

# LIFE & TIMES

## Office air quality could impact employees' creativity

AIR pollutants potentially present in workplaces could impair employees' creativity, according to a study by researchers at a Singapore-based university.

The World Health Organisation estimates that more than three million people will die each year from indoor air pollution in 2020.

A study by a team of researchers at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University has looked into the matter, suggesting that high levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), chemicals released by certain products, can impair employees' creativity.

Published in the journal 'Scientific

Reports', the study found that high levels of VOCs affected the creativity of study participants.

VOCs can be much more prevalent in workplaces than one might think, since they can originate from detergents, pesticides, perfumes, paints, or even aerosols.

"While most people would correctly associate indoor air quality with effects on the lungs, especially since we just emerged from a pandemic, our study shows that it could also have an impact on the mind and creative cognition, or the

ability to use knowledge in an unconventional way. Our findings suggest that relatively low TVOC levels, even if well within the accepted threshold, could impact an individual's creative potential," reads a statement from Assistant Professor Ng Bing Feng, who co-led the research.

Some sectors are obviously more impacted than others, as the researchers point out, but this study highlights the need for companies to improve indoor air quality.



Air pollutants potentially present in the workplace could affect employees' creativity, research reveals. PICTURE CREDIT: ETX DAILY UP