

Role of Ergonomics in Redesigning Job Design
(A case of call centers in Telecom sector, Islamabad region)



By

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Abstract

Ergonomics, the interaction of employees with their physical, mental and organizational environment is becoming important nowadays. Because Human Resources are now considered Human Capital, it becomes pertinent to understand the dynamics of this capital and its working environment. This however, depends on an aspect of Human Resources, which is job design which then leads to job descriptions. Where Human Resources focus on how to fit the worker to the job, Ergonomics main focus is to address the issue of fitting the job for the worker. This means that all other things such as space, matter, pedagogical parameters and organizational environment need to be adjusted to the worker so as to get optimal performance. Ergonomics mainly is concerned with getting the best out of the employee by focusing on the employee's requirements, rather than the job requirements.

The strenuous work environment and job design of call centers is such that the employees are constantly engaged with their customers, trying to serve and help in any possible way. This then give rise to stress levels. The employees of call centers are directly under the effects of physical, cognitive and organizational ergonomics. Physical, in the sense, that employee have to sit and monotonously attend calls. The Cognitive sagacity demands that the employees have a direct interaction with the customers and have to be emotionally intelligent to deal with them. Organizational prudence focuses strict deadlines to attend calls under stern supervision. Hence it becomes important that their jobs are designed in such a way that makes the environment of the worker more conducive to work, and hence ergonomically healthier.

The study is based on qualitative research by conducting semi-structured interviews from employees of call centers of major telecom companies in the Islamabad region. A focus group discussion was also added to the study. Some observations were also made on the employees. Thematic analysis was carried out to filter main themes from the analysis. The elements of ergonomics and job design were taken from the work of Carayon and Smith (2000).

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