

A probe into satisfaction levels with respect to furniture and spatial arrangement among office employees working in Chandigarh public and private sector offices

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Abstract

The Chandigarh city is the pioneer planned city of India having population of 9.01 lakh upto year 2001. The share of office going people is increasing in Chandigarh and needs special attention with regard to working conditions and productivity of organizations for which they work. There is a need to find out the satisfaction with respect to furniture and its spatial arrangement of employees working in Chandigarh offices. A total of 660 employees from various offices of Chandigarh were recruited as sample. The age range of the sample was between 25 to 60 years. The questionnaire used was an adapted and modified version of already existing scales of occupants' satisfaction with indoor environment quality (IEQ) components of other buildings by different researchers. Results indicate that approximately fifty percent of the employees working in private and public sector offices in Chandigarh are satisfied with their office furniture (in terms of flexibility and comfort) and Spatial arrangement (open space, storage and multipurpose functions). Since employees actively involved in the work force spend a large proportion of their lives in their place of work. It is important that the physical aspect of the workplace and satisfaction should be given its due importance.

Keywords: environment, furniture, perceived satisfaction, correlate, Design, Built environment.

1.Introduction

The Chandigarh city is the pioneer planned city of India having population of 9.01 lakh upto year 2001. Chandigarh city is among the fastest growing cities with a decadal population growth rate of 40.30%. This city is center of activities for States of Himachal, Haryana and Punjab. It is also centre of administrative activities of various States. The good level of services available to residents is an example of good governance for cities. To give boost to non polluting industries I.T. park has been setup near Kishangarh village wherein international companies had setup their industries. The share of office going people is increasing in Chandigarh and needs special attention with regard to working conditions and productivity of organizations for which they work.

Office furniture is an indispensable part of office. Furniture is equipped in the office in the form of tables, racks, cabinets, sofa etc. Furniture plays an important role to maintain better working environment. It can be described as a basic facility with which an employee identifies himself. Right kind of furniture must be provided so as to provide maximum comfort to the employee. The proper layout of furniture in one sense makes office work smoothly. It reduces fatigue and health hazards to the minimum (Chimoriya, 2018).

Paul (1995) reported that when working in offices with sit-stand adjustable furniture, employees felt more energetic and less tired by the end of the workday compared to when working in closed offices with non-adjustable furniture. Workplace furniture helps the organization tremendously in increasing its productivity, and at the same time taking care of the employees' health (Bailyn, et al., 2003). If all factors surrounding an employee are ergonomically correct, then the employee will be

comfortable and remain motivated to give the best (Larsson and Gard, 2003). In the work place the essence and need for ergonomics are to ensure maximisation of productivity by reducing operator fatigue and discomfort (Bridger, 2008).

Spatial arrangement can increase impromptu interactions (Peponis et al., 2007), and employees tend to choose the easiest method of communication. Given that these interactions can lead to stronger collaboration and productivity (Campbell & Campbell, 1988; Rashid et al., 2006), adjusting the workplace to promote such interactions is in an organization's best interest.

In India this is a new area of research. The physical aspects of the work environment do not always receive as much attention as the managerial and interpersonal aspects. There is a need to find out the satisfaction with respect to furniture and its spatial arrangement of employees working in Chandigarh offices.

2. Methodology

Sample

A total of 660 employees from various offices of Chandigarh were recruited as sample. The age range of the sample was between 25 to 60 years. The employees who were working for the last three years in a particular organization were considered for inclusion in this study. The minimum educational qualification of the selected subjects was graduation.

Questionnaire

The data collection instrument for this study was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher with the help of experts. The questionnaire is adapted and modified version of already existing scales of occupants' satisfaction with indoor environment quality (IEQ) components of other buildings by different researchers. The questionnaire items were developed to reflect the satisfaction/comfort/productivity components of the office environment. The questionnaire for the study contained 44 total items pertaining to employees' general demographics and satisfaction with thermal, acoustic, and lighting conditions.

Data Analysis

For result findings and in-depth analysis of the different components of office environment on the productivity of the office employees, descriptive statistics has been used. SPSS 16 software as research tool for data analysis was used for this research.

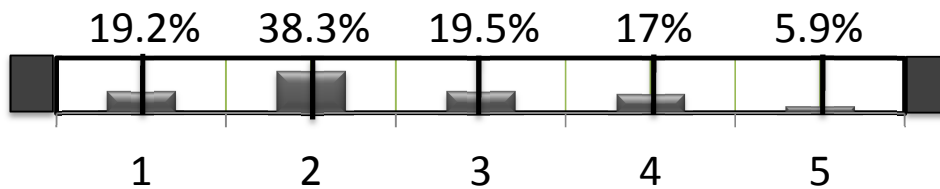
3. Results and Discussion

The respondents ask about the following questions regarding furniture, and spatial arrangement in different public sector and private sector offices and evaluate the responses in terms of frequency distribution. There are four main questions which ask from the employees regarding office furniture in their offices.

Furniture

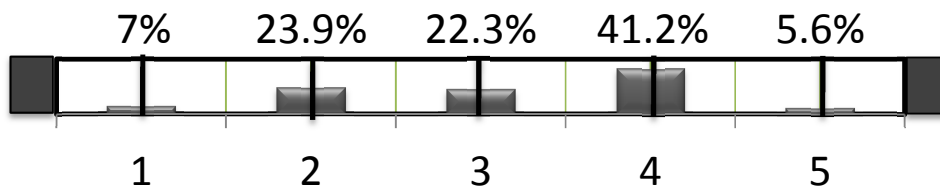
1. Furniture is flexible to adjust, rearrange or reorganize my workspace

19.2 % Not at all, 38.3 % To some extent, 19.5 % Almost, 17.0 % Fairly enough, 5.9 % Completely flexible



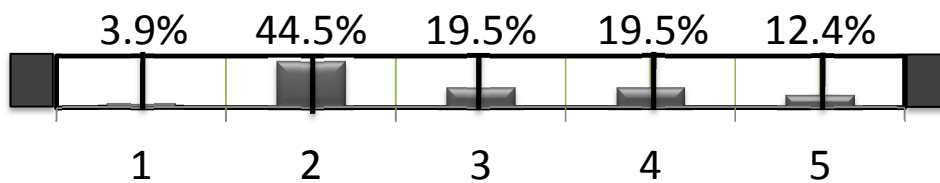
2. Furniture is comfortable enough so that I can work without getting tired till 5pm

7.0 % strongly disagree, 23.9 % disagree, 22.3 % neutral, 41.2 % agree, 5.6 % strongly agree



3. Furniture conditions at work are satisfactory

3.9% Not at all, 44.5% To some extent, 19.5% Often, 19.5% Mostly, 12.4% Always



4. Adequate and comfortable furniture will affect my productivity positively

3.5% strongly disagree, 3.2% disagree, 9.5% neutral, 63.6% agree, 20.2% strongly agree

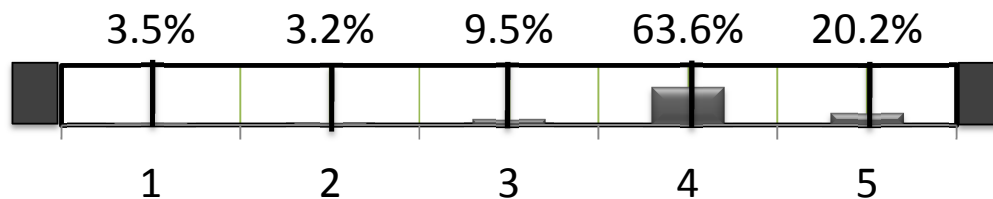


Table 1: Summary table -Satisfaction with Furniture of office

| Question | Response(%) |
|---|-------------|
| Furniture is flexible to adjust, rearrange or reorganize my workspace | 42.4 |
| Furniture is comfortable enough so that I can work without getting tired till 5pm | 46.8 |
| Furniture conditions at work are satisfactory | 51.4 |
| Adequate and comfortable furniture will affect my productivity positively | 83.8 |

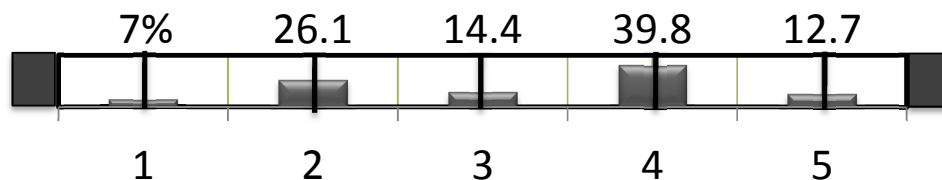
Western studies also emphasize on role of furniture in offices. Kingsley studied the impact of office ergonomics on employees' performance [6]. The level of dissatisfaction with office furniture gives cause for concern as furniture is one major source of back and neck related injuries which has the tendency to affect the health and performance of the employee.

Spatial Arrangement

There are four main questions which ask from the employees regarding office spatial arrangement in their offices.

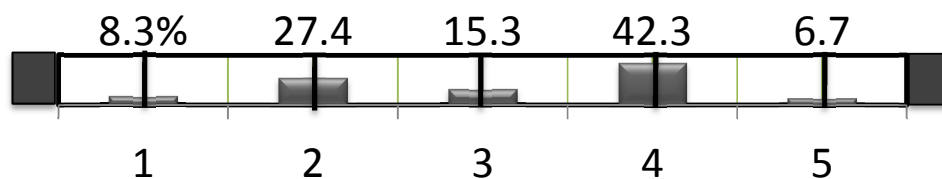
1. Office/branch is open enough to see my colleagues working

7.0% strongly disagree, 26.1% disagree, 14.4% neutral, 39.8% agree, 12.7% strongly agree



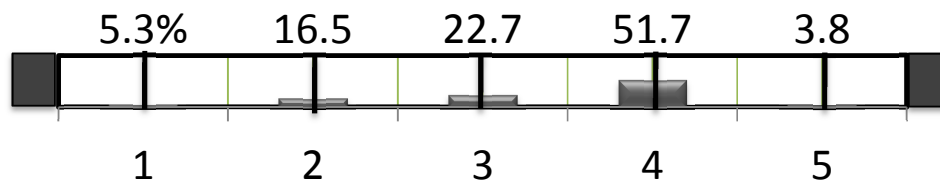
2. Work area is sufficiently equipped for typical needs

8.3% Not at all, 27.4% To some extent, 15.3% Often, 42.3% Mostly, 6.7% Always



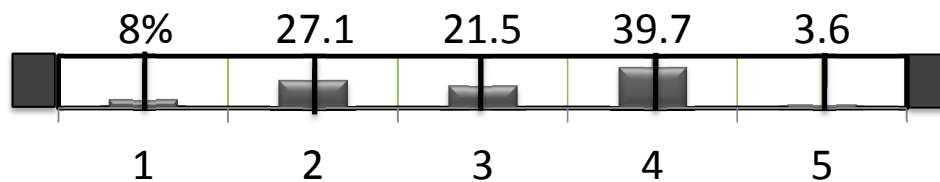
3. Satisfied with the amount of space for storage and displaying important materials

5.3% Extremely dissatisfied, 16.5% Dissatisfied, 22.7% Neutral, 51.7% Satisfied, 3.8% Extremely satisfied



4. Workspace serves multipurpose functions for informal and instant meetings

8.0% strongly disagree, 27.1% disagree, 21.5% neutral, 39.7% agree, 3.6% strongly agree



Response to Spatial Arrangement variable is listed in Table 4.72

Table 2: Satisfaction with Spatial Arrangement in Office

| Question | Response(%) |
|---|-------------|
| Office/branch is open enough to see my colleagues working | 52.6 |
| Work area is sufficiently equipped for typical needs | 64.3 |
| Satisfied with the amount of space for storage and displaying important materials | 55.5 |
| Workspace serves multipurpose functions for informal and instant meetings | 43.3 |

A survey has found that three-quarters of UK employees find the office design of their workplace hampers their work [11]. “Companies need to do more than simply house their people in a workspace and [need to] look to turn their attention to supporting innovation, collaboration and flexibility”[5].

4. Conclusion

It can be concluded that approximately fifty percent of the employees working in private and public sector offices in Chandigarh are satisfied with their office furniture (in terms of flexibility and comfort) and Spatial arrangement (open space, storage and multipurpose functions). People who are actively involved in the work force spend a large proportion of their lives in their place of work. It is important that the physical aspect of the workplace and satisfaction should be given its due importance.

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