

THE EFFECTS OF ETHICAL CLIMATE TYPES ON JOB SATISFACTION: THE CASE OF TOURISM INDUSTRY*

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Abstract

This research aims to analyse the relationship between ethical climate types and job satisfaction in tourism industry. To achieve this objective, an empirical study was conducted on 165 hotel business employees in four-star and five-star hotels licensed by the Culture and Tourism Ministry in the city of Nevşehir, Turkey. Results show that caring positively and significantly correlated with job satisfaction. According to correlation analysis, no significant relationships were found between other four dimensions of ethical climate such as law and code, rules, instrumental, and independence and job satisfaction. Regression analysis results showed that caring could explain differences in job satisfaction. Implications of the findings are discussed and avenues for future research are offered.

Keywords: Ethical climate, job satisfaction, organizational behavior, tourism industry, hotel businesses.

* This study titled "*The effects of ethical climate types on job satisfaction: The case of tourism industry*" is the extended version of the paper presented in Rome Multidisciplinary Conference, Oct 31-Nov 3, 2011, Rome, Italy.

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Öz

Etiksel İklimin İş Tatmini Üzerindeki Etkisi: Turizm Endüstrisi Örneği"

Bu araştırmanın amacı, turizm endüstrisinde etiksel iklim boyutları ile iş tatmini arasındaki ilişkiyi analiz etmektir. Bu hedefe ulaşmak için, Nevşehir ilindeki Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı belgeli dört ve beş yıldızlı otellerde çalışan 165 işçörene üzerinde görgöl bir araştırma yürütölmüştür. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre, başkalarının iyiliğini isteme boyutu ile iş tatmini arasında pozitif yönlü ve anlamlı bir ilişki tespit edilirken, diğör dört boyut olan kanun ve kod, kurallar, araçsallık ve bağımsızlık ile iş tatmini arasında anlamlı bir ilişki olmadığı bulgusuna ulaşılmıştır. Regresyon analizi sonuçlarına göre, başkalarının iyiliğini isteme boyutunun iş tatminini üzerinde açıklayıcı etkiye sahip olduğu ortaya konmuştur. Araştırma bulguları tartışılmış ve araştırma alanları önerilmiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Etiksel iklim, iş tatmini, örgötsel davranış, turizm endüstrisi, otel işletmeleri.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important factors in tourism and hospitality organizations is human being in terms of service quality, customer satisfaction and commitment, competitive advantage and organizational performance. This belief is supported by the notion that emphasizes the critical importance of human resources for organizations. That view is further supported by many theories, models and empirical studies on service and tourism management literature (Kusluvan *et al.*, 2010: 171). Satisfaction of employees working in hotel businesses may produce positive results such as increase in productivity, creation of competitive advantage, reduction of optional labor turnover rate, resultant customer satisfaction and so forth.

The employee satisfaction is defined as “the positive emotional state that one felt after evaluating one’s own job and work experience” (Kusluvan, Kusluvan, 2003: 183); and the ethical climate is defined as “the shared perceptions of what is ethically correct behavior and how ethical issues should be handled” (Victor, Cullen, 1988: 101). Ethical climate has a significant impact on individual behavior and on the organization as a whole (Kaplan, 2010: 10). In essence, ethical climate is examined most commonly using five dimensions such as caring, laws and codes, rules, instrumentalism and independence (Ogut, Kaplan, 2010: 894). It can be said that as caring, laws and codes, rules and independence climate type perceptions of these dimensions increase, job satisfaction may also increase. On the other hand, as instrumentalism climate type perceptions increase, job satisfaction may

decrease. The results of the researches analyzing the relationship between the ethical climate and the job satisfaction are presented below:

Deshpande (1996) classified the aspects of the ethical climate as professionalism, caring, rules, instrumentalism, productivity and he also classified the job satisfaction in an independent way as promotion, wage satisfaction, workmates satisfaction, work satisfaction and total job satisfaction in a survey conducted with 252 mid level managers at a large nonprofit charity organization. The survey results indicated the following points: None of the climate types could affect the wage satisfaction and the professional climate type could affect the promotion, manager and work satisfactions. Also he further found that instrumentalism climate type could affect the job satisfaction, promotion, workmates, manager satisfaction in a negative direction and the types of climate such as rules, productivity and independence couldn't affect any aspects of job satisfaction meaningfully. Although Koh and Boo (2001) stated that there wasn't any meaningful relationship between the climate type based on philanthropic and the job satisfaction, they also pointed out that there was a positive and meaningful relationship between the ethical climate based on principles and the job satisfaction in a survey conducted among the managers in Singapore. Schwepker Jr. (2001) pointed out that a positive and meaningful relationship existed between the perceptions of the ethical climate and total work satisfaction (wage, promotion, manager, policies and satisfaction from the customers). Suar and Khuntia (2004) stated that the professional climate and well wishes for the others (caring) could positively affect the external and internal job satisfaction in a survey conducted among the mid level managers at the private and public sectors. Schminke *et al.*, (2005) pointed out that there was a positive and meaningful relationship between the caring and the rules, the perceptions of the ethical climate and job satisfaction. Schwepker Jr. and Hartline (2005) stated that the perceptions of the ethical climate could increase the job satisfaction in a survey conducted among the hotel employees. Mulki *et al.*, (2006) pointed out that a positive direction and meaningful relationship existed between the perceptions of the ethical climate and the job satisfaction and the perceptions of the ethical climate could be the determinant factor over the job satisfaction of the sales personel in a survey conducted among the pharmacy employees in the USA. Aydemir (2007) classified the aspects of the ethical climate as altruism, prescriptivism, instrumentalism, effectuality and independency in a survey conducted among the employees working at nine private and public corporations dealing with different sectors in Bilecik (Turkey) and its surroundings and added that the altruism and the prescriptivism, the types of climate had a meaningful impact over the general job satisfaction. He also stated that the instrumentalism aspect had a negative direction and meaningful impact over the general job satisfaction. Kim and Miller (2008) stated that while the types of climate such as the self interest and

the efficiency could affect the job satisfaction in a negative direction, the other types of the ethical climate could affect the job satisfaction in a positive direction. Tsai and Huang (2008) stated that there was a positive relationship between the climate type based on philanthropic and wage satisfaction, job satisfaction and the total job satisfaction. Furthermore, they pointed out that a positive direction and meaningful relationship existed between the independent climate perception and satisfaction from the managers and total job satisfaction. On the other hand, it was indicated by the same study that a positive and meaningful relationship between the rules ethical climate and manager satisfaction, workmates satisfaction, payment satisfaction and the total satisfaction. On the contrary, they expressed that there was a negative and a meaningful relationship between the instrumentalism climate type and promotion satisfaction and total job satisfaction. Nonetheless, they couldn't find out a relationship between the laws and codes ethical climate perceptions and job satisfaction in a survey conducted among the nurses in Taiwan. Elçi and Alpkın (2009) analyzed the ethical climate in nine aspects and stated that the self interest climate affected job satisfaction in a negative way while the benefit of team, social responsibility and the laws and the codes ethical climate affected the job satisfaction in a positive way in a survey conducted among the employees and the managers from telecommunication industry.

The main goal of our research is based on the question of “at what level are the perceptions of ethical climate effective on providing job satisfaction of employees working in hotel businesses”. In other words, the aim of the study is to analyze the relationship between the perceptions of ethical climate and overall job satisfaction of the staff employed in four and five star hotels in Nevşehir. In this context, relatedness between perceptions of ethical climate and job satisfaction will be examined in a different culture and different service-based sector and recommendations will be presented to managers of hotel businesses.

1. ETHICAL CLIMATE

The ethical climate is a component of the general organizational climate and has been described as ‘the shared perceptions of what ethically correct behaviour is and how ethical issues should be handled’ (Elçi, Alpkın, 2009: 298). Ethical climate is a concept that describes the shared perception of organizational norms, values and behaviour (Rasmussen *et al.*, 2003: 85). A firm's ethical climate refers to the prevailing attitudes about the firm's standards concerning appropriate conduct within the firm (Kelley, Dorsch, 1991: 56) and reflects employee perceptions of morally appropriate actions and policies observed in the workplace (Lopez *et al.*, 2009: 595). Ethical work climate is a

holistic construct which encompasses the catalogue of organizational socio-moral factors (Ruppel and Harrington, 2000: 314).

Victor and Cullen’s (1988) ethical decision making framework describes theoretical ethical climates that are based on two dimensions: ethical criterion and locus of analysis (Weber, Seger, 2002: 72). Figure.1 shows ethical climate types according to a two-dimensional typology. **The first dimension** represents the ethical criteria used for decision-making inside an organization. ‘Egoism’ is characterized by decisions intended to maximize self-interest, ‘benevolence’ is characterized by decisions that aim to maximize joint interest, while ‘principle’ is characterized by decisions which adhere to rules, laws, and standards in the normative expectations of a social unit (Kim, Miller, 2008: 942-943). **The second dimension** represents the locus of analysis used as a reference point in ethical decisions (Weber, 1995: 512). At the individual level, the ethical climate of the organization supports an individual-level source for normative standards regarding ethical reasoning. The local level is supported by organizational norms favoring reference groups within the organization itself. The cosmopolitan ethical climate is supported by norms favoring external sources for ethical reasoning (Barnett, Vaicys, 2000: 352).

Figure 1. Victor and Cullen’s Ethical Climate Matrix

		Locus of Analysis		
		Individual	Local	Cosmopolitan
Ethical Criteria	Egoism	SELF-INTEREST* <i>Instrumental**</i>	COMPANY PROFIT <i>Instrumental</i>	EFFICIENCY
	Benevolence	FRIENDSHIP <i>Caring</i>	TEAM INTEREST <i>Caring</i>	SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
	Principle	PERSONAL MORALITY <i>Independence</i>	COMPANY RULES AND PROCEDURE <i>Rules</i>	LAWS AND PROFESSIONAL CODES <i>Law and Code</i>

* Theoretical strata of ethical climate

** Victor and Cullen’s five common empirical dimensions are found in italics

Source: Victor, Cullen, 1988, 104; Malloy, Agarwal, 2003, 226.

As shown in Figure 1, a firm's ethical climate can be characterized in terms of five theoretically based and empirically supported dimensions: Caring, law and code, rules, instrumentalism, and independence (Victor, Cullen, 1988: 111-113). The dimensions are defined as follows:

Caring: A caring climate is utilitarian based where employees have a sincere interest in the well being of others inside and outside the organization (Deshpande *et al.*, 2000: 212) and pertains to displays of kindness toward the employees, the firm, and the world (Kelley, Dorsch, 1991: 56). At work, caring climate reflects concern for all organizational stakeholders affected by their decisions (Shapira-Lishcinsky, Rosenblatt, 2009: 719). Studies assessing an employee's preferred work climate most frequently indicate favor for a caring climate (Martin, Cullen, 2006: 179).

Law and Codes: Employees in a law and code ethical climate are expected to adhere strictly to the codes and regulations of their profession or government (Wimbush *et al.*, 1997: 68). Organizations guided by law and codes accommodated external standards and principles in decision making (Suar, Khuntia, 2004: 12). Whether public or private sector employees "...perform their duties and functions efficiently, effectively and with integrity, in accordance with laws or administrative policies" (Huberts *et al.*, 2008: 241).

Rules: In rules ethical work climate, the principles employed are company based (i.e. company policies, procedures, rules, norms) (Wyld, Jones, 1997: 467). Employees are expected to adhere precisely to the rules and imperatives of their organization or departments (Erben, Güneşer, 2008: 959). Organizational decisions are guided by a set of local rules or standards such as codes of conduct (Tsai, Huang, 2008: 567). Many organizations aim to guide employees' behavior through formal organizational value statements, mission statements, credos, policies and formal codes of ethical conduct (Trevino, Nelson, 2004: 240).

Instrumentalism: The instrumental climate involves the egoistic criterion and is primarily based on the maximization of self-interest (Tsai, Huang, 2008: 567). In an instrumental climate, employees look out for their own self interest (Deshpande *et al.*, 2000: 212), first and foremost, even to the exclusion of interest of others who may be affected by their decisions (Wimbush *et al.*, 1997: 68). Actors perceiving an instrumental ethical climate see their organizational unit as having norms and expectations that encourage ethical decision-making from an egoistic perspective (Martin, Cullen, 2006: 178).

Independence: This dimension concerns the individual's personal rules of acceptable behavior (Kelley, Dorsch, 1991: 56). In an independent climate,

individual standard of moral judgment provides the criteria for decision making (Suar, Khuntia, 2004: 12).

Ethical climate has various functions in organizations. Perceptions of ethical climates increase affective commitment (Tsai, Huang, 2008), achievement level of dealing with ethical issues (Bartels *et al.*, 1998), organizational citizenship behaviour (Elçi, 2005), *job satisfaction* (Elçi, Alpkan, 2009), supervisory trust (Mulki *et al.*, 2006) and performance (Weeks *et al.*, 2004) while decreasing intent to leave (Schwepker Jr., 2001), and role conflict (Schwepker Jr., Hartline, 2005). In this study, we focused on job satisfaction.

2. JOB SATISFACTION

A general definition of job satisfaction is viewed as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” (Vandenabeele, 2009: 14). Another definition regarding job satisfaction is “the degree to which employees have a positive affective orientation toward employment by the organization” (Buchko *et al.*, 1998: 111).

Job satisfaction is believed to be an attitude reflecting how well people like or dislike their job (Mulki *et al.*, 2006: 20) and it is determined by policies and supervision, both factors influencing a firm’s ethical climate. Policies and supervisory direction may help eliminate ambiguity on the job related to handling ethical situations (Schwepker Jr., 2001: 41). A conflict between ethical values of the employee and the organization’s ethical climate will lead to a lower level of job satisfaction (Koh, Boo, 2001: 313). On the other hand, the more the employees have ethical climate perceptions, the more they are satisfied with their job.

Job satisfaction can be measured in terms of satisfaction with pay, promotion, coworkers, supervision and work or an overall rating of satisfaction. An overall measure is generally taken using the respondents’ general perception of how satisfied they are with their job (Mulki *et al.*, 2006: 20). In this study, an overall measure of job satisfaction is used.

In the light of some previous researches, the following hypothesis were tested:

H1: There is a positive relationship between caring and job satisfaction.

H2: There is a positive relationship between law and code and job satisfaction.

H3: There is a positive relationship between rules and job satisfaction.

H4: There is a negative relationship between instrumentalism and job satisfaction.

H5: There is a positive relationship between independence and job satisfaction.

3. MEASURES

Job satisfaction was designated as the dependent variable in this study, while ethical climate types (caring, law and code, rules, instrumentalism and independence) were considered as the independent variables. To measure ethical climate types, the 26 items Ethical Climate Questionnaire (ECQ) developed by Victor and Cullen (1988) was used. The items were classified in terms of the five dimensions of caring, law and code, rules, instrumentalism and independence. Participants responded on a 5-point Likert-type scale dictating to the extent which they agreed with each statement as it reflected their present work environment (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree). Cronbach's alphas were as follows: 0.82 for caring, 0.87 for law and code, 0.88 for rules, 0.72 for instrumental and 0.76 for independence.

On the other hand, job satisfaction was measured with short form of Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), 20 items 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). The scale showed adequate reliability. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.85. In general, a value of 0.70 in the Cronbach's alpha is considered adequate in order to ensure reliability of the internal consistency of a scale (Nunnally, 1978).

4. SAMPLE

The sampling is from employees in four (15) and five-star (5) hotels licensed by the Tourism Ministry in the city of Nevsehir, Turkey. Participants work in front offices, food and beverage, and storey services departments of these hotels. Because of unknown number of employeeed personnel in hotels, quata sampling (a quota sample a type of non-probability sample in which the

researcher selects people according to some fixed quota) is taken as a basic method that subjects are conveniently chosen from targeted groups (Sekaran, 2003: 280). The researcher would then have to decide how many respondents are to be selected in each category. There are two main possibilities: equal numbers in each category, or numbers proportional to incidence in the population (Blaikie, 2001: 205). In this frame, we decided to distribute 15 questionnaires for each hotel. Interviewers were recruited to distribute to 300 subjects. In total 168 employees responded to the survey. Of the employees who responded, 165 provided useable questionnaires on all study variables for a response rate of 55.0 per cent. This rate is an acceptable response rate for this kind of study (Lewin *et al.*, 1995).

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Sample

Characteristics	f	(%)	Characteristics	f	(%)
Gender			Education Level of Participants		
Male	112	67.9	Primary school	47	28.5
Female	53	32.1	Secondary school	78	47.3
			High school	25	15.2
Status of a person			Bachelor' or PhD	15	9.0
Married	110	66.7	Hotel Category		
Single	55	33.3	Five-star	60	36.4
			Four-star	105	63.6
Age			Worked Department		
Less than 25	44	26.6	Front office	50	30.3
26-30	81	49.1	Food and beverage	59	35.8
31-40	25	15.2	Storey service	56	33.9
41 or more	15	9.1			
Tourism education			Job Experience (number of years)		
Yes	95	57.6	Less than 1	36	21.8
No	70	42.4	1-3	55	33.3
Position			4-6	32	19.4
Department Manager	12	7.3	7-9	18	10.9
Chief	26	15.8	10 or more	24	14.5
Employee	127	77.0			

N=165

The sample consisted of 32.1 percent of females and 67.9 percent of males. 66.7 percent of the respondents were married and 33.3 percent were single. 49.1 percent of the respondents were 26-30 years old. In terms of educational levels, 28.5% of the respondents had graduated from primary school, 47.3% from secondary school, 15.2% from high school, 9.0% held

Bachelor's or PhD. Furthermore, more than half of the participants completed the tourism and hotel management training (57.6%). Respondents held a variety of positions in hotel businesses including middle managers (23.1%) and employees (77.0%). When star classifications of the hotels are taken into consideration, it is seen that the participants to the survey are employed in four star hotels (63.6%) and five star hotels (36.4%). 33.3% of the respondents had 1-3 years of job experience in the present hotels. 30.3 percent of the respondents worked in front office, 35.8 percent of the respondents worked in food and bevarage, 33.9 percent of the respondents worked in storey service. 7.3 percent of the respondents were departmant manager, 15.8 percent were chief and 77.0 percent were employee.

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 reports means, standard deviations, correlations among variables, and cronbach's alpha coefficients.

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Inter-Correlations
Among Study Variables**

	Mean	Std. Dev.	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Caring	3,46	0,74	(0,82)					
2. Law and code	3,38	1,03	,264**	(0,87)				
3. Rules	3,15	1,08	,255**	,109	(0,88)			
4. Instrumental	3,19	0,63	-,023	-,082	,046	(0,72)		
5. Independence	3,26	0,77	,222**	-,123	,149	,251**	(0,76)	
6. Job satisfaction	3,12	0,60	,268**	,005	,119	-,089	,140	(0,85)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As shown in Table 2, as a result of Pearson correlation analysis caring had significant and positive relationships with job satisfaction ($r=,268$; $p<0.01$). According to this finding H_1 was supported. No significant relationships were found between other four dimensions of ethical climate such as law and code, rules, instrumental, and independence and job satisfaction. In this respect, H_2 , H_3 , H_4 and H_5 were not supported.

The regression analysis was carried out to determine the efficacy level of the perceptions of ethical climate types on job satisfaction. Multi-collinearity should be analyzed for a better regression model. In order to detect the presence of multi-collinearity, the tolerance and the variance inflation factors (VIFs) values (Akman *et al.*, 2008: 108) are calculated. Small tolerance and high variance inflation factors (VIFs) values denote that there is a multi-collinearity

problem among independent variables (Kalaycı, 2009: 268). We can assume that multi-collinearity is not a problem in data since all significant variables in Table 3 have much higher tolerance values than 0.10 (Ozgener, Iraz, 2006: 1362) and have lower variance inflation factors (VIFs) than 5.0 (Bozic, 2007: 117).

Table 3. The Results of Regression Analysis for Job Satisfaction

Independent variables	β	S.E.	t-value	Sig.	Tolerans	VIF
Caring	0,201	0,068	2,974*	0,003*	0,825	1,212
Law and code	-0,037	0,046	-0,794	0,429	0,891	1,122
Rules	0,030	0,044	0,679	0,498	0,921	1,086
Instrumental	-0,110	0,074	-1,482	0,140	0,929	1,076
Independence	0,077	0,064	1,201	0,231	0,849	1,178
F			3,390			
Adjusted R ²			0,068			
R ²			0,096			
Std. Error of the Estimate			0,57963			
Significance level			0,006			

Dependent variable: **Job satisfaction**

* p<0,01

The results of regression analysis in Table 3 suggest that the overall model was significant (Adjusted R²= 0,068; F= 3,390; p<0,01). The interrelation of five independent variables (caring, law and code, rules, instrumentalism and independence) was taken into account, and the R² (0,096) was significant at the 0,01 level. This means that 9.6% of the variance in job satisfaction was significantly explained by the independent variables. Among independent variables, caring was found to be the most important in explaining the variance in job satisfaction as the highest beta value was 0,201.

This research has pointed out that a positive and meaningful relationship between the perceptions of caring type of the ethical climate and the job satisfaction in hotel business as stated in previous research results and different sectors such as Kim and Miller (2008), Tsai and Huang (2008), Aydemir (2007), Mulki *et al.* (2006), Schminke *et al.* (2005), Schwepker Jr. and Hartline (2005), Suar and Khuntia (2004), Koh and Boo, (2001), Schwepker Jr. (2001) and the perceptions of caring type of the ethical climate could be the determinant factor over the job satisfaction of the hotel employees in Nevsehir.

This study shows that an employee's preferred work climate most frequently indicates favor for a caring climate where organizations have a sincere interest in the well being of others inside and outside. In other words, concern for all organizational stakeholders was affected by firm's decisions.

In the final analysis, the role of ethical climate, specifically caring climate should be taken into consideration in the implementations of business strategy, business objectives, and performance of a tourism or hospitality organizations. The interests of the organization will prevail over those of all stakeholders. Given the differences among stakeholders' interests, each one of them pays attention to whether theirs or other's interest are delivered fairly. Organizational ethical climate depends on procedural and distributive justice. Therefore, the real challenge for organization's management is to ensure and demonstrate that an organization's ethical climate is part of strategy implementations, business objectives, and organizational performance.

The following suggestions can be offered for ethical climate in order to increase job satisfaction level of hotel businesses staff:

- Public authorities should carry out necessary arrangements and provide an effective control mechanism in order to lead the organizations to form professional ethical codes.
- A comprehensive and joint ethical counsel should be founded in order to form professional codes, determine the standards, and supervise the applications.
- Higher administrative staff should be a model via their expressions and behaviors in the adaptation process of ethical behaviors for the whole staff.
- Human resources policies and applications, which have a crucial role in increasing job satisfaction, should be developed in accordance with the exemplary hotel business applications.
- Organizational socialization process should be provided in order that the employees can learn organizational policies, rules, norms, and procedures on an interactive basis.
- In-service training programs required for conveying the information about ethical codes and organizational values determined by the administration should be supplied.

- Award and penalty system should be constituted and this system should be applied objectively.

Unless these issues are taken into account, turnover will increase, service quality will decrease, client satisfaction will be affected negatively, disadvantage of competition will occur, and consequently businesses will face the threat of withdrawing.

As a matter of fact, the findings of this study need to be interpreted with the following limitations in mind. First limitation is that the results cannot be strictly construed to be representative of all middle managers and employees in hotel businesses around the world, since this study has been conducted in a specific region of Turkey, Cappadocia. Therefore, the study needs to be replicated in different tourism destination, industries and countries to be able to generalize the findings. Second, participants may have been biased to present positive aspects of their businesses.

As stated this research aimed to investigate the relationship between ethical climate types and job satisfaction in hotel businesses. For the upcoming researches, it is possible to investigate the issue of ethical climate in different industry settings. Moreover, it would also be interesting to analyze the possible relationships between ethical climate and turnover intention, organizational citizenship behavior, psychological well-being for different industries or organizations.

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