

Finnish Institute of  
Occupational Health

## Are perceptions of the office environment and teleworking related to team climate at hybrid workplaces? A cross-sectional study

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### Introduction

- The post-pandemic increase of telework has raised questions on, e.g., the productivity of teams and the role of the office in hybrid work
- Previous research shows that both office design and teleworking may affect interaction and collaboration
  - Yet, few studies have analysed perceptions of the office and teleworking together
- Another gap in research on offices concerns the measurement of collaboration.
  - Studies have often focused on single aspects of communication without considering its goals (e.g. team productivity) or different dimensions of communication
  - The use of validated surveys has been rare

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## Objectives

- The aim was to investigate how the perceived office environment and the amount of teleworking are associated with team climate in hybrid work
  - We used a validated measure of the quality of collaboration, the **Team Climate Inventory**, which predicts creativity and innovation in the workplace (Anderson et al., 2014; Hülsheger et al., 2009)
- The study is explorative but the general assumption was that both office perceptions and telework would be associated with team climate
- We focused on activity-based offices because
  - one of the goals of such design is to support collaborative activities
  - activity-based working is related to multilocational working

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## Methods

- Cross-sectional survey in five Finnish organisations in Autumn 2022 (N=923, response rates 31-73%)
- The offices represented mainly modern, good-quality design
- The sample was characterized by high teleworking rates (78% teleworked 3-4 days per week or more)
- Data was analysed using linear regression (IBM SPSS Statistics)
  - The analyses were adjusted for age, gender and managerial position
  - Due to the high number of the analysed combinations (13 office perceptions x 4 team climate dimensions), *p*-values were adjusted using the Benjamini-Hochberg procedure

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## Survey measures

### Perceived office conditions

- Person-environment fit
- The ease of switching workspace
- Availability of different types of workspaces
- Work environmental support for interaction
- Availability of colleagues
- Break rooms supporting detachment from work
- Work space, storage space
- Cleanliness
- Task privacy

### The amount of teleworking

- 6 categories

### Team Climate Inventory (short version, Kivimäki & Elovainio, 1999)

1. *Participatory safety* (4 items, e.g., acceptance and sharing of information within the group)
2. *Support for innovation* (3 items, e.g., cooperating and taking time to develop ideas)
3. *Vision* (4 items, e.g., perception of team's objectives as clear, achievable and worthy, agreement with objectives)
4. *Task orientation* (3 items, e.g., critical appraisal, building on each other's ideas)

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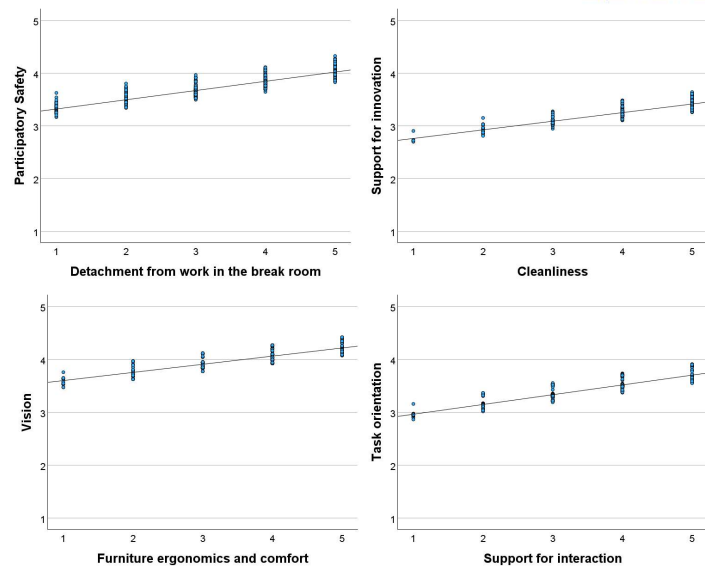
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## Results – The general pattern

- Workspaces and team climate were generally rated positively
- The amount of teleworking was not associated with any dimensions of team climate
- The perceptions of the office were related to all dimensions of team climate (no robust differences between dimensions)
- However, all associations were small



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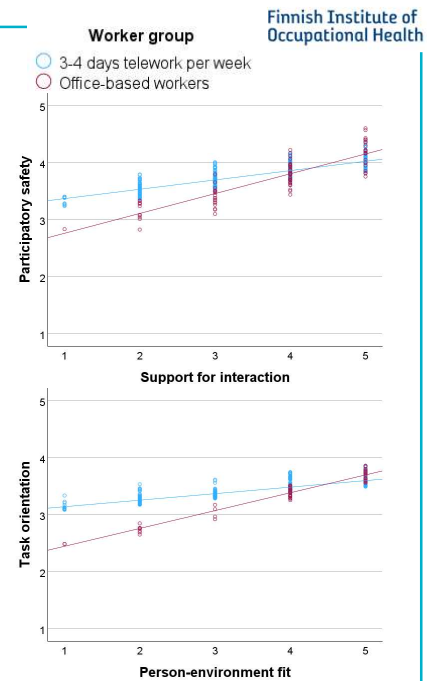
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## Results – Sub-group analyses

- We compared two sub-groups (office-based vs. hybrid workers) as an additional analysis
- Some relationships between office perceptions and team climate were stronger among office-based workers
  - These concerned the person-environment fit, perceiving workspaces as supporting interaction, the availability of colleagues at the office and detaching from work in the break rooms
- On the other hand, the availability of different types of workspaces appeared more important for those working mainly away from the office

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## Conclusions

- This study bridged research on office users' experiences and telework
- Perceived office conditions are more related to team climate than the amount of telework
  - Conversely, the role of office design may be more related to supporting different tasks at the workplace. Attracting workers to spend more time at the office may be less important for team climate
- The weak associations between office perceptions and team climate mean that only major differences in office quality may be meaningful in practice
- Office-based workers and those mainly working away have different needs at the office and workspace design should support both

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## Thank you!

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