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PSY511 Assignment 1 Solution

Fall 2026

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PSY511 — Environmental Psychology

Assignment No. 1 — Fall 2026 | Sample Solution | Total Marks: 20 | Due Date: 6 November 2026

Lesson 4: Arousal Theories. The answers use the inverted-U relationship between arousal and performance: performance is best at a moderate, optimal level of arousal, and falls when arousal is too low or too high.

Scenario 1: Sleepy in a quiet, dim room; alert in a more stimulating space

Identification: Under-arousal caused by low environmental stimulation.

• Arousal rises with environmental stimulation, and a very quiet, dim room provides too little of it.

• Below the optimal level, alertness and attention fall, so concentration becomes difficult.

• Moving to a more stimulating space raised arousal toward the optimal level, which improved alertness and performance.

Scenario 2: Extreme anxiety during an examination, racing heartbeat, rushed answers, avoidable mistakes

Identification: Over-arousal caused by examination anxiety.

• Anxiety pushed arousal far above the optimal level.

• Excess arousal narrows attention and disturbs working memory, so even well-learned material is handled carelessly.

• The mistakes were caused by the student's state, not by lack of preparation — the downward side of the inverted-U.

Scenario 3: Separate desks with occasional exchange of ideas; workers feel engaged and efficient

Identification: Optimal arousal through balanced stimulation.

• Moderate stimulation keeps arousal near the optimal level.

• Occasional contact with colleagues provides enough stimulation to stay engaged.

• Separate desk areas prevent overload, so attention stays on the work — hence efficient performance.

Scenario 4: Soft background sound is fine, but loud music and conversations distract

Identification: Overstimulation (sensory overload).

• Stimulation helps only up to the optimal point; beyond it, it becomes interference.

• Loud music and several conversations compete for attention and pull it away from study.

• Performance falls because attention is divided, not because the learner lacks ability.

Scenario 5: Outdoor training on a very hot afternoon; discomfort, poor focus, worse performance as heat rises

Identification: Heat as an environmental stressor raising arousal beyond the optimum.

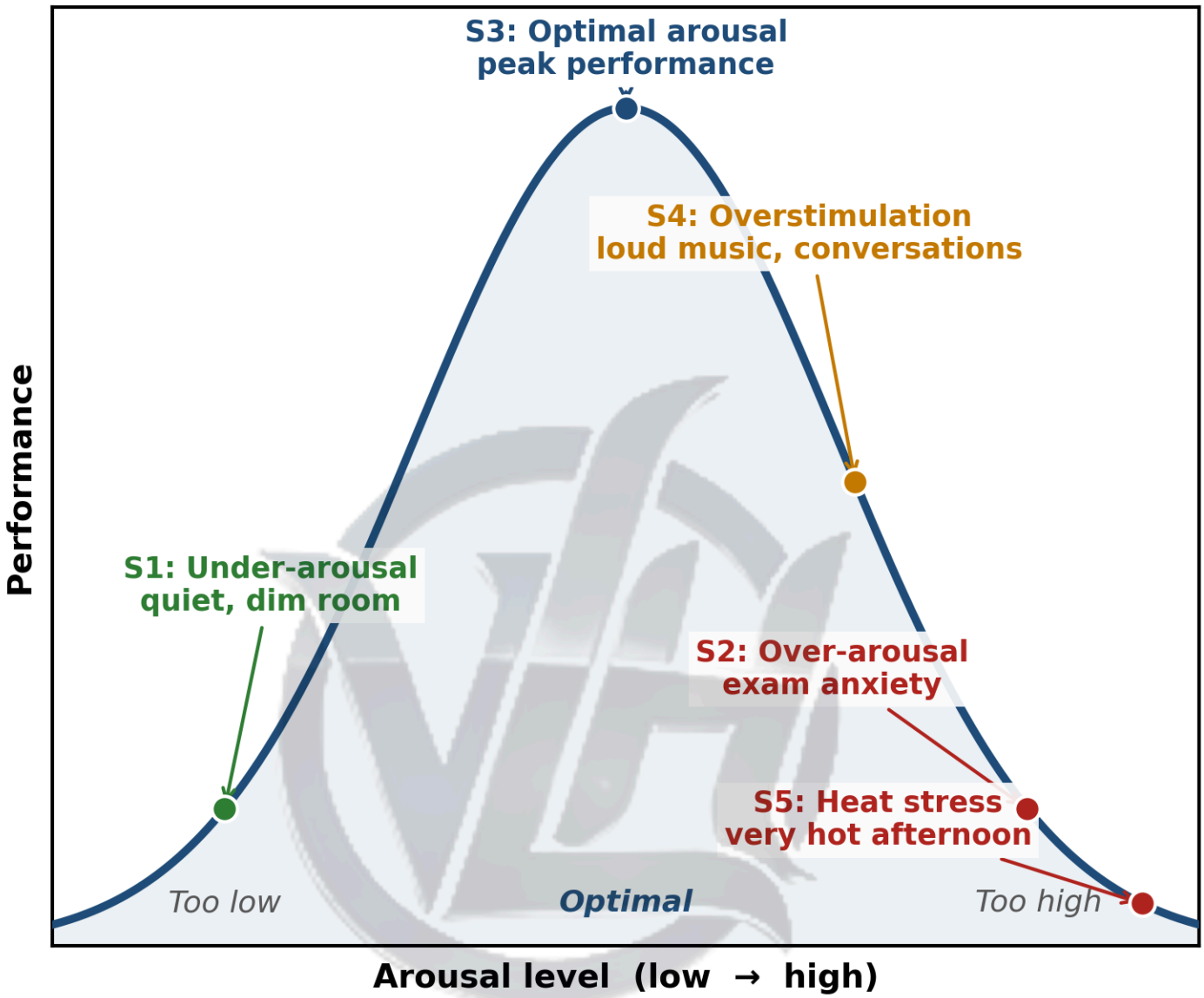
• Heat is a physical stressor that raises arousal and bodily discomfort.

• Coping with discomfort consumes attention, leaving less of it for the task.

• As the temperature rises further, arousal moves further past the optimum, so performance keeps falling.

The Inverted-U: Arousal and Performance

PSY511 — Lesson 4: Arousal Theories



Performance rises as arousal increases up to the optimal point, then falls as arousal keeps rising. Each scenario sits where its arousal level puts it on the curve.

S1 Under-arousal • S2 Over-arousal • S3 Optimal arousal
S4 Overstimulation • S5 Heat stress