PERSONALIZATION OF DORMITORY ROOMS:

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

THROUGH OBJECTS

By

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Bachelor of Science

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Lake Charles, Louisiana

1977

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College
of the Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
May, 1979

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to express her appreciation to Dr. Margaret Weber, thesis adviser, who worked diligently in the supervision and guidance of this research. A special thanks is given to my research committee, Mr. Ed Hoag, Dr. Sharon Nickols, and Dr. Kay Stewart. Together the committee became more than just faculty; they became my friends who backed me the whole way. My appreciation is also expressed to the Housing, Design, and Consumer Resources Department and to Dr. Carl Hall, Department Head, for the facilitating assistance given during my graduate study at Oklahoma State University.

My appreciation is expressed to Mr. Lynn Jackson and Mr. Kent Sampson, for providing me the opportunity to conduct personal interviews in the residence halls. The cooperation of the head residents, Jim Creech of Cordell, Mike Barton of Scott, and Meredith Legako of Wentz, was also appreciated. With the assistance of these individuals the research progressed smoothly.

Enough gratitude cannot be expressed to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. William V. Managan, and family, who have supported and encouraged me throughout this time. My appreciation is also given to wonderful friends like Peggy Heath and Debra Medley, for understanding and encouragement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Introduction

The question of the relationship between man and the environment has long been debated. Environmental determinists believe that environmental factors such as climate, physical settings, and geographical features are a direct influence on man's behavior and character traits. On the other side of this controversy, some researchers see man as an active agent in a passive environment. These theorists believe the environment does not affect man's behavior but that man inherits behavior patterns and acts upon the environment. Both sides of this issue have documented research to "prove" their theories but these are now considered to be outdated approaches to man-environment relations.

The new approach to man affecting the environment and the environment affecting man is proposed by Altman (1975, pp. 205-206). In this ecological model of man-environment relations, people and environment mutually effect and act upon each other. This approach no longer sees the environment as being fixed with man adapting to fit the environment. The ecological approach stresses the creative role that man plays in shaping his environment. Human behavior cannot be understood when separated from the environment. When man is

viewed in this context, "people become environmental change agents," not just receivers of environmental influences (Altman, 1975, p. 205). "All people are builders, creators, molders, and shapers of the environment; we are the environment" (Sommer, 1969, p. 7). When man makes changes to the surroundings, the environment also becomes an extension of people's own personalities and beings.

Housing is one of the most important features in man's near environment. Housing not only provides people with the basic physical needs of shelter and safety but housing can also satisfy other needs such as a sense of place, relatedness, privacy, psychological stimulation, and creativity (Montgomery, 1976, pp. 152-153). A house can be the place that people call their own. It also is just about the only place left where people can have privacy. The home can be where one goes to be refreshed and stimulated to start a new day. A house can also satisfy the need for creativity. Homes and rooms often take on the "personal stamp" of the occupants (Hansen and Altman, 1976, p. 493). A person's private environment can reflect his or her values and interests through decorating.

Hayward (1977, p. 12) considers the concept of a home involving these nine dimensions: relationship with others, social network, self-identity, a place of privacy and refuge, continuity, a personalized place, a base of activity, a childhood home, and a physical structure. When considering home as self-identity, people see their home as a symbol of themselves and how they want to be seen by others. The home becomes a reflection of the individual's or family's values. When home is seen as a personalized place, home is the result of the individual acting upon the environment. Again the home becomes a

reflection of the individual or family. Hayward (1977) summarizes the concept of home as embracing "the satisfaction of a wide variety of personal concerns, aspirations, motivations, and values as well as personal well-being and life-style issues" (p. 10). Rakoff (1977, p. 85) expresses a house as a shelter, a place of activity, a private space, and a place where ideas and feelings are presented.

Maslow (1971, pp. 41-43) developed an hierarchy of basic needs of humans which are physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization. He theorized that the physiological needs must be met before one could procede to the next level and then progress upward through this hierarchy of needs. Maslow discusses self-actualization as a process of full functioning and expression of the individual. Part of the process of self-actualization and expressing creativity can be fulfilled through the personalization of private spaces. Alexander (1969, p. 80) feels that our culture provides few opportunities for self-actualization. The home environment can satisfy certain human needs and can contribute to the well-being of the individual (Shearer, 1977, p. 7).

For many students, college is the first opportunity to be "on their own." Students living independently, either in residence halls or in off-campus rental units, are no longer subject to parental regulations on their private space. This is also a time when teenagers and young adults are facing the developmental tasks of identity versus role and intimacy versus isolation (Erikson as cited by Munsinger, 1975, pp. 504-505). Living in their own residences, students can individualize the dwelling as they choose as long as the self-expression meets the university or management regulations.

A great deal of research has focused on the college residence halls to examine the way in which students act upon environments. Studies (Preiser, 1969; Sommer, 1968; Titus, 1972; and Corbett, 1974) revealed that students cited the need to personalize dormitory rooms with their own decorations and objects but very little is known about the ways students personalize. Heilweil (1973, p. 395) and Van der Ryn and Silverstein (1967, p. 34) pointed out that some university regulations, such as not putting holes in the wall or taping things to the wall, prohibit students from personalizing their dwellings as they choose. Because of these regulations, most of the individualism has to be the rearrangement of furniture. Some government loans for residence halls, Heilweil found, require built-in permanent furniture, not movable furniture in dormitory rooms. This is not a specification of the loan but is done mainly as a convenience for the university or college. If the furnishings are built-in, they are considered a part of the structure and the cost can be covered by the loan. If the furniture is movable, then the cost of the furnishings are not covered by the loan. These funds are provided for the constructed part of the residence hall only. The impact of these loan provisions can be to stifle personalization, self-development of the student, and the process of turning the dwelling into a home.

Statement of the Problem

Students in residence halls were found to have three major complaints about their living conditions: 1) there was no private space;

2) dormitory rooms were not flexible enough to allow for individual design; and 3) regulations of the university limited the student's freedom in decorating (Van der Ryn and Silverstein, 1967, p. 26). Students want to be able to make choices in decorating their environment but management policies can inhibit individualization of the dwelling. Students use various items when personalizing a room but there is little research on the specific objects that students use. This research is directed toward studying how students use objects to change and adapt their dormitory rooms to reflect their values and turn their room into a home.

Background and Contribution of the Study

Research on human relationships to space and artifacts is emphasized by Kleeman (1968, p. 5). This type of research can be useful because the amount of space individuals have is becoming limited by economic factors and population growth. These limiting factors will force the design profession to begin creating multi-purpose rooms and multi-purpose artifacts to deal with limited space. If the human relationships to space and artifacts are understood, then designs can be created to fit man's needs.

Rapoport (1973, p. 4) found that the identity of structures and environmental elements such as buildings and landscapes were communicated through the images and values represented by the environment. From this assumption, Rapoport explains that "the study of man-environment interaction thus needs to be approached, at least in part, through a study of symbols and imagery . . ." (p. 9).

Laumann and House (1970) pointed out that it is important to study

> material artifacts with which individuals and families surround themselves, in order to gain insight into the ways by which people express their personalities, facilitate their pursuit of personal and social goals, and symbolize their status position in society (p. 321).

The specific objects chosen as decoration and the way these objects are arranged reflect nonverbal expression of thoughts, desires, values, or emotions (Ruesch and Kees, 1970, p. 147). Laumann and House (1970, pp. 337-338) suggested that further research be done in the categorization of objects when studying interior furnishings.

The college residence hall represents the first time a student is living independently without parental supervision. A student's dwelling may represent their first chance to act upon their environment and to decorate with their belongings to make a place their own. The dormitory plays an important role in the academic and personal development of the residents. Dormitory rooms provide an excellent example of how people act upon an institutional, plain room and turn it into a room that expresses their individuality.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to investigate and describe how college students in residence halls personalize and individualize their residences. The specific objects used in decorating were classified according to the value orientations the objects reflect. Categories of personalization were developed by the researcher to measure value orientations reflected by decorative objects.

The following objectives directed this study:

1. To identify attitudes toward the personalization of dormitory rooms.

2. To identify the specific objects college students in residence halls use to personalize and individualize their dormitory rooms.

3. To categorize these objects used in decorating by the value orientations they reflect.

4. To describe differences in decorating between sexes.

5. To describe differences in decorating between underclassmen, upperclassmen, and graduate students.

6. To describe differences in decorating between the types of residence halls at Oklahoma State University.

7. To formulate a scale for the categorization of decorative objects according to the value orientations reflected in the personalization of spaces.

Research Questions

Since there is a void of definite theory and hypotheses on this subject of objects used in the personalization of space, the following research questions were explored:

1. What specific types of objects are used in the personalization of dormitory rooms?

2. What value orientations are attached to decorative objects?

3. Can objects be categorized by the value orientations that the objects reflect?

4. What attitudes influence the decorating of dormitory rooms?

5. Are there differences in the decorating of dormitory rooms between the sexes?

6. Are there differences in the decorating of dormitory rooms between the classifications of students?

7. Are there differences in the decorating of dormitory rooms between persons living in different types of residence halls?

Assumptions and Limitations

It is assumed by the researcher that the respondents were truthful in answering the questions during the personal interview. The in depth interviews were limited to a small sample that may not be representative of all dormitory residents, but will provide baseline data for gaining an understanding of personalization and the meanings of decorative objects. The conclusions of this study are limited to Oklahoma State University students residing in residence halls in Stillwater, Oklahoma, during the fall semester of 1978.

Definitions

The following definitions describe the terms used in this research:

Accessory--"An object than enhances the design" (Alexander, 1972, p. 186).

Artifact--"A structural product of animal behavior (Audy, 1970, p. 6).

Decorative Object--"A purely ornamental object" (Webster, 1973, p. 294).

Object Language--"All intentional and nonintentional display of material things, such as implements, machines, art objects, architectural structures, and . . . the human body and whatever clothes or covers it" (Ruesch and Kees, 1959, p. 189).

Value Orientations--"Important determinants of human behavior, motivating and guiding action in relation to those objects which are valuable" (Downer, Smith, and Lynch, 1968, p. 173).

Summary

The ecological model of man-environment relations stresses the creative role that man plays in shaping his environment. Housing provides an outlet for the need to be creative. The changes and additions to the environment that man makes are actually extensions of his personality. College residence halls provide an excellent example of the ways in which students personalize their dwellings. The specific objects that students use as decoration reflect their value orientations and interests. This research categorized these decorative objects according to the values the objects reflect.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

A dwelling can be a personal experience. Sulahria and Diamond (1977, pp. 4-9) believe that all humans have an urge to live in a dwelling that is an expression of self. These authors state that it was easier to fulfill the need to personalize in times past. People were more involved then in the forming of their dwellings. The owners did most, if not all, of the planning and building of the structure. Today, few people obtain the satisfaction of building their own homes. The majority of people live in "ready-made" housing (p. 4). Audy (1970, p. 59) points out that in urban areas, man has to conform his living space to established patterns influenced by economic, political, social, and technical factors. Even so, people can still personalize their housing by decorating the interior spaces. The objects used in decorating are viewed as extensions of self and are boundaries of personal space.

Gutman and Westergaard (1974, pp. 322-328) discuss the adaptability of people to any physical surrounding and these authors believe that most people try to make their living conditions as personal as possible, even under restricted terms. Examples were given of soldiers decorating the inside of their lockers or workers in prestige

offices who cannot add any decoration to their office unless the decoration is approved by a committee. Sommer (1972) states:

> personalization does not detract from a good overall plan but rather enhances it. One sees not only a beautiful office layout or neighborhood plan but also creative and active people who feel an organic connection with an environment which permits them to create as well as to coexist and to adapt (p. 61).

St. Marie (1973, pp. 6-7) suggests that a dwelling should be planned to provide opportunities to be creative because people feel a need to express individuality in their homes. Alswang and Hiken (1961, pp. 32-34) cite many examples of people buying many homes built for someone else, but the new owners made it their home by individual conversions and decorating. Montgomery (1976, p. 175) stated that when people are restricted from decorating and painting in their dwelling, their response is apathy. Alexander (1969, p. 83) maintained that depression can result from a room with an impersonal character, and that self-esteem of person is greater in a place where the individual has influenced the environment. This author believes occupants perceive the personal character of a home to reside mainly by what is on the walls. Alexander also feels that people will change their dwellings as much as possible.

Personalization of space plays a large part in adapting to a space and may represent more than just decorating a room. Several authors pointed out that personalization is a way of expressing creativity, marking territories, or a reflection of the individual living in that space. This chapter reviews many works written on the subjects of personalization of space, nonverbal communication through

objects, decorative objects' effects upon persons using spaces, and values of college students. The literature is taken from many different fields such as zoology, psychology, interior design, communications, and architecture, in an attempt to take an interdisciplinary look at the research.

Inflecting a Scheme

Moore, Allen, and Lyndon (1974) describe two processes in inflecting a scheme in a house which are "mapping" and "collecting" (p. 207). Mapping is the process in which a person orientates himself in the house and establishes a relationship between the structure and himself. The second process, collecting, involves the use of decorative objects and territoriality. The authors (Moore, Allen, and Lyndon, 1974, p. 225) cite examples of children claiming walls by drawing on the walls. Children also claim areas by spreading out their possessions to mark off their area. In comparison, adults decorate with an artist's painting rather than drawing on the walls themselves. Adults also spread out their decorative objects and possessions to claim a dwelling as their own.

Cooper (1974, p. 131) agrees with this contention that people lay a claim to a house and projecting a part of self as they choose decorations and furniture. "It seems as though the personal space bubble which we carry with us and which is an almost intangible extension of ourself expands to embrace the house which we have designated as ours" (Cooper, 1974, p. 131).

"Territory may be represented as an area which is first rendered distinctive by its owner in a particular way and, secondly, is

defended by it" (Hediger, 1950, p. 9). Proshansky (1974) states his position as individuals laying claims to privacy, material objects, spaces they occupy, and their "personal effects" (p. 76). These places, objects, and spaces are seen as extensions of the individual's self. Proshansky views these objects, places, and spaces as settings that help establish who and what the individual is. "The modified environment that an organism makes--its artifact, collectively--is really an extension of the organism itself" (Audy, 1970, p. 7). Audy (1970, p. 9) agrees a home can reflect the personalities of the oc-cupants. From his research, Audy found that changes made to a home by an individual were acts of personal creativity and this creativity made the home more an extension of the individual's self.

Moore, Allen, and Lyndon (1974, pp. 226-229) found that people decorated with items that had special meanings or interests that may have enhanced their imagination and creativity. These architects also suggested that displays of objects allowed others to share in the owner's interests.

People tend to express themselves in a theme which is usually carried throughout the dwelling. Some typical examples cited by Ruesch and Kees (1959, pp. 148-158) were protection without conceal-ment and ornamentation with function. Protection without conceal-ment can be seen in the kitchen by use of exposed glass jars for storing food staples and continuing to decorate with glass or other transparent materials throughout the house. Ornamentation with function is a theme in which the person uses only decorative objects with a specific purpose or function. Ornamentation on casements,

cornices, or frames is a theme that is occasionally repeated through-
out a dwelling.

Harrison (1974, pp. 148-149) pointed out that some artifacts
stimulate human interaction. Many people have objects in their homes
or offices that serve as conversation pieces.

> Our physical surroundings--the props that we almost in-
> advertently select as the background for our interac-
> tions with others--often help foster our particular or
> ineffective manner in relating to others (Mehrabian,
> 1971, p. iv).

Results from a study of the effects of furniture arrangement,
props, and personality on social interaction by Mehrabian and Diamond
(1971, pp. 18-39) showed that an artistic sculpture facilitated con-
versation between persons who were sensitive to rejection.

Object Language

> In object language the arrangement of many small items
> into a whole achieves brevity and compactness of expres-
> sion, just as abstraction unites many subordinate thoughts
> into an overall idea (Ruesch and Kees, 1968, p. 147).

Through objects in the material environment, Ruesch and Kees
(1959, p. 89) believe that people can convey signals to affect others.
The effects the objects produce depend upon their arrangement, shape,
material, and surface quality. The material and surface of the ob-
ject possess certain tactile characteristics such as hard, soft, cold,
warm, smooth, or rough. Objects through their qualities can also
convey emotions that the spoken or written word cannot. Ruesch and
Kees (1959, p. 96) cite the examples of the boredom of repetitious
words as compared to the pleasing observation of a museum piece for
hours, a store display for days, or an object in your home for years.

Maslow and Mintz (1956, p. 247) and Mintz (1956, p. 459) studied the effects of esthetic surroundings upon people. When subjects were in the "beautiful" room, they were found to have better attitudes than when these subjects were in the "ugly" room. It was concluded that the visual-esthetic conditions do have an effect upon persons. Griffin, Mauritzen, and Kasmar (1969) support this contention.

Man is constantly changing and adapting the environment to fit his needs, but there are some elements in the environment that man does not respond to or change.

> One explanation for this may be the environment is more than a totality of physical objects, and objects are more than prearranged matter. Meaning attributed to objects or to their arrangement and context is a highly important determinant of responses (Hansen, 1974, p. 4).

Purposes of Decorating

Knapp (1972, pp. 30-31) perceives that people may discern qualities about the occupants of a dwelling before meeting those occupants by observing the interior of the dwelling. People can observe the interior and formulate ideas about how the objects used as decoration reflect the occupants. The author states that our feelings and conclusions drawn from these observations may be influenced by the cost and quality of the decorations. Harrison (1974, pp. 146-147) agrees that the way in which people select and arrange objects can reveal motivations, feelings, or aspirations. Many times people do not realize that they are communicating through objects. One purpose of the artifact is simply for expression besides being decorative.

Alexander (1972, p. 186) feels that "accessories may express the personality of the person or persons who are to use the space."

Van der Ryn and Silverstein (1967) suggested that women see their rooms or dwellings as extensions of their physical bodies. Women would feel it was just "as important to dress the room as to dress oneself" (p. 33). These researchers also found that students make a dwelling their home by changing and making it suitable to their own preferences. Occasional rearrangement of furniture and objects may be a way in which people deal with frustrations, a way to get something out of their system, or a response to a dull environment.

Cooper (1974, p. 135) investigated the personalization of communes around the Berkeley-Oakland area with a number of families living in one dwelling. She found that only the private spaces, such as the bedrooms, were decorated to reflect the personality of the resident. The shared, communal areas of the dwelling were sparsely decorated because the residents could not find items suitable to represent a number of highly individualized tastes. In the traditional single family dwelling this arrangement is reversed. The living room is decorated with items to reflect the family's collective self using such items as photos, mementoes, art purchases, and the best furniture. The private bedroom spaces are usually sparsely decorated. Cooper points out that the teenager's bedroom is the exception to this pattern. A teenager's room is highly personalized and represents the struggle to develop an identity separate from his or her parents.

The majority of people cannot have a dwelling unit built to suit their individual preferences. This is especially true for people living in rental units. Ruesch and Kees (1959, pp. 132-143) pointed out that a person's arrangement of accessories can give a dwelling the personalized effect. Reasons people gave for decorating were summarized into the following: family traditions, prestige, neighborhood expectations, or personal enjoyment.

Value Orientations of College Students

Very little research has been done relating value orientations and personalization of space. Huntley (1967, p. 44) and Gordon (1967, p. 69) studied changes and differences in value orientations of college students. In both studies, their aesthetic values were found to be higher for upperclassmen than for underclassmen. It was concluded that aesthetic values increased as a result of college attendance.

The Residence Hall Environment

In surveys of student reactions to different types of residence halls, Sommer (1968, p. 236) found that students preferred older or rehabilitated buildings which had less regulations on the use of the walls and furniture. The students said that they could personalize their units more, and therefore, had more feelings of independence. Research (Chase and Wolosin, 1972, p. 29) found that students' desires for independence is a major factor in the decision to move out of the dormitory into an apartment. Flather (1972,

p. 2) summarizes the residence hall problem as a lack of sense of independence. Students in college see themselves as adults and they want to live as adults.

In an interview ("College Housing," 1975, p. 56), Propst said that students wanted an environment with choices--one that permits students to have privacy as well as interaction with others. Ryder (1975, pp. 56-59) reported on the experiment at a university which provided some students with different furnishing options to their campus housing. These options were choosing a number of interchangeable furniture components that could be wall hung or placed on the floor. Researchers found that the high rate of vandalism and low occupancy rate in the dormitory were changed. After this new program had been in effect, the vandalism rate went down and the occupancy rate went up. Because the resident was able to manipulate the environment, the response was positive in that a sense of pride of ownership developed.

Results in a study by Titus (1972, p. 204) showed a desire of college students to express their independence by being able to decorate their residences freely. Corbett (1973, p. 415) cited that students felt their own decorating created a homelike atmosphere rather than the architectural structure of the dormitory.

Some architects and administrators agreed that the dormitory interior should be flexible so that the students can create a home-like atmosphere ("The Dormitory Interior," 1968, p. 40). These experts also realized that students want to decorate and move furniture to create the type of space the student desires.

Research (Miller, 1968, p. 71) showed that students preferred neutral or muted colors in their dormitory rooms so that they could add their own accents with personal items. They also preferred movable furniture over built-in furniture in dormitory rooms. He believes that only the storage units should be built-in, with other movable furnishings chosen by a designer, not an administrator.

Another survey (Weber, Winsor, and Managan, 1978) found that renters felt "at home with" or "a part of" their dwelling because of decorating with personal items and they would feel "at home" any-where if they had their belongings around them. A majority of the renters expressed that their dwellings were standardized, but the dwelling could be decorated to make it individualized. Built-in furniture and rules and regulations of the management were also cited as standardizations that hindered creativity. The renters expressed decorating as one way to brighten a dull, gray physical environment. They felt they made the dwelling what it was by their personalization through decorating.

Items Used in Decorating

Laumann and House (1970, pp. 321-338) studied 1,013 families in the Detroit area and found that families in similar status-income groups decorated with common items. The results revealed that high status families with modern attitudes used abstract paintings, sculp-ture, geometric patterned draperies, and modern furniture as their furnishings. High status families with traditional attitudes had more traditional furniture, vases, knickknacks, and plain draperies.

Low status families with modern attitudes had mixed furniture types,
floral curtains, bright walls, and the general space was bare. Low
status families with traditional attitudes decorated with religious
objects and paintings, photographs, trophies, and wall mirrors. The
researchers concluded that "people with traditional decor are also
more traditional in their behavior and attitudes regarding religion
and marital role of definition" (Laumann and House, 1970, p. 338).

Altman and Nelson (1972, pp. 26-30) studied the ecology of home
environments of sailors at a naval base in Maryland. Their results
showed that decorative items in living rooms were not consistently
reported with plants and flowers in 10 percent of the homes, mirrors
and other wall hangings in six percent of the homes, and pictures in
24 percent of the respondent's homes. In the subject's bedroom, 43
percent reported various types of wall hangings such as pictures,
posters, and pennants, and 20 percent had mirrors. In response to
the best feature of the subject's bedroom, 34 percent said objects in
the room, 24 percent said the amount of space, 22 percent said the
amount of privacy, 10 percent said the arrangement of the room, and
nine percent said physical features of the room. When asked what the
least liked feature was in the subject's bedroom, 32 percent responded
not enough space, 20 percent responded other, 16 percent responded
objects, 15 percent responded physical aspects of the room, 14 per-
cent responded not enough privacy, and two percent responded the ar-
rangement of the room.

In her work as an interior designer, Alexander (1968, p. 186)
divided accessories into the following four categories: "1) esthetic,

2) functional, 3) simple decorative objects, and 4) plants." The designer describes objects in the "esthetic" category as including sculpture, paintings, drawings, a hanging, or antiques. Objects in the "functional" category may also be beautiful such as clocks, desk equipment, mirrors, ashtrays, or containers. A seashell, rock crystal, or a piece of driftwood are classified as "simple decorative objects." The "plants" category includes all indoor foliage.

In a study of college student's rooms, Preiser (1969, pp. 123-124) found that underclassmen used more decorations than upperclassmen. He concluded that as students grow older their decorating patterns seemed to change. Playboy centerfolds, movie star posters, or psychedelic posters were popular with male underclassmen. Older upperclassmen used pictures of the fiancee rather than centerfold posters and computer printouts instead of psychedelic posters. Preiser noted "some special efforts had been made to personalize the appearance of dormitory rooms and to help the inhabitants to identify themselves better with their environment" (p. 124). Examples were a parachute hung on the ceiling to lower the ceiling height, a fireplace, wood panels on the wall, and covered windows.

Hansen and Altman (1975, pp. 495-596) used "Seven Categories of Personalization" to classify items used in decoration of dormitory rooms: "1) Personal Relationships; 2) Values; 3) Abstract; 4) References; 5) Entertainment; 6) Personal Interest; and 7) Gross/Total Space." The category of "Personal Relationships" consisted of pictures that portrayed friends, relatives, family, sweethearts, or members of a group. Objects in the "Values" category imply social,

religious, political, or philosophical values. Examples include posters of drug paraphernalia, peace or ecology signs, political slogans, or symbols that portray a style of life. "Abstract" items are artistic and symbolic. This can be pictures of nature in all forms or graphic art. Calendars, clocks, maps, and schedules are classified as being in the "Reference" category. The "Entertainment" section includes equipment such as radios, stereos, skis, or other items used in leisure activities. The "Personal Interest" objects reflect the general interest activities of the individual. Examples would be posters of public figures, sex and nudity, sports pictures, or rock music group posters. The last category, "Gross/Total Space," is for computing the area occupied by all of the other categories. These classifications did not include books, papers, pencils, or other items used in school work.

Results from this Hansen and Altman study (1976, pp. 502-503) showed that ski posters and campus maps were used as wall decorations by more students than any other item. "Reference, Entertainment, and Personal Interest" were the top categories when ranked by usage (97 percent). Few students (45 percent) used decorations portraying "Personal Relationships and Values." Most decorations were manufactured items and were not handmade.

The Hansen and Altman study (1976) demonstrated the way in which people actively change their environment. It also provided the base knowledge and data of how students personalize their environment. When people give thought to the organizing and decorating of their dwellings, the creation is personalization and self-expression

through the object itself and through the arrangement of groups of objects.

Summary

Personalization of space plays a large part in adapting a space to become a home for people. This process of personalization may involve more than just decorating a room. Several authors pointed out that personalization is a way of expressing creativity, a way of marking territories, and a reflection of the individual living in that space. Some research indicated that there is a nonverbal communication through objects. Some objects may influence attitudes, interaction, and the feeling of "home" of individuals. Recent studies have tried to classify objects and analyze how these objects can provide information about an individual.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

Introduction

The study of man-environment relations utilizes the concepts of many different fields such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, geography, architecture, interior design, ecology, and animal behavior. Altman and Nelson (1972, pp. 13-15) discussed four types of research used in examining man-environment relationships. These were descriptive studies, comparative studies, hypothesis and theory derived research, and prescriptive approaches. Hypothesis and theory derived research is directed toward proving or disproving a specific hypothesis or theory. Prescriptive approaches seek recommendations for improving the conditions of the environment for the individual's well-being. Comparative studies look for differences between various items in man-environment relations. Descriptive studies gather information on subjects where established hypotheses are not present. These descriptive studies often provide the baseline data for a research area. The research of this thesis would be classified as descriptive research in that it will provide baseline knowledge on nonverbal communication through objects and on personalizing a dwelling by the use of decorative objects.

Development of the Instrument

> Surveys, questionnaires, and interviews are concerned with
> the assessment of attitudes, preferences, and opinions,
> and have particular utility for the design-oriented person
> involved in programming and evaluation of the designed en-
> vironment (Goodrich, 1974, p. 234).

A questionnaire was developed which includes adaptations from

previous research (Altman and Nelson, 1972; Preiser, 1969; Ruesch

and Kees, 1959; Van der Ryn and Silverstein, 1967; and Weber, Winsor,

and Managan, 1978) of the college or home environment. A pilot test

(see Appendix A) was conducted in Bennett Residence Hall. Ten women

and ten men (one and one-half percent of the Bennett Hall population)

were systematically chosen from the dormitory roster list and re-

ceived the questionnaire via campus mail. There was a 35 percent re-

turn of this questionnaire. Respondents were requested to volunteer

for a follow-up personal interview but only one of the twenty respon-

dents indicated a willingness to be interviewed.

Since the pilot test response rate was quite low, it was de-

cided that data could be collected more effectively by means of per-

sonal interview. The original questionnaire was evaluated for clarity

of questions and adapted to an interview schedule. During the in-

terview, the subject was asked questions designed primarily to assess

the reasons for their use of decorative objects and reasons for dec-

orating (see Appendix B). After reading the definitions of the cate-

gories, the subject and researcher collectively classified the subject's

decorative objects into the Categories of Personalization (see Appen-

dix B), noting the number of decorative objects in each category.

These Categories of Personalization were adapted from Hansen's study

(1974) and from the work of Alexander (1968). Alexander's categories of decorative objects do not consider many objects used as decorative objects. The divisions between the categories are ambiguous and overlapping of objects in the categories occurs. Hansen begins to define the categories but some categories could be combined. Wall decorations are the only decorative objects considered by Hansen. There are many more decorative objects used that may not be hung on the wall but placed on other furnishings.

Personalization was defined as the introduction of materials into the environment that were not present before that student resided in that environment. The Categories of Personalization to reflect Value Orientations as defined by the researcher are as follows:

1. Sentimental--Objects chosen or displayed because of feelings and an emotional attachment related to the object. Examples include photographs of personal relationships, gifts, or figurines with personal messages.

2. Lifestyle--Objects portraying the individual's typical way of life. Examples are posters or objects relating to the drug culture, bottles or other containers of alcoholic beverages, campaign posters or political slogans, peace or ecology signs, religious pictures, and posters or cartoons advocating an attitude.

3. Artistic--Objects displayed because of aesthetic values or beauty to the individual. Examples include pictures of nature, natural or artificial plants, art objects or sculpture, mobiles, drawings, graphic art, wall hangings or other objects of fabric, tapestry, or macrame.

4. Reference--Objects that serve as sources of information. Examples are clocks, calendars, bulletin boards with notes, schedules, maps, newspaper clippings, and books.

5. Personal Interest--Objects which portray a subject to which the individual gives special attention to or shows enthusiasm for. Examples include pictures of public figures, pictures of sports and personalities, sports equipment, pictures of sex and nudity, pictures of music groups, stereo equipment, radios, posters of astrology, and humorous pictures or cartoons.

Description of the Population

The population for this research consisted of 7,220 students living in residence halls at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma during the fall semester of 1978. Oklahoma State University is the largest higher education institution in Oklahoma with a 1978 fall semester enrollment of 22,276. Students may choose to live on campus in residence halls or off-campus, with the exception of freshmen, who must live in a residence hall. The university offers two types of residence halls: traditional and modern. Traditional residence halls are generally non air-conditioned, older in construction, not more than four floors, and lower in cost per semester rate. The rooms in the traditional dormitories are larger than the modern dormitories but there is less storage and closet space. The traditional halls have movable furniture such as desks, beds, chairs, and chests. Bennett, Cordell, Murray, Stout, and Willard are considered to be the traditional residence halls. The modern residence halls are Kerr, Drummond, Willham, Scott, Parker, Wentz, and Iba. These halls are newer in construction, air-conditioned; some are high-rise, and higher in cost. The rooms in the modern dormitory have a large amount of closet and storage space. Some furniture is movable such as the beds and chairs, but most desks are bolted to the wall.

Decorations are encouraged as long as they do not create health or fire hazards or damage to the room. Tape and nails are not allowed to be used on the walls. Adhesive wall hangers are the only acceptable method for attaching items to the walls. Residents may paint their

room once during the academic year. The university supplies the choices of paint color. Desks may be unbolted from the wall for a $6.00 service charge. Plans must be submitted and approved before residents may construct elevated beds. Waterbeds are not allowed in the residence halls.

Selection of Sample and Data Collection

A typical modern and a typical traditional residence hall was chosen by Kent Sampson, the Assistant Director of Single Student Housing at Oklahoma State University. Cordell was chosen as the typical traditional hall and Wentz and Scott complex was chosen as the typical modern hall because Sampson felt these dormitories would provide the best overall picture of coeducational residence halls at this university with all classifications of students represented. Because of time limitations, the sample consisted of only 32 residents, eight men and eight women from each dormitory type.

The dormitory roster lists the names of the residents in alphabetical order and identifies the resident's room number. To draw a sample of eight from North Cordell, every 21st person on the list was chosen (see Table I). In South Cordell, every 44th person was chosen to obtain a sample of eight residents from this hall. Every 29th person was chosen from the roster in Scott Hall and every 70th person was chosen as a subject from Wentz. None of the initial subjects refused to participate in the research. Head Residents in each of the residence halls were contacted by personnel in the office of Single Student Housing (see Appendix C) to explain the nature of the personal

interviews and to identify the researcher. Head Residents in the male residence halls provided the researcher with an escort while conducting interviews in the male dormitories but the escort was not present in the room while the subject was being interviewed.

TABLE I

SELECTION OF SAMPLE

Residence Hall	Number of Occupants	Sample Size	Number on Dorm Roster
North Cordell (Women)	165	8	21
South Cordell (Men)	350	8	44
Scott (Men)	230	8	29
Wentz (Women)	560	8	70

Characteristics of Sample

Approximately 75 percent of the subjects in the sample were under 20 years of age. Thirty-four percent of the subjects were between the ages of 20 and 25. Table II presents the age distribution of the sample. The sample was equally divided between sex with 16 females and 16 males interviewed. The majority of the females were under 20, while the majority of the males were 20 years of age or older.

Classification of the subjects is presented in Table III. This table divides the classifications of the sample by sex. The majority

of both sexes were underclassmen with more female underclassmen than male.

TABLE II

AGE OF SUBJECTS DIVIDED BY SEX

Age	Total Sample Frequency	Sex	
		Female	Male
18	14	8	6
19	7	6	1
20	4	1	3
21	3	0	3
23	2	0	2
24	1	0	1
25	1	1	0

TABLE III

CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECTS DIVIDED BY SEX

Classification	Total Sample Frequency	Sex	
		Female	Male
Underclassmen	23	14	9
Upperclassmen	7	1	6
Graduate	2	1	1

When the sample was chosen, 16 subjects were from the typical modern residence hall, Wentz and Scott, and 16 were from Cordell, the typical traditional residence hall. Table IV summarizes the classifications and residence halls of the subjects. The subjects in Cordell were mainly underclassmen.

TABLE IV

CLASSIFICATION AND RESIDENCE HALL OF SUBJECTS

| Classification | Residence Hall | |
	Modern Scott/Wentz	Traditional Cordell
Underclassmen	10	13
Upperclassmen	4	3
Graduate	2	0

Summary

After reviewing similar research, an instrument was designed to collect the data for this descriptive study. Questions and Categories of Personalization to Reflect Value Orientations were formulated. Thirty-two personal interviews were conducted with residents in one traditional and one modern residence hall at Oklahoma State University. Subjects were chosen from the dormitory roster with half of the sample being female and half of the sample being male. Subjects were

interviewed by the researcher and then asked to classify each of their decorative objects into the Categories of Personalization. The majority of the subjects were underclassmen with generally more females who were younger than the male subjects.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

With a small sample size and a personal interview, finer details
can be noted in the time spent with each subject and diversity can be
noticed more easily. Because of the nature of this descriptive re-
search, few statistical procedures could be used but measures of
central tendency, variation, and frequency of responses were used for
analysis of the data. This chapter reports the results of the data
collected.

Responses to Questions

During the personal interview, subjects were asked questions to
assess their attitudes toward decorating and reasons for decorating.
The results reported are the responses to these questions and the
classification of decorative objects. Table V summarizes the sub-
ject's length of residence in any dormitory. The most frequent re-
sponse was one semester or less and six subjects had lived in a resi-
dence hall for at least two years.

Subjects were asked to estimate the number of waking hours that
they spent in their dormitory room. These estimates were grouped and
are presented in Table VI. The majority (13 subjects) spent five to
six waking hours in their dormitory room on the average.

TABLE V

LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN A DORMITORY

Length of Residence	Frequency
1 semester or less	22
1 year	2
2 years	6
3 years	1
4 years or more	1

TABLE VI

NUMBER OF WAKING HOURS SUBJECT
SPENT IN DORMITORY ROOM

Number of Waking Hours	Frequency
2-4 hours	5
5-6 hours	13
7-8 hours	6
10-12 hours	8

During the interview, subjects were asked if they felt "at home with" or "a part of" their dormitory room. Twenty-eight subjects affirmed that their dormitory room did give them a sense of home, while four subjects did not feel that their room had a "homey" feeling.

Table VII summarizes the reasons why the subjects did or did not feel
"at home with" or "a part of" their dormitory room. Approximately fif-
teen subjects related the feeling of "home" as being influenced by
decorative objects. Reasons expressed were that the subject had dec-
orated with items from home, the objects reminded the subject of home,
and the subject liked the way the room was decorated.

TABLE VII

EXPLANATIONS GIVEN TO WHY SUBJECTS DID FEEL
OR DID NOT FEEL "AT HOME WITH" OR
"A PART OF" THEIR ROOM

Reasons Expressed	Frequency
I know I have to live (sleep) here; I spend my time here; it's a place to come to.	9
I decorated with my own belongings from home.	7
I like the way we (I) have decorated the room.	5
There is a negative atmosphere in the dormitory. (Subjects did not feel at home.)	4
The room has a "homey" feeling; objects remind me of home.	3
It's my room; I can do what I want.	3
I've been here long enough.	1

Table VIII lists the responses to the question asking the subjects the number of times that they had rearranged their furnishings in their room. Twelve respondents had changed the arrangement of their room once during the semester.

TABLE VIII

NUMBER OF TIMES SUBJECT CHANGED
ARRANGEMENT OF ROOM

Number	Frequency
Never	7
Once during the semester	12
Twice during the semester	9
Every month	4

Subjects were asked to choose the best feature of their room from a list of the following features: certain objects, the way the room is arranged, the amount of space, or the amount of privacy. Table IX shows that the most frequent responses were certain objects in the room, the amount of space in the room, and the room arrangement. Subjects were then asked to qualify their answer by specifying the best feature. Table X summarizes their responses. Eleven subjects referred to objects or decorative touches as the explanation of the best

feature of their room. These included the views expressed about the uniqueness of the room and the decorative objects which made the room "homey."

TABLE IX

BEST FEATURE OF THE SUBJECT'S ROOM

Best Feature	Frequency
Certain objects	9
Way the room is arranged	8
Amount of space	8
Amount of privacy	2
Other	5

TABLE X

BEST FEATURE OF ROOM SPECIFIED

Views Expressed	Frequency
We have more space because our room is a corner room.	6
We have a unique room.	6
Decorative objects which make the room "homey."	5
Closets and storage space.	3

TABLE X (Continued)

Views Expressed	Frequency
Beds (some were bunked)	3
Lighting	2
Privacy and personal space	2
Stereo	1
Dresser	1
Movable furniture	1
Low noise level because room is at the end of the corridor.	1
Large desk	1
High ceiling because it makes it seem like there is more space.	1

Subjects were asked to choose between certain objects, the amount of space, the way the room was arranged, or the amount of privacy as being the worst feature of their room. Table XI indicates that amount of space was the least liked feature of their room. When subjects were asked to specify the worst feature (Table XII), eleven subjects named privacy related feelings of not enough space, crowding, could not study because of noise and interruptions, dislike to share a room, and dislike for group bathrooms.

TABLE XI

LEAST LIKED FEATURE OF SUBJECT'S ROOM

Least Liked Feature	Frequency
Certain objects	2
Way the room is arranged	3
Amount of space	11
Amount of privacy	9
Other	7

TABLE XII

LEAST LIKED FEATURE SPECIFIED

Views Expressed	Frequency
Not enough space	7
Not enough privacy; too many people on a floor; can't study; noise.	5
Sharing a room. (Subjects were used to having their own room at home.)	4
Built-in furnishings that limit the arrangement of the room.	3
Group bathrooms	2
Heating system in Cordell.	2
Color of room	1
Roommate	1
Quiet Hour regulations	1
Twin desk	1

TABLE XII (Continued)

Views Expressed	Frequency
Not having carpet	1
Bees that come in through a closed window.	1

For analysis, numbers were assigned to each ranking of the sub-
ject's reasons for decorating. These scores resulted in the group
ranking of the reasons for decorating in the order of importance
which were: 1) personal enjoyment, 2) to impress others or for pres-
tige, 3) family tradition, 4) dormitory expectations, and 5) other.
Some of the other reasons mentioned were decorating for comfort, to
brighten the environment, the appropriateness of the decoration, and
to achieve a sense of order.

After getting answers to questions about reasons for decorating,
the researcher explained the categories of personalization which are
assumed to reflect value orientations to the subject. Then the sub-
ject classified each of his or her decorative objects into the cate-
gories of personalization which are sentimental, lifestyle, artistic,
reference, personal interest, and other. The researcher listed the
object and noted the number of objects on the checklist (see Appendix
B) as the subject categoried his or her decorative objects. Table
XIII lists the number of subjects with at least one object portray-
ing the categories of personalization. All of the subjects displayed

decorative objects which were classified under the reference category. Approximately 91 percent of the subjects had decorative objects classified under the sentimental category.

TABLE XIII

NUMBER OF SUBJECTS WITH OBJECTS PORTRAYING
THE CATEGORIES OF PERSONALIZATION

Category	Distribution	
	Frequency	Percent
Sentimental	26	90.625
Lifestyle	15	46.875
Artistic	21	65.625
Reference	32	100.000
Personal Interest	26	81.250
Other	19	59.375

Table XIV is the sum of all decorative objects for all of the subjects. Approximately 44 percent of all the decorative objects were in the sentimental category. Reference items made up approximately 24 percent of the total decorative objects.

The percentage of subjects within the classifications displaying decorative objects is examined in Table XV. The most marked difference between classifications of subjects deals with the displaying of sentimental decorative objects. All of the underclassmen, 100

percent, displayed sentimental decorative objects, while only approximately 71 percent of the upperclassmen and 50 percent of the graduate subjects displayed sentimental decorative objects. All classifications used reference items. For all categories, underclassmen generally used more decorative objects than both upperclassmen or graduate students.

TABLE XIV

TOTAL NUMBER OF DECORATIVE OBJECTS BY
CATEGORY OF PERSONALIZATION

Category	Distribution	
	Frequency	Percent
Sentimental	455	44.175
Lifestyle	63	6.117
Artistic	76	7.379
Reference	246	23.884
Personal Interest	145	14.952
Other	36	3.495

Table XVI shows the breakdown between sexes of the percentage of subjects displaying decorative objects. All of the female subjects displayed sentimental decorative objects, while only 81 percent of the males had objects classified as sentimental. The percentage of

females in each category was consistently higher than the percentage of males, with the exception of the reference category of which both female and male percentages were 100 percent.

TABLE XV

PERCENTAGE OF SUBJECTS DISPLAYING
OBJECTS BY CLASSIFICATION

Category	Classification		
	Underclassmen n=23	Upperclassmen n=7	Graduate n=2
Sentimental	100.00	71.43	50.00
Lifestyle	52.17	42.86	0.00
Artistic	69.57	57.14	50.00
Reference	100.00	100.00	100.00
Personal Interest	86.96	71.43	50.00
Other	60.87	42.86	100.00

TABLE XVI

PERCENTAGE OF SUBJECTS DISPLAYING
OBJECTS BY SEX

Category	Sex	
	Female %	Male %
Sentimental	100.00	81.25
Lifestyle	56.25	37.50
Artistic	68.75	62.50

TABLE XVI (Continued)

Category	Sex	
	Female %	Male %
Reference	100.00	100.00
Personal Interest	87.50	75.00
Other	56.25	62.50

Table XVII summarizes the percentages of subjects divided by type of residence halls which displayed objects in the categories of personalization. One hundred percent of the subjects residing in Wentz and the subjects residing in the traditional residence hall displayed sentimental decorative objects, while 81.25 percent of the modern dormitory residents used sentimental decorative objects. Approximately 69 percent of the modern residence hall subjects displayed objects which portrayed their lifestyle, while 25 percent of the residents in the traditional residence hall used these objects. A higher percentage of Cordell subjects displayed artistic decorative objects than did the Scott/Wentz residents.

The means of the totals of decorative objects are examined by the two types of residence halls in Table XVIII. A "t" test was used to test the significance of the differences between the traditional and modern residence hall but none of the "t" values were significant ($p < .05$).

TABLE XVII

PERCENTAGE OF SUBJECTS DISPLAYING OBJECTS
BY TYPE OF RESIDENCE HALL

Category	Type of Residence Hall	
	Modern Scott/Wentz	Traditional Cordell
Sentimental	81.25	100.00
Lifestyle	68.75	25.00
Artistic	56.25	75.00
Reference	100.00	100.00
Personal Interest	81.25	81.25
Other	37.50	81.25

TABLE XVIII

CATEGORIES OF PERSONALIZATION AND MEAN
NUMBER OF OBJECTS BY RESIDENCE HALL

Category	Mean Number of Objects		
	Modern Scott/Wentz	Traditional Cordell	"t" Value
Sentimental	14.9375	13.5000	0.278
Lifestyle	3.4375	0.5000	1.577
Artistic	2.7500	2.0000	0.305
Reference	7.9375	7.4375	0.221
Personal Interest	3.3125	6.3125	-1.164
Other	0.6875	1.5625	-1.505
Total	33.0625	31.3125	0.199

The means of the decorative objects displayed by subjects by sex is summarized by Table XIX. Females displayed more sentimental objects than males. The "t" values for the differences between the means for males and females in the sentimental category is significant. Females significantly displayed more total number of decorative objects than males. Differences of the means for other categories were not significant to the .05 level. Females generally did not display as many reference items as males. It was noted that two male subjects decorated with items from the reference category only. Both of these subjects said that they felt at home in their dormitory room. One explained that because he was an international student, he had to move many times and that room decorations made it more difficult to move. His room was his home because it was a place to sleep. The other student explained that he felt at home because he had been in the dormitory for what he felt was a long time. Four females had no wall decorations but displayed other decorative objects in other places.

The objects used as decorations by the subjects were compiled into a comprehensive list (see Appendix D) in order to identify common decorative objects. In the sentimental category, small knick-knacks, mementoes, and photographs of friends, family, or places were the most common decorative objects. Posters reflecting attitudes were the most common objects in the lifestyle category. Common artistic decorative objects were naturalistic and geometric pictures and drawings. Schedules, charts, and course outlines were the most frequently displayed reference items. Personal interests were generally reflected by posters and stereo equipment. Although a

"functional" category was not included, functional decorative items commonly used such as desk lamps and desk equipment were classified in the "other" category.

TABLE XIX

MEAN NUMBER OF OBJECTS BY CATEGORY OF
PERSONALIZATION BY SEX

Category	Mean Number of Objects		
	Female	Male	"t" Value
Sentimental	24.3125	4.125	5.361*
Lifestyle	1.8125	2.125	-0.222
Artistic	3.3125	1.4375	1.380
Reference	7.3750	8.000	-0.335
Personal Interest	5.2500	4.375	0.358
Other	1.3750	0.875	1.005
Total	43.4375	20.9375	3.315**

*Significant at the .001 level.

**Significant at the .01 level.

Some unusual decorative effects were achieved by covering bulletin boards with fabric and covering part of the wall with adhesive paper. One male subject and his roommate had designed and built bunk beds in which the top bed extended over the top of the doorway, forming a foyer-type entrance to the room. One subject had used empty

"Skoal" cans to form large initials covering a wall. Two male subjects used fishnets as ceiling decorations.

Arrangement of beds and desks was observed in each of the subject's dormitory rooms. In the modern residence halls, Wentz and Scott, there were six different patterns of arrangement of desks and beds out of the 16 subjects interviewed. On the other hand, it was observed in Cordell, the traditional residence hall, that each of the 16 subjects interviewed had a different arrangementof beds and desks. There were no patterns in the arrangement of beds and desks observed in Cordell. Floor plans and room sizes are shown in Appendix E.

As the subjects pointed out their decorative objects, the researcher observed the division of space between the subject's decorative objects and the subject's roommate's possessions. Approximately 69 percent of the subjects decorated only part of their room and there was a distinct division of space. Thirty-one percent of the subjects had their decorative objects intermingled with their roommate's objects and there was no division of space noticed.

Summary

Most subjects felt "at home with" their room because they had decorated with their own decorative objects. The majority of respondents named decorative objects or decorative touches as being the best feature of their rooms. The lack of privacy was noted as the worst feature. Subjects ranked their reasons for decorating in the order of importance as being: 1) for personal enjoyment, 2) to impress others or for prestige, 3) family tradition, and 4) dormitory

expectations. When decorative objects were classified into the Categories of Personalization, differences of means between sexes, residence halls, and student classifications were examined by a t-test. The only significant differences found were between females and males in the sentimental category ($p<.001$) and total number of decorative objects ($p<.01$). The most common decorative objects were noted in each subject's room. Posters, schedules, charts, course outlines, knickknacks, and photographs were the most common decorative objects. Modern residence halls had fewer patterns of arrangement of desks and beds as compared to the traditional residence hall with all subjects having a different arrangement of desks and beds.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This research examined how students used decorative objects to change and adapt their dormitory rooms to reflect their values and turn their room into a home. The specific objects used in decorating were classified according to the value orientations the objects reflected. Personalization was measured as the introduction of materials into the environment that were not present before that student resided in the environment. The Categories of Personalization to reflect value orientations as classified by the researcher were sentimental, lifestyle, artistic, reference, and personal interest.

A sample of 32 subjects was randomly selected from the dormitory rosters of one typical traditional residence hall and one typical modern residence hall at Oklahoma State University. Sixteen subjects were female and 16 subjects were male. Data were collected by the researcher during a personal interview with each subject in the subject's dormitory room. Questions were designed to assess the subject's attitudes toward the room, attitudes toward decorating, and the reasons for decorating. The subject was then asked to classify each of his or her decorative objects into the Categories of Personalization.

Because of the nature of this descriptive research, few statistical procedures could be used but measures of central tendency, variation, and frequency of responses were used for the analysis of the data.

Conclusions

This research suggests that decorative objects may hold more meaning than just decoration. For students, decorative objects helped to influence the feeling of home as well as being a means for self-expression. Many felt that certain decorative objects were the best features of their dormitory rooms.

For different population groups, the objects used in decorating and the meanings expressed through these objects would be different. In the Laumann and House study (1970) different status-income groups decorated with different decorative items. The decorative items used by these status-income groups were totally different from the decorative objects used by students in this research. On the other hand, the subjects in the Altman and Nelson study (1972) reported decorative objects in their bedrooms that were similar to the objects reported by the Oklahoma State University students. In agreement with the findings of the Preiser study (1969), underclassmen subjects in this study generally used more decorative objects than upperclassmen.

When comparing the Oklahoma State University students' responses to the best and least liked features of their rooms, the results are similar to the Altman and Nelson study (1972). In both studies, certain objects in the room were cited most frequently as the best

feature of the subject's room and "not enough space" was cited as the least liked feature in both studies.

In the Hansen and Altman study (1975), Reference, Entertainment, and Personal Interest were the top Categories of Personalization when ranked by usage and few subjects used decorations portraying Personal Relationships and Values. The students at Oklahoma State University displayed more decorative objects in the Sentimental, Reference, and Personal Interest categories than in the Lifestyle or Artistic categories. These results differ from Hansen and Altman's results in that the Sentimental category was the top category at Oklahoma State University but Personal Relationships, the category used by Hansen comparable to the Sentimental category used in the present research, was one of the least used categories in Hansen's study. This difference could be attributed to the fact that the subjects in the Hansen and Altman study were all male. The females in the residence halls at Oklahoma State University seemed to display more sentimental decorative objects than males. Females also tended to decorate with more total number of decorative objects than males.

Van der Ryn and Silverstein (1967) suggested that women felt rooms were extensions of their physical bodies and would feel that they had to "dress" the room. This research found that females displayed significantly more total number of decorative objects than did males. This fact could support the suggestion made by Van der Ryn and Silverstein that there is a psychological motive behind decorating. Another reason might be that traditionally females learned

through the socialization process that they were to be the decora-
tors of the home. The research noticed that during the interviews,
males were reluctant to say that their decorative objects were ar-
tistic. The researcher would therefore conclude that these males
were afraid to say that an object was pretty or beautiful because this
is considered to be a feminine quality.

Huntley (1967) and Gordon (1967) found that aesthetic values in-
creased for male students through the college years. The research at
Oklahoma State University found that more underclassmen decorated with
artistic decorative items than upperclassmen or graduate students.
The differences between these research results could be attributed to
sex differences. A large majority of the underclassmen in the sample
at Oklahoma State University were female and the upperclassmen in the
sample were mainly males. Huntley and Gordon used only males in their
samples.

When the differences in room arrangement were observed between
the two types of residence halls, traditional and modern, there were
six patterns of arrangement of the desks and beds in the modern resi-
dence hall, while each subject's room was a different arrangement in
the traditional residence hall. This difference could be caused by
factors such as the amount of square footage in the room and the flex-
ibility of the furnishings and space. In Scott and Wentz, the modern
residence hall, the resident has less space to work with than does the
resident in Cordell. The built-in shelf and bolted desk may have stif-
led some creativity in Scott and Wentz. Cordell residents did have
poorer lighting and less closet and storage space than the modern
residence halls.

Van der Ryn and Silverstein (1967) suggested that occasional rearrangement of furniture and objects may be a way in which people deal with frustrations, a way to get something out of their system, or a response to a dull environment. The finding of this research did not reinforce their idea. Most of the subjects in this study had never changed the arrangement of their dormitory room or they had changed the arrangement once during the semester, which was usually when the subject moved into the room at the beginning of the semester.

The Categories of Personalization to reflect value orientations were designed in order to classify decorative objects into categories that reflected value orientations of the individual. These categories were sufficient but a functional category should have been added to include decorative objects that are used for a specific purpose such as wastebaskets, pencil holders, or desk lamps. Other than functional objects, the subjects had no problems categorizing their decorative objects.

This discussion has further illustrated that decorative objects could have more meaning than just decoration. The Categories of Personalization were successful in classifying objects into categories which reflected value orientations. It was shown that the sex of an individual had a significant influence on the way in which a person decorates. This reflection of differences in value orientations through decorative objects between the sexes could be caused by psychological differences or because of established cultural and socialized patterns.

Recommendations

From this study, the researcher suggests the following statements as recommendations:

1. The present study should be repeated with the following additions:

   a. A "functional" category added to the categories of personalization to reflect value orientations.

   b. Assessment of the reasons why students chose to live in residence halls.

   c. Assessment of the preferences of students for either a traditional or modern residence hall.

   d. A larger sample to permit the testing of other variables.

2. Residence halls of the future should be designed keeping in mind the following considerations:

   a. Dwellings are places made for people by people.

   b. Freedom of choice in design can satisfy some of an individual's need for the sense of independence.

   c. Flexibility and variety in design are major factors in meeting the needs of a diverse group of students.

3. A longitudinal study could be designed to describe the changes in value orientations of students through their college years by examining the changes in personalization of these students.

4. Further research into the relationships between the personalization of space and individual development is needed.

5. Research developed to study human relationships to space, artifacts, and personalization is needed to begin forming hypotheses of how people adapt space to fit their needs.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

COVER LETTER AND PILOT TEST

SURVEY OF DORMITORY ROOMS

Dear Student:

Enclosed with this letter is a questionnaire prepared by Pamela A. Managan, a graduate student in the department of Housing, Design, and Consumer Resources. You have been systematically chosen from your residence hall list for this research. The information from this survey will be used as part of a Master's Degree Thesis, so your participation is vital!

The purpose of this research is to analyze the personalization of dormitory rooms and to find out the reasons that students decorate. Recommendations about dormitory rooms will be made. Please follow the directions on the questionnaire carefully. If you would be willing to participate in a personal interview with the researcher, please fill in your name, address, and phone number in the space provided at the end of the questionnaire. The researcher will then contact you to set up a convenient date for the personal interview. This personal interview would allow the researcher to know how you have personalized your dormitory room. If you do not wish to participate in the personal interview, do not fill in your name, address, or telephone number. Please fill out the questionnaire and return it anonymously if you choose the option of not participating in the personal interview.

Please return this questionnaire through CAMPUS MAIL by October 3, 1978. No postage is necessary when sent through campus mail. Make sure your questionnaire is folded and affix the self-addressed label on the outside.

Thank you for your participation in this research.

Sincerely,

Pamela A. Managan
Graduate Research Assistant

Dr. Margaret Weber
Research Adviser

This research has been approved by the Residence Hall Association.

QUESTIONNAIRE

GENERAL DATA:
Place a check (✓) in the blank beside the correct answer.

1. Age:
_____ 17 or under
_____ 18
_____ 19
_____ 20
_____ 21
_____ 22
_____ 23 or over

2. Sex: _____ Female
_____ Male

3. Classification:
_____ Underclassman
_____ Upperclassman
_____ Graduate Student

4. Major: _____

DECORATING ATTITUDES:
Fill in the blank with your answer.

1. How many waking hours do you spend in your dorm room? _____

2. Do you feel at home with or a part of your dorm room? _____

Please explain your answer- _____

_____

3. Do your have movable furniture in your dormitory room? _____

If so, list the pieces that are movable- _____

_____

Place a check (✓) in the blank beside the correct answer. Check only
one answer for each question.

4. What is the best feature of your room?

_____ Certain objects in the room
_____ The way the room is arranged
_____ The amount of space in the room
_____ Other

Please explain the answer checked in question #4. _____

_____

5. What is the least liked feature of your room?

_____ Certain objects in the room
_____ The way the room is arranged
_____ Not enough space in the room
_____ Not enough privacy/having to share a room
_____ Other

Please explain the answer checked in question #5. _____

_____

6. Do you have any type of object, poster, or artifact that you use
for decoration in your dormitory room? _____ Yes _____ No

If you answered yes, please continue with question #7. If you
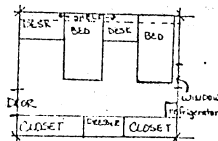answered no please skip to question #9.

7. Why do you decorate? Rate the following reasons with a "1" being
the most important reason and a "5" being the least important
reason for decorating, using the scale of 1-2-3-4-5.

_____ Family tradition
_____ For prestige (to impress others)
_____ Neighborhood expectations
_____ Personal enjoyment
_____ Other, (Please specify) _____

8. Why did you select the objects, posters, or artifacts for decora-
tion? Rate the following reasons with a "1" being the most import-
ant reason and a "5" being the least important reason for selecting
decorative items, using the scale of 1-2-3-4-5-6.

_____ I selected these objects because they harmonized with the
color scheme or furniture arrangement of my dorm room.
_____ I selected these objects because of an emotional attachment to
the objects.
_____ I selected these objects for visual entertainment or just to
have something to look at.
_____ I selected these objects because they represent my dreams,
desires or goals.
_____ I selected these objects because I made them myself.
_____ I selected these objects for other reasons.(Please specify)

_____

9. Please sketch a simple diagram of your floor plan of your dormitory
room. Please label as shown in the example below.

10. If you would be willing to participate in a personal interview with
the researcher, please fill in the information below. The research-
er is interested in how you personalized your dormitory room.

*You do not have to give this information unless you want to
participate in the further research. Otherwise your question-
naire will remain anonymous.

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

PLEASE FOLD THIS QUESTIONNAIRE CORRECTLY AND AFFIX THE ADDRESS LABEL

ON THE OUTSIDE. RETURN THROUGH CAMPUS MAIL BY OCTOBER 3, 1978.

Thank you for your participation in this research. You may enter your
personal comments or suggestions in the space below.

IF YOU LOSE THE ADDRESS
LABEL, MAIL SURVEY TO:

PAMELA MANAGAN
HDCR DEPT. ROOM 449
HOME ECONOMICS
WEST

SUBJECT:

CHECKLIST FOR CATEGORIES OF PERSONALIZATION

Category ↓   Object ←

Category	Object
Personal Relationships	
Values	
Artistic	
Reference	
Entertainment	
Personal Interests	
Foliage	
Emotional/ Sentimental	
Handmade	
Function or Decoration	
Contact w/ surface & object	
Altarlike Assemblies	
Vertical Orientation	
Showmanship	
Horizontal Emphasis	
Protection w/o Concealment	
Other	

APPENDIX B

INSTRUMENT

PERSONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Age: _____   2. Sex: _____   3. Classification: _____

4. Residence Hall: _____   5. Major: _____

6. How long have you lived in a residence hall? _____

7. How many waking hours per day do you spend in your dormitory room? _____

8. Do you feel "at home with" or "a part of" your dorm room? _____

    Please explain. _____
    _____

9. Do you have movable furniture in your dorm room? _____ If yes, which pieces

    are movable? _____

10. How often do you change the arrangement of your dorm room?

    _____Never   _____Every month
    _____Once during the semester   _____Every week
    _____Twice during the semester   _____Everyday

11. What is the best feature of your dorm room?

    _____Certain objects in the room   _____The amount of privacy
    _____The way the room is arranged   _____Other
    _____The amount of space in the room

    Please explain. _____
    _____

12. What is the least liked feature of your dorm room?

    _____Certain object in the room   _____The amount of privacy
    _____The way the room is arranged   _____Other
    _____The amount of space in the room

    Please explain. _____
    _____

13. If there are any types of decoration in the room, why do you decorate? Rate the
    following reasons with a "1" being the most important reason and a "5" being the
    least important reason for decorating, using the scale of 1-2-3-4-5.

    _____Family tradition   _____Personal Enjoyment
    _____To impress others or for prestige _____Other, please specify _____
    _____Dormitory expectations

14. Did you and your roommate work together in choosing decorative items? _____

15. Sketch of room arrangement floor plan.

CHECKLIST OF CATEGORIES OF PERSONALIZATION

CATEGORY
OBJECT

	Sentimental
	Lifestyle
	Artistic
	Reference
	Personal Interest
	Other

CATEGORY
OBJECT

	Sentimental
	Lifestyle
	Artistic
	Reference
	Personal Interest
	Other

APPENDIX C

CORRESPONDENCE

October 28, 1978

MEMORANDUM

TO: Jim Creech, Head Resident, Cordell (624-5614)
      Meredith Legako, Head Resident, Wentz (624-5019)
      Mike Barton, Head Resident, Scott (624-5024)

FROM: Kent Sampson, Associate Director, Single Student Housing

SUBJ: Residence Hall Research Project

I wish to inform you that Ms. Pam Managan has been granted ap-
proval to conduct limited research in your hall. Specifically, she
will be interviewing a few of your residents as part of her thesis.
This project is a bit unique in that Pam will be actually interview-
ing at random some of your residents. At this, she may need to se-
cure an escort from one of your staff when she is in a mall hall.

Her project will begin around October 30 and she will be in
contact with you. Ms. Managan may be reached at 372-8998 or 618
North Monroe.

Thanks for your help! Call if you have questions.

KS/db

cc: Pam Managan

APPENDIX D

COMMON OBJECTS USED IN DECORATING

Sentimental:

147 Knicknacks

47 Animal Figurines	3 Pennants
30 OSU Items (football, buttons, cups)	2 Boxes
	2 Stained Glass
12 Ticket Stubs	2 Patches
10 Caps and Hats	1 Tootsie Roll Can
9 Bumper Stickers	1 Charm Bracelet
7 Mugs and Cups	1 Horse Shoe
6 Glasses	1 Ribbon
5 Human Figurines	1 Napkin
3 Corsages	1 Cigar
3 Bottles and Vases with Flowers	

26 Gifts
22 Stuffed Animals or Dolls
21 Club, Sorority, and Fraternity Items
147 Photographs of Friends, Family, or Places
13 High School Mementoes
7 Posters
4 Pillows
2 Bookends
1 Hanging Macrame Table
1 Chessboard
1 Newspaper Clipping
1 Gum Machine
1 Paperweight

Lifestyle:

43 Posters Reflecting Attitudes
15 Alcoholic Beverage Bottles and Cans
6 Religious Items (Bibles, Pictures, Nativity Scene)
1 Certificate

Artistic:

26 Pictures (Nature, Geometric, Postcards)
13 Drawings (Done by Subject)
5 Posters
3 Wall Hangings (Rug, Fabric, Embroidery)
3 Baskets
1 Tray
1 Fishnet
1 Carved Box
1 Mirror

Reference:

91 Schedules, Charts, or Course Outlines
29 Clocks and/or Radios
20 Calendars
 2 Maps (Forestry and Campus)

Personal Interest:

81 Posters
16 Stereo Equipment
 3 Photographs of Public Figures
 3 Newspaper Clippings
 1 Frisbee
 1 T-Square
 1 Tennis Racket
 1 Sailboat
 1 Rock
 1 Pompom
 1 Puzzle
 1 Patch

Function:

17 Desk Lamps
 5 Waste Baskets
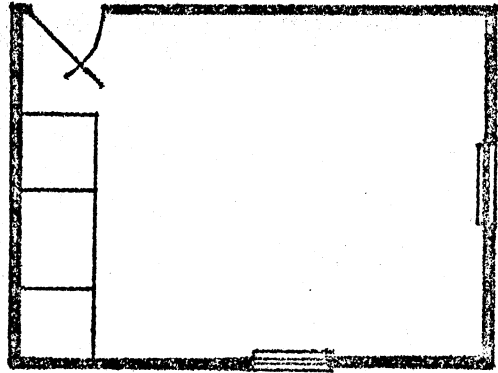16 Desk Equipment (Pencil Holders, Mail Holder, Desk Pad)
 1 Basket

Combinations:

81 Notes, Cards, and Letters (Sentimental and Reference)
25 Plants (Sentimental and Artistic)
15 Plaques (Sentimental, Lifestyle, Artistic, and Personal Interest)
 8 Candles (Sentimental and Artistic)
 3 Intitials (Sentimental and Artistic)
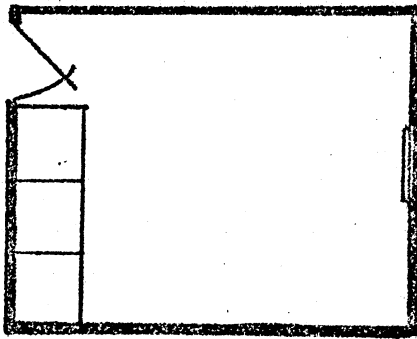
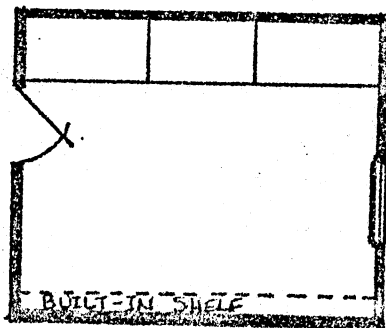APPENDIX E

SIZES OF DORMITORY ROOMS

Sizes of Dormitory Rooms

CORDELL CORNER ROOM

19' x 14'

CORDELL TWIN ROOM

16' x 12'-6"

WENTZ AND SCOTT TWIN ROOM

14'-6" x 12'

BUILT-IN SHELF

Scale: 1/8" = 1'

VITA ^{2}

Pamela Ann Managan

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: PERSONALIZATION OF DORMITORY ROOMS: NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION THROUGH OBJECTS

Major Field: Housing, Design, and Consumer Resources

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Lake Charles, Louisiana, December 19, 1956, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William V. Managan.

Education: Graduated from South Beauregard High School, Longville, Louisiana, in May, 1974; received Bachelor of Science degree in Vocational Home Economics Education from McNeese State University in December, 1977; completed requirements for the Master of Science degree at Oklahoma State University in May, 1979.

Professional Experience: Graduate research assistant, Oklahoma State University, College of Home Economics, Department of Housing, Design, and Consumer Resources, 1978-1979; reported Master's Thesis research at the Oklahoma Home Economics Association State Convention, March, 1979.