

The Effects of Organizational Climate on Organizational Commitment and Perceived Organizational Performance: Vietnam State-owned and Non State-owned Organizations

Trung Kien Nguyen *

Abstract

Organizational climate are aspects of the environment that are consciously perceived and experienced by organizational members on a daily basis. A positive climate promote positive organizational commitment and perceived organizational performance. To test this argument in the context of Vietnam, the present paper is conducted with targets are Vietnam SOEs and Non SOEs. A total of 335 results were collected, including 178 and 157 answers from Non SOEs and SOEs respectively. This paper's findings confirmed a positive relationship between organizational climate and organizational commitment and perceived organizational performance in both cases. Despite receive favorable treatments from the State, Vietnam SOEs continue to be ineffective and inefficient. However, from the perspective of SOEs members, they perceive a positive organizational climate as they continue to enjoy the benefits and privileges of being SOEs' members. As a result, their analyses show stronger impacts of organizational climate on organizational commitment and perceived organizational commitment compared to Non SOEs.

Keywords: Organizational behavior, organizational climate, organizational commitment, perceived organizational performance.

1 Introduction

Organizational climate refers to the combination of psychological climates, which are reflected through the perceptions of individuals about their work [1]. Therefore, there is no clear definition of the term. However, it is certain that organizational climate has a significant impact on employees in terms of sense of belonging, personal relationship and performance [2]. A positive association between organizational climate and organizational commitment helps to better define the concept of organizational commitment, which has always been a predictor of organizational behavior, such as turnover and absenteeism [3].

The target of the present study is Vietnam. After became independent in 1975, the Vietnamese government started a renovation process called Doi Moi in 1986 to reform the economy and the country, with State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) being a crucial part of the agenda. However, SOEs expressed inadequate ability and a lack of focus on the key areas of the economy [4]. After

* Chiba Institute of Technology

the Doi Moi renovation, many of the largest SOEs reported pre-tax profits, however, these profits were due to preferential treatment by the State and monopoly rather than efficiency [5]. In addition, scattered control over several state agencies nurtured opportunistic behavior, limited autonomy, and heavy bureaucracy [4].

The negative effects of SOEs called for the many changes to come. The first equitization of SOEs took place in 1992 [4]. However, the first phase of equitization was slowed down significantly due to considerable resistance from SOE managers and fear of job losses [6]. From 1989 to 1995, the number of wholly-owned SOEs was decreased by about 6000, also about 4000 SOEs were equitized from mid-1998 to the end of 2010 [6]. Later, the five-year plan 2016-2020 focused on stricter recruitment, selection and management of SOEs leaders and operations [7]. At the same time, Vietnamese government has been making efforts to nurture the development of Non SOEs. Laws and amendments had been enacted to authorize Non SOEs to operate in accordance with the law. In 2016, Vietnamese government recognized the private sector as the driving force of the economy while the State played an orientation role, signified the determination on the reformation of SOEs [7].

This study seeks to contribute to the current literature by delivering empirical evidence regarding the impacts of organizational climate on organizational commitment and perceived organizational performance by using data from employees working in Vietnam SOEs and Non SOEs. The objectives of the present study are: (1) to determine the impact of organizational climate on organizational commitment and perceived organizational performance in Vietnam SOEs and Non SOEs; (2) to provide a comparison between Vietnam SOEs and Non SOEs on the matter.

This paper is currently one of the few studies aimed to address and compare the relationship between these factors in the Vietnamese context. In addition, unlike previous studies that focus on the relationship between these three concepts separately, this paper contributes to existing knowledge by evaluating the influences of the three concepts in a collective manner.

4.0 era is happening in many countries, and Vietnam is no exception. Despite the obvious advantages of the Industry 4.0, human resources are those who apply and operate such technologies, also Vietnam SOEs and Non SOEs are entities that will utilize such digital technology application and advancement the most, therefore it is important to conduct this research to have a better understanding of Vietnam SOEs and Non SOEs, thus better utilize such technologies.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Organizational Climate

Organizational climate be defined as the aggregate perceptions of the characteristics of the organization [8]. Organizational climate also refers to individual perceptions; recurring patterns of behavior, attitudes and feelings of employees and reflects a set of perceptions shared by workers in the same workplace [9].

Many researchers have studied the characteristics of organizational climate. Demographic factors such as education or position can impact organizational climate [10]. Employees with low educational level perceive climate more positive compare to those with high educational level, since high educated employees have higher expectations for organizational climate, also they are more sensitive toward any negative aspects of the organization. Meanwhile, employees who

have higher position perceive organizational climate more positive compare to those with lower position. Employees who feel satisfied with their organization will have greater motivation and more chances to be promoted into higher position, which lead to more involvement and participation with their organization, therefore explaining their positive perception. On the other hand, other researchers studied the strength of organizational climate. When the practices of an organization is unclear, organizational climate will be ambiguous, making the prediction of behaviors less likely to be reliable [11]. In contrast, in mechanistic organizations that are more formalized and structured, organizational climate is greater [12]. In such organizations, practices and procedures are most noticeably defined, and the organizational climate is in line with the shared values of their members. A positive organizational climate could result in competitive advantages for the organization, such as enhancing work engagement levels of their members [11].

Other researchers continue to explore the importance of organizational climate. Because employees spend a great deal of time in their workplace, their perceptions of organizational climate influence their work attitude and behaviors [13]. Therefore, organizational climate is a primary source that affect job attitudes such as job satisfaction and job involvement, ultimately affecting job behaviors, including organizational citizenship behavior, performance and intention to quit. The more positive the perception of organizational climate, the stronger the perception of commitment and perceived organizational performance [10]. Positive organizational climate helps to retain employees by enhancing their morale, and at the same time solidifying their job attachment and their level of job involvement [13].

2.2 Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is the degree to which an employee identifies himself with the organizational goals and wishes to maintain his membership in the organization [14]. It also refers to the loyalty and bonds of individuals with their organization [13].

Previous studies have examined the characteristics of organizational commitment. Organizational commitment depends upon job enrichment factor and the degree to which employees enjoy autonomy and freedom of action while working in their organization [14]. It is also affected by demographic factors such as age and years of experience [15]. Employees with higher years of working in their organization and with older age have higher level of organizational commitment. The reason is because those employees better understand and adopt the values of their organization and can synchronize those values with their own. Meanwhile, employees with lower years of working and with younger age tend to have too high expectations and often hold on to their personal ideals, ultimately preventing them from realistically perceiving and evaluating the values and goals of the organization. Moreover, as the employees get older, their employment options generally decrease, making their current job more attractive, prompting them to commitment to their organization [14].

The impacts of organizational commitment related to performance, motivation, satisfaction and turnover intentions [16]. Highly committed employees lead to better performance and higher work motivation which are beneficial to the organization. It can be said that organizational commitment characterizes the employees' relationship with their organization, and commitment has implication for the decision to continue or discontinue membership in their respective organization [14].

2.3 Perceived Organizational Performance

Perceived organizational performance refers to the subjective perceptions of employees regarding the overall performance of their organization, compared to competitors [17]. Perceived organizational performance has a close connection with factors that directly influence employees' attitude and behavior, such as corporate strategies or reward systems [18].

Since performance is important for any organization's survival, many researches have been conducted regarding this matter. Organizational citizenship behavior and organizational social capital, which generate interpersonal trust and commitment amongst members, have a significant influence on perceived organizational performance [19]. The stronger the interpersonal trust and commitment, the better the level of perceived organizational performance. On the other hand, organizational learning that encourages absorption capacity, learning intention and integration capability has a positive relationship with process innovation and knowledge transfer, ultimately improve performance [20]. Other author focused on internal marketing to generate better perceived organizational performance [21]. Internal marketing, which is the efforts of an organization to train and motivate employees to perform better, allow organizations to create an environment and culture that shape employees work and performance. When employees are empowered, they intuitively perceive that the input they invested provide much worthy output from the organization, thus positively and significantly affecting perceived organizational performance.

3 Methodology

3.1 Hypotheses

This paper aims to test four hypotheses. First, the present paper hypothesizes that there is a positive relationship between organizational climate and organizational commitment in the case of Vietnam SOEs and Non SOEs. When organizational climate generates an unchallengeable job, lacking of resources, feedback and communication are insufficient, and there is no recognition for job well done, employees will be prevented from acquiring necessary knowledge and skills, be demotivated that consequently lead to the discontinuation of the job [22]. Moreover, positive organizational climate creates passion which is required to impact organizational commitment [17]. Variables of organizational climate such as autonomy and trust have a significant relationship with organizational commitment [23]. Accordingly, hypothesis 1 and 2 are proposed as follow:

H1: There is a positive relationship between organizational climate and organizational commitment in Vietnam SOEs.

H2: There is a positive relationship between organizational climate and organizational commitment in Vietnam Non SOEs.

Secondly, the present paper hypothesizes that there is a positive relationship between organizational climate and perceived organizational performance in the case of both entities. Perceived organizational performance is related to trust [24]. When there are trust between the top managers and employees as well as amongst members of the organization alike, employees will more likely to perceive their organization's performance positively. Additionally, human resources practices that promote communication, recognition and motivation impacts both actual and

perceived organizational performance [25]. Those factors are dimensions of organizational climate [7]. Because these studies focused on the Middle East, the present paper would like to test such theories in the case of Vietnam. Therefore, hypothesis 3 and 4 are proposed as follow:

H3: There is a positive relationship between organizational climate and perceived organizational performance in Vietnam SOEs

H4: There is a positive relationship between organizational climate and perceived organizational performance in Vietnam Non SOEs.

3.2 Research Design

The present study utilizes a quantitative research methodology. References are collected from different sources including books, journals, and articles. Participants are 335 Vietnamese employees, including 157 from SOEs and 178 from Non SOEs. Three questionnaires are adopted: a short-form of the Organizational Climate Scale (CLIOR) [9], the Organizational Commitment (OC) Questionnaire [26] and the Perceived Organizational Performance (POP) Questionnaire [27]. The CLIOR consists of 15 items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The organizational commitment questionnaire consists of 18 items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The perceived organizational performance questionnaire consists of 7 questions on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = worse, 2 = bad, 3 = good, 4 = much better). The questionnaires are translated from English into Vietnamese.

4 Results

4.1 Reliability Analysis

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test are conducted to evaluate the reliability and validity of the collected data. Table 1 shows high KMO value (>0.7) with $p = 0.000$ across the data set. Therefore, it can be concluded that the data set is reliable.

Table 1: Reliability analysis

		KMO	Chi-square	df	Sig.	α
SOEs	CLIOR	0.896	1327.416	105	.000	0.885
	OC	0.898	2035.813	153	.000	0.910
	POP	0.900	750.475	21	.000	0.922
Non	CLIOR	0.889	1170.276	105	.000	0.857
SOEs	OC	0.905	1667.186	153	.000	0.909
	POP	0.770	478.266	21	.000	0.813

The Cronbach's Alpha analyses are also conducted. The value α is required to be >0.7 . As a result, α achieves high value across all the data set, indicating a high internal consistency.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

Spearman's correlation analysis is conducted to evaluate the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables.

For SOEs, findings show a positive relationship between organizational climate and organizational commitment and perceived organizational performance at a moderate strength level of 0.576 and 0.537 respectively (** $p < 0.01$, 2-tailed). These findings support Hypotheses 1 and 3.

For Non SOEs, results also show a positive correlation between climate and commitment and perceived organizational performance at a moderate strength level of 0.493 and 0.533 respectively (** $p < 0.01$, 2-tailed). These findings support Hypotheses 2 and 4.

Table 2: Spearman's correlation analysis

		OC	POP
SOEs (N=157)	CLIOR	0.576**	0.537**
Non SOEs (N=178)	CLIOR	.493**	0.533**

4.3 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is conducted to examine the impact of organizational climate on organizational commitment and perceived organizational performance.

First, Table 3 shows a significant linear relationship between CLIOR and organizational commitment and perceived organizational performance (Sig. < 0.05) in both cases.

Table 3: ANOVA

		CLIOR				CLIOR				
		<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	
Regression	SOEs	21.312	1	112.233	.000	SOEs-POP	12.240	1	85.213	.000
Residual	-OC	29.432	155				22.265	155		
Total		50.744	156				34.505	156		
Regression	Non SOEs	14.069	1	52.942	.000	Non SOEs-POP	7.811	1	64.839	.000
Residual	-OC	46.771	176				21.203	176		
Total		60.840	177				29.014	177		

Secondly, Table 4 demonstrates that organizational climate helps to predict 42% of organizational commitment and 35.5% of the perceived organizational performance in the case of SOEs and 23.1% and 26.9% in the case of Non SOEs respectively.

Table 4: Model summary

		CLIOR			
		<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>
SOEs	OC	.648	.420	.416	.43576
	POP	.596	.355	.351	.37900
Non SOEs	OC	.481	.231	.227	.51550
	POP	.519	.269	.265	.34709

4.3 Effects of Organizational Climate on Organizational Commitment based on Age and Work Experience

The relationship between organizational climate and organizational commitment is evaluated in the case of Vietnam SOEs and Non SOEs based on demographic categories, including participants' age range and their years of working experience in their organization.

Table 5: Organizational climate and organizational commitment based on age range

Age		OC-SOEs	OC-Non SOEs
20-30	CLIOR	-0.059**	0.480**
31-40	CLIOR	0.685**	0.444
41-50	CLIOR	0.532**	0.679
50+	CLIOR	0.563**	0.872

Table 5 demonstrates the relationship between organizational climate and organizational commitment based on age range. For SOEs, the relationship is negative for employees in the "20-30" age range (N=34), and is positive for participants in the "31-40" (N=41), "41-50" (N=51) and "50+" age ranges (N=31). Organizational climate have the strongest relationship with organizational commitment for those who belongs to the "31-40" age range (**p<0.01, 2-tailed).

Regarding Non SOEs, the relationship between organizational climate and organizational commitment are positive for all age ranges. Such relationship is moderately strong in the "20-30" (N=102) and "31-40" (N=50), strong in the "41-50" (N=15) and very strong in the "50+" age range (N=11), depicting a trend that the older the employees, the stronger the relationship between organizational climate and their organizational commitment (**p<0.01, 2-tailed).

Table 6: Organizational climate and organizational commitment based on years of working

Work year		SOEs-OC	Non SOEs-OC
Less than 1 year	CLIOR	Insignificant	0.611**
1-5 years	CLIOR	0.705**	0.508**
5-10 years	CLIOR	0.397**	0.329*
More than 10 years	CLIOR	0.596**	0.707**

Table 6 illustrates the relationship between climate and commitment based on participants' year of working in their organization. Regarding SOEs, in the case of participants who work "less than 1 year" (N=6), the relationship appears to be insignificant in this study. For participants with "1-5 years" (N=32), "5-10 years" (N=27) and "more than 10 years" (N=92), organizational climate is positively related to their organizational commitment (**p<0.01, 2-tailed).

For Non SOEs, organizational climate is positively correlated to employees' commitment in "less than 1 year" (N=31), "1-5 years" (N=71), "5-10 years" (N=39) and "more than 10 years" (N=37) categories. Participants with "more than 10 years" of working demonstrates the strongest correlation between climate and their commitment (*p<0.05, **p<0.01, 2-tailed).

5 Discussion

Organizational climate has different effects on organizational commitment in the case of SOEs comparing to Non SOEs. To provide an explanation, it is important to understand that the working incentives of employees are different regarding those entities. Employees working for Non SOEs have their incentives focused more on direct financial benefits, i.e. income and earnings. Being a high power distance country, Vietnamese working for Non SOEs are frequently judged by society based on their earnings, therefore the more they earn, the better they feel in front of their social circle [28]. Therefore, in Non SOEs in which the climate is perceived to be positive and rewarding, employees are more likely to express their commitment. In fact, Non SOEs have advantages over SOEs in that they can establish their own reward system [29], resulting in a climate which is encouraging and appreciating performance and talents. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that job security is lower in Non SOEs, also Non SOEs employees change job more frequently, which might affect the impacts of organizational climate on organizational commitment.

In the case of Vietnam SOEs, employees are looking for connection as their main incentive. SOEs managers are often politically influenced [30]. SOEs promote close connection to officials and party elites [4]. SOEs managers are more likely to maximize their own benefits and their followers' rather than those of the State [31]. Accordingly, SOEs employees perceive a climate in which interpersonal connections are important and encouraging "group benefits". In Vietnam's high power distance culture, employees may prefer such opportunities for connection because getting a certain position in SOEs is an indicator of high social status and success [28]. It is argued that members of SOEs will strongly commit to their organization in such climate to benefit

themselves. It is important to note that despite its negativity, the climate SOEs generate for its members appear to be positive for them, thus encourage them to commit to the organization.

Secondly, organizational climate has different impacts on employees' perceived organizational performance regarding Vietnam SOEs and Non SOEs. Despite the efforts of government in encouraging the development of Non SOEs, Vietnam's ability to implement such policies is still limited [32]. This lead to the situation of policies from the government become slow and stagnant [32]. As a result, SOEs are still backed up by the State and continue to receive preferential treatment [33], especially in terms of easier access to resources. Such excessive resources do not necessarily translate into high performance. In fact, Vietnam SOEs have large amount of bad debts, but those debts are often covered by the State [31]. It is argued that in a climate where inconsistent performance go un-punished, it might affect employees' perception that "our organization is still doing well", thus influence their perceived organizational performance.

In contrast, Non SOEs face more economic and financial pressure in managing their organizations due to the ultimate risks such as bankruptcy [33]. Non SOEs have to depend on social networks for accessing capital and business services, or on informal source of funding, such as money lenders, all of which adversely affect their development [31]. Besides, despite government's efforts, the scale of Non SOEs and their R&D are still not significant enough [32]. It is argued that in a climate where employees perceive their organizations are having more economic and financial difficulties, their perceived organizational performance will be affected.

Vietnamese are getting better educated in the last few decades, especially younger generations. However, what they learnt in school might not prepared them for the climate of SOEs, which encourage "group benefits" rather than talents. Young employees who haven't work in SOEs for a long period of time often have high expectations and hold on to their personal ideals [15], therefore the climate that SOEs generate might be a shock for them, making them turn away. However, older employees who have been working in SOEs for a long time can understand and make use of what such climate generates, thus harmonizing those values with their own goals and objectives. In contrast, the climate in Non SOEs are often more closely related to what are taught in schools, which make it easier for new recruits to identify themselves with. While young employees with less working experience often try to define themselves with their organizational climate, commit more and exert considerable efforts to prove their abilities, older employees with longer years of working are those who enjoy Non SOEs climate the most while commit the strongest. They satisfy with the values of their organization, have more involvement, influence and participation within the climate. It can be said that the older the employees, the stronger the relationship between organizational climate and their organizational commitment.

Several suggestions are proposed for Vietnam SOEs and Non SOEs. For SOEs, firstly, leaders should be assigned based on their knowledge and contribution to the organizations, instead of those having no experience with the mission of SOEs, but rather tend to serve a political purpose. Secondly, employees of SOEs should be recruited based on their experience and education in relation with the organizational objectives. Employees should not be recruited because of connections or political interests because they contribute little, but still taking up positions that could have been given to talented employees. Thirdly, because the SOEs salary is based on an obsolete salary table, which is unrealistic when considering the continuously increase in living expenses, this may motivate employees to pursuit "group benefits". Therefore, the salary table should be updated, in addition to bonuses so that employees can actually afford their living conditions. Fourthly, SOEs should also pay attention to long-term vision with clear and measurable objec-

tives, specific time and resources required, and strategies on how to achieve them. Decisions should not be politically influenced. As such, employees will perceive a climate which encourages talents, rewarding, promoting competition for better performance, and has clearly identified mission, ultimately influence their commitment and perceived organizational performance.

For Non SOEs, firstly, they should invest more in R&D to increase their performance and competitiveness. Employees are more likely to trust and stay with organizations if they perceived such organizations are “having future”. Secondly, because the main incentive of Non SOEs employees is direct financial benefit, providing more supports such as bonuses for “employee of the month”, promotion opportunities, or providing better job security such as long-term contract may attract employees to stay. As such, employees will perceive a climate which is high performance – high rewards, also what they receive is worth their efforts. Moreover, they will perceive that their organizations is doing well and is “having future”. In this sense, it is thought that their organizational commitment and perceived organizational performance can be improved.

6 Conclusion

The present study confirms a positive relationship between organizational climate and organizational commitment and perceived organizational performance in both Vietnam SOEs and Non SOEs. Members of SOEs continue to receive benefits as their organizations continue to enjoy preferential treatments from the State. Thus, they commit strongly to their organization and perceive their organizational performance positively. For Non SOEs, a positive and rewarding climate can encourage organizational commitment. However, disadvantages compared to SOEs together with their insignificant scale might affect their perceived organizational performance.

The study has a limitation that it focuses on the impacts of the overall climate, rather than on its dimensions. Future researches can be conducted on this aspect to further explore how each dimensions of climate affect commitment and perceived organizational performance.

Acknowledgement

This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number 19K04886.

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