



# The Impact of Working Environment on Employee Job Satisfaction

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**Abstract.** In the modern era, organizations face several challenges due to the dynamic nature of the environment. One of the crucial challenges is to meet employee satisfaction to cope with a constantly changing and evolving environment. However, in delivering better products and services, many organizations are currently having difficulty maintaining good human resource management practices. This research aims to identify the relationship between factors of work environment and employee job satisfaction. Cross-sectional data from 105 respondents were collected and analysed using IBM SPSS 26. Several dimensions were examined concerning physical work environment factors, which include noise, temperature, lighting, workstation, furniture, and equipment. The results revealed that workplace, temperature and furniture have significant impact on job satisfaction among employees. Interestingly, the outcomes are not driven by perceptions of health or safety risks associated with worsening environmental conditions. This research also confirms that employee satisfaction positively affects work performance which in turn improves desired results and organizational goal.

**Keywords:** Job Satisfaction, Malaysian Employee, Regression, Working Environment.

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Research Background

In order to compete in the contemporary, highly competitive business environment, management must fully grasp the potential of the workforce that belongs to the enterprise [1]. A positive work environment can be significantly impacted by motivation and performance [2], [3]. The working environment can affect the emotions of employees, making them feel comfortable and working in a way that makes good use of their working hours [4]. Meanwhile, changes in lifestyle, work-life balance, and physical fitness can have a beneficial or detrimental impact on the office environment.

Failure to provide a conducive working environment could affect employee job satisfaction. The limitation faced by companies in providing conducive environment also leads to many obstacles with regard to maintain competitive advantage and foster innovative products to market. Companies need to make sure that their mission and vision

are carried out by their employees as to ensure company achieve its business goals [5]. As such, determining the quality of work and meeting the standards required are very crucial. One of the important factors that can influence the success of an employee's performance is the work environment towards job satisfaction [4]. The best performance and quality determined by the company requires an optimal working environment to enable problem-free and independent work. According to [5] and [6], employees are more productive, creative, and committed to the organization when they are happy with their work. In essence, past researchers of [7] and [8] highlighted studies related to the impact of the working environment on employee job satisfaction for further investigation.

In light of consideration, the current study addresses the literature gap by examining predictors of the physical working environment among employees using the proposed framework based on the Motivation-Hygiene Theory. The study provides insights into professionals and policymakers to formulate human resource strategies and policies to improve employee job satisfaction. The remainder of the study is structured as follows: Section 2 reviews relevant employee job satisfaction and physical working environment literature, discusses the constructs from prior findings, and corresponding hypotheses. Section 3 discusses research methodology and Section 4 outlines the data analyses, while Sections 5 and 6 discuss the contributions to current literature, managerial implications, limitations, and guidance for future research.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Theory of Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory**

The dual-factor theory, also known as Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory or the two-factor motivation theory, contends that two distinct sets of workplace variables can either result in job satisfaction or job discontent [9]. The study of organizational behaviour research on job satisfaction is the most commonly investigated and fascinating topic for personnel or organization managers as according to [10]. Hence, the goal of this study is to examine how the workplace environment affects employees' job satisfaction.

### **2.2 Job Satisfaction**

According to [11], while the notion of job satisfaction is merged with the psychological, physiological, and environmental aspects of the worker, one might still claim, "I am glad about my task." According to this methodology, the fulfillment of tasks that can be strongly stimulated by employing external factors is actually connected to the relationship with worker emotions. These components transmit the meaning of the task completion mood. A worker's sense of success and achievement at work is referred to as job satisfaction. It is typically believed to be closely related to both personal happiness and productivity. Job satisfaction is the result of performing work that one enjoys,

doing it well, and getting paid for it. Job satisfaction also means excitement and joy for one's work.

According to [12], the fundamental element that drives achievement of other goals that result in a sense of fulfilment is job satisfaction. The degree to which a worker is content with the benefits of his or her employment, particularly in terms of intrinsic motivation, can also be referred to as job satisfaction [13]. Moreover, the attitude and feelings people have about their employment are referred to as "job satisfactions." Job satisfaction is shown by positive and favorable views towards the position. Job discontent is indicated by negative and unfavorable attitudes towards the position [14].

### **2.3 Determinants of Physical Working Conditions**

The conditions under which an activity is carried out can be unique, ranging from those that are entirely comfortable to those that are extraordinarily onerous and dangerous to the life and well-being of employees. Stressful working conditions can be influenced by external variables that include atmospheric meteorological conditions, temperature, humidity, drafts, lighting in the work environment, noise and impedance, gases, radiation, residues, smoke and other unsafe elements, abstract factors that include sexual orientation and worker's age, weakness, boredom, threatening attitude at work, factors identified with the creation association, e.g. term of the work move, work schedule, work time, work pace and exorbitant load [15]. In accordance with [16], if the components of the physical working conditions are sufficiently given, an employee should not feel stressed while carrying out their duties.

In addition, [17] found that employees who experienced workstation ergonomic upgrades are required to document more high-quality preparations inside the workplace than employees who did not. Workstations are a collection of items that include a computer, a monitor, a keyboard, a mouse, a desk, a chair, and space for carrying out tasks. Furthermore, [18] claimed that noise from typical office equipment such computers, printers, phones, copiers, heating and air conditioning systems, and office workers' chats might distract office workers. This disruption happens when the employee is unable to regulate the noise source and is as unexpected as a chat among office workers. In addition, [19] asserts that uncomfortably noisy workplaces, sparse crowds, or a lack of natural light in the office all contribute to low worker productivity. The work environment and productivity can be greatly enhanced by changing the quality and features of light, such as brightness, alertness, and the impact of light concentration in the office [19]. According to [20], efficient lighting or brightness in the workplace will lead to performance and enthusiasm. Designing efficient lighting or brightness is a duty that is valued highly in a workplace that is industrial or organizational.

Workplace temperature has an impact on thermal comfort, perceived air quality, and symptoms of the poor indoor air quality syndrome, as stated by [21]. Additionally, according to [22], high temperatures impair one's ability to accomplish cognitive, physical, and perceptual tasks. The temperature in the office has an impact on how hot or chilly it is where employees spend their working hours each day [23]. Meanwhile, [17] found that employees who do not appreciate workstation adjustments after experienc-

ing workstation ergonomic upgrading are required to document more high-quality preparations inside the workplace than employees who did. The term "workstations" refers to a collection of components that include a computer, a monitor, a keyboard, a mouse, a desk, a chair, and the area needed to do a task.

## 2.4 Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses of Study

Based on the literature discussion, this research proposes the following framework and hypotheses to be studied. The physical working conditions consist of five factors namely furniture, equipment, noise, lighting, temperature and workstation which are hypothesized to influence employee job satisfaction in organization. Overall, there are six hypotheses being tested in this study:

H1: The workstation has a significant relationship with employee job satisfaction.

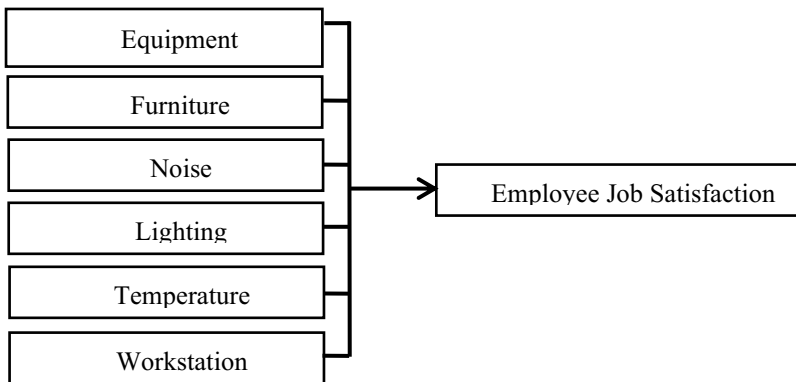
H2: The office furniture approach has a significant relationship with employee job satisfaction.

H3: The noise approach has a significant relationship with employee job satisfaction.

H4: The office equipment approach has a significant relationship with employee job satisfaction.

H5: The temperature approach has a significant relationship with employee job satisfaction.

H6: The lighting approach has a significant relationship with employee job satisfaction.



**Fig 1:** Conceptual framework of physical working condition and employee job satisfaction.

### 3 Methodology

This study utilized quantitative method in analysing the results. The samples were collected using systematic random sampling technique. Employees were randomly selected from Malaysian manufacturing firms in the target population. According to [24], this technique requires sampling frame that is accurate, easily accessible and not containing periodic patterns. Furthermore, actual list is not always needed. This research employed survey as the research instruments to collect the data. Google form link was sent through e-mail, personal Telegram and WhatsApp application to obtain employee's feedback. Prior to large data collection, research ethics was done, and the respondent's consent was attained. Questionnaire was prepared in English and Malay languages which were validated through pre-test by academic experts before distributed to the respondents. The researcher ensures that no personal answer is included, and the respondent's identity remains anonymous.

The target population of this study was 3000 employees from manufacturing firms. As proposed by [25], sampling method of at least 341 respondents is appropriate for this survey to achieve the survey objectives. Large scale data collection successfully obtained data from 105 respondents out of 500 survey distributed which represents 21% of response rate for this study. [26] recommended that research based on regressions or meta-regressions use has at least  $N \geq 25$  in order to have more variance in the analysis.

#### 3.1 Operational Constructs

The questionnaire of this study consisted of three parts. Part A consists of six items that focuses on the demographic profiles of the respondents while Section B contains physical working conditions questions that represent the independent variable which consists of 30 items. In addition, Section C (dependent variable) is related to job satisfaction of the employees. A total of 41 questionnaire elements were identified and adopted by several journals to investigate the overall impact of the work environment on employee job satisfaction. Questions on office furniture and equipment, workstation approaches, working conditions and physical environment were also included. A five-point Likert-type scale, such as "strongly disagree," "disagree," "neutral," "agree," and "strongly accept," is utilized as a measure for each of items. According to [7], [27] and [8], statistical packages are the most appropriate and consistent tool for comprehensive analysis of large amounts of data. IBM Statistics Package for Social Science Package (SPSS) version 26 is used to investigate all data collected from respondents.

#### 3.2 Data Analysis Procedure

Reliability to test the stability is used for this study and the consistency of the constructs of physical working environment and job satisfaction is tested using reliability coefficients of Cronbach alpha value. [28] stated that Cronbach's alpha is a stability reliability coefficient which indicates items in a set with a positive relationship with each other. Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.60 is acceptable which indicates reliability for the

measurement and a value of 0.70 is preferred [29]. Furthermore, correlation and analysis for regression are used to find out the correlation between two or more variables that have a cause-and-effect relationship and can formulate predictions in this relationship [30]. Hence, this study utilizes regression analysis to examine determinants of physical working environment which can be predicted on employee job satisfaction.

## 4 Analyses and Results

### 4.1 Sample Characteristics

The demographic characteristics of the selected respondents are studied using frequency analysis. Frequency summarizes information into collections and characterizes it according to the number of information focuses found in each class. Socio-demographic profile of the 105 respondents who participated in this study is presented in this section. The screening process conducted revealed no missing data. Respondent demographic explains the following six aspects of gender, age, marital status, race, education level and current position. Table 4.1 depicts the summary of the respondent's background.

**Table 1.** Profile of respondents.

Characteristics	No. of Respondents (n=105)	Percentage %
Gender		
Male	54	51.4
Female	51	48.6
Age		
18-25	2	1.9
26-30	18	17.1
31-40	52	49.5
41 and above	33	31.4
Marital Status		
Single	22	21.0
Married	83	79.0
Race		
Malay	104	99.0
Others	1	1.0
Highest Level of Academic Qualification		
Bachelor's Degree	56	53.3
Diploma	28	26.7
Master's Degree	7	6.7
SPM	7	6.7
STPM	5	4.8
Certificate	2	1.9
Current position		
Management and Professional	49	46.7
Executive	56	53.3

Table 4.1 indicates the profile of respondents of this study. The demographic items revealed that most of the respondents were male which represent 51.4% of total respondents, while the other 48.6% were female. The age distribution varied with 49.5% (52) of the respondents were 31-40 years, followed by 31.4% (33) for 41 years and above and 17.1% (18) were those in the range of 26-30 years. The lowest with 1.9% (2) were the youngest at 18-25 years old. The status of the respondents' relationships is as follows: married 79% (83) and single 21% (22). In addition, the ethnicity of the respondents was 99% (104) for Malay employee. Meanwhile, other ethnic recorded only one employee. For the highest level of academic qualification, 53.3% (56) of the respondents had Bachelor's Degree, while 26.7% (28) were at Diploma level, Master's Degree and SPM level 6.7% (7) and 4.8% (5) were at STPM. The least with 1.9% (2) were at Certificated level of academic qualification. Regarding the current position, the majority 53.3% (56) came from executive level and 46.7% (49) were at management and professional level.

## 4.2 Descriptive Analysis

Referring to Table 4.2, the highest mean value with a score of 4.2819 is employee job satisfaction. Meanwhile, temperature has the lowest mean at 2.4057, while workstation has the lowest standard deviation (0.46679). This result illustrates that the level of job satisfaction among employees is generally high.

**Table 2.** Descriptive analysis of respondents.

Variables	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Furniture	2.60	5.00	3.84	0.65
Equipment	2.20	5.00	3.67	0.64
Noise	2.60	5.00	3.52	0.47
Lighting	2.60	5.00	3.69	0.54
Temperature	1.00	4.00	2.40	0.66
Workstation	2.60	5.00	3.81	0.47
Employee Job Satisfaction	3.00	5.00	4.28	0.54

Note: N = 105

## 4.3 Reliability Analysis

The reliability test is a way to check the consistency of a scale. In this study, the reliability is assessed using Cronbach's alpha, a measure of test score reliability. The Cronbach's alpha value for all variables is higher than 0.7. The highest value is 0.946 for employee job satisfaction and the lowest is workstation with 0.704. As such, all of the instruments employed in this study have good internal consistency, reliable and consistent.

**Table 3.** Reliability analysis.

Variables	Numbers of items	Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )
Furniture	5	.902
Equipment	5	.871
Noise	5	.719
Lighting	5	.724
Temperature	5	.852
Workstation	5	.704
Job Satisfaction	5	.946
Total	35	.788

#### 4.4 Correlation Analysis

The Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient Method was employed to assess the correlation between the variables in order to test the hypothesis. Six correlation coefficients were tested through Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation, and the significance level of all correlation coefficients was set to the 0.05 (two-sided) level. The strength of the relationship can be determined via the Pearson correlation ( $r$ ). If the  $r$  value is 0, then it indicates no relationship between two variables and if the  $r$  value is 1, then it can be interpreted as perfect positive correlation, while if the  $r$  value is -1, it can be interpreted as perfect negative correlation. According to a study by [31], the  $r$  value can interpret the strength of the association. The + or - sign indicates a positive or negative relationship. A summary of the correlation matrix for the seven variables in the study is depicted in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Correlation between physical working condition and employee job satisfaction.

	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	f.	g.
Furniture	1						
Equipment	.618**	1					
Noise	.432**	.552**	1				
Light	.397**	.511**	.379**	1			
Temperature	-0.028	0.088	0.158	0.099	1		
Workstation	.367**	.461**	.300**	.624**	-0.116	1	
Employee Job Satisfaction	.450**	.418**	.255**	.338**	-.209*	.439**	1

#### 4.5 Hypotheses Testing

Table 4.5 displays the results of the multiple regression analysed to measure the strength of the proposed relationship. There were six hypotheses, and all variables were retained after testing the reliability. The individual hypothesis was tested referring to



the view set by [32] using a multiple regression prediction model, i.e., with the employee job satisfaction as the dependent variable. The results of the analysis found that H1, H5 and H6 have significant results in the prediction model. Therefore, the results supported hypotheses H1, H5 and H6 which indicated that the relationship between furniture ( $\beta=0.249$  and  $p=0.04^{**}$ ), temperature ( $\beta=-0.192$  and  $p=0.03^{**}$ ), and workstation ( $\beta=0.241$  and  $p=0.034^{**}$ ) on employee job satisfaction is significant. Meanwhile, H2, H3, and H4 were not significant in the prediction model of physical working environment towards employee job satisfaction with ( $\beta=0.107$  and  $p=0.435$ ) for equipment, ( $\beta=0.031$  and  $p=0.763$ ) for sound and ( $\beta=0.041$  and  $p=0.719$ ) for light. In addition, the  $R^2$  value for the regression model was 0.33, indicating 33% variance in employee job satisfaction is explained by the independent variables.

**Table 5.** Regression result of physical working condition and employee job satisfaction.

Constructs	$\beta$	t-value	p-value
H1: Furniture	0.249	2.060	0.042
H2: Equipment	0.107	0.784	0.435
H3: Noise	0.031	0.303	0.763
H4: Light	0.041	0.360	0.719
H5: Temperature	-0.192	-2.196	0.030
H6: Workstation	0.241	2.149	0.034

## 5 Discussion

Based on the results, it can be confirmed in this study that employees have high job satisfaction based on physical working environment. According to [7], [27] and [33], motivation, level of performance and productivity of employees are factors that are influenced by the quality of the work environment. The high level of job satisfaction among employees is a very good indicator for the organization and could lead to more success in the future. According to [2], [4], and [34], job satisfaction is an essential factor in motivating and improving employee performance. In addition, the findings are also supported by research of [35] that highlighted the importance for enterprises to recognize the benefits of a healthy atmosphere in optimizing employee satisfaction. Notably, loyalty of employee is also contributed from working environment which directly influences employee's daily work, making that good and comfortable working environment is the need of all employees [36]. Similarly, completing a task can be a source of satisfaction, thus performance is important to the individual.

Furthermore, the most influential factor in the physical working environment that contributes to employee's job satisfaction is the furniture approach. The standardized coefficient beta of the variable is maximum at 0.249 ( $\beta = 0.249$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). There is a positive correlation ( $r = 0.450$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) with moderated relationship strength between the furniture approach and employee job satisfaction. Correlation analysis proves that the value of the furniture approach is significantly and positively related to work satisfaction. The result of this study is supported by previous study of [17], which found that employees who experience improvements in workplace ergonomics have

more aggressive workplace arrangements than employees who do not experience workplace changes.

Based on a comparison of previous findings, the results show that a comfortable, risk-free workplace can lead to increased employee job satisfaction. Similar to the study by [5] and [37], both researchers agreed that the physical design of the workplace has a significant impact on the way employees work. Moreover, job setting is also found to have significant impact on work fulfillment [35]. Conversely, overcrowded and restricted one-to-one workspaces can have stress, pressure and other psychological consequences. Employees can feel unstable in the short term and lack freedom and motivation, which can lead to a very stressful environment that reduces the quality of work performance.

## **6 Implications of Findings**

The results of this survey suggest that employers are encouraged to focus on several factors that affect the work environment in order to increase employee job satisfaction. For example, the most influential factor in this study is the furniture approach, so the employer or organization needs to improve the condition of the furniture in the office [8]. In addition, furniture should have standard features such as ergonomic furniture, storage space, and shelf options. This gives employees a better working environment. It also encourages researchers to conduct a similar survey to include more employees as part of the respondents [7]. Considering that this study focuses on certain places for data collection such as industrial area, facilities and working environments are usually in better condition than rural offices, which can distort results. Involving more employees from different types of working area and spaces from all over Malaysia will give a broader perspective on the findings.

## **7 Directions for Future Research**

This study focuses on physical working environment among employees in manufacturing industry in Malaysia. Future research should also explore on other aspects of factors such as employee involvement in the entire decision-making process, flexible working hours, low workload, teamwork approach, and supportive top management which may have a positive impact on employee performance [7], [27]. The optimum level of good working environment will eventually increase employee job satisfaction, higher work commitment to the company, motivate employee to work hard, and achieve another level of productivity that may benefit organization in the long run. In conclusion, organizations should consider the importance of the physical working environment by giving appropriate attention to the details of working condition before placing employees in the office [27]. Therefore, careful research and consultation by a professional interior designer in this area is required to make the necessary arrangements for working satisfaction and employee productivity. In addition, future research should consider the plausibility that sufficient highly similar studies will be performed in the future to make a meta-analysis possible [38].

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