

## **The Effect of Service Climate on Job Satisfaction and Customers' Satisfaction: A Case Study in Narges Hospital, Doroud, Iran**

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### **Abstract**

The present study was an attempt to analyze organizational service climate on job satisfaction and emotional commitment to organization in their relationships with the customers. This study is an applied and correlational study. The target population included all the employees (150) working in Narges Hospital, Iran, out of which 108 were selected randomly using the Krejcie and Morgan table. Content and face validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by content analysis of the constructs. Reliability of the measurement was also estimated by Cronbach Alpha and found to be 0.86. The data were collected using a questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics and regression analysis using SPSS software. The results showed that job characteristics and fair treatment with the employees had a higher relationship with overall job satisfaction compared to customers' satisfaction. On the other hand, customers' satisfaction did not have a larger effect on emotional commitment to the organization under study compared to overall job satisfaction. In addition, emotional commitment affected the attraction of potential customers but did not influence attraction of employees.

**Keywords:** Service climate, overall job satisfaction, customers' satisfaction, emotional commitment to organization, relationship with the customers.

## 1. Introduction

Employees are the most valuable assets of an organization. In fact, work force can move towards meeting the goals of an organization with its appropriate and positive behavior or against these goals if not directed in the right way. Therefore, understanding the behavior of the work force is of prime significance in management. One of the influential factors in the behavior of the work force is organizational service climate which assesses how much the needs of individuals are met in an organization. In fact, service climate in an organization can influence motivations, efficiency and satisfaction in a specific job. The organizational service climate helps to achieve this goal by creating expectations the employees hold for different behaviors. Organizational service climate reflects what is expected to be supported and praised by the customers with regard to the activities, procedures, and behaviors related to the quality of services provided to them (Khoshnoud, 2011). In describing the service-profit chain of an organization, internal services (services atmosphere) attract the employees' satisfaction (Pauline et al., 2006). The results of studies (Saffari et al., 2010; Delgoshayi et al., 2008) show that it is not the policies, plans, financial status or value of the shares of a company that make a company a good environment for work. What creates an ideal and desirable working environment is the feelings employees have towards their working environment. The managers who care about customers' satisfaction should provide and work with a personnel that is emotionally dependent on their organization and is known by the organization. Organizations can create certain desirable conditions in the working environment which can lead to the satisfaction of the employees and consequently their honesty and positive behavior and their concerted attempt to meet the goals set by the organizations. In this way, they can also facilitate the process of improving the quality of services and giving satisfaction to the customers. The present study is an attempt to examine the effect of service climate on job satisfaction and customers' satisfaction.

## 2. Previous Studies

Organizational service climate has four components including job characteristics, fair treatment, supervisor support, and colleagues support. Job characteristics refers to how activities, duties and assignments are performed as well as different dimensions of a job. Some jobs are standard and running because their activities have been smoothed out and become repetitious. Some others are unusual; some require special skills and some others have a limited practical domain forcing the employees to follow exactly the specified procedures which makes them bored. Some jobs give the employees some freedom of action for doing their job as they like. Fair treatment results from the beliefs about fairness and fair rewards. An employee's perceptions of fair treatment in terms of distributive and occupational fairness can have a positive correlation with effective commitment (Robbins, 1998). According to Nilsson et al. (2001) theory, an individual will maintain his/her membership and work in an organization as far as he/she feels a balance and equality between his/her input to the organization and the outcome. The existence of inequality leads to a change in the perceptions and behaviors of an individual and he/she continues changing his/her perceptions and behavior until she/he achieves a balance. If appropriate service climate leads to job satisfaction of the employees and they are treated fairly and enjoy the support of their colleagues and manager, it will make them satisfied with their job. In this way, they will be more committed to their organization which will consequently lead to the attraction of more potential customers and future employees (Pauline et al., 2006). Supervisor support of the behaviors of innovators in an organization helps maintain an interactional-supportive relationship between the supervisor and the employees. In fact, the basis of this interactional-supportive relationship is the fact that in working environments, supervisors establish different levels of relationship with their employees. Being considerate refers to the manager's friendly and good behavior. The manager tries to help others and do whatever he/she can for the employees. The management commitment emphasizes team and individual

work. On the other hand, in order to keep up the employees' spirit, job satisfaction and organizational commitment should be cared about and attended to so that their needs are met in the working environment. Only the managers who can provide the opportunity for satisfying the high-priority needs of the employees working under their supervision will be able to create appropriate mental and organizational environment inside the organization. In customer-oriented service organizations, the employees are simultaneously worried about their own and the customers' welfare. This joint worry is of a lot of significance. When jobs and, overall, working environments are encouragingly supportive and fair, higher job satisfaction will be achieved (Aminpour, 2002). Service environment is indicative of what is expected to be supported and encouraged by the organization considering the activities, procedures, and behaviors related to the quality of the services provided to the customers. Colleagues' support of one another is highly important and influential in promotion of motivation for providing qualified services. The team will provide the opportunity for integrative and supportive service-providing activities and attempts. When the members of a team are in a close relationship with each other and interact with each other effectively, their job satisfaction will increase and they will be more active in providing services to the customers. This will consequently lead to customer satisfaction as well (Jahromi, 2009). Accordingly, employees evaluate the concerns of their organization not only about their own but also the customers' welfare (Mirza Mohammadi & Abdolmalaki, 2008). The concept of providing services to the customers has been given a new definition based on which it is not just a small part of the central building of the organization allocated to providing services but the whole organization ranging from the top managers to the ordinary employees who have a determining role in meeting the needs of the existing and potential customers. Even if an individual cannot directly support customers, he/she can support the employees who are in direct contact with the customers providing services to them.

The behaviors related to the relationship with customers in hospitals and clinical centers include how employees help the patients, the patients' satisfaction and getting back to normal activities, and their willingness to recommend the hospital to others. The interactional and social relationship between the employee and customers can be a major source of internal motivation. The considerable satisfaction of the employees can also be achieved by good behavior and treatment of the highly satisfied customers and patients (Fallahi, 2012). It is often stated that 'a happy employee is an efficient employee' and 'a happy employee should be satisfied with his/her job'. The importance of job satisfaction originates from the fact that majority of individuals spend half of their waking hours in their working environment (Abbasi, 2010). Managers who promote customers' satisfaction provide a service-providing personnel that is emotionally dependent on and known by its organization. Managers should encourage team work and a free relationship.

During the recent years, organizational studies have been mainly focused on organizational commitment because its relationship with the organizational life has been confirmed. The results of studies show that employees' commitment is a strong and effective factor in the success of an organization. Organizational commitment has been defined as a mental state which indicates willingness, need, or commitment to continue working in an organization (Khaleghi, 2008). It is a belief or attitude towards employees' loyalty to the organization and also a continuous process which facilitates the success and welfare of an organization via employees' participation in the decision making process for the organization and paying attention to those working in the organization. A committed work force will improve the status of an organization in the society preparing the ground for its growth and development. Therefore, having expert and loyal employees who are compatible with organizational values and goals and have a strong motivation and are willing and committed to keep their membership is among the main and the most essential needs of any organization because an organization needs the kind of employees who go beyond the usual activities and duties assigned to them. The existence of such a work force in an organization leads to a considerable improvement in its performance, development of a happy spirit, attainment of

the organizational goals, and achievement of individual goals. This happiness and satisfaction in the individuals helps them make positive comments and evaluation of the organization and attract potential customers (Ramezanifar, 2012). One of the components of organizational commitment is emotional commitment to an organization (the willingness to stay) which refers to the positive attitude developed by the employees' feeling of loyalty to the organization demonstrated by participation in the decision-makings related to the organization, paying attention to the members and their welfare and success. The results of studies conducted in this regard show that employees' commitment to an organization yields valuable results for that organization and the managers can benefit from these positive results by taking into account the factors that influence their commitment. Individuals' sense of belonging and fixation on the organization will be promoted due to the fact that they have a positive attitude towards the values and goals of the organization. This kind of commitment is made in conditions under which an individual is willing to continue his/her work in an organization due to the existence of an emotional dependence (Jaye Warden and Farrell (2010). In an objective evaluation of the results and consequences of the services, customers are considered as the most important assets of an organization and there is this view that happy employees will make more attempt to improve and provide services and will not withhold any services. An organization that uses the right service-providing strategies for its employees and customers will notch up success in two ways; first, by creating a motivating working environment for the employees of the organization, second, by providing appropriate services to the customers. If these two issues are dealt with successfully, the employees will be satisfied and committed and this emotional commitment to the organization will pave the way for the attraction of more customers and improvement in its reputation and consequently attraction of future employees to the organization. Besides, the employees will be more satisfied and an appropriate working environment will be created making them more committed to the organization. In this way, they will make more positive comments about the organization and will do more marketing for the organization improving its reputation and attracting future customers and employees to the organization (Reed and et al, 2000). Many domestic and international studies have been conducted in relation to the effect of service climate on employees' job satisfaction and customers' satisfaction. For instance, Pauline et al. (2006) conducted a study investigating the relationship between service climate and organizational commitment in relationship with the customers. In this study, they concluded that job characteristics and supervisor support lead to overall job satisfaction and colleagues support and fair treatment with the employees cause job satisfaction in relationship with the customer. Axlnajjar (1996) also found that there was a meaningful relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment of employees of state offices in Emirates. In a tid in Islamic Azad University, Saveh Branch, Zali (1997) found that paying attention to the emotional commitment can be essentially useful in maximizing job satisfaction and decreasing the rate of voluntary turnover.

Delgoshayi et al. (2008) investigated the relationship between service climate and organizational commitment of the employees and managers of educational hospitals of Hamedan University of Medical Sciences coming to the conclusion that there is a meaningful interaction between job enthusiasm and five levels of organizational outcomes (productivity, job satisfaction, employees' security, relocation of the staff, and profit). Abbasi (2010) considered the relationship between occupational life and management of relationship with the customers in public organizations of Marivan, Iran. The results of his study indicated that employees' perceptions of the quality of occupational life in terms of different aspects of their job such as the relationship with their colleagues were not positive and organizational commitment was found to be neither positive nor negative but neutral. Tahrir et al. (2010) conducted a study entitled "The relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment of the nurses working in hospitals". The results of their study showed that there was a meaningful relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Furthermore, they found that organizational commitment had a meaningful relationship with the variables of housing and marital status but not with other variables such as gender and

level of education and organizational post. Job satisfaction was found to have a meaningful relationship with level of education, marital status, and gender, but no such relationship was found between job satisfaction and other demographic variables. Finally, they concluded that the factors that are motivating to the employees and managers' rewarding behaviors and leadership style can influence job satisfaction and organizational commitment. In another study, Mirkamali and Naranji Sani (2008) examined the relationship between the quality of occupational life and job satisfaction of faculty members of University of Sanati Sharif and University of Tehran. The results were indicative of a positive relationship between the components of the quality of occupational life and job satisfaction, but no meaningful difference was found to exist between the quality of occupational life and job satisfaction of the faculty members of the mentioned universities. There was only a small difference in social integration and integrity which is considered as one of the components of the quality of occupational life. In other words, faculty members of Sharif University had a higher level of integrity and integration compared to University of Tehran faculty members. Delgoshayi et al. (2008) also concluded that an improvement in service climate can give rise to an increase in employees and managers' commitment to the organization and, in this way, lead to maintaining the competitive abilities and advantages of that organization.

Considering the large importance of this issue, the present study attempts to consider the effect of organizational service climate on job satisfaction and emotional commitment in the relationships with customers of Narges Hospital in Doroud, a state hospital in Iran. The present study is also an attempt to identify the problems and issues related to the effect of service climate on job satisfaction and customers' satisfaction among the employees. The results can help to shed more light on the effect of different factors on employees' satisfaction and the consequent attraction of employees. The results can inform the authorities about these factors and help them to take appropriate measures for increasing satisfaction of the employees and consequent attraction of more customers and employees. For this purpose, the following hypotheses were tested out in this study:

- H 1:** Job characteristics has a more meaningful relationship with overall job satisfaction than customers' satisfaction.
- H 2:** Fair treatment has a more meaningful relationship with overall job satisfaction than customers' satisfaction.
- H 3:** Supervisor support has a more meaningful relationship with overall job satisfaction customers' satisfaction.
- H 4:** Colleagues support has a more meaningful relationship with overall job satisfaction than customers' satisfaction?
- H 5:** Customers' satisfaction has a higher effect on emotional commitment to organization compared to overall job satisfaction.
- H 6:** Emotional commitment to the organization influences attraction of potential customers.
- H 7:** Emotional commitment to the organization influences attraction of employees.

### **3. Method**

This research is an applied correlational field study. The target population of the study included all the individuals, events, or issues that the researcher wanted to investigate about in relation with the employees of Narges Hospital, Doroud, Iran who were working in this hospital in 2012. This hospital was selected because it covers the whole Doroud county and the areas around Doroud and, therefore, a large number of hospital staff for the purpose of this study. Besides, due to the large number of patients referring to this hospital, an investigation of the effect of service climate on job satisfaction and emotional commitment in relation to the customers could help present solutions for the possible problems related to customer satisfaction influenced by employees' job satisfaction. Based on the information obtained

from this organization, the personnel includes 150 employees. 108 of them were randomly selected as the sample population using the Krejcie and Morgan table for the purpose of this study. The data were gathered from scientific websites, related books, and a questionnaire administered to the participants. The questionnaire was obtained from Pauline et al. (2006) which includes 39 Likert-scale items in which the responses are measured on a five point scale ranging from 1 as strongly agree to 5 as strongly disagree.

The questionnaire was first distributed among 25 participants for reliability analysis. Reliability of the questionnaire was calculated using Cronbach Alpha and found to be 0.86. Finally, it was administered to the sample population. Faculty members' views were sought for validity analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to characterize the sample population and frequency analysis of the items and data from the questionnaire. Inferential statistics and regression analysis were also applied to test out the hypotheses of the study.

#### 4. The Results of Hypothesis Testing

In tables 1 and 2 and the model analyzed in relation to the hypotheses in this study, path analysis was used to compare the relationship between the two independent variables and the dependent variable. In this method of analysis, first of all four independent variables were simultaneously entered into the regression equation and the strength of relationship and the effect of each one of the variables on overall job satisfaction and customers' satisfaction were estimated using standardized Beta. In the first hypothesis, the effect of job characteristics on overall job satisfaction was found to be 0.367 and on customers' satisfaction it was 0.519. Therefore, employees' job characteristics is not more highly correlated with overall job satisfaction compared to customers' satisfaction thus rejection of this hypothesis.

**Table 1:** The results of regression analysis for the effect of independent variables of the study on overall job satisfaction

Variable	B coefficient	Standard error	Beta	t	Sig.
Fixed value	0.675	0.437		1.54	0.125
Job characteristics	0.397	0.090	0.367	4.41	0.000
Fair treatment	0.020	0.064	0.028	0.315	0.753
Supervisor support	0.253	0.087	0.269	2.89	0.005
Colleague support	0.192	0.106	0.161	1.81	0.043
Correlation coefficient	0.594				
R <sup>2</sup> :	0.353				
F	14.02 (0.000)				
Dependent variable	Overall job satisfaction				

With regard to the second hypothesis, based on the results, fair treatment with the employees was not correlated with overall job satisfaction and customers' satisfaction. Therefore, we cannot conclude whether fair treatment with the employees is more highly correlated with overall job satisfaction or customers' satisfaction; the hypothesis, therefore, is rejected.

In the third hypothesis, the effect of supervisor support on overall job satisfaction was 0.269 and its effect on customers' satisfaction was 0. Therefore, according to this result, supervisor support is more highly correlated with overall job satisfaction rather than customers' satisfaction, thus confirmation of the hypothesis.

Concerning the fourth hypothesis, the effect of colleagues support on overall job satisfaction equaled 0.161, and its effect on customers' satisfaction was 0. Accordingly, it can be concluded that colleagues support has a higher correlation with overall job satisfaction rather than customers' satisfaction. Thus, this hypothesis is confirmed.

**Table 2:** The results of regression analysis for the effect of independent variables of the study on customers' satisfaction

Variable	B coefficient	Standard error	Beta	t	Sig.
Fixed value	2.21	0.281		7.87	0.000
Job characteristics	0.339	0.058	0.519	5.86	0.000
Fair treatment	0.004	0.041	0.009	0.096	0.924
Supervisor support	-0.034	0.056	-0.060	-0.610	0.543
Colleague support	0.021	0.068	0.029	0.311	0.757
Correlation coefficient: 0.512					
R <sup>2</sup> : 0.262					
F: 9.16 (0.000)					
Dependent variable: Customers' satisfaction					

The results of analysis related to the effect of the two independent variables of the study, i.e., overall job satisfaction and customers' satisfaction, showed that the effect of customers' satisfaction on emotional commitment to the organization was 0, while the effect of overall job satisfaction on emotional commitment was found to be 0.231 (see Table 3). Based on this result, no correlation exists between customers' satisfaction and emotional commitment to the organization, but overall job satisfaction is correlated with emotional commitment. Therefore, this hypothesis is rejected.

**Table 3:** The effect of the independent variables of the study on emotional commitment to the organization

Variable	B coefficient	Standard error	Beta	t	Sig.
Fixed value	2.56	0.351		7.31	0.000
Overall job satisfaction	0.150	0.071	0.231	2.11	0.037
Customers' satisfaction	0.160	0.118	0.148	1.36	0.176
Correlation coefficient: 0.334					
R <sup>2</sup> : 0.112					
F: 6.66 (0.002)					
Dependent variable: organizational emotional dependence					

As shown in Table 4 and according to the model related to the sixth hypothesis, the effect of emotional commitment on the attraction of potential customers equaled 0.420. Therefore, based on the results it can be concluded that emotional commitment to an organization influences attraction of potential customers.

**Table 4:** The effect of emotional commitment to the organization on the attraction of potential customers

Variable	B coefficient	Standard error	Beta	t	Sig.
Fixed value	1.18	0.407		2.91	0.004
Organizational emotional commitment	0.522	0.109	0.420	4.76	0.000
Correlation coefficient: 0.420					
R <sup>2</sup> : 0.177					
F: 22.74 (0.000)					
Dependent variable: attraction of potential employees					

Finally, based on the model explained in relation to the seventh hypothesis, as shown in Table 5, the effect of emotional commitment on the attraction of employees equaled 0. Therefore, it can be concluded that emotional commitment does not influence employees' attraction.

**Table 5:** The effect of emotional commitment to the organization on attraction of employees

Variable	B coefficient	Standard error	Beta	t	Sig.
Fixed value	2.31	0.659		3.5	0.001
Organizational emotional commitment	0.209	0.177	0.114	1.17	0.241
Correlation coefficient: 0.114					
R <sup>2</sup> : 0.013					
F: 1.38 (0.241)					
Dependent variable: attraction of employees					

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

In the present study, five hypotheses were examined about the effect of service climate on job satisfaction and emotional commitment to customers' satisfaction. The first four hypotheses considered the effect of four components of service climate on two types of job satisfaction. The first hypothesis stated that job characteristic influences overall job satisfaction more than customers' satisfaction, but the results of this study suggested the opposite, that is the effect of job characteristics is more highly correlated with customers' satisfaction rather than overall job characteristics. In the second hypothesis, which was related to the effect of fair treatment on overall job satisfaction and customers' satisfaction, it was found that this variable has no effect on any of these two thus rejection of the hypothesis. The findings related to these two hypothesis were inconsistent with the findings of Pauline et al. (2006) and Mirkamali et al. (2008).

The results related to the third hypothesis, related to the effect of supervisor effect on the two independent variables of the study, confirmed the higher effect of this variable on overall job

satisfaction compared to customers' satisfaction. Finally, the fourth hypothesis about the higher influence of colleagues support on overall job satisfaction rather than customers' satisfaction, was confirmed based on the results. The results related to the third and fourth hypothesis were consistent with the findings of پالين (2006) and Abbasi (2010).

The fifth hypothesis related to the effect of two mediator variables, i.e., overall job satisfaction and customers' satisfaction were also considered. The job satisfaction variables play the role of dependent variables for the components of service climate and the role of independent variable for emotional commitment to the organization. Based on the fifth hypothesis, customers' satisfaction influences emotional commitment more than customers' satisfaction. The results, however, disconfirmed this hypothesis showing that overall job satisfaction has a higher effect on emotional commitment compared to customers' satisfaction. This finding is inconsistent with the findings of Delgoshayi *et al.* (2006), Pauline *et al.* (2006), and Tahrir *et al.* (2010). The sixth hypothesis of the study took it for granted that emotional commitment to organizations influences the attraction of potential employees which is confirmed based on the results. This result is consistent with the findings of Pauline *et al.* and Mirkamali *et al.* and inconsistent with the findings from Abbasi's (2010) study. Finally, according to the seventh hypothesis, emotional commitment influences attraction of future employees to the organization. this hypothesis is not confirmed based on the findings, which is inconsistent with the findings of Pauline *et al.* (2006) and Mirkamali *et al.* (2008).

Overall, these results point to the conclusion that when jobs and the conditions in the working environment are motivating, encouraging, and supporting, both overall job satisfaction and emotional commitment to the organization will be promoted. Furthermore, both job satisfaction and customers' satisfaction will increase to the same extent that job characteristics are appropriate and encouraging for the employees of the organization. Job characteristics, however, has a larger effect on customers' satisfaction. On the other hand, organizational support (supervisor and colleagues support) influences overall job satisfaction. These two forms of organizational support are two important indicators of overall job satisfaction which play a mediating role in emotional commitment to an organization. Customers' satisfaction leads to emotional commitment to an organization and, therefore, should be attended to by the managers in order to create an appropriate service climate for the employees which will consequently promote job satisfaction. In this way, they will become emotionally more committed to their organization and produce positive effects on the organization. Managers of service-providing organizations should pay special attention to their employees' job satisfaction. The components of service climate in an organization are conceptually the indicators of internal motivation, job satisfaction, and emotional commitment to an organization. The correlation coefficient for overall job satisfaction was 0.594 and for customers' satisfaction it was 0.512. Assessment of the levels of satisfaction in an organization should be more taken heed of. Managers should also create appropriate, secure and reliable conditions in the working environment of employees. Colleagues and supervisor support are more correlated with overall job satisfaction rather than customers' satisfaction meaning that if colleagues and supervisors increase their support for the employees, the employees will be more satisfied with their jobs. As a result, their overall job satisfaction and, consequently, their emotional commitment to the organization will be promoted. Emotional bonding in the employees can be improved through increasing job satisfaction and providing an appropriate service climate.

As customers' satisfaction was the most important measure of job satisfaction and considering the importance of this issue and lack of enough studies in this regard especially in Iran, there is a need for more extensive studies in different organizations in the country considering the cultural issues related to this issue. The managers can establish a close relationship with their employees and, in this way, increase their commitment and trust in the organization. The existence of employees who can inspire confidence in the customers by their correct behavior, having the skills and strengths required by the organization,

employees' interest in fulfilling their duties in the case of a disaster, attending to the customers individually via identifying and taking into consideration their interests and needs in the organization.

Future studies could investigate and identify the role of employees in satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the provided services by other service providing organizations. The results could yield useful information for making a comparison between different organizations. Private and public organizations could be also compared to find if there is any difference between these two types of organizations. The present study was focused on emotional commitment of the employees. Future studies could be focused upon the relationship between other dimensions of organizational commitment, i.e., normative and consistent commitment and overall job satisfaction. Finally, as customers' satisfaction was the most important measure of job satisfaction and considering the large importance of this issue and lack of enough studies in this regard especially in Iran, future studies could be focused on this issue in different Iranian organizations considering the cultural issues related to this matter.

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