

The correlation between organizational climate and employee's job satisfaction: Results from Croatian enterprises

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Abstract: Organizational climate (OC) impacts and shapes employees' performance, motivation, and job satisfaction (JS). This satisfaction stems from specific elements that affect the quality of an individual's work life. The connection between OC and JS is intricate as it relates to every employee's experience and its understanding. Numerous scientific studies indicate that the leadership style of managers plays a key role in creating JS. This paper examines the ways in which various dimensions of organizational culture (OC) relate to employee job satisfaction (JS) in Croatian companies, based on the primary hypothesis and five supplementary hypotheses. The initial section of the questionnaire pertains to a series of statements connected to the OC. Satisfaction served as a dependent variable, whereas the independent variables represented the five dimensions of the OC: "internal communication," "enterprise structure," "enterprise policy," "employee's advancement opportunities," and "regard for employees' personal interests". An empirical study was carried out on a random selection of 100 employees from medium and large companies. The findings indicate that the relationship between OC and JS is mainly reflected in the "internal communication" aspect. Thus, enhancing "internal communication" is significantly linked to boosting employee JS in the chosen companies. No meaningful correlation was observed in the other four dimensions. The respondents highly rated their JS and the influence of their superior leaders on the chosen five dimensions. Due to the lack of sufficient empirical studies of this nature in Croatia and the surrounding region, the value of this work lies in its findings that are beneficial both to researchers and professionals. They can improve the design and execution of difficult changes to ensure a positive OC and JS. A relatively small size of the respondent sample and the demographic

imbalance further restricted the general validity of the conclusions. In upcoming studies, the authors may explore additional statistical tests and further examine the connections between various forms of OC and specific industries and business operations.

Keywords: organizational climate, employee's job satisfaction, internal communication, leaders' impact
JEL classification: D23, M1, M14

1. Introduction

In the realms of business and academia, organizational climate (OC) and employee's job satisfaction (JS) have recently become less common in empirical research. A possible explanation could be that studies tend to focus more on OC (Sempene et al., 2002). OC includes the atmosphere, relationships among individuals, communication, and the impact of leadership. This is the reason why it can significantly influence employees' job satisfaction, motivation, engagement, conduct, productivity and loyalty.

Many authors, including Yang (2010) and others, identify key performance indicators (KPIs), organizational culture and organizational climate (OC) as the primary predictors of job satisfaction (JS). As James et al. (2008) claim, the precise definition of OC is challenged due to its reliance on the perceptions of employees within each specific organization. One commonly referenced definition states that OC refers to the interpretations individuals assign to interconnected groups of experiences obtained through their work (Schneider et al., 2012). For instance, the nature and significance of the job, along with the colleagues they collaborate with, hold great importance for generations Y and Z (Kubátová, 2016:68). The leader's impact can be crucial in fostering a positive OC and dynamic work environment. Trust and strong relationships between leaders and employees are closely linked to job satisfaction (JS). Robbins and Judge (2010) define job satisfaction (JS) as a favourable disposition towards the aspects of an individual's work. Research findings (Skvarciany et al., 2015) indicate that, in addition to stability, compensation structure, teamwork, empowerment and core principles, JS is one of the key elements affecting OC. Spector (1985) indicates that JS reflects how much a person enjoys its work. The relationship between JS and OC is complex as it relates to every employee's experiences and their understandings of those experiences.

Numerous empirical studies conducted by various researchers show a positive relationship between OC and JS (Babšek et al., 2024; Osmani et al., 2022; Aminu, 2020; Abgozo et al., 2017; Sargunam & Rathnamala, 2014 and others). Nonetheless, some studies have found no statistically significant correlation between OC and JS. Our study showed that, for the Croatian companies examined, a statistically significant and positive correlation was detected only between JS and the aspect of "internal communication". This does not imply that the two constructs, OC and JS, do not affect each other, but instead that certain surveys have not identified a linear relationship between the variables examined. Ultimately, OC and JS are separate yet interconnected concepts. As a result, the conclusions of several earlier studies have been inconsistent and occasionally conflicting due to their inability to identify issues with various types of OC and its dimensions (Hussainy, 2022). It is important to note that Schneider and Snyder (1975) discovered that for specific individuals in particular roles, OC is closely associated with the sensation of JS, whereas for others in different roles within the same organization, this connection is simply absent.

A review of scientific papers in journals listed in WOS, Scopus, and other pertinent databases revealed a scarcity of recently published empirical studies regarding the connection between dimensions of OC and JS in Croatia and neighbouring countries. This represents a research gap in our study. This paper

showcases certain theses and results from a limited number of published studies on this subject from Croatia (Pribetic Dragosavac, 2012; Sušanj, 2005; Trobić, 2020), Slovenia (Rožman & Štrukelj, 2020), Serbia (Đorđević et al., 2021; Nikolić et al., 2013), Bosnia and Herzegovina (Rahimić, 2013), and Kosovo (Osmani et al., 2022).

The goal of the paper is to determine the extent of the connection between dimensions of OC and employee JS. To achieve this, an initial online empirical study was carried out using a Google survey questionnaire targeting a random sample of 100 employees from Croatia.

2. Literature review

Considering that the organizational climate (OC) impacts productivity, efficiency, and competitive ability, it must certainly be examined when processes within a specific company are studied. Previous studies on OC (up to the early 1980s) followed the traditional methodology of determining individual variations, typical of industrial psychology. Consequently, the “organizational” aspect was largely disregarded (Schneider & Barbera, 2014).

OC is understood as a shared understanding of perceptions and interpretations regarding policies, practices, experiences with procedures, and conducts that employees perceive encouraging and motivating (Ostroff et al., 2003; Schneider et al., 2011).

Positive OC is the primary contributor to well-being of employees, their work engagement, and increased productivity (Shuck et al., 2017; Kingsley et al., 2018; Rožman et al., 2019). Many sources and authors indicate that there is an entire range of dimensions used to define the OC.

Analysing the underlying structure of a higher-order questionnaire designed for comparative research of OC in Slovenian and Croatian companies, Sušanj (2004) revealed a four-factor structure of the OC:

1. *Organizational systems* (organization, career, rewards),
2. *Management and relationships* (communication and information, management, internal relations),
3. *Attitude towards work and quality* (innovation and initiative, motivation and engagement, quality) and
4. *Development direction* (knowledge of vision, mission and goals, professional training and learning, a sense of belonging).

Based on a study of relevant literature, Table 1 systematically shows the different dimensions of OC that have been identified and researched by individual authors in the previous 15-20 years.

In this work, we focused on next five dimensions of the contemporary OC:

1. Internal communication,
2. Enterprise structure,
3. Enterprise policy,
4. Employee advancement opportunities,
5. Care for the personal interests of employees.

Table 1. Dimensions of organizational climate

| Dimensions of organizational climate | Authors |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Job responsibility and stress, shared values, employee appreciation and feedback, workplace relationships and task characteristics. | Combrink (2004); |
| Job satisfaction, employee commitment, leadership actions, managerial and organizational effectiveness. | Castro & Martins (2010); |
| Disposition towards quality, innovation initiation, motivation, commitment, work relationships, leadership, professional competence and learning, knowledge of mission, vision and goals, work structure, internal communication and information flow, employee reward systems, career development. | OCR (2012); |
| Company structure and procedures, interpersonal relations, employees' conduct, expected performance and opportunities for growth. | Kumar-Bamel et al. (2013); |
| Communication processes, problem solving, learning, motivation, organizational efficiency, innovation, job satisfaction and commitment. | Rahimić (2013); |
| Cooperation, leader's support, trust, fairness, responsiveness, performance standards and commitment. | Kostić-Bobanović & Bobanović (2013); Saeed et al. (2019); Viitala et al. (2015); |
| Stability, reward system, job satisfaction, team approach, empowerment, common values and mutual understanding. | Skvarciany et al. (2015); |
| A feeling of accomplishment, employment stability, good relations with managers and co-workers, work-life balance. | Tansel & Gazioglu (2006); |
| Enterprise policies, practices and procedures that are expected, encouraged and rewarded. | Ahmad et al. (2018), Cygler et al. (2018); Schneider et al. (2012); |
| Employee engagement, enterprise policy, work environment, common values, enterprise structure. | Kingsley et al. (2018); Gholam et al. (2016); |
| Leadership, employee relations, employee commitment, employee satisfaction and employee motivation. | Rožman & Štrukelj (2020); |
| Leadership style, additional benefits, personnel policy, workplace conditions, employee participation in decision-making and frustrations. | Osmani et al. (2022); |

Source: Authors' work (2025)

Many other authors also classify them among the key dimensions of OC. The dimensions in our empirical study were chosen subjectively through the dialectical system theory approach (Mulej et al., 2013). Drawing from the authors' expertise and examination of several recent sources, the discussed dimensions are primarily analysed in the following sections.

Internal communication conveys and interprets messages both within and among different business units of a specific organization. Simultaneously, trust in a superior leader encourages open, two-way and clear communication (Zanabazar et al. 2023). Communication between managers and employees, as well as among employees, is the main determinant of employee JS and the key to corporate success (FitzPatrick & Valskov, 2015). The results of a recent study in Serbia (Đorđević, et al., 2021) indicate that there is a positive bivariate correlation between communication quality and JS, meaning that, as noted by

Nikolić et al. (2013), aspects of satisfaction with internal communication are positively associated with JS variables.

Modern digital platforms (e.g. Microsoft Teams and Zoom) allow leaders to establish virtual environments where members of remote teams can converse, mutually inform each other, exchange ideas, share resources and work together on projects (e.g. Trello and Jira platforms) in real time (Cisco, 2020). Neill et al. (2020) conclude that healthy interpersonal relationships and reciprocal communication can improve employee identification with the organization, even amidst the execution of challenging organizational changes.

Achieving the goals of any organization is connected to top management efficiency of the *enterprise structure*. The OC establishes a reference framework where management's insights and explanations regarding the suggested model of the business structure are exchanged (Janićijević, 2013). If leaders do not successfully delegate tasks, authority, and responsibility to lower levels of the hierarchy, enterprises' responses to changes will be sluggish and insufficient (Koleci, 2019). The framework serves as the foundation for interpersonal relationships and is essential for the synchronized efforts of all business departments. In this regard, every organization is unique regarding its complexity, formalization, and centralization. For instance, a more relaxed set of standards, rules, regulations, and procedures can allow employees more independence, thereby enhancing their job satisfaction.

Enterprise policy refers to a collection of formal regulations that are endorsed regarding development, expansion, and accumulation to manage the business. As noted by Ruža (1989), it is impacted by external factors (natural, scientific, socio-economic systems, public perceptions, etc.) and internal structural components (type and scale of business, equipment configuration, workforce, etc.). This OC dimension signifies adherence to lofty ethical and CSR standards, promotion of inclusivity, and attention to gender equality. When employees genuinely feel connected to management and develop a sense of allegiance, they are more inclined to adhere to formal regulations and remain within the organization (Yukl, 2008). Employee retention is strongly linked to the strategies implemented by the HR department (Kundu & Gahlawat, 2016).

Advancement opportunities are characteristic for the OC that involves systematically executed programs for employee professional training and education, rewarding outstanding individual performance, endorsing employee initiatives, and fostering their career development. Currently, digital platforms can greatly enhance the mentoring role of leaders, which may further accelerate employee development (Deloitte, 2020). Kubátová's empirical study (2016) indicates that Gen Zers anticipate their leaders to act as mentors while granting them a stimulating degree of autonomy. Consequently, leadership encompasses not just the attainment of KPIs, but also addressing the needs, aspirations, and expectations of employees (Perkov et al, 2024).

Being an effective leader involves actively ensuring the *personal interests of employees* are addressed, rather than merely stating it. Employees desire an OC where that ensures safety and freedom (Probst, 2024). The balance among personal interests and work, seniority and age, position and status, as well as overall life satisfaction are viewed as individual factors of JS. The employees expect that they can seek assistance from their direct supervisor in specific circumstances or when solving a personal issue. This is why leaders prioritize flexible work schedules, work-life balance, employee importance and health, as these factors enhance engagement, motivation, loyalty, and a sense of belonging.

2.1 Organizational climate (OC)

Although the notion and studies on OC originate from the 1960s, contemporary authors are eager to explore how this management domain relates to aspects such as KPI achievement, innovation, change management, or employee stress (Grobelna, 2023). Since its inception to the current time, numerous

definitions have been suggested for this term, indicating that a consensus on it is still missing. OC is defined by Hoy & Miskel (2010) as the associated elements of the business environment that distinguish it from others and affect employee conduct. Regardless of the different definitions of OC, they all have at least two features in common: perception and expression of beliefs. This is exactly why a clear set of derived dimensions of OC has not yet been established.

However, as stated by Burton et al. (2012), the OC of a specific business unit might align or not with the corporate OC, meaning that employees may interpret various types of OC in different divisions of a particular enterprise. Some factors contributing to this phenomenon may include the actions and the influence of direct superior leaders. Consequently, OC is more comprehensively understood by examining the multi-faceted interactions of varying organizational tiers instead of focusing solely on the traits of a single hierarchical level (Kang et al., 2016). This approach to researching specific OCs differs from the traditional molar approach which seeks to understand climate as a holistic perception of the organization (Schneider et al., 2017). Differences in size, complexity, vision and mission among organizations also generate different aspects of OC. Dragosavac Pribetic (2012) frequently references these five dimensions of OC: structure, support and warmth, risk, identity and standards. Alongside many other authors, Aishwarya & Ramasundaram (2012) distinguish following four dimensions (according to their results): people-oriented, rule-oriented, innovations-oriented and results-oriented climates. Various organizations create distinct OCs that represent their core values, priorities, and approaches to managing organizational processes. OC may serve as a bridging factor for leadership style and managerial skills (Mehralian, et al. 2020).

Several authors argue that organizational culture is a key factor in the success of a business, as elevated employee motivation leads to enhanced performance (Milfelner & Belak, 2012). Consequently, it is advised that managers routinely gather and assess pertinent data to plan improvements in working conditions. Assessing OC is commonly carried out via surveys that enable employees to share their views on different elements of the work environment. Measurement can incorporate cognitive, affective and behavioural elements.

2.2 The leader's role and employee job satisfaction (JS)

Recent statistics indicate that 70 percent of employee engagement, which refers to how committed and connected employees feel to their work environment, is shaped by the leader (Ratanjee, 2021). The leader's role primarily consists of motivating employees to achieve successful results (Cartwright & Holmes, 2006; Maamari & Majdalani, 2017; Rožman & Štrukelj, 2020). These results, among other aspects, can also be influenced by the attributes of the sector in which the business functions and the choice of the type of OC pursued by the leader. The findings of a comprehensive study by Dulay et al. (2015) that encompassed 99 research surveys indicate that leaders play an important role in the development of a positive OC.

An increasing amount of scientific studies indicates that the leadership approach of managers, especially at operational and mid-level positions, is crucial in fostering JS, which affects employee involvement in aspects like knowledge sharing, creativity, and innovation (e.g., Dutta et al., 2025; Haddad, 2024; Chatterjee et al., 2023). The notion first emerged as a field of academic study in 1935 when Robert Hoppock released his article "Job Satisfaction". This subject has drawn significant interest from researchers and professionals, particularly since the 1970s (Spector, 1985). Locke's theory of range of influence (1976) is the most famous model of JS. The author starts from the premise that satisfaction is influenced by the discrepancy between an individual's job expectations and what he/she actually receives. Ahmad et al. (2018) draw attention to the fact that personality traits should also be considered

when interacting with OC and JS. Thus, it becomes easier to comprehend why identical climate conditions can impact various employees and their JS in distinct ways.

Based on all the referenced and cited sources, the hypothesis (H1) was proposed, stating: “There is a correlation between organizational climate and job satisfaction in Croatian companies”. The determination of whether to accept or reject this hypothesis relied on testing five established auxiliary hypotheses as outlined:

AH1: There is a relationship between the quality of internal communication and employee job satisfaction in Croatian companies.

AH2: There is a correlation between the quality of the organizational structure and employee satisfaction in Croatian companies.

AH3: There is a correlation between the quality of enterprise policies and job satisfaction in Croatian companies.

AH4: There is a correlation between the quality of advancement opportunities and employee job satisfaction in Croatian companies.

AH5: There is a correlation between the quality of care for employees' personal interests and their job satisfaction in Croatian companies.

To determine the significance and endorse the main hypothesis (H1), the authors independently established a prerequisite that a minimum of four auxiliary hypotheses need to be accepted.

3. Research methodology and sample description

This chapter covers research design, methodologies and features of the respondent sample. Both secondary and primary data sources were utilized. Secondary sources consist of both domestic and international scientific and professional literature, along with relevant online bibliographic databases. In the literature review, techniques for description, classification, compilation, analysis, synthesis, inductive and deductive reasoning, and comparison methods were utilized. Scientific research and assessment techniques were employed using the SPSS program for analysing the questionnaires. Primary data was collected through empirical research using an online Google questionnaire, specifically employing the “snowball” technique on a random sample of 100 employees from medium-sized and large enterprises in Croatia (during the period from 15 July to 19 August 2023). The response rate was 80% for both company sizes. Prior to starting the questionnaire, respondents were informed about anonymity and the protection of personal data privacy.

The introductory part of the questionnaire contains three questions about the structure of the sample (gender, level of education and enterprise size). The first part refers to a set of statements related to the OC. Satisfaction played the role of a dependent variable, while the independent variables denoted the following five dimensions of the OC: internal communication, organizational structure and policy, opportunities for advancement and concern for the employees' personal interests. The authors subjectively selected these dimensions through the approach of dialectical system theory since it was impractical to consider all the components of the OC. Respondents expressed their level of agreement each item using a Likert scale: scores ranging from 1 to 5 (appendix-Table 1).

The respondents indicated their level of agreement with 15 statements concerning JS in the second part of the questionnaire (appendix-Table 2). These statements were chosen and adapted from Spector's (1985) Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS). The third part of the questionnaire refers to the level of agreement of the respondents with statements regarding the strength of the impact their direct supervisors have on the OC (appendix-Table 3). The author's original work includes statements concerning the assessment

of OC in chosen companies (first part), specifically regarding the leader’s impact on the OC (third part). Analyses include descriptive statistics, significance tests and numerous comparisons to identify statistically relevant variations. The size of the observed businesses was based on employee count from the Croatian Accounting Act (2023), which defines medium-sized enterprises as having up to 250 employees on average, while large enterprises have more than 250 employees. The analysis excludes 137,950 micro and 15,748 small businesses, representing up to 98.4% of all entrepreneurs in Croatia (Fina, 2024). Given their significant share and various unique characteristics, we believe they warrant a separate and more comprehensive study. Following the suggestion of Horvat & Mijoč (2019) to utilize the G*Power program for accurate evaluation of the statistical power of prevalent statistical tests, this paper conducted a test provided on the Qualtrics website (2025).

Figure 1. Calculation of the ideal sample- Sample size calculator

| | |
|--------------------|------|
| Confidence level: | 90% |
| Population size: | 1989 |
| Margin of Error: | 10% |
| Ideal sample size: | 66 |

Source: calculation taken from Qualtrics (2025)

Data from 2023 indicated that there were 1,989 medium-sized and 458 large companies operating in Croatia (Fina 2024). Conversely, 65 participants from medium-sized companies and 35 from large companies took part in our study.

Through the execution of the test (Figure 1), it was found that for a 90% confidence level and the given number of medium-sized businesses with a standard error of 10%, the optimal sample size is 66 (in this case, it was 65!). Regarding gender, 75% of the sample consisted of male respondents while 25% were female. As far as the level of education is concerned, most respondents held a university degree (47%).

Table 2. Reliability of variables (N = 100)

| Variables | Dimensions | Reliability value |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Organizational climate (OC) | <i>Internal communication</i> | .912 |
| | <i>Enterprise structure</i> | .773 |
| | <i>Enterprise policy</i> | .777 |
| | <i>Advancement opportunities</i> | .769 |
| | <i>Caring for the personal interests of employees</i> | .808 |
| Job satisfaction (JS) | | .776 |

Source: Authors (2025)

Next are individuals holding a higher vocational education (27%), followed by those with a master’s degree or doctorate (15%), while the fewest number of respondents had a secondary vocational education (11%). Table 2 shows the reliability metrics of two variables related to the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient values. In general, the findings indicate that measures of OC and JS are reliable, accurate and consistent.

4. Results of empirical research

This section presents and interprets the results of empirical research and statistical data analysis to attain the objectives of the study and determine the validity of the hypothesis. Table 3 shows the descriptive data of the examined variables.

The value of the Arithmetic mean (AM) for the variable “internal communication” is 4.1125; the “Standard deviation” (SD) is 0.7171. The “Coefficient of variation” (CV) is valued at 17.44%. It shows a fairly low variation in scores. The respondents typically assessed the degree of “internal communication” in their organizations highly, indicating it is well established. The following three variables exhibit minimal fluctuation in ratings and are highly regarded features in the OC. The only variable that respondents rated slightly lower was “care for employees’ personal interests”.

Table 3. Descriptive data of the examined variables (N = 100)

| Variables | N | Minimum | Maximum | Arithmetic mean (AM) | Standard deviation (SD) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------|---------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Internal communication | 100 | 2.00 | 5.00 | 4.1125 | 0.7171 |
| Enterprise structure | 100 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 4.1775 | 0.3765 |
| Enterprise policy | 100 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 4.1100 | 0.3715 |
| Advancement opportunities | 100 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 4.1350 | 0.4042 |
| Care for personal interests of employees | 100 | 3.00 | 4.00 | 3.5275 | 0.2510 |
| Job satisfaction (JS) | 100 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 4.0240 | 0.3409 |
| Leader’s impact on internal communication | 100 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 3.9950 | 0.3481 |
| Leader’s impact on the enterprise structure | 100 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 3.9775 | 0.2954 |
| The leader’s impact on enterprise policy | 100 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 4.0300 | 0.3143 |
| The leader’s impact on employee advancement | 100 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 3.9675 | 0.3111 |
| The leader’s impact on care for employees’ personal interests | 100 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.2725 | 0.7834 |

Source: Authors’ work (2025)

Based on the agreement with 15 statements in the appendix (Table 2), it can be concluded that the respondents highly rated their JS (AM=4.0240; SD = 0.3409; CV = 8.47 %). The lower 3 part of Table 3 shows the respondents’ views on the influence of their superior leaders on the chosen five dimensions of OC. Thus, with very little variability in their ratings, they rated favourably their leaders’ impact.

Table 4. Correlation analysis of obtained data (N=100)

| | | Enterprise size | Gender | Education | Internal communication | Enterprise structure | Enterprise policy | Advancement opportunities | Care for employees' personal interests | Job satisfaction (JS) |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Enterprise size | Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N | 1 100 | | | | | | | | |
| Gender | Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N | ,157 ,118 100 | 1 100 | | | | | | | |
| Education | Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N | ,095 ,348 100 | ,040 ,692 100 | 1 100 | | | | | | |
| Internal communication | Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N | ,185 ,065 100 | ,079 ,435 100 | -,173 ,085 100 | 1 100 | | | | | |
| Enterprise structure | Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N | -,152 ,132 100 | -,042 ,675 100 | -,030 ,768 100 | ,059 ,563 100 | 1 100 | | | | |
| Enterprise policy | Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N | ,037 ,716 100 | -,031 ,758 100 | -,188 ,060 100 | ,131 ,195 100 | ,125 ,214 100 | 1 100 | | | |
| Advancement opportunities | Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N | -,142 ,159 100 | -,065 ,523 100 | -,033 ,741 100 | ,034 ,736 100 | ,065 ,521 100 | ,051 ,611 100 | 1 100 | | |
| Care for employees' personal interests | Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N | -,039 ,701 100 | -,064 ,530 100 | ,020 ,842 100 | ,102 ,313 100 | ,068 ,501 100 | ,157 ,119 100 | ,000 ,997 100 | 1 100 | |
| Job satisfaction (JS) | Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N | -,155 ,124 100 | -,118 ,242 100 | ,005 ,960 100 | ,359** ,000 100 | ,161 ,111 100 | -,094 ,351 100 | -,040 ,695 100 | ,140 ,165 100 | 1 100 |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Marinović (2024)

The analysis presented in Table 4, measured by Pearson's linear correlation coefficient, provides an insight into the correlation between the different research variables. The statistical significance of these correlations was shown by means of p-values. The correlation between the size of the enterprise, gender and education of the respondents is not statistically significant with the chosen variables.

5. Discussion and limitations

The study of organizational climate (OC) captures the interest of academics and professionals. Most researchers in this field agree that a significant limitation of their studies is that they focused on certain aspects of the OC while neglecting others (Hussainy, 2022). Ali and Patnaik (2014) note that the OC can be used to describe the enterprise, as well as reflect the employee's JS. Locke (1976) described JS as a positive emotional experience stemming from a person's assessment of their job. Ahmad et al. (2018) indicated that personality traits have constraining influences on the connection between specific aspects of OC and JS. Empirical research for the purposes of this paper yielded similar results. The existence of a relationship was determined only between "internal communication" as a component of personality traits and JS. Coronel et al. (2020) identified a positive moderate correlation between OC variables and JS (moderate $R_s+0.290$, $p-0.007<0.01$). Chiang Vega et al. (2021) additionally found that JS is positively and statistically significantly related to OC. As stated by Ali & Jung (2017), OC is a key feature of an outstanding workplace. In this sense, several studies (Kao, 2017; Maamari et al., 2017) highlight the beneficial effects of this management style that aligns with the OC and the employee's work practices. The study conducted by Moslehpour et al. (2019) highlights a favourable connection between leadership style and organizational commitment (OC), particularly regarding enhanced motivation and productivity. According to Siegrist et al. (1990), a leader's role in achieving employee satisfaction includes fostering relationships with subordinates, showing empathy and understanding for others, disposition towards accommodating employees' individual preferences and work styles and encouraging collaboration among team members.

This paper highlights the significance of ongoing changes in the field of workplace and JS elements. Furthermore, different types of inter-corporate strategic alliances focused on enhancing competitiveness in the global market have led to the necessity of establishing a flexible OC that accommodates the demands of the global workforce (Prange & Mayrhofer, 2015). The integration of new technologies can assist leaders in these initiatives (e.g., email, intranet, SMS, corporate social media, HR applications, and tools for virtual meetings). Recently established digital workplaces can minimize "noise" in internal communication and enhance efficiency and employee's JS (Deloitte, 2020). Future research in this field will assist in determining the validity of theoretical models on the correlation between OC and employee JS. The exchange of feedback, quality of team communication and the freedom to express personal viewpoints are crucial elements in achieving an inspiring OC. Bowling et al. (2010), Adeniji (2011), Meena & Agarwal (2014), Pecino et al. (2019), and various other authors discovered in their studies that a significant positive correlation exists between aspects of OC and employee JS. Nonetheless, the fundamental hypothesis (H1) of this study is dismissed since the relationship between OC and employee JS in Croatian companies has not been confirmed. Specifically, among the five auxiliary hypotheses examined, only the initial one (PH1) was validated. A statistically significant yet somewhat weak positive correlation was identified solely between the quality of "internal communication" and job satisfaction ($R=0.359$, $p<0.01$).

In line with this, other studies have also not discovered a statistically significant relationship between OC and JS (Yamassake et al., 2021; Shahram et al., 2013). This indicates that there are no notable correlations among “enterprise structure,” “enterprise policy,” “advancement opportunities,” and “concern for employees’ personal interests” with other variables in this study. Possible reasons include the limited number of respondents and the lack of participation from employees in micro and small businesses. Aminu (2020) similarly found that “enterprise policy” and “enterprise structure” do not significantly influence OC.

To define the scope of this paper’s contributions to academic literature and corporate practice, it is important to recognize specific limitations. One factor is the location where it is implemented. Specifically, similar to other nations, Croatia possesses unique values, cultural practices, and traditions. Thus, the outcomes may reveal varying cultural traits and notably distinct standards for assessing the JS of Croatian employees in comparison to individuals from other nations. A relatively small number of respondents (particularly after breaking them down by company size) and the demographic imbalance increased the risk of Type II errors and restricted the general validity of the conclusions as well. Moreover, even though different variables were utilized to assess OC and JS, self-reports from employees might have led to personal perceptions and response bias. In addition, the personal choice of the analysed five facets of OC is also a limitation. The authors’ lack of specifying the direction of hypotheses (positive or negative correlation) diminishes the strength of the testing. Due to the aforementioned constraints, our results can only act as a reference and should not be used to make broad conclusions. Nonetheless, they are adequately representative for a better understanding of different aspects of the OC and the employees’ JS, considering the leader’s role.

6. Conclusion

Organizational climate (OC) reflects the attitudes of employees concerning their personal experiences in the workplace. A favourable OC is characterized by open internal communication, supportive leadership, opportunities for career advancement and professional growth, as well as a high degree of job satisfaction (JS) among employees. Our statistically analysed findings confirmed that OC and JS are not equivalent. To attain employee job satisfaction, it is crucial to cultivate an OC that has a motivating influence on the majority of employees.

The objective of this paper was to clarify the connection between the dimensions of OC and employee JS within Croatian medium-sized and large enterprises. The research findings demonstrate a high degree of reliability across all variables. Nevertheless, it was discovered that a statistically significant and positive correlation exists solely between “internal communication” and JS. Although only one dimension is deemed significant, it may still imply a localized relationship between OC and JS. It is evident that improved “internal communication” can result in an elevated level of employee JS. One of the few studies conducted in the region, which involved a sample of 202 respondents from south-eastern Serbia, also indicated that an increase in satisfaction with internal communication correlates with a rise in overall JS (Đorđević et al., 2021). In this paper, the highest rated aspects of the OC were “internal communication,” “enterprise structure,” and “enterprise policy.” Additionally, a strong perception among respondents regarding the impact of their direct supervisors was identified not only concerning the three previously mentioned dimensions but also in relation to the fourth dimension, which pertains to “employee advancement opportunities.” Overall, the JS of the employees surveyed was rated as high.

This paper has made a significant contribution by synthesizing existing literature related to leadership, human resource management (HRM), and organizational climate, thereby enhancing and broadening the scope for future research in this management domain. Given the scarcity of similar studies in Croatia and the surrounding region, the empirical research findings presented in this work add considerable value. In the absence of such research, the validity of theoretical models concerning the relationship between organizational climate (OC) and job satisfaction (JS) remains unverified. Despite the exclusion of micro and small enterprises from the empirical analysis, this research will assist professionals and scholars in more effectively developing and executing organizational transformations to promote a positive OC and JS. Furthermore, in contrast to larger organizations, smaller enterprises exhibit greater flexibility as they typically lack a dedicated human resources (HR) function. The limited number of employees allows employers to more easily fulfil one of their key responsibilities, which is to cultivate a positive and distinctive OC. Findings from one of the few recent studies in Croatia indicate that even within small enterprises, there exists a statistically significant correlation between OC and JS, with greater JS linked to a more favourable evaluation of the current OC (Trobić, 2020).

In future studies, the authors may consider employing additional statistical tests and variables to further explore the relationship between various types of the OC and specific industries and business activities. For instance, it is generally accepted that a predominantly rule-oriented climate is more appropriate for legal and financial sectors, while a people-oriented culture is better suited for sales and marketing personnel, among others. In the context of the contemporary digital economy, the authors could examine the potential effects of digital transformation (DX) on the five dimensions of OC. Therefore, in forthcoming research, a broader range of OC dimensions should be analysed in detail using structural equation modelling and a larger, more diverse sample. Additionally, it is important to note that the demographic characteristics of the chosen sample should be defined with greater precision and comprehensiveness. In our example, there is a lack of data regarding respondents' ages. This represents a significant limitation, as age cohorts such as Generation Y and Generation Z exhibit markedly different values and preferred attributes of OC. The presence of different generations offers experts a valuable opportunity to gain insights into the lifecycle of leadership careers and to consolidate perspectives on the increasingly apparent shifts in social norms and the perceptions of a motivating OC.

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Appendix:

Table 1. Agreement with statements about five OC dimensions

| DIMENSIONS | STATEMENTS |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Internal communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The flow of feedback in the enterprise is ensured. • All information within the enterprise is available to all employees. • Communication among colleagues is encouraged. • Every team member has the right to an opinion and suggestion. |
| Enterprise structure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes for decision-making in the enterprise are clearly defined. • The organizational structure supports the efficient distribution of responsibilities. • The enterprise structure is flexible and adaptable to changes in the environment. • The structure enables quick decisions and action. |
| Enterprise policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The enterprise adheres to high ethical business standards. • Enterprise policies support diversity and inclusiveness. • There is a balance between achieving business goals and caring for employee well-being. • Policies are reviewed and adjusted based on employee feedback. |
| Opportunities for advancement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different programs are implemented for training and development of employees as well as leader mentoring. • Employees have the opportunity for internal advancement. • There is a reward system for outstanding results and contribution to the enterprise. • The enterprise supports employee initiatives to improve processes and work. |
| Leader's care for employees' personal interests | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are flexible options for work-life balance. • Employees are supported when they are in personally challenging situations. • Taking care of the health and safety of employees is a priority task. • The enterprise builds a sense of importance among employees who have the opportunity to express their needs. |

Source: Authors (2025)

Respondents expressed their agreement with each of the above statements with grades from 1 to 5 (1 - I absolutely disagree; 2 - I disagree; 3 - I neither agree nor disagree; 4 - I agree; 5 - I absolutely agree).

Table 2. Agreement with statements about job satisfaction

| SEQ. N° | STATEMENTS |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | My superior is competent for the tasks he is in charge of. |
| 2. | When I do my job well, it is recognized, and I get praise. |
| 3. | The rules and protocols at my job are reasonable and contribute to the enterprise. |
| 4. | Communication in my team is good. |
| 5. | Those who prove to be good at work have opportunities for advancement. |
| 6. | My supervisor is fair to me. |
| 7. | The work I do is appreciated in the organization. |
| 8. | The goals of the department and the enterprise are clear to me. |
| 9. | I believe that I am fairly paid for my work. |
| 10. | Superiors show interest in my work. |
| 11. | I like working with my colleagues. |
| 12. | I feel proud doing my job. |
| 13. | I'm satisfied with my opportunities for advancement. |
| 14. | My job is pleasant. |
| 15. | Work assignments are clearly explained. |

Source: Author's work according to Spector (1985)

Respondents expressed their agreement with each of the above 15 statements with grades from 1 to 5 (1 - I absolutely disagree; 2 - I disagree; 3 - I neither agree nor disagree; 4 - I agree; 5 - I absolutely agree).

Table 3. Agreement with statements about the impact of the immediate superior leader on the OC

| DIMENSIONS | STATEMENTS |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Internal communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mode of communication and information is two-way. • Relevant information is available to all employees. • Employees and teams communicate openly with each other. • The leaders listen our views and opinions. |
| Enterprise structure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision-making processes are transparent and clear. • Individual responsibility is effectively distributed. • Flexible enterprise structure enables adaptation to change in the environment. • The organizational system enables quick decision-making and agility. |
| Enterprise policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader’s standards are highly ethical and socially responsible. • Diversity and inclusiveness are encouraged and supported. • Corporate goals and concern for employee well-being are mutually balanced. • Employee feedback is an important landmark for revising and adjusting enterprise policies. |
| Opportunities for advancement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees participate in training and development programs as well as leader mentoring. • There are various possibilities for advancement in the enterprise. • Excellent results and contribution to the enterprise are especially rewarded. • Employee initiatives to improve processes and work are supported. |
| Leader’s care for employees’ personal interests | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organizational concept provides flexible options for work-life balance. • My leader support employees in personal situations. • The health and safety of employees at work are the leader’s priorities. • Employees’ sense of belonging is built, and they are given the opportunity to express their needs. |

Source: Authors (2025)

Respondents expressed their agreement with each of the above statements with grades from 1 to 5 (1 - I absolutely disagree; 2 - I disagree; 3 - I neither agree nor disagree; 4 - I agree; 5 - I absolutely agree).

Povezanost organizacijske klime i zadovoljstva zaposlenika poslom: nalazi iz hrvatskih poduzeća

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Sažetak: Organizacijska klima (OK) utječe na radni učinak, motivaciju i zadovoljstvo poslom zaposlenika (ZP). To zadovoljstvo rezultat je određenih čimbenika koji utječu na kvalitetu nečijeg radnog života. Povezanost između OK i ZP je složena jer je podložna iskustvima svakog pojedinog zaposlenika i njihovim tumačenjima. Mnoga znanstvena istraživanja sugeriraju da stil vođenja menadžera igra ključnu ulogu u stvaranju ZP. Na temelju glavne i pet pomoćnih hipoteza, ovaj rad analizira razinu povezanosti između OK i ZP zaposlenika u hrvatskim poduzećima. Prvi dio upitnika odnosi se na skup tvrdnji vezanih uz OK. Zadovoljstvo je imalo ulogu zavisne varijable, dok su nezavisne varijable označavale sljedećih pet dimenzija klime: “interna komunikacija”, “struktura poduzeća”, “politika poduzeća”, “mogućnosti napredovanja zaposlenika” i “briga za osobne interese zaposlenika”. Empirijsko istraživanje provedeno je na slučajnom uzorku od 100 zaposlenika srednjih i velikih poduzeća. Rezultati su pokazali da se korelacija između OK i ZP prvenstveno očituje u “internoj komunikaciji”. Dakle, poboljšanje ove dimenzije najviše doprinosi povećanju zadovoljstva zaposlenika poslom u odabranim poduzećima. U ostale četiri dimenzije nije pronađena značajna korelacija. Ispitanici su visoko ocijenili svoje zadovoljstvo poslom i utjecaj nadređenih na odabranih pet dimenzija. Budući da nema dovoljno sličnih empirijskih istraživanja kako u Hrvatskoj tako ni u regiji, dodana vrijednost ovog rada su dobiveni rezultati koji mogu koristiti praktičarima i istraživačima. Tako se mogu bolje osmisliti i provesti radikalne promjene u smislu stvaranja povoljne OK i postizanja ZP. Ipak, relativno mali uzorak ispitanika i demografska neravnoteža ograničili su donošenje općih zaključaka. U budućim istraživanjima autori mogu razmotriti neke druge statističke testove i dublje istražiti odnos između različitih vrsta OK i pojedinih industrija, odnosno djelatnosti.

Ključne riječi: organizacijska klima, zadovoljstvo zaposlenika poslom, interna komunikacija, utjecaj lidera

JEL klasifikacija: D23, M1, M1