AESTHETICIZATION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES: A STUDY ON SCHOOL TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

Unprecedentedly, aestheticization exponentially plays a dramatic role in organisational studies and the scholarship on the space, place and aestheticization has been far less focused and remained agnostic. The present study aims at discovering the effect of space, place and aestheticization among teachers. Lucidly there is an urge to explore and investigate how the school's physical environment and its design have been athetized and how its effect on the teacher's feelings. With the aid of the purposive sampling technique, data were garnered from teachers working in primary and secondary schools with in-depth interviews. Drawing on conceptual insights from organizational aesthetics and theory of satisfaction and motivation, this qualitative study explored the relationship between workplace design aesthetics, school teacher's satisfaction and motivation. The majority of the informants interviewed agreed that space, place and aestheticization have a strong effect on employee satisfaction, mood, feeling, involvement, creativity and motivation. Aesthetics seem to be a predominantly vital factor in predicting productivity and performance.

Keywords: *aestheticization, education, motivation, performance, place, satisfaction and space*

INTRODUCTION

The concept of aesthetics has gained admiration in recent times because of the high consideration given to the "aesthetic sphere of existence" in the theorization of organizations. Ramírez (2005) states "aesthetics" is the Greek word 'aisthanomai' which specifies perception by the senses. Further, Ramírez (2005) reviewed aesthetics as a branch of Western philosophy that deals with the forms of understanding, perception, conception, and experience, which we qualify with adjectives such as 'beautiful,' 'ugly,' 'elegant,' or 'repulsive.'In the sense that they facilitate the organization of aesthetic experiences in work processes in the operational

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core. Though the term "Aesthetic experience" is usually defined with the concept of "beauty," it transcends the traditional view of beautification.

Schön (1983) discovered that, for architects, which is comprehensible as it is generally assumed that the products of the work, architectural designs, should manifest beauty. Hoeken and Ruikes (2005) found that people can relate to works of art to a specific corporate uniqueness, which signifies that works of art can function as a sign of the organizations' personality. Moreover, organizations strive to transmit their identities through the buildings, grasp their acquisition and display of art. Nevertheless, it has been argued that research on the role of artifacts should be encouraged (Barry & Meisiek, 2010). Therefore, the notion not merely by corporate firm but the government departments and institutions ought to be taken into consideration to explore the impact on the place, space and aestheticization on their performance, productivity, satisfaction, and motivation. The rudimentary objective of this study is to identify the likely impact of aesthetics on teachers' satisfaction and motivation.

The originality of the study

Organizations are evolving towards deploying aesthetic aspects into the working life for the sake of being 'beautiful' and 'attractive' and to retain organizational members attached to the organization. Despite numerous studies previously exist that merely discuss aestheticization in corporate sector firms in Sri Lanka, there has been very little researches focusing on government sectors primarily educational sectors in Sri Lanka, more specifically in the northern region. This is the first study in the northern region that embraces empirical evidence to investigate how aestheticization affects the school staff's productivity and their working life.

Research problem

Unless there is indisputable evidence that acquiring art and aesthetics has an impact on organizational behaviour and the routine life of employees, reputation or service delivery, its legitimacy becomes questionable (Bjerke and Ind, 2015). Albeit job satisfaction and motivation of teachers in line with space, place and aesthetics were well established in the developed countries, indeed a few research studies and findings are in support of developing countries like Sri Lanka. Nevertheless, those studies conducted in developing countries have applied the models and theories which were initially developed from the studies in developed countries. Warren and Rehn (2006) state that there is still a need for research on aesthetics and the

organization. Moreover, in organization studies, we have long neglected the aesthetic context of organizational behaviour. Although it seems evident that aesthetic deliberations play a role in many different aspects of organizations, it is not so clear if and how aesthetics play a role in the process of organizational design. Therefore, this research study covers the way for Sri Lankan scholars to explore the phenomenon of organizational aesthetics, which is a reality of in the contemporary work organizations in Sri Lanka.

Objectives of the study

- to explore how the school environment is being aestheticized.
- to explore the feeling, emotions and experiences of teachers concerning the aestheticized work environment.
- to identify how teachers perceive aestheticization in school.
- to explore the consequences of aestheticization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of aesthetics grasped recognition in the 19th and 20th centuries. The concept was originated from the Greek notion aisthetikos (Wasserman et al., 2000) thus; it is used to express things with pleasing appearances and beauty. Danto (2003) states beauty is an option for art and not a necessary condition. It is a vital condition for life as we would want to live it. Aestheticization can be seen in the rise of specific business industries that are geared to encounter our aesthetic interest: our need to have fun, make ourselves and our surroundings beautiful and have as many meaningful experiences or adrenaline-experiences as we can. It is only in the past few decades that more and more aspects of our reality are becoming aesthetically mantled, and that our social reality becomes more and more an aesthetic construction (Welsch, 1996). Welsch points at several aestheticization processes happening around us. We live in styled houses, drive our beautiful cars through our meticulouuusly planned city, go to shops with a carefully designed "total shop experience". In other words, we are transforming our urban, industrial and natural environment into a hyper aesthetic scenario.

Aesthetics of the organization

The pioneering work on aesthetics in organizations can be found within management or, more specifically, the field of "workspace design." This field, which is based within the architectural and engineering professions, is focused on managing facilities in the most effective way (Bjerke, Ind, De Paoli, 2007). The role of the physical and aesthetical dimensions of office buildings for organizations has been recognized by architects such as Becker (1982) and Duffy (1992), who focused on how architectural solutions defined environments and influenced organizational processes. At present, in our culture, the concept of beauty is meticulously connected with originality, genius, expressiveness, and the ability of a work of art to appeal beyond rationality to the taste or the senses of the spectator or listener. Despite, other views are still present too. Magala et al. (2007) found that aesthetic appreciation tends to be expressed in any of the following four criteria. These are: (1) in balance, in harmony, at peace; (2) simple, complete, pure authentic; (3) exciting, adventurous, provoking, challenging; and (4) innovative, discontinuous, surprising, strange. According to (Dickinson and Svensen, 2000; Schmitt and Simonson, 1997) the aesthetic is no longer the "software" around a material "hardware" but more and more the essence, the core of a product. This can also be seen in the service industries, where face-to-face or voice-to-voice interactions. The Handbook of Organization Studies termed "*Exploring the aesthetic side of organizational life*" Gagliardi et al. (1999) intentionally pursues to be "mold-breaking, future-oriented and agenda-setting". Aesthetic experience, due to its unconscious nature, cannot be (completely) expressed by words. The notion of aesthetics is used as a way to refocus the perspective on the sensible, physical elements of organizational life. Due to the high recognition given to aesthetics in the recent few decades, it could be observed that contemporary work organizations have an increasing interest in incorporating aesthetic values to the working life.

Italian organizational sociologist, Antonio Strati, gives a broader view of the term aesthetics while understanding it as a form of knowledge. In his viewpoint aesthetics is; not art; instead, it is concerned with sensory perceptions acquired through vision, hearing, smell, touch and taste. It is an aesthetic judgment, or in other words, that which is affected by the beautiful, feeling disgusted, having sublime sensation, etc. These are specific forms of knowledge that do not belong to the intellective domain (Strati, 2000).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To achieve the above-stated objectives of the research, this study relayed on a qualitative approach. According to Creswell (1998) qualitative methods should be applied when identifying motives and attitudes among employees. McDaniel and Gates (1999) maintain that qualitative methods are of particular use when the holistic research objectives are interpretation and understanding of meanings. Schein (1990) underscores the significance of using a qualitative approach to gather perceptions about organizational cultures among members of organizations. Findings can be labelled, organized and discussed according to the terminology of space, place and aestheticization.

Instrument: (*in-depth interview*)

Under the qualitative approach, an in-depth interview was chosen to explore the Roles of Space, Place and Aestheticization on teacher satisfaction, motivation. Minichiello et al. (1990) defined In-depth interviews as "repeated face-to-face encounters between the researcher and informants directed toward understanding informants' perspectives on their lives, experiences or situations as expressed in their own words." The in-depth interview is often described as a form of conversation (Burgess, 1982, 1984; Lofland, 1995). As such, it reproduces a fundamental process through which knowledge about the social world is constructed in normal human interaction (Rorty, 1980). The interviewees were selected because they were assumed to have knowledge and understanding of their working environment and have opinions about it (Berg, 2001; Churchill &Bly, 1999). A total of 8 school staff were identified for this study.

Sampling

Data gathering is vital in research, as the data is meant to contribute to a better understanding of a theoretical framework (Bernard 2002). It is imperative that choosing the method of garnering data and from whom the data will be garnered be done with sound judgment, especially since no amount of analysis can make up for inappropriately gathered data (Shaw et al. 1986). For the study, purposive sampling has been embraced. Purposive sampling is the most popular and widely used in qualitative research (e.g., Kengatharan, 2019a). It is a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of informants (Tongco, 2007).

Population

The population for this study encapsulates three higher schools in the Vavuniya district. A total of nine(N=9) teachers were selected for the study based on the assumption of they have the fundamental theoretical knowledge and understanding about the concepts of space, place and aesthetics corresponding with satisfaction and motivation.

Mode of data analysis

A thematic content analysis was employed for analysing the transcripts. Content analysis and thematic analysis are two vital methods harnessed for the analysis of message content (Neuendorf, 2019). Both encompass codes and coding (Ahuvia, 2001), that is, a process of instead of message content with abbreviated, convenient symbols. These codes might be applied to messages by human investigators (coders) or, in the case of some content analyses, by computer programs that use predefined search algorithms. Thematic analysis in the sense of "a way of seeing" and "making sense out of seemingly unrelated material" (Boyatzis, 1998).

DATA ANALYSIS

Nine key informants chosen of this study where four of them were males and the remaining five were females. They were exceptional informants per se originated from differing age groups, years of experience, educational qualifications and gender. The highest number of informants fell between 30-40 age group (n=4), followed by four informants (n=3) between 40-50 and the remaining two informants (n=2) were over 50 age group. The average years of experience were 16 years.

According to the observation, we found that these three higher schools attempted to provide the work environment of all teachers and students with an aesthetic climate. Colourful wall hangings with inspirational quotes, on the walls, gardening, statues, and arrangements of classrooms could be identified as some captivating aesthetic attempts. As I had the interview with the principals of the three schools, they mentioned they had initiated several beautification projects with the help of the students, teachers and old students. Despite this, the critical obstacle they encounter is a lack of finance and lack of support from the education departments. Notwithstanding, they execute the projects and aesthetic initiations successfully with the support of SDA (School Development Association) and through their guidance and support.

The informant reviled that

"It is pivotal to aestheticize not merely the schools but all the government institutions and departments because the design of art and aesthetic and physical arrangements plays a significant role in enhancing the productivity of the teachers and other officers. Even the

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colour of the wall (building Colour) impact on the mood and feeling of the employees. Moreover, the beautification of the learning environement leads to better learning. Notwithstanding, there are many factors impact teacher's motivation and satisfaction, but lucidly, the way we arrange and design the workplace dramatically changes the mood and feeling of the teachers; consequently, it leads to a high level of satisfaction and motivation".

(Interviewee-8)

It is relevant to question the effect of the space, place and aesthetic and its potential impact on teachers. However, teachers did seem to be satisfied with the physical environment at each selected school even though they were not able to separate the space, from the place, and from the aesthetic in describing the surroundings of the school.

"Even if we have any personal problems with us when we enter into the classroom, we forget them. Because when we see the students in the classroom and the way they dressed up, classroom atmosphere, students love toward us, even the blackboard and chalk Pease change our moods. Consequently, we can use tech peacefully".

(Interviewee-4)

The place is also a way of seeing, knowing and understanding the world. When we look at the world as a world of places, we see different things. We see attachments and connections between people and places. That place is not just a thing in the world but a way of understanding the world. We see worlds of meaning and experience. Sometimes this way of seeing can seem to be an act of resistance against a rationalization of the world, a way of seeing that has more space than a place.

Another Informant's Verbatim Quote:

"Surprisingly, when I entered into the principal office, I feel like encouraged and motivated. Because you do not believe the artifacts (achievements photos, awards and complimentary gifts) kept in the room make us more inspired. Moreover, furniture items arranged, design of the glass fittings, antecedent photos of principals give us the momentum to achieve something in our work-life". That truly inspires us. The amount of space per student in a classroom is that the density of the room also matters.

(Interviewee3)

A learning climate that embraces and nurtures the intimacy between teachers and children is vital in reaping a culture of working collectively. Aesthetically pleasing colours have a

psychological impact on us, so bright, bold and vibrant designs will enhance the classroom environment, thus boosting student and teacher satisfaction.

An informant disclosed that:

The lobby of the school, floor and gate reflect our culture, ideology and tradition. The design of the gate and the statues elicit the spirituality among teachers and students. Since you know the school should be treated as a temple, thus our entrance gate reflects the same sense of feeling as a result that changes our mood and emotions and gives us a sense of self-worth. Few trees, garden, artificial, benches under the trees, waterfall Literally, peaceful and pleasurable atmosphere that stimulates us to perform well. When we perform effectively, the level of satisfaction and motivation could be attained.

(Interviewee-2)

Adjustable and convenient tables on castors, comfortable chairs and plentiful writing exteriors enable a variety of activities and boost collaborative learning experiences, for both the teacher and the students. Therefore, by enhancing classroom designs, student and teacher productivity and creativity is also significantly enhanced.

One of the teachers expressed:

"Space, Place and Aesthetic play a vital role in the teacher's psychological happiness., noisy or improper location and place might hamper the teachers' productivity. Moreover, the design of the classroom, artifacts in the classroom, paint colour, surroundings of the class and school, teachers interaction with the students, friendly learning environment, furniture and design of the furniture, arrangement of the tables and chairs, ventilation, location of the garbage bins, dress-code of the students, iconic colour of the school is green that disclose we are friendly with the environment, library facilities, hygienic toilets, parking facilities, staff room design, physical arrangements of canteen facilities are inevitable in designing the workplace".

(Interviewee-6)

The atmosphere in these areas is important. They should adopt styles such as the 'residential design, creating a home away from home. Warmth and comfort are key and can be achieved through homely furniture, bright colours and natural textures. Aesthetically good-looking colours play a psychological influence on us, so bright, bold and vibrant designs will enhance the classroom environment, thus boosting student and teacher satisfaction.

For instance, an informant's expression is noted underneath:

"My whole teaching style has changed as a result of having the library and technology lab and its facilities like touchpad controls, computers and multimedia projectors. because I taught my students a very formal way like traditional teaching and learning before . . . soon as I become more acquaintance within the school, then I changed my teaching styles because I want the children to develop a more adult learning style. Interestingly, students like to learn in the technology lab than in the classroom".

(Interviewee- 9)

The aestheticization of organizational life studies how individual and group behaviour in organizations by observing and following their feelings, desires, tastes, talents, and passions. According to Strati (2010), it examines how organizations are design aesthetics of working style, leadership style, relationship with others in the workplace, the appearance and features of workplace, the artefacts produced by the organization and the symbolic elements of the organization's image.

One of the key informants extracted verbatim quote:

"A classroom designed with an all-inclusive learning space at its heart has a huge impact on the wellbeing and satisfaction of students, teachers and their engagement, so it's fundamental to maximize this when planning a design. Safe, healthy and achieves the highest-quality education possible. Moreover, student's engagement and active participation give us the sufficient motivation to teach them" (e.g., cabinets, bookshelves).

(Interviewee- 7)

Pleasant working environment, good colleagues, and different job tasks and duties were highlighted both as motivational – and satisfaction factors. The analysis of the interviews exposed that the teacher's satisfaction appeared good. Due to the viable impact of the physical environment on satisfaction, the informants disclosed that there could be such a relation, but they did not think that people were so aware of the influential power of art, design and aestheticization.

Furthermore, another participant reviled that:

"Natural lighting renovations like huge windows and doors with open views, or high-quality LED lighting, will invoke positive feelings and result in happier students, less absenteeism, fewer illnesses and ultimately, an increased engagement that motivate us to feel good and thus we can perform without any reluctant and disruptions."

Artefacts are visible aspects in the organizational culture. Artefacts are the revilement of a specific culture and define the behaviour, objects and praxis the organizational culture harness to affirm and manifest itself in the direction of members of the culture (Cooper et al., 2016).

The Aesthetic sense of a teacher should motivate him/her to teach effectively in classrooms, school and classroom take a dominant role. Moreover, while entering the school, the school's motto, arch of the school pictures on the school wall, statues, slogans on the arch, and wall and the scenic beauty of the school such as flower plants, etc., create aa positive thought in a teacher's mind. In the principal office, the way of the arrangement of the appliances, shields of the students and the performance records enhance a teacher to tech happily.

(Interviewee- 1)

DISCUSSION

Surprisingly, it has been revealed that proper space, place and aesthetic climate and organizational design inspire creativity. Employees with the loftier level of well-being have the propensity to be healthier (Horton & O'Fallon, 2011), motivated (Lou, 2011) and exhibit to endow to firm creativity and innovation Huhtala & Parzefall, 2007). Creativity is a mental characteristic of an individual to discover new ideas, solutions, and alternative ways; aesthetic work environment design encourages creativity among teachers and students. Moreover, our moods, feelings and psychological well-being significantly impact the way we think and in order to conceive something new, we should have a pleasurable and peaceful mindset. Moreover, the mind-set for creativity relays on the design of the workplace.

Lucidly, when employees experience the lack of well-being due to dissatisfaction and lack of motivation expose negative ramifications, such like stress (Karatepe et al., 2009), burnout (Huhtala & Parzefall, 2007), job dissatisfaction (Lam & Chen, 2012), extensive absenteeism, and eventually turnover (Wright & Bonett, 2007), can surface. Human wellbeing has been conceptually and empirically linked to aesthetics (Andrews & Withey, 2012; Goldberg et al., 2012; Hamermesh & Abrevaya, 2013). Longing for or the expression of beauty is believed to be a basic human need to continue towards self-actualization (Maslow, 1970). It has been found that the aesthetic needs at a workplace tend to be negatively associated with work stress and more frequently reported than ergonomic needs (Schell, Theorell, & Saraste, 2011).

Despite this, it has been elicited that a suitable place and the pleasurable atmosphere design assist in coping with the stress experienced by the teachers. It is recommended that the experience of beauty can be derivative from an organization's physical atmosphere such as interior and exterior aesthetics design, which can oblige as a cause to well-being (Strati, 2000; Magala et al., 2007). Aesthetic impetuses, constructed into workplace design, can foster aesthetic experiences 'during a sensory, cognitive, affective, interactive and valuation process leading to a pleasant, enjoyable and meaningful state of mind' (Wang, 2014). Hence, it can be said that happy mindset teachers make the students outstanding.

Therefore, it is vitally important to embrace the aesthetic design of the organization to reap the growth in the future.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The term "aesthetics" has been used to express things with pleasing appearances and beauty (Wasserman et al, 2000). In a wide sense, aesthetics is defined as a "form of knowledge" (Taylor & Hansen, 2005), which is comprehended straight through the sensory premises of a human being. In the recent past, with attention given to the "aesthetic sphere" of existence within organizational life (Taylor & Hansen, 2005), organizations have moved towards incorporating aesthetic value to their products, services, organizational design, artefacts, etc. A classroom is a system and that can be understood if it is seen that way. There is multifaceted intimacy between the physical structure and the arrangement of the room, the teacher, the students and the distribution of space (Rivlin & Rothenberg, 1976; Gump, 1987). The atmosphere of the classroom is a direct expression of the educational philosophy and it takes an active part in the educational process (Proshansky & Wolfe, 1974).

The learning atmosphere can be an influential teaching gadget at the disposal of the teacher; if not it can be a purposeless and unrecognized influence on the behaviours of both children and teachers. Teaching is inherently interactive and people-oriented (Johnson, 1990). This perspective embraces the teacher-designed environment as a powerful influence on the lives and well-being of children and teachers throughout the school day. Additionally, in the progress of teaching and learning, the physical atmosphere organized by the teacher contributes the setting for learning and simultaneously acts as a participant in the teaching and learning (Loughlin & Suina, 1982).

Management education should encourage the expansion of aesthetic sensibility. Some evidence exists that companies themselves take the aesthetic production of recruits, through training and enculturation, in their own hands (Nickson et al., 2003). Therefore, it is pivotal to train and educate the teachers as well as the students on the importance and the consequences of aestheticization, organizational design beauty in a sense that they can enhance the consciousness. Despite, school performance typically depends on the teacher's skills, knowledge, ability, education, experience and attitude (see Kengatharan, 2019b), organizational design, space, place and aesthetics also play a significant role not merely on teachers' mood, behaviour, feeling but students' performance as well. Notwithstanding, factors

determining teachers' motivation and satisfaction are county-culture specific nature (Kengatharan, 2019a).

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The study has limitations that can provide avenues for future studies. First, the investigation was delimited to teachers in the Vavuniya district. Thus, future researchers can consider regional wise. And also, it can be embraced not only the schools but government sector organizations and departments like banks etc.; it is therefore vital to cross-authenticate the findings in a diverse national context to support and establish the reliability of results.

Second, the purposive sampling strategy employed in this research relied on in-depth interviews. Teachers who have no relevant discipline altogether were excluded from the sample, yet they could have provided essential insights into the subject of investigation. A perhaps related issue is a small proportion of back-of-the-house teachers in the sample, which could have reduced the finding power.

Finally, the study did not link workplace aesthetics and employee satisfaction and motivation to organizational outcomes such as employee productivity, efficiency, service quality. This aspect, however, deserves serious attention from scholars to provide specific guidelines to the schools. Future research should also explore the relationship between design aesthetics and on productivity. It would also be interesting to find out if stress-reducing design and aesthetic design can co-exist in a workplace to enhance well-being.

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