

Survey of job Satisfaction and Organizational Climate at the University Computing Centre (Srce), Zagreb

Damir Danijel Žagar

University of Zagreb Faculty of Agriculture

Introduction

Organizational environment determines behavior of the organization's members. Therefore, in order to efficiently manage human resources in an organization, it is crucial to know and understand this environment. Being used to describe organizational environment, organizational climate and culture are one of the most important psychosocial constructs influencing successful organization functioning and development. During recent thirty years these constructs are attracting the interest for both – organizational behavior researchers as well as practitioners working in the field of the organizational effectiveness improvement and optimal human resources use. All of them are trying to find answers to questions related to the climate and culture nature, their ways of measurement and modification, and their causes and consequences.

Importance of studying climate and culture of different social units is based on classical *Lewin* (1936) model in which behavior arises as the consequence of the interaction between an individual and his/her surroundings. Generally, it is considered that an individual reacts on the specific situation based on his personal perception of such a situation. Working situation or organizational environment creates specific surroundings which restrict and influence behavior of the organizational members. Psychological significance that social surroundings create for an individual plays important role in the research of the organizational climate and culture. Despite the basic similarity between organizational climate and organizational culture, scientific research between these two constructs differs significantly and is almost completely independent. Only recently, there is an accent on complementarities and dependencies that exist between them. There is a basic differentiation on the content level between them – while “climate” addresses perception of the organizational environment characteristics, “culture” is focused on the value system that dominates over the organization. The difference is also evident from the comparison of their widely accepted definitions.

The most common definition of the organizational climate is as perception of various aspects of the working environment (events, actions, relations and rules) which are psychologically meaningful and significant to the organization members. Organizational culture, at the other hand, is usually defined as a value and belief system shared between

organization members. Having its roots in industrial and organizational psychology, and when compared to organizational culture, organizational climate has a significantly longer history. The first reference explicitly noting the “organizational climate” construct dates back to 1939, when *Lewin*, *Lippitt* and *White* have published their work on experimental construction of social climate among boy groups. Since then, organizational climate had gone through many inspections and changes in conceptualization. Organizational culture is for the first time mentioned in the paper published by *Petigrew* in 1979.

Organizational Culture

Organizational (or sometimes called „corporate“) culture is a pattern of values, norms, beliefs, attitudes and assumptions that may not have been articulated, but shape the ways in which people behave and things get done. Values refer to what is believed to be important about how people and the organizations behave; norms are the unwritten rules of behavior. Organizational culture deals with abstractions such as values and norms which pervade the whole or a part of an organization. They may not be defined, discussed or even noticed, but they do have a significant influence on people's behavior within an organization they belong.

Organizational culture offers a shared system of meanings which is the basis for communications and mutual understanding. If these functions are not fulfilled in a satisfactory way, culture may significantly reduce the efficiency of an organization.”

In general, “culture” is defined as a set of important assumptions (often unstated) shared by members of a community. These assumptions consist of beliefs about the world and how it works, and the ideals that are worth striving for.

Organizational culture concept is of recent origin, and similarly as the organizational climate, it is used to describe behavior of the organization. Through the literature describing organizational culture authors use various approaches in their efforts to provide its definition. Some of them are focused on the cultures' dimensions while others are investigating its roles and functions. Even between the research groups using same methodologies and approaches

there is still no agreement in providing a common definition. After almost twenty years, researchers of different scientific disciplines are still trying to give an answer to the seemingly simple question – “What is organizational culture?”

Organizational Climate

Although the term is sometimes mixed up with the term ‘organizational culture’, the climate has a different meaning – it describes aspects of the environment that are consciously perceived by organizational members (unlike culture, which covers mostly unconscious parts). Most usual way to describe organizational climate is how people perceive (see and feel about it) the culture existing in their organization – it is relatively persistent set of perceptions held by organization members concerning the characteristics and quality of organizational culture. Culture represents actual situations; climate is the perception of it. In other words, climate is more about how someone experiences his/her social environment; culture is about creating a social environment by group of people.

Highlights of results

Perceived strong points of the organization:

- Relatively important and attractive jobs with potential for professional development
- Organizational culture that enhances further professional education, in accordance with employees’ preferences
- Importance of gained competences for employees’ further professional development
- Regular salary
- Working time
- Work/private life balance
- Supervisors, especially their professional competences!
- Personal relationships with direct supervisors – understanding, respect, being available
- High level of trust into direct supervisors
- Friendly atmosphere, lots of informal relationships, many employees are friends
- Stable and secure employment within the company – no danger of losing jobs or firing
- Majority of employees do trust the management (but there is possibility for improvement, since vast majority should do!)
- New technology – being afoot, investment and implementation
- High-quality of service, orientation towards customers

Perceived weak points of the organization – space for improvement:

- Employees’ already existing professional competences are not fully used
- Gained skills and knowledge is not shared enough within the organization

- Not much hope for promotion within the system for majority of the staff
- Lower salaries than in corporate sector
- Distribution of salary amounts within the organization is not perceived as just
- No clear and just criteria for bonuses
- Lack of freedom to make decisions, not enough authority delegated
- Some employees can’t complete their tasks during working hours
- Criticizing by direct supervisors, without much praise (?)
- Not enough feedback by direct supervisors
- Lack of good communication and co-operation between departments, even within departments
- No culture of constructive conflict-resolution
- Work-load not evenly distributed within a sector; some employees work more and some less than the others
- Not enough vital and relevant information for employees; too much shared informally
- Low-quality performance is tolerated within the organization, high-quality performance not being stimulated
- Two-way communication between management and employees: perceived lack of management’s interest in employees’ opinion – the organization does not encourage, actively search for and stimulate employees’ initiatives for improvement of its productiveness and quality; it even does not accept and implement them properly when they arrive
- No clear vision about the organization’s goals and strategy, management’s expectation from the employees or quality required
- No clear criteria for quality-performed jobs
- Productivity is not at its best, nor is the employees’ commitment to perform their jobs well and contribute to organizational goals achievements

Conclusion

Employees perceive lots of strong sides of the organization, as well as those that need some improvement. It is important for the Srce management to be more aware of both. Recognizing and emphasizing strong sides and advantages of work in Srce could increase an employee value proposition. To identify disadvantages (both from the eyes of the employees and the management) and take over responsibility to change them is a crucial step for constant organizational improvement that management aims for.

We feel it is of equal importance that for the first time the employees’ opinions be required and systematically collected and interpreted. This, alongside with meaningful measures from the management, could be an important step for them to change their perception from not being asked for the opinion, to becoming real partners in mutual efforts to successful and satisfied organization.