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A DIMENSIONAL MEASUREMENT OF ORGANISATIONAL CLIMATE IN INDIAN OIL CORPORATION LTD., DIGBOI REFINERY, ASSAM

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ABSTRACT

Core competition is very important for the survival of any organisation. In a large-scale industrial unit like Indian Oil Corporation Ltd., it is very important to have a positive organisational climate for sustaining and challenging the modern competitive world. A healthy organisational climate promotes employees growth and thus contributes positively to the business outcome. The quality of organisational climate affects the overall performance of employees. Positive climate is an indicator of positive attitude of top, middle as well as lower level of employees in a petroleum industry. The present study is a humble attempt to acclimatise the various dimensions of organisational climate from the existing literature. The study also attempts to measure the various dimensions of organisational climate namely challenge, involvement, trust, openness, freedom, humour, conflict, idea support, debate and risk taking in Indian Oil Corporation Ltd., Digboi Refinery, Assam. The study used the Organisational Climate Questionnaire to measure the dimensions of organisational climate and found that idea time, playfulness, conflict and risk taking are having lower influence to the organisational climate. However, debate, trust, challenge, freedom and idea support are found as "good" dimensions, which contribute positive influence to the organisational climate of the organisation under study.

KEYWORDS

conflict, dimensions, organisational culture and positive climate.

INTRODUCTION

Human resources are effectively deployed through appropriate human resource practices and management of organisational culture (Barney & Wright, 1998). Human resource is the most important resource that an organisation possesses. It is the contributor to the intellectual, social and emotional capital of an organisation, thereby being the most important instruments behind every success. It is thus very important to develop the competencies of this resource with changing times, to keep them in pace with the competition (Barney, 1991). In addition, the organisations are facing intense challenges of employees' commitment and proper organisational climate. These challenges are not unique to any specific organisation or industry, but affect all organisations, regardless of their structure or size. Organisational climate in particular is constantly being challenged by the impact of the changes today (Nair & Ghosh, 2006). To survive and surpass their competitors, organisations are constantly seeking to improve their performance. Brown and Leigh (1996) revealed that organisational climate has become more important than ever before because organisations need to ensure that those employees who contribute to the growth of the organisation will want to stay in the organisation and will continue pouring their efforts in to their work to benefit the organisation. Schneider (1990) defined organisational climate as perceptions of the events, practices and procedures, as well as the kind of behaviors, which get rewarded, supported and expected in a particular organisational setting. Isaksen et al. (2001) articulated organisational climate as the recurring of patterns of behaviour, attitudes and feelings that characterise life in organisations. Organisational climate and organisational culture are associated with each other in the literature and sometimes they are even used interchangeably (Wall, 1999). Climate is conceived as an organisational reality in an objectivistic sense. Culture refers to deeper and more enduring values, norms and beliefs within the organisation however, climate is distinct from culture in that it is more directly observable within the organisation (Ekvall, 1996). Bowen and Ostroff (2004) elaborated organisational climate as a shared perception of what the organisation is like in terms of practices, policies, procedures, routines and rewards. Organisations shall continuously seek for a developmental climate because only then their human resources will be more flexible to changes brought by organisations to cope up into the changing competition.

Organisational climate is the quality of working environment. Individuals when valued and respected by the organisation, contribute positively to business outcome. The feelings, attitudes and behaviour of its employees as influenced by the adopted organisational policy, results in the creation of a unique organisational climate. A positive climate will encourage employees' growth and commitment. In the words of Cambell (1970) organisational climate is a set of attributes specific to a particular organisation that may be induced from the way that the organisation deals with its members and its environment. For the individual employees within the organisation, climate takes the form of a set of attitudes and expectancies, which describe the organisation.

Digboi is a small town in Assam situated in the North-Eastern part of India. The place is the headquarter of Assam Oil Division of IOCL and is regarded as the birth place of the country's petroleum industry. It was in this region that the pioneers struck oil in the midst of dense jungle at a time when there was hardly any industrial development in the country. By an Act of the Parliament in 1981, the refining and marketing interest of the Assam Oil Company was vested with the IOCL and the Assam Oil Company as a division became full-fledged part of Indian Oil Corporation Limited as IOCL, Digboi Refinery.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of the past studies is useful to define concepts to show the theoretical basis and formulate the methodology unambiguously and objectively. Forehands and Gilmer (1964) conducted a study on the evolution of organisational climate. The study found out that individual behavior could be more meaningfully understood if it was related to the behavioral environment as perceived and reacted by the employees. In other words, the climate was defined as an enduring organisational or situational characteristics perceived by the members of the organisation. Frederikson (1966) concluded that different organisational climate has different effects on human performance. The study summarised that the amount of administrative work in the stimulated job is more predictable in a climate that encouraged innovation than in one that encouraged standard procedures. Friedlander and Margulics (1969) studied organisational climate with an objective to determine the relationship between organisational climate and job satisfaction. The study revealed that organisational climate is a significant determinant of individual job satisfaction and this relationship varies with different types of climate. Baumgartel (1971) found out the contributing factors of organisational climate for leadership practices, communication practices and enduring systematic characteristics of working relationships among any person on any division of an organisation. Schneider and Hall (1972) in their study on organisational climate aimed to find out the interaction between personal and organisational characteristics and its relationship to organisational climate. The findings concluded that organisational climate is the phenomenon that represents an interaction between

personal and organisational characteristics. Dotlich and Kanarick (1984) found out the effect of organisational climate on job satisfaction and job performance. The study revealed that organisational climate is strongly related to employee satisfaction than that of job performance. Hystad, Bartone and Eid (2014) examined the positive organisational behavior theory to test workplace and individual factors that may affect safety climate in petroleum industry. The study explored the potential influence of authentic leadership style and psychological capital on safety climate and risk outcomes. The study accomplished the importance of leadership qualities as well as psychological factors in shaping a positive work safety climate. Haugsnes (2016) studied the relationship between organisational climate and work environment. The study revealed that positive organisational climate provided job support which strengthened work environment. Schneider et al. (2017) attempted to study the history about organisational climate and organisational culture. The study highlighted the reflections of four main periods of organisational climate which are the Pre-1971 Era, with pioneering work on exploring conceptualisation and operationalisation of climate constructs, the 1971-1985 Era with foundational work on aggregation issue, outcomes-focused climate on safety and service and early writings, the 1986-1999 Era characterised solidification of a focused climate approach to understand organisational processes and outcomes and beginning of the survey approaches and the 2000-2014 Era, characterised by multilevel work on climate, climate strength, demonstrated validity for climate approach outcomes and processes and the relationship between leadership and climate and culture.

Ekvall (1996) pointed out ten dimensions of organisational climate, which are characteristics of climate and in a way reflect the possibility for certain creative behaviour that enables change and innovation. The link between creativity, climate and innovation which is proposed by Ekvall is supported by the theory of Amabile et al. (1996). Climate or the work environment as called by Amabile et al. (1996), influences the level and frequency of creative behaviour. Creative behaviour is the beginning and necessary condition for innovation (Amabile et al. 1996). The Creative Climate Questionnaire (CCQ) by Ekvall tries to measure the degree in which the dimensions are present and creativity is able to flourish. The dimensions of organisational climate under CCQ are Challenge/Involvement, Freedom, Idea support, Trust/Openness, Playfulness/Pleasantry, Dynamism/ Liveliness, Debates, Conflicts, Risk taking and Idea time.

Therefore, organisational climate refers to the recurring patterns of behaviour exhibited in the day-to-day environment of the organisation, as experienced, understood and interpreted by the employees within the organisation.

The ten dimensions of CCQ were further tested on reliability and validity by Isaksen, Ekvall, Laurer and Britz (2001). This resulted in a list of nine dimensions and improvised to a questionnaire called the Situational Outlook questionnaire (SOQ), excluding the tenth dimension "dynamism/ liveliness".

NEED OF THE STUDY

From the various literatures reviewed, it has been observed that studies on organisational climate have been envisaged on various spheres. Besides, research studies had attempted to examine the relationship between organisational climate and organisational structure, perception and counterproductive behaviour. But, there is no in-depth study on the organisational climate in oil sector especially in Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOCL). The presence of a favourable climate attracts huge capital and increases managerial effectiveness. Since late eighties, in the petroleum sector, IOCL had spread their wings and contributed tremendously to the Indian economy. Hence, it is appropriate to study whether the employees in IOCL perceive the organisational climate favourably or not. Keeping in view the aforesaid set-up, the topic is considered for the study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are

1. To acclimatise the dimensions of organisational climate
2. To measure the dimensions of organisational climate in IOCL, Digboi Refinery.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

a) POPULATION AND SAMPLING FRAME

The research population of the study comprises of all the non-executive employees of IOCL, Digboi Refinery. The respondents were selected through stratified random sampling method. There are 1575 number of employees, out of which the number of executives are 325 and number of non-executives are 1250 as on 14th November, 2014. The non-executive level employees include Junior Engineers, Accountants, Clerks, Operators, Nurses, Refinery Workers and Security Guards (IOCL Manual, 2014). The sample size consists of 20 per cent of each of these individual groups, which represents the 20 percent of the non-executive employees of the organisation. Therefore, a total of 250 non-executive employees represent the sample size of the study.

b) VARIABLES CONSIDERED

The dimensions of organisational climate are being measured by using the most commonly used SOQ. The variables considered to measure the various dimensions of organisational climate are challenge/involvement, freedom, trust/ openness, idea time, playfulness/humour, conflict, idea support, debate and risk taking.

c) DATA COLLECTION

The study was conducted through primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected from the sampled respondents through a well-designed questionnaire. The sources of secondary data were the administrative and personnel manuals of IOCL, journals, magazines, various survey reports, research papers, published and unpublished dissertations, theses etc.

DISCUSSION ON THE DIMENSIONAL MEASUREMENT OF ORGANISATIONAL CLIMATE

As mentioned above, the present study has adopted SOQ. The relevant variables have taken into account to analyse the dimensions of organisational climate. By using Four Point Likert Scale, the data relevant to the items under the nine dimensions were collected and have been measured. The following Table 1 highlights the descriptive statistics of organisational climate in the organisation of study from non-executives' point of view.

TABLE 1: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF ORGANISATIONAL CLIMATE (Non-Executives' point of view)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
MeanD1	250	1.71	2.14	1.9606	.00572	.09051
MeanD2	250	1.50	1.83	1.7140	.00512	.08102
MeanD3	250	2.00	2.40	2.0600	.00624	.09858
MeanD4	250	.83	1.50	1.4893	.00530	.08382
MeanD5	250	1.33	1.67	1.3387	.00265	.04191
MeanD6	250	.83	2.00	.8520	.00928	.14668
MeanD7	250	1.80	2.60	2.5872	.00636	.10058
MeanD8	250	1.67	2.50	2.4867	.00663	.10477
MeanD9	250	.40	.80	.6320	.00706	.11165
Overallmean	250	1.59	1.73	1.6746	.00142	.02251
Valid N (list- wise)	250					

Source: Researchers' calculation

Where, D1 = Challenge, D2 = Freedom, D3 = Trust, D4 = Idea time, D5 = Playfulness, D6 = Conflict, D7 = Idea support, D8 = Debate and D9 = Risk taking. Again, Table 2 draws the allotted scores with percentage on the dimensions of organisational climate of the sampled non-executive employees.

TABLE 2: ALLOTTED SCORES WITH PERCENTAGE ON THE DIMENSIONS OF ORGANISATIONAL CLIMATE (Non-Executives' point of view)

N=250	Challenge	Freedom	Trust	Idea time	Playfulness	Conflict	Idea support	Debate	Risk taking
Total Allotted Score	3431	2571	2575	2234	2008	1278	3234	3730	790
Percentage	65.35	57.13	68.67	49.64	44.62	28.40	86.24	82.89	21.07
Overall Percentage	56.03								

Source: Researchers' Calculation

Based on the above mean value and percentage of each dimension of organisational climate, the ranking of these dimensions are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3: RANKING OF THE DIMENSIONS OF ORGANISATIONAL CLIMATE FROM NON-EXECUTIVES' POINT OF VIEW

Sl. No.	Dimensions of Organisational Climate	Ranking
1	Idea support	1
2	Debate	2
3	Trust/openness	3
4	Challenge	4
5	Freedom	5
6	Idea time	6
7	Playfulness	7
8	Conflict	8
9	Risk taking	9

Source: Researchers' Calculation

FINDINGS

From the review of literature, it was acclimatised that the nine dimensions supporting the study for the organisational climate in IOCL, Digboi Refinery, Assam, are challenge, freedom, trust, playfulness, idea support, idea time, debate, conflict, and risk-taking.

The mean value of overall organisational climate is 1.67 (s.d = 0.023, s.e = 0.001). Likewise the mean value of Challenge (D1) is 1.96, Freedom (D2) is 1.71, Trust (D3) is 2.06, Idea time (D4) is 1.49, Playfulness (D5) is 1.34, Conflict (D6) is 0.85, Idea support (D7) is 2.59, Debate (D8) is 2.49 and Risk taking (D9) is 0.63. Considerably, the distribution of mean values of nine dimensions differs markedly from the overall mean. However, the mean of D1, D2, D3, D7 and D8 are higher than the overall mean score. Therefore, these five dimensions of organisational climate have higher impact on the perceived organisational climate of non-executive employees. The overall percentage of the dimensions of organisational climate is 56.03 per cent. Based on Table 2, the dimensions namely Idea support (D7) = 86.24%, Debate (D8) = 82.89%, Trust/Openness (D3) = 68.67%, Challenge (D1) = 65.35% and Freedom (D2) = 57.13% have higher impact on the perceived organisational climate. But, Idea time (D4) = 49.64%, Playfulness (D5) = 44.62%, Conflict (D6) = 28.40% and Risk taking (D9) = 29.07% are having lesser impact on the perceived organisational climate of the non-executive employees in the organisation. These findings are aligned with the findings from Table 1.

From the above analyses of nine dimensions of organisational climate, it was found out that there exists a better climate in IOCL, Digboi Refinery from the non-executive employees' point of view.

However, Idea time, Playfulness, Conflict and Risk taking are having lower influence to the organisational climate. Therefore, these dimensions are considered to be the "not good" dimensions for organisational climate of the organisation. But, the other dimensions namely Debate, Trust/openness, Challenge, Freedom and Idea Support are considered to be the "good" dimensions.

RECOMMENDATIONS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Considering the nine dimensions of organisational climate and measuring the same, it is brought into being that a positive organisational climate is prevailed in the organisation under study. But, there still exists four dimensions namely "idea time", "playfulness", "conflict" and "risk taking" which cannot be considered as "satisfactory" as the four dimensions are not causal positive influence in bringing up the good organisational climate.

A good amount of time may be provided to the employees for elaborating new ideas. Playfulness is beneficial to the organisation to achieve organisational goal. Being cognisant of humorous interplay will help employees to understand the relationships between workers and between workers and management. Again, conflict management in the organisation is to be taken care of. Proper and timely management of conflict will decrease the conflict rate in the organisation thereby the personnel role-play in the organisation will accelerate. The finding of the present study regarding "conflict" as one of the weak dimensions of organisational climate, is aligned with the findings of Nordin, Sivapalan, Bhattacharyya, Hezlina, Ahmad and Abdullah (2014)

When the personnel role-play in the organisation has increased due to less and no conflict between the employees and between the employees & employer; co-operation and communication will be increased. Subsequently, the employees of the organisation should feel belongingness to the organisation and risk will be taken by them. When the organisational risk has mitigated through this strategy, the management of the organisation can take effective and efficient decision. Management may also change the procedures or approaches to improve the employees' position through the participation of both executive and non-executives in debate. To improve the climate of the organisation, the management should provide and encourage innovative ideas, which usually avoid confusions and uncertainties.

LIMITATION

The study is limited on the study of organisational climate from non-executive point of view. It is also limited that the study was conducted only on IOCL, Digboi Refinery.

SCOPE OF FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research can be conducted in all the IOCL Refineries in Assam. Employees' commitment to the organisation and its relationship with organisational climate may also be considered as the objective(s) of further research.

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