

A study on Ergonomically based implemented practices in housekeeping department and its impact on the wellness of hotel employees with special reference to 5 star hotels in Pune city.

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Abstract

The nature of employment in contemporary society is changing quickly, and the labour market is seeing more competition. In order to be productive and maintain their appeal on the labour market, workers must be competent and keep up with changes in knowledge, skills, and attitudes. On the other hand, skilled workers are a company's most valuable competitive assets, thus it makes sense to up-skill the workforce by regularly providing training on processes and how to protect oneself from occupational illnesses. The goal of the current study is to raise awareness about how ergonomics affects employee performance.

By exploring how ergonomics relates to other scientific fields and by identifying different types of ergonomics as well as their theories and applications for employee health, the significance and significant function of ergonomics are reviewed.

The following **keywords** are associated with ergonomics: physical, cognitive, organizational, human, machine, environment, types of ergonomics, and ergonomic disciplines.

Introduction

Everyone wants to give their all-in today's brutally competitive workplace, but in order to advance professionally and earn more money, spending more time at work was once necessary. This is the time when people begin to have bodily problems. It may begin with a headache or a backache, which people in their 20s and 30s choose to dismiss. While technological performance is no longer the single most essential quality, as other qualities like employee comfort, pleasure,

or usability gain relevance, the combination of product qualities remains one of the most effective competitive aspects today. In the context of this competitiveness, branches of ergonomics that are still in development, such as contentment, ease, or cognitive engineering, have been tentatively examined as a way to enhance the usability of products.

Ergonomics is the study of creating workplaces that are comfortable for employees, increase productivity, and reduce injury risk. The hospitality sector, where workers spend several hours bending, standing, and handling heavy goods, places a special emphasis on this. The importance of ergonomics in the workplace, especially in hotels, is examined in this essay.

The Importance of Ergonomics in the Workplace:

The importance of ergonomics in the workplace cannot be overstated because it contributes to the security, comfort, and wellbeing of workers. It entails creating workstations, tools, and equipment that are tailored to the human body in order to lower the risk of accidents and musculoskeletal conditions. Ergonomics boosts productivity and efficiency while also enhancing safety, as workers are less likely to feel tired and uncomfortable.

Despite the advantages of ergonomics, some companies could undervalue its significance owing to ignorance or financial considerations. The costs of not putting ergonomic principles into practice, however, can be high and include more absenteeism, lower productivity, and even legal penalties.

Hotel ergonomics

The ergonomics of hotels, in particular, call for special consideration. Housekeepers, bellhops, and front desk personnel working in hotels frequently have to undertake strenuous physical labour such as lifting heavy bags, cleaning rooms, and standing for long periods of time. Lack of ergonomics implementation in hotels can result in musculoskeletal problems and work-related injuries, which can raise healthcare expenses and increase staff turnover.

Employers can take a number of steps to enhance ergonomics in hotels, including providing ergonomic tools, designing workstations to meet the size of the person, and teaching staff the right lifting techniques. For instance, housekeepers can utilise lightweight vacuums and movable

cleaning carts to lessen the physical strain on their bodies, and front desk employees can use movable desks to increase comfort and lower the chance of back injury.

Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSD)

The majority of housekeepers' injuries are musculoskeletal in nature. Anything having to do with the body's interactions between bones and different tissues, ligaments, tendons, and muscles is referred to as musculoskeletal (also known as soft tissue). When a bodily part is asked to perform tasks that it is not ready for—such as working harder, stretching further, lifting more, or performing other tasks at a higher level—injury results, leading to soft tissue strains or tears. The muscles, tendons, and joints might suffer harm if there is not enough time between exertions for recovery and/or healing. If the behaviour is repeated, the ongoing trauma could have a major negative impact.

Soft tissue injuries caused by repetitive motion typically develop over a long period of time after repeated exposure to low-level hazardous circumstances, but they can also happen more quickly depending on the pace, intensity, and severity of the exposure. Nearly 62 percent of all housekeeping injuries in the hospitality industry are musculoskeletal-related, which can lead to loss of flexibility and strength, overexertion, muscular fatigue, and functional handicap. The majority of injuries occur while making beds.

Objectives

1. To study the awareness levels on ergonomics among the housekeeping staff
2. To comprehend how ergonomics is applied in a hotel's housekeeping department
3. To evaluate how closely the hotels adhere to ergonomics.
4. To study the impact of Ergonomics on the wellness of the housekeeping staff

Scope of the study

The following are applicable to the study's scope:

1. The housekeeping staff of Pune's five-star hotels.
2. It is relevant to the cleaning procedures used in guest rooms and public areas
3. It applies to the furniture in guest rooms and cleaning supplies used in the hotels
4. Occupational hazards for the housekeeping staff due to operational procedures.

Research Methodology

Primary Data Gathering: The information from the structured questionnaire given to the housekeeping staff can be used to gather the first set of primary data, who actually performs the strenuous cleaning, etc. suffered from numerous musculoskeletal illnesses or traumas. The second round of questions would be made available to the hotel's management, which is in charge of creating the cleaning tools and the SOP for cleaning techniques. Collecting Secondary Data: Secondary data is using articles from literature reviews to help collect published research papers, published journals, magazines, newspapers, etc.

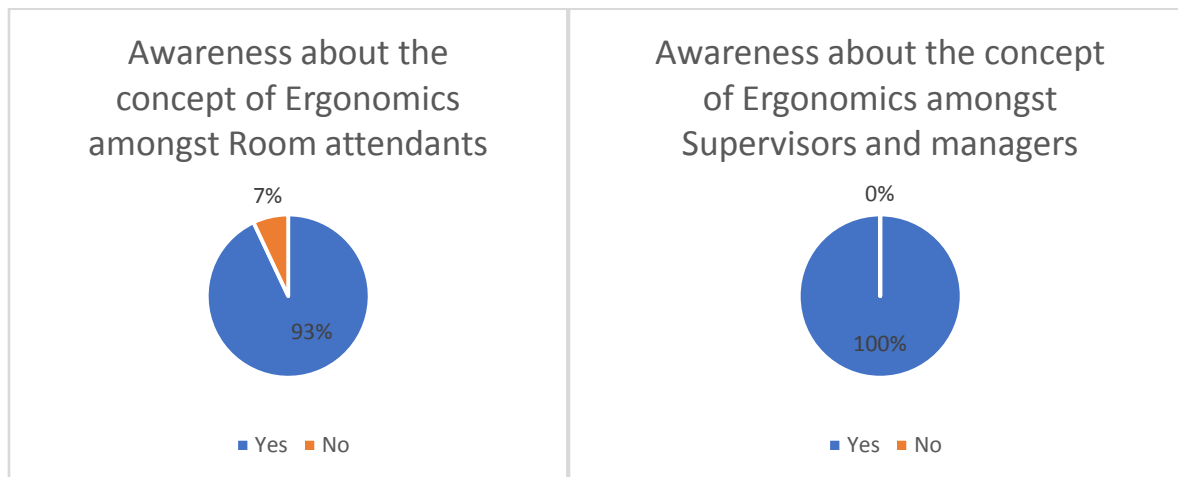
Literature Review

In the modern workplace, the physical, psychological, and organizational factors are seen as the main obstacles that employees must overcome. To complete duties within the allotted time will be challenging due to the bad working environment. Additionally, these elements will stress out the workers physically and mentally. It will ultimately have a detrimental impact on the employee's health and well-being, which will most likely diminish their ability to do tasks effectively, which will damage both their individual performance and the performance of the hotel as a whole. According to the International Ergonomics Association (2003), the scientific field of ergonomics (also known as "human factors") examines how people interact with other system components and applies theory, principles, information, and design techniques to enhance both people's well-being and the system's overall effectiveness. In order to make tasks, jobs, goods, settings, and systems compatible with human needs, skills, and limits, ergonomic consultants contribute to their design and evaluation. The term "Human Engineering" or "Human Factor Engineering" is thus used (Arcana-India Brand Equity Foundation-2019). The science of ergonomics examines how well individuals and their jobs "fit" together. It prioritizes people, taking into account their abilities and constraints. By examining the varieties of ergonomics, as well as its principles and uses, as well as its connections to other scientific disciplines, it is possible to examine the importance and prominent role of ergonomics. Rupesh Kumar (2006) examined the cleaning job methods, cleaning tools, working environment, and psychosocial factors in their study practices among cleaners who are professionals. The study found that an ergonomics-based approach and cleaning-related issues, user-centered design be substantially resolved. Hotel housekeeping is more prone to health injuries than any other sector of the hotel,

according to studies done by Hotel Workers Rising in 2005. This is due to the hotel maintaining luxuries like heavy beds, thicker linen, etc. due to the always growing demand from the customers. According to the survey, 91% of people report having pain at work. Neck pain and lower back pain are two of the most common occupational health issues, according to research by Driessen, Maurice T., Proper, Karin I, et al. from 2010. They came to the conclusion that using PE as a tool to prioritize and design ergonomic measures to prevent neck and lower back pain can be effective. The difficulties that the cleaning staff faces were discussed by Amrik Singh in his research papers from April 2015 and April 2014, which were based on "Hotel Housekeeping Innovative Trends & Modern Practices." One of them is the custom of applying ergonomics principles in lodging facilities. According to the research, if hotels begin implementing ergonomic practices, this will promote hotel expansion and long-term profitability. offers a piece that looks at the opportunities, practices, and challenges that the housekeeping department faces today. A pamphlet was printed by BC Research Inc. General information regarding the activities that cause Musculoskeletal Injuries (MSI) is provided in the brochure. Additionally, it offers advice on how to avoid things like high muscle forces, repeated motion, awkward postures, etc. It states that the employer is in charge of the MSI prevention Programme.

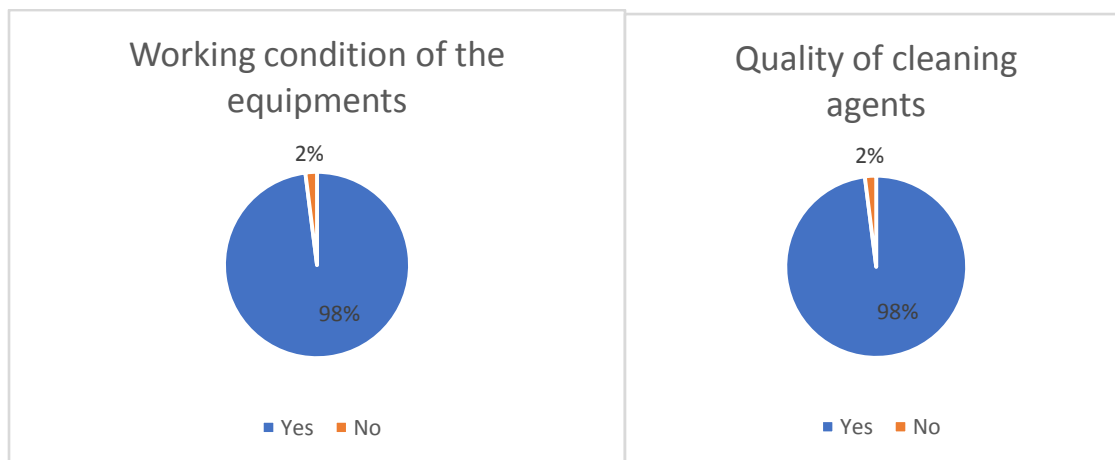
Data Analysis

A well-drafted questionnaire was circulated amongst the housekeeping staffs of 5-star hotels in Pune, which included GRAs, Supervisors and the housekeeping managers. The questionnaire mainly focused on the 5 broad aspects of ergonomics which included: Awareness about the housekeeping staff on ergonomics, the equipments and cleaning agents used in the housekeeping, the training provided to acquaint the housekeeping staff to operate the equipments and use the cleaning agents, Implementation of ergonomics in housekeeping department, Occupational hazards caused by the wrong implementation of work procedures and its impact on the physical and mental wellness of the employees.



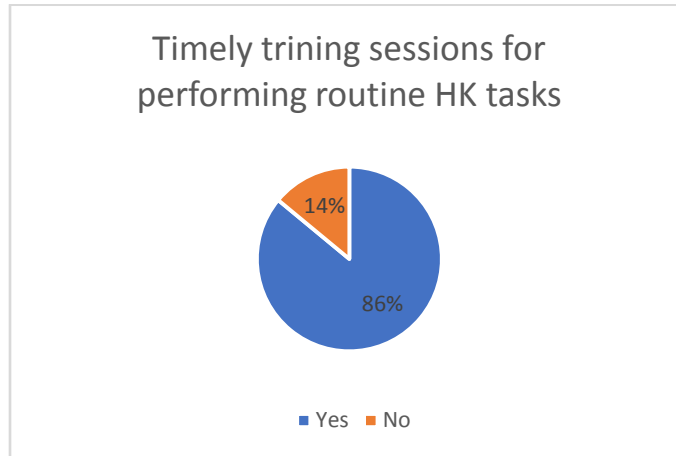
Question1

According to the pie chart above, 93% of hotel housekeeping employees (GRA) are aware of the term "ergonomics." It is noted that just a small percentage of people—about 7%—are unaware of this idea. However, managers and supervisors are fully cognizant of the concept of ergonomics.



Question 2

According to the research, housekeeping managers and supervisors consciously maintain the equipment by adhering to routine maintenance procedures in order to maintain the wellbeing of the personnel. In order to prevent accidents, Out of Order (OOO) equipment is also identified and removed from the stock. To educate the workers on proper chemical usage and safety precautions to take when working in hotels, MSDS (Material Safety data sheets) are placed in various locations.



Question 3

According to the research, hotel employees (supervisors and managers) are aware of employee safety and the proper application of operating instructions for equipment and cleaning chemicals. However, only 86% of hotels conduct training to monitor and direct the staff to follow proper practices when carrying out duties like making beds, pushing carts, using vacuum cleaners, cleaning bathrooms, handling trash, linen etc. that have a significant impact on employee wellness. But around 14% of hotels fail to pay attention to the staff members for adhering to the correct procedures, resulting in injuries, physical fatigue, mental sickness and also decreased efficiency levels of the staff.

Question 4

The majority of housekeeping workers is aware that activities like changing beds and cleaning have been linked to musculoskeletal illnesses (MSD). Most members of the housekeeping team are aware that ergonomics is a practice that can be used to lessen MSDs. The knowledge that designing equipment with ergonomics in mind is held by about 78% of the housekeeping personnel. The knowledge that ergonomics can be used to change the workplace to better suit the needs of the cleaning staff is held by about 94% of the housekeeping staff (GRA, Supervisors and Managers). About 92% of the housekeeping employees (GRA, Supervisors and Managers) are aware that ergonomics is utilized to reduce workplace hazards, maintain employee health, and increase housekeeping staff productivity.

Question 5

It has been shown that more than 80% of the hotels under investigation employ ergonomics to help them choose their housekeeping equipment. Additionally, it has been noted that more than 75% of hotels teach their housekeeping staff on how to lessen the effects of MSDs. About 58% of hotels take ergonomic design concepts into account while creating the furniture for the guest rooms. 78% of hotels, or the majority, take into account using ergonomics concepts while standardizing the operating method for housekeeping duties.

Conclusion

In summary, ergonomics is an important feature of the workplace, especially in hotels where staff members do physically demanding activities. Employers can increase safety, comfort, and productivity while lowering the risk of accidents and musculoskeletal illnesses by using ergonomic concepts. Employers must understand the value of ergonomics and take action to provide a secure and comfortable work environment for their staff.

This study has proven that there is a considerable risk of injury for housekeeping service workers due to their exposure to a number of ergonomic risk factors. When creating system-wide measures to prevent injuries, physical and mental risk factors must be taken into account. These methods should concentrate on cleaning the guest rooms, handling the trash, recycling, and linens, mopping, cleaning the bathrooms, vacuuming, and lifting/moving furniture.

Hotels are aware of the physical harm that their housekeeping staff has suffered as a result of not adhering to ergonomics principles, but they pay less attention to the core reason. In the end, this leads to problems like absenteeism, a high staff turnover rate for housekeeping, weariness, and low productivity. This diminishes the staff's inability to perform to hotel standards, which could result in further losses for an organisation.

Suggestions

1. Right number of staff to be employed for equal distribution of work.
2. On the job training need to be taken more seriously for acquainting the housekeeping staff to the right procedures to perform every task.

3. Job rotations and proper allocation of shift timings to be strictly adhered to avoid overburdening of the staff.
4. Weekly breaks need to be given in order to achieve work life balance and physical and mental break from the work routine.
5. The use of manual equipments to be kept minimum to avoid strain on the employees and at the same time, a proper training to be provided for using mechanical equipments.
6. Before purchasing any cleaning supplies and equipment for the property, one should definitely consult an ergonomist.

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