



The Relationship between Organizational Climate and Staff Attitude in Iranian Medical University Libraries

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Abstract

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Introduction: The organizational climate is the organization's personality and employees' perceptions of its environment. The study aimed to determine the relationship between organizational climate and staff attitude in Iranian medical university libraries.

Methods: In this cross-sectional study, all librarians of three Iranian medical libraries were included. Data was collected using the ClimateQUAL questionnaire. Specialists confirmed its validity and reliability, and Cronbach's alpha obtained 0.953. The collected data was analyzed in terms of descriptive and inferential statistics (p -value <0.05) in SPSS software version 22.

Results: The overall mean of the organizational climate for the studied medical libraries was 111.87 ± 49.00 . There were no significant differences between these libraries based on the organizational climate ($p=0.711$). Regarding staff attitudes, the lowest and highest total mean were for job satisfaction and work unit conflict, respectively. There was a significant relationship between the organizational climate and staff attitudes ($r=0.352$).

Conclusion: The reinforcement of demographic diversity, customer service, teamwork, and continual learning in medical libraries can be more effective in improving the organizational climate of these libraries. The positive organizational climate has a positive effect on staff attitudes, job satisfaction, and continuing to work with the library.

Introduction

The organizational climate is a set of cultures, traditions, and practices in the organization introduced by Lewin et al. at the end of 1931s. They used the social climate to describe the feelings or atmosphere that govern the organizations (1). The organizational climate is the organization's personality, and employees' perceptions of the institutional environment improve the ethical climate (2, 3). A positive organizational climate has profound effects on employees. In contrast, a negative organizational

climate causes a lack of work motivation in the employees of an organization (4). The organizational climate provides facilities for the organization's employees to improve the quantity and quality of products and services, job satisfaction, creativity, responsibility, and loyalty of staff (5). Today, improving the organizational climate has been considered by managers and discussed widely in the organizational behavior literature (6).

On the other hand, organizational climate measures have



been utilized to study organizational climate in different settings such as libraries (7). Among them, the Organizational Climate Measure (8), Sussman and Deep questionnaire (9), and Halpin & Croft organizational climate questionnaire (10) can be mentioned. In the meantime, there was no particular instrument to assess libraries' climate until 2007. The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) introduced the ClimateQUAL tool in 2007, which evaluates the organizational climate and attitudes. It enables libraries to carry out an in-depth assessment of libraries' atmosphere and diversity, as well as their growth and excellence. The ClimateQUAL aims to improve a culture of healthy organizational climate and diversity, staff perceptions of organizational climate and diversity, collecting and interpreting staff feedback, and the best practices for managing the organizational climate. It also enables libraries to interpret and act on data available on the ClimateQUAL website. This measurement assesses the organizational climate (nine dimensions) and librarian attitudes (seven dimensions) together in one questionnaire electronically for different libraries (11). According to this, it differs from other organizational climate questionnaires used in previous studies.

On the other hand, the organizational attitude was investigated by different scales for organizations, such as the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) (12), Scale of Safety Attitudes (13), and Change Attitude Scale (14). The attitude of librarians was studied in terms of different measurements, including the attitude to Technology Use Scale (15), Job Attitude Scale (16), and Pro Marketing Scale (17). Previous studies showed that the ClimateQUAL questionnaire was used to evaluate the organizational climate of different types of libraries globally (5, 18-21). Liu and Tang investigated the climate of Nanjing Agricultural University Library by revising the ClimateQUAL scale in 2011. The second and third rounds of assessment were carried out in 2014 and 2017 to examine the effects of such optimization measures. The results showed that the scores increased overall (22).

Also, several studies have applied this tool to evaluate the organizational climate of medical libraries (23-25). In the first Iranian study, Yaminfirooz et al. in 2013 assessed the organizational climate of the medical libraries in the north of Iran based on ClimateQUAL scales. The results showed that the organizational climate of educational libraries was optimal (23). In another study by Yaminfirooz et al., the organizational climate of central libraries in Mazandaran and Babol medical universities was assessed by the ClimateQUAL scale. The results indicated that the climate of creativity and innovation, teamwork, continuous learning, psychological safety, and management in the libraries was inappropriate (24). Hashemian et al. measured the organizational climate of libraries in Isfahan universities. The data were collected using the ClimateQUAL questionnaire. The findings indicated that the organizational climate of these libraries was desirable; however, climate justice, with the lowest mean score compared to similar studies, is the aspect that deserves more attention from library administrators (26).

Literature review showed that librarians' attitude in terms of organizational climate, especially in medical libraries, was not investigated by the ClimateQUAL scales. Several studies assessed the librarians' attitude by using technology (15, 17), job satisfaction (16), and service marketing (17) tools. The

results of these studies and other related ones revealed that negative organizational attitudes could adversely affect staff performance and service delivery to users (12-17).

Based on searching the Ministry of Health and Medical Education website in Iran, there are 68 medical universities and colleges and 309 scientific disciplines. Each university has a central library on the main campus and a branch library for each faculty. The central library provides medical information resources and services for all students, faculty, and staff from all fields of the medical sciences. Also, the branch libraries as special libraries respond to their users in the faculties (27). According to this, medical libraries play an essential role in responding to the information needs of students, researchers, and patients. In this regard, improving the organizational climate of medical libraries cause to strengthen their performance and provides a motivating environment to staff and users. Also, medical library staff can operate effectively in a stress-free environment and provide the best services for health users (28, 29). Therefore, evaluating the organizational climate of medical libraries and their librarians' attitude is essential because of the substantial role of a desirable organizational environment in providing sufficient health information and attracting users to a dynamic and positive place.

Overall, the organizational climate of Iranian medical libraries in hospitals, colleges, and universities has been studied to some extent. Nevertheless, there is no evidence for the relationship between the organizational climate of medical libraries and staff attitudes in terms of the ClimateQUAL questionnaire. So, the present study aimed to determine the relationship between organizational climate and staff attitude in Iranian medical university libraries.

Methods

Study Design and Participants

This cross-sectional study was conducted to assess a relationship between the organizational climate and staff attitude of Iranian medical libraries from June through September 2019. The study population included all librarians (50 persons) who were working at the central libraries of Tehran University of Medical Sciences (12 librarians), Iran University of Medical Sciences (20 librarians), and Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences (18 librarians).

Measures

Data was collected using the ClimateQUAL questionnaire (Appendix 1). The questionnaire included three parts of demographic information, the organizational climate scales (nine dimensions and 36 items) and the staff attitude scales (seven dimensions and 15 items). The organizational climate dimensions are justice, leadership, deep diversity, demographic diversity, innovation, continual learning, teamwork, customer service, and psychological safety. The staff attitude dimensions include job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviors, organizational withdrawal, team psychological empowerment in the workplace, task engagement, and work unit conflict. The present study applied the organizational climate scales translated to Persian by Yaminfirooz et al. (23) and the organizational attitude scales in the



original ClimateQUAL questionnaire (11). Medical library specialists confirmed the validity and reliability of the total questionnaire, and Cronbach's alpha was 0.953. The minimum and maximum total scores were estimated as 36 and 252, 4 and 28 at each dimension for the organizational climate. The minimum and maximum total scores of the staff attitude were estimated as 15 and 105, 1 and 7 for job satisfaction, 4 and 28 for work unit conflict, and 2 and 14 for other dimensions. The value and interpretation for each dimension in the organizational climate scale are 4-10 (undesirable), 11-16 (acceptable), 17-22 (desirable), and 23-28 (Ideal). Taking into account the minimum and maximum total scores of the organizational climate (36, 252), the overall status of the organizational climate was estimated as 36-90 (undesirable), 91-144 (acceptable), 145-198 (desirable), and 199-252 (Ideal).

Data collection

The Questionnaires were distributed among librarians by referring to the studied libraries. In case of the absence of librarians in these libraries, the questionnaires were handed over to the library manager, and he/she was asked to deliver them to the absent librarians and receive them. Out of 50 distributed questionnaires (12 Tehran, 20 Iran, 18 Shahid Beheshti Universities of Medical Sciences), 31 persons returned the filled questionnaires to the researchers (62% response rate).

Data analysis

A seven-point Likert scale (completely disagree 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 completely agree) was used to score items. Data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics, including ANOVA and Kruskal-Wallis analysis, and Pearson correlation (p -value<0.05) to determine the relationship between the organizational climate and staff attitudes by SPSS software version 22.

Results

The analysis of 31 questionnaires collected from the studied libraries showed that most librarians were female, with a work experience of 21 to 30 years, aged 41-50 years. They were permanent employees, had an education degree in library and information science (BS or MS), worked in the public services section, and had a library manager whose field of study was not a library and information science (54.8%) (Table 1).

Based on Table 2, the climate for justice was desirable for libraries of Iran and Shahid Beheshti medical universities but acceptable for the central library at Tehran University of Medical Sciences. The total score of the climate for justice in all three medical libraries was desirable (16.19±7.98). The climate for leadership was acceptable for the central library of Iran University of Medical Sciences but undesirable for the central libraries of Tehran and Shahid Beheshti universities of medical sciences. The total score of the climate for leadership was undesirable in all these libraries

(12.93±6.39). The climate for demographic diversity was acceptable for the central library of Iran University of Medical Sciences and undesirable for the central libraries of Tehran and Shahid Beheshti universities of medical sciences. The total scores of the climate for demographic diversity (10.29±6.29) and innovation (12.29±7.42) were acceptable in all these medical libraries.

The climate for continual learning and teamwork was acceptable in the central libraries of Iran and Tehran universities of medical sciences, respectively. It was undesirable in the central library of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences. The overall status of these dimensions in the studied libraries was acceptable (11.80±5.10, 11.19±5.99). Also, the climate for customer service was acceptable in the central library of Tehran University of Medical Sciences but undesirable in the central libraries of Iran and Shahid Beheshti universities of medical sciences. The total score of this dimension was low for these libraries (8.70±5.53). The overall status of psychological safety was acceptable in these libraries (13.70±7.76). The climate for deep diversity was desirable in the central library of Iran University of Medical Sciences but acceptable in the central libraries of Tehran and Shahid Beheshti universities of medical sciences. The overall status of this dimension was acceptable for these libraries (14.74±8.56). There was no significant difference between these medical libraries based on each dimension of organizational climate (p <0.05).

According to Table 3, the overall status of the organizational climate was acceptable in the central libraries of Iran (118.57±37.78) and Tehran (107.60±44.47) universities of medical sciences but undesirable in the central library of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences (88.50±44.85). The overall mean of the organizational climate was 111.87±49.00 for these medical libraries, and there was no significant difference between these libraries in terms of the organizational climate (p =0.711).

Based on the organizational attitudes, the work unit conflict (18.93±5.45) and the organizational withdrawal (8.96±3.79) were high among the studied libraries. The central library of Iran University of Medical Sciences had the highest scores on job satisfaction (2.85±2.11), organizational citizenship behaviors (8.14±3.18), and task engagement (5.42±4.15) than the other two libraries. The organizational commitment (7.60±4.15) and organizational withdrawal (9.60±2.70) of the librarians at Tehran University of Medical Sciences were high among the other studied libraries. The team psychological empowerment (8.83±5.60) and work unit conflict (20.83±5.81) were high in the central library of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences. About work unit conflict, the interpersonal conflict was higher than task conflict. Except for the task engagement, no significant differences were found between these medical libraries based on the organizational attitudes dimensions (p -value=0.040). According to Table 5, there was a significant relationship between the organizational climate and the staff attitudes (r =0.352) in the studied medical libraries. Therefore, the organizational climate of medical libraries influences their staff attitudes and motivates them to work there.



Table 1. Demographic information of the library's staff in Iranian medical sciences universities

Criteria	Sub criterion	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	5	16.1
	Female	24	77.4
	No response	2	6.5
Work experience	0-10	9	29
	11-20	10	32.2
	21-30	12	38.8
Age	≥30	6	19.4
	31-40	9	29
	41-50	10	32.2
	≤51	6	19.4
Employment	Permanent	19	61.3
	Temporary	9	29
	No response	3	9.7
University	Iran	7	22.6
	Tehran	5	16.1
	Shahid Beheshti	6	19.4
	No response	31	41.9
Staff field of study	Library and information science	15	48.4
	Non library and information science	14	45.2
	No response	2	6.5
Degree	Diploma	4	12.9
	Associate/Bachelor	15	48.4
	Master/Doctoral	11	35.5
	No response	1	3.2
Workplace	Management	5	16.1
	Public service	13	41.9
	Technological service	9	29
	Administration	4	12.9
Library manager's field of study	Library and information science	12	38.7
	Non library and information science	17	54.8
	No response	2	6.5

Table 2. The organizational climate of the libraries in Iranian medical sciences universities

Dimension	University	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Total mean	p-value
Climate for justice	Iran	16.40	8.18	4	28	16.19	0.651
	Tehran	12.00	6.08	4	17		
	Shahid Beheshti	16.60	9.79	4	26		
	No response	17.46	8.01	6	28		
Climate for leadership	Iran	13.14	6.96	4	23	12.93	0.279
	Tehran	10.00	3.93	4	13		
	Shahid Beheshti	9.50	4.84	4	17		
	No response	15.53	6.78	7	27		
Climate for demographic diversity	Iran	10.14	5.81	4	20	10.29	0.54
	Tehran	8.20	5.49	4	16		
	Shahid Beheshti	5.66	1.86	4	8		
	No response	13.30	6.95	4	28		
Climate for innovation	Iran	11.71	5.55	4	20	12.29	0.932
	Tehran	11.40	6.34	5	19		
	Shahid Beheshti	11.50	8.47	4	24		
	No response	13.30	8.77	4	28		
Climate for continual learning	Iran	12.28	3.86	6	16	11.80	0.134
	Tehran	14.40	5.22	9	22		
	Shahid Beheshti	7.66	4.84	4	17		
	No response	12.46	17.50	4	22		
Climate for teamwork	Iran	11.14	4.94	5	19	11.19	0.545
	Tehran	13.60	7.76	5	25		
	Shahid Beheshti	8.33	6.25	4	20		
	No response	11.61	5.86	4	20		
Climate for customer service	Iran	10.57	3.77	5	15	8.70	0.80
	Tehran	12.60	8.90	4	26		
	Shahid Beheshti	5.00	1.26	4	7		
	No response	7.92	5.15	4	20		
Climate for psychological safety	Iran	15.14	4.81	7	21	13.70	0.901
	Tehran	12.80	6.72	4	20		
	Shahid Beheshti	12.00	8.50	4	24		
	No response	14.07	9.53	4	28		
Climate for deep diversity	Iran	18.00	7.87	8	29	14.74	0.511
	Tehran	12.60	5.77	6	19		
	Shahid Beheshti	12.16	9.38	4	24		
	No response	15.00	9.64	4	28		

Table 3. The overall status of the organizational climate in the libraries of three Iranian medical universities

University	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Iran	118.57	7	37.78	74.00	183.00
Tehran	107.60	5	44.47	45.00	149.00
Shahid Beheshti	88.50	6	44.85	36.00	157.00
Missing	120.69	13	58.32	46.00	212.00
Total	111.87	31	49.00	36.00	212.00

Table 4. The organizational attitudes of library's staff in three Iranian medical sciences universities

Dimension	University	Mean	Standard deviation	Average	p-value
Job satisfaction	Iran	2.85	2.11	2.77	0.318
	Tehran	2.40	1.34		
	Shahid Beheshti	1.33	0.51		
	No response	3.53	2.50		
Organizational commitment	Iran	6.85	3.89	6.58	0.502
	Tehran	7.60	4.15		
	Shahid Beheshti	4.33	2.94		
	No response	7.07	4.46		
Organizational citizenship behaviors	Iran	8.14	3.18	6.70	0.380
	Tehran	5.80	1.92		
	Shahid Beheshti	6.00	2.75		
	No response	6.61	2.39		
Organizational withdrawal	Iran	9.57	3.20	8.96	0.881
	Tehran	9.60	2.70		
	Shahid Beheshti	8.00	5.36		
	No response	8.84	3.95		
Team psychological empowerment in the workplace	Iran	6.71	3.72	7.80	0.815
	Tehran	7.60	3.20		
	Shahid Beheshti	8.83	5.60		
	No response	8.00	3.65		
Task engagement	Iran	5.42	4.15	4.83	0.040
	Tehran	4.00	2.91		
	Shahid Beheshti	2.00	00.00		
	No response	6.15	3.43		
Work unit conflict	Iran	19.00	3.82	18.93	0.596
	Tehran	16.20	4.81		
	Shahid Beheshti	20.83	5.81		
	No response	19.07	6.35		

Table 5. The relationship between the organizational climate and the organizational attitudes

Variables	Organizational climate
Organizational attitudes	r 0.352

Discussion

This study aimed to determine the relationship between the organizational climate and the staff attitudes in Iranian medical libraries. In terms of each dimension of the organizational climate, climate for justice, deep diversity, psychological safety, and innovation were suitable and at the moderate level for Iranian medical libraries. However, the climate for justice plays a crucial role in identifying the organizational climate. This finding is somewhat similar to the study by Jahani et al. but differs in terms of the most important variables affecting the organizational climate. Their research identified that psychological safety and teamwork were the most critical factors for determining the organizational climate (30) that, somewhat was similar to the present study.

The current study shows that an unsuitable climate of leadership, respect for employees of different nationalities, languages, and religions, customer service, continuous learning, and teamwork cause an unfavorable organizational climate in medical libraries. In this regard, no similar study was found to compare the results that should be considered in future research. Yaminfirooz et al. (23) revealed that the most and the lowest essential dimensions of the organizational climate belonged to customer service and teamwork, respectively. In contrast, the present study found that these dimensions were not acceptable in the Iranian medical libraries. Hashemian et al. (26) stated that the climate for justice had the lowest score in the Isfahan libraries, different from the present study. Liu and Tang (22) showed that teamwork, justice, deep diversity, continual learning, stimulate and competition, organizational commitment, and psychological empowerment had the lowest scores in the workplace. Their results were different because, in the current study climate for justice, deep diversity, psychological safety, and innovation were suitable and at a moderate level for the organizational climate of Iranian medical libraries. Therefore, creating a favorable, fair, and secure organizational climate, creative and innovative managers and staff cause to provide appropriate services to the users of these libraries.

In a different study based on the measurement scale (Situational Outlook Questionnaire (SOQ)) and surveyed population (202 managers working in Malaysian companies), Shanker et al. (31) concluded that innovative work behavior plays a mediating role in the relationship between organizational climate for innovation and organizational performance. In terms of their results and the present study, the innovational climate in an organization can improve staff performance and, finally, organizational actions. So, medical libraries must provide an innovational atmosphere where staff shows their skills.

Overall, there was no significant difference between the studied libraries regarding the organizational climate. These results were similar to Hashemian et al. study. They investigated that libraries of the Isfahan University had a

better organizational climate than Isfahan University of Medical Sciences based on ClimateQUAL measurement (26). In another survey, Yaminfirooz et al. (23) achieved different results than the present study. In their research, there was a significant difference among studied medical libraries in terms of organizational climate, staff employment status, and the work location of staff in different sections of the library. They concluded that the college or educational libraries had a more favorable organizational climate than hospital libraries. This finding supports the theory that each staff member has specific values, criteria, and perceptions based on personal, family, and cultural conditions. These results and the relationship between the organizational climate and demographic variables were not reported in the present study, which can be investigated in future research.

In another part of the current study, based on the components of the staff attitude, work unit conflict and job satisfaction had the highest and the lowest mean, respectively. Except for task engagement, there was no significant difference between these libraries based on the organizational attitudes dimensions. On the other hand, the possibility of job withdrawal among librarians of Shahid Beheshti and Tehran universities of medical sciences was higher than at Iran University of Medical Sciences due to lack of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, team psychological empowerment, and work unit conflict. Also, the data analysis revealed that there was a significant relationship between the organizational climate and staff attitudes in the medical libraries. Similar to these results, there was no study to investigate the staff attitudes in the medical library using the ClimateQUAL questionnaire. However, the dimensions of organizational attitudes have been studied by other questionnaires (32-36). Bolino et al. (32) identified that citizenship motivations among staff were not necessarily positive. Similar to the current study, they concluded that Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) causes improved performance of employees. In another related study, Fong et al. (34) studied leadership empowerment, psychological empowerment, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and citizenship behaviors as staff attitude dimensions.

Walumbwa et al. (33) surveyed several dimensions of staff attitude. They revealed that commitment to the supervisor, self-efficacy, procedural justice climate, and service climate partially mediated the relationship between servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior. These results were different from the present study. Because servant leadership was not one of the studied dimensions of employees' attitudes in ClimateQUAL measurement, their results also showed that procedural justice climate and positive service climate amplified the influence of commitment to the supervisor on organizational citizenship behavior. Berberoglu (37), in a different study in terms of measurement and research population, revealed that



organizational climate is highly correlated with organizational commitment and perceived organizational performance. These results were similar to the significant relationship between the organizational climate and staff attitude in the Iranian medical libraries.

Li and Bryan (38), in a similar study, pointed out that a healthy workplace climate for employees is positively related to the satisfaction of the organization's customers. Ahmad et al. (39), in a different study surveyed the effect of organizational climate on job satisfaction. They concluded that personality traits have moderating effects on the relationship between certain aspects of organizational climate and job satisfaction. The results of these studies and the present study showed that medical libraries need to improve job satisfaction, organizational commitment, team psychological empowerment, and reduce work unit, and interpersonal conflict. The organizational climate of medical libraries influences the attitudes of their staff and the motivation to continue working in the library and improve their performance. In a library with a positive organizational climate, employees are more involved in innovative activities, enhancing their knowledge about the library functions.

Finally, the study limitation was some staff's inability to respond the questionnaires and mention the name of their workplace library, which may be due to fear of losing a job. Therefore, further research was suggested with larger populations in the medical and non-medical libraries. Also, staff attitude in different libraries needs to be studied by ClimateQUAL measurement and its relationship with organizational climate and demographic variables.

Conclusion

The organizational climate was favorable in the central libraries of Iran and Tehran universities of medical sciences but unfavorable in the central library of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences. The climate for justice, deep diversity, psychological safety, and innovation are the critical dimensions for the organizational climate of medical libraries. The climate for justice plays a crucial role in identifying the organizational climate. The reinforcement of demographic diversity, customer service, teamwork, and continual learning in medical libraries can effectively improve the organizational climate. The positive organizational climate has a positive effect on staff attitudes, job satisfaction, and working in the library. It can be suggested that creating a dynamic environment, providing

in-service training courses, attending international events, and visiting the successful medical libraries in the country or other parts of the world will improve the organizational climate and staff attitudes. However, several factors such as demographic characteristics and ethical consideration of librarians as age, gender, geographical location of the library, managers' and library staff education related to the medical library and information science, maintaining confidential work information of library in order not to lose a job may affect librarians attitudes. In the present study, the relationship between these factors and organizational attitudes was not studied, which could be a topic for future research.

Declarations

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Conflicts of Interests

None of the authors declared any conflict of interest.

Ethical statement

This study resulted from the research project entitled "the effect of organizational climate on organizational attitudes in central libraries of Iranian universities of medical sciences based on ClimateQUAL Tool." The ethical Code for the study was IR.IUMS.REC.1397.1212 at Iran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran. Participants were reassured that the research data and the identities of the individuals were confidential and would not be shared with others. In addition, participants were allowed to leave the study at any time.

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Authors' contributions

The research ideation was done by Nadia Sani'ee and Sirus Panahi. The data were collected by Hamidreza Tabarraei Natanzi, Fatemeh Torabi, Ahmad Mirzaee and analyzed by Nadia Sani'ee. The manuscript was written by Nadia Sani'ee and Sirus Panahi and approved by all the authors.

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