

Work Responsibilities, Work Environment, Productivity and Psychosocial Concerns

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Abstract

This paper examined work responsibilities, work environment, productivity and psychosocial concerns. The world of work has become so complex in the 21st century; plethora of changes and challenges have emerged therein in recent times hence the need to recourse to psychological science for proper adjustment and utmost development. Present day work environment determines, to a large extent, the responsibilities assigned to workers. It equally determines the degree to which workers are poised to discharge their responsibilities efficiently. The focus of most organizations in the contemporary society is productivity; and work responsibilities and environment are integral to productivity of organizations. The ergonomic and economic relationship between work responsibilities and work environment geared towards productivity gives rise to psychosocial concerns such as motivation, collaboration, adequate staffing, proper regulation, conflict resolution, healthy competition, motivation and stress management which have bearing on Yerkes-Dodson's Law of performance. This article explores these psychosocial concerns and recommends among other things that work responsibilities should be made clear to workers to avoid ambiguity and role conflict. It is also recommended that the work environment should be made conducive to foster the welfare and well-being of workers, which in turn will foster productivity in organizations.

Keywords: work, responsibilities, environment, productivity, psychosocial

Introduction

Work responsibilities, work environment, productivity and psychosocial concerns all revolve round work life or the world of work. Work is an activity involving mental or physical effort geared towards the performance of a task. Work as a phenomenon of interest comes with lots of responsibilities. The term responsibility pertains to the opportunity or ability to act independently and take accountable decisions. The work environment largely determines the responsibilities of workers. Furthermore, a congruent, stable and comfortable work environment fosters productivity. Productivity in this paper is all about output, profit, interest or result of concerted efforts in a work environment. Most business enterprises are set up to maximize profit subject to cost minimization. In a bid to maximize productivity, lots of psychosocial concerns emerge. It has become imperative to address the eminent psychosocial concerns to foster congruence and productivity of workers.

Work responsibilities

Work responsibility pertains to the binding or obligatory nature of specified tasks. Work responsibility as a phenomenon of interest deals with what is expected of an individual by virtue of his work roles (Iwundu, 2023). Work responsibility hinges on a specific type of work a person is doing. It is the responsibility of an employee to ensure that everything under his/her care is kept safe and that where he or she is appointed to work is in order. An employee's job specification describes his/her work responsibilities. Common work responsibilities include cleaning, clearing, forwarding, tendering, securing of facilities, management of humans, among others (Kinanee, 2012).

Work environment

Work environment pertains to the setting where work takes place. Work environment subsumes the entirety of the physical, psychological and sociological constellates of the place of work. Work environment could be a piece of land, office space, workshop, water body or other locations set aside only for working activities (Uzoeshi, 2013). A working environment can be conceptualized as specialized place of work. Suffice it to state that any place where work is being carried out is a working environment. And for a worker to be in the right state of handling a given task, the environment must be stable and, to an extent, comfortable. A working environment is supposed to be suitable and safe for a specific kind of work. It must be peaceful, full of tranquility and secured for customers and employees themselves. A good work environment is one that enables and encourages one to work with less force, limited mental and physical effort and still achieve more (Echebe, 2014). Common work environments as inferred from Holland's personality and work environment typologies include:

1) **Realistic environment:** A realistic environment is a work environment characterized by physical, mental or energetic activities. Examples of realistic environment include welding shop, farm, factories and others (Uzoeshi, 2013).

2) **Investigative environment:** An investigative environment is a calm place where intellectual activities take place. Examples of intellectual activities include researching, data analysis, medical discoveries, reading and writing. And these can be carried out in offices, libraries, laboratories or other specialized settings.

3) **Artistic environment:** Artistic environment are work places that promote creativity. The studio, artists shop, cinema hall, football field and other places where creativity bubbles fall under this category.

4) **Social environment:** Social environment is a place where helping activities takes place. The counsellor's office, the sick bay, staff room and significant others are examples of social environment (Uzoeshi, 2013).

5) **Enterprising environment:** The enterprising environment is dominated by oratorical activities. Examples of enterprising environment include: market, law court, church, amongst others.

6) **Conventional environment:** Conventional environment is characterized by due process. Common conventional environment includes the office of the secretary, police station and significant others (Ordu, 2012).

Productivity

Productivity means a state or quality of being productive. And also in terms of economics, productivity is the comparison between the amount of output and input of an economic performance. If the output becomes greater than the input, one has productive surplus; but if it is the other way round, it is called productive deficit (Kinanee, 2012). Iwundu (2020) disclosed that for one to be productive in life, he or she must remain focused and unwavering, putting his/her mind to it. Most workers desire to make profits in their daily work life and can achieve this by putting all they got into fulfilling the responsibility they have. The most important components of a person's work life or career are the amount of resources, benefits and profits that one has been able to derive from his/her place of work, regardless of the amount of efforts and time they have used. For one to be successful at his/her place of work, he or she has to be productive. It is therefore pertinent for workers to put in their best in whatever they do in order to achieve better and rewarding results (Ordu, 2012).

Psychosocial concerns

Psychosocial, as a word, pertains to the influence of social factors on an individual's mind or behaviour. The psychosocial concerns of interest to the researcher in relation to work responsibility, work environment and productivity are discussed hereunder.

i. **Congruence:** This deals with the extent to which an individual's personality matches his/her work environment. Personality encases all relatively stable and distinctive styles of thought, feelings and behavioural responses that characterize a person's adaptation to surrounding circumstances. When there is congruence between personality and work environment, genuineness will ensue and this will enhance productivity (Uzoeshi, 2013).

ii. **Motivation:** Motivation is an internal state that propels people to have interaction in aim-directed conduct. It is often understood as a force that explains why human beings or animals provoke, retain, or terminate a sure conduct at a particular time. It is a complex phenomenon and its specific definition is disputed. Motivation is applicable in lots of fields and affects academic success, work performance, consumer behaviour, and athletic achievement (Iwundu, 2020).

Iwundu (2014) disclosed that motivational states are characterized by route, intensity, and patience. The path of a motivational state is shaped by the intention it tries to obtain. Intensity is the charge of the state and influences whether or not the state is translated into action and how much effort is employed. Persistence pertains to how long a person is inclined to have interaction in an interest (Iwundu & Andah, 2018).

iii. **Collaboration:** Collaboration is the method via which two or more human beings, entities or companies work together to complete a venture or gain an intention. Collaboration is similar to cooperation. Most collaboration calls for management, despite the fact that the shape of management may be social in a decentralized and egalitarian organization. Teams that work collaboratively frequently access more sources, recognition and rewards when dealing with opposition for finite resources

(Shedrack, 2014). Structured methods of collaboration encourage introspection of conduct and conversation. Such techniques foster growth and the achievement of groups as they engage in collaborative problem-solving.

iv. **Adequate staffing:** Adequate staffing is all about getting the desired qualified personnel to perform the obligations required to satisfy the overall performance criteria set up. Adequate staffing is one of the ways of fostering productivity in organizations (Kinanee, 2012).

v. **Proper regulation:** Regulations are policies made to control the way something is done or the way people behave. To enhance productivity, there is need to regulate the behaviour of employees to reduce wastage (Ordu, 2012).

vi. **Conflict resolution:** Conflict resolution is a way for two or more individuals to discover a peaceful method to a confrontation among them. The confrontation may be personal, economic, political, or emotional. When a dispute arises, often the great course of action is negotiation to clear up the confrontation (Shedrack, 2014).

vii. **Healthy competition:** Healthy competition is common in most work environments. Anyone who partakes in healthy competition desires to succeed, and derives pleasure from seeing others being successful. Their competitive spirit stems from a boom mind-set, and is utilized in a fine manner to assist their team (and themselves) reach their goal (Cheng et al., 2015).

Stress Management

Waterson (2018) disclosed that stress management includes a wide spectrum of strategies and psychotherapies aimed at controlling someone's stage of pressure, mainly persistent pressure, typically for the cause of enhancing daily functioning. Stress produces numerous physical and intellectual symptoms which vary in keeping with each man or woman's situational factors. These can include a decline in bodily health, which include headaches, chest ache, fatigue, and sleep problems, as well as depression. The system of stress control is regarded as one of the keys to a satisfied and successful lifestyle in present day society. Life often provides numerous needs that may be difficult to address; however, strain management aids to regulate tension and maintain overall well-being.

Stress Management and Yerkes-Dodson's Law of performance

Stress management has bearing on Yerkes-Dodson's Law of performance. Yerkes–Dodson law is an empirical relationship between stress and overall performance, initially developed by psychologists, Robert M. Yerkes and John Dillingham Dodson, in 1908. The law states that performance increases with physiological or intellectual arousal, but most effective up to a point. When levels of arousal turn out to be too excessive, overall performance decreases (Diamond et al., 2007).

Researchers have discovered that different tasks require special ranges of arousal for ultimate performance. For instance, difficult or intellectually stressful obligations can also require a lower level of arousal (to facilitate attention), whereas responsibilities

involving stamina or endurance may be completed better with higher degrees of arousal (to growth motivation) (Corbett, 2015).

Because of task variations, the form of the curve can be quite dynamic. For easy or properly-learned tasks, the relationship is monotonic, and performance improves as arousal increases. For complex, unusual, or tough responsibilities, the relationship between arousal and overall performance reverses after a point, and overall performance thereafter declines as arousal increases (Yerkes & Dodson, 1908). It is therefore imperative to manage stress very well to foster productivity of workers.

Conclusion

Work responsibilities, work environment, productivity and psychosocial concerns are interrelated. Workers are responsible or accountable for the duties or tasks assigned to them in their work environment. Work environments could be realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising or conventional and same thing applies to workers. There is need for congruence for better productivity. Furthermore, there is need for stress management, motivation, conflict resolution, adequate staffing and lots more, for improved productivity.

Recommendations

- 1) Work responsibilities should be made clear to workers to avoid ambiguity and role conflict.
- 2) The work environment should be made conducive to foster the welfare and well-being of workers.
- 3) Staff welfare should be prioritized to foster productivity in organizations.

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