

ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE DIAGNOSIS IN A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY INSTITUTION: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN CAPITAL

DIAGNÓSTICO DEL CLIMA ORGANIZACIONAL EN UNA INSTITUCIÓN UNIVERSITARIA PRIVADA: IMPLICACIONES PARA LA GESTIÓN ESTRATÉGICA DEL CAPITAL HUMANO

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Abstract: This research focuses on evaluating the organizational climate (OC) at a private university in Mexico, with the aim of identifying its strengths and areas for improvement. This study was descriptive-correlational, with a non-experimental cross-sectional design. The 42-question questionnaire with a Litwin and Stinger (1998) scale was adapted to collect the perceptions of the evening shift nursing staff. Eighteen employees participated in the study. An excellent internal consistency value was obtained for the instrument (Cronbach's alpha of 0.792). The main conclusions point to a mostly positive OC. The structure dimension achieved 93.75% positive perceptions, demonstrating a level of clarity in procedures, policy, and levels of authority. Favorable findings also stand out in interpersonal relationships, with 87.5% and 56.25% strongly agreeing. The organization's identity is perceived positively by 87.5%, which seems to indicate that employees are well aligned with the institution in terms of its mission and values.

Therefore, the findings of the current study confirm the importance of a positive work environment for performance, job satisfaction, and commitment, and highlight the need for its continuous monitoring to ensure the competitiveness of the institution.

Key words: organizational climate, job satisfaction, personnel management, higher education, organizational analysis.

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INTRODUCTION

It is a topic that has been developed from the mid-20th century onwards, although its profile and study patterns have changed over time. An extensive and comparative work by Schneider et al. (2017) provides an overview of the climate of organizational thermodynamics. As a result, they conclude that the climate of an organizational regulatory framework for a place is the general perception of its formal and informal policies, practices, and procedures. From the authors' point of view, it affects motivation, concern, and success in the workplace.

Similarly, Berberoglu (2018) analyzes organizational climate as a determinant of performance in public hospitals, obtaining positive correlations with commitment and job satisfaction, as well as with the decrease in staff turnover. Likewise, the author emphasizes that corporations with effective measurement plans on organizational climate have the possibility of implementing timely interventions that significantly impact staff productivity and well-being.

In the case of Mexico, Uribe et al. (2020) developed and validated the Multidimensional Organizational Climate Scale specifically for use in Mexican organizations due to the country's unique cultural and socioeconomic differences. These researchers, therefore, demonstrated that the measurement must be adjusted to the realities of the essential climate in the company's home country to produce valid and reliable results, proposing different possible dimensions.

Likewise, Mendoza-Moheno et al. (2011) analyzed the relationship between organizational climate and innovation in Mexican SMEs, determining that managerial support, autonomy, and recognition are three dimensions of organizational climate that can significantly predict innovative capacity. In this sense, the authors emphasized the need to carry out periodic organizational climate assessments as a strategy to increase the competitiveness of Mexican companies in an increasingly competitive and globalized context.

The main objective of this research was to diagnose the Organizational Climate in a Private University Institution in order to identify strengths and areas of opportunity to design strategies for continuous improvement.

Organizational climate assessment is a good tool and possibly a strong strategy for any modern organization. The reason simply lies in the fact that organizational climate describes what employees see and to what extent it influences their behavior, motivation, and work. Effective work climates promote productivity, reduce absenteeism and turnover, improve customer service quality, and implement responsiveness and adaptability. In a modern world where everything is changing very quickly, there is no place to take advantage of the market and ensure stability in your job. Regular assessment of organizational climate is required to have enough relevant information to make some critical decisions affecting competitiveness and well-being. The current research will provide such information, making recommendations on strategies to strengthen human capital as a source of sustainable competitive advantage.

Despite its importance, the assessment of organizational climate has several limitations that must be recognized in order to interpret the results correctly:

- 1) Climate is not independent in reality. Since it is an individual perception of something—impression and vividness of the surrounding environment—it is by definition subjective and vulnerable to cognitive problems.
- 2) The current assessment does not have a permanent character: climate is so dynamic that an assessment is relevant only for a certain period.

Conceptualization of organizational climate

Organizational climate is a multidimensional participation of those factors that, according to a common perception, the average person in the organization has of his or her workplace. According to Arias-Jiménez (2007), a climate is the personality of an organization in terms of how our working conditions are created by organizational and individual characteristics. The author also differentiates between organizational climate and culture. While organizational culture implies basic and long-lasting values, climate is more immediate and can be changed with short interventions.

There has been a change in the conceptualization of organizational climate over the decades. According to Pedraza (2020), focused on objective organizational characteristics; individual, where psychological perceptions are privileged; and interactionist, which integrates objective and subjective factors, this being

the vision that enjoys the greatest acceptance. This is because such an approach is aware that climate is an emerging formation of the dynamic process between organizational factors and perceptual processes of employees.

Dimensions of organizational climate

In the literature, the dimensions that characterize the dimensions of organizational climate have been extensively studied. According to the results of confirmatory factor analysis, among the eight indispensable factors that the authors named organizational structure, individual responsibility, rewards, challenge, interpersonal relationships, cooperation, performance standards, and conflict management, they have shown that all dimensions do not function individually, but interact creating specific patterns of the overall climate in the original organization.

Additionally, for Latin America, Zenteno-Hidalgo and Durán (2022) propose a contextual approach, with additional dimensions that integrate dimensions such as participative leadership, effective communication, and the physical conditions of the work environment. This model has been validated in different productive sectors, and they argue that the evaluation of organizational climate is a factor that must be contextualized in the country in which the organization operates.

Impact of organizational climate on organizational variables

Organizational climate has been shown to have significant correlations with several other organizational variables of interest. Chiang et al. (2016) evaluated the relationship between organizational climate and job satisfaction in public sector workplaces and found evidence of significant positive correlations between autonomy, recognition, managerial support, and overall satisfaction. Furthermore, as mentioned above, the aforementioned research sustains the values over time and allows affirming that for at least three months maintaining sustainable improvements in organizational climate predicts improvements in job satisfaction.

Finally, in relation to the three previous domains, Rodríguez-Ayan and Sotelo (2020) identified that, with respect to the area of performance, organizational climate explains about 34% of the variance in individual performance and about 41% in team performance. In particular, the results suggest that the dimensions of role clarity, feedback, and support for innovation are the most powerful predictors of performance; negative factors would affect organizational goals, such as work pressure or too much formalization, among others.

Interventions to improve organizational climate

Therefore, occupational intervention initiatives aimed at improving the organizational climate should be based on an accurate diagnosis and designed according to the characteristics of the organizations themselves. Enriquez and Calderon (2022) propose an intervention model based on three levels: individual (competency development), group (team strengthening), and organizational (structural and cultural transformation). Their longitudinal study in manufacturing companies has shown that multilevel interventions generate more sustainable improvements, as opposed to those that only pay attention to one level.

Finally, Rivera-Porras et al. (2018) conclude that, on balance, it is critical for companies to link interventions with their organizational climate to their corporate strategy. According to their primary data, aligning these two dimensions for a company will maximize results.

DEVELOPMENT

Research paradigm

The present organizational climate study was implemented in accordance with postpositivism, since, although it affirms that an objective reality exists, it argues that it can only be imperfectly perceived by the researcher due to his or her intellectual and sensory limitations Creswell & Poth (2023). Such a framework is appropriate for organizational climate analysis because it facilitates the combination of objective measurements with the interpretation of subjective perceptions by stakeholders.

Rivas-Tovar (2021) indicates that the post-positivist paradigm allows the study of complex organizational phenomena, since methodological triangulation is feasible and perceptions about the work climate, as subjective, can be systematized and rigorously analyzed. When it enables my methodological decisions, the paradigm conceptually frames this thesis.

Research level

The selected level of research is distinguished as descriptive-correlational. As indicated by Hernández-Sampieri and Mendoza (2022), descriptive studies aim to specify the properties, characteristics, and relevant profiles of the phenomenon explained, and the correlational dimension helps to reveal the mutual relationships between the variables or dimensions analyzed. In this sense, the chosen combination is more than appropriate to describe the organizational climate and its relationship between different components. Martínez-Ortega et al. (2009) indicate that descriptive-correlational studies are essential for developing basic explanatory or experimental research, constituting a means between primary exploration and a

detailed explanation of the phenomenon. Therefore, in the organizational climate scenario, this level is essential both to describe in detail the current state and to reveal the evident dependencies.

Study design

The design used was non-experimental, cross-sectional. This type of design allows the phenomena to be observed in their natural environment, without deliberate manipulation of the variables; data collection can be carried out at a specific time. According to Ato et al. (2013), the choice of this type of design allows the researcher to collect information about the phenomenon described above as it occurs. Therefore, the non-experimental cross-sectional design was used in the present study due to its characteristic of collecting argumentation according to the phenomenon to be investigated.

The cross-sectional design allows the researcher to obtain a picture of the climate to be evaluated at a specific time and, from there, to diagnose it as it is and establish a baseline for future interventions. As Instrument

For the evaluation of the organizational climate, the questionnaire used by Capetillo (2020) in his study was adapted. It consists of 42 questions, which can be answered with the following scale of Litwin and Stinger (1998):

Table 1. Scoring scale.

Scale	Score
Very much in agreement	3
Agreed	2
Disagree	1
Strongly disagree	0

For the interpretation of the result, the higher the score, the better the organizational climate, and the lower the score, the poorer the organizational climate.

Simulation procedure

The research was carried out following a protocol structured in six phases:

Phase 1: The research project was presented in a very general way to the authorities of the private university, in order to obtain their approval and start the activity, so in this second phase a more specific version was presented.

Phase 2: A linguistic adaptation—of lesser magnitude—of the quantitative instrument—applied questionnaire—was also carried out—the questionnaire had to be contextualized to the experience of university students, without, however, losing the original structure. This adaptation was approved by three experts in organizational psychology.

Phase 3: The adapted instrument was applied to a pilot group of 5 persons with similar characteristics to the target population but who did not participate in the final study. This pilot allowed us to identify and correct possible ambiguities in the items and to estimate the application time.

Phase 4: Face-to-face sessions were scheduled for the application of the questionnaire during the afternoon shift workday. An adequate space was provided for the privacy and comfort of the participants. Before answering the questionnaire, each participant was informed about the study and subsequently signed an informed consent form.

Once collected, the data were digitized using SPSS software, version 25. The database was also cleaned to ensure that there were no data entry errors or missing data. Then, descriptive statistics were calculated for each item and dimension, and the correlation between the dimensions of organizational climate was analyzed.

Phase 6: Organizational climate profiles were prepared globally and by dimensions. Strengths and areas of opportunity were identified. Comparative analyses were developed considering sociodemographic and labor variables. Finally, a report was prepared with the findings and specific recommendations.

Participants

The population that participated in the exercise consisted of the afternoon shift staff of a private university located in downtown Mexico City. A non-probabilistic convenience sample was used and 18 people participated, divided into the following roles: professors, administrative and support staff, which corresponds to 90% of the staff of this shift. For the male gender, 10 men participated; while for the female gender, 8 women participated, with an age range between 27 and 58 years old. Regarding the seniority of the employees in the institution, the data are as follows: less than one year, there were 2 people; from 1 to 5 years, there were 7 workers; from 6 to 10 years, there were 5 collaborators; and more than 10 years, there were 4 people.

The objectives of the research were made known to all the research participants, who voluntarily assumed them in writing under the informed consent, whose clause assured the confidentiality of the data and that the information obtained would only be used for research purposes. The research respected the ethical

principles for research in social sciences decreed in the Helsinki Declaration and was also endorsed by the Research Ethics Committee of the institution.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Once the information was collected, the data analysis was performed. For this purpose, Cronbach's Alpha parameter was calculated, as cited by Colorado et al. (2025), which is the most traditional and widely used. The figure obtained can be seen in Table 2.

Reliability results.

Variable	Data
0.792	42

The figure for the present study obtained a reliability of 0.792, which indicates excellent internal consistency. For Taber (20200), data between 0.78 and 0.88 is a good figure.

Table 3 represents the level of predominance of the structure dimension.

Table 3. Results of the structure dimension.

Variable	%
Very much in agreement	43.75
Agreed	50
Disagree	6.25
Strongly disagree	0

The results of the structure dimension reveal a mostly favorable perception on the part of the participants. A positive opinion was expressed by 93.75% of the respondents, distributed between strongly agree (43.75%) and agree (50%). Only 6.25% expressed disagreement, while no respondent selected the strongly disagree option.

This distribution shows that employees cannot complain about surveys involving formal organization, procedures, policies, and authority and red tape within the university. The lack of any response in the most negative group shows that there are no extremely negative opinions about the structure of the university.

Table 4 represents the level at which the reward factor predominates.

Table 4. Reward dimension results.

Variable	%
Very much in agreement	37.
Agreed	50
Disagree	12.5
Strongly disagree	0

The reward scale has a similar pattern of acceptance, although with nuanced variations. Specifically, 87.5% of respondents have a favorable opinion on the issue, with 37.5% strongly agreeing and 50% agreeing. However, the difference compared to the previous dimension lies in the increase in negative perceptions; 12.5% disagree.

Overall, this configuration suggests that while the majority of staff believe that the institution's system of incentives, rewards, and rewards is appropriate, there is still a not insignificant proportion of staff who feel that there are inadequacies in this area. The lower proportion of strongly agree responses compared to the rest of the dimensions may suggest that the area of rewards needs more attention to achieve optimal levels of satisfaction.

Table 5 represents the predominant level of the relationship dimension.

Table 5. Relationship dimension results.

Variable	%
Very much in agreement	56.25
Agreed	31.25
Disagree	6.25
Strongly disagree	6.25

The relationships dimension is the most positive of all the measures, as evidenced by the values of 87.5% of respondents. The perception of the frontal ones is particularly strong. In this regard, 56.25% of respondents supported the statement "I strongly agree." Negative perceptions, on the other hand, remain low and calm. To be more precise, the values of .25% strongly disagree and 0.25 disagree.

As a result, the results show that the interpersonal climate in the institution is extremely satisfactory, as indicated by the evaluations given by the input scale of the individual subjects in the study.

The staff responds extremely positively to how much they like working with the staff, how much they like the communication with others, how much they like the companionship and the team spirit in which the task is performed. The high proportion of highly agreed responses supports this statement for each question. All human relations are a key aspect of the organizational climate of the institution.

Table 6 represents the level at which the identity factor predominates.

Table 6. Results of the identity dimension.

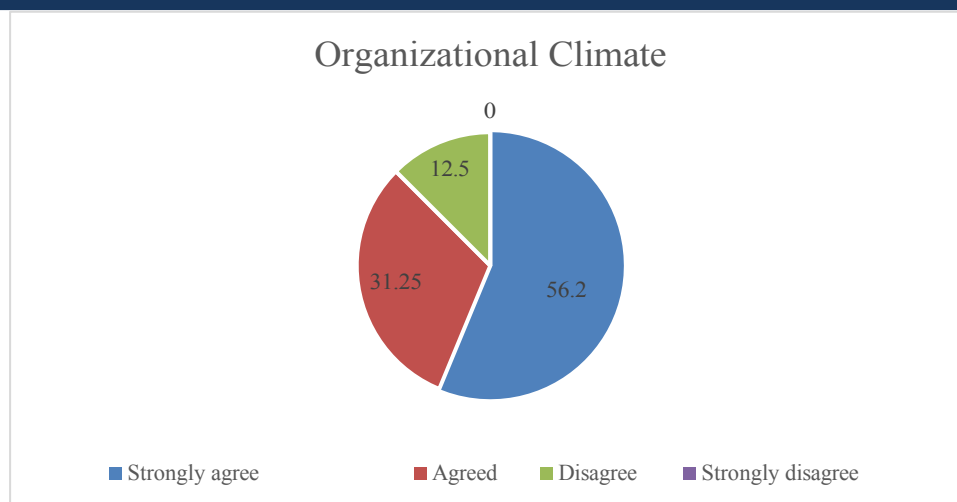
Variable	%
Very much in agreement	43.75
Agreed	43.75
Disagree	6.25
Strongly disagree	6.25

The identity dimension reflects an equal distribution in the positive categories, with 43.75% for strongly agree and agree, resulting in 87.5% of favorable perceptions. Negative responses comprise the remaining 12.5%, equally distributed between disagree and strongly disagree, with 6.25% each.

This is indicated by the fact that in the vast majority of cases, staff show satisfaction with their identification with the institution, its values, mission, and organizational objectives. At the same time, given the occurrence of responses in the strongly disagree category, albeit minimal, it is possible to point to the presence of a small segment of staff who experience some difficulties with identification with the organization. It is likely that this aspect is related not so much to the organization itself, but to the attitude towards some of its individual aspects. In general, this problem deserves attention and some measures can be put in place to strengthen the sense of belonging of the members.

Figure 1 shows the predominant level of the variable: organizational climate.

Figure 1. Results of the organizational climate dimension.



From the information provided by the previous figure, it can be inferred that the organizational climate in its generality of form in the institution contains elements that are, in most cases, positive. The convergence of favorable results in the four dimensions considered in the review: structure, rewards, relationships, and identity, implies that it is a healthy and functional workplace, and as a consequence, it is an acceptable place to work.

The impressive pattern of high percentages of perceptions that ranged between 87.5% and 93.75% in all the dimensions means that, as a matter of priority, the institution succeeds in granting conditions of well-being and satisfaction to its personnel. On the other hand, the areas of opportunity revealed, especially in the reward factor, show that there are still specific aspects that can be intervened quite significantly to reach the level of excellence denominated in all the dimensions evaluated.

DISCUSSION

These results should be discussed within the specialized literature in order to further analyze and evaluate the meaning and scope in light of existing knowledge on university climate.

First, the results indicate a generally favorable organizational climate, since the positive perceptions range between 87.5% and 93.75% in all the dimensions evaluated. In this sense, the research findings are partially contrasted with Uribe et al. (2020), since, in their validation of the Multidimensional Organizational Climate Scale for Mexican organizations, they also found large variations in staff perceptions, but extensively for public institutions. More generally, the presence of positive consistency implies that the university institution under investigation manages to implement organizational practices that are congruent with the cultural and socioeconomic characteristics of the Mexican context.

On the other hand, what has been observed regarding the cultural adaptation of the measurement instrument in accordance with the recommendations of Uribe et al. (2020) could also partly justify the adequacy of the results observed. In correspondence with what has been argued, in fact, what has been stated about the urgency of using measurement instruments that are contextualized with fidelity to the specific characteristics of the Mexican organizational context is confirmed.

The dimension that obtained the highest proportion of strongly agreed responses was interpersonal relations, with 56.25%. Thus, the interpersonal relations dimension stands out as the strength of the institutional climate. The importance of this finding lies in the fact that it contrasts with the perspective of Chiang et al. (2016), who in their analysis of public institutions observed that, although interpersonal relations are a decisive factor, they are not the one that most influences the overall satisfaction of employees.

The prominence of interpersonal relationships in the present study could be explained by the specific peculiarities of the EP field, where the combination of smaller organizational size and closer proximity among collaborators favors the development of a strong interpersonal connection. Thus, the strength of relationships can be described as a strategic resource because, as stated by Zenteno-Hidalgo and Durán (2022), it leads to more collaboration, effective communication, and cohesion, which are three critical factors for institutional performance in the EP field.

The rewards dimension, although maintaining satisfactory levels (87.5% of positive perceptions), presents the highest proportion of negative perceptions (12.5%) and the lowest concentration of strongly agree responses (37.5%). This configuration coincides with the findings of Mendoza-Moheno et al. (2011) in their study on Mexican SMEs, where they identified that recognition constitutes one of the dimensions of organizational climate with the greatest potential for improvement, but also with the greatest impact on organizational innovative capacity.

The data presented by Rodríguez-Ayan and Sotelo (2020) demonstrate the importance of reinforcing the reward system, since the authors determined that feedback and support for innovation are powerful predictors of individual as well as group performance. Given that education and academic innovation are two primary aspects in the university environment, the lack of an adequate reward system could limit the potential for institutional development, as well as the staff's own motivation to strive for quality and continuous improvement.

In terms of the average index, the Organizational Structure dimension also obtains the highest level of acceptance. In this sense, it can be argued that respondents' favorable perception in this area refers to their clarity about procedures, policies, and lines of authority. In particular, this result is consistent with Berberoglu's (2018) assertions that structural clarity is a critical factor influencing organizational performance, especially in service institutions, such as universities.

The structural strength evident indicates that the entity has been able to create regulatory and operational frameworks that ensure safety and guidance to staff. However, it is worth considering the warning of Enriquez and Calderon (2022) who insist on the proper balance between formal structure and organizational flexibility, including educational environments due to the need for adaptability to current trends and changes in education and the social scenario.

The confirmation of these findings through convergence with the specialized literature reaffirms the reliability of the results found, which adds up to provide solid bases for the design of interventions focused on those specific opportune areas identified, namely the reward system, without abandoning the advocacy approaches on autocracy and structure and friendly relations in the work environment.

CONCLUSIONS

First, the organizational structure dimension shows the highest percentage of acceptance, constituting 93.75% of positive perceptions. This indicates that staff feel clarity in the procedures, policies, and lines of authority previously established. This strength can be considered the basis for efficient organizational functioning. It implies that the institution's regulatory and operational frameworks are well described and therefore understood by employees.

On the other hand, the second dimension that emerges as a strength is interpersonal relationships, which had a favorable percentage of 87.5% and the highest percentage of strongly agree responses: 56.25%. This result is especially important because positive interpersonal relationships are a critical component for work well-being, effective collaboration, and talent retention. In this sense, the sense of camaraderie and satisfactory interpersonal communication constitute a valuable intangible asset for the institution.

Another dimension whose results are fortunate is that of organizational identity, since 87.5% of the responses were positive. This figure shows that a sufficient level is retained to generate a good identification by the personnel with the institutional mission, vision, and values. At the same time, given that a small segment has negative opinions in this regard, it is possible to propose the strategy of reinforcing internal communication, integration programs, and activities that foster a sense of belonging.

The rewards dimension, although still maintaining very acceptable levels of satisfaction, with a total of 87.5% positive perceptions, is also the area with the greatest opportunity for improvement. A total of 12.5% of negative perceptions were recorded. In addition, the lowest proportion of "strongly agree" responses was recorded, totaling 37.5%. The above perception suggests that the current system of recognition, incentives, and rewards should be reviewed and its programming strengthened. Thus, it is linked to a strategic opportunity to increase staff motivation and commitment to job satisfaction.

The results of this study, therefore, reflect what has been documented in the specialized literature that organizational climate is a predictor of critical organizational variables such as performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. The positive configuration of the institutional organizational climate is, therefore, a competitive advantage that the organization should not only ensure that it remains, but should continue to strengthen through strategic interventions.

FUTURE WORK

The results of the present study open two lines of future research of particular relevance for the advancement of knowledge on university organizational climate:

This line of research will be based on the simulation of intervention measures that may include salary increases and promotions, depending on the quality of the academic profile. Future research should measure the temporal effect of changes in intervention design problems, expanding to two axes: the quality of the institutional climate and institutional performance.

From this perspective, the proposed research allows extending the understanding of organizational climate in universities through the comparative analysis of several institutions. At the same time, key differences and similarities can be attributed to differences in size, geographic region, type of education, or other socioeconomic factors. In this sense, the proposed framework could allow the identification of differentiated patterns and contribute to the development of even more vivid frameworks for the evaluation and improvement of organizational climate in the Mexican educational system.

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