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**WELL-BEING AND
REDUCTION OF
DEBILITATING FACTORS
ASSOCIATED WITH THE
WORK ENVIRONMENT**

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(i) Introduction: The number of employees with diagnoses of chronic stress, Burnout syndrome and anxiety disorder within work environments has increased at an accelerated pace around the world. The pandemic and post-pandemic scenario of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) only contributed to make these illnesses stand out in corporate spaces. When we study the impact of office environments on the lives of their workers, we know that there are many factors that contribute to these diseases. Daily we go through situations that require our perception and reasoning, which happen consciously or unconsciously. To emphasize this thought, Silva and Goulart (2015) elucidate that Kahneman (psychologist and economist) divides human thinking in two ways: the first is fast (unconscious and emotional – linked to our automatic responses) and uses little brain energy to occur; the second is slower (conscious and rational – used when solving a problem that requires more concentration) and needs more brain energy to happen. The human mind, as described by Friedman (2017), constantly maps its surroundings, looking for clues and using data to select an ideal mental approach, that is, where we are affects the way we think, and when we see, hear, touch, taste or we smell, the body and the brain participate in the interaction with the environment (DAMASIO, 2012). When we are in workspaces, much is required of our conscious and rational thinking.

(ii) Objective: Plan corporate spaces aimed at the physical and mental well-being of its employees, in order to reduce the debilitating factors associated with the work environment.

(iii) Methodology: This article approaches a set of analyzes and research. All information was collected from scientific studies found on Scielo, PubMed, ANFA database (Academy of Neuroscience for Architecture) and books. From the analyzed

studies, it is possible to outline more efficient paths and objectives for the conception of the architectural project of corporate spaces.

(iv) Results and discussion: The concept of office work actually occurred only with the arrival of the Industrial Revolution, famous for its transformation of the production model. “At the time, most workplaces looked almost nothing like they do today. The typical office consisted of a vast open space, with rows upon rows of identical desks placed closely together. Employees had little privacy, resulting from the design incorporated at the time. The crowded office, as it was known, was a natural extension of the factory floor. The goal was to keep everyone in sight, as a way to ensure people stayed at their desks. The result was an increase in employees’ chronic stress, lack of: motivation, creativity, autonomy and a loss of desire to work. Neuroscience made possible the study between the human being and the space in which he is inserted. Our work environments are our “second home”, where we spend most of our days performing our professional duties and responsibilities. What became even more evident after the creation of new offices during the Industrial Revolution is that we are beings with desires, dreams and feelings. We cannot talk about individuals without mentioning the human brain, which is largely responsible for cognition and memory. The frontal lobe (or executive lobe) it is largely responsible for controlling impulses and emotions, free will, our sense of responsibility, forming judgments, helping to understand others, developing complex thoughts, controlling behaviors and being in charge of our attention. For Goldberg (2009), the frontal lobe is the “organ of civilization”. Within the frontal lobe we find the prefrontal cortex, which has as its main function the responsibility for integration (include, exclude and organize elements in a set, forming a coherent whole)

of actions to achieve goals (MOURÃO JR; MELO, 2011). The successful achievement of pre-established work goals and the ability to respond appropriately to the demands of the workplace depend on efficient and flexible cognitive and social functioning. (BALCONI; ANGIOLETTI; CRIVELLI, 2020). In a world where we are hyperstimulated all the time – whether through physical, digital or social means – stress, Burnout syndrome and anxiety associated with the work environment have become increasingly common. The effects of stress can still be divided into three categories: physiological, psychological and behavioral (BAKER, 1985:369). These illnesses already existed before the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and are likely being amplified by the ongoing challenges presented by this event (ARNSTEN; SHANAFELT, 2021). The hormone cortisol acts in the regulation of stress levels, also serving as a regulator of blood pressure, mood regulator and amount of sugar in the blood. The highest levels of cortisol are released in the morning and are related to our mood and energy supply. In situations of chronic stress, there is a continuous hyperstimulation of this hormone, which becomes harmful, causing physiological and functional changes in the brain that can later result in the development of psychiatric disorders. Any workplace has characteristics that can cause anxiety and through the neuroarchitecture project it is possible to present a new look and a new meaning to these places. Stress-related problems are responsible for 75% of health problems today. Overcharging within institutions and the great financial concern are the greatest causes of stress in the contemporary world. Most people are relatively healthy and whole when they start their professional lives, however, over time, the stress of the workplace wears them down

and they develop chronic health problems (SISODIA; GELB, 2020:37). It is understood that the role of the architect when it comes to developing projects goes far beyond the harmonization between the layout and the choice of materials. Each project will be unique, as a crucial aspect that differentiates them – in addition to the locations in which they are inserted – are the individuals who will make use of that space. This responsibility is even greater when it comes to designing corporate spaces, precisely because we spend more time in work environments than in our own homes. Work itself demands a good part of our daily energy, which is why spaces must promote the well-being and health of their employees. Physical environments play a powerful role in shaping a diverse range of psychological and behavioral outcomes, including individual motivation to work (DAVIS; LEACH; CLEGG, 2012). Even when people aren't consciously paying attention to sounds, textures or smells, the senses are capturing information and sending it to the brain. This just proves the relevance of a well-designed environment, focusing on individuals who will enjoy that space in addition to the entire layout developed. Changes in environments are able to promote changes in the brain. The environment acts directly on our cognition and learning, and when stimulated correctly, it brings results both for the personal achievements of each user and for the social life of the offices.

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