

The impact of work environment on creative performance of employees of Jeddah's Movenpick Hotels

تأثير بيئة العمل على الأداء الإبداعي لدى الموظفين في فندق موفنبيك جدة

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Introduction

Creativity is the process of producing novel ideas for solving problems and for developing innovative products and services (2). The creativity research has been started since 1950s and until today, where it becomes a growing recognition for the companies and organizations. It revealed its importance as a source of competitive strength and success since it turns ordinary companies into market leaders (23, 39, 42, 50, 57). Therefore, it becomes a major concern for organizations that are facing the global economic competition today (50).

Work environment has a crucial impact on the employee's performance and therefore in achieving the organization goals (48). It is a combination of factors that influence their work performance and level of motivation in terms of job satisfaction and intention to leave or turnover intentions (28, 44, 51, 56). A better work place will increase the output and improve the employees' productivity (13). On the other hand, an effective work environment entitles an attractive, creative, comfortable, motivating, and satisfactory environment for the employees (62).

Creativity is important for organizations to reach high level of performance, which requires supportive work environment (67). Work environment is able to stimulate creativity by providing physical and social stimuli that give rise to creative performance of the employees (57). Several components and external conditions in the work environment can inhibit or facilitate creative performance (34). Therefore, exploring what factors influence creative performance of the individuals or groups is important, as they can contribute significantly in ideas generation, organizational success, and long-term survival (57, 35, 25, 55, 1). For example, Gu and his group found a positive influence of leader's moral stance on the creative performance of the team (29).

Research problem

Most of previous studies have examined the relationship between some environmental factors on creative performance of employees rather than the work environment factor (63). Work environment has several items that can be investigated but there are insufficient studies regarding this matter. For this reason, this study intends to fill the research gaps by examining the effect of work place environment on the employee's creative performance in Movenpick Hotels in Jeddah and how the work place environment must be designed in order to encourage creative performance.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to determine the effects of the work environment factors on the creative performance of the employees of Movenpick Hotels in Jeddah. Several sub objectives will be achieved to identify which factors are positively or negatively affect the creative performance of employees'. Based on Work Environment Scale (WES), which was developed by Moos and Insel in 1981, there are three dimensions and ten subscales that measure the social environments of different work settings, which was used to form the following study objectives:

1. Identify the effect of involvement on the creative performance of employees
2. Identify the effect of supervisor support on the creative performance of employees
3. Identify the effect of co-worker cohesion on the creative performance of employees
4. Identify the effect of autonomy on the creative performance of employees
5. Identify the effect of task orientation on the creative performance of employees
6. Identify the effect of work pressure on the creative performance of employees
7. Identify the effect of clarity on the creative performance of employees
8. Identify the effect of control on the creative performance of employees
9. Identify the effect of innovation on the creative performance of employees
10. Identify the effect of physical comfort on the creative performance of employees

Importance of the study

Since there is not sufficient research conducted in this field in Saudi context, the importance of this study appears in its findings as it will guide the Saudi Arabian managers in their organizational improvement. Also, it will direct the attention of the decision makers to deal with the concept of work environment and its impact on the creative performance of their employees. In addition, it will help the designers who want to design work environments in such a way that encourage creativity in the employees' performance.

Research Question

The research question of this study is:

RQ: What is the effect of work environment factors on the creative performance of employees in Movenpick Hotels' in Jeddah?

- RQ1: What is the effect of involvement on the creative performance of employees?
RQ2: What is the effect of supervisor support on the creative performance of employees?
RQ3: What is the effect of co-worker cohesion on the creative performance of employees?
RQ4: What is the effect of autonomy on the creative performance of employees?
RQ5: What is the effect of task orientation on the creative performance of employees?
RQ6: What is the effect of work pressure on the creative performance of employees?
RQ7: What is the effect of clarity on the creative performance of employees?
RQ8: What is the effect of control on the creative performance of employees?
RQ9: What is the effect of innovation on the creative performance of employees?
RQ10: What is the effect of physical comfort on the creative performance of employees?

Research hypotheses

The study's intentions and the previous researches guide to indicate the hypotheses of this study. The following hypothesis will be tested:

Hypothesis.1: At least one of the work environment factors has an impact on the creative performance of employees.

Then, in order to test which of the work environment factors has an impact on the creative performance of employees, the following hypotheses are developed.

Hypothesis.1a: There is a positive impact of involvement on the creative performance of employees

Hypothesis.1b: There is a positive impact of supervisor support on the creative performance of employees

Hypothesis.1c: There is a positive impact of co-worker cohesion on the creative performance of employees

Hypothesis.1d: There is a positive impact of autonomy on the creative performance of employees

Hypothesis.1e: There is a negative impact of task orientation on the creative performance of employees

Hypothesis.1f: There is a positive impact of work pressure on the creative performance of employees

Hypothesis.1g: There is a positive impact of clarity on the creative performance of employees

Hypothesis.1h: There is a positive impact of control on the creative performance of employees

Hypothesis.1i: There is a positive impact of innovation on the creative performance of employees

Hypothesis.1j: There is a negative impact of physical comfort on the creative performance of employees

Literature review

1. Creativity in organizations

For more than years creativity research has been tackled from several areas and aspects including psychology, cognitive science and management (26). It distinct into two types in which creative achievement requires: divergent thinking which means bringing creative ideas into existence or convergent thinking which deals with creative problem-solving (88). The latter plays a crucial role in maintaining the competitive advantage of an organization (59, 4, 18, 52, 10). Organizational creativity is the cornerstone of organizational change and the foundation of innovation, which is a key to organizational effectiveness (27). Work creativity is the perspective of organizational products, services, processes, and procedures (20). For organizations that value creativity and seek to be creative they need to pay attention to work environment element according to the theory that suggest its effect on an individual's creativity therefore the organizational creativity (63). There are five components for organizational creativity in which the link between them are individuals, group, and organizational characteristics that have an impact of creative process and resulting in creative output (64). Ford suggests that creative work performance is expected from individuals who interested and motivated. Similar to Amabile's (3, 4) model, Ford (24) also suggests that there are three influences that shape a person's capacity to provide creative actions and performance. These are domain-related knowledge, creative thinking abilities, behavior skills, and work environment (50, 24, 4, 89).

2. Work environment

Work environment is not only referred to physical environment but also includes the social environment (5). Physical environment relates to the work setting and where the employees perform their duties (66). On the other hand, social environment that deals with emotional aspects such as relationships with the supervisors and other staff, autonomy, equity, fairness, and task responsibilities (61). According to the model of Great Places to Work Institute, a research and management consultancy which have been evaluating employees and employers since 1980, employees prefer to work in well-structured and comfortable workplace in such a way that leads to better productivity (43). They also would like to work in a climate that is trustable and enjoyable (43). According to literature, work environment has been measured according to several dimensions, which was used to create

models that shows the relationship between work environment factors and the organizations' employees or outcomes. According to Ekvall's model, ten factors can affect the climate within the organization which are as follows leadership behaviour, task requirements, resources and technology, organizational culture, management practices, structure and size, mission and strategy, individual skills and abilities, motives and styles, individual needs and organizational systems, procedures and policies (4, 40).

Other dimensions were also proposed by Campbell et al. in 1970 includes the degrees of structure imposed on the position, reward orientation, and consideration, individual autonomy, support and warmth. Later in 1993, Ostroff has suggested twelve dimensions that are then grouped into three higher order dimensions: affective, cognitive, and instrumental (33). Another scale was developed by Moos's Work Environment that focuses on the social climate of work environments, which represent a group of feelings, attitudes and behaviors that describe life in an organization (65). In addition, the Work Environment Scale (WES), which was developed by Moos and Insel in 1981, has three dimensions and ten subscales. All of them measure the social environments of different work settings. These dimensions include the personal growth, the system maintenance, and the relationship dimensions (65). The latter subscales include involvement, peer cohesion, supervisor support whereas the system maintenance dimension includes the following subscales; clarity, control, innovation, and physical comfort. Lastly, the personal growth dimension relates to how to make employees take decisions, workload pressure, getting their job done, be efficient and make good planning. These subscales are autonomy, task orientation, and work pressure (65).

3. The Dimensions of the Work Environment

3.1. Involvement

Job involvement is defined as "psychological identification with one's work" (41). It is about how the employees see their jobs and lives united together. It also refers to the commitment to their jobs. According to the approaches of involvement in the literature, job involvement has an influence on the person's self-esteem and in finding person's identity (32). It is important for the employees to have high level of job involvement in order to not make them feel separated between their lives and jobs (31). It also gives them high level of satisfaction when they accomplish their duties effectively (22). Brown revealed that people who committed to their work and organization and find their jobs challenging and motivating are less intention for turnover or leaving their jobs (32). Therefore, achieving creative performance of employees may depend on achieving the highest level of job involvement in the organization (22).

3.2. Supervisor Support

Supervisor's support refers to the helping and assisting behaviour that can be provided by the direct supervisor to the employees (19, 9). It also can be shown by the organization when they value their contribution and care about their welfare to satisfy socioemotional needs (53). This support will increase the employee's incorporation and involvement in the organization (53). Therefore, support from the supervisors and the positive interaction between them can encourage the employees' creative performance and hence reaching organizational creativity (21).

3.3. Co-worker Cohesion

Co-worker Cohesion can be described as the social interaction with satisfaction and attraction among the members of the group (58). It represents their unity and attachment to meet their objectives as well as their social needs (58). According to Fertinger, the cohesion defines as “the total field of forces which act on members to remain in the group” (12). It can be distinct into two groups; group integration and attraction to group. The first concerns the group as totality whereas the second refers to the person as a member itself (14). The cohesion groups characteristics appears in supporting each other, having a good cooperation and communication, beside the strong morale and group spirit between them (60). From the above findings, co-worker cohesion can be also an essential factor that leads to a creative performance of the employees in the organization.

3.4. Autonomy

Autonomy fa a person can be defined as the feeling of freedom with no pressure or control of any internal or external force (15, 46). It can be reached when the work environment is created to be supportive such as when managers offering more level of choice, encouraging self-initiation, and assumes the employees’ perspective (15). Increased autonomy increases the flexibility and the control of the employees in deciding how to perform the work (45). As autonomy can supports employees’ behavioral changes and increase job satisfaction as well as performance, it may support the creative performance of the employees in the organization (15).

3.5. Task Orientation

Task orientation is described as performing a task in an excellent quality by sharing the concern, vision, and outcomes, which would include evaluations and modifications (30, 54). In another word, the team members share a common concern to ensure a good performance outcome (49). This dimension requires an environment that supports the adoption of improvement of methods, policies and procedures (7). When the excellent performance is achieved, it would be a supportive work environment for the other factors including enhancing the employees’ creative performance in the organization.

3.6. Work Pressure

Work pressure is the over expectation achievement from the employees in an organization. Workload pressure means extra work that distracts the main project work (38). Usually, it affects the time line or the time period set for finishing the project work (63). It may result in work stress especially if the employee fails to meet the work deadlines and make his or her depressed and exhausted and sometimes be ill (11). Therefore, the work environment of organizations better to not have that pressure when it seeks a creative performance from its employees.

3.7. Clarity

Clarity is when employees know about the company’s rules and policies and its communication to them. Also, know what expect in their daily worklife and what is expected from them. In addition, their job duties as well as their importance are clearly defined to them (63). According to the previous research, task clarity has a

positive relationship with job satisfaction and clarity of organizational goals can affect the employees' performance in obtaining such goals (66). As a result, creative performance of employees may be also affected by the clarity of work environment.

3.8. Control

The work environment control is mainly relating to managers to keep employees under control. Managerial control is the degree of the rules and pressures that are used to keep that control (63). The previous research revealed that management control affects several outcomes including employee's performance, job satisfaction, motivation, stress, involvement, level of absenteeism and turnover (36). It is at some extent necessary to have a control mechanism for the selective control of employee behaviour. Another study has shown that negative effects of control on the performance of employees as well as intrinsic motivation which cannot be neglected (36).

3.9. Innovation

Innovation and creativity are mainly different concepts (47). While creativity deals with the production of new ideas, innovation deals with the adoption of these ideas and transfer them into a new product or service or system etc. (16, 33). The latter represents the successful implementation of the creative ideas within an organization (6). Therefore, innovation is the result of creativity and no innovation without the creative processes (8). As a result, innovation can be a muck land as a factor of work environment to enhance creative performance of employees in the organizations (17, 45).

3.10. Physical Comfort

Physical workplace is the second most important reason for turnover of the employees in the organizations according to a study done by American Society of Interior Designers (37). It revealed that there is a strong relationship between the employees's psychology and their work environment (37). The working climate and conditions such as rest time, ventilation, safety, cleaning voice level and good physical setting have shown a great effect on the employees' performance (2). Therefore, most of the employers aim to afford the good workplace environment to increase the productivity level of their employees (2). Based on these findings, workplace can be also an effective factor that support creative performance of the employees in organizations.

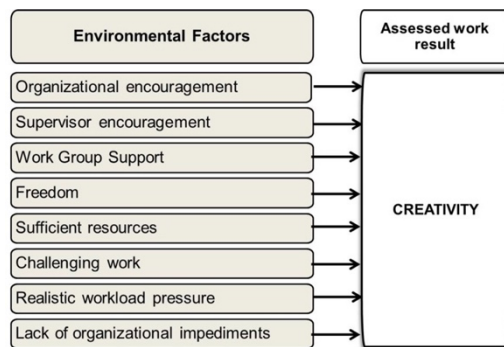
4. The relationship between creativity and work environment:

Creativity is multifaced which can be affected by several individual-level and environmental variables (68). A study has shown that employee's creativity is influenced by the work environment (68). Since that, several studies have been conducted to find out the relationship between work environmental factors and the creativity of the organizations' employees (69). Also, it has been realized that social environment has an impact on the creative behaviour of the employees at some degrees (69). Then, a quantitative research instrument called KEYS was developed by Amabile et al. to assess the work environment factors that are necessary for creativity in organizations (6). It represents a componential model of creativity that describes the psychological and social components necessary for an individual to produce creative performance (72, 6, 73). The instrument includes

eight environmental scales, in which six were identified as “stimulant scales” that encourage creativity and two were identified as “obstacle scales” as they are negatively related to creativity (6, 70). The six scales are organizational encouragement, supervisory encouragement, work group supports, freedom, sufficient resources, challenge (6). On the other hand, the two scales are organizational impediments and workload pressure (70).

Another research was conducted in Turkey has shown that the ability of problem solving and adaptation factors at individual level were found to have positive relationship with creativity (90). Also, group diversity and commitment were found to have positive relationship with creativity at the group level (90). In addition, another study has revealed a strong positive association between creative work environment and affective employee attitudes (71). Eren and Gündüz (2002) have examined how the characteristics of the work environment affect creativity at work (71). Managers of 126 firms were selected in the study from the largest 500 firms of Turkey. The factors were examined are freedom, organizational encouragement, group support, autonomy, communication, supervisory encouragement, and work pressure (71). All the factors have positive effect on creativity except communication factor which was found to have negative effect on creativity (71). The sum of the studies finding show that creativity depends not only on individual factors but also on several work environment factors that impact the creative performance and creativity of employees (81).

KEYS is a well-recognized, psychometrically sound instrument to quantitatively assess the work environment for creativity (6, 74). It consists of a 68 items-questionnaire organized into ten work environment factors relevant to creativity and creative performance. The instrument consists of a questionnaire with 78 items, organized into ten work environment factors that classify the relevant environmental factors and results. The factors are presented in Figure 1. (81). The factors which were used in this study are similar to the ones which were identified by Amabile’s scale KEYS.



Source: Adapted from Amabile *et al.* (1996)

Figure 1. Environmental factors of KEYS

5. The relationship between creativity and work environment:

Performance of employees means the result of people work in their jobs to achieve the organization goals (82, 84). Therefore, organizations should build an attractive work environment so that the employees are able to give a creative performance (85). Creative performance of employees depends on several factors in which some are relate to individuals such as relevant knowledge whereas others relate to the work environment (86). Work environment includes several factors that contributes to the productivity of the employees (83). Recent studies have determined what work environment factors influence creative performance of employees in the organization. For instance, number of studies shown the relation between physical work environment with creative performance of employees (86, 87). On the other hand, Gu et al. have found that moral stance of the leaders has a positive effect on the employees' creative performance (29). Also, Muñoz- Pascual and Galende concluded that managers should encourage intrinsic motivation for their employees to improve their creativity level which would lead to creative performance (75). In addition, Jyoti and Dev revealed that transformational leadership would increase the creative performance of the employees (76). In another study, and his colleagues concluded that the climate of the organization has a moderate the effect of emotional intelligence on creative performance of the employees (77). Moreover, Jiang et al. suggested that employees who face bullying by their leaders affect their creative performance (78). Nevertheless, a study was done by Rodríguez-Sánchez et al. observed that group engagement plays a curial role between work group cohesion in relation with their creative performance (79). The existence of music sounds or silence or fresh air in a work environment can also stimulate the creative performance of the employees (80).

Research methodology

1. Participants

The study targeted the employees of Movenpick Hotels in Jeddah, KSA. The data will be collected from the employees working in different departments and divisions. The study will be focused on several factors of the work environments. The questionnaire will be distributed to all the volunteered workers and will be eliminated to the workers who will not give a complete response. The total questionnaire will be analyzed using specific tools. The participants will be on voluntary basis.

2. Instrument or study tools

The quantitative research instrument in this study will be a questionnaire to obtain the information and data necessary for the study. The questionnaire that will cover the following work environment dimensions: involvement, supervisor support, co-worker cohesion, autonomy, task orientation, work pressure, clarity, control, innovation, and physical comfort. The factors were adapted from Amabile et al., who developed KEYS research instrument that known to focus on the relationships between work environment factors and creativity of the employees (6).

3. Statistical methods

Frequency distribution of answers, graphs, and percentages will be generated and linear regression. In addition, the correlation coefficient will be Pearson and to get the results as accurate as possible, SPSS statistical program will be used. The reliability coefficient of Cronbach's Alpha will be calculated in order to test the availability of the consistency and internal consistency between the answers to the questions. Knowing that the statistically acceptable value of the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient will be 60%.

Research limits

The limitation of this study relates to the difficulties in involving all the employees of Movenpick hotels in KSA not only the employees in Movenpick hotels Jeddah.

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