Overview

History of office design
BBC News Catalyst
Experimental Data
Where Next?
Psychological Research into Identity and Space Management
"The Holy Grail"

(Horne)

Office Improvements

Tangible Benefits

Relocation

New people

Incentives

Downsizing

Restructuring

Management initiatives

Time of year

Colour scheme

Success/failure of local team

Etc
Realities of contemporary office space

Flexible office territory
• Multiple workstation access (hot desking)
• Area depersonalization (clean desk/shared desk policy)
  Lack of a *home* space
• Creation of artificial group boundaries
• Diminution of personal and group agency
Office Development

- Pharaoh’s Scribes
- Medieval Monks
- Dickensian Bank Clerks
Space Management & Identity Realization

• Increasing workplace surveillance since early 20th century
  • 1860s
  • 1890
  • 1915
  - Taylorist (Taylor, 1911) principles of consistency, standardization, and efficiency
  - Development of High surveillance Low autonomy office environments
The Modern Office?

2008

1906
Panopticon

- Bentham 1783
- Covert continual surveillance
- Clusters of inmates
Office Reality
BBC 15th November 2006

- New rules in tax offices mean desks must be free from clutter to promote “lean, efficient business processing”.
- Revenue and Customs staff cannot have food at their desks
- Non-essential items targeted include money, memorabilia and packed lunches
Office Reality

• "Lean is all about offering a better service to our customers and staff. It is a key element in HMRC’s plan to provide improved service and meet efficiency targets.” (HMRC)

• Staff at Revenue and Customs (HMRC) have condemned "hare-brained" plans to remove items such as family pictures from work areas to boost productivity.
Your place or mine?

Forget clearing clutter in the office. Decorating your desk is good for you - and good for your boss, according to a set of workplace experiments.

Ever come back from holiday and been acutely aware of the fact that someone else has been working at your desk? The computer screen is at the wrong angle, the mouse is on the wrong side of the keyboard, your pens have been put in the top drawer together with the photograph of your cat.

What's the first thing you do? Put them all back. Why? Because this is your space and the way it's arranged says something important about who you are - both to yourself and to other people.

This article is illustrated with photos sent in by our readers.
Survey findings

Survey of UK office workers (Ns = 34, 61, 104, 302, 1,643) (Knight & Haslam, 2009)
Drawbacks of Survey Instruments:

• Self report
• Correlational
• No causation
• No control
• No observation of behaviour
Workplace Experiment

- experiment 2
The experiment

3 Hypotheses:

• H1 — Decorating/designing a workspace will (a) increase workers’ organizational identification and (b) enhance productivity/satisfaction

• H2 — Empowering workers to decorate or design their own workspace will (a) increase organizational identification and improve productivity/satisfaction still further

• H3 — Compromising workers’ autonomy within the workspace will reduce organizational identification and compromise performance/satisfaction.
2) What is Martin Chamberlain’s position in the company?

3) Who is Martin Chamberlain’s immediate boss?

10) In which town/city is Hexagon Taps located?

13) Which two offices flank the sales manager’s office?
Task #2
Letter Identification (Attention to Detail)

• A one-page magazine article.
• Strike out all the lower case letters ‘b’ as quickly and accurately as you can.
Book the Christmas Party

Go to an awards dinner

Be responsible positive company publicity

Chair a prestigious committee

Attend a Dubai Conference
Task #4
Questionnaire

Attitudes and feelings
Participants complete questionnaire:
80 questions = 14 scales
- Organizational identification
  - I identify with the organization that's running this experiment
- Control
  - (During experiment) I had control over my environment
- Sick room syndrome
  - The air in the room was stuffy
- Organizational Citizenship Behaviour
  - If these were my normal working conditions I would stay behind to do extra work if necessary, even if I wasn’t paid overtime.
- Motivation Scale
  - I wanted to do well in the tasks
- Ambience Scale
  - I felt ‘at home’ in the room during the tasks

INSTRUCTIONS
This questionnaire consists of a number of statements each with its own scale. These scales allow for seven shades of meaning from disagree completely to agree completely. For example, if you agree quite strongly with a statement you would cross the sixth box in the scale like this.

Before you begin, please be assured that all your responses will remain anonymous and confidential.
If you have any questions, please ask them now. Otherwise, please turn the page and begin.
Condition 1: Lean (Bare) office

- Participant undertakes the tasks in a lean space
- No decorations
Condition 2: Enriched office

- Participant works in a decorated space
- S/he cannot change the room design
Condition 3: Empowered office

- Participant is asked to decorate the space in which they will work
- S/he can choose 0–6 pictures
- ... and add 0–6 plants
Condition 4: Compromised office

- Identity is realized as in Condition 3
- Identity is then compromised by the experimenter
- The participant then works under the conditions imposed by the experimenter
Well Being
Relationship between Space management, Identity Realization and Well-being

- Assessed in terms of (a) ease of concentration

Concentration: $F(3,108)=5.26$, $p<.01$, $\eta^2=.13$

- Study of UK office workers ($Ns=112, 47$) (Knight & Haslam, in prep)
Well Being
Relationship between Space management, Identity Realization and Well-being

- Assessed in terms of (a) ease of concentration, (b) ambience

- I felt at home
- The room felt soulless
- The room had a good
- I felt comfortable
- atmosphere

**Concentration:** $F(3,108)=5.26$, $p<.01$, $\eta^2=.13$

**Ambience:** $F(3,108)=15.95$, $p<.01$, $\eta^2=.31$

- Study of UK office workers ($Ns = 112, 47$) (Knight & Haslam, in prep)
Well Being
Relationship between Space management, Identity Realization and Well-being

- Assessed in terms of (a) ease of concentration, (b) ambience and (c) sick office syndrome

Conclusions
- Enrichment and Identity Empowerment increase well-being
- But not when ‘management’ violates identity-realization

Study of UK office workers (Ns = 112, 47) (Knight & Haslam, in prep)
Organizational Identification

Relationship between Space management, Identity Realization and Organizational Identity

i feel strong ties with the organization that is running this experiment

I identify with the organization that is running this experiment

Assessed in terms of (a) organizational identification scale

Conclusions: Identity realization increase a sense of

Study of UK office workers (Ns = 112, 47) (Knight & Haslam, in prep)
Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Relationship between Space management, Identity Realization and Organizational Well-being

Enrichment and Identity Empowerment increase Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Study of UK office workers (Ns= 112, 47) (Knight & Haslam, in prep)

• Assessed in terms of (a) positive tasks retained, (b) negative tasks retained and (c) total number of tasks retained

Positive Tasks:

\[ F(3,43) = 4.77, p< .01, \eta^2 = .25 \]

Negative Tasks:

\[ F(3,43) = 4.20, p< .01, \eta^2 = .23 \]
Productivity
Relationship between Space management, Identity Realization and Productivity

- Assessed in terms of (a) memo sorting, (b) letter counting and (c) overall performance and errors.

Conclusions
- Enrichment increase productivity
- Identity Empowerment increases productivity still further
- Faster performances do not mean more errors

Study of UK office workers ($N_s = 112, 47$) (Knight & Haslam, in prep)

- Memos: $F(3,43)=3.70$, $p<.01$, $\eta^2=.26$
- Letters b: $F(3,43)=4.45$, $p<.01$, $\eta^2=.30$
- Overall: $F(3,43)=4.58$, $p<.01$, $\eta^2=.24$
Conclusions

• Data challenges the idea that productivity can only be achieved through high surveillance and a lack of autonomy.

• In fact, the opposite may be true — a lack of autonomy (and an associated lack of input into managerial decision making) would appear to compromise well-being.

• The outcomes of standard, office management approaches can be very costly (in both economic and social terms).

• These studies (and the theory they support) point to the need to involve employees in the design of work space allowing for the expression of valued identities.

• Space management (e.g., business, architecture, design) needs to move from a philosophy of identity imposition to one of identity realization.
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Older adults in care
Happiness and (apparent) health of the residents

F(2,24)=22.50, p<.001, η²_p = .69
Total appearance means in the home’s sitting rooms at 11am and 7pm

$F(2,24)=15.38, p<.001, \eta^2_p=.56$
Good workspace design? Results to date

Organizational
Identity
Reality

Individual

Group

Well Being

Productivity

(Knight & Haslam, 2009)
Want to become involved?

- www.prism-identity.com
- 01392 247 903
- cpk201@ex.ac.uk
The Psychology of Office Space
(Knight & Haslam)

8th April 2009
IPSIS workshop