Workplace absenteeism essay sample

Health & Medicine, Stress

The employee absenteeism is becoming one of the major problems in corporate work culture. Absenteeism is acceptable up to certain level but there are employees hired for full time or partial are absent from work which results to reduce in productivity, efficiency and employee morale. Both the government and private firms are facing the problem employee absence from work. The reasons of absenteeism are categorize into two categories as employee related and job related. The main of purpose of this paper is to increase the understandings absenteeism and its effect on the workplace. Absence occurs for legitimate reasons such as stress, serious illness and family emergencies but it also occur due to minor aches, pains, hangover and sleepless night.

The growing and expensive concern for most of the organization is absence from sickness. It affects the firms operating costs, manufacturing processes, business deadlines and efficiency. The problem of employee absenteeism is best resolved by taking positive interventions such as change management style, job burnout and employee health problems; changing working conditions refer to co-worker relationships stress, provide incentives where companies provide several incentive programs for employees to reduce sickness absence and attendance policy explains a company should maintains attendance policy which helps in identifying the employee who absent frequently. By implementing and focusing on the stated approach will minimize the employee absenteeism, reduces the cost related to absent employee, better performance and improves high morale.

SIX KEY TERMS

Absenteeism, Stress, Sickness, Costs, Morale, Employee Absence

INTRODUCTION

The study is referred to absenteeism at workplace caused due to a number of reasons. It focuses on how organizations treating their valuable assets i. e. employees. Employees taking off from work due to personal issues, family problems, accident at workplace and health condition which leads to low in morale and decrease productivity of an organization. The other issues results in absenteeism deals with employees stress, working shifts, job design, and sickness. To overcome the employee absenteeism problem, management takes positive approach which includes change management style, change working conditions, provide incentives and develop an attendance policy.

This review also cover the aspect that an organizations bearing the cost due to absence of employee from workplace. It increases the operational costs to production which ultimately cut down the profits. According to the researchers, the short term absence has greatest impact on business rather than long term, resulting in over 40% of total working time lost (Haswell 2003).

The purpose of this study is to highlight causes of the absenteeism and its impact on work and how to reduce it from workplace. There is need to implement the preventive measures which facilitates employees to work under stress less environment and improves morale as well which results in better productivity and less absenteeism. The overall health of the organizations depends on how the management tackling the employee absence problem in order to minimize the absenteeism.

SIX KEY TERMS

ABSENTEEISM

In an article, the author (Tourin 1943) define absenteeism as an employee is considered as an absentee who does not report for work during the entire period of any shift on which he is scheduled to work which was later supported by another researcher, (Kelly 1990) describes absenteeism is absence for which the employee is accountable for particular job or work. The employee absences from workplace due to many numbers of reasons such as personal illness, personal business or absence without leave which is measured in number of hours. In order to understand the cause of absenteeism, the researcher split up into work or job related and employee-related causes which are as follows:

a. Job Related Causes

The job related causes depends on the many aspects such as nature of the job, working conditions, health and safety hazards and internal relationships. The job should be designed according to employee capabilities and skills. If an employee likes what he or she is doing and best at their job than there is not likely to be off without good reason. An employee job is not according to their skills and capabilities then they feel the work can along without them and they may be tempted by opportunities to escape and take a day off now and in future also. The working conditions for instance working shift also have an effect on absenteeism. The rigidity of most work schedules makes it difficult for employees to attend their personal concern outside working hours. The afternoon or night shifts workers tend to suffer from digestive

problems, sleeplessness and nervous disorders due to sleeping at different times, eating at odd times, probably not sleeping or eating properly. The health and safety hazard leads to workplace absenteeism. The computer operators or word processor users often suffer from muscular problems, shoulder pains as well as headaches and vision problems.

b. Employee Related Causes

The employee related causes deals with family responsibilities, physical condition and accident at workplace. The family responsibilities indicate that the presence of dependent children is another employee-related cause for absenteeism. The employee has to take off from work when the kids are sick or they need to take for medical or dental appointment or important event at kid school etc. A worker who is not physically fit for a job is likely to be off work due to illness. The physical fitness starts depreciate after a certain age. The older workers tend to be more off because of their health issues than younger workers (Kelly 1990).

There are several approaches to reduce or control absenteeism from workplace. According to the author (Bula 1984) states that management needs to develop an organizational policies and procedures regarding employee attendance aimed at reducing and controlling absenteeism. According to the researchers, in an article by (Cole and Kleiner 1992) found that the basic elements to control workplace absenteeism are maintain detailed attendance records, determine the reason for the absence, summarize and analyze attendance data, provide quality leadership and specify an appropriate course of action. The management must develop an

attendance system so that supervisors can keep daily records of employee attendance. The supervisor must conduct the meeting when absent employee return to work to know the reason for his absence. The purpose of this meeting is that management concerned about every absence and also to let know that supervisor is care about the employee wellbeing.

The workers absences from work can be summarized by the department, division or the entire organization with the aid of computers. The key is to provide the analysis indicates the areas of concern to management. In an organization, supervisor is the key person who knows about the absent of employees from workplace. The supervisor seeking the opinions and ideas from workers regarding their duties and encouraging them to make their own decision will stimulate interest in the job and quite possibly reduce absenteeism. Absenteeism is only partly controllable by managers, but a good start is to measure it reliably to get better idea of the precise nature of problem.

STRESS

In many organizations, the main cause for absenteeism is increasing stress among employees which leads to absence from workplace. Stress got different definitions for it. The main cause of stress is said to be excessive work pressure (Michie 2002). But, it's called as pressure from environment and which is there in every person's own self. Historically, the employers always blame the person who is under tremendous stress for mistakes at work. As of today's world stress is defined as the interaction between the individual and the situation. In simple economic terms, it can also be defined

as the psychological and physical state of resource of an individual is not enough to cope up the pressure of demand of the situation. Stress can change a lot of things in an individual on the way to pursue his goals by undermining the goals he want to achieve both as an individual and being in an organizations. Stress got different behavioral changes like anxiety, depression, irritation, fatigue and other changes like aggression, being withdrawn, unmotivated and difficulty in concentration and solving problems. Situations which also cause stress are like those are uncertain, uncontrollable, unpredictable and low performances.

Stress may also be caused by time limited events like exam pressures and deadlines. Stress is also one of the major problems affects the working group in this modern life. It was also stated in an article by the author (Gandham 2000) that the fear of other types of demand put on them at work place is also another reason for increase in stress. Researcher like (Teasdale 2006) written in an article that according to WHO (World Health Organization) health is defined health as a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing. According to them, Health as a physical aspect has been understood and managed whereas the mental and social aspects of health is understood because of which the rate of stress has been increased in recent years. According to author (Teasdale 2006), maintaining mental and social aspects of wellbeing is more important than the physical wellbeing. The steep growth of busy life is one major reason for increased number of stress related medical cases.

Organizations usually wouldn't employee people with the history of mental problems instead they recruit people with less past mental problems. Because that will help them in attaining their company targets pretty peacefully whereas that itself turns to be a potential reason for stress, anxiety, and in some cases they may even become less worthwhile and less productive. It's also stated by (Gandham 2000) that occupational stress is of two types: a. Exogenous (outside of individual) with the demands of the job and changes in the work load or environment; and b. Endogenous (within the individual) with employee's abilities both physical and mental and coping mechanisms.

An article by (Mishra 2011) states that the concept of stress and research on it has reached an all-time high during the past few years. A man's reactions to the intense psychosocial stress become a major concern of psychological investigations in present day world. According to the research conducted in this article, a person's one third of his daily routine is filled with job satisfaction and various social and psychological stress and frustrations. It has also been told that consistent high job performance and perfection also leads to high job stress socially and mentally. The behavior of stress includes attitude towards job, mental and physical consequences which costs dearly to the organization in a physical and monetary terms. Stress has become an integral part of people's life these days. Stressful situations don't take the toll on quiet people rather on people who love to face the situation with an aim to struggle through it and master it. Stress usually starts because of the environment around us i. e. the situation and the height of stress level changes from person to person depending upon the situation. In viewing its

bad effects scientists has systematically understood the functioning of stress and how it can be maintained or reduced as the day passes.

SICKNESS

Sickness is usually linked to smoking and drinking, psychological illness and pain results in absent from work. According to the researchers (Johansen, et al. 2008) describes sickness as a complex phenomenon that is determined by factors other than health and the relation between ill health and sickness absence is not straight forward. The determination to participate or to resume work following illness sickness absence will be connected to the real and apprehended conditions of labor (both psychosocial and physical), projected job requirements, attitudes and behavior management, community norms and social peer group and hospitals professionals, as well as economic pressures caused by loss of income for individuals and loss of output for organization (Whitaker 2011). There are also other factors for sickness absence that function at the individual level, such as the person's fitness, illness behavior, motivation to participate, beliefs and work satisfaction to play a role in decision making process.

In order to control the sickness absence, the government and organization need to develop policies and practices aimed at reducing sickness absence. The organizational policies and practices (OPPs) with regard to sickness absence often focus on work attendance and also cover other aspects such as health policies, safety climate and ergonomic practices. To retain the employee at work due to sickness absence, the organization need to bring occupational health professional to develop intervention that are efficient in

helping people to return to work and also need to develop a good understanding of the aspects other than disease that impact this behavior. This will involve close co-operation between human resources, worker representatives, line managers and occupational health professionals (Roelen 2010).

COSTS

The definition of cost varies from industry to industry, business to business and organization to organization. In simplest form cost if defined as the total money, time, and resources associated with a purchase or activity. Many organizations suffering from cost of absence as the wage cost over an employee who is absent is the replacement cost of personnel or over manning organization to take into account a certain level of absence costs, loss of productivity and decreased the quality of services, management of human resources and time spent on occupational health dealing with the absence that can be used for other purposes. As per article by (Armstrong 2000) describes the cost of absenteeism to Irish industry is more than $ 500 million in a year with the cost of personal injury liability claims ranging from $ 660 million to $ 1. 3 billion which was later supported by another article by (McKeown 1989) in 1974, British economy suffered from the loss of 320 million days per year compared to 3 million for industrial action due cost of absence.

According to study it was found that organizations with higher levels of absenteeism pay higher levels of overtime. The organizations that don't proactively managing it are missing an opportunity to save millions of dollars

every year. To reduce the cost of absence, the organization need to use the automated solutions that help organization to track the cost per employee due absence. To address this, companies can provide an array of services to help workers to deal with their personal and family issues for instance, Employee Assistance Programs (EPAs) which include counseling on financial, marriage and career issues. To overcome the cost of absence, organization need to decrease stress by giving employees some control over their work lives (Gibson 1999). The challenge for organization is to carry out the right combination of policies and practices to address the needs of staff, while ensuring that employees to meet productivity target of company is required from their workers.

MORALE

Morale is a feeling, an emotional state, not an intellectual attitude, and is thus like all emotions a variable, it can be either good or bad. In an article by (Geoghegan 1942) define morale is a feeling of confidence and competence in the carry on an enterprise. It is a sensation of confidence in the outcome, confidence in cause and leaders. It also includes feeling of competence of personal capability and self-confidence. As per article, the employee morale is directed towards the fostering of group rapport and the internalization of management goals by employees (Baehr 1958). The expectation is to achieve these aims would have a positive impact on absenteeism, spoiled work, productivity etc. Morale has also been termed as an attitudinal response to work environments that has an effect on behavior of individuals encircled by the organization. More precisely, high morale is exhibited when

an individual shows determination to do his or her best under any circumstances.

According to research, absenteeism has a big impact on the morale of a group of workers which leads to less productivity. In a group of workers, if an employee is frequently absent from work, others may go off themselves which results in decreasing the moral of group workers and lowering the productivity of the group as a whole. As per the statistics, companies with low morale saw higher rates and cost of unscheduled absences. The rate of unscheduled absenteeism is twice as high at companies with poor or fair morale as those with good or very good morale (Navarro and Bass 2006). The research indicate that a simple business formula behind morale and productivity, that is low morale leads to low productivity and high morale leads to high productivity.

In order to increase the productivity and maintain the morale among employees, organization need to build the morale of their employees which are playing the most important role to run any organization. There are certain measures to improve the morale of employees. The organization needs to be congruent which creates a secure environment for staff and when employees feel more secure, morale improves. The managers need to acknowledge the staff which is a great morale booster by using word like " we" when talking about achieving results. When management addresses employees about the organization target and goals, they need to use the word " you" and make it about them and give them what they want to hear. The organization can take steps to enable compassion in their work

environment which is an essential aspect leading to improve morale, satisfaction and productivity. The compassion matters and leads to increase retention, improved work satisfaction and commitment (Gautam 2008). A small effort to encourage compassion among group workers will lead to productivity and improve morale of employees.

EMPLOYEE ABSENCE

The employee absence refers to a person who is absent or taking day off from work. The employee absence is costly affair to the organizations. The companies with high employee absence rates are commonly thought to be less efficiently managed organizations that those which have low rates of absence. According to a report by a recruitment company Morgan and Banks a year paid out US $ 1. 95bn in wages to absent employees, costs associated with overtime, production losses and temporary staff cover (Tey 2005) which was later supported by another researcher (Kautis 2009) that Indian service sector is the 3rd largest in the world and facing huge employee absence in form of numerous strikes and other reasons. The supervisor of any firms is the one in position to understand circumstances of the employee absence and to notice a problem at an early stage.

Their active involvement in the company's absence procedures is pivotal and future success of an absence program (Yorges 2007). The organizations that trained their supervisors well through conducting several workshop or absence training program and have the full support of senior management results in decrease in employee absence rate than those who are not providing such trainings. The organization which actively manages the cost

of employee absence is capable of achieving more productivity and also improves the employee morale. The employees need to be aware about their benefit or incentive programs and management training workshop which results in reduce the absence of them from workplace (Navarro and Bass 2006). The management needs to educate and conduct special training modules on absenteeism for the employers so that they concentrate more on finding ways to increase the employee presence at work rather than how to decrease the absenteeism (Kautis 2009).

Findings from the literature review

The literature review available on the topic workplace absenteeism differs significantly in terms of quality and findings. The absenteeism from workplace cannot be cured completely but it can be minimized to some degree by taking preventive measures. Authors and writers had given some preventive measures to reduce absenteeism from workplace. The root causes for absenteeism is employee personal issues, sickness and stress at workplace. An organization should take preventive measures to reduce absenteeism from workplace so they can save millions of dollars which cost an organization due to employee absence.

As research, literature review helped in knowing the basic concept and the challenges associated with employees at workplace, which identified issues or problems. Such studies are the general current structure that the organization has no compassion towards employees who can never be a solution to problems at workplace.

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