

## Organizational climate research: a tool for improving work environment

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**Abstract:** The organizational climate research is a tool used to survey satisfaction or non satisfaction factors of the individual in the organizational context. Such factors are closely connected to organizational behavior and the attitude that the company must adopt in the sense of the elaboration, implantation, and monitoring that comes to attend the employees' expectancies regarding satisfaction factors or to minimize their anxiety in relation to the non satisfaction factors. In this sense, the X Company which adopts this tool to evaluate its organizational climate was chosen as sample for this paper. Thus, the hereunder study aims to show and analyze the data the environment research could offer and, from the results of this tool to suggest improving actions regarding the observed factors. The case study data were gathered by means of a consultant company which applied a questionnaire, adopting the Likert scale methodology. The findings showed this company is far from achieving a favorable position regarding the observed factors. There is a lot more to be done in relation to all analyzed factors, once there are data that are in dissonance with interconnected subjects. However, the organizational climate research proved to be an important tool so that the company may visualize the level of satisfaction and non satisfaction of their collaborators. It allows also the implementation of corrective actions to the factors that negatively influence the organization environment.

**Key words:** Organizational behavior. Motivation. Leadership.

## Pesquisa de clima organizacional: uma ferramenta para melhorar o ambiente de trabalho

**Resumo:** Este artigo tem como objetivo analisar o clima organizacional como uma ferramenta usada para medir os fatores de satisfação e não-satisfação dos indivíduos no contexto organizacional. Tais fatores estão proximamente conectados ao comportamento organizacional, e quais são as atitudes que a empresa deve adotar no sentido de elaboração, implementação e monitoramento para atender às expectativas dos empregados em relação aos fatores de satisfação, ou diminuir a ansiedade em relação aos fatores de não-satisfação. Neste sentido, a Empresa X, que adota esta ferramenta para avaliar o clima organizacional, foi escolhida como amostra neste trabalho. Assim, este estudo tem como objetivo mostrar e analisar os dados que esta pesquisa pode oferecer e a partir dos resultados da aplicação desta ferramenta, e sugerir ações de melhoria para os fatores analisados. Os dados para este estudo de caso foram coletados por meio de uma empresa de consultoria, a qual aplicou questionários, utilizando-se da metodologia da Escala de Likert. Os resultados obtidos mostram que a empresa está longe de atingir uma posição favorável nos fatores observados. Existe muito mais a ser feito em relação aos esses fatores, uma vez que alguns dados estão interconectados com outros assuntos. Entretanto, a pesquisa de clima organizacional se mostrou como uma importante ferramenta para que a empresa possa visualizar os níveis de satisfação ou insatisfação dos colaboradores. Ela possibilita, ainda, implementar ações corretivas para os fatores que podem estar influenciando negativamente o ambiente organizacional.

**Palavras-chave:** Comportamento organizacional. Motivação. Liderança.

## INTRODUCTION

The organizations, in a general way, expect people to take roles and attitudes in order to demonstrate their involvement and compromising inside the organizational aspect. For that, it is used some tools to identify and to understand the behavior dynamic in the organizations.

One of the strategic tools to evaluate the psychological environment of the organization is the organizational environment research which is characterized as a collecting process and data analyzes and information that are subsidies to a reference development diagnosis to a definition and implementation of corrective and preventive actions. By applying the research of the environment, the company may effectively know its environment, how it is, which are the causes that most contributes to this environment, how is the environment in each work unit etc (LUZ, 2003).

To be effective, the environment research must be applied periodically, once the organizational environment is the organization perception the collaborators has. It is something built up as the time pass by, through efforts and actions taken from the opinion of the individuals taking part in the organization.

In this context, this study aims to analyze the results of the organizational climate research applied to the company X and identify the critical factors for the environment improvement, factor that reflects directly in the organization behavior.

## THEORETICAL REVIEW

### ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE E ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

The moment the organizations are living points to questions that less than a decade was not discussed in the strategic meetings. Not even in the human resources area or people management was invited to discuss and to present, strategically, solutions for problems related to people in the organizations.

By mentioning the individual behavior in the organization, it is made necessary to point the reflections of it in the organizational behavior that, according to Robbins (1998) is one study field that investigate the impact that individuals, groups, and the structure has on the behavior inside the organizations with the purpose to apply this knowledge in the benefit of an organization efficiency. It means, to study what people do in the organizations and how their behavior affects their efficiency. The questions related with absenteeism, shifting, productivity, human efficiency and management are considered in the context.

For Sirota et al (2005), apud Araujo (2006), the human behavior in the market enterprise context reflects in the

results related to the productivity, quality, and consequently in the competitively degree of the organization, independent of the scenario presented, be it domestic or global. Thus, it appears to us that it is important to consider the individual not only as a human resource, but, as a person, having characteristics of personalities, expectancies, personal objectives, anyway as a human being.

There is three factors that people wish in the organization an that contributes to its behavior in this context, and that influence in the positively degree of the organizational environment, that are equity, realization, and fellowship.” There is no point the company believes or even be sure that what is offered to its employee is superior to what is offered by the other companies, is this has a different perception. What is necessary is to know people feel themselves and, from that, to manage this datum” (GIL, 2001:272).

In the Souza conception, *apud* Luz (2003: 11), Organization environment is a phenomenon resulting from the culture elements interaction. The environment is more perceptible than its causal sources, comparing it to a perfume, for its effect is perceivable without knowing its ingredients, even though, sometimes, it is possible to identify some of them.

For Schwartz and Davis (1979), *apud* Bowditch and Buono (1992:189), “The organizational environment is a measure of up to what point the people expectancies, on how one should work in an organization, are being accomplished”, that on the individual level reflects in the satisfaction with the work, in the its compromising with the organization, in the interaction in groups, and even in what refers to absenteeism and turn around.

When referring to organizational environment there are three stream lines that always are present, independently of the concepts presented by various authors that are employee satisfaction, the employee perception, and organizational culture. These three elements presents a transversely mode in what it refers to a theme (LUZ, 2003).

According to Gil (2001), it turns to be convenient that the organizations systematically research on organizational environment aiming to achieve objectives as identify and measure the employee’s attitudes related to the programs, politics and practical possibilities of the company; to develop the management understanding about the employee point of view in order improve the work relations with their subordinates; to identify the tendencies of opinions and the attitudes of the employees among other.

It turns to be essential to investigate the questions that evaluate the organizational environment, to approach also the role, the importance and the culture influences established in the organizations. Independently of the action branch, the organizations present an organization culture that is characterized by their own value, members’ behavior, philosophy, etc. The culture constitutes itself of aspects that give to the organizations an exclusive way of

being; it represents the beliefs set, values, working style and relationship that distinguishes an organization from others.

In the organizations the culture shows itself in several ways, although it is considered untouchable, their materialization happens through the various factors such as: ethical code, philosophy, mission declaration, vision declaration and of the company values and, finally through the organization behavior and the people working in it (LUZ, 2003:18). Though, it would not be possible to handle the subject organizational environment without considering the factors of culture that directly interferes in the employees compromising level in the organizations.

The combination of culture and environment includes characteristics as behavior norms; "entertainment" dosage that follows the work; what is recompensed; freedom degrees and empowerment in opposition to bureaucracy and to restriction; the adjustment between authority and responsibility; the measure and the communication efficiency; the amount of confidence in the organization; the respect level and flexibility towards the individual (MAYO, 2003:127). Therefore, it may be said that the environment now perceived and manifested in a certain moment in the organization is a consequence of the factor of its culture.

## **LEADERSHIP, COMMUNICATION AND MOTIVATION**

When its intended to discuss and analyze people behavior in the organizations and how their attitudes affects their own performance in this scenario, through the leadership theories, motivational theories and aspects related to empowered communication in the business mean, this subject turns to be an essential stream line that influences this subject, or better, by means of these analyzes, it is sought to understand the importance of its reflections in the human behavior in the organization.

Some definitions of leadership are presented by Fiedler and Chemers (1974), *apud* Bowditch and Buono (1992: 118), "(1) leadership is relation among people in means which the influence and the power were distributed unevenly in a legitimate basis (contractual or consensual); and (2) the leadership doesn't occur isolated (that is, there is no leaders without follower)".

Thus, the definitions presented above are associated to questions of authority and power to the concept of leadership (Bowditch and Buono, 1992). When the individual has power to take decisions or refers to situations, in that individual has formally a leadership position. But, French and Raven (1959), *apud* Bowditch and Buono (1992) states that the even if the individual having formal position to exercise leadership, he may not necessarily exert influence upon the one under his leadership.

For Bowditch and Buono (1992), the power may be conceptualized as being the cause of certain behaviors or

as the result of certain circumstantial factors. Managers are essentially powerless up to the moment their followers concede them the authority to conduct (BARNARD; 1938 *apud* BOWDITCH and BUONO, 1992). In this sense, when relating power/authority and organizational behavior it may consequently reflect upon questions related to the organizational environment, that by referring as of model of management it will drive the reader to ask how the leader or manager has formal authority to exert power, of conducting questions related to people management to achieve the organization objectives.

By considering the management role presented by Mintzberg, it makes necessary to broach the importance of the organization. In a business context, the communication importance is demonstrated by the fact the managers keeps more the 75% of the time communicating, states Cribbin (1972) and Mintzberg (1980), *apud* Bowditch and Buono (1992: 80). Considering this statement, related questions to the business communication may serve as inputs for the analysis of the organizational behavior.

For that reason, Myers and Myers, *apud* Bowditch and Buono (1992), analyses the communication in three broad functions such as: *production and control* (communication directed to the work accomplishment and to the objectives of the production and the organization), *innovation* (messages about new ideas and proceeding changes) and *socialization and maintenance* (communication directed to the realization means of the work and for the personal involvement, the interpersonal relations and people motivation in the company), concluding that communication is really important to improve the environment, mainly in respect to the socialization and the inter-relationship in the organizations.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The work was developed utilizing the bibliographic research method and a case study that is part of a research carried on by the Company X, for the critical factors identification and opportunities of improvements and organizational ambient conditions.

For the research achievement it was hired a consultant company specialized in organizational environment study, which has prepared a questionnaire having 98 questions using the LIKERT scale methodology. The sample was of 750 questionnaires applied to a universe of 774 collaborators what represents 97% from the researched universe. The application of the research performed by the company itself, under the coordination of the Human Resources area, and the data were compiled by the consultancy.

It is worth to remark that, as the research was spontaneous, around 2% of the questions were not answered. The research took place on October 2005. The research broached four dimensions inside the organizational

structure context that are: corporative processes, motivation and credibility, management of the company and managerial style.

1. Corporative Processes: Comprise the politics, norms and organizational practices utilized for management and people development.
2. Motivation e credibility: Reflect the intensity of the connection of the people with the organization.
3. Company management: It is related to the management model practiced in the company.
4. Managerial style: it is the behavior pattern of the immediate superior in the performance management and development of member of his team. It is the direct relationship way and communication of the company with its collaborators.

Among the four dimensions, it was chosen to analyze the dimension managerial style, which under the authors' point of view emphasizes more the human behavioral question in the organization. In the environment research applied at Company X, the dimension style comprises the following factors: Performance planning and development; Support, orientation e counseling; Performance revision and development; Reinforcement and acknowledgment; Aptitude and justice.

For this work it was extracted the 24 questions distributed among the 5 factors related to Managerial Style.

#### 4. Results e Discussion

The company considers as a good administrative result, for any question, of any analyzed factors, is the favorable answer index reaches 70%. Below, they are presented the research results and some considerations about these results, which may be thus summarized.

In the Performance Planning and Development the organization objective was doing a survey of the collaborators view the own responsibility degree and of its controller related to the performance and goals accomplishment, as well as of personal development. For the analyzes of the planning factor it was done five questions, with an average of answers of 97.9%, with a minimum of 97.5% and a maximum of 98.5%, considering 750 questionnaires in the sample.

It is verified that it was not achieved, for the planning, in any question, the favor ability index proposed, that such average was of 55%. The question B presented the best result with 69%, followed by question A with 66%. The answer E had the lowest index with 48%. This answer lacks of a better analysis, for if it if compared with answer D, with an 51% index, it is verified that there is the participation of the employee in the definition of self goals, what requires knowledge of the criteria adopted, meaning that its index can not be lower than answer D, once the heist explain the criteria to obtain the better performance.

It is realized yet that the percentage of each question, relative to the neutrality is superior to the non favor ability, except for the question D, such index is little lower. In the data analysis, it is noticed that the collaborators do not know to distinguish carrier responsibility, what is expected from them, besides that they hope to be recognized by what they do; what must occur, because the company does not presents a formal evaluation process for the collaborators and the lack of a structured development plan. To achieve the desired index of 70% it is necessary a publishing work and clarification about the carrier plan, evaluation and development so that the employee knows his rights and obligations on the job.

The first question the main objective is an evaluation of the immediate in charge about the degree of aperture and the participation level that is given to the collaborator in use of its function. To the analysis of Monitoring and Support it was done eight questions, with an answer average of 98%, with the minimum of 97.7% and a maximum of 98.8%, considering 750 respondents.

In the Monitoring and Support it is verified that it was not achieved the index of favor ability proposed, such average was of 60.1%. In the question D, that deal with the autonomy for the responsibilities accomplishment the index was achieved with an average of 71%. A little below, with 67% we have the question C, incentive to face challenges, what it appear to us it is in accordance to the result obtained for the autonomy.

The question B, discussion about decisions, with 59%, seems to be misaligned with question C and D, because who gives the autonomy and motivates the subordinate to new challenges, allows that their decisions to be discussed because it demonstrate to be a democratic person.

The questions E, G and H with 59% index each, along with F with 56%, also need a more detailed analyzes. Now, if the manager is democratic, as per answer C and D, there is no reason to not discuss and look for solutions for the conflicts together, changes, and condition for the accomplishment of responsibility. It is believed that, maybe, neutrality is superior to the unfavorable ability, what facilitates to achieve the index defined.

For the analysis of the results, it is verified that there is less involvement of the collaborators in the goals definition, as well as, there is no understanding of what is priority. For the employee to get involved with these tasks and to know better what is expected from him, in terms of priorities, it is required the elaboration of an incentive plan.

The questions objectives related to the performance factor and development is raising information about the way the one immediate superior in charge conduct the subjects related to the performance evaluation of his collaborators, as well as growth desire in the organization. In the performance analysis it was done three questions only, with answer level of 98.1%, with a minimum of 97.5% and a maximum of 98,8%, considering 750 questionnaires

in the sample.

This factor had a very low evaluation from the superiors, with the better index achieved 46 %, on item B, the strong points discussion and the need of professional development, while for item A, growth possibility, and item C, personal desire, presented values such 39% and 38%, respectively.

Comparing Support e Orientation factors, for autonomy items (item D) and incentives (item C) give to the employee, and Performance Analysis, for the three items, it verified dissociation among the factors, as a characteristic of administrative aperture in the first case and a closed administration and/or authoritarian, in the second case.

The Performance Analysis and development shows, also, the great work to be developed to achieve the index considered good, once, for the three items the neutral values are below of unfavorable values. In the data analyzes, it verified that the controller focus in the operational and not in people controlling, indicating that he is not prepared to provide feedback, perhaps indicating a lack or methodology for the perception differences between subordinates and controllers.

It is noticed yet that, there is no plan that presents a clear growth vision, as well as, demonstrates that the, possibly, does not have, also, a developing program for differentiated performances, for, there is differentiated competences with the same remuneration. To overcome these so low indexes, it is suggested that the Human Resources sector creates and implement politics and development maintenance.

The factor Reinforcement and Acknowledgment comes to confirm the questions raised in the previous factor. In the analyzes of the data, where it was done only three questions, with the answer average, of 97%, with the minimum of 97.1% and a maximum of 98,3%, considering 750 questionnaires answered in the sample

There is a big difference among the three items evaluated, what distorts the average value of 50%. The item A, acknowledgment of the work had a value of 62% and need a small effort to achieve the objective 70%. The items, B – creates professional opportunities - with 39% and the C – actuate in a decisive way upon people with development problems - with 48%, requires a good work, for it has high non favor ability, mainly the first, 34%, while the second has 23% of favor ability.

Observing the Monitoring and Support factors, item F the superior provides conditions for the responsibilities accomplishment – with an index of 56% and item H – the superior solves the problems in the area – with an index of 55%, and comparing their indexes with items B e C, it is notices that the employee does not understand the questions, due to the distance between the indexes. Now, if the managers creates opportunities conditions and solve the problems in his area, it means that they create new opportunities (item B) and act to solve the performance problems (item C). To achieve the desired index of 70%

it is crucial to have an effective work feedback from the controller so that the factors related to motivation and communication be stimulated and implemented

With the objective of evaluating the model of management adopted, the questions of Ability and Justice measure the satisfaction level of the collaborators in relation to the abilities to manage people and the sense of justice which is adopted by controller dealing with treating their collaborators. For the analysis of Abilities and Justice it was done five questions, with an answer average, of 97.8%, with a minimum of 97,1% and a maximum of 97,4%, considering all questionnaires of the sample.

In this factor it is verified a balance in the answers indexes, with a medium value of 56,4%. The item C – equal treatment to all employees – it has the highest level with 61%. While, item A – justice in the evaluation – it has the lowest index 51%. This factor requires a good work to achieve 70%, for it presents an index of 22%, either for the neutral as for the unfavorable.

Item D - stimulus to innovation and facility to generate and set up improvement ideas - com 59 %, it is noticed that there is an understanding paradox, when compared with the answers in previous questions, such indexes are low. If the controller stimulates the innovations it is understood the he creates professional opportunities himself, that is vetted by B with 39%. In order to achieve the reference index of 70% estimated by Company X, it is suggested as clarifying action to the controllers, from the human resources area, of the objectives and application of the performance evaluation tool.

## CONCLUSION

The management model adopted by the organizations is an important issue in respect to the organizational balance. It seems that there is more and more, a greater awareness on the part of the companies on the questions related to the satisfaction of their collaborators in the working environment. It is due to the fact that nowadays the great competitive differential is the human being, and the relationship between individual and organization is conducted in order to stimulate the employees so they have the required attitudes to reach the organizational objectives. Apart from that, the organizational success is closely connected to the compromising degree that the individual have in relation to the organizational objectives.

On the other hand, in order to the organizations to establish their competences, is requested that they develop the personal competences of the individuals that is part of their structure, what may improve the work environment in the organizations. The performance plan and the development factor broad questions related to the objectives, responsibilities and criteria for the personal and professional development. This factor is a process of identification training requirements, employees counseling

and dialog related to the performance evaluation with the objective to increment the people capacity to contribute to reach the organization goals. The controller is responsible for the people training and development so that they by putting together knowledge and abilities perform their functions.

Factors such as support, orientation and monitoring deals with the subordinate responsibilities, such as incentives to face challenges, autonomy for the decision making, difficulties and conflicts at work and changing that affect their activities. It is understood that the aspects dealt with in this item involve the controller management capability, of having a democratic leadership style. The efficiency do the leadership style will depend on the effect upon the task performance and the people satisfaction at work. To achieve a satisfactory result in these aspects, it is required a free and efficient communication aiming to exchange in information to the improvement to the decision making and problems solution.

The performance and the development characterize the possibilities of growth, development needs and professional aspiration. The development refers to a set of experiences and learning opportunities that enables the collaborator personal growth. To have growth aspirations in the organization the employee must keep a permanent contact to the superiors manifesting and demonstrating interest through the trainings, learning sections, and performance of his functions directed to reaching the company goals.

Reinforcement and acknowledgment presents manifestations of new opportunities and acting toward the resolution of people repetitive performance problems. To reach the personal goals, the individuals need to receive adequate training from the controller and required equipment so that they develop a good job. Without these elements, even people highly motivated shall not have a good performance.

Ability and justice are related to equity, evaluation and development, innovation stimulus and people managing capability. In this factor, it was verified the need of an attitude looking into the pro-activity, that is the controller attitude to process in positive way the feedback that come from the organization and, at the same time, consonance with company expected objectives, and making collaborators to get involved and perceive the importance of their participation in the organizational development process.

The results indicate that there is a lot more to be done in relation to all analyzed factors, once there are data that are in dissonance with interconnected subjects. Thus, an analysis towards more perfection of the results that take into consideration another factors of the global research, shall help to implement a plan of diversified actions.

In this context, the organizational climate research proved to be an important tool so that the company may visualize the level of satisfaction and non satisfaction of their collaborators. It allows also the implementation of

corrective actions to the factors that negatively influence the organization environment.

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