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Human Resources Management in Nonprofit Sport Organizations

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Abstract: Human resources play a significant role in organizational effectiveness. In this regard, the contribution of organization citizenship behavior is very important and can be interpreted based on the existing climate in an organization. The goal of the present study is to investigate the ethical climate existing in nonprofit sport organizations, and to examine the possible differences in the perception of ethical climate between the members in relation to gender, age and experience. One hundred and fifty six members (117 men and 39 women) of non profit sport organizations were used. Participants filled out the Ethical Climate Questionnaire. Results revealed a superiority of benevolent climate (social and individual caring) in the relevant associations, and the absence of differences between members in relation to gender, age and experience.

Keywords: Ethical climate; Human resources; Organizational behavior; Sport.

1. Introduction

Organization is defined as the distinctive social entity, union or group of people who try to achieve goals. Organizational Effectiveness (OE) holds a basic role in the achievement of goals for which human resources are vital and for this reason they should be effectively managed.

The literature indicates that support that human resources constitute the primary resource of any organization and that the effectiveness of an organization is heavily influenced by how well it uses its human resources (Slack, 1997). According to Ivancevich and Matteson (1996), the individual performance is the foundation for the performance of the organization. Koehler (1988) mentions that the fact that the existence of an organization is due to individuals, should never be overseen. Additionally, Chelladurai (1985) supports that human resources management are very crucial since humans are those who execute organizational and policy related procedures.

Human resources are not objects ordered and delivered based on the needs of every organization. Each individual has different abilities, experiences, knowledge and contributes in his/her own way in the operation of the organization. This element is an interesting challenge for the management of the organization's members in order to achieve organizational effectiveness.

Human resources management depends on the ability to explain and predict organizational behaviour (OB), which reveals attitudes and behaviours of individuals and groups in the organization (Rocha and Turner, 2008). More specifically, the satisfaction of the members regarding their pay, their dedication to the work group and work performance are examples of important attitudes and behaviours in the workplace. (Doherty, 1998).

A construct that can ensure a unique view on the issue of organizational behavior is the organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Aoyaki *et al.*, 2008). The OCB of an organization is presented as "discretionary actions that promote organizational effectiveness" (Tepper *et al.*, 2004). Organ (1988) defined OCB as "the individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal rewards system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization" (p.4).

A mean that has been mentioned that can be used for an informal interpreter and judge of an individual's organizational behavior is the "climate" (Malloy and Agarwal, 2001). Climate is considered as a powerful coordinator for individual organizational behavior and may hold an important role in the way individuals behave at an ethical or unethical direction. (Stead *et al.*, 1990). Based on the above, it is supported that it is possible for organizational climate combined with individual moral orientation as well as with the formal system of rules and

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regulations of the organization, play an important role not only on the performance of the members of the organization but also on the context of their moral behavior (Victor and Cullen, 1988). Research has revealed that ethical climate in organizations affect the moral behaviour of membership (Cohen, 1995; Schneider, 1975; Victor and Cullen, 1987;1988).

Ethical climate is theoretically based upon three classes of ethical theory: egoism, utilitarianism and deontology (Victor and Cullen, 1987). Knowing the characteristics of each form of ethical climate can contribute to better manage OB. As it was established by several studies, ethical climate can be expressed in five dimensions (Wimbush et al., 1997):

“caring” - Sincere interest in each other’s well-being, as well as workgroup’s constituencies.

“rules” - Insisting on strict observance of rules and mandates of their organization (or subunits).

“law and code” - Insisting on strict compliance with codes and regulations of their profession or government.

“independence” - Strong guidance by personal moral beliefs.

“instrumental” - Attention focused on the interest in oneself, first and foremost, even to the exclusion of the interest of the interest of others who may be affected by decisions.

The interest of the present study is focused on the OCB of nonprofit sport organizations, a subject of very little investigation so far. The goal of the present study is to investigate the ethical climate work existing between members of nonprofit sport organizations (administration) as well as to examine possible differences between members in relation to gender, age and administrative experience.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

To implement the study 156 individuals were used. All were members of nonprofit organizations. From them 117 were male and 39 female. The age of participants ranged from 20 to 78 year old (M = 40.6, SD = 10.52), while years of experience as members of athletic associations ranged from 1 to 36 years (M = 8.56, SD = 6.83). The age and experience for the purposes of the study were divided in three levels: age (20-36, 37-45 and 46-78 years) and experience (1-4, 5-9 and 10-36 years). The division was made based on the distribution of individuals in each group in order to have homogeneity for statistical analyses.

2.2. Procedures

The selection of athletic associations for the use of their members in the present study was random. Researchers after visiting the offices of the nonprofit organizations initially updated the members on the aim of the study and following asked them to fill out the relevant form. This procedure lasted approximately 10-15 minutes. It should be noted that researchers mentioned that participation at the research in voluntary and anonymous.

2.3. Measure

In order to estimate ethical climate, a validated Greek version (Proios et al., 2009; Proios et al., 2010) of the Ethical Climate Questionnaire (ECQ) Victor and Cullen (1987;1988) was used, as this was adapted by Agarwal and Malloy (1999) for nonprofit contexts. The ECQ used in the present study includes 18 statements that are distributed in five dimensions: Individual caring (4 statements), Machiavellianism (4 statements), Independence (2 statements), Social caring (4 statements) and Law and code (4 statements). Replies are given on a 5-point Likert-type from *strongly agree* (5) to *strongly disagree* (1). Coefficient α was for Individual caring (.65), for Independence (.64), for Machiavellianism (.67), for Social caring (.68) and for Law and code (.70). Even though coefficient alpha appears to be lower than the acceptable (.70), for the present case they could be considered as relatively acceptable (Tabashnick and Fidell, 2007).

3. Results

Results of descriptive statistics (Table 1) showed that the scores in social caring climate (M = 4.19, SD = .56) and individual caring (M = 4.11, SD = .69) dominated over other dimensions of law and code climate (M = 3.95, SD = .61), Independence (M = 3.24, SD = .92, and Machiavellianism (M = 2.39, SD = .76).

Table-1. Descriptive Statistic Total and relation with Gender

	Men		Women		Total	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Individual caring	4.08	.71	4.24	.60	4.11	.69
Machiavellianism	2.37	.71	2.53	.64	2.39	.76
Independence	3.26	.93	3.12	.89	3.24	.92
Social caring	4.19	.55	4.19	.65	4.19	.56
Law and code	3.92	.61	4.08	.64	3.95	.61
<i>Sig. differences</i>	$\lambda = .017, F(5,136) = .61, p = .69$					

The examination of differences between participants in descriptive statistics (Table 1) initially showed that females scored higher than males in the dimensions individual caring, law and code and Machiavellianism, while

males scored higher than females only in the dimension of independence. Nevertheless, the analysis of variance did not show significantly important differences between males and females ($\lambda = .017$, $F(5,150) = .61$, $p = .69$).

Regarding age, descriptive statistics (Table 2) showed that the higher scores in the dimensions of ethical climate were found in ages from 20-36 years old, except from the dimension of Independence for which the higher score was found in ages 37 to 45 years old. Nevertheless, the differences between scores in the dimensions of ethical climate on the three age levels were not found to be statistically important ($\lambda = .949$, $F(10,268) = .67$, $p = .75$).

Table-2.Descriptive Statistic and Differences relation with Age

	20-36 years		37-45 years		46-78 years	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Individual caring	4.27	.48	4.05	.72	4.14	.69
Machiavellianism	2.44	.83	2.35	.71	2.35	.80
Independence	3.14	.88	3.37	.93	3.24	.93
Social caring	4.33	.53	4.14	.51	4.26	.52
Law and code	4.04	.64	3.91	.66	3.95	.52
<i>Sig. differences</i>	$\lambda = .949$, $F(10,254) = .67$, $p = .75$					

Finally, regarding years of experience of participants, descriptive statistics (Table 3) showed that for the dimensions of caring (social and individual) the higher scores were found on experience level 1-4 years, while for the other dimensions of law and code, independence and Machiavellianism were found in the experience level of 5-9 years. In this case as well differences in scores of ethical climate in all three levels of experience were not found to be statistically important ($\lambda = .948$, $F(10,268) = .72$, $p = .70$).

4. Discussion

The subject of the present study was the management of human resources in nonprofit sport organizations. This interest was the result of claims that the effectiveness of an athletic organization is heavily affected by the use of its human resources (Slack, 1997). Considering the above, the present study made an effort to investigate OB of the members of sport organizations through the existing ethical climate.

Table-3.Descriptive Statistic and Differences relation with Experiences

	1-4 years		5-9 years		10-36 years	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Individual caring	4.18	.63	4.09	.72	4.05	.74
Machiavellianism	2.38	.74	2.52	.82	2.35	.72
Independence	3.28	.86	3.34	.88	3.11	1.01
Social caring	4.22	.52	4.20	.55	4.16	.62
Law and code	3.97	.67	4.11	.51	3.84	.59
<i>Sig. differences</i>	$\lambda = .948$, $F(10,268) = .72$, $p = .70$					

Initially the findings revealed that the prevailing OB of members of nonprofit sport organizations is related to benevolent. This is perceived by the dominance of scores in the climates of social and individual caring. The present finding is confirmed by the findings of previous studies (Agarwal and Malloy, 1999; Proios et al., 2009). The prevalence of a caring climate in sports was also supported by a study that recorded the perceptions of young athletes (10-17 years of age) (Fry and Gano-Overway, 2010). Victor and Cullen (1987;1988) report that benevolence is based on concern for others. The decision-maker aims at a decision that maximizes joint interests even if it means a lesser satisfaction of individual needs (Weber, 1995). In this way an individual that decides within a climate where benevolence prevails it is possible for his/her decision to provide the greatest good for the largest number of people involved in this decision. Such individuals see their organizations as having a sincere interest for the well-being of others (Wimbush and Shepard, 1994).

Another finding of the present study is the fact that the perceptions on OB of members in nonprofit sport organizations for principle climates (independence, law and code), present a medium level of small interest for decisions relating to benevolent climates. The present finding reveals that the specific individuals do not set as priority rules, laws and normative standards relating to honesty, justice and fairness when they make decisions. Research has shown a negative relation between unethical behaviours and ethical climate in organizations with no moral code (Peterson, 2002). The finding of the present study seems to offer answers, in part, on the claims that competitive sports reduces pro social behaviour (Kleiber and Roberts, 1981), or support antisocial behaviors (Kohn, 1986). The present study also revealed that egoistic climate (Machiavellianism) for the organizational citizenship behaviour of members of nonprofit organizations is of secondary importance. Within this climate the decision maker usually decides based on the consequences on his/her self, satisfying mostly his/her needs, ignoring the needs and interests of others.

The examination of developmental factors of ethical climate for the existence of differences, did not confirm our expectations. Specifically, findings did not show proof that factors such are gender, age and experience do not affect

the formation of the ethical climate in nonprofit sport organizations. Regarding differences in the perception of ethical climate in relation to gender, findings enhance the claim that this is an unresolved issue (Malloy and Agarwal, 2001), since the up to date findings are contradicting. No significant differences were revealed in the perception of ethical climate in relation to age. This finding strengthens reports supporting that age is not a clear valuation factor for moral judgment (Kracher *et al.*, 2002; Rest *et al.*, 1986). Finally the absence of differences in the perception of ethical climate in relation to athletic experiences, did not confirm the view of cognitive - developmental theory on moral development (Kohlberg, 1969;1976). This deviation is possibly due to the fact that the present study examined the experiences on a specific social area. If indeed there is a variation between different kinds of experiences in moral development, this is an area for future investigation.

5. Conclusions-Suggestions

Based on the findings of the present study it can be concluded that the organizational citizenship behavior in nonprofit sport organizations where volunteerism prevails, it is distinguished by a caring climate revealing at the same time a limited knowledge of codes or rules and that decisions may not be based on rules and principles. Also the absence of differences in the perception of ethical climate between members shows that their decisions are dominated by ethical criteria.

Within the frame of organizational citizenship behavior in nonprofit sport organizations we suggest knowledge on the consequences of a decision. This could contribute to organizational effectiveness. The fact that in the present study the members of organizations voluntarily offered their work creates the question of whether OB of paid members is different than those offering voluntary work. This could consist a subject for future investigation.

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