

The Influence of Social Atmosphere on Work Performance: An Examination of Creativity and Complex Problem-Solving

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ABSTRACT

The study conducted here is dedicated to the topic of how social atmosphere influences work performance when solving creative and complex problem-solving tasks. A total of 39 students from the Harz University of Applied Sciences were divided into two groups, each of which was presented with pleasant or unpleasant video stimulus material designed to create a corresponding social atmosphere. The students then completed a creative task and a complex problem-solving task. Items to validate the stimulus material showed that the intended social atmospheres could be reliably generated in both conditions. In the pleasant condition, the students mentioned significantly more and more creative ideas in the creative task. The complex problem-solving task was evaluated on several dimensions as well as using a category system. Results show that in the pleasant condition participants wrote significantly longer answers. In the unpleasant condition participants addressed the issue of time more often. Although only partial effects were found, results indicate that a deepening and broadening of the research subject could reveal worthwhile findings.

Keywords

Social atmosphere – complex problem-solving – creativity – work performance