

The Effect of Ethical Climate on Affective Commitment in Non-Profit Sport Organizations in Ardabil Province

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Abstract

Purpose: The research was conducted to examine the effect of ethical climate on affective commitment among members in non-profit sport organizations in Ardabil province.

Method: This descriptive-correlation study was conducted using Two questionnaires of ethical climate Victor and Cullen (1988), and De Waal (2018) affective organizational commitment on the Likert scale to collect data. Data has been collected from 157 employees through a pretested questionnaire. Data from the cross-sectional study was analyzed using SPSS 24.

Results: The results showed that in terms of employees working in non-profit sports organizations, the ethical atmosphere of the organization has a positive and significant effect on employees' emotional commitment ($P = 0.001$, $\beta = 0.491$). That is, if one unit of change occurs in the moral climate variable, as much as 0.491 units in the variable of emotional commitment to the job and in a positive direction. **Conclusion:** It can be concluded that if organizations have a very ethical atmosphere, it can improve emotional commitment. Increasing the level of emotional commitment of employees has a negative relationship with the intention of employees to leave the organization, so increasing the emotional commitment of employees makes employees not leave the organization.

Keywords: Ethical Climate, affective commitment, Nonprofit sport organizations, Ardabil province

Introduction

Over the years, several attempts have been made in the ethics literature to explain and understand ethical behaviors in organizations. A majority of corporate ethics research has focused on ethical leadership and ethical climate as a critical antecedent of organizational outcomes (Berkman 2009, Demirtas 2015) but a little amount of research has explored the relationship between ethical climate and its outcomes. Recently ethical climate has been issued as a vital environmental factor. And the ethical climate could act as a mechanism that brings a greater affective commitment in the workplace (Tehseen 2018). The ethical climate within an organization may affect how individuals choose to deal with these ethical issues. This was first stated in ethical climate theory by Victor and Cullen (Cullen 2012). Victor and Cullen defined ethical climate as a pervasive organizational characteristic that affects how organizational decisions are made (Victor et al. 1989). Thus, within an organization, ethical climate is based on members' perceptions of typical organizational practices and procedures involving ethics. When an organizational member is faced with an ethical issue and considers what the organization would want him/her to do, that consideration is based on the organization's ethical climate. Thus, ethical climate includes individuals' perceptions of organizational norms regarding ethical behaviors (He et al. 2020). There are various kinds of work climates. One of them is ethical work climate that can be defined as the predominant perceptions about the procedures and practices of the organization that has ethical content or the prevailing perceptions of typical organizational practices and procedures that have ethical content (Flynn 2008, Demirtas 2015). Also, ethical climate can be described as "the perception of what constitutes right behaviors, and thus becomes a psychological mechanism through which ethical issues are managed" (Cullen 2006). As such, the construct

of ethical climate approaches the notion of moral norms, that is, behavioral guidelines that drive the interpretation of what is right and wrong within groups and organizations (Pagliaro et al. 2008, Ellemers et al. 2011, Lo Presti et al. 2018). This refers to the fact that different organizations develop different subcultures that govern how individuals relate to each other and regulate each other's behaviors. Starting from the original ethical climate theory (Cullen 1987), a growing body of research has focused on the consequences of ethical climate on employees' perceptions and behaviors. In this vein, researchers ascertained that ethical climates predict employees' ethical behaviors (Ouwervkerk et al. 1996, Butterfield et al. 1998), job attitudes, commitment to the organization, turnover intentions, organizational behaviors (Lo Presti et al. 2018). And in the other hand, Sims and Keon investigated the effects of ethical climates on the person organization fit, and concluded that persons whose ideal preferences of ethical climate matched with the actual ethical climate in their organizations were more likely to be committed to their organizations (Lyndon 2022). This particular finding in terms of person organization fit and ethical climate was verified by later studies (Arnaud et al. 2008).

Commitment in the workplace has the potential to influence organizational effectiveness and employee well-being (Meyer and Herscovitch 2001). It is particularly relevant in an era when resource scarcity and cutback management have become the norm, and when managers of public institutions across countries are addressing challenges of attraction and retention of high quality employees as well as their morale, motivation and performance. Porter et al. defined organizational commitment as a belief and acceptance of organizational goals and values, the willingness to exert effort toward organizational goals, accomplishments, and a strong desire to maintain organizational membership. Basically, it is an individual's affective binding with his/her organization as a

consequence of accepting organizational values, and the willingness to keep working within the organization (Demirtas 2015). Meyer and Allen listed types of commitment, including commitment from necessity (continuous commitment), commitment from obligation (normative commitment), and the affective organizational commitment (Van Dick et al. 2004). So that all the definitions of affective organizational commitment emphasize the employee's bond with the organization, captured by the characteristics such as acceptance of organizational goals, values, and a strong desire to associate with the organization (Perry 2004). In addition to positive associations with employee physical and psychological well-being, and with job satisfaction (Lovakov 2016), affective commitment works to strengthen employees identification with the organization (Allen and Meyer 1990, Brown et al. 2019). It also enhances emotional, mental and physical investment in the organization, attachment to the goals of the organization and its vision (Hur et al. 2014). Kumari and et al., reported that organizational-based psychological ownership is concerned with individual members' feeling of possession and psychological connection to an organization as a whole including organizational culture and climate, attitudes of senior management, corporate goals and vision, reputation of the organization, and corporate policies and procedures (Kumari 2013).

In this regard, a study by Demirtas entitled the Effect of ethical Leadership Behavior on ethical Climate, Turnover Intention, and Affective Commitment were done, they reported the indirect effect of ethical leadership involves shaping perceptions of ethical climate, which in turn, engenders greater affective organizational commitment and less turnover intention (Demirtas 2015) The relationship between ethical Climate and its outcomes have been studied by few scholars in the organizational behavior field. However, there are limited researches on ethical Climate and behavioral

outcomes such as Affective Commitment in Iran. the climate can be an essential issue in Non-profit sports organization, because commitment and participation in work is very important because of the voluntary work in such organizations. But the ethical climate studies have not been conducted in non-profit sports organizations. On the other hand, the performance of employees in deprived and remote areas can be different compared to employees in developed areas. Ardabil province is located in the northwest of Iran and some of its cities are considered deprived areas. On the other hand, volunteering in such areas is controversial due to the lack of income Therefore, the aim of this study was to evaluate the effect of ethical climate on affective commitment in non-profit sports organizations in Ardabil province.

Materials and methods

This descriptive-correlation study was conducted using an online survey with structured Likert-scale items to gather data. The link to the online questionnaire was shared to members Ardabil non-profit sports organizations namely. The statistical population of the present study included employees, coaches and athletes of non-profit sports organizations in Ardabil province, including Kargaran sports board, Ardabil university sports board and a number of Ardabil sports board. The participants who are working as middle-level managers, athletes, coaches and sports volunteers' members are chosen from three non-profit sports centers in Ardabil province. 127 members were chosen randomly from these facilities in which about 300 (N) member are still working. This sample size is sufficient according to the Cochran formula methodology. The data gathering process was administered and monitored closely for a period of 2 weeks. The ethical climate scale which was developed by Victor and Cullen (1988) is used in this survey. The scale consists of 10 items. An example item is "The most efficient way is

always the right way in this company.” The Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was 0.827. For the last variable, Affective organizational commitment scale which was developed by De Waal (2018) is used. The scale consists of 5 items. An example item is “I think I can easily join another organization as a member of this organization”. The Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was 0.743.

Detailed information was provided to ensure the confidentiality of our respondents and to

Results

The final sample consists of 74 % male and 26 % female participants. The average of their age is 27.12 years. All participants have a direct contact with their job and they work in a volunteer's job in non-profit sport industry. Also, the sample is distributed according to their department. 37% of the sample is in the volunteering; 10.23 % is in the team management; 13 % is in the coaching; and 40 % in the Athletes department.

The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16. Descriptive analysis was run to identify the ethical climate and affective commitment. Descriptive analysis showed that there is a significant difference between ethical climate and affective commitment ($p=0.001$). Also, evaluate the distribution of the sample, Durbin-

decrease social desirability. Finally, in order to decrease the evaluation apprehension, the respondents were told that there is no correct or incorrect answer for the items given in the survey. Scoring in this study was based on a five-point Likert scale in which it showed 1 = “strongly disagree” and 5 = “strongly agree”. Thus items are averaged within the scales to create composite measures for each variable. Items were coded in a way that high scores equate to high levels of the construct of interest.

Watson (skewness and kurtosis) values are observed in Table 1. According to previous studies, reported has been that the values of the skewness and kurtosis must be between -2 and $+2$ for a normal distribution. As seen from the table, the sample in this survey has a normal distribution. From the given values, members perceive the organizational climate and act ethically, and they are committed to their organizations. Consequently, they do not think of leaving their organizations

To study the impact of ethical climate towards affective commitment, regression analysis was done. Ethical climate was found to have significant impact on affective commitment ($\beta = 0.491$) at significance level of .05. Therefore, it can be concluded that ethical climate was the significant predictor of affective commitment. Regression analysis values are observed in Table 2.

Table 1- Descriptive statistics for variables

Variable	Mean±SD	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Ethical climate	3.65±0.53	3.542	3.755	0.481	0.945
Affective commitment	3.28±0.56	2.978	3.304	-0.593	1.878

Note: $P<0.05$

Table 2- Regression analysis for variables

Variable	Durbin Watson	R	R square	Sig(p)	Beta (β)
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Ethical climate					
Affective commitment	1.550	0.491	0.241	0.001*	0.491

Discussion

Ethical climate is important sources for organizational success. This study examined effect of ethical climate on affective commitment in non-profit sports organization members. In this study, it is argued that the influence of ethical climate thus, ethical climate among employees can be spreading through the work context and the process of social contagion in order to shape the affective commitment, which, in turn, contributes to organizational members' commitments to their organizations.

This finding is consistent with the results of Dorgham 2012 and Tsai 2008. They reported that there is a positive and significant correlation between organizational commitment and people's perception of ethical climate, meaning that the more ethical the organization's climate, the higher organizational commitment can be expected from employees (Tsai and Huang 2008, Dorgham and Science 2012). Also, Feng He and et al explored were six types of ethical climate on organizational commitment and its three dimensions, including affective, continuance, and normative commitment through an investigation on 476 Chinese insurance agents. they reported that ethical behavior of coworkers and a caring climate had a significantly positive impact on both organizational commitment and its three dimensions, while independence climate had no significant influence on overall organizational commitment or its three dimensions (He et al. 2020). employees regard relationships and interactions within their organization as just if they feel the workplace climate is ethical, and this makes for workers' increased satisfaction and commitment. In addition, organizations with ethical climates endeavor not to use

misleading methods and practices. Thus, ethical climate causes employees to have a positive outlook on their jobs and stay longer with their organizations and think less about leaving. Accordingly, (Shaffakat et al. 2020) believes a desirable ethical climate could play a role in increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and in contrast, it could reduce leaving intentions. (Jaramillo et al. 2008) found that ethical climate has a positive correlation with job satisfaction, and this leads to a reduction in tendency to leave service and increased organizational commitment and job performance. Improving ethical climate can be improved affective commitment. thus, it is suggested the administrators should implement a fair and transparent performance appraisal system that is free from bias. Performance appraisal may be related to many issues or variables and may impacted on many organizational and individual performance measures. However, due to time and budget constraints, only a few variables were analysed. This study involved two variables, mainly ethical climate and affective commitment. Other performance measures such as motivation, job engagement and stress and attendance should be considered in future study.

In explaining the correlation between ethical climate based on rules and organizational commitment of people can only be observed in specific occasions, so that whenever employees of an organization are committed to principles of professionalism and regulations of organization and feel that the organization's conduct is also wholly in accordance with rules and regulations, their commitment to their organization increases (Leach 2005). Therefore, with importance of organizations rules and professionalism in organization, organizational

commitment of employees increases. When there is a climate of interest in organization, employees are benevolent and consideration for one another becomes a priority. It is imperative that whenever there is such a climate in organization, employees identify themselves with their organization and feel emotionally committed to their colleagues, leading to desire to stay with their organization and be committed to it. Additionally, ethical climate encourages better understanding of organizational supports by employees. Consequently, they regard their organization as if it considers them its top priority (Filipova 2007). This most probably causes a positive work experience for the employee, and to make up for it, he or she becomes more committed to the organization. This positive correlation between affective commitment and the understood organizational support by the employees has been proved in past studies (Hester et al. 2006).

Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that affective commitment could be improved if organizations were highly ethical climate. The administrators may implement ways that may improve the Employees affective commitment. Creating a friendly atmosphere between department heads and employees improves employee performance through an ethical climate.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that if organizations have a very ethical atmosphere, it can improve emotional commitment. Increasing the level of emotional commitment of employees has a negative relationship with the intention of employees to leave the organization, so increasing the emotional commitment of employees makes employees not leave the organization.

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