**Assignment - 1**

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

**Summary of the Journal:**

The author describes the change in a workplace environment that should be incorporated in order to meet and accommodate the needs of an aging workforce. In regard to the study, the two main reasons for this growth of aging workforce are the increase in the birth margin between 1946 -1964 and workers tending to stay longer before they call for retirement. 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. Hence, the need for the working population to stay on the job longer.

There is an undeniable impact on the aging workers and the efficiency of the work. According to the author, the aging population does not lead to reduced performance or productivity. The reduction is observed only in those jobs where capacities of a person play the 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 fatal as compared to younger workers. 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 four pillars that provide stronger support are as follows: the work environment, Work Arrangements 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.

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 pull the employers from taking steps to employ the aging workers. For instance, the complexities that tags along the phased retiree 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.

**Considerations that should be taken by HF Professionals while designing workplace for older workers. Administrative and Engineering Controls for the safety of older workers and its impact on other age groups:**

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. Incorporating principles of ergonomics, human factors and universal design will assist in delivering the type of environment for the older workers to perform their best.

In order to reverse the effect of an aging workforce on a company’s productivity various administrative and engineering controls are used. The engineering control focuses on the job and works environment. 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 the 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.

The engineering solutions put by employers make 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.

For instance, a new building is to be constructed which has 3 floors, now if the workforce contains an aging employee, then an elevator or lift facility should be provided. Also, the technology of the equipment that is to be handled by older workers should be simpler or the person should be trained so that they do not have to retain a lot of information. Employers can work with these changes ensure that other age groups will acquaint to such an environment and they can easily adapt to the stress-free work life and even if they are in the same environment, it will not affect their health adversely.

Other factors as a part of Engineering Controls could be workstation being properly air conditioned and well lit for the elder workers. Young workers on the other hand might not be affected by working in darker corners of the buildings (workplace) so the seating should be assigned accordingly.

Also, the workstation design can be modified by including chairs plausible for sitting or adding footrests, whereas standing desks could be used where a person has to sit and get up more frequently. At the same level of skill set, employers can allocate the sitting job to an aging employee, as the elder person would not mind sitting for longer hours whereas, a younger employee may get bored and might wish for more physical activities.

The administrative solutions cater 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.

For example, repetitive work with minimal challenges and a lot less to remember could be assigned to an aging employee. Providing such an environment to the younger employees might create havoc out of mundanity as they may wish to be more inclined towards challenges in their job.

Additionally, proper training for the job which includes a visual presentation, continuous vigilance to let the employees know about their mistakes will help them perform their best. However, younger workforce might not take continual monitoring as constructive criticism.

Thus both solutions together provide the overall well-being and safety of the person improving the productivity simultaneously.