

Exploring the Influence of Perceived Ethical Work Climate upon Organizational Identification in the Jordanian Cellular Telecommunications Companies

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Abstract

Business ethics is considered significant to the organization success and essential for their survival and growth. The ethical work climate reflects and defines the ethics of the organization, which can be incorporated into employees' identity through organizational identification. Therefore, the aim of this study is to identify the impact of perceived ethical work climate upon organizational identification in the Jordanian cellular telecommunications companies. The sample of study composed of (182) employee from the target companies. In order to achieve the study objectives, the researcher designed a questionnaire consisting of (31) paragraph to collect the required data from the study sample. The multiple regression analysis was used to testing the hypothesis. Empirical results found that the law and code, independent, rules, and caring as dimensions of ethical work climate has a positive impact on organizational identification, while instrumental climate as a dimension of ethical work climate has a negative impact on organizational identification. Based on these empirical results the study recommending that the companies should focus largely on the caring, law and codes, rules, and independence as dimensions of ethical climate in order to increase the employees' organizational identification and make these climates the dominant ethical work climate. On the other hand, the companies should minimize the instrumental climate because it decreases the organizational identification of employees.

Keywords: Business Ethics, Organizational Ethical Climate, Organizational Identification.

1. Introduction`

Business ethics has emerged as a significant topic in society in the past decade and it is considered important to business success in the long term (Van Aswegen & Engelbrecht, 2009) and essential for organization survival and growth. Through business ethics commitment, organizations can enhance and improve their reputation, and image, and win the trust of society, which in turn reflected into a competitive advantage. In addition, business ethics playing a significant role in increasing the effectiveness of the organization by reducing the corrupted behaviors and ensuring that the decisions taken is consistent with the organizational goals and interests, thereby establishing ethical work climate is inevitable for all organizations (DeConinck, 2011). According to (Victor and Cullen, 1987; Jones, 2007; McDonald, 2009) the ethical climate reflects and defines the ethics of an organization, and it is the shared perceptions of what ethically correct behavior is and how ethical matters/dilemmas should be treated and addressed.

In business environment, Studies of the ethical climate have shown that work climates can be an important factor in forming the attitudes and behaviors of employees (Hollinger and Clark, 1983). Results of these studies proposed a connection between an organization's ethical climate and the attitude and behavior of employees (Cullen, Victor, and Stephens, 1989). Many scholars found that ethical climate have a positive impact on job satisfaction (Koh and Boo, 2001; Tsai and Huang, 2008; Elci and Alpan, 2009; Park, Chevalier, and Ali, 2012; Wang and Hsieh, 2012) and organizational commitment (Cullen, Parboteeah, and Victor, 2003; Martin and Cullen, 2006; Okpara and Wynn, 2008) which leads to lower turnover intention (Mulki, Jaramillo, and Locander, 2006; Schwepker 1999; Valentine and Barnett, 2003) and better job performance (Weeks et al., 2004).

The prior studies of ethical climate largely focused on the relationship between the types of ethical climate and job satisfaction and organizational commitment and neglected many important variables like organizational identification.

Organizational identification defined as perceived oneness with an organization and the experience of the organization's successes and failures as one's own (Mael and Ashforth, 1992), and it is playing an important role in displaying the integration of employees with the organizational values and goals (Miller et al., 2000).

By reviewing the literature, very few studies have examined the relationship between ethical work climate and organizational identification, and most of them focused on the organizational identification of salespeople. Thus, it seems there is a lack of research and studies on the relationship between ethical work climate and

organizational identification. As a result, the purpose of this study is to contribute in expand and enrich the literature by empirically testing the impact of perceived ethical work climate on organizational identification for the employees of Jordanian cellular telecommunication companies in order to answer the study question: what is the impact of ethical work climate upon organizational identification?.

2. Literature review

2.1 Ethical Work Climate

Ethical climate considered as a type of organizational climate, which includes a set of prescriptive climates reflecting organizational practices, policies, and procedures with moral consequences (Cullen, Parboteeah, and Victor, 2003; Martin and Cullen, 2006). According to Victor and Cullen (1987, 1988) ethical climate in an organization refers to a perception of what ethically correct behavior is and how ethical issues should be treated and addressed. And they defined it as the dominating perceptions of ideal organizational procedures and practices that have ethical content or those aspects of work climate that identify what constitutes ethical behavior at workplace. Based upon three main categories of philosophy (egoism, benevolence, and principle), and three loci of analysis (cosmopolitan, local, and individual) Victor and Cullen (1987, 1988) suggested nine ethical climate types, which includes: company rules and procedures; laws and professional codes; self-interest; company profit; efficiency; friendship; team interest; social responsibility; and personal morality.

In order to assessment and investigation empirically the existence of these nine ethical climate types, Victor and Cullen (1987) developed the ethical climate questionnaire (ECQ). Through a multiple of survey studies, they validated the existence of some, but not all of the suggested climate types (Victor and Cullen, 1987, 1988; Cullen and Bronson, 1993). The empirical studies found that five types of ethical climate originate from the nine theoretical climate types and include several loci of analysis occur most often (Martin and Cullen, 2006; Tsai and Huang, 2008; Bulutlar and Oz, 2009): law and code, independence, rules, caring, and instrumental. These five types are adopted in this study for measuring the perceived ethical work climate.

2.1.1 Law and Code

Law and code climate is related with the principle construct and the cosmopolitan locus of analysis; when a law and code climate is dominant in the organization, employees are expected to abide to the codes and regulations of their profession or another authority (Wimbush and Shepard, 1994; Wimbush, Shepard, and Markham, 1997a, b; Martin and Cullen, 2006). Consequently, it is expected that in a law and code climate, employees will be more motivated to comply with existing codes of conduct; and decision-making is based on external codes such as the law, or professional codes of conduct.

2.1.2 Independence

Independence climate is related with the principle construct and the individual locus of analysis. According to (Wimbush and Shepard, 1994; Wimbush, Shepard, and Markham, 1997a, b; Martin and Cullen, 2006) independence climate is essentially based upon personal morality and the person's deeply held values to make ethical decisions. This climate highlights personal moral beliefs with minimal regard for external influences. In independence climate ethical behavior will be encouraged and raised (Wimbush, Shepard, and Markham, 1997a), because it reflects the highest post-conventional form in a cognitive moral development framework, thus, individuals' actions will be based upon principles of ethics and utilitarianism (Ambrose, Arnaud, and Schminke, 2008).

2.1.3 Rules

Rules climate is related with the principle construct and the local locus of analysis. In this climate, organizational rules and policies are strictly followed by employees (Wimbush and Shepard, 1994; Wimbush, Shepard, and Markham, 1997a, b; Martin and Cullen, 2006). In addition, organizational decisions are perceived as being guided by a strong and pervasive group of local standards or rules, like codes of conduct (Liu, Fellows, and Ng, 2004; Appelbaum, Deguire, and Lay, 2005; Aquino and Becker, 2005; Martin and Cullen, 2006). When this type of a climate is dominant, then the differentiation between right or wrong behavior is made in terms of organizational rules.

2.1.4 Caring

Caring climate is related with the benevolence construct and the individual and local loci of analysis. In this climate, individuals have a sincere interest in each other's well-being (Wimbush and Shepard, 1994; Wimbush, Shepard, and Markham, 1997a, b; Parboteeah et al., 2005; Martin and Cullen, 2006) as well as that of others within and outside of the organization who might be affected by their ethical decisions.

2.1.5 Instrumental

Instrumental climate is related with the egoism construct and the individual and local loci of analysis. This climate is mainly based upon the maximization of self-interest. In instrumental climate Individuals believe that decisions are made that serve the organization's interests or provide personal benefits. When this type of climate is dominant, most likely employees will not be interested about the results of their behavior for others' well-being. Diverse studies and researches like (Cullen, Parboteeah, and Victor, 2003; Erond, Sharland, and Okpara, 2004) shown that instrumental climate is the least preferred.

2.2 *Organizational Identification*

The roots of organizational identification concept refer to the social identity theory (Tajfel 1978; Tajfel and Turner 1979; Turner 1982). The introduction of social identity theory by Tajfel in 1970 changed the method social psychologists studied the relations and interaction between individuals and the organizations and groups they belong to (Van Knippenberg and Hogg, 2001). Derived from social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1985; Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Kramer, 1991) and self-categorization theory (Haslam and Ellemers, 2005) organizational identification defined as a cognitive relationship between the definition of an organization and the definition a person applies to him or herself (Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail, 1994). While (Mael and Ashforth, 1992) defined organizational identification as a perceived oneness with an organization and the experience of the organization's successes and failures as one's own, and it is the most frequently cited definition. According to (Johnson, Johnson, and Heimberg, 1999; Van Knippenberg and Van Leeuwen, 2001) organizational identification can be defined as the process of internal and external persuasion by which members of an organization incorporate key organizational ideas into their identity. Ashforth and Mael (1989) and Rousseau (1998) proposed that organizational identification is a cognitive judgment relating to the fit between organizational and individual values and is essentially devoid of any evaluative component. According to (Ashforth, Harrison, and Corley, 2008) organizational identification is the extent to which employees both cognitively and emotionally identifies with his or her organization and ranges from primarily a cognitive awareness of membership with the organization to fuller affective connection including values and goals congruence. In addition, they suggested that organizational identification is at the core of why people join organizations and why they voluntarily leave, why they approach their work the way they do and why they interact with others the way they do during that work. Riketta (2005) developed a composite description of organizational identification covering two of the basic social identity theory elements when he wrote that the many definitions imply that the organizational member has linked his or her organizational membership to his or her self-concept, either cognitively (e.g., feeling a part of the organization; internalizing organizational values), emotionally (pride in membership), or both.

Many studies found that organizational identification has a supportive and positive impact on the effectiveness of the organization and employee's performance and organizational citizenship behavior (Dukerich, Golden, and Shortell, 2002; Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004) and it is plays an important role in raising the job satisfaction, commitment, motivation, and physical well-being of employees (Mael and Ashforth, 1992; Van Dick and Wagner, 2002). Moreover, organizational identification encourage employees to make decisions that are consistent with organizational objectives (Smidts, Pruyn, and Van Riel, 2001) and it is negatively related to turnover intentions (Van Knippenberg and Van Schie, 2000; Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004).

Compared to other variables used to measure attitudes of work behavior, such as organizational commitment and job satisfaction, organizational identification has not received as much attention in the extant literature as it has often been treated as the same concept as organizational commitment (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Riketta, 2005) despite the distinction between the both concept (Mael and Tetrick, 1992). One of the key differences between organizational commitment and organizational identification is that organizational identification grounded in social identity theory and relates to the follower's perception of oneness or belongingness to the organization.

2.3 *The relationship between work ethical climate and organizational identification*

Through reviewing the literature there are only four studies have examined and investigated the relationship between organizational ethical climate and organizational identification (DeConinck, 2011; Oncer and Yildiz, 2012; Briggs, Jaramillo, and Weeks, 2012; DeConinck, DeConinck B and Banerjee, 2013). DeConinck (2011) in his study examined how an ethical work climate influences organizational identification and supervisory trust, which indirectly affects turnover among salespeople, the study results found that there is a positive relationship between ethical work climate and organizational identification. Oncer and Yildiz (2012) applying their study on a sample of employees of leading multinational insurance company in turkey, the results shown that ethical climate have significant positive relations with organizational identification; also, the results shown that ethical

climate has a significant moderating role on the relationship between perceived corporate reputation and organizational identification. Briggs, Jaramillo, and Weeks (2012) by using a sample of salespeople in the television broadcasting industry conducted their study to explore the relationship between ethical climate and organizational identification. They found that organizational ethical climate have a positive relationship with employees' organizational identification, and salespeople will have a more positive attitude toward the organization when they perceive it emphasizes high ethical values. DeConinck, DeConinck B and Banerjee (2013) in their study also used a sample of salespeople, found that ethical work climate influences salespersons level to which they identify with their organization's vision and goals. In addition, Ethical work climate also was related to turnover intentions, but only related to turnover indirectly through organizational identification.

3. Study Hypothesis

The study mainly aimed at exploring the impact of perceived ethical work climate on organizational identification. Therefore, the main hypothesis is:

H0: There is no impact with statistical significant at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) of perceived ethical work climate (law and code, independence, rules, caring, and instrumental) on organizational identification.

4. Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive and field analytical methodology. In the descriptive methodology, the literature related to the study topic was reviewed in order to building the theoretical framework of the study and developing the questionnaire. In the field analytical methodology, a field survey was conducted in order to gathering the data required through the questionnaire distributed, and the statistical techniques were used to analyze the collected data.

4.2 Study Population and Sample

The study population consisted of all Jordanian cellular telecommunications companies, which amount (3). The size of the study sample was (182) employee from different levels and working in the headquarters of these companies and its branches in Amman city, and they has been chosen on a random basis. Table (1) presents the characteristics of study sample in terms of their gender, years of experience in the company, and finally their age.

Table1. The characteristics of study sample

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	101	55.50
	Female	81	44.50
Years of experience	Less than (5) years	31	17.03
	From (5) to less than (10) years	71	39.01
	From (10) to less than (15) years	64	35.16
	From (15) to less than (20) years	16	8.80
	(20) years and above	-	-
Age	From (18) to (25) years	29	15.94
	From (26) to (32) years	70	38.46
	From (33) to (40) years	68	37.36
	(41) years and above	15	8.24
Total		182	100%

4.2 Study Instrument

The study instrument included a questionnaire developed by reference to the theoretical literature related to the ethical work climate and organizational identification. The questionnaire composed of three parts: The first part covers the demographic variables of the study sample, such as the gender, years of experience and the age of respondents. The second part of the questionnaire includes the paragraphs related to the ethical work climate, which adopted from (Victor and Cullen, 1988). The third part of the questionnaire includes the paragraphs related to the organizational identification, which adopted from (Mael and Ashforth, 1992; Harvey, Cage, Wolfe, and Westerfield, 2006). The answers to the second and third part of questionnaire relied on a Likert's Scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1); disagree (2); moderately agree (3); I agree (4); and strongly agree (5).

4.3 Instrument Validity

The researcher offered the study instrument on a number of specialist academicians in the field of business administration, organizational behavior and research methodology, and some experts in the field of business ethics during the preparation phase of the research, and according to their opinions; the language and words of questionnaire are clear. In addition, the questionnaire is adequate and fit to the present study.

4.4 Instrument's Reliability

The researcher determined the reliability of instrument by Cronbach alpha coefficients in order to ensure the internal consistency among questionnaire items. The alpha values was (0.91) for the ethical work climate items and (0.89) for organizational identification items and (0.85) for the instrument as a whole. These values are excellent because it is higher than the acceptable value (60%) and it is acceptable for the purposes of this study.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Data Presentation

The means and standard deviations for the respondent's answers on the questionnaire items related to perceived ethical work climate and organizational identification introduced in the table (2) and table (3). Where table (2) presents the means and standard deviations for the respondent's answers on the questionnaire items related to perceived ethical work climate, while table (3) presents the means and standard deviations for the respondent's answers on the questionnaire items related to the organizational identification.

As shown in table (2) the results indicate that the rules climate is the dominant ethical work climate in the Jordanian cellular companies with average of means (4.23). Also the results from table (2) shown that the paragraph (people are expected to comply with the law and professional standards over and above consideration) has the highest mean (4.25) while the paragraph (in my company, people are expected to strictly follow legal or professional standards) has the lowest mean (4.01) within law and code climate. And the paragraph (the most important concern in my company is each person's own sense of right and wrong) has the highest mean (3.97) while the paragraph (each person in this company decides for themselves what is right and wrong) has the lowest mean (3.58) within independence climate. Also the results from table (2) shown that the paragraph (it is very important to follow rules and procedures in my company) has the highest mean (4.30) while the paragraph (everyone is expected to stick by company rules and procedures) has the lowest mean (4.18) within rules climate. And the paragraph (in this company, doing what is best for everyone is the major consideration) has the highest mean (3.66) while the paragraph (my company major concern is always what is best for people) has the lowest mean (3.39) within caring climate. Finally, the results from table (2) shown that the paragraph (in this company, people protect their own interests above all else) has the highest mean (3.42) while the paragraph (people are expected to do anything to further the company interests, regardless of the consequences) has the lowest mean (2.37) within instrumental climate.

As shown in table (3) the results indicate that the employees of Jordanian cellular telecommunication companies have a high organizational identification level with average of means (3.83). Also the results from table (3) shown that the paragraph (I try to make on the job decisions by considering the consequences of my actions for the company) has the highest mean (4.10) while the paragraph (when someone criticizes my company, it feels like a personal insult) has the lowest mean (3.69).

5.2 Hypotheses Testing

Before applying the regression analysis in order to testing the study hypothesis the researcher conducted the following tests to ensure the fitness of data for the regression analysis assumptions: Variance Inflation Factory (VIF) Test, and Tolerance Test to ensure there is no high correlation between the independent variables (Multicollinearity), and Skewness Test to ensure the normal distribution of the data. The results of these tests presented in table (4).

As shown in table (4) the results indicate that the values of (VIF) for all variables less than (10) and the values of (Tolerance) higher than (0.05) which mean there is no high correlation (Multicollinearity) between the independent variables. Also the results from table (4) shown that the values of Skewness less than (1) which means the normal distribution of the data. Based on these results the multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to test the study hypothesis. Table (5) presents the model summary, and table (6) presents ANOVA analysis and table (7) presents beta and t values for the study hypothesis.

As shown in table (5) the results indicate that the value of R square is (0.817) and this value means that the model explains (0.817) from the variance in the dependent variable (Organizational Identification) by ethical work climate.

Table2. The means and standard deviations for the respondent's answers on the questionnaire items related to ethical work climate.

Law and Code	Means	Standard deviation
1. People are expected to comply with the law and professional standards over and above consideration.	4.25	0.89
2. In my company, the law or ethical code of our profession is the major consideration.	4.06	0.93
3. In my company, people are expected to strictly follow legal or professional standards.	4.01	0.78
4. In my company, the first consideration is whether a decision violates any law.	4.18	0.85
Average	4.12	
Independence	Means	Standard deviation
5. In this company, employees are expected to follow their own personal and moral beliefs.	3.89	1.05
6. In this company, people are guided by their own personal ethics.	3.73	0.97
7. Each person in this company decides for themselves what is right and wrong.	3.58	0.87
8. The most important concern in my company is each person's own sense of right and wrong.	3.97	0.82
Average	3.79	
Rules	Means	Standard deviation
9. It is very important to follow rules and procedures in my company.	4.30	0.99
10. Everyone is expected to stick by company rules and procedures.	4.18	0.84
11. People in the company strictly obey the company policies.	4.22	0.79
Average	4.23	
Caring	Means	Standard deviation
12. In this company, doing what is best for everyone is the major consideration.	3.66	1.13
13. The most important concern is the good of all the people in the company as a whole.	3.47	0.75
14. My company major concern is always what is best for people.	3.39	0.93
Average	3.50	
Instrumental	Means	Standard deviation
15. People are expected to do anything to further the company interests, regardless of the consequences.	2.37	1.09
16. There are no rooms for one's own personal morals or ethics in this company.	2.76	0.96
17. In this company, people protect their own interests above all else.	3.42	1.02
Average	2.85	

Table 3. The means and standard deviations for the respondent's answers on the questionnaire items related to organizational identification.

Organizational Identification	Means	Standard deviation
18. I consider myself a good representative or ambassador of this company.	3.97	0.92
19. I believe this company is taking me down the right path.	3.85	1.09
20. I try to make on the job decisions by considering the consequences of my actions for the company.	4.10	.76
21. Personally, I share the goals of my company and I value its mission.	3.84	0.78
22. My company has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	3.75	1.15
23. When someone criticizes my company, it feels like a personal insult.	3.69	0.95
24. I am very interested in what others think about my company.	3.71	0.84
25. When I talk about my company I usually say we rather than they.	3.91	0.79
26. The company success is my success.	3.77	0.85
27. When someone praises the company, it feels like a personal compliment.	3.74	0.88
28. I have a high loyalty to my company.	3.89	0.97
29. I work with sincerity and honesty to achieve the goals of my company.	3.79	0.73
30. I feel proud because I am working in this company.	3.76	0.93
31. I deal with the problems of my company as my personal problems.	3.81	1.02
Average	3.83	

Table 4. The results of VIF, Tolerance, and Skewnes tests

Independent Variables	VIF	Tolerance	Skewness
Law and Code	2.52	0.412	0.569
Independence	3.77	0.429	0.483
Rules	2.85	0.453	0.433
Caring	2.33	0.359	0.527
Instrumental	3.15	0.468	0.457

Table 5. The Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of The Estimate
1	0.893	0.817	0.737	0.346

*Predictors: (Constant), Law and Code, Independence, Rules, Caring, Instrumental.

Table 6. ANOVA Analysis

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	317.841	3	44.307	1057.195	0.000
Residual	22.174	179	0.046		
Total	340.015	182			

*Predictors: (Constant), Law and Code, Independence, Rules, Caring, Instrumental.

**Dependent Variable: Organizational Identification

As shown in table (6) the results indicate that the value of (F) is (1057.195) with significant (0.000) which is lower than the specified value (0.05) so the model is fit and acceptable.

Table 7. Beta and t values for the study hypotheses

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t.	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
1 (Constant)	0.079	0.063			
Law and Code	0.691	0.032	0.742	24.770	0.000*
Independence	0.377	0.024	0.448	6.205	0.000*
Rules	0.675	0.029	0.715	18.327	0.000*
Caring	0.410	0.030	0.508	7.302	0.000*
Instrumental	- 0.150	0.021	- 0.218	- 3.972	0.041*

*Significant at the level of statistical significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

**Dependent Variable: Organizational Identification

As shown in table (7) the results of multiple regression analysis indicate that the ethical work climate influences the organizational identification. The values of beta and t-tests shown that the following climates: law and code, independence, rules, and caring has a positive impact on organizational identification at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) while instrumental climate has a negative impact on organizational identification at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The current study investigated the influence of perceived ethical work climate namely (law and code, independence, rules, caring, and instrumental) upon organizational identification. Empirical results found that the law and code, independence, rules, and caring as dimensions of ethical work climate has a positive impact on organizational identification, while instrumental climate as a dimension of ethical work climate has a negative impact on organizational identification. Based on these empirical results the study recommending that the companies should focus largely on the caring, law and codes, rules, and independence as dimensions of ethical work climate in order to increase the employees' organizational identification and make these climates the dominant ethical work climate. On the other hand, the companies should minimize the instrumental climate because it decreases the organizational identification of employees. Also the study recommending that conducting more future research and studies on the factors that enhancing and raising the perception of ethical work climate, and the different variables that might affecting the organizational identification in the different contexts, because the current study limited to exploring the influence of perceived ethical work climate upon organizational identification and its results limited to the Jordanian cellular telecommunication companies.

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