Organizational Climate of Fırat University

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Abstract

Organizational climate consists of the psychological perceptions of employees about the organization and its environment. A clear, supportive climate effects the individual and organizational performance positively. This study evaluated the organizational climate perceptions of the employees of Fırat University. The climate perceptions of the employees were assessed through the Organizational Culture Assessment Scale(OCAS). 273 employees from diverse units of the university with diverse jobs participated in the research. In consequence of the research, the organizational climate perceptions of the employees were revealed to be at "I'm uncertain/moderate" level, at "I disagree/low" level in terms of communication and participating in decision making, and at "I agree/high" level in terms of organizational commitment. Age, job, status variables makes up a significant difference in perceiving the organizational climate.

Key Words: Organization, climate, Fırat University, perceptions of employees

Introduction

From human relations approach, employees have been accepted the most important component of the organizations. In order to make organizations much more effective and productive, perceptions of employees have became more important. As a concept related to the perceptions of employees, Organizational Climate has been attracting many researchers.

Emergence of the climate conception is based on the studies carried out by Lewin et. al. on the motivation theory search. Lewin (1951), has suggested that psychological domain is effective in organizational behavior and motivation, Litwin and Stringer (1968) have defended that climate mediates the individual motives, and effects of such motives on the behaviors.

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Climate is defined by Tagiuri (1968) as the relatively continual characteristic of the whole environment which is sensed by the employees at a particular site, affects their behaviors, composed of several particular characteristics of the environment, and which can be identified; by Schein (1992) as the common perceptions of the employees about the organization; by Moran and Volkwein (1992) as the permanent characteristics of the organization distinguishing it from other organizations, and perceptions of the employees about autonomy, trust, association, support, recognition, renovation and justice; and by Çelik (2005) as the entire psychological intrinsic characteristics affecting the employees' behaviors, and distinguishing the organizations from each other.

While climate was preciously perceived by the employees as the long-lasting and continual organizational characteristics (Forehead and Gilmer, 1964; Schneider and Bartlett, 1968); later, the attentions concentrated on individual characteristics rather than organizational characteristics (Schneider and Hall, 1972; Jonesand James, 1979). Actually, the individuals acquire their perceptions about organizational climate through the organizational environment (Kozlowski and Fare, 1988). In the climate theories, it is assumed that the employees psychologically perceive and make sense of the policies, practices and procedures within the organization with meaningful expressions (James, Joyce and Slocum, 1988; Reichers and Schneider, 1990). Organizational climate refers to individual identifications of the organizational practices and processes. Such identifications help to understand the effect of the organizational intrinsic environment on the individual performance and individual satisfaction. Organizational climate is oriented in the collective definition of this environment (Joyse and Slocum 1982). Hoy and Miskel (1991) regard the climate as the personality of the organization.

The researches conducted show that a positive, supportive, incentive organizational climate has positive effects on the job satisfaction, organizational c and job performance (Litwin and Stringer , 1968; Bilir and Ünal, 2007). In an ideal climate, the factors and expectations such as credibility, reliability, openness, sincerity, helpfulness, participation are high (Arnoff and Baskin, 1983).

While Halpin (1996) specifies the organizational climate types as clear, autonomous, controlled, familiar, paternal and closed; Bilgen (1990) defines them as open and closed, job-oriented, production-oriented and work center-oriented. Open climate indicates the organizational status where organization members highly have a sense of an association, there are familiar relations between the employees (Çelik, 2009). Closed climate has exactly opposite characteristics to the open climate, and its the organization type where job satisfactions of the employees are low (Aydın, 1986, 112).

Dimensions of the organizational climate are defined in different ways by various authors. Organizational climate is dimensioned by Halpin (1960) as disengagement, morale, familiarity, contempt, close control, job-orientedness and tolerating; by Litwin and Stringer (1968) as structure, individual responsibility, familiarity, managerial support, standards, conflict and organizational definition; and by Lawler and Weick (1970) as individual responsibility, structure, award and interest. There is no common understanding in the literature in respect of dimensioning of the organizational climate. However, the factors such as organization structure, relations between the employees and management, managerial support, participation in decision making may be considered as the fundamental components of the organizational climate.

Organizational structure covers the conceptions such as anatomy, physiology, hierarchy, role, and status (Bursalıoğlu, 1991, 20). An organization cannot be the case without organizational structure. The groups and individuals engage the organizations with the communication fact. Organizational structure is formed through communication (Mumby and Stohl, 1996). *Organizational commitment*, which is one of the organizational climate dimensions, is defined as the individual's belief in the targets and values of the organization, willingness to strive in order for the organizations to achieve its targets, and desire towards staying as an organization member (Demircan, 2003). It reflects the liability feelings of the employees concerning staying in the organization, and arises from the feelings about continuing the organization membership (Meyer et al, 2001). Participative management understanding, which is one of the factors affecting the organizational climate, have positive effects on performance, productivity and employees' satisfaction.

Participative management satisfies the basic needs of the employees such as finding their jobs meaningful, autonomy and being member (Nyhan, 2000, 91). The study conducted by Manz (1990) on team basis suggests that participation enriches the activities of the team members on the organizational pattern, thus, improves the strength feelings of individuals who are team members (Kirkman and Rosen, 1999).

Universities are primary among the organizations leading the social change, and affect the society by their studies in economy, technology and social fields. Research and development satisfy the high level education needs by publication activities. Ability of such organizations to realize the tasks expected from them depends on the employees' having a positive climate perception. Presence of a positive, supportive and open climate at the universities can positively affect the individual and organizational performance. Therefore, it is important to know the organizational climate perceptions of the university employees.

Purpose of the Research

This research aimed to determine the organizational climate perceptions of the employees of Fırat University, and whether there were differences between the organizational climate perceptions based on several demographic characteristics. For this purpose, the answers were sought for the following questions:

1. At what level are the perceptions of the employees of Fırat University about organizational climate?

2. Do the organizational structure perceptions of F.U. employees show significant differences in regard to the variables of age, gender, marital status, seniority, officer (academician, lecturer, official, technical staff, servant, nurse), statu (manager/employee).

Method

Descriptive screening method was used in this research. The study universe of the research consist of the employees of Fırat University. Cluster sampling method was used

sampling method. Employees of the Engineering Faculty, Science & Letters Faculty Academic, Education Faculty, employees of Fırat University Presidency, administrative, technical staff and the nurses commissioned at the Medicine Faculty and Research Hospital were selected by unbiased cluster sampling.

Development of Data Collection Instrument

The literature about organizational climate was reviewed (Litwin and Stringer 1974;Korkut, 1993; Ertekin, 1993, Kolb,1979; Yahyagil, 2006, Çağlar, 2008, Özdemir, 2006, Keleş, 2008), and the Organizational Climate Assessment Scale (OCAS) developed by the researcher was used. First, the face validity and scope of the OCAS scale was checked, for this purpose, it was examined by three academicians who are expert in the field, and the necessary adjustments were made in line with the suggestions. In the analysis made, as KMO = .93, Bartlett's test value = 4859.339 and sig. = .000, it was understood that the scale was appropriate for factor analysis. Explanatory factor analysis was used for structure validity. As the load values of item 9, 10, 11, 18 and 22 were below .30 in the explanatory factor analysis, they were removed from the scale, so the scale consisted of 31 item.

Varimax vertical rotation was applied in the factor analysis, it was determined that the scale is gathered under 4 (four) factors. Presence of Organizational structure (15 item), organizational communication and participating in decision making (8 item), Organizational commitment (5 item), Organizational Conflict (3 item) were seen. These factors explain 55.036% of the total variance. Factorial loads of the articles vary between .40 and .89. In the reliability test, the Cronbach Alpha coefficients for organizational structure dimension, dimension of employee relations and participation in decision making, organizational commitment dimension, conflict dimension and the overall scale were determined to be .918, .823, .864, .513 and .927, respectively. This shows that validity and reliability of the scale is high. The scale has been evaluated with Likert type five grading scale. The range of grading scale consists of the following options: *1-1.79 I definitely do not agree, 1.80-2.59 I do not agree, 2.60-3.39 I am not sure, 340-4.19 I agree 4.20-5.00 I definitely agree.*

Taking into consideration the ratios of the employees working in the units selected as research samples, 400 questionnaires were sent, 300 questionnaires were returned, 27 questionnaires filled incorrectly or with bias were considered invalid, so the number of valid questionnaires was 273. Frequency, percentage (%), arithmetic average, standard deviation, t test, single way variance analysis are employed in the analysis of the data.

Results

Participants

68% of the participants were under 35 year old. 43.60% were female, 56.40% were male. 58.00% were married, 42.00% were single. 51.30% had a seniority of 1-5 years. In this event, it is seen that young employees constitute the majority of the participants. In terms of the duty variable; 24.20% were academicians, 6.20% were lecturers (lecturers-Specialist-Instructor), 24.90% were research assistant, 17.60% were officials, 3.30% were technical staff, 13.60% were servants - contracted servants, and 10.30% were nurses. In terms of status, 11.70% were managers, 88.30% were employees.

Results as to the sub problem 1

The overall perceptions of employees of Fırat University about organizational climate is at $\bar{x}$ = 2.82 "I'm uncertain/moderate" level. Organizational climate perceptions of the participants in terms of the dimensions are at ($\bar{x}$ = 2.87, SD=0.87) "I'm uncertain/moderate" level for organizational structure dimension; at ($\bar{x}$ = 2.59, SD=0.90) "I disagree/low" level for the dimension of employee relations and participations in decision making; at ($\bar{x}$ = 3.29, SD = .94) "I agree/high" level for the organizational commitment dimension, and at ($\bar{x}$ = 2.89, SD= 2.48) "I'm uncertain/moderate" level for the conflict dimension.

Results as to the sub problem 2

In this sub-problem, it was evaluated whether the organizational structure perceptions of F.U. employees constitute significant differences by the variables of age, gender, marital

status, seniority, office (lecturer, academician, official, technical staff, servant, nurse), status (manager/employee).

2.1. In terms of the age variable, whether there is a significant difference between the organizational climate perceptions of the employees or not was tested by using the One Way Anova.

Table 1. Organizational climate perceptions of the employees in terms of age variable

Dimensions	Variance source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Organizational Structure	Between Groups	4,012	5	,802	1,039	,395
	Within Groups	204,690	265	,772		
	Total	208,702	270			
Participation in decision making	Between Groups	4,175	5	,835	1,011	,411
	Within Groups	218,808	265	,826		
	Total	222,983	270			
Conflict	Between Groups	16,853	5	3,371	3,952	,002
	Within Groups	226,024	265	,853		
	Total	242,877	270			
Organizational commitment	Between Groups	41,020	5	8,204	1,333	,250
	Within Groups	1630,945	265	6,155		
	Total	1671,965	270			

According to the Table 1, while there is no significant difference for the organizational structure dimension [$F_{(5-265)}$= 1.039, p >.05], dimension of participation in decision making [$F_{(5-265)}$= 1.011, p >.05], and commitment dimension [$F_{(5-265)}$= 1.333, p >.05]; a significant difference exists for the conflict dimension [$F_{(5-265)}$= 3.952, p <.05]. In the LCD test conducted so as to determine the source of the difference; it was concluded that a significant difference of views was present between those in the age groups of 30 and lower and 31-35, and those in the age groups of 41-45, 46-51, in perceiving the conflict dimension of the organizational climate.

2.2. In consequence of the t test conducted so as to determine whether there is a significant difference between the organizational climate perceptions of the employees in terms of the gender variable;

Table 2. The t-test results for variable of gender

Dimension	Gender	N	Mean	t	p
Organizational Structure	Female	104	2,8433		
	Male	138	2,7992	.338	,700
Participation in decision making	Female	104	2,5802	,549	584
	Male	138	2,5148		
Conflict	Female	104	3,2660	-,227	,820
	Male	138	3,2947		
Organizational Commitment	Female	104	3,0019	,698	,487
	Male	138	2,7337		

*P>.05

It was concluded that there was no significant difference between the views for the organizational structure dimension(t_{240} = .388, p >.05), dimension of communication and participation in decision making (t_{240} = .549, p >.05), conflict dimension (t_{240} = -.227, p >.05), and organizational commitment dimension (t_{240} = .698 p >.05).

2.3. In consequence of the t test conducted so as to determine whether the marital statuses of the participants affect their organizational climate perceptions or not. Results can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. The t-test results for variable of marital statue

Dimension	Gender	N	Mean	t	p
Organizational Structure	Female	153	2,8268		
	Male	112	2,9679	-1,285	,200
Participation in decision making	Female	153	2,5741	-,407	,684
	Male	112	2,6196		
Conflict	Female	153	3,2658	-,717	,474
	Male	112	3,3482		
Organizational Commitment	Female	153	3,0866	1,59	,113
	Male	112	2,6500		

*P>.05

It can be concluded that there is no significant difference between the views for the organizational structure dimension (t_{271}= -1.285, p >.05), dimension of communication and participation in decision making (t_{271} = -.407, p >.05), conflict dimension (t_{271} = -.717, p >.05), and organizational commitment dimension (t_{271}= 1.59, p >.05).

2.4. It was whether there is a significant difference between the organizational climate perceptions of the employees in terms of seniority variables using One Way Anova. Results can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. One Way Anova test results for variable of seniority

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Organizational Structure	Between Groups	6.482	4	1.620	2.140	.076
	Within Groups	199.937	264	.757		
	Total	206.418	268			
Participation in decision making	Between Groups	3.323	4	.831		
	Within Groups	217.876	264	.825	1.007	.404
	Total					
		221.199	268			
Conflict	Between Groups	7.155	4	1.789	2.010	.093
	Within Groups	234.966	264	.890		
	Total					
		242.121	268			
Organizational Commitment	Between Groups	21.503	4	5.376	.861	.488
	Within Groups	1648.907	264	6.246		
	Total	1670.410	268			

*P>.05

Accordingly Table. 4, there is no significant difference for the organizational structure dimension   [$F_{(4-464)}$ = 2.140, p >.05], dimension of participation in decision making [$F_{(4-264)}$ = 1.007, p>.05], and commitment dimension [$F_{(4-264)}$ = ,861, p>.05], and the conflict dimension [$F_{(4-264)}$ = 2.010, p >.05]. One Way Anova Analysis conducted to determine whether the jobs the employees affect their perceptions about organizational climate: In consequence of the One way Anova in Table 5; while there is a significant difference of views for the organizational structure dimension [$F_{(6-266)}$ = 3.116, p<.05], dimension of participation in decision making [$F_{(6-266)}$ = 2.851, p<.05], and conflict dimension [$F_{(6-266)}$ = 4.003, p<.05]; no significant difference is present for the organizational commitment dimension [$F_{(6-266)}$= ,861, p >.05].The source of difference of view is presence of a significant difference of views between the academicians, academic members (lecturers, instructors, specialists), research

associates, officials, servants and nurses in the structure dimension; between the academicians, academic members (lecturers, instructors, specialists), research associates, officials, servants and nurses in the dimension of participation in decision making and communication; and between the servants and nurses in the organizational conflict dimension.

Table 5. One Way Anova test results for variable of duty

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Organizational Structure	Between Groups	13.712	6	2.285	3.116	.006
	Within Groups	195.123	266	.734		
	Total	208.836	272			
Participation in decision making	Between Groups	13.479	6	2.246	2.851	.010
	Within Groups	209.563	266	.788		
	Total	223.042	272			
Conflict	Between Groups	20.129	6	3.355		.001
	Within Groups	222.925	266	.838	4.003	
	Total	243.053	272			
Organizational Commitment	Between Groups	30.000	6	5.000	.861	
	Within Groups	1643.243	266	6.178		.563
	Total	1673.243	272			

*P<.05

The t test conducted so as to determine whether the statuses of the employees affect their organizational climate perceptions or not. Results can be seen in Table 6 ;

Table 6. The t-test results for variable of statues

Dimension	Statu	N	Mean	t	P
Organizational Structure	Manager	32	3.2851	3.326	.002
	Official	241	2.8258		
Participation in decision making	Manager	32	3.0640	3.474	.001
	Official	241	2.5305		
Conflict	Manager	32	3.1875	-.621	.538
	Official	241	3.3098		
Organizational Commitment	Manager	32	3.2875	1.733	.087
	Official	241	2.8367		

*P<.05

In consequence of the t test; while there was a significant difference of perception for the organizational structure dimension (t_{271}= 3,326, p <.05), dimension of communication and participation in decision making ($t_{27\ 1}$= 3.474, p <.05); no significant difference of view was present for conflict dimension (t_{271} = -0.621, p >.05), and organizational commitment dimension (t_{271} = 1.733, p >.05).

Discussion

The fact that perceptions of the participants about the University climate is at the "I'm uncertain/moderate" level is confirmatory for the results of the previous researches (Ertekin, 1978; Korkut, 1993; Arabacı, 2010).The participants have expressed their views at ($\bar{x}$ = 2.59, SD =0.90) " I disagree" for the dimension of "organizational communication and participation in decision making", which is one of the organizational climate dimensions. The fact that perceptions of the participants about organizational communication and participation in decision making is low may be interpreted as that not sufficient importance is placed on human relations at the University. It is emphasized that existence of communication based on mutual cooperation in the organization, ensuring a participative management understanding and decision making is one of the most important aspects of organizational encouragement (Eren and Gündüz, 2002). Also, a management giving importance to and supporting the ideas of the employees will increase their intrinsic motivations and performances (Cummings& Oldham, 1997). One of the key factors that may influence employees' perceptions of involvement is organizational climate. Organizational climate helps to set the tone of the organization and can work to facilitate or impair employee involvement. We focus on three main elements of involvement, namely, participation in decision making, team work and communications, and three elements of organizational climate, namely, the bureaucratic, innovative, and supportive dimensions of climate (Shadur et all. 1999). Hence, the university management

may be recommended to keep the communication channels open, and to take measures for more effective participation of the employees in decision making.

While the participants agree with the organizational communication and decision making dimension at a low level, they agree with the statements concerning organizational commitment at high level. It may be assumed that there is a linear correlation between the organizational communication and organizational commitment. The researches conducted in this respect support this argument. Aşan (2008), in the research he has conducted on the employees of a total of 8 different firms engaged in the same sector in Ankara, has concluded that there is a strong correlation between communication and emotional - organizational emergence and job satisfaction. However, no findings to that effect were attained in some researches. In the research conducted by Ada et. al. (2008) in the production sector; the white-collar employees expressed their views for the articles regarding organizational communication and normative commitment at "I'm uncertain" level, and for the articles regarding continuance commitment at "I disagree" level. Blue-collar employees expressed their opinions for the organizational communication dimensions at "I'm uncertain" level. The fact that the organizational commitments of the researchers is revealed to be high in this research is important from the aspect of individual and organizational performances. The researches conducted have concluded that organizational commitment decreases absenteeism, being late and quitting job (Mathieu and Zajac 1990), ensures qualified service and customer satisfaction (Ada, Alver and Atlı, 2008), and promoted the organizational citizenship behavior (Kaufman, et al. 2001; Schappe, 1998). In the research, Çağlar (2008), has found that participation of the employees in decision making and being supported by the management when they do their duties well, increases the organizational commitment. O'Driseon and Evans (1988) indicate in their research that the feeling of being satisfied with the communication in the organization is closely associated with the workplace perception that may be regarded as a factor of the multidimensional climate structure.

A significant difference is observed between the employees 41 year-old and higher, and the younger employees, in the organizational conflict dimension. This result matches with

the result of the research of Gürkan (2006), Chimanikireetall (2007), İşcan and Karabey (2007) that the higher is the age and seniority, the more positively is the job satisfaction and the organizational climate perceived. However, no significant correlation was found between age and the organizational climate perceptions of the participants in the research conducted by Öğe (2009). In this respect, the university management is suggested to be more tolerant particularly to the younger employees.

The fact that the organizational climate perceptions of the participants do not show a significant difference in terms of marital status, gender, seniority variables support the research results of (Çokluk, 2001; Arabacı, 2010;Burgaz, 2002; Pakdanel, 1988), but not the research results of (Aksu, 1994; Çamur, 2006). It would be expected that an organizational climate perception against women in terms of gender, against singles in terms of marital status, and against those with lower seniority in terms of seniority. However, the fact that the majority of the participants are of young age and have low seniority (those having high seniority may have refrained from being participants) may have led to emergence of such result.

The fact that the lecturers and academic staff perceive the organizational climate positively in terms of the duty variable, and that the officials and nurses have negative perceptions, are confirmatory for the research of Gürkan (2006). The difference of views between the nurses and academic personnel in the dimensions of organizational structure, communication and participation in decision making in terms of the job variable may have been led by the duties and roles, difficulty of the working conditions, of the nurses. In terms of job and role; the relation between the officials and servants is similar to the relation between the academicians and nurses. The jobs and roles may create differences in perception of the organizational structure. In the dimension of participation in decision making, it is understood that there is a significant difference of psychological perception between the academicians and nurses; between the lectures and research associates, officials, nurses; and between the servants and nurses.

In the dimension of conflict, it is understood that there is a significant difference of psychological perception between the servants and nurses. The nurses may have positive

perception in regard to conflict because of their attributes such as gender, job, education and status. Existence of a climate allowing undesired conflicts, even inciting the conflicts, in the organizations may constitute the source of conflict.

In terms of the status variable, being/not being a manager has emerged as an important factor in perception of the organizational climate [t_{271} = 2,581, p<.05]. This is the expected result. It matches with the result the research of Çokluk (2001) that the organizational climate perceptions of the participants vary on the basis of the staffing positions of the participants. The managers, from their own viewpoints, may have different perceptions from the employees in regard to organizational structure and communication. Whereas, no significant difference in perception of the organizational structure was revealed between the managers and employees in the study conducted by Burgaz (2002). Burgaz interpreted this as to that a difference is expected be present in perception of the organizational structure between the managers and employees, but the fact that the participants with at the managership status have not been able to assimilate the managerial behavior patterns in their personalities yet since they are young or new managers.

Conclusion

For university administrators, participation of employees to take into decision making process, keeping the communication channels open, strengthening communicational links among the duty groups are all going to affect the organizational climate perceptions of the employees positively. In terms of age and seniority, because of negative organizational climate perceptions of young employees, it can be offered to the university administrators to be more tolerant to the young employees. In addition to these, arranging social activities in the units may lessen negative perceptions about the organizational climate among the duty groups.

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