

INVESTIGATION OF ETHICAL CLIMATE UNDERSTANDINGS PERCEIVED BY THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORTS EMPLOYEES

GENÇLİK VE SPOR BAKANLIĞI ÇALIŞANLARININ ALGILADIKLARI ETİK İKLİM ANLAYIŞLARININ ARAŞTIRILMASI

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate ethical climate understandings perceived by the Ministry of Youth and Sports Employees. The ethical climate perceptions of the Ministry employees is at a level of "I agree" and this suggests an adequate level of ethical climate in the Ministry. The ethical climate perceptions of the employees in the 41-45 age group are significantly higher than the 26-30 age group employees. The ethical climate perceptions of the employees with lower level of education and lower reading level are higher compared to those employees with higher level of education.

Keywords: Ethical climate, staff, the ministry of youth and sports, workplace

ÖZET

Bu araştırmanın amacı, Gençlik ve Spor Bakanlığı çalışanlarının algıladıkları etik iklim anlayışlarının araştırılması. Bakanlık çalışanlarının kendi kurumlarıyla ilgili etik iklim algıları Katılıyorum düzeyinde olup, bu durum bakanlıktaki etik iklim düzeyinin yeterli olduğunu göstermektedir. 41-45 yaş grubu çalışanların etik iklim algıları 26-30 yaş grubu çalışanlara göre anlamlı bir şekilde daha yüksek çıkmıştır. Eğitim düzeyi daha düşük olan ve kitap okuma düzeyi daha az olan çalışanların etik iklim algıları eğitim düzeyi yüksek olan çalışanlara göre daha fazladır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Etik iklim, personel, gençlik ve spor bakanlığı, işyeri

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INTRODUCTION

This word, derived from the word "ethos" in the Greek language and having the meaning of "character", has transformed into the word "ethic" in time and has become a sub-dimension of philosophy, investigating ideal, abstract and moral rules (Acar, 2016; Bute, 2011; Simsek et al. 2011; Aydın, 2006). The concept of ethical climate is a part of overall organization climate that helps to recognize ethical characters of organizations (Demir and Karakus 2015; Yener et al. 2012; Elci and Alpan, 2009; Martin and Cullen, 2006). After 1844, Auguste Comte indicated ethics as the seventh field of science and expressed his opinion "'Humanity is not to be defined through man, but on the contrary, man through humanity" (Bulbul, 2001). When there is no possibility to remedy the situation of people deprived of basic needs, it was argued that the belief in a just World was maintained by despising the poor (Acar 2015; Furnham and Proctor 1989).

Terminologically, the word climate entered the literature as a word of Greek-origin and it has the meanings of "tendency", "inclination". It is also used to describe physical phenomena such as heat, pressure and temperature. With the meaning used in business literature, "climate" refers how members of an organization evaluate internal and external environment of the organization (Bute, 2011; Yagmur, 2013). As a result of globalization, today's business world where competition constantly increases and intensifies has an environment that is hectic and open to constant change. The ultimate goal of enterprises operating in such an

environment is to be successful and maintain their presence (Donertas, 2008). Employees' perception of the ethical climate of their organization is affected by the organization's policies, procedures, reward system and formal or informal systems within the organization (Dogan & Kilic 2014).

Ethical climate provides guidance that there are shared ideas for what behaviors towards employees would be right and how issues should be handled and solved in moral dilemmas. In other words, ethical climate guides employees on what behaviors are appropriate and supported (Victor & Cullen 1988; Treviño et al., 1998; Demirtas 2014). People tend to perceive the world as a place where everybody gets what they deserve, good things happen for the good they do and bad things happen for the bad they do (Acar, 2015; Hafer & Begue, 2005). While ethical climate helps employees in evaluating their issues and considering various alternatives, it also provides guidance for them to decide about acceptable and non-acceptable behaviors (Barnett & Schubert, 2002).

METHOD

The data obtained in the study were evaluated, using statistical methods in the SPSS 14.0 software package. In research findings and evaluation section, frequency distributions for the demographic characteristics of survey participants, mean and standard deviation values of the questions about the ethical climate perceptions, a reliability analysis to determine whether or not the data is suitable for statistical analysis, a factor analysis to understand how many dimensions the scale consists of, an Independent-Samples T-test to determine whether or not there is a significant difference between two groups in terms of independent variables such as gender, marital status, occupation, a One-Way Anova test to determine whether or not there is a significant difference between more than two groups were included.

Sample

The research population consists of randomly reached 233 people who worked in the central office of the Ministry of Youth and Sports between the years 2015 - 2016.

Reliability Analysis

As a result of reliability analysis of the ethical climate scale, which consisted of 26 questions, the Cronbach's Alpha value was found to be 0.897, the Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items was found to be 0.898, and the N of Items was found to be 26. Since the lowest reliability value is considered as 0.70 in the studies conducted in social sciences, it can be said that 0.897 Cronbach's Alpha value is a good result in terms of internal consistency of the scale used in this study.

Data Collection

This study is a diagnostic study and it was conducted by applying a survey to the Ministry employees. In the first part of the survey, demographic information such as age, gender, marital status, work experience, title, educational status of the survey participants as well as questions on whether or not they do physical exercise, how often they read books, what they do in their leisure time, how they define themselves were included. The ethical climate scale that was developed by Cullen, J.B., Parboteeah, K.P. & Bart, V. (2003) was used. The original scale is 9-dimensional however it was seen that the scale consisted of 5 dimensions in the studies conducted by Victor & Cullen, (1988) 2; Wimbush & Shepart, (1994); Peterson, (2002); Vardi, (2011); Ogut & Kaplan, (2011). Yurdakul (2013) adapted the scale to Turkish with the help of linguists through translation-reverse translation. The ethical climate scale

developed by Victor and Cullen (1988) was used to assess the ethical climate perceptions of the survey participants of their organization. The original scale is 9-dimensional. However, it was downsized to 5 dimensions in subsequent studies.

In the survey, the questions about demographic information are closed-ended, and the questions about the ethical climate perceptions were arranged as 5-point Likert type scale, one of the interval scales. The values and intervals of the 5-point Likert scale are as follows: *Weight 1 Choice I strongly disagree Limits 1.00 - 1.80, Weight 2 Choice I disagree Limits 1.81 - 2.60, Weight 3 Choice I'm not sure Limits 2.61 - 3.40, Weight 4 Choice I agree Limits 3.41 - 4.20, Weight 5 Choice I strongly agree Limits 4.21 - 5.00.*

FINDINGS

Similar results were observed in the answers given by the participants to the questions on the laws, rules and policies dimensions of the ethical climate perception. The general average of the answers for the questions on the laws, rules and policies dimensions enter the 'I agree' interval of the 5-point Likert scale with a value of $x=3.71$. Accordingly, we can say that the Ministry employees who participated in the survey look positively at the practices regarding laws, rules and policies in the organization they work and they have a positive ethical climate perception of their organization (Table 1).

Considering the general average of the 'thinking the good of others' dimension of the ethical climate perception, it takes place in the 'I'm not sure' interval of the 5-point Likert scale with a value of $x=3.13$. Accordingly, the participants stated that they are not sure about the 'thinking the good of others' dimension in their organization. Two out of five items in this dimension are included in the 'I agree' interval of the 5-point Likert scale. First one; the item 'In our organization, it is our main criteria to protect well-being of our employees as a whole' had a $x=3.46$ mean value, while the second one; the item 'In our organization, the most efficient way is the right way' had a $x=3.41$ mean value (Table 2).

Considering the general average of the 'individual interests' dimension of the ethical climate perception, it takes place in the 'I'm not sure' interval of the 5-point Likert scale with a value of $x=3.09$. Accordingly, the ministry employees perceive the 'looking out for their own individual interest' behavior of the permanent and contract personnel working in their organization on an 'I'm not sure' level. Out of four questions in this dimension, with respect to the expression 'In our organization, there is no place for moral and ethical values of the employees', the participants responded on the lowest level with a mean value of $x=2.78$ (Table 3).

Considering the general average of the 'organizational interests' dimension of the ethical climate perception, it takes place in the 'I'm not sure' interval of the 5-point Likert scale with a value of $x=3.06$. Accordingly, the ministry employees perceive the 'looking out for organizational interests' behavior of the permanent and contract personnel working in their organization on an 'I'm not sure' level. Out of five questions in this dimension, for the expression of 'When the work done damages corporate interests, it is regarded as unsuccessful', the participants responded on an 'I agree' level with a mean value of $x=3.47$ (Table 4).

In the 'thinking the good of others' dimension, a significant difference was observed between the 26-30 age group and the 41-45 age group. In this dimension, the ethical climate

perceptions of the employees of the 41-45 age group is significantly higher than the employees of the 26-30 age group ($p < 0.05$) (Table 5).

In the 'thinking the good of others' dimension, the ethical climate perceptions of the employees who never read books is observed to be significantly higher than those who read books once a week ($p < 0.05$). In the 'independence' dimension, significant differences were observed between those who read books once a week and those who rarely read books or those who never read books. In this dimension, the ethical climate perceptions of those who rarely read books or those who never read books is significantly higher than those who read books once a week ($p < 0.05$). Again in this dimension, the ethical climate perception of those who never read books is significantly higher than those who read books every two weeks ($p < 0.05$) (Table 6).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The general average of the answers given to the questions on the laws, rules and policies dimensions enters the 'I agree' interval of the 5-point Likert scale with a value of $x = 3.71$. Accordingly, we can say that the Ministry employees who participated in the survey look positively at the practices regarding laws, rules and policies in the organization they work and they have a positive ethical climate perception of their organization. In their studies, Donertas (2008), Asunakutlu (2002), Topaloglu (2010), Bute (2011) reached the conclusion that ethical climate has a very powerful and positive effect on the organizational trust of employees. Our study is consistent with the similar research results in the literature. In his study, Ozipek (2014) reached the conclusion that compared to the employees with a high school education, the employees with an educational background on doctoral level perceive that their corporate has an ethical climate. In the study conducted by Acar (2014), it was observed that the average results, including all sub-dimensions, of the employees who did not work in a management position are higher than the employees who worked in a management position. Dogan and Kilic (2014), on the other hand, reported a contrary result with our study, reaching the conclusion that the 'individual interests' type of ethical climate has a negative effect on the perceived organizational ethical climate level.

Similar results were observed in the answers given by the participants to the questions on the laws, rules and policies dimensions of the ethical climate perception. We can say that the Ministry employees who participated in the survey look positively at the practices regarding laws, rules and policies in the organization they work and they have a positive ethical climate perception of their organization.

Considering the general average of the 'thinking the good of others' dimension of the ethical climate perception, the participants stated that they are not sure about the 'thinking the good of others' dimension in their organization. Considering the general average of the 'individual interest' dimension of the ethical climate perception, the ministry employees perceive the 'looking out for their own individual interest' behavior of the permanent and contract personnel working in their organization on an 'I'm not sure' level. Out of four questions in this dimension, with respect to the expression 'In our organization, there is no place for moral and ethical values of the employees', the participants responded on the lowest level with a mean value of $x = 2.78$. Considering the general average of the 'organizational interest' dimension of the ethical climate perception, the ministry employees perceive the 'looking out for organizational interests' behavior of the permanent and contract personnel working in their organization on an 'I'm not sure' level. In the 'thinking the good of others' dimension, a

significant difference was observed between the 26-30 age group and the 41-45 age group. In this dimension, the ethical climate perceptions of the employees of the 41-45 age group is significantly higher than the employees of the 26-30 age group. In the 'thinking the good of others' dimension, the ethical climate perceptions of the employees who never read books is observed to be significantly higher than those who read books once a week. In the 'independence' dimension, significant differences were observed between those who read books once a week and those who rarely read books or those who never read books. In this dimension, the ethical climate perceptions of those who rarely read books or those who never read books is significantly higher than those who read books once a week. Again in this dimension, the ethical climate perception of those who never read books is significantly higher than those who read books every two weeks.

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Table 1. Results for the Laws, Rules and Policies Dimension

<i>Laws, Rules and Policies</i>			
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
5. Our organization always expects us to do the right thing for our customers and the public.	233	3,78	1,07
7. In our organization, everybody, first and foremost, is expected to work efficiently.	233	3,77	1,15
8. All employees are expected to comply with all laws and professional standards above all.	233	3,91	1,09
9. In our organization, laws and professional standards are the main criteria in all kinds of decisions and applications.	233	3,47	1,27
10. In our organization, employees are expected to strictly comply with laws and professional standards.	233	3,63	1,15
11. In our organization, the primary criterion is whether or not a decision is in violation of any laws.	233	3,68	1,07
12. In our organization, complying with the rules and procedures is very important.	233	3,64	1,12
13. All employees are expected to abide by rules and procedures of the organization.	233	3,80	1,10
MEAN		3,71	1,13

Table 2. Results for ‘thinking the good of others’ dimension

<i>Acting Out Of Concern For Others</i>			
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. It is our main principle to act out of concern for all of the employees of our institution as a whole.	233	3.46	1.29
2. The most important issue in our institution is the interests of the employees as a whole.	233	2.95	1.26
3. Our primary concern is always what is good for other people.	233	2.88	1.23
4. In our institution, each employee acts out of concern for other employees.	233	2.94	1.27
6. In our institution, the most efficient way is considered to be the most correct way.	233	3.14	1.19
Mean		3.13	1.25

Table 3. Results for ‘Individual Interests’ dimension

<i>Individual Interests</i>			
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
16. In our organization, employees value their own interests above everything.	233	3,21	1,30
17. In our organization, employees mostly look out for themselves..	233	3,27	1,23
18. In our organization, there is no place for moral and ethical values of the employees.	233	2,78	1,20
19. Employees are expected to do anything for the interest of the organization without thinking of the consequences.	233	3,10	1,21
Mean		3,09	1,23

Table 4. Results for the ‘Organizational Interests’ dimension

Organizational Interests			
	N	Mean	SD
14. In our organization, successful people are those people who comply with written instructions.	233	2,88	1,21
15. In our organization, employees strictly comply with company policies.	233	2,99	1,14
20. In our organization, employees are not interested in anything other than the interests of the organization.	233	2,78	1,21
21. When the work done damages corporate interests, it is regarded as unsuccessful.	233	3,47	1,09
22. In our organization, the primary responsibility of the employees is to keep the budget under control.	233	3,17	1,16
Mean		3,06	1,16

Table 5. Tukey test for ethical climate perceptions by age

Tukey HSD				
Ethical Climate Dimensions	(I) Age	(J) Age	Difference between means	P
2- Thinking the good of others	Between 26-30	Between 20-25	-0.722	0.073
		Between 31-35	-0.130	0.927
		Between 36-40	-0.294	0.476
		Between 41-45	-0.659	0.010 *

*P<0.05 means a significant difference.

Table 6. Tukey test for ethical climate perceptions by the frequency of reading

Ethical Climate Dimensions	Tukey HSD		Difference between means	P
	(I) Reading	(J) Reading		
2- Thinking the good of others	Once a week	Every two weeks	-0.132	0.852
		Rarely	-0.411	0.057
		I never read	-0.591	0.043 *
3- Independence	Once a week	Every two weeks	-0.052	0.992
		Rarely	-0.478	0.037 *
		I never read	-0.767	0.010 *
	I never read	Once a week	0.767	0.010 *
		Every two weeks	0.715	0.018 *
		Rarely	0.289	0.629

*P<0.05 means a significant difference.