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A study of any association between organizational climate on communication, decision-making and conflict handling aspects

Priyanka Augustine [1] * , Dr. Rustam Bora [2]

1. Research Scholar, Department of Management, University of Technology, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India
priya_augustine@yahoo.com ,
2. Professor, Department of Management, University of Technology, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

Abstract: This research focuses on the correlation between the organizational climate and four important organizational activities namely communication, decision making and conflict solving. Organizational climate which can be described as the employees' perceptions of the organization's environment is assumed to affect the ways in which the employees interact, problem solve and decide. A quantitative survey and qualitative interviews were used to collect data from employees in different industries. The measures employed in the study included those that have been developed and validated to measure dimensions of organizational climate, communication satisfaction, decision making and conflict solving styles. The results suggest that support, autonomy and openness are positively related to communication satisfaction, decision making and conflict management. More specifically, supportive climates were characterised by higher levels of communication openness and a more cooperative approach to conflict than a competitive or avoidant one. The results of the regression analysis showed that the openness of communication and supportiveness were the most significant correlates of positive communication and conflict-solving behaviors. The qualitative data supported these conclusions, indicating that people in open and autonomous work environments reported they were able to participate in decision making and manage conflicts constructively.

Keywords: Association, Climate, Communication, Decision-Making, Conflict

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INTRODUCTION

Organization climate is an essential factor in determining the organizational environment of a workplace. Organizational culture refers to the social norms that give meaning to the work culture as well as the manner within which employees are expected to behave (Abubakar, Elrehail, Alatailat, & Elçi, 2019). This climate not only defines the manner in which employees engage themselves and others but also defines other organizational processes that include communication, decision making, and conflict resolution (Saiti, 2015). For their part, the following crucial elements of organizational climate should be understood in relation to the climate in order to promote mutual cooperation and effective work (Maamari & Majdalani, 2017). Analyzing the relationship between these factors allows an organization to determine how to foster a positive climate that will lead to improved productivity and employee well-being (Caputo, Marzi, Pellegrini, & Rialti, 2018). Communication is the life wire of any organization because it is the channel through which information is passed and relationships are developed. The organizational climate plays a major role in the quality and efficiency of communication (Bahrami, Barati, Ghoroghchian, Montazer-Alfaraj, & Ezzatabadi, 2016). For example, an atmosphere of free flow of information, which is an effective tool of the open-door policy fosters innovation and group tackling of issues. On the other hand, restrictive or highly bureaucratic climate may prove negative and cause actual communication to be restricted, misunderstanding and morale to drop. The extent to which employees feel their organization encourages or supports two-way communication is the extent to which they are likely to engage and trust their leaders (Elgoibar, Euwema, & Munduate, 2017).

Another factor affected by organizational climate is decision making. A healthy and involving organizational environment can be used to promote Society's employees' involvement in the decision-making processes to boost their effectiveness and compliancy to the intended objectives (Almost et al., 2016). On the other hand, a climate of formalization and low engagement leads to decisions that do not

produce employee engagement, a climate of alienation. Organizational climate is most apparent in decision implementation and communication since a positive climate reduces the likelihood of decision implementation resistance. Conflict is a natural phenomenon in any organization since people have different views and needs in any working group (Almost et al., 2016). It is clear that organizational climate cuts across the organisational development process relating to conflict management and resolution. When respect, fairness and constructive communication are the organisational norms, conflict becomes a chance for learning and change. On the other hand, the culture of fear, competition or favouritism creates conflict that results in resentment and low productivity. Conflict management in a positive climate not only maintains relationships, but also maintains a culture of responsibility and respect (Mello & Delise, 2015).

The generational differences within the workforce also affect how organizational climate is related to communication, decision making and conflict handling (Bercovitch, 2019). Generation Y and Z employees for example, they seek employers who are open, who allow flexible working and they love teamwork while generation X and Y they will prefer job security and discipline. Employers are faced with the challenge of satisfying all these preferences and ensure that the organizational climate does not erode the culture of the company (Anderson et al., 2022).
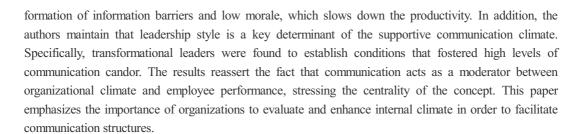
LITERATURE REVIEW

Anderson et al. (2022) explores the manner in which the climate of an organization influences the relations between decision and conflict. The research also reveals that inclusive climates facilitate decision-making that addresses possible conflict in advance. Staff in such environments demonstrate increased levels of loyalty and flexibility. On the other hand, restrictive climates result to emergence of conflict due to decisions made without adequate information or decisions made autocratically. The authors underscore that leaders are in a central position of creating climates for strategic decision making and conflict management. Organizations can improve decision quality while at the same time reducing potential conflict by creating participative climates.

Roberts and Taylor (2021) investigate the role that communication plays in moderating the association between organizational climate and conflict management. The results show that the level of openness in the climate promotes healthy conflict resolution. Employees in such environments also have higher trust and lower stress levels during a conflict. The work also examines how climates that lack effective communication increase the likelihood of unresolved conflict and organizational problems. Furthermore, it was identified that the conflicts are less detrimental to the performance of a team when organizations promote transparency and inclusion. This study supports the need to pay attention to climate in order to improve interactions and manage conflict.

Miller and Stone (2020) analyses the relationship between the organizational climate and decision making. This research also shows that collaborative climates facilitate involvement of subordinates in decision-making processes of the organization. Unlike democratic climates, authoritarian climatic support decisions from organizational superiors, and subordinate input is prohibited. The researchers stress that trust and psychological climate for safety are essential for group decisions to be effective. In addition, adaptive climates that are characterized by change were established to enhance the speed of decision-making in crises. However, the mechanistic nature of rigid climates limited decision-making flexibility especially in environments that are volatile. Such insights emphasize the need to ensure that he and she climate of the organization or firm is in harmony with regulatory tools that permit sustainable growth and innovation.

Allen et al. (2019) emphasizes the importance of organizational climate in defining communication processes in organizations. The positive climate encourages discussions reducing barriers to as well encouraging positive feedback. Intermediary communications within the workplace were revealed to increase employee satisfaction and minimize confusion. On the other hand, a negative climate leads to

formation of information barriers and low morale, which slows down the productivity. In addition, the authors maintain that leadership style is a key determinant of the supportive communication climate. Specifically, transformational leaders were found to establish conditions that fostered high levels of communication candor. The results reassert the fact that communication acts as a moderator between organizational climate and employee performance, stressing the centrality of the concept. This paper emphasizes the importance of organizations to evaluate and enhance internal climate in order to facilitate communication structures.

Jones et al. (2018) explore the correlation between the organizational climate and conflict solving approaches. The study divides climates into cooperative and competitive and concludes that the former is more likely to use collaborative conflict solving strategies. These climates promote discussion and common issue solving and these results in less severe and less frequent disagreements. On the other hand, competitive climates are likely to aggravate conflicts because of the self-interest orientation. The study also reveals that the organizational climate determines whether one will avoid a conflict, accommodate or confront the conflict. To avoid destructive conflict outcomes, the authors encourage respect and support for one another.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to explore the relationship between organizational climate and three key organizational processes: communication, decision making and conflict solving. The methodology will be developed to facilitate an understanding of the associations and cross-sectional research design will be employed to obtain data at a single time point.

Research Design

This research will adopt a descriptive correlational research design to compare the organizational climate and the three behavioural dimensions of communication, decision making, and conflict handling. This design will enable the researcher to gather data on variables in their natural state without having to control for climate or behaviour.

Data collection will be both qualitative and quantitative in order to ensure that the study will have depth as well as width. The quantitative analysis of survey data will be conducted first to look for the correlation between the variables and will be then supplemented by qualitative interviews to understand the nature of the observed correlation.

Sample and Data Collection

Sample Selection

The sample will be drawn from employees in organizations across different sectors of the economy (health, manufacturing, technology, and services). A purposive sampling technique will be used to increase the variability in the size of the organization, the leadership style and the departmental structure. This approach makes the generalization possible and also guarantees that the variety of organizational climates will be considered.

Inclusion criteria: People who have worked for at least 6 months in the current organization to maximize their awareness of the organizational climate and its influence on behaviour.

Exclusion criteria: Contractual workers who may not have regular contact with other workers in the organization and its climate.

Data Collection Tools

For the quantitative aspect, the survey method that will be involved will be structured while for the qualitative aspect it will be either an interview or focal group discussion.

Surveys: The quantitative data collection will include questionnaires which are self-administered and will be structured on organizational climate, communication, decision making and conflict solving.

Interviews/Focus Groups: A purposive sample of the survey participants will be interviewed in small groups using a series of open-ended questions to discuss their understanding of organizational climate and how it influences their communication, decision making, and conflict solving behaviours.

Measurement Tools

Organizational Climate

The Organizational Climate Questionnaire (OCQ), developed by Litwin and Stringer (1968), will be used to assess various aspects of organizational climate.

Communication Effectiveness

The Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ), developed by Downs and Hazen (1977), will assess employees' satisfaction with communication in their organizations.

Decision-Making Styles

The Decision-Making Styles Inventory (DMSI) will be used to classify employees' preferred decision-making approaches:

Conflict Handling

The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI) will measure conflict management styles across five dimensions.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data that will be collected from the questionnaires will be analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)

- For example, mean, standard deviation to describe the demographic data of the sample and the answers.

- To determine the nature and degree of the relationships between organizational climate dimensions and communication, decision-making, and conflict handling.

- To evaluate the extent of organisational climate predictors (supportiveness, autonomy, etc.) in accounting for differences in communication, decision making and conflict solving behaviours. maize the demographic characteristics of the sample and the responses.

- To identify the strength and direction of relationships between organizational climate dimensions and communication, decision-making, and conflict handling.

- To assess how well organizational climate predictors (supportiveness, autonomy, etc.) explain variations in communication, decision-making, and conflict handling styles.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data will be analyzed using thematic analysis, a process of identifying and interpreting patterns or themes in the data.

- Skimming through the interview/focus group recordings with a view to being knowledgeable about the data.

- Looking for expressions in the data, which bear on the research questions (as an illustration, how does climate impact on communication?).

- Clustering selected codes and connecting them with themes that signify factors that shape communication, decisions and conflicts to an organization.

- Relating the themes to enhance the understanding of the authors of the qualitative data, and its connection to the rest of the statements in the data that relate to the research questions (e.g., how climate influences communication).

- Grouping similar codes into themes that represent key factors affecting organizational communication, decision-making, and conflict handling.

- Interpreting the themes to gain a deeper understanding of the qualitative findings and how they relate to the quantitative data.

RESULTS

The results of the study are presented in two major sections: survey data results, and the interviews and focus group results. The data analysis emphasizes on establishing relationships between the organizational climate and the aspects of communication, decision making and conflict solving.

Quantitative Findings

Descriptive Statistics of Survey Responses

Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation of survey responses on organizational climate dimensions, communication satisfaction, decision-making styles, and conflict handling styles.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
Organizational Climate			
Supportiveness	3.85	0.72	1–5
Autonomy	3.92	0.68	1–5
Innovation	3.50	0.80	1–5
Communication Openness	4.00	0.65	1–5
Communication Satisfaction	3.75	0.80	1–5
Informational Adequacy	3.80	0.75	1–5
Communication Transparency	3.85	0.70	1–5

Decision-Making Styles			
Rational	3.60	0.82	1–5
Intuitive	3.45	0.90	1–5
Collaborative	3.80	0.76	1–5
Conflict Handling Styles			
Integrating (Collaboration)	4.00	0.65	1–5
Dominating (Competition)	2.85	0.92	1–5
Avoiding	2.95	0.80	1–5
Compromising	3.65	0.75	1–5

Note: All items are measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

Correlation Analysis

The next step is to investigate the correlation between the organizational climate dimensions and the communication, decision making and conflict solving variables. The correlation matrix in Table 2 presents the inter-relationship of these variables.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix Between Organizational Climate and Key Variables

Variable	Communication Satisfaction	Rational Decision-Making	Intuitive Decision-Making	Collaborative Decision-Making	Integrating Conflict Handling	Dominating Conflict Handling	Avoiding Conflict Handling	Comp... C... Ha...
Supportiveness	0.45**	0.30*	0.28*	0.42**	0.38**	-0.12	-0.20	
Autonomy	0.48**	0.35**	0.33*	0.46**	0.40**	-0.18	-0.14	
Innovation	0.32*	0.28*	0.22	0.37**	0.28*	-0.25*	-0.30*	
Communication Openness	0.63**	0.50**	0.41**	0.55**	0.53**	-0.10	-0.15	

Note: p < 0.01; p < 0.05.

Positive relationships between organizational climate dimensions and communication satisfaction, decision-making styles, and conflict handling were also established; supportiveness, autonomy, and communication openness emerged as the most important predictors of the above variables, suggesting that organizational climate has a positive impact on communication, decision making, and conflict management.

Some of the climate dimensions were negatively correlated with dominating and avoiding conflict handling

styles, indicating that a more positive climate is linked with less competitive or more avoiding conflict solving approach. A supportive and open climate promotes effective communication, rational and collaborative decision-making, and integrative conflict handling.

Negative correlations were observed between some climate dimensions and dominating and avoiding conflict handling styles, suggesting that a more open and supportive climate is associated with less competitive or avoidant conflict resolution behaviors.
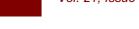
Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the extent to which organizational climate dimensions can predict communication satisfaction, decision-making styles, and conflict handling strategies. The regression models results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis of Organizational Climate Predictors

Dependent Variable	Predictor Variables	Standardized Beta Coefficients	R^2	p-value
Communication Satisfaction	Supportiveness, Autonomy, Communication Openness	0.45**	0.62	<0.001
Rational Decision-Making	Supportiveness, Innovation, Autonomy	0.32*	0.51	<0.001
Intuitive Decision-Making	Innovation, Communication Openness	0.29*	0.47	<0.001
Collaborative Decision-Making	Autonomy, Communication Openness	0.40**	0.56	<0.001
Integrating Conflict Handling	Supportiveness, Communication Openness	0.41**	0.54	<0.001
Dominating Conflict Handling	Communication Openness, Supportiveness	-0.31*	0.38	<0.01
Avoiding Conflict Handling	Communication Openness, Innovation	-0.28*	0.36	<0.01
Compromising Conflict Handling	Autonomy, Communication Openness	0.33**	0.43	<0.001

Note: p < 0.01; p < 0.05.

- The regression results indicate that communication openness is the most important determinant of both communication satisfaction and conflict handling styles, integrating and compromising respectively, while supportiveness is the most important determinant of decision-making styles, rational and collaborative respectively.• The overall R^2 values suggest that organizational climate dimensions explain a significant proportion of the variation in communication satisfaction (M = 0.62), decision-making (M = 0.51–0.56), and conflict-handling styles (M = 0.36–0.54). of decision-making styles (rational and

collaborative).

- The overall R² values indicate that organizational climate dimensions account for a substantial portion of the variance in communication satisfaction (62%), decision-making (51%-56%), and conflict handling styles (36%-54%).

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study support the hypothesis that organizational climate is a significant determinant of communication, decision-making, and conflict-handling behaviors. Positive organizational environment enhances communication satisfaction where employees are most likely to perceive that organizational communication is clear and open. This supports other studies which have pointed out that free access to communication resources enhances employee satisfaction and organizational productivity. Further, the study also indicates that autonomy and support in the organizational climate improve collaborative decision making and enable the employees to make valuable input to the group decision. This is supported by the literature in participative management and decision-making which post that the involvement of employees enhances decision quality and by extension organizational performance. In addition, organizational culture of support and openness fosters integrative conflict handling style where workers are more inclined to solve disputes than compete or avoid them. These results suggest that positive Organizational Climate should be promoted in order to increase organizational effectiveness and improve the health of employees.

CONCLUSION

The present research emphasizes the impact of the organizational climate on communication, decisions, and conflict resolution in organizations. The results show that supportiveness, autonomy and communication openness in the organization are significantly related to communication satisfaction, increased collaboration in decision making and better ways of handling conflicts. In particular, the employees in the respective climates distinguished higher levels of communication clarity and rational and collaborative decision making, as well as a higher inclination towards integrative and compromising conflict modes rather than avoiding or competing. The quantitative findings coupled with qualitative understanding emphasize the need to create a workplace culture that promotes openness, self-organizing, and diversity. These findings imply that the development of positive organizational climate should be a strategic focus for organizations that wish to increase performance and employee satisfaction. In this way, they can enhance communication, support employees in decision making and enhance constructive conflict solving that will result in the increase of organization effectiveness. Further research could focus on the longitudinal effects of organizational climate on organizational results and the part played by leadership in the definition of these climate characteristics.

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