

Role of technology on behaviour of employees

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Effect of technological environment on the behavior of employees The effect of development of tools and technology on the evolution of human activity has long been a major concern for researchers of social behavior. Marx one of the founding fathers of sociology In his works clearly made a connection between the advent of technology and its impact on production. He clearly viewed technology as a key factor that led to development of the productive means and emphasized Its Importance in shaping socio-economic structure (Mishear, 1979).

According to Marx, the Identity of the dominant or ruling class was determined by their ability to best ester the development of technology. Furthermore even In neo-classical economics, technological progress Is regarded as the driving force behind economic growth (Channels and Renee). This notion has been further strengthened by endogenous growth theory which states that in order to sustain a positive growth rate of output per capita in the long run, there must be continual advances in technological knowledge (Action and Hewitt, 1998).

Hence given its role in economic growth a common deduction that people can make is that technical progress leads to higher efficiency of employees and hence eventually leads to higher standard of living. However there are two sides to a coin and technological progress and environment can have both positive and negative impact on the behavior of employees. The impacts are dependent on the sector the technological environment is introduced into and the nature of work of the employee in any institution. While there are multiple benefits there is always a flipped to the benefit.

Technological environment increases the competence of an employee and often reduces workload. It helps reduce unproductive hours by increasing an employee's efficiency. It helps an employee carry out long drawn processes in lesser time and once saves time which can be invested in other activities. For example new social technologies like Yammer are being introduced exponentially into an organization's working system as they help organizations, managers and employees to perform better, faster and smarter.

An application like Yammer provides a social networking platform wherein employees have real-time access to what's happening even when they are out of the office. Through this program, co-workers can collaborate and share Ideas across an infinite number of people and locations Instantaneously. This facilitates quick responses and suggestions from employee and hence Increases efficiency (Daniels, 2012). Existing technologies offer organizations a way to Improve their efficiency and effectiveness.

The latest technology and tools allows quicker knowledge acquisition and knowledge transfer which helps employees successfully compete In global competitive climate. Technology provides the standardization mechanism for sharing learning and knowledge across organizational boundaries, Hence technology has a very positive impact on employee behavior as it optimizes their output. Computerizing of any Job usually requires only the behavior of monitoring, which is a dramatic change from the usual behaviors, e. . , placing cartons on a rack, completing paperwork, etc.

In monitoring, the employee only has to keep a check on the equipment periodically and monitor the optimum functioning of the equipment, this helps employees multi-task. Multi-tasking in turn further optimizes an employee's utility. With the high reliability of new computerized processes, a problem occurs rarely and it saves time. However, occasionally computerizing can lead to complacency due to increased dependence on the technological aspect. Under such circumstances if a person quits monitoring, the failure to check over long erodes can cause disastrous effects in safety, production, quality and cost.

The reason behind the complacency can be attributed to the fact that when any Job is computerized, it reduces the reinforcement for the operators and changes the behaviors that are important to the business outcome. A major caveat of a technological environment is that when we bring in technology we reduce the reinforcement for people I. E. The human element (Daniels, 2012). Technology can help streamline processes and make work easier for employees, however learning how to use new technology while remaining productive can be stressful.

Furthermore with the rapid advent of technology employers face the daunting task of organizing new trainings, improving support systems and upgrading documentation. Thus a technological environment can lead to an added burden on the shoulders of not only the employees who are required to master the new technological addition but also on the employers who need to facilitate proper training so as to make sure that there is a smooth transition between the two stages. In the absence of such a smooth

transition owing to the inertia of either the employees or the employers can spell disaster for the institution.

It can lead to decline in productivity of any industry and consequently impact the employees by increasing their stress levels (Richards, 2013). Moreover, research suggests that that technology often can lead to 'De-killing' of workers in certain sectors while it creates unusual counter bias in others. The first problem of De-killing can be seen in the cotton weaving industry. It is observed that improvement in technology leads to destruction of the need for skilled artisans and their replacement by Workers' who are required only to perform menial repetitive tasks (Channels and Renee; Bessel, 2009).

If the skilled set of employees is forced to carry out the same task repetitively then it leads to boredom among them and hence decline in productivity. Similar examples have been documented in the tannery industry as well. However, there are clear counter examples where modern technologies become generally biased towards more skilled workers. One such of the Linotype machine. Hence it has been seen that technological advancement can create increasing inequality of wages and employment between the skilled and the unskilled.

This in turn can lead to dissatisfaction with an organization and increase the gap between its employees (Channels and Renee; Bessel, 2009). The effect of technological environment on the behavior of employees is also dependent on the perception of the employees themselves. If an employee has had positive experience before, he is more receptive to a progressive technological environment on the other hand if an employee has had

difficulty navigating new interventions before, he may not be receptive to a technological environment.

Therefore an employee's perception of what is happening in the organization and how it affects him can influence his response to technological environment and impact his behavior (UNESCO, 1958). Another factor that defines employee acceptance is dependent on the type of industry and the rate at which technology environment changes (UNESCO, 1958; London & Baseman, 1989). One example is the automation industry wherein technology forms an integral part of functioning, hence most employees welcome it.

Similar cases are seen with regards to the Information technology sector or in the field of animation wherein innovation forms the crux of the sector. Employees in such industries thrive in a technological environment. However a sudden transition from a on mechanized industry to a technological advanced environment may face resistance at least initially from employees. Hence in conclusion it becomes clear that a technological environment can have either a positive or a negative impact on the behavior of the employees.

The impact varies with multiple factors. Some of the factors that define acceptance of technology and its influence revolve around the perception of the employees, the type of industry, willingness of the employees to learn and integrate technology and a clear understanding of the technology. Moreover it is imperative for an organization to understand the science of

behavior so they can marry technology and behavior in a way that provides the necessary consequences of the right kind.

Also it is important to keep in mind that technology alone cannot help increase a organizations output, output is dependent on innovation and ideas and the human element should always be the centre point to achieve success for any venture.