

Satisfaction with light influences our perception of others

If you are satisfied with the lighting in your environment, then you are more likely to rate others as warm and competent. So reports Kombeiz and Deitl in their paper recently published in *Ergonomics*¹.

The researchers conducted a laboratory study that simulated an office and varied the lighting:

1500 lux (bright) OR 150 lux (dim) AND 5500K (cool white) OR 2500K (warm white)

164 students participated in the study and were asked to rate their satisfaction with the lighting and their current mood (cheerful, happy, joyful, lively).

They were also shown a picture of a face with a neutral expression and asked to rate the face for:

- Warmth (= warm, friendly, trustworthy)
- Competence (= competent, intelligent, confident, assertive).

Key findings

Satisfaction with the lighting increased the likelihood that a face would be rated as warm or competent.

The type of lighting (bright/dim, warm white/cool white) did not have a statistical effect on the group's overall satisfaction with the lighting, their mood nor their judgements of warmth/competence.

Do the results also apply to real workplaces?

Kombeiz and Deitl conducted a similar study in a real office (with it's existing lighting) with 176 full-time office workers¹. They also found a relationship between satisfaction with the lighting and social judgement.

Practical implications

The authors of the paper made the following conclusions:

- Use lighting that is constant for all candidates in job interviews or performance reviews. This will reduce bias in your judgement of candidates.
- There is not a single set of lighting parameters that will satisfy all people in a workplace.
- Personal control of light can accommodate an individual's satisfaction with the lighting. This, in turn, could translate to better perception of others in the workplace.



Reference: 1. Kombeiz O & Dietl E (2019) *Ergonomics* 62(8): 995-1007



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