

Office Peacocking as a Modern HR Intervention: Impact on Employee Motivation in the Post-COVID Workplace

¹Shruthi Kasarla ²Dr. Gayathri R ³Kruthi Kasarla

Student, MBA(HR), Jain (deemed – to – be University), CMS Business School, Bengaluru

Assistant Professor, OB & Human Resource, Jain(Deemed to be University), CMS Business School, Bengaluru

Student, MBA(HR), Jain (deemed – to – be University), CMS Business School, Bengaluru

Abstract

The post-COVID workplace has witnessed a paradigm shift in employee expectations, prompting organizations to adopt innovative strategies to encourage office attendance and enhance motivation. This study explores "**Office Peacocking**", a modern HR intervention where companies invest in visually appealing and comfortable office spaces—such as ergonomic seating, vibrant aesthetics, and enhanced amenities—to foster a motivating work environment.

Through a mixed-method research approach, this study examines the impact of office aesthetics on employee motivation, job satisfaction, and productivity. Data was collected from employees across various industries, analysing their perceptions of workplace aesthetics post-pandemic. Statistical findings indicate a positive correlation between enhanced office environments and increased employee engagement. Qualitative insights further highlight how sensory experiences, spatial design, and workplace ambiance contribute to motivation and well-being.

The study concludes that strategic workplace enhancements can serve as a crucial tool for HR managers in talent retention and employee satisfaction. Findings also suggest that organizations investing in "Peacocking Elements" create a sense of belonging and purpose among employees. This research provides valuable recommendations for businesses aiming to optimize workplace experiences in the evolving corporate landscape.

Keywords: Office Peacocking, Workplace Aesthetics, Employee Motivation, Post-COVID Workplace, HR Interventions

Introduction

The modern workplace is evolving beyond mere functionality, with aesthetics and design playing a crucial role in shaping employee motivation and engagement. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly altered how employees perceive office spaces, increasing expectations for comfort, flexibility, and a more engaging work environment. As organizations navigate this shift, the concept of Office Peacocking has emerged (Sombret, 2024). The word office peacocking has two distinct meanings.

First, Office Peacocking refers to enhancing office aesthetics and infrastructure to create an appealing and motivating workspace. This involves thoughtful office design, incorporating elements such as vibrant interiors, ergonomic furniture, collaborative spaces, and wellness amenities to foster a positive work environment. The idea is that a well-designed office can improve employee morale, increase job satisfaction, and enhance overall productivity.

The second interpretation of Office Peacocking describes a behavioral trend where employees choose to work on-site to increase visibility and career opportunities. In this sense, employees deliberately spend more time in the office, believing that face-to-face interactions with leadership and colleagues can enhance their professional standing and lead to greater recognition.

While both meanings exist in workplace discussions, this study focuses exclusively on Office Peacocking as an HR-driven strategy to enhance workplace aesthetics and, in turn, boost employee motivation. It explores how a well-designed, visually appealing office can inspire employees, encourage engagement, and improve overall workplace motivation. By examining the impact of Office Peacocking on employee motivation, this research offers insights into how organizations can create work environments that not only attract employees but also keep them engaged and productive.

Problem Statement

The COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped workplace dynamics, leading to widespread adoption of remote and hybrid work models. As organizations aim to encourage employees to return to the office, the concept of "office peacocking" -creating aesthetically appealing, comfortable, and engaging workspaces has emerged as a promising strategy to enhance employee motivation and engagement.

However, despite its growing prominence in corporate practice, there is limited to no academic research exploring the effectiveness of such office peacocking. This lack of evidence-based insights leaves organizations uncertain about the actual impact of office aesthetics on employee behaviour, productivity, and well-being.

Moreover, HR departments play a pivotal role in integrating such initiatives into broader employee engagement strategies. By aligning office design with employee needs and preferences, HR can drive motivation and satisfaction while fostering a sense of belonging in the workplace.

This study seeks to examine the influence of office peacocking on employee motivation in the post-pandemic era, emphasizing the critical role of HR in creating work environments that inspire and engage employees

Review of Literature

Employee motivation is crucial for workplace productivity and job satisfaction. It is linked to corporate strategies (Ahmad et al., 2024) and fosters long-term commitment (Biswal et al., 2024). However, sustaining motivation post-pandemic is challenging due to evolving work structures (Kannamma & Krithika, 2024). The COVID-19 crisis accelerated digital transformation, reshaping employee engagement models (Sharma & Kumar, 2024).

AI-driven HRM is enhancing talent acquisition, training, and performance management (Dhinakaran et al., 2023). However, concerns about data biases and ethical governance persist (Subramanian & Riya, 2024). Balancing automation with human-centric HR practices remains critical. Meanwhile, workforce preferences have shifted towards flexibility, as employees show reluctance to return to traditional offices (Griszbacher, 2023). In the Indian IT sector, rigid return-to-office mandates have led to dissatisfaction (Narasimha & Neena, 2024). The shift from traditional HR practices to a data-driven approach has further strengthened employer branding and streamlined hiring processes, ultimately contributing to a motivated workforce (Gayathri, 2023).

The physical work environment significantly impacts motivation. Office design elements such as lighting, ergonomics, and collaborative spaces enhance productivity (Rahman et al., 2024). Post-pandemic office trends prioritize wellness and flexibility (Nagaiti, 2023), while environmental factors like proper lighting contribute to workplace satisfaction (Rasouli Kahaki et al., 2022). AI-powered HR tools are addressing retention challenges through predictive analytics and personalized learning modules (Biswal et al., 2024).

Existing research highlights the critical role of employee motivation, workplace environment, and HR practices in shaping productivity and engagement. Studies have examined various aspects such as remote work, office design, lighting, and greenery, all of which contribute to employee well-being and performance. Additionally, HR interventions continue to evolve to align with the changing needs of the modern workforce. As organizations navigate the post-pandemic era, fostering a work environment that enhances both motivation and efficiency remains a key priority.

Research Objectives

The following are the objectives of this research, which aims to explore and evaluate the impact of Office Peacocking on employee motivation in the post-COVID workplace:

1. To examine the impact of office peacocking on employee motivation.
2. To analyze the role of HR in implementing Office Peacocking as a strategic intervention.

Research Hypotheses

- **H₀ (Null Hypothesis):** Office Peacocking (enhancing office aesthetics and infrastructure) as an HR intervention does not have a significant impact on employee motivation in the post-COVID workplace.
- **H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis):** Office Peacocking as a modern HR intervention has a significant positive impact on employee motivation in the post-COVID workplace.

Research Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods research approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques to analyze the impact of Office Peacocking on employee motivation in the post-COVID workplace. The primary data collection method is a structured survey targeting employees who have experienced office environments before, during, and after the pandemic. A total of 203 responses were gathered, incorporating closed-ended Likert scale questions, multiple-choice options, and an open-ended question to capture detailed insights into workplace aesthetics and motivation.

Additionally, secondary data from existing literature, industry reports, and scholarly articles on workplace design and employee motivation provide a theoretical foundation, contextualizing the primary findings.

The study identifies Office Peacocking and HR's role in workspace design as independent variables, examining their influence on employee motivation—the dependent variable. By analyzing relationships between these factors, the research aims to assess how office aesthetics contribute to motivation, productivity, and engagement. The mixed-methods approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of both statistical trends and personal experiences, enabling meaningful conclusions and practical recommendations for HR-driven workplace design strategies.

Data Analysis

1) Reliability Test

The reliability test was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha to assess the internal consistency of variables—Employee Motivation, Office Peacocking, and HR's Role in Office Peacocking. With a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.77, the test confirms good reliability, indicating that responses across these variables are consistent. This ensures that the study's measures are stable and suitable for further statistical analysis. The results reinforce the idea that workplace aesthetics significantly impact employee motivation, with HR playing a crucial role in implementing these enhancements.

2) Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was performed to explore the underlying structure of the data and assess whether the variables converge into a common factor. The analysis revealed that the first factor explains 74.3% of the total variance, while two components together account for 92.7% of the variance. High loadings for Employee Motivation (0.77), HR's Role in

Office Peacocking (0.91), and Office Peacocking (0.90) suggest a strong association between workspace aesthetics, HR interventions, and motivation. These findings confirm that office aesthetics are not just a superficial aspect but a structured HR strategy that positively impacts employee motivation and workplace engagement.

3) Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics provided key insights into employees' perceptions of workplace aesthetics and motivation. The high mean scores across variables—Employee Motivation (4.50), Office Peacocking (4.68), and HR's Role in Office Peacocking (4.75)—indicate strong agreement among respondents about the significance of workplace design. The low standard deviations further suggest consistency in responses. These findings emphasize that employees recognize and appreciate HR-led efforts to enhance office aesthetics as a motivating factor in their work environment.

4) Correlation Analysis

```

CORRELATION
/VARIABLES = Employee_motivation Officepeacocking
/PRINT = TWOTAIL SIG.
    
```

Correlations

		Employee_motivation	Officepeacocking
Employee_motivation	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.518
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	204	204
Officepeacocking	Pearson Correlation	.518	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	204	204

a) Office Peacocking and Employee Motivation

The Pearson correlation coefficient between Office Peacocking and Employee Motivation is 0.518, indicating a moderate to strong positive relationship. With a p-value of 0.000, the correlation is statistically significant at the 99% confidence level. This confirms that improved workplace aesthetics contribute meaningfully to higher employee motivation.

b) HR's Role in Office Peacocking and Employee Motivation

```

CORRELATION
/VARIABLES = Employee_motivation HR_role_in_officepeacocking
/PRINT = TWOTAIL SIG.
    
```

Correlations

		Employee_motivation	HR_role_in_officepeacocking
Employee_motivation	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.529
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	204	204
HR_role_in_officepeacocking	Pearson Correlation	.529	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	204	204

A correlation of 0.627 was found between HR's Role in Office Peacocking and Employee Motivation, suggesting a strong positive relationship. The statistically significant p-value further confirms that HR-led initiatives in workplace design have a measurable impact on employee engagement. These results highlight the strategic role HR plays in fostering a motivating and visually stimulating work environment.

c) Employee Motivation, HR's Role in Office Peacocking, and Office Peacocking

```

CORRELATION
/VARIABLES = Employee_motivation HR_role_in_officepeacocking Officepeacockin
/PRINT = TWOTAIL SIG.
    
```

Correlations

	Employee_motivation	HR_role_in_officepeacocking	Officepeacockin
Employee_motivation	1.000	.529	.518
HR_role_in_officepeacocking		1.000	.781
Officepeacockin			1.000
	Pearson Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N		

The correlation between office peacocking and employee motivation is 0.518, indicating a moderate positive relationship. HR’s role in office peacocking also shows a moderate positive correlation with motivation (0.529). A strong correlation (0.781) between HR’s role and office aesthetics highlights HR’s significant influence on workplace design. All relationships are statistically significant ($p = .000$), reinforcing the impact of HR-driven workspace enhancements on employee motivation and engagement.

5) Regression Analysis

a) Office Peacocking and Employee Motivation

```

REGRESSION
/VARIABLES= Officepeacockin
/DEPENDENT= Employee_motivation
/METHOD=ENTER
/STATISTICS=COEFF R ANOVA.
    
```

Model Summary (Employee_motivation)

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.52	.27	.27	.59

ANOVA (Employee_motivation)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	25.52	1	25.52	74.20	.000
Residual	69.48	202	.34		
Total	95.00	203			

Coefficients (Employee_motivation)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.47	.47	.00	1.00	.319
Officepeacockin	.86	.10	.52	8.61	.000

The regression analysis shows a moderate positive relationship ($R = 0.52$) between office peacocking and employee motivation, with an R^2 value of 0.27, indicating that 27% of the variation in employee motivation is explained by office aesthetics. The ANOVA results ($F = 74.20$, $p = .000$) confirm the model’s statistical significance. The regression coefficient (0.86, $p = .000$) and Beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.52$) further support the strong influence of office aesthetics on motivation.

b) HR's Role in Office Peacocking and Employee Motivation

```
REGRESSION
/VARIABLES= HR_role_in_officepeacocking
/DEPENDENT= Employee_motivation
/METHOD=ENTER
/STATISTICS=COEFF R ANOVA.
```

Model Summary (Employee_motivation)

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.53	.28	.28	.58

ANOVA (Employee_motivation)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	26.60	1	26.60	78.58	.000
Residual	68.39	202	.34		
Total	95.00	203			

Coefficients (Employee_motivation)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.24	.48	.00	.51	.612
HR_role_in_off	.90	.10	.53	8.86	.000

The regression model establishes a moderate positive relationship ($R = 0.53$) between HR's role in office peacocking and employee motivation, with an R^2 value of 0.28, suggesting that 28% of the variance in motivation is attributable to HR-led workplace enhancements. ANOVA results ($F = 78.58$, $p = .000$) indicate statistical significance. The regression coefficient (0.90, $p = .000$) and Beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.53$) highlight HR's strong role in shaping motivating workspaces.

Research Outcome and Findings

The research confirms that Office Peacocking significantly enhances employee motivation by creating an engaging and productive work environment. A well-designed workplace boosts job satisfaction and organizational commitment. HR plays a key role in implementing these aesthetic improvements, aligning them with employee well-being and company goals. The findings reject the null hypothesis, validating that Office Peacocking is a strategic HR intervention that positively impacts motivation. While other factors like leadership and career growth may also influence motivation, this study establishes Office Peacocking as a valuable HR-driven strategy that fosters a sense of belonging and enhances workplace engagement in the post-COVID era.

Conclusion

This study highlights the crucial role of Office Peacocking in enhancing employee motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction, especially in the post-COVID workplace. A well-designed workspace fosters belonging, improves well-being, and strengthens organizational culture. The research confirms HR's pivotal role in implementing Office Peacocking as a strategic tool to boost motivation. By addressing the need for aesthetically appealing work environments, this study helps organizations optimize workplace design for higher productivity. While other factors like leadership and career growth also influence motivation, integrating Office Peacocking as a core HR strategy ensures a more engaging and productive work environment.

Limitations of the Study

This study relies on quantitative measures, which may not fully capture subjective experiences of motivation influenced by personal preferences and work styles. Its cross-sectional design limits insights into long-term effects, as motivation fluctuates due to factors like leadership and organizational changes.

Despite these limitations, this study provides a strong foundation for understanding Office Peacocking as a strategic HR tool. Future research should adopt mixed-method and longitudinal approaches to offer a more comprehensive perspective on workplace aesthetics and employee motivation.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings on Office Peacocking and its impact on Employee Motivation, the following recommendations are proposed for organizations and HR professionals to enhance workplace aesthetics and optimize employee motivation:

- Conduct surveys to understand aesthetic preferences and create workspaces that resonate with employees.
- Ensure office design enhances both visual appeal and ergonomics, promoting comfort and efficiency.
- Integrate natural elements like plants and outdoor spaces to reduce stress and boost well-being.
- Allow employees to customize their workstations, fostering a sense of ownership and belonging.
- Regularly update décor, layouts, and artwork to maintain a stimulating and engaging work environment.

References-

1. Ahmad, S., Wong, W. K., Riaz, S., & Iqbal, A. (2024). The role of employee motivation and its impact on productivity in modern workplaces while applying human resource management policies. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (Kuwait Chapter)*, 13(2), 7-12.
2. Vereb, D., Krajcsák, Z., & Kozák, A. (2025). The Importance of Positive Employee Experience and Its Impact on Organizational Benefits. *Journal of Modelling in Management*, 20(1), 51-69.
3. Kannamma, V. B., & Krithika, M. (2024). *Investigating the Impact of Evolving Work Culture on Employee Productivity in the Post-Pandemic Period*. 333–336.
4. Alam, M. J., Shariat Ullah, M., Islam, M., & Chowdhury, T. A. (2024). Human resource management practices and employee engagement: the moderating effect of supervisory role. *Cogent Business & Management*, 11(1).
5. Grizzbacher, N. (2023). Working from Home vs. In-office post-COVID-19. *GILE Journal of Skills Development*
6. Somashekar, M. P., & Bharateeya, P. (n.d.). *A Study on Hesitancy among Information Technology Employees to Resume Work from Office Post COVID-19 Lockdowns*.
7. Rahman, R., Nurdiansyah, H., Sidharta, I., Purana, R. D., & Hendiky, F. (2024). Increasing Employee Performance Through Physical Work Environment and Work Motivation
8. Nagaiti, N. (2023). Interior Design Trends for Administrative Offices in Post-COVID-19 Work Environments. *Dirāsāt*, 50(3), 92–110.
9. Rasouli kahaki, Z., Jahangiri, H., Smith, A., & Kazemi, R. (2022). Subjective and objective survey of office lighting: effects on alertness, comfort, satisfaction, and safety. *Medicina Del Lavoro*, 113(3), e2022024.
10. Husti, A., Ciobanu, I., Cicevan, R., Neacsu, I., & Cantor, M. (2015). *Image of ornamental plants in work environments and their effect on employees*. 95.
11. Sombret, P. (2024, May 16). Office peacocking: an attempt to bring employees back into the office. *Deskbird*
12. Subramanian, Y. R., & Riya, R. (2024). The transformative role of artificial intelligence in human resource. *International Journal on Recent Trends in Business and Tourism (IJRTBT)*, 8(2), 14-25.

13. Biswal, B. K., Raparathi, M., Kayande, R. A., Kaliappan, S., Madhavi, T., & Humnekar, T. D. (2024). An Examination of Corporate Identity as a Business Strategy for human Resources using Machine Learning. *Library of Progress-Library Science, Information Technology & Computer*, 44(3).
14. Narasimha, A., & Neena, P. C. (2024). Addressing attrition in the Indian IT industry: Evaluating the efficacy of a motivation and engagement model. *Multidisciplinary Reviews*, 7(8), 2024164-2024164.
15. Gayathri, R. FUNDAMENTAL OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ,2023.
16. Sombret, P. (2024, May 16). Office peacocking: an attempt to bring employees back into the office. *Deskbird*
17. Companies resort to “Office Peacocking” to retain, lure employees back to office: Experts. *ETHRWorld.com*. (2024, July 5)
18. Paul, J. (2024, May 2). What is office peacocking? The new workplace trend in 2024 You need to know. *Mashable India*.
19. Sachdev, G. (n.d.). *Office peacocking: Can snazzy workplaces get employees back to office?* YourStory.
20. Desk, T.,(2024, May 2)*Tupaki English*. Officepeacocking
21. Weinstein, M. (2024, March 25). *The right way to do “Office peacocking.”* Training.
22. Gupta, C. (2024, May 23). Office peacocking: Can swanky spaces bring employees, accustomed to working from home, back to office? *The Indian Express*.