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THE EFFECT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE ON WORK LIFE BALANCE

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to examine the effects of organizational climate which means the workplace environment perceived by the workers on work life balance which represents the harmony or disharmony between work life and private life. To realize this aim, 114 employees working for three different organizations in Turkey were conducted a survey and the data was collected. Regression analysis was used for data analysis. The results of this study show that organizational climate has a positively meaningful effect on work life balance. However, 10 different dimensions were examined within the context of this study. Therefore, it was seen that each dimension of had different effects on work life balance.

KEYWORDS

organizational climate, work life balance.

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INTRODUCTION

Together with globalization a new structuring has arisen in almost every field from state level to individual level and all organizations longing to survive have had to keep up with this new technology. During this structuring process, thanks to the opportunities provided by technology, work life balance (flexible working hours, work share, health facilities, opportunities provided by the internet, working from home) has become a popular term. Work life balance does not only belong to employees but also has become an advantage-bearing quality for companies in terms of competitiveness. Thus, many organizations have started giving more importance on work life balance. Organizations use work life balance as a tool to reach the aims of both employees and the organization because work life balance has a positive effect on employees and increases sense of belonging and productivity of work (Clutterbuck, 2003). In studies on work life balance, which affects productivity of work, flexibility, and employee commitment positively, the term organization climate stands out. Organization climate is one of the significant elements to ensure work-life balance and includes issues such as the employee adopting the organization's aims (commitment), having relationships in conformity with the organization's strategies and policies, and showing behaviours expected by the organization. Organization climate bears certain qualities for each organization and is defined as the workplace environment that affects employees' behaviours. Organization climate is the individuals' perceptions of the workplace environment within the organization (Aytaç, 2003). Organization climate directs employee's motivation, perception, and type of relationship and therefore affects work life balance either positively or negatively. In light with the phenomenon and concepts mentioned above, this study aimed at examining the effects of organization climate on work life balance by reducing it to dimensions of organization climate. With reference to this examination, the study examines how and to what extent organization climate effects work life balance.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE**ORGANIZATION CLIMATE**

The literature review regarding organization climate shows that the initial studies carried out by Kurt Lewin in 1930s examined the relationships between human behaviour and environmental stimulators. (Onen, 2008:25). Lewinian appears when the conceptual base of organization climate is reviewed. The concept behaviour which was defined by Lewinian as a product of human beings and examined establishes the framework of studies on organization climate (Denison, 1990:25). In its most simple definition organization climate is the environment or ambiance created by organization culture in the organization (Varol, 1989:17). According to another definition the psychological environment of the organization is named organization climate (Katz and Kahn, 1977:123). Organization climate is also defined as the employees' perceptions regarding the workplace environment (Cekmecelioglu, 2006:299). Halpin (1966) defined organizational climate as follows: "what is characteristics to an individual is what is climate to the organization" (Mercan, 2007:82).

In line with the definitions above, we can say that organization climate affects employees' behaviours differently. Organization climate is perceptual and therefore each employee perceives it differently (Cekmecelioglu, 2006:299). Organization climate being perceptual is a result of people's expectations regarding how working should be within the organization and of their ideas regarding to what extent these expectations come true. Hence, if the expectations of the employees and organization climate comply organization climate is said to be good whereas if they do not comply, organization climate might be said to be bad or weak (Dincer, 1996:211). For this reason, organization climate affects employees positively or negatively and directs their behaviours (Basaran, 2000:297).

According to Miner (1988) organization climate is the organization's inner and stable quality which is experienced by employees and affects their behaviour, shows a series of the organization's behaviours and may be defined through the values of the organization culture.

The study of Litwin and Stringer carried out in 1968 examined organization climate in 9 different dimension namely structure, responsibility, award, risk raking, support, sincerity, standards, conflict, and identity (Yahyagil, 2006:80-81). Apart from these dimension, following are among the general characteristics and variables of organization climate (Batlis, 1980:233):

- The organization is composed of policies and behaviours of its members and senior management.
- It is based on the perception of circumstances regarding the workplace environment.
- It provides the basis for interpreting the workplace environment.

- It is the source of pressure that directs the activities.

The variables of organization climate are as follows (Forehand, 1968:66):

- **Environmental variables:** These variables do not stem from the employee and affect the members of the organization. For example, the size and structure of the organization, economic conditions and unionization rate.
- **Personal Variables:** These variables refer to the abilities, characteristic, and values of employees. For example, abilities of employees, their attitudes towards work and staff, their interest for work and their characteristics etc.
- **End variables:** They are a combination of both environmental and personal variables such as work motivation, satisfaction, and productivity.

When organization climate is approached in terms of the three variables above, it can be defined as a combination of environmental and personal variables (Forehand, 1968:66).

WORK LIFE BALANCE

With its general definition work life balance is the state of individuals' demands/aims regarding work life and personal demands/aims being balanced. Although this term is used in academic and professional life, it still does not have a clear definition. However, the balance approach can be defined as professional and family life (or private life) being away from conflict (Kucukusta, 2007:244). According to another definition work life balance is the individual's being occupied with roles in professional and private life on the same level and being equally satisfied with these roles (Greenhaus et al., 2003:512). Objectively work life balance is defined as success in health, career, and private life while subjectively it is defined as satisfaction in professional and private life (Hilderbrandt, 2006: 255-256). Today, work life balance has taken precedence over work safety among employee privileges (Armour, 2002). Organizations that do not help their employees balance between work and life will have difficulty in both employing skilled and motivated employees and keeping hold of them (Shellenbarger, 1999).

Providing work life balance has a lot of positive effects for organizations and following are among these effects (Cieri et al., 2002:3):

- It helps create a positive workplace environment and keep the employee, and increases the rate of response of education investments,
- It increases the diversity of staff and eases employee's adaptation,
- It develops managers' leadership skills and enables them produce various strategies to meet employees' needs.

In addition to the definitions of work life balance above, it is also based on minimizing the competitiveness between professional life and personal life and so targets creating harmony between the two lives. Work life balance advises managers to give more importance on flexible working hours and work share issues, which makes many contributions to the organization such as increasing employment and productivity, keeping hold of the employee and satisfying the employee. Besides these benefits, work life balance provides cost efficiency and increases performance (Manfredi and Holliday, 2004: 6).

Moreover, work life balance is a strategic human resources management tool which helps the employee feel good both physically and emotionally (Wong and Ko, 2009: 195). In terms of human resources management work life balance applications are among the strategies that contribute to increase employee's commitment to the organization. Work life balance is also considered to be a significant element that decreases the factors causing work place problems and stress (Kucukusta, 2007: 244).

HYPOTHESES

In line with the definitions made regarding organization climate and work life balance, it is possible to say that organization climate is one of the significant components for employees to balance life and work. In this context, the study aims to examine the effects of organization climate on work life balance. Therefore, the below hypotheses are tested in this study:

- H1: Formal structure dimension of organization climate affects work life balance positively and meaningfully.
- H2: Organizational support dimension organization climate affects work life balance positively and meaningfully.
- H3: Workplace environment dimension of organization climate affects work life balance positively and meaningfully.
- H4: Awarding dimension of organization climate affects work life balance positively and meaningfully.
- H5: Interpersonal relationships dimension of organization climate affects work life balance positively and meaningfully.
- H6: Risk taking dimension of organization climate affects work life balance positively and meaningfully.
- H7: Communication dimension of organization climate affects work life balance positively and meaningfully.
- H8: Innovativeness dimension of organization climate affects work life balance positively and meaningfully.
- H9: Decision making dimension of organization climate affects work life balance positively and meaningfully.
- H10: Team work dimension of organization climate affects work life balance positively and meaningfully.

METHODOLOGY

AIM AND CONTRIBUTION

The aim of this study is to examine the effects of organizational climate on work life balance. Specifically, this study aims at examining the effects of organizational climate on work life balance by various dimensions and it is believed that the results of the study will help organizations to decide on which dimensions of organization climate to focus on to work life balance, which is an element to increase employees' commitment. Also, it is thought that increasing the number of organizations and institutions with a better organization climate will have positive effects for employees, organizations and sectors.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population of this study is composed of 3 different organizations operating in transportation, banking, and advertising sectors in Istanbul and managers and employees of these organizations are also included in the population. Based on the data obtained from these organizations the population is composed of about 5000 people. 250 people were sent questionnaires by considering the rate of response and convenience sampling method was adopted. 114 people responded and therefore the rate of response was 45.6%.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS METHOD

The necessary data was collected via online questionnaire technique. Researchers have stated the data collected via online questionnaire methods to be as valid as pen and paper questionnaires and that they had no negative effect on the data quality (Kickul and Lester, 2001). The questionnaire form was composed of 3 parts. The first part is composed of 20 statements that aim to measure participants' perceptions regarding organization climate. The second part is composed of 6 statements to determine the level of work life balance and the third part is composed of statements that aim to determine demographical characteristics of the participants. The answers to the questionnaires were collected between April and June 2015.

Cronbach Alpha co-efficient was used for reliability analysis of the scales and regression analyses were used to test hypotheses.

SCALES

The scales used in previous studies were examined to determine the organization climate and level of work life balance and the appropriate ones were used in the questionnaire form.

In order to determine the participants' perception of organization climate, the scale developed by Yahyagil (2006) was made use of. This scale is composed of 10 dimensions 20 statements. The dimensions are formal structure, organizational support, workplace environment, awarding, interpersonal relationships, risk taking, communication, innovativeness, decision making, and team work. The scale is a 5-point Likert type scale. The items of the scale include answers ranging from 1-I definitely do not agree to 5- I definitely agree. Higher scores indicate that perception of organization climate is positive. The scale does not consist of a negative attitude statement.

In order to determine the participants' level of work life balance, the scale developed by Dawn et al. (2009) was made use of. The scale consists of 6 statements and is a 5-point Likert type scale. The answers range from 1-I definitely do not agree to 5- I definitely agree. Higher scores indicate that perception of work life balance is high. The scale does not consist of a negative attitude statement.

FINDINGS

FINDINGS REGARDING SAMPLE

The distribution of participants by their demographical characteristics is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Variable	Category	N	%
Gender	Female	26	22.8
	Male	88	77.2
Marital Status	Single	37	32.5
	Married	77	67.5
Age	25 and less	16	14.0
	26-30	59	51.8
	31-40	28	24.6
	41 and more	11	9.6
Education	High school degree	3	2.6
	Bachelor's degree	72	63.2
	Master's degree	37	32.5
	Doctoral degree	2	1.8
Monthly Income	1000 TL or less	6	5.3
	1000-2999 TL	37	32.5
	3000 TL or more	71	62.3
Tenure	1 year or less	21	18.4
	2-5 years	71	62.3
	6-10 years	12	10.5
	More than 10 years	10	8.8
	TOPLAM	114	100

Majority of the participants were male (77.2%) whereas the percentage of females was 22.8%. 67.5% of the participants were married and, 32.5% were single and the rate of participants aged between 26 and 30 was 51.8%. 63.2% of the participants were bachelors, and 32.5% of them were graduates. 62.3% of the participants earned 3000 TL and more, 32.5% earned between 1000 and 2999 TL. 62.5% was the percentage of working duration of the participants 2-5 years.

RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Cronbach Alpha co-efficient of the scales are given in Table 2.

TABLE 2: RELIABILITY VALUES

Scale	Number of Elements	Cronbach Alfa
Formal Structure	2	0.12
Organizational Support	2	0.76
Workplace Environment	2	0.42
Awarding	2	0.72
Interpersonal Relationships	2	0.72
Risk Taking	2	0.71
Communication	2	0.70
Innovativeness	2	0.88
Decision Making	2	0.84
Team Work	2	0.86
Organizational Climate	16	0.95
Work Life Balance	6	0.92

It can be seen in Table 2 that Cronbach Alpha values calculated for formal structure and workplace environment dimensions were below 0.70, and therefore these two variables were excluded. Cronbach Alpha values for the remaining dimensions were above 0.70 and these variables are reliable (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994:265; Tavşancıl, 2010:29).

DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

Table 3 presents averages, standard deviation, and co-relations of the variables used in this study.

TABLE 3: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Variable	Mean	St.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Org. Support	3.25	1.08	1								
2. Awarding	2.56	1.09	0.75*	1							
3. Int. Relationship	3.22	1.06	0.76*	0.61*	1						
4. Risk Taking	2.70	1.02	0.66*	0.66*	0.74*	1					
5. Communication	3.16	1.05	0.61*	0.62*	0.57*	0.60*	1				
6. Innovativeness	2.93	1.18	0.77*	0.73*	0.57*	0.67*	0.57*	1			
7. Decision Making	2.86	1.08	0.74*	0.75*	0.58*	0.58*	0.58*	0.74*	1		
8. Team Working	3.10	1.10	0.76*	0.65*	0.74*	0.73*	0.68*	0.70*	0.62*	1	
9. Work Life Balance	3.69	0.77	0.39*	0.31*	0.41*	0.33*	0.35*	0.25*	0.21**	0.20**	1

N= 114, *p<0.01, **p<0.05

It can be seen from Table 3 that the relationships between the variables of the study were meaningful ($p < 0.05$) and therefore the effect of dimensions of organization climate on work life balance needs to be examined. Furthermore, the co-efficient regarding interaction does not exceed 0.85 value, which shows that there is no multicollinearity (Kline, 2011:362).

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

The effect of the sub-dimensions of organization climate on work life balance was tested via regression analyses. Demographical variables were used in the analysis and control variables were used in the model. Results of the regression analyses can be seen in Table 4.

TABLE 4: RESULTS OF THE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Variable	Work Life Balance	
	Step 1	Step 2
	β	β
Control Variables		
Gender	0.153	0.204
Marital Status	-0.063	-0.156
Age	0.056	0.067
Education	-0.121	-0.087
Monthly Income	0.270**	0.172
Tenure	-0.003	0.093
Independent Variables		
1. Organizational Support		0.514**
2. Awarding		-0.033
3. Interpersonal Relationship		0.336**
4. Risk Taking		0.090
5. Communication		0.269**
6. Innovativeness		0.037
7. Decision Making		-0.309**
8. Team Working		-0.522*
F Value	0.949	4.125*
R²	0.051	0.368
Adjusted R²	0.003	0.279

N= 114, * $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$

The effect of formal structure and workplace environment on work life balance was not examined because the reliability regarding these dimensions was not sufficient.

According to the regression analysis results presented in Table 4, organization climate organizational support ($H2: \beta = 0.514$, $p < 0.05$), interpersonal relationships ($H5: \beta = 0.336$, $p < 0.05$) and communication ($H7: \beta = 0.269$, $p < 0.05$) dimensions had positive and meaningful effects on work life balance whereas decision making ($H9: \beta = -0.309$, $p < 0.05$) and team work ($H10: \beta = -0.522$, $p < 0.01$) dimensions had negative and meaningful effects on work life balance. However awarding ($H4: \beta = -0.033$, $p > 0.05$), risk taking ($H6: \beta = 0.190$, $p > 0.05$) and innovativeness ($H8: \beta = 0.037$, $p > 0.05$) dimensions did not have any effect on work life balance. These findings show that hypotheses H2, H5, and H7 could be accepted whereas hypotheses H4, H6, H8, H9 and H10 were denied.

Also, it can be seen that the rate of organization climate dimensions' explaining work life balance was 36.8 % ($R^2 = 0.368$).

CONCLUSION

The effect of organization climate on work life balance was examined within the context of this study. Accordingly, data was collected from 114 personnel working in three different organizations in Turkey via questionnaire method. The research draws attention to the importance of organization climate and examination of the effects of work life balance, which contributes to productivity and continuity of individuals and organizations and thus organizations are informed on the importance of organization climate. It is believed that this information will contribute to professional life positively and affect both organizations and individuals positively.

The effects of organization climate were examined by ten different dimensions. Cronbach Alpha values calculated for formal structure and workplace environment dimensions were below 0,70, and therefore these two variables were excluded. The relationship of other dimensions with work life balance was examined via regression analysis.

The results of the regression analyses showed that there was a positive and meaningful relationship between organizational support, interpersonal relationships, and communication and work life balance. By looking at these findings it is possible to claim that providing organizational support to staff, relationships with colleagues, communication among employees and with superiors and juniors, and informing employees on workflow within the organization and activities to be carried out contribute to work life balance.

For this reason, both financial and emotional support provided by organizations will contribute to their work life balance. Also, it can be said that employees' communication with both each other and management increases work life balance.

The analysis showed that decision making, risk taking, and team work dimensions had negatively meaningful effects on work life balance. This negative effect in terms of decision making dimension might be that employees' responsibilities and workload increase as they participate in decision making processes and this increase affects employee's work life balance negatively. Similarly, team work also increases workload and therefore it might be perceived to unbalance work life balance.

The findings of the analysis also showed that there was not a meaningful relationship between organization climate and awarding, risk taking, and innovativeness dimensions.

When all these findings and results are evaluated in terms of the sample, it can be said that organizational support, interpersonal relationships, and communication dimensions are more important to provide and develop work life balance. These results are thought to motivate organizations to create a better organization climate and therefore encourage employees to find the balance between their lives and work, which in turn will contribute to individuals, organizations, and sectors positively.

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