

Effectiveness of Management: Workplace Organization and Employee Productivity

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Abstract

Effective management tactics used by organizations must allow for their employees to be engaged and have the more efficient productivity. It is important to examine the historical analysis of how some of the management tactics businesses uses have become what they are today. Chapter one focuses on the historical analysis of business management tactics throughout the 19th and 20 centuries, and how specific psychological tactics have the shifted the focus from workers solely producing output to having their interests be recognized within their workplace. Today, the COVID-19 pandemic has shifted the way many businesses function, especially how their workforce is able to work through working from home environments. Chapter two focuses on the effects that the pandemic has brought to employees and how their can be negative impacts from working isolated within their homes. The COVID-19 pandemic has also created problems for productivity of businesses, especially through the result of “quiet quitting” from their employees. Chapter three focuses on the effects of “quiet quitting” on businesses, how the pandemic has affected productivity within businesses and potential solutions to improve business productivity and employee satisfaction. Chapter four then focuses on how the application within a real Human Resources Department can allow for exposure to many of these topics throughout the paper. Overall, the purpose of this paper aims to examine the historical and modern effects of management tactics to allow for businesses to succeed.

Keywords: productivity, satisfaction, management

Chapter One: Historical Analysis of Employee Productivity and Engagement Through Psychological Management Tactics

It is important for organizations and businesses to enable their employees to work in the most efficient way possible. The way the flow of work and how employees interact with one another are important for the success of business. The art of management can be seen as “knowing exactly what you want men to do, and then seeing that they do it in the best and cheapest way” (Taylor, 1912, p.21). Since the late 19th century and 20th century, there have been many different standpoints on the most efficient ways for businesses to operate and manage their employees to obtain the finest work. The purpose of this paper is to examine the historical ideas that led to forming effective management tactics to improve employee productivity and engagement. This analysis indicates that the Scientific Management Theory by Frederick Taylor, Time and Motion Studies performed by Frederick Taylor, Frank and Lillian Gilbreth, the Human Relations Theory by George Elton Mayo and the Theory of Human Motivation by Abraham Maslow were influential in providing various productivity and engagement tactics used by organizations through psychological approaches.

Frederick Taylor and the Scientific Management Theory

One of the most influential contributions to the historical evolution of business management is the Scientific Management Theory introduced by mechanical engineer and management consultant, Frederick Taylor. Taylor was born in 1856 in Philadelphia, and later in life had goals to attend Harvard College to become a lawyer until medical problems with his eyes prevented him (Copley, 1923). This led Taylor to shift his focus to another form to make money, which was joining various jobs in different industries. While entering the industry, productivity was evolving with the development of machines to lead to companies to experience bigger

production (Copley, 1923). This allowed Taylor to see how specific components such as output can be influenced by employee efficiency. When entering the industry, Taylor highly disliked manual labor, but took various apprenticeships such as within a pump- manufacturing company to gain experience (Copley, 1923). When Taylor first entered the industry, he experienced employees that were not cooperative at all, along with the relationships between employees and their employers clashing against each other (Feiss, 1924). It would be during this time of entering the industry that led Taylor to form and apply the Scientific Management Theory to the problems he was seeing within the industry.

Through the Scientific Management Theory, Taylor was able to apply the ideas of the scientific method to the management of businesses. Within the Scientific Management Theory, Taylor focused on the unconscious and philosophical aspects of management. Through this, Taylor applied principles of the spirit gives the body the ability to work, and he focused mainly on how the unconscious of individuals plans out specific movements and mechanisms while working to create an efficient system (Copley, 1923). The theory supports the importance of examining the mechanisms to get work done in the most efficient way. With the Scientific Management Theory, Taylor focused on the idea of maximum prosperity which refers to each man within the organization to develop to his maximum efficiency, so he can take advantage of his natural abilities and produce the most efficient work he can (Taylor, 1915). He wanted to focus on the importance of business getting the most output from their employees by focusing on what they are naturally talented in and separating work through those abilities. Taylor believed that employees want high wages from their management, and the employer wants their employees to create a low cost of labor to manufacture specific things (Taylor, 1912). This can show that there is a non-antagonistic relationship between the employee and their employer as

they are both seeking separate things from one another. Through the Scientific Management Theory Taylor focused on the importance of a responsibility on management it was to learn about their employees to know they excel at, so they can be properly selected and trained (Copley, 1923). This is important for management as it can allow for the right employees to be completing the correct jobs based on the natural abilities, and lead to them producing the most output for the business. Overall, the Scientific Management Theory by Frederick Taylor focused on the individual aspect of management, and ways that individual employees can be more effective which can help the business succeed. This theory was influential in how management evolved in the years to come.

The Importance of the Time and Motion Studies

Frank and Lillian Gilbreth can be seen applying scientific analysis to the ideas of the Scientific Management Theory through their combination with Frederick Taylor to create the Time and Motion Study. These time and motion studies allowed for workers to work in a more efficient way to produce more output for companies (Farmer, 1921). The time and motion studies were very influential in the evolution of management tactics that are seen throughout various organizations.

American engineer/consultant, Frank B. Gilbreth, was born on July 7th, 1868, in Fairfield, Maine where he was mostly surrounded by strong puritan influence (Uriwick & Brech, 1949). Early in his life, Gilbreth broke away from normal specific social circles that he was involved in because of the career path he decided to take. Instead of attending college, at the age of seventeen Gilbreth decided to join the building industry through an apprenticeship in bricklaying where he was able to move up the ranks of the company quickly (Uriwick & Brech, 1949). By having these specific jobs throughout the company and industry, Gilbreth became interested in

many aspects of management efficiency. Right away when starting his new job in this industry, Gilbreth was interested in the best movements of workers to save labor for the workers themselves and the company (Urwick & Brech, 1949). These interests led him to his popular motion studies that analyzed the efficiency of workers within various companies.

Frank Gilbreth's wife, American psychologist/ industrial engineer, Dr. Lillian Moller Gilbreth, was born May 24th, 1878, in Oakland California (Reynolds, 2003). Lillian Gilbreth played a very influential part in developing the Scientific Management Theory and had great influence on her husband research and ideas. In 1900, she graduated from the University of California, where she wrote her thesis entitled "The Psychology of Management" (Reynolds, 2003). This helped shape the ideas of both Lillian and Frank Gilbreth when looking at management. They both thought that the fundamentals of management were psychology and education (Urwick & Brech, 1949). This showed through Frank Gilbreth work of motion studies that focused mostly on the movements of employees and their activities that led to the most efficiency. Lillian Gilbreth focused on the application of psychology into the field of management. She defined the psychology of management as "the effect of the mind that is directing work upon that work which is directed, and the effect of this undirected and directed upon the mind of the worker" (Gilbreth, 1914, p.1). Lillian Gilbreth believed that management is based on work being directed by the mind and the effect of it on a worker. She also applied the idea of functionalization to the practice of management within organizations. By separating the work between individuals, employees can see who is lacking skills and concentrate on their specific role (Gilbreth, 1914). This supports the ideas of the Scientific Management Theory as it focuses on the individual employee based on separation of function based on specific natural abilities within a company. When separating the work of the employees, everyone has a function

and specific work to perform (Gilbreth, 1914). These ideas supported the Scientific Management Theory as it focused on the specific works of individual employees, and how the work is assigned and divided between employees of a company to utilize their special ability to get the most efficient output produced.

Through the time and motions studies Frank Gilbreth and Frederick Taylor were able to find a solution to many problems within companies. While Taylor was solely focused on the time it took to perform a task along with the breaks an employee took, Gilbreth was also interested in the movements when performing the task and working conditions employees were put under (Farmer, 1921). Taylor focused more on the time aspect of efficiency of working, while Gilbreth focused on the specific movements of employees to be the most efficient. The method of Taylor's system was to divide the work among employees and then time the separate workers to see their efficiency of completing a task (Farmer, 1921). This is the creation of the time study as he focused on finding the most effective ways to do a task in the shortest amount of time to produce more output in less amount of time and create less waste. He conducted a study regarding the time it took women to examine bicycle balls that were defected. Within this study, Taylor found as the women worked longer it resulted in them spending more time talking, which led him to the conclusion if the time spent performing the task and working hours were shorter the employees would be more productive (Farmer, 1921). Taylor wanted to increase output by measuring how a worker performed a task in each interval (Farmer, 1921). This is important when examining the time studies, as Taylor was able to focus on incorporating shorter working hours or even rest breaks if needed to spend less time and money on work that will not be beneficial for the company.

As Frederick Taylor focused more on Time Studies Frank Gilbreth focused on Motion Studies. The purpose of the Motion Study was to find the most standard movements and methods that are needed to perform a specific task in the most effective way (Gilbreth, 1911). When trying to track the movements of the individuals he used a stopwatch which was seen as not effective, which is when he turned to using photographs (Farmer, 1921). However, more elaborate technology was needed to show accurate results. Therefore, the cyclegraph was used to see the light within the hands of the employees to track the movements used to make them more efficient (Farmer, 1921). An example of a Motion Study that Gilbreth performed could be seen with employees covering chocolates. The results of this study showed that the employees in the department went from all having different movements of work, to a new technique that allowed them to work faster and cover more chocolates (Farmer, 1921). The main result of these studies is to help the employers gain cooperation from their employees, reduce waste and costs from the organizations (Gilbreth, 1911). Frank Gilbreth had taken interest in Frederick Taylor's work. Gilbreth attended some of Taylor's lectures regularly, and the contact between them allowed them to share their ideas which were new to each other (Urwick & Brech, 1949). This contact led to the Time and Motion studies to come together. With his method, Gilbreth wanted to look at the individual movements of the employees and then time them through the collaboration of Taylor's ideas (Farmer, 1921). Gilbreth and Taylor were able to provide insight on how the employees can work faster through various changes in their working environment. Some of these changes included comfortable seating for the employees while they work and rests to help improve productivity (Farmer. 1921). Overall, the Time and Motion Studies were very influential in the evolution of management tactics to improve employee productivity.

Opposition to the Scientific Management Theory

Some people such as management consultant and social worker, Mary Parker Follett opposed the Scientific Management Theory. Mary Parker Follett was born in 1868 in a town called Quincy which was near Boston, Massachusetts (Parker, 1984). Through her college career she was able to gain more interest in the problems seen within businesses. She attended Harvard's Annex for women in 1888, which was called Radcliffe college, where she studied topics such as law and history and became interested in problems within companies such as the working conditions of employees (Parker, 1984). However, Follett did not do most of her work within businesses. Follett worked mostly as a social worker that helped struggling communities (Parker, 1984). With her application of political knowledge to business she was able to break away from the norms within management. Follett became very interested in the motivations of employees and specific groups within companies (Parker, 1984). This topic of focus is different from the Scientific Management Theory that relied mainly on increasing output and less on the attitudes of employees. She created two different viewpoints which were behavioral view of control and holistic view of control. Within the behavioral view of control, Follett proposed for employees to be treated as a human that has their own interests and other abilities aside from their work (Parker, 1984). This is the opposition of focusing on workers mainly "machines" where they are only used to create output. Within the holistic view of control, Follett proposed that businesses function with dynamic processes that created interconnectedness between all parts of the company (Parker, 1984). With this approach Follett wanted to focus on the connection between specific functions in a business rather than just on the functions and how they are performed (Parker, 1984). These ideas presented by Follett go against the Scientific Management Theory.

Mary Parker Follett was also highly influenced by the ideas of Gestalt Psychologists. These psychologists believed in studying wholes and opposed that specific states are not made up of individual elements (Follett, 1941/1982a). These ideas influenced Follett when examining the functions of businesses. She saw the business as an integrative unity that made a coordinated unit instead of separate parts (Follett, 1941/1982b). This shows that Follett focused on the business as a whole and not their individual parts to maximize the most output. By visiting specific businesses during the time, she found many workers had hostile attitudes towards one another due to the focus on being the most productive in their time of producing output (Follett, 1941/1982b). This shows the results of the Time and Motion Studies by Taylor and Gilbreth and the consequences they had on businesses. Follett believed that the Gestalt Psychologists influenced organizations and how they hire and promote individuals by focusing on their whole personality (Follett, 1941/1982a). This viewpoint focused on looking at employees through their whole personality, rather than just basing them on their skillset.

When examining the relationship between employees and their management, Follett believed that the workers should be represented and have their opinions heard and allow them to help the business altogether (Follett, 1941/1982b). She also focused how employers can get the most engagement from their employees. Within a unit, an employer can gain participation through giving their employees incentives, acknowledging the differences that might arise within the group, and comprising (Follett, 1941/1982c). This supports a more of connective and supportive relationship between workers and management. After her death in 1933, her views were often overlooked due to the Great Depression, where many businesses needed to focus on surviving and not so much on the pleasing their employees (Fox & Ulrich, 1982). Overall, the

influence of Mary Parker Follett and her ideas were crucial to how management evolved to improve employee engagement.

George Elton Mayo and Employee Relations

The ideas of Mary Parker Follett had great influence on the work of Australian psychologist, George Elton Mayo, and the Human Relations Theory. Mayo placed emphasis away from the efficiency of an organization being solely based on how workers operated machines, rather he focused on the attitudes of workers (Mayo, 1924). His work reflects ideas of Follett and strays away from the ideas of the Scientific Management Theory. George Elton Mayo was born on December 26, 1880, in Adelaide, Australia (Trahair, 1984). Mayo did not spend his whole educational career in Australia, rather he spent most of his life in the United States. He attended St. Peter's College and the University of Adelaide, where he turned to business after failing within the field of medicine, however, also took an interest in philosophy (Trahair, 1984). Mayo was able to combine what he had learned from psychology with his background with ethics. Mayo was greatly influenced by the ideas of neurologist Pierre Janet. As Janet believed that hysteria was produced through a hypnogogic state, Mayo believed that that this hypnogogic feeling of daydreaming while working is due to employees having a feeling of being isolated and doing the same work without any change (Zaleznik, 1984). This led Mayo to focus on the social conditions of employees within a business that might lead to this sense of daydreaming.

Through the Human Relations Theory, Mayo was able to shift the focus towards the mental attitudes of employees and away from speed/time of performance. The Human Relations Theory focused on the human aspects of how workers view their work and their attitudes towards the work they perform (Zaleznik, 1984). Mayo worked with different businesses to examine the fatigue and how working conditions can affect the attitudes of workers. Through a

research study at a textile mill, Mayo was able to study the working conditions and fatigue of employees. The textile mill that he visited had problems with the internal employee engagement and satisfaction. By implementing work breaks throughout the day, the employees were able to feel less fatigued, have better attitudes, and the expenses of the company that would have been waster were able to be distributed to employees as bonuses (Mayo, 1924). With being said, by providing better working conditions such as introducing rest pauses for the employees, they were not as fatigued which increased morale and better attitudes towards their work. Within this textile mill, Mayo was also able to examine the effect of repetitive work on the employees. Through his research, Mayo found that repetitive work was detrimental to the efficiency of workers, which can lead to them feeling to a daydream state and have a negative feeling towards their work (Mayo, 1924).

Mayo also spent many years working with Hawthorne Works of Western Electric Company. During the years of 1928 to 1931, Mayo worked with the company to observe the working conditions and performance of employees (Trahair,1984). Over the five years he examined a group of women who helped put together parts for telephones. Mayo found that by giving the women better working conditions and less supervision, they had better output and their attitudes in regards to their work was improved due to better social relations with their coworkers (Trahair, 1984). Mayo also examined a group of men who had more supervision over their work. The results of this showed that with more supervision and less freedom the men did not have a positive attitude to increase their output (Trahair, 1984). Within his work at Hawthorne, Mayo was able to find a theme that the departments of the company that had the lowest turnover was due to an employee led group that acted as a team (Bell, 1947). Overall, the work of George Elton Mayo through the Human Relations Theory the importance of employee

motivation and interests were focused on more within the management of businesses to create success.

Abraham Maslow and Employee Motivation

The Theory of Human Motivation presented by the American psychologist, Abraham Maslow focused on new ways employees during the 20th century were able to become more engaged with their roles. Maslow was born to a Jewish family on April 1st, 1908, in Manhattan where he would study at City College of New York, law at Brooklyn Law School, transferred to Cornell University, went to Wisconsin for further education in psychology, and then attended the New School in New York City (Hoffman, 1988). One of his major mentors was Gestalt psychologist Max Wertheimer (1880-1943) (Hoffman, 1988). With this Maslow had similar influences from Gestalt psychology on his ideas such as Follett and Mayo. Through his work, Mayo focused on the idea of human motivation and the idea that people aspire to reach a level of self-actualization (Maslow, 1965/1998). Maslow is famous for his creation of the hierarchy of needs. Within this Theory of Human Motivation or hierarchy of needs there are different layers. The bottom consists of the physiological needs such as hunger, thirst and sex, the next layer is safety needs of an organism, next is love needs or the sense of belonging, then there is the self-esteem needs, and finally the self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). This sense of self-actualization that people aspire to achieve is important in how engaged an employee might be to their job roles.

Businesses being able to support their employees to try and achieve this self-actualization can be very beneficial. Self-actualization can be seen as the need for a person to do what they are meant to be doing, which is not always attainable, however it is different for everyone and can be worked towards (Maslow, 1943). This is important for organizations to set their employees up for the most success to strive for this. Maslow believed that when people work to become self-

actualized, their work becomes part of themselves, which can in turn help the business to succeed (Maslow, 1965/1998). If people are engaged with their work because it is considered “their calling” it can allow for them to be more focused and ready to work together with their business and be more productive. If an organization is self-actualized along with the employees, it allows work to become more enjoyable and for people to want to go to work (Maslow, 1965/1998). Through this hierarchy of needs, self-actualization can be seen as the highest motivating level for employees to achieve (Maslow, 1965/1998). Overall, the Theory of Human Motivation by Abraham Maslow proposed for organizations to let their employees find their calling within their work and work towards this goal of self-actualization which can be a very beneficial management tactic to improve employee engagement.

Businesses have gone from focusing on work movements as the most effective way to increase productivity to examining the attitudes and internal motivations of their employees. This historical analysis shows how businesses have based their tactics to provide employee engagement and increase productivity on psychological theoretical background. The evolution of organizational development has allowed for employee engagement to be strengthen and examined as more of an internal aspect that can be affected by each component of a business. Overall, many influential people and psychological theories such as the Scientific Management Theory by Frederick Taylor, Time and Motion Studies performed by Frederick Taylor, Frank and Lillian Gilbreth, the Human Relations Theory by George Elton Mayo and the Theory of Human Motivation by Abraham Maslow have led to the development and strengthening of organizational tactics to further improve the employee engagement within their company.

Chapter Two: Examining the Negative Consequences on Employee Engagement of Home Working Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has shifted the dynamic of the workplace/workforce in various ways. Employees had to navigate a different work culture through an unknowing time and underwent a major change which was working from home. Within this time, it could have been easy for work engagement within employees to decrease due to the communication with one another only through technology. Kahn (1990) through the Work Engagement Theory defines personal engagement as “the simultaneous employment and expression of a person’s “preferred self” in task behaviors that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence (physical, cognitive, and emotional), and active, full role performances” (p. 700). Work engagement is a critical component of the work environment and the role of the employees. The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted workplace climate and culture for employees that shifted to the working-from-home structure. This paper aims to reflect on the negative consequences of the home working environment on corporate employees due to the changes of their work environment and culture.

Work Engagement Theory

The Work Engagement Theory proposed by William Khan focuses on personal engagement and disengagement, and the effects of psychological elements within the work environment and specific work roles. Kahn (1990) states that people are more engaged or physically involved with their work when it aligns with their values. It allows them to be creative and connect with others. These components are important to establish when employees assess their role within their organization. Personal disengagement can be seen as the withdrawal behavior by individuals that create disconnect and incomplete performance within work roles

(Kahn, 1990). It is important for employees to not become disengaged to succeed at role tasks. However, with this disengagement, employees can become distant from their role and do not act as their usual self (lack of energy) when performing their job (Kahn, 1990). With this, individuals might feel detached from their work role, which can affect their work performance.

The Work Engagement Theory also focuses on the effects of psychological elements of employees' work conditions. Some of the psychological elements that play a role on work conditions are psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability (Kahn, 1990). Kahn (1990) describes psychological meaningfulness as "...a feeling that one is receiving a return on investments of oneself in a currency of physical, cognitive, or emotional energy" (pp.703-704). It is important for employees to feel this meaningfulness by having the chance to provide and receive a lot within their work role. Factors that influence psychological meaningfulness are task characteristics, role characteristics and work interactions (Kahn, 1990). Kahn (1990) believes that employees should have tasks that are varied and allow them to be creative, along with their role characteristics to match with their self-image and to have connection with colleagues to have inclusion within their organization. Another psychological element is psychological safety which is seen as employees having the ability to show themselves without having any negative consequences on their career or image (Kahn, 1990). The factors that influence psychological safety are interpersonal relationships (being able to share ideas with others with no consequences), group and intergroup dynamics (shaped by the groups within a specific organization), management style and process (having a leader that is supportive and trusting) and organizational norms (having expectations of roles within an organization) (Kahn, 1990). All these factors are important in allowing for an employee to grow and be themselves without fearing negative impacts. Lastly, psychological availability is having

resources to help support any problems physically, emotionally, or psychological (Kahn, 1990). The factors that influence psychological availability are physical energy, emotional energy, insecurity (how secure they feel within their role) and outside life (life-work balance) (Kahn, 1990). All these psychological elements play a role in how engaged an employee would be within their specific role and organization.

COVID-19 and Social Interaction

A major negative consequence due to working from home due to COVID-19 is the lack of social interaction that workers would receive from their colleagues. The sense of connectedness between employees working together is decreased when working from home. In a study by Lal et al. (2021), researchers asked participants in the United Kingdom who shifted to the home working environment to keep work diaries for ten working days. Through this study, the researchers wanted to examine the relationship between social interaction and remote working. The results of the literature showed that employees felt there were fewer personal conversations being had, which led to lower social interaction with their colleagues (Lal et al., 2021). These results can show that by not being in the same work environment, there are less opportunities for connectedness and sociability between employees. Social interaction can play a big role on how employees feel about their work culture and careers. A limitation of this study can be seen through the very small sample size that was provided within the study to collect data from. Kaufman and Taniguchi (2021) examined retrospective reports from the year 2020 regarding the changes of job positions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The researchers were interested in seeing how the way employees feel their job has changed since the pandemic. The results showed that employees who worked from home were 23% more likely to state that they were less connected with their coworkers than employees who worked in the physical work

environment (Kaufman and Taniguchi, 2021). This can show that working from home creates a sense of disconnect for many employees, as they are not physically with the other coworkers to bounce ideas off one another or interact with throughout the day. The employees who work from home do not have the ability to have face to face interactions with their coworkers therefore they can become isolated (Kaufman and Taniguchi, 2021). Interpersonal relationships within the workplace can be seen as a component of psychological safety within the Work Engagement Theory (Kahn, 1990). Overall, a negative consequence of the work shift to working from home is the lack of social connectedness between coworkers.

COVID-19 and Employee Work-Life Balance

Another negative consequence from the COVID-19 pandemic has been the blurred line between work and life balance or boundaries due to work from home environments, which in turn affects the well-being of employees. In a study by Adisa et al. (2022), researchers looked to examine work-life balance and the COVID-19 pandemic shift of working from home for many employees. The researchers examined data from academic lecturers in the United Kingdom based on their experiences of working from home during the pandemic (Adisa et al., 2022). The results showed that the pandemic eliminated the boundaries between work and home life, which in turn can hinder their well-being. Adisa et al. (2022), states it is important for employees to have the separation between work and outside life such as their family or fun activities outside of work. Some participants stated that they are juggling both work and non-work components at the same time such as taking care of their children while still on the clock, which can strain them physically and emotionally (Adisa et al., 2022). The participants also described the lack of feeling that they used to have when going to work in person, which was the sense of leaving work problems at work when they returned home (Adisa et al., 2022). All these components

justify that the work from home culture that was created by the COVID-19 pandemic has led to employees having no separation from their work stressors when they are with their family or trying to enjoy other aspects of their lives.

Many parents during the pandemic had to juggle work pressures and helping their children navigate remote learning. In a study by Wethal et al. (2022), researchers examined the boundaries of work-life components during working remotely in the pandemic. The participants included families within different households in the United Kingdom (Wethal et al., 2022). This can allow for the researchers to see the differences of families; however, a limitation of the research study is that they focused strictly on upper class households instead of comparing upper- and lower-class families. The results showed that when having to focus on their work and the education of their children, many parents had to either cut down on their work hours and not achieve as much as they would, extend their working time outside of 9-5 which can create more pressure, or complete their tasks late at night when the children went to sleep (Wethal et al., 2022). These findings support that having blurred boundaries of work-life balance can affect the physical and emotional energy of employees. Physical and emotional energy are seen as elements that influence psychological availability in the Work Engagement Theory (Kahn, 1990). Overall, a negative consequence of the working-from-home environment is the lack of separation between work and home life.

COVID-19 and Employee Motivation

Lastly, a negative consequence of working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic is the decrease of motivation from employees. In a study by Galanti et al. (2021), researchers examine working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic and aspects of the job demands and resources model (JD-R model). The model states that every occupation has its own specific job demand and job resources (Galanti et al., 2021). The study focused on people who worked

full time from work in Italian public or private organizations through a questionnaire on Qualtrics (Galanti et al., 2021). The questionnaire measured various aspects of working from home and of their position. The results showed that working from home can create many distractions within the workspace which can lead to decrease the motivation of employees (Galanti et al., 2021). By being distracted it may take away from their ability to concentrate or engage within the tasks. By examining the JD-R model, job and personal resources can influence the well-being and motivation of employees (Galanti et al., 2021).

Motivation can play a big role in how employees view their job. In a study by Rietveld et al. (2021), researchers examine the three basic needs of the self-determination theory (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) and how these along with intrinsic motivation can be affected by working from home. The participants consisted of employees of a Dutch higher education institution, who participated in an online survey (Rietveld et al., 2021). The results of the study showed that when employees had to work from home, they reported a decrease in intrinsic motivation, as they did not enjoy their work (Rietvel et al., 2021). This can show that employees did not enjoy the work they were doing while working from home, therefore they were not internally motivated to complete it or achieve goals. This may suggest that the employees needed to examine their task characteristics of their position to gain more engaging work. Kahn (1990), states “When organization members were doing work that was challenging, clearly delineated, varied, creative and somewhat autonomous, they were more likely to experience psychological meaningfulness” (p. 704). Employees need to have meaningful work to be motivated to succeed. Overall, working from home can decrease the motivation many employees exhibit.

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has created a major shift in the workforce and how employees work. Working from home has created a whole new environment and has

created many challenges for employees. Three negative consequences of working from home are the decrease in social interaction with colleagues, lack of life-work balance and a decrease in motivation. All these consequences can lead to many problems within the workforce. It is important for these problems within the workforce to be addressed and fixed. Future research can focus on ways to improve home working as it has been integrated into normal society since the pandemic. This will help the employees and the organizations that they represent be successful.

Chapter Three: Examining the Potential Solutions to the Struggles of Businesses and Workforce Satisfaction Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major effect on the way businesses and their employees' function. Many businesses had to either close, restructure or perform major layoffs to their employees. Many businesses that were customer facing ran into problems with their supply chain, consumer demand, cash flow and their workforce (Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic changed a lot of aspects within businesses, especially the workforce. Many employees within corporate jobs had to move to working remotely, which changed the dynamic of their job roles. Working from home has led to many different problems within the workforce of many companies. The major outcome to the COVID-19 pandemic has been the decline in productivity by many businesses. It is important to focus on how the productivity of businesses has been influenced by the changing times brought up by the pandemic. This paper aims to reflect on the problem of decreased productivity of businesses due to workforce struggles such as "quiet quitting" and potential solutions to improve employee satisfaction and business performance.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many businesses were affected by hindrances with their productivity. Some of the changes due to the pandemic have been that many people are no longer going out and spending their money on goods, therefore businesses had to use up their spending to keep their company up and running (Meyer et al., 2022). This shows that the productivity of businesses has taken a big hit from the COVID-19 pandemic, as many customers are not leaving their homes to go shop. The productivity of businesses has also been affected through the decrease in sales activity due to many customers not entering stores or purchasing products but also with disruptions in their supply chains to obtain specific necessary inventory (Meyer et al.,

2022). The individual productivity of employees can also be affected which in turn can influence the productivity of the organization. Employee productivity was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic through the isolation that many workers were put through, which made accomplishing many of their tasks difficult which impacted their productivity (Anakpo et al., 2023). Employee productivity plays a role in how well the business performs and reflects their productivity.

Problem Within Organizations

One major problem that affects business performance that can be seen within the workforce is employees undergoing “quiet quitting” due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has hurt businesses mostly through the idea of many of their employees undergoing “quiet quitting” within their job roles. Formica and Sfodera (2022) define “quiet quitting” as “the limited commitment of employees to carry out the assigned duties and to relinquish from any other task not specified in their job description” (p.900). A problem of “quiet quitting” can be seen with job dissatisfaction within employees. Job satisfaction can be seen as the feelings an employee has towards their job, and how much happiness they feel while in their job role (Bandyopadhyay & Srivastava, 2022). Employee satisfaction plays a role in how the employee supports the success of a business. When employee’s satisfaction is high, employees are more loyal towards the company and work harder to allow it to run efficiently (Islam et al., 2020). “Quiet quitting” can be seen when employees are dissatisfied and have low commitment to their tasks within their job position and are not very invested in what they are doing (Formica & Sfodera, 2022). Employees who partake in “quiet quitting” do not usually go above and beyond for their job, and do not add in any extra effort. Usually, these employees do not go beyond their needed obligations and refuse to perform any work outside of working hours (Boy & Sürmeli, 2023). This can potentially hurt many businesses, as employees are not thinking

out of the box to create solutions for obstacles they might be facing, which in turn can decrease the productivity of the business. It is important for employees to be satisfied and find their work meaningful as it can help the business. Employees who are satisfied with their job will be more creative within the workplace, will try and find solutions to any obstacle, and support others that they work with to achieve a goal (Bakotić, 2016). When employees “quiet quit” they have decreased performance because they are working to get the job done but not to make it meaningful. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, employees have been experiencing increased stress at work and longer work hours (Ng & Stanton, 2023). This can play a role in how employees might be overworked and turn to “quiet quitting” as a result. Overall, the problem of “quiet quitting” of employees within businesses needs to be addressed and provided solutions so the productivity of organizations is not being negatively impacted.

Potential Solutions to Increase Business Productivity and Employee Satisfaction

One solution to increase employee satisfaction and avoid “quiet quitting” is for organizations to provide their employees with effective and efficient feedback based on specific goals that they set for themselves. To increase employee satisfaction, it would be helpful for organizations to allow for their employees to have good feedback from the higher leadership within the company on specific goals that the employees set for their future career. This can be a good way for employees to state what they are looking for and for the company leadership to provide them with some additional guidance to attain these goals. It is important for employees to plan out their specific goals they want to achieve, so they can be more satisfied with their job to obtain these goals. By going through career development, the leadership and organization can allow for employees to set career goals based on their KSA’s (knowledge, skills, and abilities) (Ali et al., 2019). With this, the employees can align what they are most successful at with their

future career goals through efficient feedback from their supervisors to provide them the resources to achieve these goals. Human Resources within an organization can work with the employees to help them modify their role or goals to align with their skills (Rizwan et al., 2014). This will allow for employees to feel they are able to discuss their future and come to terms with their KSA's to evaluate their role now and goals they might want to achieve to fit more with their KSA's. When making specific organizational policies it is important for Human Resources to examine employee satisfaction and help implement specific tactics that will help with satisfaction, and lead to higher productivity for the whole business (Rizwan et al., 2014). Overall, providing more detailed feedback that aligns with the KSA's of employees will allow for them to be more satisfied with their role within the organization.

The goals that they set can be aligned with the goals of the company itself, which can in turn help with the overall performance of the company. This idea can be achieved by the organization performing a Management by Objectives (MBO) approach. MBO is a technique used by organizations to align their employees' goals with their own (Islam et al., 2020). These objectives are seen as informal and part of the employees' everyday lives (Islam et al., 2020). Within this approach, there is interaction from individuals at every level of a company, and the individual is able to focus their tasks on the necessary and overarching goals of the company (Ogochukwu et al., 2022). They will help improve not only employee satisfaction but will help them become more aligned and committed with what the organization needs to achieve to succeed and be more productive.

With this approach there are several components that the individual must go through with MBO planning. The steps of MBO planning consists of defining the problem within the company and setting specific goals, objectives to reach the goals are given, communicating a

clear path for the objectives to be completed, examining the results of what should come out of these goals, defining how the performance will be evaluated, and there is a full agreement between the supervisor and employee to fulfill their duties (Islami et al., 2018). These steps are important in planning the goals that will be completed. The monitoring of the MBO phase includes implementing the plan on how everything will be evaluated along with allowing individuals to have their freedom to complete the work and have constant communication with them (Islami et al., 2018). This helps the supervisor maintain control and allow for it to stay on track. Lastly, evaluating the MBO phase includes how did the strategy and plan allow for the organization to be more productive and for the employee to be more satisfied with their work and role (Islami et al., 2018). This is very important to allow for both the individual employee and organization to succeed. Many employees are unable to reach their goals due to not knowing what their managers or company expect them to complete and work towards (Ogochukwu et al., 2022). Many times, when employees are unaware of how they should make changes in their work to align with the company goals, it leads to low productivity within the organization (Ogochukwu et al., 2022). This can be due to the fact that employees who are unaware of what they should be achieving to help the company might be putting their focus into tasks or projects that are unhelpful for the company to succeed. MBO allows for employees and their supervisors to speak together in ways that the individual employee can help with the overall goal of the company which can lead to increased productivity of the organization. Through the MBO approach, employees can be seen as more productive for the company as they are partaking in important decisions and future planning for the company (Ogochukwu et al., 2022). Overall, effective feedback aligned with the skills and goals of the organization is very helpful in increasing productivity and employee satisfaction.

Another solution is for organizations to allow for themselves to modify their strict guidelines of their job roles and allow for employees to be provided with more job autonomy in order to increase productivity within their business. Employee satisfaction can be positively impacted by having increased job autonomy (Rizwan et al., 2014). The term autonomy can be defined as employees having the ability to choose to partake in tasks that align with their interests and provide more meaning to their work (Gagné & Bhave, 2011). If employees feel they have the option to work on things that are more interesting to them this will in turn allow them to be more satisfied with their work and the organization. Dissatisfaction within their job can be based on the fulfillment of three basic needs of the employees not being met, which are human needs, values, and purpose (Formica & Sfodera, 2022). By having their needs met, their values aligned with business and having a connection to the purpose of the company allows for employees to be more satisfied within their role (Formica & Sfodera, 2022). It is important for employees to have these specific skills as they can help drive more business and allow for their organizations to be successful. When an employee has high autonomy or freedom within their role, it can lead to more positive feelings toward their role and higher job satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Jong, 2016; Ryan & Deci, 2000). By having more control over their role, employees can build satisfaction with their organization as they can become more involved in specific tasks in which they can apply their strengths. A tactic of how this job autonomy can be achieved is through more freedom from the higher leadership of the company. If the employee must ask permission from the higher leadership every time they want to make a certain decision, it can lead to employees not being collaborative and having low job autonomy (Burcharth et al., 2017). Therefore, organizations must have a relationship of trust with their employees to allow them to work through decisions critically and find new solutions to problems freely.

With this, job autonomy can play a role in how organizations perform and succeed. Through Human Resources, if employees are given the ability to incorporate autonomy within their role, it can allow for employees to work together to be more effective for the organization's success and productivity (Park, 2018). If employees have the freedom to work and think creatively, they can all bounce ideas off one another and think of new and creative ways to allow for the business to run more effectively. In a study by Park (2018), results showed that employees who had more autonomy were able to work with others which led to higher performance by the organization and better customer satisfaction. This shows that the more freedom and ability employees must work on things that interest them, it will help companies out in the long run to be successful and have increased productivity. Without job autonomy, employees would have to ask their higher ups for assistance when deciding on a specific decision, which in turn can create a slower progress to get things done therefore decreasing productivity within the work environment and business (Burcharth et al., 2017). Overall, business productivity can be greatly increased by organizations letting their employees have more freedom and autonomy within their roles.

In conclusion, "quiet quitting" is a major problem that is seen in the workforce today. It has caused many problems within businesses as they are unable to keep their employees satisfied and committed to their company. There are potential solutions/ tactics that Human Resources within specific companies can enforce to help reduce the "quiet quitting" within their companies and improve the productivity and performance of the company. These specific solutions of goal setting and autonomy allow for employees to align their values and address the major problem that businesses are facing every day. For businesses to be productive and successful, they need to have a dedicated and satisfied workforce to back them up through every obstacle.

Chapter 4 redacted to remove personal reflections and any identifying information.

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