

THE VALUE OF WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY: EMPLOYEE PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

Employees are valuable assets for organizations, and their well-being is crucial for productivity and success. The workplace environment significantly affects employees' cognitive and emotional states, behavior, engagement, performance, and productivity. Factors such as room design, layout, cleanliness, equipment quality, temperature, ventilation, lighting, noise levels and air quality all play a crucial role in creating a comfortable and engaging workplace environment. This study highlights the importance of these factors and underscores the potential benefits of further research on how they impact employee productivity in hospitality organizations. The findings suggest that lighting quality significantly influences employees' perception of working conditions, while noise levels positively correlate with productivity and employee health.

Introduction

Employees and their skills are valuable intangible assets for an organization. A successful organization prioritizes the well-being of its employees by providing a high-quality, enjoyable, and safe work environment, recognizing that employees spend a significant amount of time at work. The workplace environment not only dramatically influences the cognitive and emotional states, concentration, behavior, actions, and abilities of employees across various organizations, but also plays a crucial role in their well-being. It significantly impacts employee engagement, performance, and overall productivity and profitability of the organization. The potential benefits of a high-quality work environment are vast, offering the promise of enhanced employee well-being and organizational success.

Clements-Croome [1] reports that providing a healthy working environment for employees is crucial in enhancing human productivity. Failing to do so could negatively affect employee health, such as reduced concentration, fatigue, and increased absenteeism [2].

Essential factors of the workplace environment include room design, workplace layout, cleanliness, equipment quality, temperature, ventilation, lighting, noise, vibration, radiation, and air quality. A comfortable physical workplace environment encourages employee mobility, higher concentration, sensory and physical connection to work roles, and engagement. It also improves their physical and mental well-being.

Ambiental factors such as noise, temperature, lighting, and air quality can significantly influence people's behavior in indoor spaces [3]. Considering that physical factors impact the behavior of individuals in enclosed environments, this research raises the question of whether these factors also affect employees' productivity in hospitality organizations. This study

underscores the need for further research, sparking curiosity and the desire for a more comprehensive understanding.

Materials and Methods

The research was conducted in October 2021 on 66 employees of different socio-demographic characteristics in three catering establishments from the territory of the City of Novi Sad. The structure of the sample was observed according to the following independent variables: part of the day in which the questionnaire was filled out, gender, age, education, total length of service, length of service at the current job, size of the room where the work is done and part of the catering facility where work tasks are performed.

The newly developed questionnaire Ambient Factors at Work Scale (AFWS) consisted of 41 items, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The survey covered a range of productivity and performance at work regarding environmental conditions and surroundings. All analyses were run in IBM SPSS v.26 [4].

Results and discussion

The provided table (Table 1) offers an overview of the central tendency and variability measures for the subjective assessments of ambient factors in the catering facility, as reported by the respondents. The range of values for individual ambient factors was consistently between 1 and 5. Upon analyzing the results and computing the average values along with their accompanying standard deviations, it is evident that the respondents expressed the highest satisfaction with the lighting quality. Conversely, the research conducted in hospitality facilities highlighted air quality as the most challenging ambient factor.

Figure 1. Subjective assessment of the respondents on ambient factors

	N	Minimum	Maximum	AS	SD
Lightening	66	3.00	5.00	4.15	0.827
Noise	66	1.00	5.00	3.18	1.006
Air quality	66	1.00	5.00	2.51	1.361
Temperature	66	1.00	5.00	3.15	1.140

The general hypothesis related to establishing the connection between ambient factors through the subjective evaluations of respondents and operationalization through questions on the questionnaire with working conditions, employee productivity and employee health. In the table, the first four variables - lighting quality, noise intensity, air quality and temperature adequacy refer to the subjective assessment of the respondents. In comparison, the remaining three variables were measured through statements on the questionnaire. In order to investigate the correlation between variables, Pearson's correlation was performed.

Figure 2. The correlation between ambient factors and working conditions, productivity and health of employees

		Work conditions	Productivity	Health
Air quality	r	0.021	-0.096	-0.115
	p	0.865	0.442	0.356
Noise	r	-0.146	0.623**	0.631**
	p	0.243	0.000	0.000
Temperature	r	-0.398**	-0.175	-0.143

	p	0.001	0.161	0.252
Lightening	r	0.417**	0.512**	0.373**
	p	0.001	0.000	0.002

Upon analyzing the results, it becomes apparent that lighting and air quality emerge as prominent ambient factors. Specifically, lighting exhibits the highest quality rating, while air quality garners the lowest. Concerning the impact of these independent variables on working conditions, productivity, and employee health, it is noteworthy that lighting demonstrates a statistically significant correlation with all three dependent variables. Moreover, temperature significantly influences working conditions, with higher temperatures exerting a negative impact on productivity. Conversely, noise in catering establishments yields a positive and statistically significant effect on productivity and employee well-being.

Conclusion

The findings suggest that ambient factors significantly influence the work environment and its various facets. Therefore, regular monitoring of these physical factors is imperative to foster an optimal working environment for specific tasks. On the other hand, the employees' opinions, as the main contributors to every work process, are also crucial.

However, in order to draw robust conclusions, it is imperative to conduct research involving a larger group of participants using a standardized questionnaire and to accurately measure these physical parameters. This will thereby facilitate the generalization of the findings and take specific action in that direction.

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