powerful force that drives the thought process, decisions, actions, and performance of employees. We'll be looking at why a positive, safe and healthy work environment is so crucial and what could be some ways to create a positive workplace environment. Mindfulness has its roots in Buddhist teachings. Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn, a molecular biologist, started offering mindfulness training in the United States in the late 1970s as a therapeutic tool to help patients manage chronic illness. At Google, a mindfulness program, known as "Search Inside Yourself," has been so successful that it is now a stand-alone program offering three core benefits. First, it expands leadership capacity, decision-making capacity, and the ability to create a positive culture through increased effectiveness. Second, it improves performance and collaboration through pronounced empathy and ease in relationships. Third, it promotes greater emotional resilience, stress management, happiness, and job satisfaction; leading to fewer stress symptoms and sick days.Healthcare expenditures at high-pressure companies are found to be nearly 50% greater than at other organizations. TheAmerican Psychological Association estimates that more than $500 billion is siphoned off from the U.S. economy because of workplace stress, and 550 million workdays are lost each year due to stress on the job. Sixty percent to 80% of workplace accidents are attributed to stress and it's estimated that more than 80% of doctor visits are due to stress.

Workplace stress has been linked to health problems ranging from metabolic syndrome to cardiovascular disease and mortality. While a cut-throat environment and a culture of fear can ensure engagement (and sometimes even excitement) for some time, research suggests that the inevitable stress it creates will likely lead to disengagement over

the long term. According to Sinha (2001), that employees' performance is dependent on the willingness and openness of the employees in doing their job themselves. Engagement in work — which is associated with feeling valued, secure, supported, and respected — is generally negatively associated with a high-stress, cut-throat culture.

Review of Literature
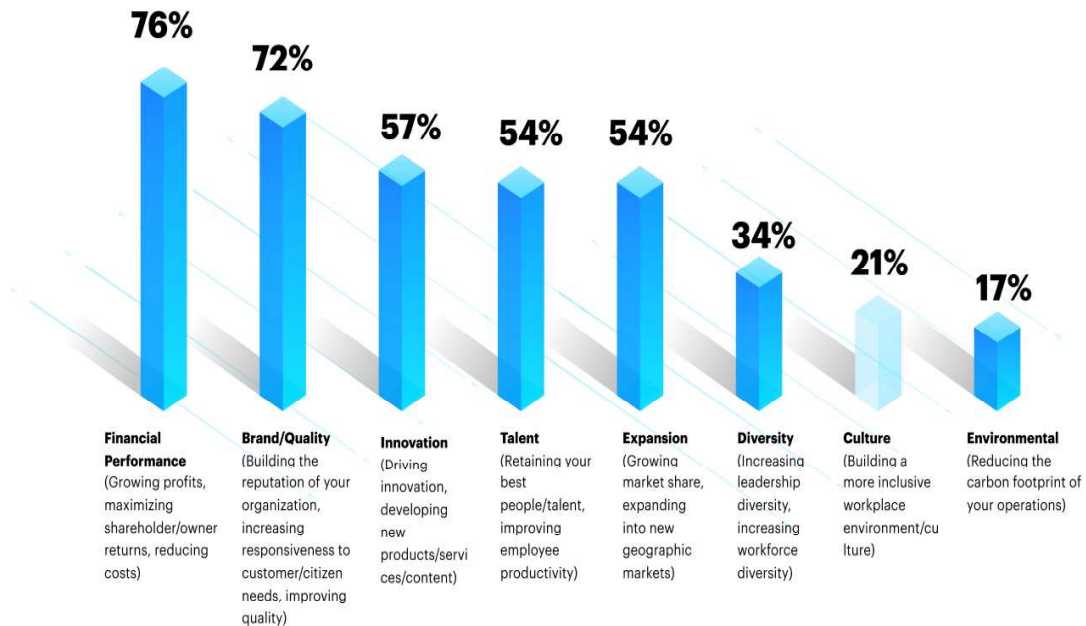
2.1 WHY WORKPLACE CULTURE MATTER?

It has been noticed that in many progressive organizations, their work culture is their strongest message as a brand. The work place environment in a majority of industries is unsafe and unhealthy. These include poorly designed workstations, unsuitable furniture, lack of ventilation, inappropriate lighting, excessive noise, insufficient safety measures in fire emergencies and lack of personal protective equipment. People working in such an environment are prone to occupational disease and it impacts on employee's performance. Thus productivity is decreased due to the workplace environment. It is the quality of the employee's workplace environment that has a substantialimpact on their level of motivation and subsequent performance.

An employee's degree of engagement with the organization, especially with their immediate environment, has a vital influence on their error rate, level of innovation and collaboration with other employees, absenteeism and ultimately, how long they stay in the job. Creating a work environment in which employees are productive is a precursor to increased profits for your organization, corporation or small business. McCoy and Evans (2005) stated that once the employees had become stressors at the workplace, the employees have the high potential of getting their job done very slowly and it will affect the employees' performance. The relationship between work, the workplace and the tools of work; workplace becomes an integral part of work itself.The management dictates how and exactly to maximize employee productivity center around two major areas of focus: personal motivation and the infrastructure of the work environment. When a company's culture is supportive and healthy, employees' mental and physical health are benefitted. Office environment positively affects the behavior of individual employees. Thus, the excellence of working environment act as an essential function in determining the level of employee and worker motivation, productivity, and performance (Sharma, Dhar, &Tyagi, 2016)

Whether promoting a culture of wellness through a wellness plan, an onsite health center, an emphasis on work-life balance or a combination of techniques is a requisite. The poor work environment will lead to disengagement, higher absenteeism, errors and defects. According to McCoy and Evans (2005), they stated that the elements of the physical work environment need to be proper so that the employees would not be stressed while getting their job done. In their article, they also stated that the physical element plays an important role in developing the network and relationship at the workplace. It will also reflect in staffs' work, ability, low engagement, they experienced lower productivity, job growth and lower profitability. There are also some other disturbances that could affect the employee's performance that include noise which will cause discomfort to the employees and thus reduce the employees' productivity (Hedge, 1986).

In order to retain top talent and create a motivated, healthy workforce; finding a balance between work and personal life is sometimes challenging to accomplish. Gone are the days where employers push for the ever-faster pace of burnt-out employees. Many modern employees are demanding more flexibility and control when it comes to balancing their lives with their work structure. Employee productivity is the most significant interest nowadays, and it is affected by the working environment in many ways (Mwendwa, McAuliffe, Uduma, Masanja, &Mollel, 2017). It can play a positive or negative role depending on prevailing physical conditions in the working environment.Work with your employees to find this balance. The result will be happier, healthier and more productive employees. Importantly, businesses with highly engaged employees enjoyed 100% more job applications. In a world of increasingly global competition among companies and even among countries; the good performance of human resources is needed. Researches (Suwati, Minarsih and Gagah, 2016) have shown that the main goal of work for someone is not only to get the salary, but to reach self-satisfaction. Employees' performance is influenced by a lot of aspects such as: motivation, work environment and leadership. Healthy and safe working environment can take a very central role in increasing productivity.Unfortunately, most of the employers consider it as an extra cost and do not spend much on maintaining a comfortable working environment. (Thobaben& Woodward, 1996).Guillot (2013) presents three main symptoms associated with burnout: emotional exhaustion reduced personal accomplishment, and depersonalization. Employees experiencing this condition become disconnected from the organization and typically see their productivity and performance decrease. Mindfulness based meditation has been introduced as a viable intervention to counteract these conditions

(Lomas et al., 2017). Mindfulness practices have been found to reduce stress and burnout, allowing individuals to focus their attention, improve their working memory capacity, and display more self-compassion (Roeser et al., 2013)

76% Financial Performance (Growing profits, maximizing shareholder/owner returns, reducing costs)

72% Brand/Quality (Building the reputation of your organization, increasing responsiveness to customer/citizen needs, improving quality)

57% Innovation (Driving innovation, developing new products/services/content)

54% Talent (Retaining your best people/talent, improving employee productivity)

54% Expansion (Growing market share, expanding into new geographic markets)

34% Diversity (Increasing leadership diversity, increasing workforce diversity)

21% Culture (Building a more inclusive workplace environment/culture)

17% Environmental (Reducing the carbon footprint of your operations)

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2.2 PSYCHOLOGY ELEMENTS OF WORK ENVIRONMENT

Research suggests that working is generally related to positive health for an individual. The most impactful lesson we have learned is not about which application or platform is best, but rather how to manage the psychology of remote work. Resources thus enable employees to successfully complete their tasks and goals, as a way to enhance their well-being and capacity to perform well (Bakker &Demerouti, 2007; Balducci, Schaufeli, &Fraccaroli, 2011). There are plenty of online tools that facilitate easy communication and collaboration but they don't replace the human element of office culture. Our challenge is trust. In a physical office environment, trust is hard wired into the space. Wellbeing comes from one place only — a positive culture. By having a good environment, the employees could apply their energy and their full attention to perform work (Visher, 2007).

People go on the job market, decline promotions, or resign. The consequential turnover costs associated with recruiting, training, lowered productivity, lost expertise, and so forth, are significant. The broad definition of well-being is developed by Danna and Griffin (1999). They define employee well-being as the state of individuals' mental, physical, and general health, as well as their experiences of satisfaction both at work and outside of work.Lack of loyalty is a major factor. For these reasons, many companies have established a wide variety of perks from working from home to office gyms. However, these companies still fail to take into account the research. They conclude that individuals can be mindful at work, but doing so can be a challenge and that mindfulness may be more readily adopted in roles that require relational qualities, (e.g., therapists and nurses). Mindfulness programs can be one way to increase the wellness and performance of your team. It can build group cohesion, and lead to a healthier and happier work environment. A Gallup polls showed that, even when workplaces offered benefits such as flextime and work-from-home opportunities, engagement predicted well-being above and beyond anything else. Employee health is considered a sub-dimension of employee well-being (Danna & Griffin, 1999). Well-being comprises both psychological outcomes such as lack of distress, anxiety,emotional exhaustion, and physiological outcomes such as blood pressure, heart condition, and general physical exhaustion (Danna & Griffin, 1999).

Employees often prefer workplace wellbeing to material benefits. The various facets of mindfulness operating synergistically may undermine occupational health, and to effectively predict organizational outcomes associated with mindfulness, it may be valuable to consider multiple facets in combination. Consideration of individual mindfulness profiles can help the design of tailored mindfulness interventions, capitalizing on individuals' strengths and working to address deficits identified in a profile. This people centric approach is reinforced by a commitment of sustainable growth and practical measures designed to prepare for the future. Thus, creating a positive work environment should be imperative for every organization. An ideal organization's environment:

➢ Defines its internal & external identity.

➢ Is capable of elevating or hindering Employee Engagement.

➢ Is powerful enough to drive employee turnover & absenteeism.

➢ Can help attract the best talent.

- Can improve employee productivity & efficiency.

- Safe and healthy environment to help organizations to retain their best.

Ensuring that employees are valued and appreciated during work transitions and is critical to keeping them engaged. While digital norms might enjoy the solitude of working from home, others need social engagement in the office. Nevertheless, we should create a sense of unity that fights away loneliness and builds trust. Job performance can be defined as behaviors or activities that are performed towards accomplishing the organization's objectives (Motowidlo, Borman and Schmit, 1999). Mindfulness may be best understood when complemented with a structure for evaluating the relative value of particular thoughts and actions in terms of the extent to which they support conduct that leads to individual and collective flourishing in organizations, as opposed to the simple relief from, or tolerance of, mental discomfort.

A physical conducive workplace environment which is comfortable, flexible and aesthetic to the employee encourages their mobility, concentration, sensory and physical connection to work roles and fosters employees' engagement. It enhances the physical and mental well-being of the employees. A properly designed user-friendly physical workplace environment is central to employee engagement and consequently organizational success.

The contrary side of a positive work environment is a toxic work environment. A lack of proper communication among employees, unclear or incorrect information – is a key sign of a toxic work environment. A lack of work-life balance or time off may also indicate a toxic work environment. The most obvious indicator of a toxic office environment is when the company's culture prioritizes business outcomes at the expense of employee retention, job satisfaction and mental health.
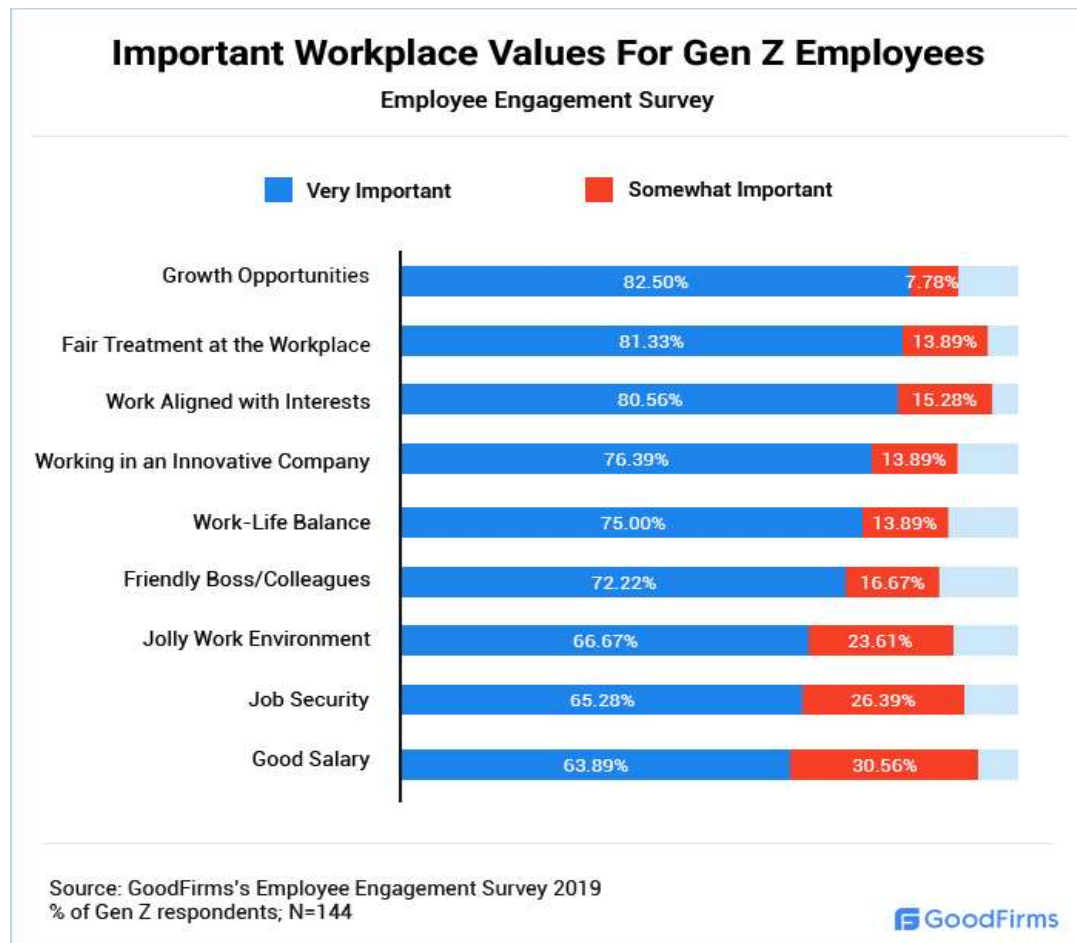
2.3 KNOW-HOW COWORKERS

When everyone on your team is working together to solve problems and be more efficient, you're able to get things done faster. Collaboration and communication between team members can also ensure everything is moving smoothly and in the right direction. Strong communication gives an opportunity for team members to nurture and foster connection and trust. On the flip side, poor communication can impede almost all aspects of a business - customer service, employee engagement, productivity & profitability.Effective workplace communication is another key factor to improve the workplace environment. An

organization which communicates throughout the workplace in an effective manner is more likely to avoid problems with completing the daily procedures, and is less unlikely to have a problem with improper occurrences.

Offering employees an opportunity to voice their opinions & concerns; giving them a platform for social engagement & interaction goes a long way in instilling a sense of ownership among employees. The employee's job performance includesequipment, physical work environment, meaningful work, standard operating procedures, and reward for good or bad systems, performance expectancy, and feedback on performance, in addition to knowledge, skills and attitudes (Stup, 2003).

Important Workplace Values For Gen Z Employees
Employee Engagement Survey

Source: GoodFirms's Employee Engagement Survey 2019
% of Gen Z respondents; N=144

Research Methodology

3.1 SCOPE AND COVERAGE OF RESEARCH STUDY

The scope of the research is to cover the effect of a positiveworkplace environment that improves productivity, morale and retention in the overall business.

3.2 OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH STUDY

The objectives of the study are:

- ➤ To find out the why the positive workplace is important
- ➤ To identify the words of appreciation boost employee morale
- ➤ To find out how diversity helps sustain and benefit a healthy workplace environment for employees

- ➢ To identify the if employees are showing interest in wellness
- ➢ To suggest techniques to overcome the redundancy and foster work culture

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY & DETAILS OF TOOLS

Discuss the various research design, research problems, scope and significance of the study, source of data, statistically techniques used and objective and limitations of the study.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND RELIABILITY:

A research design is an arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research. The purpose of the study is to provide an observation and create a positive workplaceenvironment that is a prerequisite to improve productivity and a company's success.

3.5 NATURE & SOURCE OF DATA/INFORMATION:

The relevant data has been collected from newspapers, journals, websites, magazines, etc.

3.6 IMPACT OF POSITIVE WORKPLACE

Positive working environments provide several benefits for both employees and employers. This is because this type of environment can lead to employee success and happiness both personally and professionally.

Companies can achieve a positive working environment by focusing on their overall culture; supporting employee growth and making employees feel safe and comfortable. The features include ventilation rates, lighting, access to natural light and acoustic environment (Becker, 1981; Humphries, 2005; Veitch, Charles, Newsham, Marquardt and Geerts, 2004; Karasek and Theorell, 1990). Lighting and other factors like ergonomic furniture have been found to have a positive effect on employees' health and so on employees' productivity (Dilani, 2004; Milton, Glencross and Walters, 2000; Veitch and Newsham, 2000). A positive working environment has several noticeable factors. Workplace environment has an effect on the 'ergonomics' which can be defined as the science of designing to fit the employee, rather than physically forcing the employee's body to fit the job. It can also be considered as physical and mental capabilities that limit the employee as he interacts with tools, equipment, work methods, tasks and the workplace environment.

To better understand this atmosphere, it's important to know its common attributes so that you can look for them with your current or future employer. The following are the parameters of a positive workplace environment:

- ➢ Productive atmosphere
- ➢ Honest communication
- ➢ Compassionate team members
- ➢ Positive reinforcement
- ➢ Positive thinking
- ➢ Good work life balance

- ➢ **Productive Workplace:** A positive working environment has a calm atmosphere that leads to greater productivity. When you're able to work with minimal distractions, you're more likely to stay on task and accomplish more of your daily responsibilities. It also means you're able to work in a stress-free setting that promotes your cognitive performance and physical well-being.

- ➢ **Honest Communication:** Positive working environments often include clear communication between various members of an organization. This includes communication between employees and upper management, and between coworkers themselves.

- ➢ **Compassionate Team members:** A positive working environment encompasses a level of respect, empathy and overall understanding between colleagues. These sentiments can also foster collaboration and help you feel heard and valued at your workplace.

- ➢ **Positive reinforcement:** Positive reinforcement is a way for employers to praise you for your good work. Companies that provide positive reinforcement can help foster a positive working environment for all.

- ➢ **Positive Thinking:** Looking at work with a positive mindset can help spread a good mood throughout the day.

- ➢ **Good work life balance:** A positive working environment consists of a healthy balance between your personal and professional life. This ensures you can continue to find job satisfaction without letting your job overtake other areas of your life.

Data Analysis & Interpretation

4.1. JOB PERFORMANCE

The work environment can be defined as the environment in which people work, including the physical and behavioral environments, work profile and culture. Each aspect is interrelated and affects the overall performance and productivity of employees. It is the quality of the work environment that has the greatest impact on the employee's level of motivation and subsequently, performance.

With employees spending such a large proportion of their lives at work, a displeasing work environment can decrease employee performance. Hence, healthy surroundings at work are important for employee productivity and make good business sense. A study by Robert Half International found that the work environment provided by businesses is the most important factor in employee satisfaction, and that more than one-third of workers would reject a perfect job if the work environment was not one in which they could thrive. An inviting, comfortable physical environment also enhances the positive energy in the workplace, increasing productivity and success. Employees experience stress if they perceive negatively towards their workplace environment. The stress slows down the responses of the employees and hence affects their work efficiency. Stress generated at the workplace can affect the employees' productivity, morale and motivation which in turn reflect in the performance and productivity of the employees.

4.2 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The physical environment at work is vital to employee contentment, health and well-being. This element affects interpersonal interactions between employees in an organization which along with environmental conditions in the workplace are important factors influencing employee job satisfaction and performance. A proper, rewarding and supportive work environment improves the physical and mental capabilities of employees in their daily lives. Some organizations believe that the physical environment must encourage informal communication, familiarity and friendships, as these factors motivate employees to pursue a higher level of organizational commitment, which ultimately leads to better performance. The physical working environment has a direct impact on employee productivity, and it therefore makes sense to provide the staff with a workplace that is modeled to increase the wellbeing and productivity of the workforce.

4.3 RECOGNITION

Being appreciated and recognized at work does wonders when it comes to employee engagement, motivation, and productivity. Appreciate employees' efforts and it can change their attitude towards their tasks completely.

- Giving out staff recognition monthly award
- Performance based incentives
- Redeemable coupon, vouchers
- Certificate for achievements
- Extra miler support through a monthly award

4.4 FUN AT WORK

When workplaces make "fun" an intrinsic aspect of work, they have happier teams; and a happier employee is bound to perform better. Workplace fun is often linked to - greater motivation & productivity, less stress and fatigue, and better satisfaction. Moreover, having fun activities at work helps build trust among employees and enhances teamwork. Companies should make efforts tocreate a healthy and safe work environment to facilitate an engaging culture where people love to come to work. Hosting employee engagement activities, team building games, town-halls, retreats, off-site as well as onsite socials are all great ways to allow employees to come together and build strong relationships outside the boardroom.

4.5 SOCIAL CONNECTION

A positive social connection at work produces highly desirable results. The people get sick less often, recover twice as fast from surgery, experience less depression, learn faster and remember longer and tolerate pain. Toxic, stress-filled workplaces affect social relationships and, consequently, life expectancy. Jonathan Haidt at New York University's Stern School of Business shows in his research that when leaders are not just fair but self-sacrificing, their employees are actually moved and inspired to become more loyal and committed to themselves. As a consequence, they are more likely to go out of their way to be helpful and friendly to other employees, thus creating a self-reinforcing cycle.

Trusting that the leader has your best interests at heartimproves employee performance. Employees feel safe rather than fearful. Feeling safe in the workplace helps encourage the spirit of experimentation so critical for innovation. Kamal Birdi of Sheffield

University has shown that empowerment, when coupled with good training and teamwork, leads to superior performance outcomes whereas a range of efficient manufacturing and operations practices do not. A positive work climate also leads to a positive workplace culture which, again, boosts commitment, engagement, and performance.

Happier employees make for not only a more congenial workplace but for improved customer service. A positive workplace is more successful over time because it increases positive emotions and well-being. This, in turn, improves people's relationships with each other and amplifies their abilities and their creativity. It buffers against negative experiences such as stress, thus improving employees' ability to bounce back from challenges and difficulties while bolstering their health.

4.6 ENCOURAGE WORK LIFE BALANCE

Work-life balance has become one of the highest criteria for job applicants and should be a key component of the employer's inclusion agenda. When employees feel able to work from home, take time off for medical appointments, handle family matters and work flexible hours according to their personal needs, there is a considerable increase in employee loyalty and satisfaction, which in turn increases productivity and improves staff retention. Thus, creating a harmonious work-life balance is very important not only for the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of employees, but also for better work performance.

4.7 GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

When employers continuously invest both time and money in their employees' development, employees realize that the company is also interested in the progress of their career and this has a positive impact on their work attitude and performance levels. Encouraging your employees to grow and advance also boosts employee retention and motivation. Offering training allowances or sponsoring e-learning or certification programs, are some of the common ways by which managers can help build & sustain an ever-growing and ever-dynamic work culture.

4.8 RELATIONSHIP AMONG STAFFS

The relationship amongst employees and employers has a major impact on the workplace environment. Creating a healthy corporate culture requires the participation of all members at various levels of the organization. Taking time to have a conversation with employees about projects and making sure that employees generally feel comfortable to share

the ideas they have, fostering a culture where no idea is too silly and allowing people to feel at ease while being able to innovate safely, is vital for better staff involvement and productivity. Creating an open-door work culture, where every manager's door is open to every employee.

Demet Leblebici (2012), in a research project on the impact of workplace quality on employee productivity, found that healthy behavioral workplace conditions result in positive consequences on employees, even if physical environmental conditions are less favorable. Importantly, it was discovered that behavioral components of the working environment affect employee performance more significantly than physical components. In conclusion, a behavioral environment has many benefits on employee performance within an organizational setting.

4.9 FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

The finding of the present revealed on the following:

- Most of the data shows it's important to keep a close eye on your team members.
- Employees' health and mental wellbeing are probably the most concerning aspect impacted from a negative work environment and stress.
- The poor working habits in a negative work environment, leading to a decrease in performance and reduced business turnover and overall impact lead to imbalance in routine process.
- One employee is unhappy at work; it affects everyone else in the office.
- Negative working conditions can lead to increased team-conflict, hostility, fears of dismissal, stress, and unhappiness.

4.10 RECOMMENDATIONS:

A positive workplace culture, on the other hand, is associated with higher productivity and reduced turnover—a real win-win. Changing the workplace culture takes time and effort, but the payoff can be enormous. The coronavirus pandemic has brought about unprecedented challenges for business around the world. It has reinforced the basic principles and is an eye opener. There are some positive parameters:

- Appropriate communication from management and HR
- Positive outlook towards works / responsibilities
- Controlled leveraging and risk management through proper management decisions
- Encourage teamwork, moral support and well-being
- Consideration given for work life balance
- Employer finds a way for appreciation and recognition
- Employees are treated fairly; problems are addressed and treated appropriately
- Remain united to face the uncertain situation and share responsibilities
- Employees should see that the organization is invested in their futur

5.1 CONCLUSION

A positive workplace culture that fosters healthy relationships and camaraderie among employees is crucial for success. It is essential for managers to instill a sense of pride, loyalty, and ownership among their teams. When employees are proud of being associated with their company, they align themselves with the company's vision and are inspired to work harder, find better ways to solve problems & devise faster ways to achieve a task.

Positive workplace culture boosts the overall employee engagement levels at an organization, while a negative culture not only drops engagement but also kills productivity. Your workplace culture can either transform employees into advocates or critics.

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