

Psychosocial and Physical Conditions Influencing Human Work within Organizations: A Theoretical Approach in Light of the Human Relations School

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Abstract:

This research paper highlights the most important contributions of Human Relations Theory, which, like other organizational theories, has shown considerable interest in organizations and the dynamics of their internal work environment. The work environment is considered one of the most important organizational concepts because of its significant influence on, and interaction with, other variables within the organizational climate. In particular, attention is given to the worker as the fundamental and active driving force of the organization. Workers are influenced by the psychological, social, and physical conditions under which they perform their work, and these conditions, in turn, affect the organization.

Keywords: Psychological-Social Conditions, Physical Conditions, Work, Human Relations School.

INTRODUCTION

Work is one of the most important subjects that has attracted the attention of researchers and scholars across various disciplines, including sociology, social psychology, and organizational psychology. Each discipline has examined work from its own theoretical and methodological perspective. As a concept, work constitutes a significant social phenomenon in contemporary societies and organizations because of its close association with human resources, which represent a fundamental component of organizational effectiveness.

Human resources are influenced by a range of factors, including psychosocial conditions and the physical conditions present in the work environment. These conditions surround individuals in the course of performing their duties and can significantly affect their attitudes, behavior, and performance within the organization. In this context, the studies and experiments conducted by Elton Mayo and his colleagues in industrial settings sought to identify the most important factors and conditions influencing human work. Their findings highlighted the impact of both social and environmental conditions on employee performance, whether through enhancing or reducing performance levels within organizational settings, including university organizations.

Study Importance

- This study contributes to enriching the body of knowledge on organizational behavior by addressing a topic that is closely related to key organizational concepts and processes.

- The study highlights the importance of psychological, social, and physical conditions and examines the extent of their influence on human work within the organizational environment.
- The study addresses the diversity of perspectives among scholars and researchers from different disciplines regarding the concept of work. Particular attention is given to Human Relations Theory, which emphasizes that job performance is influenced by psychological, social, and material factors, thereby affecting organizational effectiveness, success, and development.

Study Objectives

- To examine work as a social phenomenon that influences both organizations and society.
- To identify the main principles of the Human Relations School and its major contributions to the study of work, particularly concerning the influence of psychological, social, and physical conditions on workers.
- To determine the key factors within the internal organizational environment that positively or negatively affect work performance.

1. Defining the Concepts

1.1 Concept of Work

Work is a broad and multidimensional concept that has been examined across various scientific disciplines. Psychologists have focused on its psychological dimensions, sociologists have emphasized its social aspects, and economists have analyzed it in terms of its productive and economic functions.

Work has been defined as “an intended human activity that aims to change a certain situation totally or partially” (Belrabeh, 2011, p. 16).

It is also defined as “the conscious and purposeful muscular or intellectual activity exerted in the production process, that is, the use of tools to transform the material of work in the process of material or immaterial production” (Jaafour, 2018, p. 710).

Another definition views work as “one of the means of self-expression through which the individual seeks to achieve personal goals and self-realization. It provides opportunities for discovering individual inclinations and desires and allows for the expression of activity and the release of emotional energies.”

Work has also been defined as “a concept that is not limited to organized individual activity but also includes collective activity. Work is shared by workers who cooperate to accomplish a specific task that an individual alone may be unable to complete, whether within an institution or in society” (Suleiman, 2007, p. 52).

George Friedmann defines work as “the function performed by human beings through their physical and moral capacities to produce wealth and services.”

Similarly, Bergson defines work as “human activity based on the creation of utility” (Allout O. , 2019, p. 03).

1.2 Concept of Organization

Organization has been defined from various perspectives by scholars in the field of management and organizational studies.

Barnard defines an organization as “a system of activities or functions coordinated in a precise and organized manner among a group of individuals through which they seek to achieve a common objective” (Barnard, 1938, p. 73).

Similarly, Scott defines an organization as “a social unit consciously and coordinately formed by a group of individuals working toward a specific and defined goal” (Scott, 2003, p. 11).

Stephen Robbins defines an organization as “an organized system that includes a group of individuals who coordinate their efforts and functions to achieve planned and shared objectives without isolation among workers” (Robbins & Judge, 2019).

Belkacem Slatnia defines an organization as “a social entity composed of a group of individuals who interact with one another in accordance with assigned tasks and roles in order to achieve a specific, defined, and common objective” (Saltania, 2004).

1.3 Concept of Human Work within the Organization

Human work within the organization refers to the activities and functions performed by an individual as a member of the organizational environment and as an integral component of the organization. In carrying out assigned tasks, employees utilize their intellectual abilities, physical capabilities, and professional skills while demonstrating responsibility and commitment to organizational objectives. Human work is influenced by the psychological, social, and physical conditions that characterize the organizational environment. These conditions can motivate employees and enhance their performance, thereby contributing to the achievement of organizational goals. They also strengthen employees' sense of attachment and commitment to the organization, which is reflected in its effectiveness, success, and continuity (Maher, 2003, p. 27).

2. The Importance of Human Work in the Organization

Human work is considered a fundamental element and one of the key pillars upon which organizations depend to perform their functions and achieve their objectives. The continuity and success of an organization are closely linked to its employees and to the abilities, skills, and knowledge they possess and apply in carrying out their assigned tasks.

By utilizing their competencies effectively, employees direct their efforts toward achieving organizational goals, thereby enhancing both their professional competence and personal development. This contributes to positive interaction within the organizational environment and leads to improved job performance. As a result, organizations are better able to provide high-quality services and achieve their objectives.

Furthermore, a supportive work environment characterized by favorable psychological, social, and physical conditions fosters creativity and innovation among employees. Such conditions encourage effort, commitment, and productivity, thereby contributing to organizational development, effectiveness, and long-term success (Al-Omian, 2013, p. 33).

3. Motives for Work

The main motives for work can be summarized as follows:

- Work is a social and economic necessity in human life.
- Work serves as a means of communication and integration between the individual and society and helps protect individuals from unemployment.
- Work enables individuals to achieve self-realization and attain their personal goals.
- Work provides employees with a sense of satisfaction and psychological well-being through their participation in organizational activities.
- Work allows employees to experience a sense of importance and value within the organization.

- Work enables employees to establish social relationships and become members of work groups (Laalawi, 2012, p. 21).

4. Psychosocial Conditions Affecting Work

The provision of appropriate psychosocial working conditions contributes significantly to achieving self-integration, social integration, and professional adjustment among employees. These conditions are reflected in the quality of social and professional relationships within work groups and in the overall organizational climate. A positive organizational climate enhances organizational effectiveness and contributes to organizational success.

In addition, several other variables influence employee behavior and work performance. These include the characteristics of small work groups, supervision and leadership styles, and the degree of harmony and mutual understanding prevailing within the workplace. Such factors play an important role in shaping employee motivation, influencing behavior, and encouraging individuals to perform their work effectively.

Leadership is considered one of the social factors that influence workers' behavior within organizations. It plays an effective role in organizing employees' affairs to the extent that it is difficult to imagine a group of workers performing their tasks without a leader. The leader is considered a fundamental means of encouraging and mobilizing the energies and capabilities of individuals and directing them toward the achievement of organizational objectives (Maryam, 2014, p. 48).

4.1 Workers' Relationship with Management

The formal organization significantly affects the social conditions of work and plays an important role in motivating individuals to improve their performance. According to Scott, it is a system for organizing the activities of a group of individuals and enabling them to work cooperatively toward a common goal through leadership and authority. The organization influences social conditions at work through the administration's exercise of its responsibilities. These responsibilities include determining work positions for each individual, providing opportunities for communication during working hours, establishing wage rates, ensuring appropriate working conditions, and addressing all matters related to the work environment. Furthermore, the administration's exercise of its responsibilities depends on the nature and extent of the social relationships that develop among individuals.

Every workplace has objectives that it seeks to achieve. To accomplish these objectives, workers are expected to exhibit different types of behavior according to specific situations and organizational requirements.

4.2 Communications

Communication is considered one of the functions of human resource management and serves as a motivating factor for employees. This includes the development of wage and reward systems that reflect the work performed by employees. In addition, flexible communication systems characterized by simplicity and clarity contribute to the creation of mutual understanding and cooperation, which form the foundation of relationships and interactions among individuals. Communication facilitates the exchange of information and ideas related to the field of work (Jawadi, 2006, p. 22).

4.3 Work Groups

Work groups are considered one of the most important subsystems within an organization. They contribute significantly to accomplishing tasks and implementing the strategic plans established by organizational leaders and supervisors, particularly when tasks, responsibilities, and decision-making processes are distributed fairly. Such conditions promote employees' satisfaction and psychological well-being, strengthening their sense of trust and responsibility toward their duties, colleagues, and the organization.

Work groups also exert a considerable influence on members' attitudes, ideas, beliefs, values, and orientations through the norms and controls that guide collective behavior and encourage members to act in ways that serve shared organizational interests. When these processes function effectively, they help prevent conflict, pressure, and workplace disputes. This reflects a climate of understanding, harmony, and compatibility among work groups, contributing to the achievement of organizational objectives while remaining consistent with employees' personal goals (Allalqa, 2021, p. 33).

4.5 Organizational Climate

Organizational climate is considered one of the most important components of the organizational structure. It encompasses the conditions that characterize the internal environment of the organization and distinguish it from other organizations. These conditions include organizational culture, leadership, communication, supervisory style, rules and procedures, organizational justice, job satisfaction, and organizational loyalty. These variables both influence and are influenced by the organizational climate.

When an organization maintains a clear and flexible hierarchy, balanced organizational systems and units, and minimal organizational conflict or labor disputes, the organizational climate can be considered positive. Such a climate encourages employees and managers to perform effectively and facilitates dialogue and the exchange of ideas, opinions, and perspectives on matters related to work and the organization. As a result, strong professional and social relationships develop through interactions across different organizational levels.

A flexible organizational climate also encourages employees to address challenges and adapt to emerging circumstances by utilizing their skills, abilities, and preparedness. This strengthens self-efficacy, confidence, and responsibility toward work tasks and colleagues, while fostering cooperation and harmony. These outcomes enhance job satisfaction and contribute to greater organizational commitment and loyalty. Consequently, a positive organizational climate supports organizational success, development, and competitiveness (Al-Ahwal, 2020, p. 266).

5. Physical Conditions Affecting Work

5.1 Lighting

Lighting is considered one of the important variables in the organizational environment, as it significantly influences employees' performance levels, either positively or negatively, thereby affecting the organization as a whole. When lighting conditions are appropriate, they contribute to satisfactory job performance across different occupational groups within the workplace. This is largely due to the improved visibility that enables employees to perform assigned tasks accurately and pay close attention to details without experiencing distractions that may impair concentration.

Appropriate lighting also helps reduce eye strain, a common source of physical fatigue among workers. Furthermore, it encourages employees to complete tasks efficiently and in a timely manner, while enhancing their motivation to apply their skills and abilities to improve performance and

achieve high-quality outcomes. In addition, adequate lighting contributes to reducing workplace accidents and supports the organization's efforts to maintain occupational health and safety. As a result, employees experience greater psychological comfort and security within the workplace (Allout A. , 2016, p. 131).

5.2 Temperature

Temperature is considered one of the fundamental factors affecting employee performance within the workplace. The availability of appropriate temperature conditions is reflected in the level of job performance and, consequently, in the achievement of organizational objectives. Therefore, organizations should provide a suitable thermal environment that supports employees in performing their duties accurately and effectively.

When employees work under comfortable temperature conditions, they are more likely to experience a sense of security and well-being, as they perceive that the organization is concerned with maintaining their physical and psychological health. This helps prevent disturbances that may hinder task performance and reduces the likelihood of negative psychological states such as anxiety, tension, and emotional distress. Such conditions also minimize the occurrence of negative organizational outcomes, including organizational conflict and occupational stress, both of which can adversely affect the achievement of organizational goals (Hafez & Others, 2022, p. 90).

5.3 Noise

Noise is one of the physical conditions that most significantly affects the psychological and physical well-being of employees within an organization. Excessive and disturbing sounds can disrupt employees' concentration and attention while performing their tasks, particularly when those tasks require precision and accuracy. Noise may also interfere with verbal communication among individuals, reducing the effectiveness of information exchange within the workplace.

Prolonged exposure to noise can contribute to health problems, including nervous fatigue, stress, and physical exhaustion. As a result, employees may experience reduced productivity and diminished capacity to perform their duties effectively, which negatively affects organizational performance and the achievement of organizational objectives.

To address these challenges, organizations should take appropriate measures to protect employees from excessive noise. Such measures may include establishing specialized teams to monitor and maintain equipment, reducing sources of noise within the workplace, and providing a work environment characterized by calmness and comfort. These efforts contribute to occupational health and safety, enhance employee well-being, and support the achievement of organizational goals.

5.4 Ventilation

Ventilation is an important element of the work environment, as it ensures the continuous renewal of air throughout organizational departments. Effective ventilation prevents the accumulation of unpleasant odors and air pollutants that may contribute to physical and psychological health problems among employees. It also reduces feelings of discomfort and suffocation associated with poor air quality. Maintaining a moderate and comfortable atmosphere encourages employees to perform their duties effectively and to comply with organizational policies, rules, and regulations. In turn, this contributes to the achievement of organizational objectives while supporting the retention of a highly skilled and efficient workforce.

5.5 Workplace Design

The internal work environment is one of the most important factors influencing employee performance and organizational commitment. A workplace that is well designed, safe, and suitable for the tasks performed encourages employees to carry out their responsibilities comfortably and efficiently, particularly when job requirements are aligned with their abilities and skills. Such conditions promote employee retention and strengthen their attachment to the organization. An effective workplace design includes adequate and clean space, well-organized equipment, tools, and furniture, as well as the availability of modern technological resources accompanied by appropriate employee training. These factors contribute to reducing occupational errors and workplace accidents, thereby saving time and effort across different occupational groups. As a result, organizations benefit from a more efficient workforce and improved organizational performance (Allou, 2023, p. 846).

6. Human Relations School

6.1 Concept of Human Relations

Human relations in the workplace are defined as “a field of management concerned with integrating individuals into the work situation in a manner that motivates them to cooperate with maximum productivity while achieving balance among employees and satisfying their social, psychological, and material needs” (Kamel, 2014, p. 97).

The human relations approach emerged as a reaction to the limitations of the classical approach. Unlike the classical perspective, which emphasized formal structures and economic incentives, the human relations approach began its analysis from the individual, viewing employees as fundamental elements influencing organizational effectiveness. Its central assumption is that human beings are social in nature and seek self-fulfillment through work. Consequently, this approach emphasizes psychological satisfaction and the fulfillment of employees’ social and psychological needs (Boudraa, 2014, p. 20).

The term *human relations* also refers to an intellectual movement that emerged during the 1930s and remained influential until the 1950s. This movement developed in response to the rigidity associated with the scientific organization of work. Rather than focusing exclusively on rationality and formal organizational structures, it emphasized behavioral and collective dimensions of organizational life. From this perspective, individuals are not viewed merely as members of a formal organization; they are also regarded as participants in social groups that emerge naturally within the workplace and develop their own values, norms, and standards (Retimi, 2015, p. 23).

Among the most prominent pioneers of the Human Relations School was Elton Mayo and his colleagues. Between 1927 and 1932, Mayo and a team of researchers from Harvard University conducted a series of studies at the Western Electric Company's Hawthorne Works. These studies sought to identify the factors that influenced employee productivity and to explain why workers exhibited different levels of performance.

6.2 Human Relations Experiments within the Organization

Elton Mayo initially focused on examining the effect of physical working conditions on employee productivity, particularly the impact of lighting. To conduct this investigation, he established two groups. The first group served as a control group and continued working under existing conditions without any modifications. In contrast, the second group was exposed to several improvements, including enhanced lighting, appropriate temperature and humidity levels, and a reduction in

workplace disorder. The results indicated an increase in productivity and an improvement in work performance among the employees exposed to the modified conditions (Desouki, 2024, p. 25).

Mayo subsequently expanded his research to examine the psychological and social dimensions of work. His findings suggested that material and physical conditions alone were insufficient to explain employee performance. He concluded that psychological and social factors also play a significant role in shaping workers' behavior and productivity. According to this perspective, employee behavior cannot be understood in isolation from the work group to which individuals belong. The Human Relations School emphasized that workers' attitudes, emotions, interests, and social relationships contribute substantially to the development of their personalities and influence their behavior in the workplace (Al-Omian, 2013, p. 44).

6.3 Principles of Human Relations

The Human Relations School is based on several principles derived from the Hawthorne studies. These principles can be summarized as follows:

- An organization consists primarily of the relationships that develop among groups of individuals rather than merely a collection of isolated employees.
- Organizational behavior is shaped by the behavior of organizational members, who are influenced by social pressures arising from the customs, values, and norms upheld by their groups.
- Administrative leadership plays a fundamental role in influencing group formation and in modifying group norms to align with organizational objectives. Leadership also promotes greater cooperation and integration between formal and informal organizational structures.
- Effective integration can be achieved by incorporating informal organizational structures into the formal organization and by involving employees at all levels in the management process, thereby encouraging their commitment to organizational goals.
- Communication within the organization is not confined to formal channels. Informal communication networks also exist and may exert a significant influence on employee behavior. Consequently, these networks should receive appropriate managerial attention.

Among the key foundations of the Human Relations School are listening to employees, understanding their feelings, encouraging their interests, recognizing and respecting their efforts, and providing them with relevant information. In addition, managers should involve employees in training and development activities and acknowledge individual differences in characteristics, abilities, and personal traits (Jamila, 2015, p. 63).

6.4 Interpretation of Psychosocial and Physical Conditions in the Work Environment According to Human Relations Theory

According to Human Relations Theory, work is influenced by a combination of psychosocial and physical factors within the organizational environment. The theory emphasizes that employees are not motivated solely by material conditions but are also affected by social relationships, emotions, attitudes, and psychological well-being. Consequently, employee performance and productivity depend on the interaction between physical working conditions and psychosocial factors.

The university, as a service organization, consists of multiple departments and units whose employees perform diverse functions and responsibilities. From the perspective of Elton Mayo and his colleagues, these employees should not be viewed merely as productive units whose performance

is determined exclusively by material working conditions. Rather, employees are individuals with emotions, attitudes, and social needs that influence their behavior and performance. At the same time, they are affected by the physical conditions of the work environment in which they operate. For example, when the work environment in a university is characterized by disorder and excessive noise, administrative employees may experience difficulty concentrating on their tasks. Such conditions can reduce their ability to utilize their skills and capabilities effectively, particularly because administrative work often requires sustained attention, analysis, and decision-making. As noise and distraction increase, employees may find it more difficult to maintain focus, which can negatively affect the quality and efficiency of the services they provide.

In light of Human Relations Theory, university administrators should therefore strive to create a work environment that supports both the physical and psychological well-being of employees. Providing a calm, orderly, and comfortable workplace can help employees perform their duties more effectively, enhance their sense of comfort and security, and contribute to the successful accomplishment of organizational objectives.

Insufficient or inappropriate lighting can also contribute to eye strain and fatigue, which may impair the visual comfort and effectiveness of administrative employees. As a result, employees may encounter difficulties when reading and interpreting organizational policies, procedures, and regulations that are essential to their duties. Similarly, excessively intense lighting may create feelings of discomfort, anxiety, and tension, which can negatively affect job performance. Therefore, lighting should be distributed appropriately throughout the workplace and maintained at a level that is suitable for the nature of the work being performed. Proper lighting helps reduce visual fatigue, enhances employee comfort, and minimizes the physical and psychological effects associated with unsuitable lighting conditions.

Temperature and ventilation are also important physical factors affecting employee performance. Excessively high or low temperatures, as well as inadequate ventilation, may cause discomfort, stress, and dissatisfaction among administrative employees. Such conditions can reduce efficiency and adversely affect the quality and accuracy of the services provided. Consequently, organizational leaders should ensure that the workplace maintains appropriate temperature levels and adequate ventilation. A comfortable physical environment can motivate employees at different administrative levels to perform their duties effectively and contribute to the delivery of high-quality services.

However, Human Relations Theory emphasizes that organizational effectiveness cannot be achieved solely through the provision of favorable physical working conditions. Employees are social beings who require recognition, support, and attention from management in addition to suitable material conditions. When employees feel valued and appreciated, their morale and motivation increase, which positively influences their performance. Conversely, when employees perceive a lack of respect or recognition from managers and colleagues, they may experience dissatisfaction and frustration, resulting in lower morale and reduced commitment to their work.

Furthermore, employees who feel undervalued may become socially isolated from their work groups and lose confidence in organizational leadership. Such outcomes can negatively affect cooperation and overall organizational performance. For this reason, organizations should create a work environment that supports the psychological and social well-being of employees. This includes encouraging cooperation, mutual understanding, and positive interpersonal relationships through effective and flexible communication processes. Organizations should also facilitate employees'

participation in work groups that are compatible with their abilities and job responsibilities. These practices strengthen employees' sense of belonging and importance within the organization, thereby enhancing psychological satisfaction, organizational commitment, and overall job performance.

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded that psychological, social, and physical factors exert a significant influence on the organizational work environment. Physical conditions such as temperature, ventilation, lighting, and noise constitute essential components of the material work environment, while factors such as workplace relationships, communication, incentives, and leadership represent important psychosocial dimensions. When these conditions are provided in an appropriate and supportive manner, they encourage employees to perform their duties effectively and to exert greater effort in accomplishing organizational tasks. As a result, organizational efficiency and effectiveness are enhanced. Conversely, when such conditions are inadequate or incompatible with employees' abilities and needs, they can adversely affect performance and reduce the quality of work outcomes.

In addition, the individual occupies a central position within the organizational environment and is influenced by a wide range of physical, psychological, and social factors. Employees possess feelings, emotions, attitudes, and interpersonal relationships that shape their behavior and influence their interaction with the workplace. These influences may be either positive or negative and are reflected in the overall organizational climate and performance of the institution. Consequently, they contribute to determining the extent to which an organization achieves success, development, and sustainability or experiences inefficiency and decline.

Therefore, organizations, whether service-oriented or production-based, should strive to establish a work environment that promotes employee motivation, productivity, and well-being. This requires not only the provision of suitable physical working conditions but also careful attention to employees' psychological and social needs. By fostering a supportive organizational climate, institutions can enhance employee satisfaction, strengthen organizational commitment, and improve overall performance.

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