

Paper –Principles and Practice of Management

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## **Topic- Hawthorne Experiments**

Professor Elton Mayo is known as the Father of the Human Relations Approach to Management Theory. From 1924 - 1932, he, along with Fritz Roethlisberger, T.N. Whitehead and William Dickson, conducted the Hawthorne studies (so named for the location of the studies - the Hawthorne Plant of Western Electric Company).

In these experiments, Mayo evaluated the attitudes and psychological reactions of workers in on-the-job situations. It began by examining the impact of illumination levels on worker productivity. Eventually, the study was extended through the early 1930s and addressed a broader range of workplace conditions.

The results, however, identified a unique identifier of group performance - attention. The control and experimental groups' performance improved irrespective of the environmental conditions.

The theory became known as the Hawthorne Effect - individuals perform better when given special attention. The study also addresses other major concerns, such as: individual vs group job performance, worker motivation, and production standards.

The findings were as follows:

Group dynamics (Social Factors) are important determinants of job performance and output.

Groups have their own norms and beliefs, independent of the individual members.

Individuals are not solely motivated by compensation. Perceived meaning and importance of ones work are the primary determinants of output.

Employees prefer a cooperative attitude from superiors, rather than command and control.

Communication between management and employees is essential to understand employee issues.

Workplace culture sets production standards - despite standards set by managers.

The work of Mayo, through the Hawthorne studies, was instrumental in understanding the roles of group behaviour and individual psychology in management practice.