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Explanation of the Role of Ethical Climate & Social Undermining in Employee Job Involvement

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Abstract

Background: Job involvement is one of the most important ways to increase employee effectiveness by improving ethical climate and reducing social undermining. On the other hand, job involvement helps employees to be more committed to their work. The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of ethical climate and social undermining on job involvement of employees.
Methods: Research method is applicable in terms of practical purpose and type of descriptive–correlation and stepwise regression. Among 292 employees of the general department of education of Lorestan Province, 169 were selected by relative stratified random sampling. In order to collect data, from three questionnaires of ethical climate, social undermining was used in job and job involvement. SPSS software was used to analyze data from descriptive statistical methods and Pearson correlation coefficient and stepwise regression.
Results: The results showed that ethical climate and its dimensions have a significant positive relationship with job involvement. 21.3% of the changes in job involvement of employees are influenced by 3 aspects independence and instrumental and regulation. Also, social undermining and its dimensions have a significant negative relationship with job involvement. 4.8% of job involvement changes are affected by the aspect coworker undermining.
Conclusion: Based on research results of ethical climate and social undermining have an impact on job involvement and are considered as important variables associated with it.

Keywords: Job involvement, Ethical climate, Social undermining

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Introduction

Kahn as the first researcher who conceptualized the term job involvement and focused on the psychological presence of employee during performing their job. He defined the concept of involvement as follows: performing organizational plans using the full capacity of the organization's employees so that employees are emotionally, intellectually (cognitively) and physically involved with their job-related activities. Sometime later, Kahn's views shaped the basic assumptions of the Gallup Organization in the area of employee job involvement. Then, Harter et al. defined the concept of employee involvement as individual's involvement and satisfaction as well as employee's enthusiasm for performing job related tasks (1). Researchers developed the concept and explained it separately (2).

Employee involvement is a rather novel concept in the literature of human resources and has received particular attention in the last two decades. Therefore, there are several definitions for this concept (1). Job involvement as a set of factors related to attitudes includes two emotional and behavioral components that can be affected by the characteristics of the individual and also the characteristics of the workplace (3 job involvement as the internalization of values such as job goodness or job importance for an individual, that means, the extent to which an individual can devote himself more to the organization goals (4). For researchers, involvement refers to the level of individuals' enjoyment of what they do (2). Studies define job involvement as a description of an individual's current job and a function of the extent to which his or her job can address one's immediate needs (5). Job involvement has been one of the most effective techniques to promote employee productivity by improving work commitment and employee participation. Similarly, job involvement support employee to be more committed to their job (6).

For a researcher, due to the positive impact of employees' involvement on organizational effectiveness, activists, employees, and academics are interested in creating involvement in the employees. According to a researcher, while many employees consider employee involvement as a novel action in the area of human resource which can be a technique to address the uncertain and turbulent conditions of job market and industry, the academic communities are still seeking the factors that predict the employees' involvement (1). states that Asian countries, unlike Western countries where there are various research and theories on employees' job involvement, have less focused on this issue while paying attention to employees' job involvement are necessary in these countries. According to a review of the research, the basic factors are the low job involvement of teachers (7). According to Levinson & Cookson, the results of investigations on teachers in the United States and other developed countries indicate that between one-third and one-half of teachers will not choose a teaching job if they have the right to re-choose a job (8).

Moreover, organizations, units and working groups include different types of climates, such as the ethical climate, and due to differences in the situation of individuals, working groups and work history, employees' perception of the organizational climate and ethics climate vary in different organizations. the ethical climate as a set of organizational characteristics that refers to norms and shows how ethical problems are solved (9). Different investigations show that the ethical climate includes prohibitions, punishments, and ethical restrictions. the ethical climate is a kind of organizational climate that refers to behaviors that are believed to be satisfactory or generally accepted in the intended environment (10).

The ethical climate reflects ethical policies, methods, organizational policies and ethical outcomes (11). For researchers, the ethical climate in the organization includes the employees' psychological perception of the ethical policies and methods that govern the organization and its sections (12). At the same time, according to a study, the ethical climate in organizations helps, in dealing with right or wrong behaviors, to first take the observations into account (13).

For researchers, the dimensions of the organizational ethical climate include: Caring (employees are always driven by clients interest), Rules (observe

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law in performing different things), Regulation (individuals act according to the organization norms), Instrumental (individuals are driven by their organization interest), Efficiency (the most efficient technique is always the right and appropriate method) and Independence (employees should be guided by their personal ethical values in their activities) (12).
The concept of social undermining has been of interest to many researchers and has been defines by various researchers (14) and is one of the concepts that have been examined as an influential variable in relation to the outcomes related to employees over the past few years. For researchers, the concept of social undermining is first examined by Wincor et al. (1993). But Rook is the first contemporary researcher who seriously directs other researchers to pay particular attention to the problematic aspects of social relations (15). research related to social undermining based on Rook's (1984) investigations of social psychology has been as a ground to determine the extent of problematic social interactions and exchanges in a set of individuals' experiences (16). Researchers believe that critical studies on deviant and destructive organizational behaviors do not have a long history and research in this area has started and grow for 25 years ago (17).
social undermining is regarded as behaviors that in the course of time hinder the creation and maintaining positive interpersonal relationships, job-related success, and reputation (14). With respect to the components of social undermining, two dimensions of supervisor undermining and co-worker undermining have been mentioned (18). Yu suggested two components of social undermining, that is, supervisor undermining and co-worker undermining at the individual level, and writes: negative evaluation of the individual's perspectives, actions, efforts and other intentional and purposeful behaviors by the supervisor and his coworkers that hinders his efforts to achieve his job goals; inter alia, preventing the provision of significant and necessary information to the person who is undermined, and also some such behaviors as insults, harassing and at the same time silent actions with facial features, blaming and constant gossips are regarded as social undermining (19).
Much researches been conducted with respect to the variables that were suggested. According to the results of the research by Tiwari & Singh, employees with higher job engagement have higher commitment to their organization. According to the results of investigations by researchers, employees who are more engaged to their jobs have higher job satisfaction, try more to achieve organizational goals and therefore are not reluctant to leave their organization (20).
According to the results of the research by researches, job involvement has a negative effect on employee leave (21). The results of some research indicate that job involvement results in job satisfaction, job commitment, performance and self-sacrifice for work (6). According to the findings of researchers, the status of job involvement was moderate among the study population (22).
According to the findings of researchers, Islamic work ethics plays a positive role on job engagement (23). The results of researches indicate that the ethical climate directly promotes employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Similarly, the ethical climate mitigates the tendency of employees to leave the office (24). According to the findings of researches, the ethical climate of the organization and its dimensions have a positive and significant effect on organizational identity and thereby negatively affect the tendency of employees' leave (25).
Also, the results of studies by Mpho (Undermining as a Weapon of Humiliation of Subordinates, Farooq and Julian (Positive Relationship between Social Undermining and Stress), Duffy et al and Ferguson and Barry indicate that social undermining affects aspects of employee behavior and consequently the organization (26, 27, 28, 29). Indeed, organizations, including educational organizations and their managers, should pay attention to the status of job involvement as well as its related variables. Therefore, the purpose of the current study is to explain the role of ethical climate and social undermining to answer the following questions:
- Do the ethical climate and its dimensions affect job involvement?
- Do social undermining and its dimensions affect job involvement?

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Material & Methods

By purpose this was applied research, and in terms of the possibility of controlling variables was in the category of non-experimental research and in terms of relationships between variables was descriptive-correlational. The statistical population is 292 employees of Department of Education Lorestan General Office, of which 263 were male and 29 females. This research used stratified sampling and table of determining the sample size by Krejcie and Morgan (30), and selected 169 people including 152 men and 17 women as a statistical sample. It is necessary to note that based on the organizational positions, expert (144 people), senior expert (16 people), head of department (6 people) and deputy director-general (3 people) completed the measurement tools.

Table 1: Frequency distribution and percentage of the community members and statistical sample by gender

Indicator	Woman	Man	Total
Community	29	263	292
	9.93	90.07	100
Sample	17	252	169
	9.93	90.07	100

The measurement tools of this research were as follows:

Job Involvement: to assess job involvement, this research used Edwards & Kilpatrick 20-item multiple-choice (4-choice options) questionnaire of job involvement (31). Its validity was obtained by content validation and expert approval and post-implementation reliability in a sample (30 people) by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.76.

Ethical Climate: to measure ethical climate, this research used Victor & Cullen questionnaire. The scale is designed from 26 items of 5-choices options in a range from strongly disagree to strongly agree, and measured six dimensions of caring, rules, regulations, instrumental, efficiency and independence (32). Its validity was obtained by content validation and expert approval and post-implementation reliability in a sample (30 people) by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the mentioned dimensions 0.89, 0.93, 0.90, 0.81, 0.87 and 0.85, respectively and was 0.95 for the entire questionnaire.

Social Undermining: to measure social undermining, this research used the 26-item, 5-choices options scale of Duffy et al. (2002), which includes two dimensions of supervisor undermining and co-worker undermining at the individual level (18). Its validity was obtained by content validation and expert approval and post-implementation reliability in a sample (30 people) by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the mentioned dimensions 0.78 and 0.73, respectively, and 0.77 for the entire questionnaire.

To analyze the data, this research used some such methods as descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple regressions with SPSS software.

Results

169 people, including 152 men and 17 women, based on organizational positions, 144 experts, 16 senior experts, 6 heads of departments and 3 deputies participated in this research. The mean and standard deviation of job involvement were 43.65 and 6.017, respectively, ethical climate was 81.57 and 19.565, respectively, and social undermining was 60.30 and 13.124, respectively. Table 2 displays the indicators of mean, standard deviation and correlation matrix of variables. According to the obtained correlations, there is a significant relationship between the variable of ethical climate ($p<0.01$, $r=0.320$) and its dimensions: caring ($p<0.03$, $r=0.166$), rules ($p<0.01$, $r=0.264$), regulations ($p<0.01$, $r=0.302$), instrumental ($p<0.01$, $r=0.311$), efficiency ($p<0.01$, $r=0.294$) and independence ($p<0.01$, $r=0.323$) and also social undermining variable ($p<0.01$, $r=-0.225$) and its dimensions: there is supervisor undermining ($p<0.01$, $r=-0.201$) and co-worker undermining ($p<0.01$, $r=-0.208$,) with job involvement. Therefore, it may be concluded that if the amount of ethical climate variable increases, the amount of job involvement increases and if the amount of social undermining increases, the amount of job engagement decreases.

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Table 2: Mean, standard deviation and correlation coefficient between the research variables

Variables	Mean	Standard deviation	Job engagement
Caring	16.89	4.064	0.166
Rules	12.95	3.910	0.264
Regulations	9.64	2.942	0.302
Instrumental	20.83	5.211	0.311
Efficiency	9.77	2.867	0.294
Independence	11.46	3.762	0.323
Ethical climate	81.57	19.565	0.320
Coworker undermining	31	6.006	0.208-
Supervisor undermining	29.33	8.836	-0.201
Social undermining	60.30	13.124	-0.225
Job involvement	43.65	6.017	-

Table 3 presents the regression analysis performed in three steps. Of the predictor variables included in the analysis, based on the highest level of significance, three dimensions of independence, instrumental and regulations remain in the analysis, the independence dimension is about 10.4 percent by itself, independence and instrumental dimensions together explain about 14.4 percent and independence, instrumental dimensions and regulations together explains 21.3 percent of the variance of job involvement. That means, 21.3 percentage of changes in employee job involvement is affected by three dimensions including independence, instrumental and regulations of the of the ethical climate dimensions ($R^2 = 0.213$, F=14.870, sig<0.001). As the results of Table 4 displays, of the predictor variables included in the analysis based on the highest level of significance, the variables of independence, instrumental and regulations are remained in the analysis and the variables of efficiency, rules and caring are excluded from the analysis.

According to regression analysis performed in one step, of the predictor variables included in the analysis, based on the highest level of significance, the dimension of co-worker undermining is remained in analysis, which explains about 4.8 percent of the variance of job engagement. That means, 4.8 percent of the changes of the employees' job engagement are affected by the dimension of co-worker undermining of the social undermining dimensions ($R^2 = 0.048$, F=7.527, sig<0.001). As the results of Table 4 indicates, of the predictor variables included in the analysis, based on the highest level of significance, the co-worker undermining variable is remained in the analysis and the supervisor undermining variable is excluded from the analysis.

Table 3: Multiple correlation coefficient (R), coefficient of determination (R^2) and respective significance tests F

Variable	Steps	Variables	R	R^2	β	b	β	F	Sig
climate	1	Independence	0.323	0.104	0.516	0.117	-0.323	19.435	0.001
	2	Independence + instrumental	0.380	0.144	0.437	0.157	-0.214	13.972	0.001
	3	Independence+ instrumental+ regulations	0.461	0.213	-0.781	0.206	-0.523	14.870	0.001
under-mining	1	Coworker undermining	-0.208	0.048	-0.208	0.076	-0.208	7.527	0.001

Table 4: Standardized regressions coefficient and significance tests t

Variable	Steps	Predictor variables	β	Statistic t	sig
	1	independence	0.516	4.409	0.001

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Climate	2	independence+ instrumental	0.437	2.780	0.001
	3	independence+ instrumental regulations	-0.781	-3.796	0.001
	excluded	efficacy	0.140	1.194	0.234
		rules	0.052	0.038	0.970
		caring	0.005	0.328	0.743
undermining	1	coworker undermining	-0.208	-2.744	0.001
	excluded	supervisor undermining	-0.124	-1.363	0.175

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to explain the impact of ethical climate and social undermining on job involvement of employees of Department of Education Lorestan General Office. According to the results of the first hypothesis, the ethical climate and its dimensions have a significant positive effect on employee job involvement and three independence dimensions, instrumental and regulations are capable of predicting job involvement. This result is in line with the findings of other studies (23-25). In explaining the confirmation of this hypothesis, it might be argued that ethical climate includes prohibitions, punishments, and ethical restrictions that reflect policies, methods, organizational policies, and ethical outcomes. Similarly, the ethical climate in the organization includes the psychological perception of employees about ethical policies and methods that govern the organization and its sections. Also, ethical climate in organizations helps, in dealing with right or wrong behaviors, to first pay attention to observations. In this regard, the managers of the organizations are suggested to provide the grounds for the development and deepening of the ethical climate in the organization under their management. Encouraging and supporting ethical employee, trying to improve the ethical climate based on building trust, using training and ethical programs, and adhering to ethical principles in payments can all be effective.

According to the result of the second hypothesis, social undermining and its dimensions have a significant negative effect on job involvement and then co-worker undermining's capable of predicting job engagement. Take the effect of social undermining on job management into account and at the same time improve performance in the organization by strengthening job involvement, it is necessary to manage organizations to lay the groundwork for mitigating social undermining and generally highlighting it in planning at all levels and training to deal with it among all employees. To this end, at co-worker and supervisor undermining levels, it is important to pay attention to creating a friendly environment and empathy between the employees of the organization and also the prepare a room for criticism and expectations between employees and managers.

Afterall, while various points of view consider employee involvement as a novel action in the area of human resource which can be a technique to address the uncertain and turbulent conditions, the academic communities are still seeking the factors that predict the employees' involvement. At the same time, organizations are currently faced with a highly uncertain environment in which providing the proper response to these changes, identifying new opportunities and achieving their benefits must create capabilities in themselves. In these conditions, the concepts of ethical climate and social undermining are important issues that have attracted the attention of experts and researchers. The results of this research indicated that the variables under investigation affect job involvement. Indeed, organizations, including educational organizations and their managers, must pay attention to the job involvement status of employees, as well as to its related variables. Furthermore, translating the categories of ethical climate, social undermining, and job engagement into a larger discourse, developing policies to strengthen them by deci-

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sion-makers, and generally taking a long-term approach to institutionalize these variables in organizations can be regarded as practical actions.

Conclusion

The results of this study indicated that the ethical climate and its dimensions and social undermining and its dimensions affect the employees' job involvement. Furthermore, the results of multiple regressions indicated that some dimensions of the variables of ethical climate and social undermining are capable of predicting job involvement. Therefore, to strengthen and improve the level of employees' job involvement, it is suggested that the managers of organizations prioritize the necessary planning in making appropriate arrangements for developing and deepening the ethical climate and, at the same time, in creating strategies for addressing social undermining.

Ethical Consideration

This research introduced the sources used and observed the principle concerning respect for the intellectual property rights of the authors of the works. Moreover, this research included the ethical principles concerning informed consent, privacy, anonymity of respondents and confidentiality of information about the research participants.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests.

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