

ORGANISATIONAL WORK CONDITIONS ESSAY PACK

For CAIE A2 Psychology Paper 3

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1a) Describe what psychologists have discovered about:

- the impact of physical work conditions on productivity and the Hawthorne effect, and
- the impact of the design of the work environment focusing on open plan offices, including a study. [6]

Ans.

Physical work conditions such as temperature, noise and lighting can influence productivity by affecting comfort, health and concentration. Early research on this topic led to the Hawthorne effect, [redacted]

[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] t. However, Kompier argued that the Hawthorne effect is [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

The design of the work environment also affects productivity, particularly in open plan offices. Open plan offices are designed to increase [redacted]
[redacted]. Oldham and Brass investigated the effects of moving from a conventional office [redacted]

[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

1 b) Evaluate what psychologists have discovered about:

- the impact of physical work conditions on productivity and the Hawthorne effect, and
- the impact of the design of the work environment focusing on open plan offices, including a study

including a discussion about determinism versus free-will

Evaluation in your answer can include strengths, weaknesses and a discussion of issues and debates. [10]

Ans.

One relevant issue is determinism versus free-will. Research on physical work conditions and productivity support determinism. The Hawthorne studies implied that [redacted]
[redacted]. Kompier challenged this [redacted]
[redacted], as Oldham and Brass showed that [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

Another issue is the use of experiments. The Hawthorne studies used quasi-experimental methods in real workplaces, [redacted]
[redacted]. Kompier brought about the lack of scientific rigour and [redacted]
In contrast, Oldham and Brass used a longitudinal [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

A final issue is the use of questionnaires. Research on open plan offices heavily depends on [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

2 a) Describe what psychologists have discovered about:

- design of work: shiftwork, and
- effects of shiftwork on health and accidents, including a study. [6]

Ans.

Shiftwork refers to work schedules that fall outside standard daytime hours. Rotational shiftwork involves workers moving between

[REDACTED]

Shiftwork is associated with disrupted circadian rhythms, reduced sleep quality, fatigue and increased accident risk. Gold et al. aimed to examine the

[REDACTED]

2 b) Evaluate what psychologists have discovered about:

- **design of work: shiftwork, and**
- **effects of shiftwork on health and accidents, including a study**

including a discussion about application to everyday life

Evaluation in your answer can include strengths, weaknesses and a discussion of issues and debates. [10]

Ans.

One relevant issue is application to everyday life. Research on shift design shows clear practical implications. Rapid rotational shift patterns, especially backward rotation, d

Gold et al.'s findings that rotator nurses slept less

Another relevant issue is determinism versus free-will. Much of the research supports a deterministic explanation, as

. Similarly, flexi-time assumes workers can self-regulate their schedules responsibly. This suggests that

A final issue is the use of questionnaires. Gold et al. used self-report questionnaires to measure sleep,

3 a) Describe what psychologists have discovered about:

- accidents at work focusing on human and system errors, and
- reducing accidents at work using a token economy, including a study. [6]

Ans.

Accidents at work can be explained using human and system errors in operator-machine systems. Human errors occur when

[REDACTED]

System errors come from poor design of machine controls and displays. Displays give information to operators

[REDACTED]

One method of reducing accidents is a token economy, based on [REDACTED]. Fox et al. aimed to investigate whether a token economy could

[REDACTED]

3 b) Evaluate what psychologists have discovered about:

- accidents at work focusing on human and system errors, and
- reducing accidents at work using a token economy, including a study

including a discussion about individual and situational explanations

Evaluation in your answer can include strengths, weaknesses and a discussion of issues and debates. [10]

Ans.

One relevant issue is individual and situational explanations. Human error approaches to workplace accidents focus on individual factors, such as mistakes in attention, memory or decision-making. Errors of omission, commission, sequencing and timing all

[REDACTED]

Another relevant issue is idiographic versus nomothetic approaches. Classifications of human errors and design principles for controls and

[REDACTED]

A final issue is the use of longitudinal studies. Research on token economies was improved by Fox et al.'s long-term design, as the programme

[REDACTED]

4 a) Describe the key study by Swat (1997) about monitoring of accidents and risk events.

[6]

Ans.

Swat investigated how accidents and risk events are monitored in organisations and highlighted limitations of using only reactive monitoring. Reactive monitoring focuses on

[REDACTED]

The aim of the study was to develop a useful method of recording

[REDACTED]

Results showed accident frequency averaged 2.8 per 100 employees, with the foundry highest. Accident severity averaged

[REDACTED]

It was concluded that monitoring should include

[REDACTED]

4 b) Evaluate the key study by Swat (1997) about monitoring of accidents and risk events including a discussion about individual and situational explanations

Evaluation in your answer can include strengths, weaknesses and a discussion of issues and debates. [10]

Ans.

One relevant issue is individual and situational explanations. Swat's findings strongly support situational explanations of workplace accidents. Their analysis showed

[REDACTED]

Another relevant issue is idiographic versus nomothetic approaches. Swat used a largely nomothetic approach by classifying

[REDACTED]

A final issue is the use of longitudinal studies. Swat analysed accident data over several years and compared accidents in 1993 with incidents recorded in 1994. This helped identification

[REDACTED]

Lesson prepared by:

Jyotika Varmani

CIE A Levels Psychology School Teacher, Modern College, Mauritius
CIE A Levels Psychology Subject Expert, Podar International, Mumbai
AQA GCSE and A Levels Psychology Tutor, Expert Tutors, UAE
AQA A Levels Psychology Tutor, Higher OTS Academy, UAE
AQA A Levels Psychology Tutor, Gritty Tech, India
AQA A Levels Psychology Tutor, Aurora ELearning, UAE
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AQA, Edexcel and IBDP

M.A. (Psychology Honours), UGC-SET and NET (first attempt, first ranker),
PGDHE (Post-Graduate Diploma in Higher Education)
Visit Jyotika Varmani's complete profile at -
<https://www.teacheron.com/tutor-profile/1KH>

To book your GCSE/IGCSE/A-levels classes with Jyotika Varmani:

WhatsApp: **+919892507784** OR

e-mail: jyotika@excellingpsychology.com

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