

# Factors Affecting Work Productivity among Employees in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Industry

Rosalyn L. Malicay & Jonathan C Gano-an

College of Business Administration, University of Southeastern Philippines,  
Iñigo St, Barrio Obrero, Davao City, 8000 Davao del Sur, Filipina

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### Corresponding author:

rlmalicay02984@usep.edu.ph

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## ABSTRACT

Employee productivity is influenced by a variety of factors. Productivity is essential for increasing employees' performance, which contributes to organizations' success. This study examines how work environment, work load, and supervisor support influence workforce productivity. Although several previous studies have investigated the factors influencing productivity, this study concentrates on three particular areas: workload, supervisor support and work environment. The primary data was gathered from business process outsourcing (BPO) employees, and an adapted questionnaire was distributed. A total of 100 business process outsourcing employees in Davao City completed the survey. The findings showed that a safe working place, workload, and the support of supervisor influenced the productivity of BPO employees. A p-value of  $< 01$  indicates an association between a safe work environment, workload, and supervisor support and employee productivity. These results conclude that work environment, workload and supervisor support are positively influential on employee productivity among the BPO employees who participated in this study.

## SARI PATI

*Produktivitas karyawan dipengaruhi oleh berbagai faktor. Produktivitas penting untuk meningkatkan kinerja karyawan, yang berkontribusi pada kesuksesan organisasi. Studi ini mengkaji bagaimana lingkungan kerja, beban kerja, dan dukungan supervisor memengaruhi produktivitas tenaga kerja. Meskipun beberapa penelitian sebelumnya telah menyelidiki faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi produktivitas, penelitian ini berkonsentrasi pada tiga area khusus: beban kerja, dukungan supervisor, dan lingkungan kerja. Data utama dikumpulkan dari karyawan outsourcing proses bisnis (BPO), dan kuesioner yang disesuaikan disebarkan. Sebanyak 100 karyawan outsourcing proses bisnis di Kota Davao menyelesaikan survei tersebut. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa tempat kerja yang aman, beban kerja, dan dukungan supervisor memengaruhi produktivitas karyawan BPO. Nilai p kurang dari 0,01 menunjukkan hubungan antara lingkungan kerja yang aman, beban kerja, dan dukungan supervisor dengan produktivitas karyawan. Hasil ini menyimpulkan bahwa lingkungan kerja, beban kerja, dan dukungan supervisor berpengaruh positif terhadap produktivitas karyawan di kalangan karyawan BPO yang berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini.*

## INTRODUCTION

One of the key management ideas that has attracted scholarly attention is employee productivity, which is seen as a key mechanism in boosting organizational success. Increasing employee productivity is one of the many priorities of an organization. Increased employee productivity has a number of advantages for both firm and its personnel. Hence, understanding the factors that affect productivity is essential to ensure sustained performance (Hanaysha, 2016).

The study by DILI et al., (2022) presented business process outsourcing (BPO) as an industry with the fastest growth rates, and with the recent employment growth trends, the industry is expected to prove to be a significant source of job creation. In the Philippines, the BPO industry represents 10% to 15% of the global BPO business. Local BPO companies have been expanding at a compound yearly growth rate of 10% in recent years, constantly placing the industry in the top ten global outsourcing destinations.

Employees in the BPO sector must be highly skilled at offering clients outstanding customer service by resolving their complex issues and addressing questions with assurance and skill. Hence, the main challenge for any BPO firm is managing its employees in making work enjoyable, keeping them enthusiastic about organizational goals, raising their job satisfaction and performance, and retaining them in order to maintain competitiveness in the market (Kotteswari, n.d.). Additionally, a BPO employee's level of job satisfaction, commitment, absenteeism, drop out from job, and exhaustion significantly impact their performance and productivity. (Combs et al., 2010).

In addition to employee productivity factors, Haenisch (2012) discloses that poor management and supervision, poor communication, a small workforce or low budget, and low pay or little recognition were the issues most commonly cited as restricting productivity. The results of his analysis also support the notion that the significant factors affecting productivity are similar in both public and private sectors. Moreover, Alam et al.,

(2018) explained that of the 17 Social Compliance Factors (SCF), 9 factors significantly influence productivity. These include working hours, wages and benefits, conditions in the workplace, forced labor, welfare, and employment relations.

Correspondingly, Lelei (2017) found a substantial positive association between employee productivity in county offices and the job design, workplace culture, career advancement, and employee compensation in each one. According to the study, when occupations are well-designed, employees' productivity increases. The best performance from employees comes from clearly defining their tasks and responsibilities, outlining the proper ways to carry out their duties, and giving them the freedom to work in other areas. Review of the literature reveals, that few BPO employees have participated in research about the factors affecting employee productivity. This study seeks to recognize the different circumstances that affect the productivity level in the BPO industry.

## Purpose Statement

Business process outsourcing (BPO) is hugely popular in today's businesses that have centralized customer service and support services. The BPO industry typically has huge offices with a number of employees who handle transactions with different clients globally. Moreover, BPOs can occupy small offices with a few employees or large offices with thousands of workers, depending on the nature of work. The goal of this study is to relate various aspects or circumstances affecting the workers in the BPO industry. Although many elements impact employee productivity, this research will concentrate on three aspects: the work environment, workload and supervisor support.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

### Theoretical Framework

Work-related influences (work environment, work load, and supervisor support) are identified as explanatory variables in this study. The purpose of identifying these variables is to ascertain the

impact they have on employee productivity. The guiding theories for this investigation are as follows:

1. The independent variables are discussed in the human relations theory, notably the management philosophy of Elton Mayo, which was developed from 1924-1932. According to this perspective, social (work environment and workload) and relational factors (supervisor support) influence employee motivation. Additionally, previous research suggests that managers improve efficiency by treating staff members as distinct persons.
2. The dependent variable is anchored in Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964). The theory explains that, if an employee is rewarded, they may be persuaded to devote additional effort to boost their productivity.

environment, including those that both positively and negatively affect employees' involvement, productivity, morale, and comfort level, could also be regarded as crucial.

The study of Al-Omari and Okasheh (2017) posited that one's place of work affects output. Workplace factors have an effect on employee performance, satisfaction, social interactions, and health, among other things. The results showed that situational restrictions like the amount of noise produced around the area, office furniture that employees use, air quality, and office lighting are some of the work environment conditions that call for greater attention, since these can negatively affect job performance. Massoudi and Hamdi (2017) support these findings, as they concur that the location of the workplace and its details, such as low noise disturbance, easy parking, and free coffee, enhances the environment.

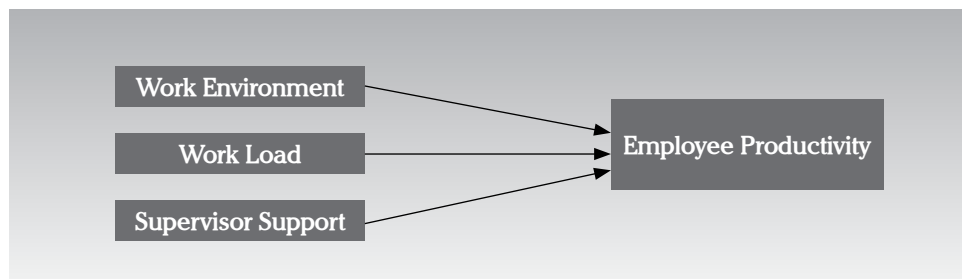


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

The relationship between variables is depicted in Figure 1, in which the productivity of the employee is the dependent variable. Working environment, workload, and supervisor support are the independent variables that theoretically impact employee productivity.

### Work Environment and Employee Productivity

Modern workers have a wide range of employment options, making the office atmosphere a crucial component in whether they accept and stay in their jobs. The level of employee motivation, performance, and productivity could be entirely influenced by the office environment. These factors also have a big impact on a company's capacity to attract and keep talented personnel. Other elements of the work

In addition, the Hierarchy of Needs Theory by Maslow emphasizes that people can be productive and driven to accomplish as much as they can if they are physically fit, secure, and in a setting with supportive people. Therefore, in order to inspire and motivate their teams, companies must provide them with additional support ensuring that the workplace, whether virtual or not, provides a safe environment.

A total of 257 occurrences of occupational injuries were reported within the BPO sector (86.4% or 222 cases). The majority of the impacted employees worked in call centers, where they experience daily work-related pressures. According to the literature, contact center staff operate in a distracting environment. The research done by Janice et al., (2019) shows that workplace

temperature, noise level, workplace setup, and other factors are identified occupational risks that affect the performance of a BPO employee, particularly in the call center industry.

Another widely used theory to explain employee productivity is Vroom's Expectancy Theory. The core element of this philosophy is that an individual joins an organization with a set of expectations, and if these anticipations are realized, they will stay longer with the organization. The idea clarifies the connections between structural, psychological, and environmental elements. In fact, Salaman et al. (2005) looks more closely at this notion and finds that a high level of motivation must be maintained for employees to perform successfully. To achieve this motivation, the company must ensure that its objectives and values are in coordination with its mission and vision. With this, increased productivity, improved employee performance, enhanced employee morale, teamwork encouragement, and a great mindset under hard conditions can develop and prosper.

Becker and Huselid's Theory (1998) explains that the workplace influences employee productivity. According to the theory, organizations can attain a competitive advantage for human resources if a better working environment is created. Moreover, in the study by Shazad et. al. (2018), nine of ten survey respondents agreed that the work environment had an impact on their attitudes and productivity.

In reference to the findings by Al-Omari and Okasheh (2017), the physical aspect of a workplace is crucial to employees' accomplishment, contentment, social connections, and health. Moreover, with research from the literature review, a significant interaction is discovered between the working environment's physical conditions and employee performance. Thus, the researchers convey the following:

*H1: Work environment significantly affects employee productivity among BPO employees.*

### **Workload and Employee Productivity**

The workload assigned to an employee as well as the work goals that the organization has

established can be used to gauge workforce productivity. Anastasya Sinambela, (2021) claims that both internal and external factors impact employees's workload. Internal influences include factors like gender, physical condition, age, and psychological issues. Tasks, the work atmosphere at work, and responsibilities are all examples of external variables.

According to the findings of Tri and Anjanarko (2021), productivity levels are affected by workloads along with individual skills. This involves output and if it adheres to the obligations and specifics of the duties that have been delegated to employees. The quantity and quality of the outcomes are affected by overload.

In response to these findings, a company should take each employee's workload into account by allocating job responsibilities in accordance with the skills they possess and balancing their workload with the time allotted to each employee to finish a task (Tri & Anjanarko, 2022). The management of an organization can increase the productivity of its staff by distributing the task fairly. Employees' susceptibility to stress and burnout increases with a workload that is too extensive, which also has an effect on the organization's production.

In 1896, an 80/20 rule was developed by Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto. This principle states that for many outcomes, about 80% of consequences result from 20% of causes. This idea enables organizations and employees to decide which projects to prioritize in order to have the greatest impact. In terms of productivity, this rule helps identify the task to be prioritized during the work-day. In other words, the Pareto principle allows an individual to accomplish more with less effort. As a result, the organization and its employees can operate more productively.

In 1960, Douglas McGregor developed the *McGregor X and Y Theory*. Theory X describes a typical employee who dislikes work inherently and seeks out opportunities to avoid it. In contrast, Theory Y refers to individuals who like to work and consider their work to be enjoyable and normal. The management's consequence for Theory X employees is that rewards serve as motivators

to encourage them to work. However, creating a work environment in which staff members can express and develop their creativity is difficult for management when dealing with Theory Y employees.

Correspondingly, Bruggen (2015) found an increase in workload enhanced worker performance up to a certain point, after which worker productivity began significantly decreasing. The study emphasizes the need for a particular workload level to promote employee performance while keeping in mind that a high workload level impedes performance. Thus, this research assumed the following:

*H2: Workload is significantly linked to employee productivity among BPO employees.*

#### **Supervisor Support and Employee Productivity**

Support from one's supervisor is defined as the extent to which superiors value the work of their employees. It is determined by the level of assistance they provide to their subordinates by acknowledging their efforts and accomplishments (Namatovu, 2018). For instance, a miscommunication can occur between two parties if a supervisor fails to relay job-related updates to employees (Harris et al., 2007). However, effective supervisory assistance improves job satisfaction and task performance and can counteract the impact of harmful workplace pressures (Andiola et al., 2021).

In a BPO industry, a manager can determine the needs of each individual personally through observation and conversation. Employees in BPO companies believe that their supervisors are also willing to assist them with matters not related to their jobs and encourage them to express themselves honestly. In matters concerning work, a supervisor gives advice, provides assistance with employees' tasks, and helps them perform better. Furthermore, employees perceive their supervisor as a role model because of their ability to provide constant assistance at work by sharing their knowledge. Additionally, when employees have unanticipated demands outside of work, they can count on their superiors to make sure

that their obligations at work are accomplished. When issues arise between work and personal life, supervisors collaborate with their staff to find creative solutions and work with them to solve conflicts in a creative way (de Ocampo et al., 2018).

In the 1960's, Australian psychologist Professor Fred Fiedler developed the Theory of Leadership Effectiveness. It claimed that, if an organization tried to improve team performance through leadership, it was vital to evaluate the leader in terms of underlying attributes, evaluate the environment the leader is operating in, and look for commonalities between the two. Fiedler recognized the need to consider the attitudes of leaders and created a scale to measure these sentiments.

Talukder and Galang (2021) explore how a supervisor's support affects employees' performance in the organization. The research revealed a substantial mediating connection between support from supervisors and workers' performance. However, according to Gandolfi and Stone (2018), leadership has no universal definition. Nevertheless, everyone acknowledges that a leader's management style has a big influence on how productive their team is. Thus, the researchers proposed:

*H3: There is a significant link between supervisor support and employee productivity among BPO employees.*

#### **METHOD**

This study applied quantitative and descriptive research and survey questionnaire to gather data. The respondents were workers in the BPO industry. The goal is to examine the variables that affect the productivity of employees, which is related to workplace, workload, and supervisor support. A descriptive-correlation technique is appropriate for the task, and the goal of the research is to comprehend how different variables relate to one another.

To ensure the validity and credibility of the survey questions, a questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale was adapted from Bernard et al.,

(2022). According to Sözen and Güven, (2019), the Likert scale was created after looking at different geography attitude measures to help researchers evaluate the variables supplied. The survey has 4 sections and 16 questions to gauge the participant’s level of agreement with a certain situation or statement. The questionnaire was disseminated to the selected respondents using Google Forms.

The researchers established a population of one hundred (100) well-chosen participants from various BPO industries in Davao City. These respondents work in office settings, are managed by a supervisor, and are knowledgeable about the policy of their organization. The respondents were chosen through random sampling, and the data collection was done in November 2022. The number of participants was anchored on the work of Green (1991). The basic rule of the formula is that a correlation or regression study needs at least 50 participants, and the number rises as the independent variables increase. The primary characteristic of Green Formula is that it only accounts for the number of independent variables, not population size (Chanuan et al., 2021).

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1 shows the demographic data of respondents from various BPO organizations in Davao City. Of the participants, 60% are female, and 40% are male. Additionally, 61% have spent less than five years in the industry. The majority are between the ages of 25 and 34 (49%) and 25 to 34 (49%).

Table 2 shows the frequencies of the responses to the statements that correspond to a safe work environment. 79% of the respondents agreed that estimates were set up by supervisors to ensure safety in the workplace. However, 6% disagreed and 15% are neutral on this. Moreover, 51% of the respondents agreed that a dangerous workplace brings high turnover of employees, with 33% being neutral. Additionally, 74% affirmatively believe that poor lighting, clean air, room condition, and level of noise affect productivity, but 17% disagreed and 9% are neutral.

Furthermore, 75% believed that a risky workplace causes pressure among workers, but 15% disagreed and 10% chose to be neutral. Finally, while 70% of participants agreed that poor work aid equipment can hurt workers and has a bad impact on how they perform, 20% disagreed but 10% were neutral.

**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

Socio-demographic Factors		Frequencies	Percentage
Gender	Male	40	40%
	Female	60	60%
Age	18-24	23	23%
	25-34	49	49%
	35-44	24	24%
	45-54	3	3%
	55 or over	1	1%
Length of Service	Below 5 years	61	61%
	6-10 years	26	26%
	11-15 years	10	10%
	Above 15 years	3	3%



**Table 2. Work Environment**

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Safety estimates are set up by bosses/directors to guarantee security in the workplace.	5	1	15	31	48
A perilous workplace brings about excess of employees in the workplace.	7	9	33	30	21
Poor lighting, ventilation, temperature, and noise levels affects employee productivity.	9	8	9	18	56
A risky workplace causes pressure among workers, who find it difficult to focus on their work appropriately.	8	7	10	31	44
Poor work aid equipment can cause harm to employees and negatively affect their performance.	11	9	10	25	45

Source: Adapted questionnaire from Elaho and Odion (2022)

According to Table 3, 76% of respondents agree that workload induces stress and reduces output, but 9% disagree and 15% are neutral. Additionally, 36% of the respondents believe that there is an increase in workload but no improvement in their environment. However, 34% say otherwise, and 30% are neutral. Moreover, 40% agree that workload inconsistencies are present in their workplace, 23% disagree, and 37% are neutral. Furthermore, 79% of the respondents affirmatively express that excessive workload affects employee morale, health, and

performance, but 8% disagree, and 13% are neutral. Lastly, 66% believe that their organization has policies to promote work-life balance, while 11% disagree and 23% stay neutral.

All of the participants in the survey are managed by a supervisor who evaluates and guides them in their performance. In Table 4, 79% agree that they have a good working relationship with their superiors. However, 3% disagree, and 17% are neutral. Furthermore, 76% also agree that there is enough guidance and support to help employees, but 5% agree and 19% are neutral.

**Table 3. Workload**

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
There is inconsistency among workers' workloads with work capacity in the work environment.	5	1	15	31	48
Heavy workload induces stress and reduce employees' output.	7	9	33	30	21
My workload increased over the last two years with no improvement in the environment.	9	8	9	18	56
My organization has policies to balance my work and life.	8	7	10	31	44
Excessive workload affects employees' morale, health, and performance.	11	9	10	25	45

Source: Adapted questionnaire from Elaho, O.B. and Odion, A.S., (2022)

In addition, 78% of the respondents state that there are proper training and communication in their workplace, but 5% disagree, and 17% are neutral on this issue. Also, 71% agree that their superiors provide them with relevant materials, data, and knowledge to help them with their work. However, 6% disagree and 23% are neutral. Finally, 80% of the participants agree that their supervisors ensure their clear understanding of their tasks and motivate them to improve their productivity, but 4% disagree, and 16% are neutral.

In terms of employee productivity, 30% of the respondents agree that facilities and equipment

have hindered them from achieving the business targets while 45% disagree, and 25% are neutral. Furthermore, 43% deny that their current workload does not make a commitment to tasks, but 24% agree that they do, and 33% are neutral. Moreover, 52% disagree that workers are not prepared to go beyond what is expected of them in getting the job done; however, 23% agree and 25% are neutral. At 80%, the majority of respondents agree that they could readily adapt to their workplace; 5% disagree, and 15% are neutral. Furthermore, 51% disagree that their work environment is not efficient enough while 22% disagree, and 27% are neutral.

**Table 4. Supervisor Support**

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
There is a positive relationship between supervisors and employees in the work environment.	2	1	17	45	34
Employees have adequate supervision and support to aid employees in the work environment.	3	2	19	47	29
There is adequate training and effective communication in the workplace.	3	2	17	36	42
My supervisor ensures employees' clear understanding of assigned tasks and motivates employees for improved productivity.	3	1	16	44	36
Supervisors provide the necessary materials, information and knowledge to aid employees work.	4	2	23	41	30

Source: Adapted questionnaire from Elaho and Odion (2022)

**Table 5. Employee Productivity**

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The facilities and equipment in the organization have hindered my achievement of business targets.	12	33	25	22	8
My current workload does not make special commitment to work tasks.	13	30	33	18	6
Employees are not ready to go the extra mile in getting the job done in the work environment.	14	38	25	13	10
I easily adapt and learn in my working environment.	1	4	15	42	38
My work environment is not efficient enough.	15	36	27	15	7
My supervisors have influenced me to be independent, creative, and accountable.	3	3	21	28	45

Source: Adapted questionnaire from Elaho & Odion (2022)



The relationship between the independent variables and how they impact the dependent variable shown in Table 6 indicates that a safe working environment, the tasks of employees, and the support of supervisors significantly influence productivity. As defined by  $r(100) = 0.274$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , a significantly positive relationship exists between a safe work environment and employee productivity, since the p-value is less than 0.01. Correspondingly, Janice et al., (2019) concluded that the workplace factors in the BPO sector are positively correlated with employee productivity and job satisfaction.

Moreover, the correlation between workload and employee productivity is defined by  $r(100) = .357$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , which shows a positive relationship between workload and employee productivity. This is supported by the study of Tri and Anjanarko, (2022) which proves that the employees' workload has a positive and partial influence on work productivity. Productivity levels are influenced by workloads as well as personal abilities. This relates to the output and whether it is in line with the obligations and specifics of the duties that have been assigned to employees.

Lastly, the correlation between employee productivity and supervisor support is very

significant,  $r(100) = .889$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . This result also indicates the significance between the two variables. The study of de Ocampo et al., (2018) concurs that in the BPO industry, supervisors consider how the employees' efforts can assist the business. Additionally, supervisors asks for suggestions on how staff members can achieve a balance between their personal and work obligations, and their supervisors encourages teamwork. The findings show that their supervisors considers how their job can benefit both the people and the business.

The p value results for the three (3) independent variables are 0.006, 0.000, and 0.001 correspondingly. This is highly significant since it is less than the alpha value of 0.01. Moreover, the two variables move in the same direction, as signified by a positive correlation sign.

The p-value is considered the tail segment of the distribution. The analyst rejects the null hypothesis if it is less than the predetermined significance level (Ho et al., 2019). As a result, the work environment, particularly its safety, tasks or workload given to the workers, and support received from supervisors all have substantial impacts on employees' productivity. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative is accepted.

**Table 6. Correlation of Safe Work Environment, Workload, and Supervisor Support with Employee Productivity**

		Employee Productivity
Safe Work Environment	Pearson Correlation	.274**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.006
	N	100
Workload	Pearson Correlation	.357**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	100
Supervisor Support	Pearson Correlation	.339**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	100

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 7 shows the result of SPSS calculations using regression. The R<sup>2</sup> (R-Square) is 0.163 (16.3%), which means that a safe working environment, employee workload, and the support of the supervisors equally influences employee productivity by 16.3%. The result also shows that the R-value garners 0.403, which indicates a positive relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. An R<sup>2</sup> of 0.163 indicates 16.3% of the variance. However, 83.7% of the factors that affect employee productivity among BPO employees can be attributed to other variables not covered in this study.

encourage work training and satisfactory supervisor support, such as work breaks or vacation packages and shift changes. Furthermore, supervisors could create an incentive program that offers rewards such as lunch dates and paid vacations. Subsequently, providing employee recognition such as promotion should also be given to employees who are good at their jobs not just for those who have worked at the company for a long time.

**CONCLUSION**

The researchers reached the following conclusions based on the information gathered:

**Table 7. Regression between safe work environment, workload, and supervisor support and employees productivity**

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.403 <sup>a</sup>	0.163	0.136	0.63718

a. Predictors: (Constant), Supervisor Support, Workload, Safe Work Environment

**MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The empirical insights of this study have the following implications for companies operating in the BPO industry. First, the industry could ensure the safety of employees in their place of work. This can be made possible by crafting or enhancing company policies to ensure a safe work environment. If they have policies in place, employees will feel secure and motivated to work knowing that the company cares for their welfare. Second, top management may engage in more frequent conveyance of appropriate workload to workers. The majority of the respondents believe that a lower workload enhances productivity. The industry may reconsider hiring qualified people and if they already have enough people for the job, they should revisit how they distribute tasks to their hired individuals. If there is an unequal distribution of tasks it could be because of improper scheduling of employees or insufficient manpower available to handle the job. Finally, management could employ strategies that

1. A significant relationship was observed between a safe working environment and employee productivity. The results of the survey demonstrate that the elements of the workplace, particularly safety, has an impact on productivity.
2. The amount of workload also affects the productivity of employees. In fact, 79% of the respondents agreed that excessive workload affects performance, health, and morale.
3. The result also shows the significance between supervisor support and the productivity of an employee. The result shows that 80% unanimously agree that their supervisor motivates them to improve their productivity.

The researcher’s conclusions illustrate that the productivity of employees is influenced by its work environment, workload, and supervisor support. Future researchers may also consider linking other factors that affect employee productivity in the BPO industry like work-life balance, compensation, and shifting schedules.

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