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Chapter

The Role of Organizational Climate in Cultural Transformation

Jacek Grodzicki

Abstract

Each enterprise operates in a different way and has a different work system and culture. So, each enterprise has different requirements, action plans, and organizational systems. In order for an organization to have better functionality and to be innovative and effective, it is important to analyze the system of operation, the duties assigned to employees, and the organizational climate. This will help to examine what affects the functionality of the enterprise and the efficiency of the employees. Hence, it is important to know what the organizational climate is and how to study it. In this context, the chapter will explore the most common dimensions of organizational climate and understand their correlations with organizational culture in the broadest sense.

Keywords: organizational climate, engagement, employee well-being, employee commitment, job satisfaction, organizational culture

1. Introduction

In recent years, business organizations have been experiencing a significant acceleration of organizational change, both in terms of structure and employment needs. In addition, a different approach of young employees to work itself from the previous one is becoming a problem. Balance is becoming an overriding value. For generation X or Z, the amount of pay is less important than for earlier generations of workers. It is increasingly common that the choice of a workplace is determined by information about the climate in a given organization. The level of employee commitment and efficiency also depends on it [1]. This is causing more and more organizations to see the need to build the work environment in such a way that employees feel comfortable in it. So that they can use all their potential and creativity for the good of the organization. This is their key to success in a competitive market today [2]. However, it is worth remembering that the organizational climate is something impermanent, which changes quickly, depending on the needs and expectations of employees. On their ability and willingness to work together. In contrast, organizational culture is the basis for how individuals act within an organization. It is something that employees find and to which they must adapt. According to Schneider, the difference between the two concepts is that organizational climate describes events and experiences and reveals patterns of employee behavior, while culture is a set of shared values, assumptions, and beliefs that exist within an organization. It seems, therefore, that culture

should be viewed as something deeper within the organization. Something based on the values, beliefs, and assumptions of its employees. Organizational climate, on the other hand, as measured by a number of dimensions, is merely a piecemeal examination of these areas over a period of time [3]. Organizational culture is built over years, and the changes it undergoes are inherently slow. Interestingly, however, it is the organizational climate that is one of the more powerful factors in these changes.

2. The concept of organizational climate

The work environment is created primarily by people. Humans are the most important element for an enterprise to function, and relationships largely determine the work climate and productivity. The work climate has a major impact on an employee's daily performance and career. A person acquires knowledge throughout life, and importantly this takes place primarily in the work environment. A pleasant environment in which employees work has a positive impact on performance and well-being. Employers who create a pleasant work environment and good employee relations find it easier to attract new employees. This is because their positive image reinforces the company's good reputation in the social environment.

The work environment includes many factors that affect well-being, work comfort, and productivity. These are divided into two groups: physical factors and psychosocial factors. Physical factors — otherwise known as the material work environment. They are designed to provide comfortable conditions and safety for the employee. Employees have little influence on this, but the environment in which they perform their work translates into their productivity and well-being. Therefore, it is an extremely important element to provide adequate working conditions for the employees and create a relaxed and pleasant zone, where everyone feels comfortable. Psychosocial factors—these are interpersonal relationships. They are formed at the stage of each employee's daily life. They are extremely important as they largely determine how people employed by the organization will feel in the work environment, and how this will translate into their work. This aspect of human functioning in an organization, along with satisfaction and satisfaction analysis, that is, the area of organizational climate research.

While there are various proposals in the academic literature on this area of research, the dominant approach defines organizational climate as the majority of employees' shared assessment of practices, procedures, and events that shape perceptions of an organization. Organizational climate is a tool for understanding human behavior in organizations [4]. Research on organizational climate dates back to Kurt Lewin's work in the 1950s [5]. The concept became particularly popular in the 1960s and 1970s [6]. The organizational climate is shaped by a variety of factors, including the leadership style, organizational culture, communication patterns, and the physical environment. It is important for organizations to create a positive and supportive climate that promotes employee well-being, engagement, and productivity [7]. According to Guion, this climate relates to both the attributes of the organization and the perception of the individual, and that it is simply an alternative to affective responses to the organization, such as job satisfaction [8]. Thus, one can agree with Taguiri that organizational climate is a set of measurable characteristics of the work environment in which the people studied function. These dimensions are something that employees perceive directly or indirectly that affect their motivation and behavior ([9], p. 362-381).

It is worth noting at this point that, in general, several groups of proposals for organizational climate can be singled out [10]. One of them is the subjective concept, which focuses on the individual feelings of employees. According to this concept, it is the sum of all the feelings, relationships, and perspectives of individual employees that creates a differentiated organizational climate. This is a dynamic and impermanent process. The climate evolves with the changes that naturally occur in employee groups. Another is the interactionist concept, which views climate as a phenomenon that can be created by a group of employees. The important thing is that, according to this concept, it is not just the sum of individual employee perspectives, but the sum of the relationship between individual employee perspectives, group perspectives, and the organizational environment. Other proposals can be categorized as a concept that is referred to as managerial because it focuses on the responsibility of managers for building the organizational climate. It is primarily concerned with creating positive vertical relationships (manager-subordinate). This is the basis for a good atmosphere in the organization and translates into work efficiency. It is also worth noting that the concept is focused on satisfaction and performance. It focuses primarily on the needs of the employee. The main idea here is to recognize the climate itself, which allows you to more reliably assess the needs and expectations of employees, and then respond accordingly. The last one worth mentioning is the cultural concept, which depicts the organizational climate as a “manifestation” of the organizational culture. This means that with the help of the visible organizational climate certain theses can be formulated about a given organizational culture.

It is worth noting that at different times different currents and directions of interest in the organizational climate emerged, which translated into differences in the selection and study of climate components. The debate on organizational climate research that has been going on since the 1970s in the pages of scientific journals has been not so much about how to measure it, but what to measure [1]. Cilliers and Kossuth summarized the research of many authors and concluded that organizational dimensions at the formal level are structure, policies, goals, management practices, task specialization, decision-making, standards, and rewards. At the informal level, organizational climate refers to identity, employees’ needs, accountability, the process of social communication, information exchange, support, or ways of resolving conflicts [11]. Analyzing the emerging subsequent research results in this area confirmed these observations. Although, of course, there are some differences between the various areas that are studied. Thus, for example, C.M. Tustin based his research on such dimensions as [12]:

- Interpersonal communication, both horizontally and vertically;
- reciprocal relations between colleagues;
- level of identification with the organization;
- level of fairness in the context of access to benefits and the process of awarding them itself;
- assessment of the employee’s level of responsibility for tasks performed;
- assessment of employee participation in decision-making;
- opportunities for development and career building;
- assessment of existing risks and the need for change.

While Martins and Martins, for example, analyzed such dimensions as [13]:

- level of satisfaction with the physical equipment of workplaces;
- the evaluation of the perception of the organization's goals and the level of satisfaction with their achievement;
- evaluation of the management system;
- assessment of the sense of fair treatment;
- general job satisfaction and factors that keep an employee in an organization.

However, it can be noted that there are common areas in all studies on organizational climate. These are [14]:

Autonomy — understood as the ability to make independent decisions about goals, methods, or priorities.

Relationships — a sense of belonging to a community and a desire to help each other;

Trust — primarily in relation to superiors;

Responsibility — in relation to task completion;

Support—primarily from superiors to support risk-taking by subordinates;

Recognition— the level of recognition of individual employees' contribution to the bottom line;

Fairness— a sense of justice on 3 levels-procedural, distributive and relational;

Change—the ability to use new solutions or employees' own creativity without risk of punishment.

Based on these eight areas, individual researchers try to tailor their question proposals to achieve the broadest and most coherent picture of relations within an organization. At this point, it is worth taking a closer look at the various elements of the organizational climate.

A positive organizational climate is characterized by open communication, collaboration, trust, and a shared commitment to achieving common goals. On the other hand, a negative climate can be characterized by fear, mistrust, conflict, and a lack of cooperation. Organizations can analyze and assess their climate through surveys, focus groups, and other methods of gathering employee feedback. The feedback can then be used to identify areas for improvement and develop strategies for creating a more positive and supportive climate. For example, surveys conducted among users of a recruitment service showed that 65 percent of Poles believe that the atmosphere in a company can become a reason for resigning from a job, even if there is no other offer of employment. It turns out that the majority of Polish employees are not satisfied with relations in companies. A bad atmosphere at work causes frustration and a decrease in their commitment. The most common reason such a state is the behavior of co-workers and the boss [15].

The organizational climate can become conducive to develop the potential and competencies of the employees and provide opportunities for fulfillment. There is a need for an enhanced role of managers who should feel responsible for building a positive motivating work culture, which would ensure optimum utilization of the capabilities of the team members, leading to self and organizational effectiveness ([16], p. 33-43).

At a time, when the employee is an organization's greatest asset, employers' concern for a good organizational climate is becoming a necessity. Organizational climate is a measure of verifying working conditions and the level of motivation of an employee team. A positively perceived work environment is often tantamount to an increase in employee performance, while an organizational climate that negatively affects employees promotes job burnout. Among the costs to the company of employee burnout are employee inactivity and the need to redirect tasks assigned to them to other team members who are not necessarily prepared and have the necessary aptitude to perform them. Interpersonal relationships can become uncomfortable for an employee, for example, when he or she becomes a victim of bullying or sexual abuse. The result can be resignation and psychological problems [17].

Another important issue worth investigating is the level of utilization of an employee's potential. According to T. Amabile, creativity is influenced primarily by the employee's knowledge of the field in which he or she moves on a daily basis and the motivation associated with the performance of a given task [18]. The employer does not have much influence on the first aspect, and he can only try to hire people who are specialists in a particular field and have creative aptitude. He does, however, have the opportunity to influence the motivation and commitment of the employee. It is worth remembering that an employee who is skilled in a particular field is not always ready to fully engage. This is influenced by several factors such as motivating the employee to be innovative, the system of mobilizing the team for new challenges and projects, the way the work is done, the tools the employee is given to perform the tasks, enabling the employee to act independently, and believing in the team. The employee motivation system is extremely important in the work environment. It improves the employee's psychological comfort, as well as facilitates problem-solving and improves interpersonal relations and atmosphere and well-being. It affects effective performance and commitment. Every employee values comfort at work, wants to be appreciated, supported, but also to be able to work independently, to have his opinion respected. This gives a sense of satisfaction and a desire to work. Reverse actions, such as disrespecting an employee's opinion, constant criticism, or excessive control, can be a threat to the well-being of the team and can reduce the sense of comfort, efficiency, and motivation. For a company to grow, it should be open to new ideas and projects. Employees should be given the opportunity to think independently so that they can create innovative solutions. This involves the extra time they must be given to perform activities unrelated to their current tasks. Team members should not feel stress or pressure when creating something new. Feedback on the work done is needed so that the employee knows if their actions are leading in the right direction. The evaluation should be positive so that the employee is motivated to continue.

"The best places to work are distinguished by the fact that you like the people you work with, trust them, and take pride in what you do." It turns out that companies that interact well with their employees, trust them, and give them opportunities for development are considered the best places to work. Employees feel safe there and want to give as much as they can form themselves to make the company grow and be as profitable as possible. Good relations between employees and also with the supervisor integrate the team for innovative action [19]. The relationship between employees and supervisor plays an extremely important role against the background of the entire enterprise. It should be based on cooperation, openness, and trust. The atmosphere in the group reflects their individual feelings, which affect the productivity and functionality of employees.

3. Organizational climate and management functions

It is worth noting that the organizational climate is linked in a certain way to all management functions. It is particularly important for employees to have their opinions and feelings taken into account right from the planning stage. They feel they are full members of the organization when they are reliably informed about the goals the company is aiming to achieve when they have a real influence on the actions taken. Employee participation in the decision-making process regarding the organization's development directions and ways to implement the adopted strategies triggers an above-average level of commitment in employees. By participating in the planning of activities, they feel they are equal participants in events and members of the community that the organization should create.

In the process of organizing, many elements have to do with shaping the organizational climate. These include clear and lucid organizational arrangements, an appropriate division of authority, a defined space of autonomy and responsibility, and a well-known promotion system. Inadequate distribution of competencies in the organization, or uneven distribution of responsibilities and tasks among employees has a destructive effect on the organizational climate, making horizontal cooperation in the organization difficult. A predetermined scope of competence at the time of hiring helps avoid unnecessary tensions within the work team. Entrusting new tasks should be consulted with them in advance, which provides an opportunity to jointly develop a method to achieve the set goal and resolve any dilemmas.

The formation of the organizational climate is also influenced by elements related to controlling as a function of management. Particularly, noteworthy are employees' feelings about the rigorousness of verifying the level of performance of tasks assigned to them. Here the question arises about the level of autonomy of employees in the choice of methods and tools used to perform tasks, and the power of superiors to maintain deadlines for their performance. On the one hand, one can see the desire to increase the area of autonomy, but on the other hand (especially in countries with a high level of dimension —Power distance), there is still pressure to control the actions of subordinate employees. This is strongly correlated with the management style adopted. Such actions negatively affect employees and reduce their efficiency and block creativity. This negatively affects the organizational climate and detracts from employee motivation.

Of all the management functions, motivation contains the most elements that influence organizational climate building. There is a feedback loop between organizational climate and motivation. Organizational climate affects the level of employee motivation, and the methods of motivation used in an organization have a significant impact on the creation of organizational climate. The more positive employees feel about their work environment, the more they tend to identify with the organization. In an era of chronic labor shortages, efforts to retain existing staff become extremely important. It is worth remembering that the costs incurred by staff turnover are increasing and ultimately affect the overall assessment of the organization. It is also important from the point of view of building a positive image that serves to attract more job applicants. In a favorable atmosphere, there are no difficulties with team integration and greater openness to new challenges is noticeable. In a well-integrated group of employees, raising the requirements arising from the development of the company's activities is not a problem, even raising the level of job satisfaction [20].

Given the low capital intensity of intangible motivation tools, such as concern for improving the organizational climate, it is difficult to replace them with something

else that brings similar results in the form of increasing employee efficiency. Job satisfaction can be defined as an emotional reaction that an employee has toward a job that is the result of his or her comparison of actual outcomes with expected outcomes. Job satisfaction has also been defined in terms of attitudes that individuals have toward their jobs [21]. Sempane, Rieger, and Roodt stating that job satisfaction refers to the individual's perception and evaluation of the job. According to these authors, the individual's perception is influenced by his or her unique circumstances such as needs, values, and expectations. Therefore, jobs are evaluated by people on the basis of factors that are important to them. Although the definitions of job satisfaction are varied, it is generally considered to be an attitude or feeling that one has about one's job that is either positive or negative [22]. There are numerous studies investigating the relationship between organizational climate and job satisfaction, with many researchers finding evidence to support this relationship [23]. It is worth citing at this point the work of Brief who found that an organizational climate that is characterized by features such as a high degree of autonomy, building good relationships among employees, showing interest and concern for employees, recognizing employees' achievements, and showing them respect results in higher employee satisfaction. So do salary, benefits, and promotion opportunities, which are elements of the organizational climate [7].

4. Organizational culture and organizational climate

Analyzing the concept of organization culture, one can see that it concerns both the quality of life of the people associated with the organization and the methods of its further development. It assumes the existence of interdependencies between such areas as nature, society, and the economy [24]. Harmonizing the relationship between these planes requires both the development of new, more efficient, and environmentally friendly technologies, the introduction of restrictions on the exploitation of environmental resources, as well as a widespread change in the way of life and a revision of the prevailing hierarchy of values. These aspirations, among others, can be seen in changes in the culture of organizations. Where the issue of employee satisfaction is playing an increasingly important role [25]. Incidentally, this interest in social relations in the workplace contributed to the discovery of the aforementioned correlation occurring between job satisfaction and performance and organizational climate. Organizational climate is often combined with organizational culture by researchers. It is part of organizational culture, actually what employees create among themselves [26]. Organizational climate defines more the relationships and rules among employees, which are not necessarily predetermined by the organization. Organizational climate is a concept that focuses mainly on employees. It is also an issue that separates the concepts of organizational culture and organizational climate. Culture is a much deeper aspect that focuses on subconscious and abstract behaviors within a team. Climate, on the other hand, is more observable as it involves realized actions that are evident in behaviors and habits within a team of employees. Organizational climate refers to how employees perceive particular features of an organization's culture. Unlike culture, which sets behavioral boundaries, climate has a direct impact on behavior within the organization and when dealing with external contractors. The quality of the organizational climate can have a real impact on the proper functioning of a company. Mainly due to the fact that employees are less likely to be stressed, which means future job burnout. These employees are more

willing to learn new things, that is, take part in training courses or otherwise develop their skills. The organizational climate has a significant impact on the development of companies through the formation of a positive organizational culture. It is the surface of culture and reflects employees' subjective feelings about the atmosphere in the workplace [27]. Creating a positive climate promotes employee motivation and success. Managers should pay attention to the organizational climate and take measures to build a positive atmosphere in the workplace. Finally, it is worth noting that if employees perceive their organization as morally excellent, based on optimism, trust, compassion, honesty, and forgiveness, they are more likely to engage in pro-organizational behaviors, such as mutual aid and support. In addition, the perception of the organization as a place with an "ethical climate" directly influences the overall willingness to work together, deeper than just performing work tasks together [28]. That's why it is so important to know about ethics, that is, the personal beliefs of individual employees as to what behavior is right and what behavior is not within generally accepted norms. This is especially true when an organization seeks to embed new patterns of behavior in the organization's culture. It should be remembered that culture is transmitted to employees in various forms, the most important of which are: material symbols and language, rituals, and anecdotes.

The original culture of an organization emerges due to the philosophy of the founder of a particular organization. It exerts a strong influence on the selection of the workforce. The activities that the organization's top managers carry out create a common climate and outline what is allowed and what is not. This culture is reflected in the formulated mission, the sense of social responsibility, and the operation of a strong organizational system. The organization's culture is reinforced by human resource management practices. It is also reinforced by the selection process, the actions of the top management, and socialization methods. The culture of an organization consists of permanent elements. Therefore, it is difficult to change. It develops over several or even a dozen years. It is deeply rooted in the values to which employees are attached [29].

Today, with changes in the socioeconomic environment occurring so rapidly and unpredictably, organizations cannot wait for these changes to remodel organizational culture on their own. With the increasing impact of globalization and the new challenges posed by the different expectations of the next generation than before, organizations must try to implement new ideas into their culture themselves. But for this, they need clear and researchable criteria and dimensions, and this is what is contained in the field of organizational climate research. This is where the need for change can be seen most quickly. Hence, the apparent emphasis in well-managed organizations on conducting organizational climate monitoring. It is through it that changes can be responded to in a timely manner. It is worth remembering that one of the biggest challenges of today's organizations is to get and keep talented employees. This is not possible without ensuring that they work in a friendly and rewarding atmosphere.

5. Conclusion

Work has become an area, where people seek satisfaction, personal fulfillment, and opportunities for growth. The organizational climate provides the foundation for these expectations. A friendly open and supportive work environment fosters creative thinking, and effective communication and increases employee engagement.

Understanding these needs has led companies to focus on employees and engage in building a positive social environment, that is, a good organizational climate. However, the speed and multidirectionality of changes in the socioeconomic environment and the emerging different expectations of new generations of employees are forcing changes in the functioning of the organization. The first stage is to try to implement new ideas in the area of organizational climate. The next is to introduce more permanent changes that are related to organizational culture. This is because the latter is the basis of the organization's operation at all levels. It is something that arises in the course of the organization's development and defines the norms and value systems that stimulate employees. As an established system of patterns of thought and action in the organization, it is not subject to such rapid changes as the organizational climate. Therefore, in order to know the intensity and direction of new proposals for the perception of the shape of organizational culture, it is worth analyzing emerging changes in the area of organizational climate.

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Conflict of interest


The author declares no conflict of interest.

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