Application of Behavioral Science Approach: The Open-Plan Office—Productivity Enhancer or Productivity Killer?

Organizations began experimenting with open-plan office spaces in the 1950s, and up to 80 percent of offices today utilize this idea. The question to be answered is: Do open-space floor plans actually contribute to better communication, higher productivity, and better interpersonal relations? Are the potential benefits outweighed by noise (both audio and visual) and lack of privacy?

YOUR CALL

1. If so, many employees now work in open offices, yet behavioral science studies largely show they are not a productive or beneficial arrangement, why do you suppose they continue to be so prevalent?

Utilize the ideas of Munsterberg, Follett, Mayo, Maslow, and McGregor to analyze why the open-office plan became so popular.

2. What kind of office arrangements do you think would work best and why?

3. Watch this video "The Origins of the Open Office Hellscape"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-p6WWRarjNs&t=2s

Answer the following questions:

- What was the basic idea behind open offices?

- What was right about early open offices?

- What went wrong? (you might have them compare Frank Lloyd Wright's concept with todays' office plans.)