



Determining the dimensions of organizational climate perceived by the hotel employees



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ABSTRACT

This study identifies the dimensions of organizational climate perceived by the hospitality employees and measures the perceptual differences among the employees about the organizational climate. Data were obtained from 504 employees across 18 luxury hotels in India. Exploratory factor analysis identified five components explaining 60.11% variance. However, confirmatory factor analysis revealed a more precise and validated four dimensional climate constructs labelled as '*Esprit of Profession, Organization & Workgroup*'; '*Leader Facilitation & Support*'; '*Cohesion, Clarity & Objectivity of System*' and '*Job Challenge, Variety & Feedback*'. Analysis of variance determined that significant differences in perception exist among the employees of different star category of hotel, job positions and gender about the climate. This study contributes to the knowledge related to organizational climate in the field of hospitality and the findings would be useful for hotels in improving their organizational climate.

1. Introduction

Hotel is a service oriented industry and depends on quality manpower for its sustainability (Datta & Singh, 2017; Kusluvan, 2003; Tajeddini & Trueman, 2012). The graduates who have been presently entering the hospitality profession from past one decade have attitudes, values, and perspectives which are quite diverse from their senior generations (Choi, Kwon, & Wansoo, 2013; Farrell & Hurt, 2014; Josiam, Devine, Baum, Crutsinger, & Reynolds, 2010; Pendergast, 2010). They are more qualified and technology savvy and have challenged the hotel industry which used to depend more on manpower for its operation (Eisner, 2005; Gursoy, Maier, & Chi, 2008; Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010). The young employees are impatient and have shown least organizational commitment level. The easiness of job search through internet has continuously instigated their turnover intentions (Gursoy et al., 2008; Yang, 2008). These characteristics have caused concern for the HR managers in understanding and curbing the attrition of these hotel employees (Cairncross & Buultjens, 2007; Pendergast, 2010; Shaw & Fairhurst, 2008). The most essential thing that directs the mindset of the employees are their own perception about the working condition of the organization, i.e. organizational climate (Barron, Maxwell, Broadbridge, & Ogden, 2007; Cairncross & Buultjens, 2007; Farrell & Hurt, 2014; Gursoy et al., 2008; Karatepe & Karatepe, 2010; Maxwell, Ogden, & Broadbridge, 2010).

Thus, understanding the young professional's expectations and perceptions about the hotel's organization climate is of utmost importance not only because their overall strength is maximum and continuously increasing (Datta & Singh, 2017) but it would also enhance the growth and prosperity of the hotel industry by minimizing HR related issues (Choi et al., 2013; Datta & Jha, 2015; Farrell & Hurt, 2014; Subramanian & Shin, 2013).

Though some studies of organizational climate have been conducted but it has been evident that climate differs from one context to another, so it cannot be generalized and the study of its influence on a different settings will always remain a unique one (Jones & James, 1979; Milton, 1981). Hotel industry have to understand the expectations of their employees from the existing climate and try to make it more encouraging for them (Datta & Jain, 2017; Farrell & Hurt, 2014; Subramanian & Shin, 2013). This study identifies the dimensions that determine the perception of the young employees of luxury hotels in India about their working conditions.

2. Organizational climate and its hospitality underpinning

The study on organizational climate (OC) can be traced back from 1939 through the work of Kurt Lewin and has constantly been focus of empirical research. 'Organizational climate' as a word was coined by Cornell (1956) and expressed it as a "delicate blending of

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interpretations or perceptions by persons in the organization of their jobs or roles in relationship to others and their interpretation of the roles of others in the organization". In 1958, Argyris (as cited in Zhang & Liu, 2010) presented climate in relationship with formal organizational policies, employee needs, values and personalities. For quite a long time, organizational climate was considered as a feeling of impression of the organization, till Forehand and Gilmer (1964) gave a more precise definition. According to them it is "a set of characteristics that describes an organization, distinguishes it from other organizations, is relatively enduring over time and can influence the behaviour of people in it". In their study Litwin and Stringer (1968) defines climate as "a set of measurable properties of the work environment, based on the collective perceptions of the people who work in the environment and demonstrated to influence their motivation and behaviour". The study by Pritchard and Karasick (1973) assimilated several explanations given by former researchers and collectively presented OC as a reasonably persistent quality of an organization's internal environment, different from other organizations, which are consequences of the organization's members' behaviour, perceptions and interpretations which determine their behavioural outcomes.

Earlier debates on culture & climate had no clarity because the term was used interchangeably (Davidson, Manning, Timo, & Ryder, 2001). Denison (1996) clarified all the confusion by demarcating culture and climate and explained that OC is revealed in the practices and actions that are apparent at the surface of the organization. Climate is emphasized to be impermanent, subject to direct control and limited to characteristics that are deliberately perceived by the organization's members whereas collectiveness of climate over a period of time results in culture and it is rooted in the values, beliefs, and assumptions of the organizational members. Denison emphasized that qualitative research methods are required for studying culture whereas quantitative research method are applicable for studying climate.

Davidson et al. (2001); Davidson (2000); Johnston, Sharma, and Spinks (2013); Johnston and Spinks (2013); Manning, Shacklock, Bell, and Manning (2012, 2004) acknowledged the work of Jones and James (1979) and Ryder and Southey (1990) and mentioned OC as a combined score of the perception of the members about the work environment of their respective organizations. Researchers also delivered the approach toward the climate measurement. They considered that the 'perceptual measurement of individual attribute' approach to determine the measurement of the OC is more definitive, however there were certain gaps which the researchers tried to address. It was identified that researchers were obsessed with measurement techniques and they entirely neglected the conceptual models and constructs. But, the measurement only come into the picture once a model is established and the parameters are clearly outlined (Kundu, 2007). Moreover the dimensions of the organizational attributes have been mixed up with the individual attributes, for which Jones and James (1979) insisted on the use of the term psychological climate in case of individual attributes and similarly for the organizational attributes, they termed it as OC. This study has conceptualized OC as a construct created by the actions of the organization. This definition is more relevant here as it focuses on people and their views of climate and what impact it has on the organization rather than on definitional issues.

2.1. Measurement of organizational climate in hotel industry

Research of Davidson et al. (2001); Davidson (2000); Subramanian and Shin (2013) has witnessed positive influence of OC in improving organization's success in hospitality sector. Since the success of the organization especially that of hospitality organization depends on customer satisfaction (Ali, Omar, & Amin, 2013; Johnston et al., 2013; Mohsin, Lengler, & Kumar, 2013; Pizam & Ellis, 1999; Rahimi, 2017; Tajeddini & Trueman, 2012) and also influenced by the work attitude of the employees (Chalkiti & Sigala, 2010; Davidson et al., 2010; Ma & Qu, 2011; Murphy, Dipietro, Rivera, & Muller, 2009; Pizam & Thornburg,

2000; Zopiatis & Kyprianou, 2006) for which climate plays an important role (Manning, Davidson, & Manning, 2004; Subramanian & Shin, 2013).

Jones and James (1979) developed 35 'a-priori concept' (potential dimensions) and segregated them in 04 characteristics namely: job & role characteristic (consists of 11 composites), characteristic of leadership (consists of 08 composites), workgroup characteristic (consists of 04 composites), and subsystem & organizational characteristic (consists of 12 composites). Each concept consists of two to seven items and with a three to five scaled responses. Composites were counted by aggregating appropriate item responses. Data from 4315 US navy personnel of different subunits and departments were collected through psychological climate questionnaire (PCQ) of 145 items and the application of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) produced six underlying dimensions with eigenvalues greater than unity.

Ryder and Southey (1990) modified the PCQ instrument of Jones and James (1979), to suit the context and was measured on seven point Likert scale. Further, 145 items were segregated to 35 'a-priori' concept. EFA was applied on the data and the result identified 10 dimensions, out of which 06 were interpretable.

Study conducted by Davidson (2000) in fourteen 4-star and 5-star hotels in Australia using the further modified version of the PCQ instrument. He framed 70 items based on the same 35 'a-priori concept', with each concept having 2 items. However while loading for EFA, Davidson deviated from the earlier approaches of Jones and James (1979) and Ryder and Southey (1990) and loaded 70 items instead of 35 composites, which extracted 12 components of eigenvalue greater than unity, out of which seven dimensions were successfully interpreted by him. Later on in another study, Davidson et al. (2001) named this as 'tourism and hospitality organizational climate scale'.

Manning et al. (2004) tried to establish a shortened version of the instrument developed by Davidson (2000) and Davidson et al. (2001) in hospitality industry. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) of the modified instrument failed to measure all the dimensions. Their study acknowledged the original instruments established by Davidson (2000) and Davidson et al. (2001) since it has covered a much larger sample. Later on, it was confirmed through the work of various researchers: Datta and Jain (2017); Johnston and Spinks (2013); Manning et al. (2012) that the OC instrument developed by Davidson (2000) and Davidson et al. (2001) is quite reliable than other climate instruments on hospitality industry. However, the research of Ryder and Southey (1990) had mentioned that the analysis approach of Jones and James (1979) is the most adequate one and had been adopted in many researches (Johnston & Spinks, 2013). Milton (1981) mentioned that the climate differs from one industry to another and in dissimilar organizational settings. Since the climate of the hotel industry in India is still unexplored, the prime objective of this study is to identify the underlying dimensions of OC as perceived by the hotel employees in India.

2.2. Perceived differences among the employees about the Hotel's climate

Hannan and Freeman (1977) have mentioned that there is an implication of population ecology to the organizational-environment relation and it differs from individual to organizational level. Davidson (2000); Johnston et al. (2013) expressed that hotel's climate is a unique multi-level construct and it is perceived differently by different demographic groups. Understanding the perception of each and every group is necessary to understand the climate of hotel industry as a whole (Davidson et al., 2001). The perception of the groups depend on the organizational (star category and departments) or individual (job position and gender) level (Al-Khasawneh, 2013; Datta & Jain, 2017; Jones & James, 1979; Kuria, Peter, & Alice, 2011; Zhang & Liu, 2010).

The HR policies and benefits of the upper star category of hotels are much more structured than lower star category of hotels which results in perception differences amongst the employees working in hotels of different star classification (Al-Khasawneh, 2013; Davidson et al., 2010;

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