

Organizational climate in a public hospital from Quindío Colombia

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Abstract: Objective: To characterize the organizational climate perceived by the assistance and administrative staff members at a public hospital in Quindío-Colombia 2015. Method: A quantitative correlational study, which measures the organizational climate of a low complexity hospital through the characterization of twelve dimensions. The population being studied was conformed by 114 assistance and administrative staff members who belong to a public hospital in Quindío-Colombia. Results: The measurement of the organizational climate provided a result of a global average of 69.81 with a score of 3.9 being classified as a medium level for the organizational climate. There was evidence of a highly meaningful positive bond between the organizational climate and the dimension of interpersonal relationships and between this one with the external coordination. Conclusion: There is evidence of the importance given by the staff members to the “friendly interaction” that is interpreted as a respectful and effective relationship with their co-workers, which is, in turn, necessary for the generation of a teamwork environment. Additionally, it was found that a high degree of importance regarding interpersonal relationships with the external coordination is given; fact that can be understood as the value staff members confere to the participative leadership within their perception of organizational climate.

Keywords: *Organizational Culture, Health Care Institutions, Human Resources in Health.*

Clima organizacional em um hospital público de Quindío Colombia

Resumo: Objetivo: Caracterizar o clima organizacional percebido por funcionários assistenciais e administrativos em um hospital público do departamento de Quindío-Colômbia, em 2015. Método: Estudo quantitativo de tipo correlacional, o qual mede o clima organizacional de um hospital de baixa complexidade através da caracterização de doze dimensões. A população estudada foi conformada por 114 funcionários assistenciais e administrativos pertencentes a um hospital público do departamento de Quindío na Colômbia. Resultados: A medição do clima organizacional apresentou como resultado uma média global de 69,81, com uma qualificação de 3,89 catalogando-se como um nível médio para o clima organizacional. Evidenciou-se uma relação positiva altamente significativa entre o clima organizacional com a dimensão das relações interpessoais e desta última com a coordenação externa. Conclusão: Evidencia-se a importância que tem para o funcionário, desde sua perspectiva, a “interação amigável” a qual se interpreta como a relação respeitosa e efetiva com seus colegas de área, necessário para um ambiente de trabalho em equipe. Do mesmo modo, evidenciou-se a importância das relações interpessoais com a coordenação externa, o qual pode se traduzir como o valor que o funcionário lhe dá à liderança participativa na percepção do clima organizacional.

Palavras-chave: *Cultura Organizacional, Instalações de Saúde, Recursos Humanos em Saúde.*

Clima organizacional en un hospital público de Quindío Colombia

Resumen: Objetivo: Caracterizar el clima organizacional percibido por funcionarios asistenciales y administrativos en un hospital público de Quindío-Colombia en 2015. Método: Estudio cuantitativo de tipo correlacional, que mide el clima organizacional de un hospital de baja complejidad mediante la caracterización de doce dimensiones. La población estudio la conformaron 114 funcionarios asistenciales y administrativos pertenecientes a un hospital público de Quindío-Colombia. Resultados: La medición del clima organizacional dio como resultado un promedio global de 69,81, con una calificación de 3,89 catalogándose como un nivel medio para el clima organizacional. Se evidenció una relación positiva altamente significativa entre el clima organizacional con la dimensión de relaciones interpersonales y de esta última con la coordinación externa. Conclusiones: Se evidencia la importancia que para el funcionario tiene, desde su punto de vista, la “interacción amigable” que se interpreta como la relación respetuosa y efectiva con sus compañeros de área, necesaria para un ambiente de trabajo en equipo; de igual manera se evidenció la importancia de tener en cuenta las relaciones interpersonales con la coordinación externa lo que se puede traducir como el valor que el funcionario le confiere al liderazgo participativo en la percepción del clima organizacional.

Palabras clave: *Cultura Organizacional, Instituciones de Salud, Recursos Humanos en Salud.*

1 Introduction

The current organizational dynamics make people go through evolving situations and daily interactions that directly interfere with the productivity and in the achievement of the institutional goals, due to the diverse situations lived within the interpersonal relationships, the communication, the working quality, the decision-making, the institutional horizon, the transformation processes, and the type of leadership (SALCEDO; ROMERO, 2006).

Authors such as Lewin, consider the organizational climate as a useful conception to associate the factual aspects of an organization (FLORES, 2014). Other authors such as Méndez (2006) have proposed diverse approaches regarding the meaning of organizational climate. Nevertheless, most of them agree on the close relationship that men's behavior has with the environment of his organization (GARCIA SOLARTE, 2009).

Independently from the most relevant definition the academic or practical use given to the concept of organizational climate, this study aims to emphasize on the fact that the organizational climate can be measured and managed; being this aspect, a determining factor of transformation processes promoted by the management. Aspects that are necessary so that the organization can be routinely adapted to new internal and external elements that pressure the stability and the organizational growth (SERLIN, 2010).

The proposal states that one of the most important aspects to be considered by a manager is the understanding of how the internal customer can count with a fair treatment; becoming as the

interlocutor of an honest communication with his hierarchical superiors. A communication through which, the internal client learns about expectations and responsibilities he is expected to accomplish, as well as the acknowledgments for the efforts made and achievements obtained (SEGREDO PÉREZ, 2013). In simple terms, the proposal is stated: “as a need of providing people inside the organization with the treatment they are expected to provide to their customers” (PÉREZ DE MALDONADO et al., 2006, p. 231). In other words: if the manager requires an optimal assistance to patients and external clients, it is necessary to treat that the internal client with the same considerations.

It is then understood that managing the work environment of a company, is a fundamental issue due to the impact it has on the fulfillment of a task (SALAZAR ESTRADA et al., 2009). This confirms the need of having work practices aimed to the creation of an affectionate environment that enables the development processes of the staff, since any project that dismisses the influence of the affectionate behaviors of a person in his daily activity, minimizes the profits of an organization (PÉREZ DE MALDONADO et al., 2006, p. 231).

One of the main functions of a manager is the promotion of a favorable organizational climate, in both physical and mental aspects, which encourages people to contribute spontaneously and mentally with their effort, to achieve changes and goals proposed in order to obtain long-term improvements regarding productivity (CARRILLO ARRIAGA, 2011).

The health service providers represent one of the most essential support in a flourishing and productive

society, for this reason, different investigators at national and international scale; have engaged in the performance of studies that support the organizational climate of the health systems and the organizations in charge of providing such services (MARÍN BETANCUR; PAZ DELGADO, 2014).

The diagnostic of the organizational climate in a Hospital by “Dr. Luis F. Nachón”. Xalapa, Veracruz (CORTÉS JIMÉNEZ, 2009), who searched the specification of the perception of the group through the dimensions of the organizational climate, proposed by the Pan-American Health Organization: motivation, leadership, participation and reciprocity. In this research, the groups refer an unsatisfactory perception of the organizational climate, including the dimensions with their corresponding variables, being the nursing staff the personnel who expresses a higher level of dissatisfaction.

The organizational climate investigation regarding the transformation management for the development of an organization carries out a conceptual approach to the topic and presents different dimensions and categories to be considered in its measurement. Such categories go around the values of the organization, its beliefs, customs and institutional practices that allow the clarification of the causes of the satisfaction and dissatisfaction at work and their incidence in the organizational transformations (SEGREDO PÉREZ, 2013).

On the other hand, the study based on organizational climate, carried out with administrative staff of the regional hospital of Cobán (SIERRA, 2015), established that the work environment of the administrative area was favorable for such staff, due to the incidence of positive factors; in addition, there were difficulties related to quality and remuneration.

In this sense, it is necessary to continue with the research on the phenomenon of organizational climate regarding health care institutions. For this reason, the aim of this study consisted on characterize the organizational climate perceived by assistant and administrative staff of a public hospital, with the purpose of using the findings to generate actions to mitigate the various difficulties found in work environment.

2 Method

A quantitative correlational study, through which the organizational climate perceived by assistant and administrative staff who belong to a public hospital in Quindío-Colombia in 2015 is characterized.

The dimensions approached were: internal communication, recognition, interpersonal relationships at work, working quality, decision-making, the hospital facilities, the objectives of the institution, the commitment, the adaptation to transformations, the of activities and functions delegation, external coordination and the efficiency in productivity.

The variables of the organizational climate were measured considering this aspect as a

[...] multidimensional phenomenon that describes the nature of the perceptions that employees have from their own experiences inside an organization (CHIANG VERA et al., 2008, p. 66).

A sample of 114 participants was chosen at random in the different departments of the hospital. The participants were told about the objective of the survey and signed the form chosen for that purpose. The participation in this research was done in a voluntary and anonymous form. The application of the instrument for data collection was done individually and without a time limit. There was an error margin of 5% and a level of trust of 95%. The sample used for the study consisted of permanent staff, personnel with a contract of the service provider and people who had a contract through third parties for administrative and mission tasks, which will take more than 6 months working at the hospital. There were excluded the staff with less than 6 months working at the hospital, the ones who were on vacation time, or the staff who was absent from the institution at the moment of the application of the instrument. The ethics committee of the Catholic University of Manizales approved the execution of this project.

2.1 Instrument

For the diagnostic of the organizational climate, an instrument adopted by the Quality Department of the Health Ministry of Chile validated in a previous experience by Rebeco 2001 (SEGREDO PÉREZ, 2013). It is about a questionnaire in which 12 dimensions are considered: Internal communication, recognition, interpersonal relationships, working quality, decision-making, facilities, objectives of the institution, commitment, adaptation to transformation, activities and functions delegation, external coordination and the efficiency in productivity. It consisted of 74 statements that perceive 12 dimensions of the organizational climate, designed with answers based on the five points Likert scale (Strongly agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neither agree

nor disagree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly disagree = 1). (SEGREDO PÉREZ, 2013).

2.2 Statistical analysis

The information was taken in an SPSS statistical package version 21 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, 2015). To create the database that allowed the analysis of the information integrally, there were used central tendency measures: frequency, percentages, mean, minimum and maximum value, in order to describe the characteristics of the sample and the variables of this study. The coefficient of trust of the instrument was obtained through a Cronbach alpha and a data normality curve through the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test, prior construction of index with a value from 0 to 100, with the aim of identifying the pertinence of applying parametric statistics, favoring the application of the Spearman's rho for the analysis.

3 Results

3.1 Socio-demographic characterization of the participants

The 71.1% of the participants were females and 28.9% males; the age mode was 26 years old and the mean 35 years old. Regarding the working time of the participants at the institution, the mean was 36 months with a time shorter than 0 months and longer than 372 months. The predominant types of contracts were personnel with a contract of the service provider and contract through third parties, each one with 42.3%, the remaining 15% corresponds to permanent staff. The level of schooling stated that 42.3% of the population had developed technical

studies, 33% university level studies, 15.5% secondary level studies, 8.2 postgraduate degree studies and 1% primary school level.

3.2 Organizational climate

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test shows data with a distribution that is not normal in the Organizational Climate Questionnaire, resulting in a mean of 69.81 (DE = 18.15) and a quantification mean of 3.89 considered medium at the scale designed for that purpose.

The minimum data of the questionnaire was 57.97 points and the maximum of 85.30 points. The results of the average obtained for each dimension presented in the questionnaire are reported in Table 1, the highest score was obtained in the dimension related to the commitment and the lowest on the concerning to the external coordination.

In regard to the dimensions of this instrument, there is evidence of the following averages for each, showing a non-normal data distribution.

3.2.1 Organizational climate dimensions

- Internal communication

There was a positive co-relation with the results obtained from the work environment. Inasmuch as the internal communication is appropriated, showing a reliability coefficient of 0.943 which is considered as high (represented in the 13 items for a high-reliability coefficient) will increase the score obtained by the working environment.

- Acknowledgements

There was a high-reliability coefficient; is one of the dimensions that are mostly co-related with the

Table 1. Organizational climate dimensions.

Dimensions	X	DE
Internal Communication	72.93	16.05
Acknowledgments	62.70	20.65
Interpersonal Relationships	67.71	19.87
Working Quality	79.57	16.49
Decision-making	65.72	22.77
Facilities	63.18	22.18
Objectives of the Institution	76.89	20.46
Commitment	85.30	15.57
Adaptation to Transformation	60.41	12.92
Activities and Functions Delegation	67.01	21.43
External Coordination	57.97	12.76
Efficiency in Productivity	78.35	78.35

Source: Elaborated by the author.

measurements obtained by the working environment and with the dimension number 12 which describes the efficiency in productivity. Demonstrating that inasmuch as the staff member feels he is productive and efficient he will think he is acknowledged by the organization.

- Interpersonal relationships

There is evidence of a highly meaningful positive relationship, the highest related to the working environment and with the interpersonal relationships dimension, constituted by the items that associate area teamwork, working motivation, the interaction with other team members and the reciprocal respect.

- Working quality

There is a positive co-relation with the interpersonal relationship dimension at work. It is probable that the quality at work is interpreted as quality in the working environment.

- Decision-making

It correlates less favorably with the dimension number 12, which is efficiency in the productivity, deducing that the efficiency in a higher flexibility environment will improve with the possibility for the staff members to assume their own determinations or at least consult those decisions with the organization's executive team.

- Facilities

An aspect that calls the attention is the fact that there are not meaningful positive relationships with other dimensions. It can be established that the facilities dimension does not count as an important issue when assuming a measurement of the working climate.

- Objectives of the institution

It had a measurement $\bar{X}=76.89$, which places it at a medium scale, indicating that, exist certain knowledge gaps, definition gaps, and acceptance of the objectives of the institution.

- Commitment

This dimension obtained the highest mean ($\bar{X}=85.30$), demonstrating that the hospital staff members show a strong commitment to the institution, they feel they have the capacity to make a significant effort and a high degree of responsibility at all times with their activities despite their type of contract in which most of the cases generate job stability.

- Adaptation to transformation

One of the lowest dimensions, which demonstrated that the staff members show a certain degree of reluctance to transformations.

- Activities delegation

A little function delegation is observed.

- External coordination

This dimension presented the lowest mean ($\bar{X}=57.97$) showing a scarce teamwork, a low level of communication with other areas of the institution, a limited awareness regarding the needs of the service and probable difficulties with the chain of command.

- Efficiency in productivity

This dimension had a mean of $\bar{X}=78.35$. Demonstrating an important significance concerning the use of resources and the achievements of tasks.

Regarding the characterization of objectives according to the Spearman's Rho correlations, the interpretation shows how the interpersonal relations along with the internal communication convey a high level of significance ($p < 0.05$), which indicates that exists an adequate teamwork, staff workers are satisfied with their job, and there is a good communication within the members of the teamwork.

Although this communication is highly effective, it goes against the analysis of the communication dimension, which delivered results of the lowest mean of all the dimensions considered, since expectation was to have high results in both of them. It is observed a better communication when addressing high officers and a proper co-relation in terms of interpersonal relationships in contrast with the poor communication shown among peers when working as a team.

4 Discussion

The perception of the working environment perceived by the Quindío's State Social Company staff workers and the administrative staff, delivered a score of 3.89 which categorizes it in a medium level scale: Low 1-1.9, Medium 2-3.9, High 4-5, in contrast to other diagnostic studies related to organizational climate in a military hospital in 2014 (RAFAEL, 2014). Where a high frequency of dissatisfaction by the personnel in the evaluated dimensions was demonstrated. In the same way, a study made by Domínguez Silva, Álvarez Fuentes and Navarro Domínguez (2009), reports that the organizational climate of a University Polyclinic punctuated below the average considered as the lowest limit of satisfaction among all the analyzed dimensions. Cortés classified the global organizational climate of a hospital as dissatisfactory when found

that only the 9% of the staff members perceived the climate as satisfactory (CORTÉS JIMÉNEZ, 2009).

In Colombia, studies as the one made by Conde Martín, Figueroa Murcia and Flórez Peña (2014), addressed the evaluation of the working environment of a high complex degree healthcare institution, compared with the health care institution analyzed in this study by using the same methodology, and reported similar findings with a score of 3.4 which is considered as medium or with low satisfaction.

According to the outcomes of our study, the results show that all the analyzed dimensions presented a statistically significant positive score ($p = 0.001$) when associating these dimensions with internal communication, highlighting the relationship between communication and interpersonal relationships.

Although the bibliography regarding organizational climate is ample, it is certainly true that different studies at international level are characterized by the heterogeneity of the approaches and of the organizational climate measuring instruments. Specifically, in Colombia, those aspects are restricted as the case shown by Carmona Arias and Jaramillo Correa in 2010. In their study about the organizational climate of a hospital in the department of Pereira (CARMONA ARIAS; JARAMILLO CORREA, 2010), they focus on the negative relationship that represents the lack of a well-defined administrative model. Also, the study shown by Chiang Vera, Salazar and Núñez (2007), in which the work environment is related to leadership styles and psychosocial risks in companies of the social and health sector in Colombia.

5 Conclusion

The dimensions of interpersonal relationships and working environment relate in a highly, meaningful way. An important segment of the surveyed staff members, associates good relationships with their co-workers, with the mutual respect as an important condition in the perception of a “proper” working environment. To put the same question in slightly different terms, it can be said that based on the findings, a proper working environment favors “good” interpersonal relationships and vice versa.

A straight relation of a weak force characterizes the co-relation among dimensions. This can be interpreted as the interdependence of the dimensions in the result shown by the dimension of working environment, which implies that in order to create an impact, all the analyzed dimensions should be approached, ideally by doing a previous detailed study

of each variable, designed specifically considering the conditions of the hospital subject of the study.

A positive but weak correlation between the working environment and the internal communication is observed. This aspect could be explained on one hand, as a weakness of the teamwork culture, and on the other hand, the fact that eventually low importance is being given to what the organization seeks for, either for the shortcomings in the induction processes, the unclear organizational culture or to the fact that these aspects are not known and therefore, there is a non-existent application of the corporative values that the organization wants to reflect.

As reflections regarding the management of the organization, the proposal is to include the managing of the working environment inside the organization's strategic plan. Another idea is to create a program for the management of the organizational climate coordinated by personnel with knowledge and experience on the subject. The measurement of the organizational climate must be done by following the scientific requirements of each case, must be periodically done, and preferably validated for the use in low complexity degree healthcare institutions and ideally performed by third parties.

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Author's Contributions

All the authors contributed equally in the construction of this text. All the authors approve the final version of this text.