The Effect of Organizational Climate on Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB): A Study on A Private Company in Malaysia

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Abstract

Malaysia's economic growth has intensified competition, necessitating the productivity of employees. Research consistently shows that fostering a positive work environment promotes organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), a critical factor in enhancing organizational productivity and efficiency. Despite the growing emphasis on cultivating a positive work environment in Malaysia, there is still a need for comprehensive research on the relationship between organizational climate and OCB within this context. This study, which adopts a survey-based quantitative research design, aims to explore the relationship between organizational climate and OCB among private-sector workers in Malaysia. The study involves 94 respondents from Malaysia's private sector. The analysis reveals a high level of altruism but a moderate level of sportsmanship and civic virtue among Malaysian private-sector employees. Many respondents exhibit high and low courtesy and moderate and low conscientiousness. A low level of organizational climate highlights communication and leadership issues, with a moderately positive relationship between organizational climate and OCB. In conclusion, the findings underscore the importance of creating a positive work environment with supportive leadership, clear communication, and opportunities for engagement. Addressing the identified areas for improvement will empower employees to demonstrate higher OCB levels, thereby boosting organizational success and contributing to the overall well-being of the workforce.

Keywords: Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Organizational Climate, Human Resources, Organizational Development, Organizational Behavior

Introduction

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) has been a focal point of research in organizational behavior, drawing considerable attention over the years. Studies by Organ et al (2006);

Podsakoff et al (1997) consistently showed that OCB correlates with improved job performance, heightened job satisfaction and increased employee retention rates. In addition, employees in an efficient organization frequently engage in voluntary tasks without receiving acknowledgment or remuneration and exceed the required scope of their work (Arubayi et al., 2020; Ismail et al., 2021). This behavior facilitates the coordination of activities among team members within and outside the organization, enhances the organization's capacity to attract and retain skilled employees, improves the stability of the organization's performance, and enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of organizational performance (Anjala & Sandamali, 2019; Ismail & Rodzalan, 2021). In other words, managers and employees allocate their energy and time to accomplish organizational objectives. Furthermore, another study indicated a connection between OCB and ethical behavior, suggesting its influence on employee performance (Khokhar & Zia, 2017). Organizations increasingly recognize the importance of promoting OCB to facilitate effective functioning and foster a culture of collaboration, mutual support, and goal alignment. OCB encompasses a spectrum of voluntary behaviors that surpass formal job responsibilities, including assisting colleagues, displaying proactive problem-solving, and actively supporting organizational goals (Ismail et al., 2021). By engaging in OCB, employees demonstrate their commitment to contributing positively to the workplace environment and organizational objectives, ultimately leading to enhanced productivity and performance (Khaskheli et al., 2020). Based on the discussion above, the previous studies have practical implications for organizational development and emphasize OCB's significance in enhancing organizational effectiveness. The practical implications of these findings are significant, as they provide a roadmap for organizations to enhance their productivity and efficiency by fostering a positive work environment that encourages OCB among employees. At this point, the role of OCB as a highly valuable contributor to employees' performance and organizations' effectiveness cannot be denied. Hence, this study focuses on OCB and emphasizes how this behavior affects organizational success.

Malaysia has recently experienced significant economic growth and development (Chia et al., 2014). However, this expansion has intensified competition, prompting organizations to enhance productivity and efficiency. Achieving these objectives hinges on having engaged and committed employees willing to exceed their job expectations. According to research, creating a positive work environment conducive to OCB can help facilitate this process. Despite the growing focus on fostering a positive work environment in Malaysia, there is still a requirement for comprehensive research on the relationship between organizational climate and OCB within this context. Although previous studies have shown that organizational climate is a critical factor in shaping employees' attitudes and behaviors, more comprehensive research is needed to examine the relationship between organizational climate and OCB.

This gap in understanding can create challenges for organizations in creating a positive work environment that encourages OCB, leading to potentially harmful outcomes such as low employee engagement, reduced job satisfaction, and decreased organizational performance (Pitaloka & Sofia, 2014). Therefore, the study aims to examine the relationship between organizational climate and OCB in Malaysia. This study will bridge this gap by investigating how organizational climate influences OCB in Malaysia. It will analyze the factors that shape organizational climate and devise strategies to cultivate a positive work environment conducive to OCB. OCB is pivotal in enhancing organizational effectiveness, job satisfaction, and employee retention (Hidayah & Harnoto, 2018). The impact of organizational climate on

OCB is essential for organizations that want to create a positive work environment that encourages discretionary behaviors among employees. Therefore, understanding the dynamics between organizational climate and OCB is essential for maximizing productivity and fostering a supportive work environment in Malaysia. This can help Malaysian organizations develop strategies to create a positive work environment that encourages OCB, leading to better employee engagement, increased job satisfaction, and improved organizational performance.

Literature Review
Organizational behavior researchers have extensively studied the concept of OCB. The concept describes behavior contributing to the organization's success, even when not explicitly required or rewarded. OCB is regarded as a crucial aspect of worker performance and significantly impacts an organization's ability to succeed. OCB is a concept that refers to voluntary employee behavior that goes beyond formal job requirements and contributes to the organization's overall effectiveness (Organ, 1988). OCB is Individual behaviors that are voluntary, not expressly or directly acknowledged by the official rewards structure, and that collectively support the efficient operation of the organization (Organ & Ryan, 1995). Different categories of OCB can be identified, including interpersonal assistance, sportsmanship, and organizational loyalty. Interpersonal assistance involves providing support or aid to colleagues, whether assisting with tasks or offering emotional backing. Sportsmanship encompasses cooperation, maintaining positivity, and avoiding negative gossip, fostering a harmonious team dynamic. Organizational loyalty entails promoting the organization, such as endorsing it as a great workplace or representing it positively (Podsakoff et al., 2000). OCB is important within organizations for a variety of reasons. Firstly, they enhance overall organizational effectiveness by fostering a positive work environment and improving the quality of interpersonal relationships among employees. Secondly, OCB can boost job satisfaction and decrease turnover rates by fostering higher levels of employee engagement and organizational commitment. Finally, OCB elevates the organization's reputation by promoting a positive image and generating word-of-mouth referrals from contented employees (Podsakoff et al., 2000).

A comprehensive review of scholarly articles in organizational management elucidates the relationship between organizational climate and OCB, highlighting how a positive climate fosters higher levels of OCB engagement among employees. Organizational climate, defined as the shared perceptions and attitudes of employees within an organization, plays a critical role in shaping employees' attitudes and behaviors (Halbusi et al., 2021).

A positive organizational climate can encourage employees to engage in OCB, whereas a hostile climate can lead to negative behaviors such as absenteeism and turnover. Studies consistently demonstrate a positive correlation between a positive organizational climate and OCB and a hostile climate with OCB (Organ, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 1997). Lee and Allen (2002) examined the intricate interplay between organizational climate and OCB. Their findings illuminated a significant positive correlation between a positive organizational climate and the prevalence of OCB among employees. Specifically, they observed that in work environments characterized by supportive leadership, clear communication channels, and a culture of trust and collaboration, employees were more inclined to exhibit behaviors that went beyond their formal job requirements, such as helping colleagues, volunteering for tasks, and contributing innovatively to the organization. Conversely, Lee and Allen also noted a negative relationship between an adverse organizational climate—marked by factors like

poor leadership, low morale, and conflict—and the expression of OCB. These findings emphasize the critical role of organizational climate in influencing employee behavior and organizational effectiveness.

A favorable climate can enhance employee morale, increase job satisfaction, and create a sense of commitment to the organization, all of which can lead to higher levels of OCB. Conversely, an adverse organizational climate can have the opposite effect. Employees who feel that their contributions should be more valued may become disengaged, less committed, and less likely to engage in discretionary behaviors. This can lead to a less productive workforce, decreased organizational effectiveness, and lower levels of job satisfaction. In conclusion, the collective insights from Allen et al (2003) and Glisson and James (2002) underscore the pivotal role of organizational climate in shaping various aspects of employee attitudes, behaviors, and organizational outcomes. These findings underscore the importance of cultivating a positive organizational climate, which enhances job satisfaction and performance and reduces turnover intentions and stress levels. Moreover, a conducive organizational climate fosters creativity, innovation, and a solid organizational culture. Recognizing the importance of organizational climate can help organizations create environments that promote employee well-being, engagement, and, ultimately, organizational success.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study. The literature review outlined a research framework to explain the relationship between the investigated variables. This study framework represented two variables: OCB and organizational climate. This study's conceptual framework explains the influence of organizational climate on OCB. OCB consisted **of five dimensions: conscientiousness, sportsmanship, civic virtue, courtesy, and altruism.**
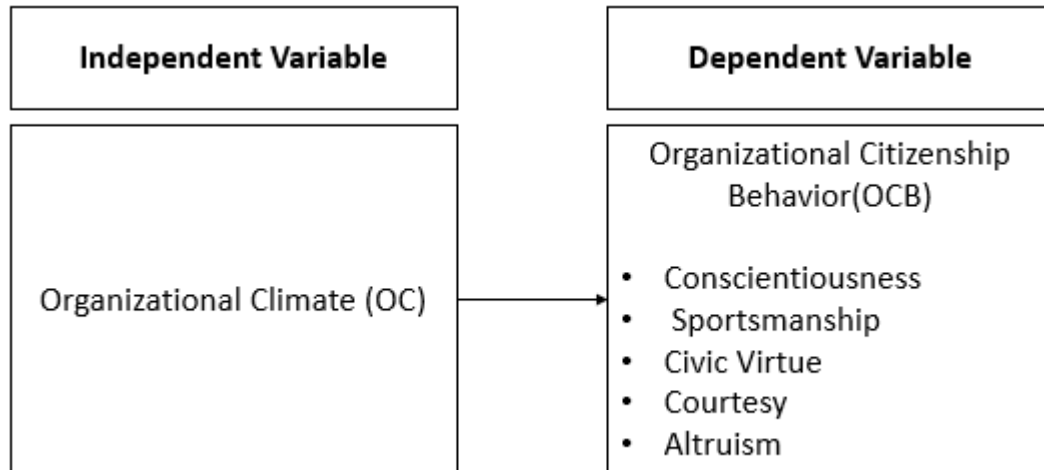
Fig. 1 Conceptual framework of the study

Methods
This study employed a cross-sectional design, utilizing self-administered questionnaires for data collection at a private sector company in Malaysia. It is based on the survey method, aiming to explore the relationship between organizational climate and OCB among private sector workers in Malaysia. The target population comprises all private-sector workers. Sekaran (2004) deemed a sample size of 100 respondents sufficient to ensure the validity of generalization. Meanwhile, according to G-power analysis, the minimum sample size for this

study is 89. For this survey, 100 questionnaires were distributed via Google Forms, and 89 were returned, resulting in an 89% return rate.

Measurements

This study measured five dimensions of OCB, which include altruism (5 items), conscientiousness (16 items), sportsmanship (5 items), courtesy (4 items), and civic virtue (4 items). This study adopted the Organizational Citizenship Behavior Scale (OCBS) by Dennis Organ (1988) to measure OCB. Meanwhile, the study adopted five items to measure organizational climate. The questionnaire measures its items using a 5-point Likert scale. The anchors are: never (1), rarely (2), sometimes (3), often (4), and always (5). This scale's internal consistency and reliability were 0.808 for OCB and 0.839 for organizational climate.

Results And Discussion

This study used SPSS version 25 to analyze the data, which involved descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics were used to characterize the demographic profiles of the respondents, including gender, age, race, religion, marital status, highest education qualification, department within their organizations, employment level, duration, and current status. Respondents represented a wide range of employment levels across various organizations located in the Klang Valley region. Table 1 depicts that 52.8% were female and 47.2% were male. The data shows that most respondents were female, more than 50%. However, this slight difference in percentages does not undermine the study, considering previous research consistently reported a male-dominated labor force in Malaysia, with rates as high as 82.8% (Akhtar et al., 2020). Despite this, the statistics indicate a minor gender disparity, suggesting equal opportunities for both genders. Therefore, fewer male respondents than females do not significantly impact the study's validity. Whether a male- or female-dominated environment influenced the respondents does not diminish the significance of the research.

The age groups 19-24 and 25-29 were the top two highest among all age groups, contributing 43.8% and 47.2%, respectively, with 39 and 42 respondents. Meanwhile, besides the two age groups mentioned above, each represents a small percentage of respondents; 3.4 % were in the age groups of 29–33 and 34–38. Two respondents were in the age group between 39 and 43 years old and 44 years and older, representing only 1.1% of the total respondents. The age statistics reveal that most organizations the respondents work with strongly favor hiring young employees, which explains the significant disparity between the young and old age groups. This study's dominance of these two age groups indirectly offers a significant advantage, focusing on organizational behaviors and climate, specifically how employees behave and perform in the work environment. It aids in developing an awareness of the factors that can motivate employees, boost their performance, and help organizations build a dependable relationship with their workforce. In fact, involving young employees in this study would significantly impact the identification of behavior, which then affects the overall organizational climate that suits most employee age groups.

According to the marital status data, 75.3% of respondents were single, and only 24.7% were married. This indicates a predominant single status among respondents, suggesting potentially differing levels of commitment to personal life compared to married individuals. Recognizing an employee's marital status may hold significance for some organizations, as studies suggest it can provide insight into their likely commitment to their roles and its impact on the organizational climate (Yu & Liu, 2021). The disparity between single and married

respondents could significantly influence organizational behavior, shedding light on whether unattached or attached employees demonstrate higher levels of job dedication. This distinction may shape organizational values and beliefs.

Regarding educational qualifications, the data shows that 4.5% of respondents hold a master's degree as their highest qualification, while the majority of respondents (49.4%) hold a bachelor's degree as their highest qualification. Additionally, a diploma was the second-highest qualification, with 41.6% represented by 37 respondents. Surprisingly, the factor 'others' represents four respondents with an STPM qualification, internationally recognized as a valid and respected form of preuniversity certification. Research suggests that an individual's highest educational attainment influences the development of their organizational and social skills, along with gaining knowledge across various domains, potentially influencing their behavior in the workplace (Chen et al., 2021). However, studies have differing views regarding the necessity of holding the highest qualifications, as it often depends on the specific career trajectory, which may prioritize either skills or experiences (Stoffberg et al., 2023). Nevertheless, a solid educational background is crucial for individuals to grasp relevant organizational concepts and contribute effectively to their organizations.

The overall statistics encompassing the departments represented by respondents span nearly ten departments. Interestingly, 27% of respondents fall into the 'others' category. These 'others' represent departments not explicitly listed on the questionnaire, including manufacturing, telecommunications, engineering, teaching, early childhood education, veterinary, healthcare, social media marketing, courier services, etc. Among the listed departments, operations and the business department emerged as the most represented, accounting for 23.6% of respondents. The finance department was closely behind with 15 respondents, followed by the customer management department with ten respondents, and others distributed accordingly. Despite the varied departmental choices, the data does not inherently indicate any specific aspect of organizational behavior, as departmental representation is typically mandatory in every organization.

Zhenjing et al (2022) highlighted that those differences in employees' workloads or tasks, such as the clients they interact with or the types of tasks they handle, may influence their job performance and perceptions of organizations, thereby impacting the organizational climate. Consequently, each department may play a role in shaping organizational behavior. Among the various working levels, junior executives emerged as the most represented, comprising 51.7% of respondents. This aligns with the highest age groups, suggesting a suitable working level for young respondents within organizations. The trainee working level followed closely behind, constituting 20.2%, while senior executives accounted for 15 respondents. The significance of these numbers for trainees is notable, especially considering the predominance of young respondents, which likely led to their recruitment into trainee or junior executive roles. The presence of six respondents representing the manager's working level may indicate experienced individuals who have been with organizations for a longer duration.

Despite the notable differences in working levels, this study encompasses various levels, reflecting the understanding that organizational behavior involves all individuals within an organization, including employees and employers, or high-position individuals, all of whom contribute to shaping the behavior within the organization (Nkeobuna & Ugoani, 2020). Lee & Kim (2023) assert that employers and high-position individuals, such as managers, play a crucial role in the organization's system, structure, strategy, and socio-cultural aspects.

Therefore, their perspective significantly contributes to understanding organizational behavior, providing insights from both internal and external viewpoints.

The data revealed that most respondents, comprising over 86.5%, reported a working duration of 0–5 years. This trend correlates well with both the age groups and the respondents' working levels, particularly with trainee and junior executive roles being the most prevalent. Furthermore, nine out of 89 respondents reported having 6–10 years of working experience in their respective organizations, accounting for 10.1% of the total. These individuals may belong to either the junior or senior executive levels. Theoretically, longer tenure within an organization often correlates with a more profound familiarity with organizational behavior, which can positively impact the organization (López-Cabarcos et al., 2022). However, the statistics presented indicate a contrary trend, suggesting that most respondents may lack extensive familiarity with their respective organizations due to their relatively short working experience and limited interactions with supervisors and teams. This poses a challenge in identifying behavioral patterns within a shorter timeframe.

Most respondents, comprising 76.4%, held permanent positions, while the remaining 23.6% were contracted employees. Further examination of the employment status revealed that contract employees primarily occupied trainee-level positions, whereas permanent employees were distributed across the other three working levels. Liu et al (2021) conducted a study that suggests employment status can influence organizational behavior due to its association with specific roles and responsibilities. In this context, a significant influence comes from the specific expectations and responsibilities tied to different organizational positions, which denote an employee's status. Contract employees may experience lower levels of stress and lighter workloads compared to their permanent counterparts, resulting in fewer expectations and responsibilities. This difference can profoundly shape employees' behaviors and interactions with others. While permanent employees constitute the majority, considering contract employees in this study is crucial for understanding whether reduced expectations and responsibilities affect their organizational behavior. Furthermore, aside from differences in work execution expectations and responsibilities, variations in individual self-perceptions and qualities may exist between contract and permanent employees. For instance, contract employees might exhibit lower confidence levels. They may be less inclined to assert themselves or voice their opinions than permanent employees, who tend to feel more assured and assertive, taking on leadership roles more readily. Such personal qualities can significantly impact organizational behavior, as this study shows.

Table 1
Demographics Profile

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	SD
Gender				
Male	42	47		
Female	47	53		
Race				
Malay	78	88		
Chinese	6	7		
Indian	3	3		
Ethnic Sabah or Sarawak	2	2		
Religion				
Muslim	80	90		
Buddhist	5	6		
Hindu	2	2		
Others	2	2		
Age (Years)				
19 – 24	39	44	20.56	
25 – 29	42	47		
29 – 33	3	3		
34 – 38	3	3		
39 – 43	1	1		
44 and above	1	1		
Marital Status				
Single	67	75		
Married	22	25		
Highest Qualification				
Diploma	37	42		
Degree	44	49		
Master	4	5		
Others	4	5		
Department				
Finance	15	17		
Operation & Business	21	24		
Commercial	1	1		
Human Resource	8	9		
Audit	1	1		
Retail	4	5		
Consumer	4	5		
Corporate	1	1		
Customer Management	10	11		
Others	24	27		

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	SD
Working Level				
Trainee	18	20		
Junior Executive	46	52		
Senior Executive	15	17		
Manager	6	7		
Others	4	5		
Working Duration (Years)				
0 – 5	77	87		
6 – 10	9	10		
11 – 15	2	2		
16 – 20	2	2		
Employment Status				
Permanent	68	76		
Contract	21	24		

The frequencies, means, and standard deviations of respondents' OCB were measured to examine the scenario of OCB among employees in private sector companies in Malaysia, as shown in Table 2. Based on the data in Table 2, most respondents displayed a high degree of altruism. Altruism typically involves acts of selflessness and concern for the well-being of others, suggesting that most participants in the study may have shown a willingness to help or support their colleagues or community members. Conversely, the study reported moderate levels of sportsmanship and civic virtue. Sportsmanship often relates to fair and respectful behavior in competitive settings, while civic virtue pertains to an individual's involvement and contribution to the community or organization. The moderate ratings for these dimensions suggest that while respondents may exhibit some degree of sportsmanship and civic engagement, it may not be as pronounced or consistent as their altruistic behavior.

Furthermore, most respondents showed low to moderate levels of conscientiousness. This dimension typically involves organization, responsibility, and attention to detail. Therefore, the findings suggest that many respondents may demonstrate varying degrees of these traits, with many falling within the low to moderate range. This could imply that they may have room for improvement in terms of organizational skills, reliability, and attention to detail compared to those with higher levels of conscientiousness. The results indicated that most respondents displayed a low level of courtesy, which suggests that most participants exhibited behaviors characterized by a lack of consideration for others. This could be attributed to factors such as cultural norms, individual personality traits, or workplace dynamics. Additionally, it may indicate a need for interventions or training programs to promote positive interpersonal behaviors and enhance social interactions within the studied group.

Table 2
Level of Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Level	f	%	Mean	SD
Conscientiousness				
Low (1.00 – 2.33)	32	36	3.90	0.653
Moderate (2.43 – 3.66)	32	36		
High (3.66 – 5.00)	25	28		
Sportsmanship				
Low (1.00 – 2.33)	41	44	2.87	0.638
Moderate (2.43 – 3.66)	42	46		
High (3.66 – 5.00)	6	7		
Civic Virtue				
Low (1.00 – 2.33)	29	33	3.79	0.716
Moderate (2.43 – 3.66)	36	40		
High (3.66 – 5.00)	24	27		
Courtesy				
Low (1.00 – 2.33)	31	35	4.38	0.662
Moderate (2.43 – 3.66)	29	33		
High (3.66 – 5.00)	29	33		
Altruism				
Low (1.00 – 2.33)	30	34	4.01	0.688
Moderate (2.43 – 3.66)	26	29		
High (3.66 – 5.00)	33	37		

According to the findings presented in Table 3, most respondents reported a low level of organizational climate, accounting for 37% of the participants. This could imply that a significant portion of the respondents perceived the organizational climate, which encompasses factors such as communication, leadership, and work environment, to be less favorable or supportive. Possible reasons for this perception include poor communication channels, ineffective leadership practices, or a lack of employee engagement initiatives within the organization. Overall, these findings highlight potential areas for improvement in enhancing the organizational climate to meet employees' needs and expectations better.

Table 3
Level of organizational climate dimension

Level	f	%	Mean	SD
Organizational Climate Dimension				
Low (1.00 – 2.33)	33	37	3.75	0.655
Moderate (2.43 – 3.66)	28	32		
High (3.66 – 5.00)	28	32		

Relationship between Organizational Climate and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was employed to explore the relationship between organizational climate and OCB. The results revealed a moderately significant positive relationship ($r = 0.537$, $p < .05$) between organizational climate and OCB. In theory, a moderate correlation suggests that both variables tend to fluctuate; as attention to organizational climate increases or decreases, so does its impact on OCB factors like job structure, performance, communication, motivation, and leadership. This occurs because paying more attention to organizational climate often leads to cultivating a positive work environment and implementing effective leadership practices, consequently fostering employee motivation and dedication towards contributing more to the organization's goals.

Table 4

Correlation coefficient between Organizational Climate and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Organizational Citizenship Behavior	r	p-value
Organizational Climate	0.537**	0.000

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal valuable insights into the dynamics of organizational culture, employee engagement, and their implications for organizational success. This study shed light on various aspects of employee behavior, organizational climate, and the relationship between these factors. The finding reveals that most employees displayed high altruism, indicating a workplace culture that values mutual support, cooperation, and concern for others' well-being. This positive behavior reflect favorably on the organizational climate and suggest a work environment where employees are inclined towards collaborative efforts and assisting their colleagues when needed. Despite the prevalence of altruism, the organization reported moderate sportsmanship and civic virtue. This suggests that while employees demonstrate some degree of fairness and community involvement, there is an opportunity for improvement in fostering a stronger sense of sportsmanship and civic engagement within the organization.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that many employees exhibited moderate and low levels of conscientiousness, reflecting varying degrees of organization, responsibility, and attention to detail. This finding suggests that while employees possess certain traits associated with conscientiousness, there may be opportunities for further development in enhancing organizational skills, reliability, and attention to detail among employees. However, the analysis reveals that most respondents exhibit low courtesy. This indicates a lack of consideration for others and underscores the importance of promoting positive interpersonal behaviors within the workplace. Addressing this aspect is crucial for fostering a respectful and inclusive work environment where employees feel valued and respected. Additionally, this study highlights that the levels of organizational climate among employees were low. Issues such as poor communication channels, ineffective leadership practices, or a lack of employee engagement initiatives within the organization could cause these findings. The low level of the organizational climate shows the need for interventions to improve communication, enhance leadership effectiveness, and foster a more supportive and favorable work environment.

Despite these challenges, the study reveals a moderately positive relationship between organizational climate and OCB. This suggests that as attention to organizational climate increases, there is a corresponding impact on behaviors that contribute to organizational success. Effective leadership and supportive practices are crucial in shaping the organizational climate, influencing employee motivation, and demonstrating dedication to achieving organizational goals. In conclusion, the findings highlight the importance of fostering a positive organizational climate characterized by supportive leadership, effective communication, and opportunities for employee engagement. By addressing areas of improvement identified in this study and prioritizing cultivating a positive work environment, organizations can empower employees to exhibit higher levels of OCB and contribute to the organization's overall success.

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