

# Psychological theories on organisational work conditions



A) Describe what psychologists have discovered about organisational work conditions.

Psychologists have spent many years trying to prove or disprove the fact that organisation in the work place effects the productivity of the employees. That is to say, if work conditions such as lighting, temperature, noise and vibration do indeed affect the level to which the employees subjected to these issues work. It is proven that the correct lighting will aid a worker in producing a higher level or productivity without tiring so easily. High or low temperature extremes will lower concentration and affect the ability of the worker to continue effective production. High noise levels will detract the workers attention and may cause headaches and other physical ailments which disallow continuing success in the work place. Vibration clearly affects the work of someone needing a steady hand - with these things in mind we can see with little doubt that without moderation and organisation work conditions can deteriorate at a vast pace. Work tedium and lack of motivation can be caused by bad management.

B) Evaluate what psychologists have discovered about organisational work conditions.

Let us first address the issue of lighting. Lighting in any instance is a highly reactive thing. In a nightclub or in a romantic setting the lighting is always dim and soft to increase the confidence of the persons involved. Why then, should this be any different in a work place? It is patently obvious that light too dim can cause someone to strain their eyes, not only meaning that they need put in more effort to gain the same results, but they may also result in

physical ailments such as headaches and migraines, therefore leading to a great decrease in productivity. Light too bright and harsh can be intrusive, it can affect the workers morale, making them feel on display, and under interrogation, promoting nervousness and strain, thereby affecting the productivity of their work.

Temperature is a particularly important factor of the work place. If people feel cold, they are using energy to try and warm themselves, energy that could be used in other ways. If someone is too hot, they become lethargic and listless, making them unable to apply themselves in a devoted manner to any task. Both extremes are damaging to the work place, not only do they create these physical manifestations but they also affect the mood of a worker. Someone knowing that they will be cold all day at work will eventually become unwilling to enter the work place, fearing for yet another day of shivering. Someone knowing that their work place is far too hot will also eventually become unwilling to enter the work place, they can become dehydrated and snappy, irritable with other work mates and generally spreading an unhealthy work atmosphere.

High noise levels can be damaging to concentration. Whilst many people enjoy working with the background noise of some music, it is proven to be detrimental to work productivity levels if noise gets too loud. The brain will inevitably find itself split between two tasks - that of the work, and that of listening to the noise, and this inevitably detracts from the quality of the work being produced. At the same time, silence or practically no noise in the work place can cause workers to become self-conscious and nervous, also not advantageous to high quality work.

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Vibration caused by any number of things – machines in the office / warehouse where someone works, traffic outside on the street or even faulty plumbing, clearly affects the work of someone needing a steady hand. Not only is this damaging for the quality of the work, but it can also cause health problems in the long term, resulting in back pain and migraines.

Bad management such as over delegation or lack of rotation between tasks can cause tedium and boredom in the work place resulting in a lack of motivation to complete the work set, and eventually a higher level of absences as people decide that going into work is just too tedious and they begin to take ‘ sick days’.

C) Giving reasons for your answer, suggest how work conditions and schedules may be organised to reduce their negative effects.

Most of the above issues can be monitored and regulated through good organisational management. An alert and active manager is required to motivationally ensure that his work team are in the appropriate surroundings to optimise work capacity through conditions. This will alter from work place to work place, for instance, in an office, it is appropriate to have overhead lighting that is not too intrusive and then offer the workers desk lights so that they can monitor their own lighting for their own personal comfort and therefore productivity. Offices should be kept on the warm side rather than the cool side, because staff are generally stationary and this can cause bad circulation. Sitting in the same place all day can cause coldness and effective heating which can be monitored simply is a good solution. This way the staff can operate a consensus and alter the heating if they feel the need to. The

noise level should be kept at a constructive rate - enough to encourage movement and action without negating maximum concentration. Staff should not feel self conscious on the phone or when talking because there is only silence, but loud music or television are obviously not appropriate in this case, as they would clearly detract from the workers ability to give full concentration to the business in hand. Computers should be monitored so that sound is usually turned off unless necessary so that the rest of the workers are not subjected to each computer making different noises all through the day. If the job in question is more physical, say in a warehouse, then these things may be altered. Louder music may encourage faster movement and higher activity levels, lower temperatures will be necessary because the work is more physical and worker will heat more quickly, lighting may need to be more stringent in order to avoid tripping or any accidents. Vibration in any work place is not beneficial, it will make anything involving your hands harder - and most jobs do involve tactility. It can cause physical and bodily harm and pain and no work place wishes to subject this on its workers. Maximum attention should be given to ensure that no-one is in the situation where they are subjected to constant vibration. Lastly, this should all be overseen by a manager who has the foresight to allow for all these things, and the personal tastes of his team. He should allow change and varied job delegation in order to avoid boredom and tedium, this will give his staff a pleasant and comfortable environment in which to offer his staff diverse activities, keeping them motivated, happy and relaxed.