**Assignment - 1**

Date: July 2, 2017 Author: Anukul Raj

**Journal Review – Meeting the Challenges of an Aging Workforce**

1. The author describes about the change in workplace environment that should be incorporated in order to meet and accommodate the needs of an aging workforce. According to author, the primary reason for the aging workforce is because of the decline of the number of young employees when compared to the aging employees leaving the job. The margin is observed to be growing.  The author delineates the impact it has on the social security and the pension, which is directly dependent on the active persons in the workforce. To cater such situation for the dependent population there is rising need for the working population to stay on the job longer.   
   There is an undeniable impact of the aging workers and the efficiency of the work. According to author, the aging population does not lead to reduced performance  or productivity. Reduction is observed only in those jobs where capacities of a person plays more crucial role than the experience. Generally, the relationship between the performance and age is found to be positive. The author brings into focus another vital point that the person’s increased duration in the job makes them less prone to injuries owing to their experience. However, the injuries they suffer are more fatal as compared to a younger worker. It is thus important that the measures and reforms that employers need to ensure in the workplace to meet the requirements of the employees to improve their work efficiency. The workplace impacts the work efficiency of the employees directly. It is the employer’s responsibility to make the working conditions hospitable for all the age groups. Since, the study depicts an increase of old age workers in the next 25 years. The study shows that the old workers do not frequently show illness but the intensity of the illness is severe. With the increase of the age of workers, the work environment should be adopted with strength. A quantitative Work Ability Index (WAI) has been recorded from a standard questionnaire, which helps to evaluate the critical work ability factors. The WAI helped to predict a relation between the index score and per person disability and sickness absence costs. It is observed that there is a decline in WAI scores with age. A study has been conducted and the WAI recorded during 1981 to 1992 showed a significant decrease. Also, WAI decreased with stressful work conditions. In order to enhance the WAI with time, four important variables are associated which are adjustment in physical work environment, psychological environment, health and lifestyle promotion and worker skills and competency building. The four pillars that provide stronger support are as follows: the work environment, Work Arrangments and Work-Life Balance, Individual measures and Social Measures. These enable the increase of work effectiveness and the productivity of the employees irrespective of the age group. Accomplishment of work is subjective to the individual potential. With age comes health issues which needs to be focused on as there are problems that are prevalent with age and the cure is to alter the external situation to reduce the stress and effort that is required. Few common issues that are generally observed may be imbalance, hearing disability, reduced strength and endurance. The changes made to the work environment to accommodate the needs of people will enable the employees to perform their best in such situations.  The work life balance is another major concern as this impacts directly on the work efficiency of the employee. In order to accommodate such needs, the employer should take care of the work situation such as the number of hours of the shift, enabling good rapport with the supervisor, a proper information transfer and also significant decision control. A swedish study reported the direct effect on systolic blood pressure and stress. However, a flexible work environment represented better results. It is important for the individual worker to take some required measures to maintain good health and not turn vulnerable to some of the major health issues. It is stated that 70% of the deaths are due to the chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, stroke, obstructive lung disease, and diabetes. Proper care taken by individual ensures them to resist to be prone from diseases with age. This not only helps in nurturing personal health but also indirectly helps the company to procure yield results. Social measures which are viable for the employers can be taken care of such as daily commute of the aged workers, meeting their health concerns and other aspects which may help employees perform their best for their work.

To conclude, the employers who are willing to modify the working conditions and also incorporate the required changes to accommodate the aging workers can yield better performance from the experienced workers. However, there are various reasons that pulls the employers from taking steps to employ the aging workers. For instance, the complexities that tags along the phased retired programs, underlying beliefs that age will decline the efficiency of work, unclear awareness about the laws concerning workplace bias and equal opportunity and also the lack of awareness of comprehensive programs and policies that can be availed to accommodate the aging workers.

1. While designing workplace environment for an elder person, the important aspects to be considered by an HF professionals include their various needs and requirements. It should not be just based on the physical abilities but should also cater to the mental abilities of the person. For instance, a new building is to be constructed which has 3 floors, now if the workforce contains an elder person then an elevator or lift facility should be provided. Also, the technology of the equipments that are to be handled by older workers should be simpler or the person should be trained simply so that they do not have to retain a lot of information.These changes ensure that other age groups will acquaint to such an environment and they can easily adopt to the stress free work life and even if they age in the same environment, it will not affect their health adversely.
2. In order to reverse the effect of an aging workforce on a company’s productive various administrative and engineering controls are used. The engineering control focuses on the job and work environments. The idea is to redesign the job tools, equipment and environments to achieve control over the risks that are associated with injury and illnesses. The Administrative controls on other hand, refer to the steps taken by the management or staff to limit the potentially harmful effects of a stressful job on workers. To ensure safety both measures are required as one caters to the physical demands of the job while other caters to the psychological aspects of it. In other works, the engineering solutions put my employers makes sure that an employee is not subjected to potentially hazardous machinery, faulty equipment and the conditions that an elder person is subjected to work are not extreme in nature. The administrative solutions caters to the psychological aspect of the person, making sure, the person is not in any mental duress and that they have all the required skills or training to do their jobs. Thus in coherence, both solutions provide the overall well-being and safety of the person simultaneously, improving the productivity as well.