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The Relationship between Organizational Culture and Organizational Identification in the Iranian Employees in an Industrial Organization in Ahvaz, Iran

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The purpose of this article is to investigate the relationship between organizational culture and organizational identification. Participants included 300 employees from an industrial organization in Ahvaz, Iran, who completed the organizational identification and organizational culture questionnaires. The results showed that there are positive and significant relationships between subscales of organizational culture (i.e., teamwork, morale, informational flow, involvement, supervision, meeting), and organizational identification. The relationships between disidentification, ambivalence and neutral identification with dimensions of organizational culture were negative and significant.

Keywords: organizational culture, organizational identification, disidentification, ambivalence, neutral identification

Interest in identification within the organizational context has grown considerably over the last decade, as it has emerged as an important variable in organizational behavior research (for review, see Pratt, 1998; Rousseau, 1998). Identification has important implications at the individual, group, and organizational levels. Although previous researchers have focused on factors related to varying levels of employee identification such as performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, turnover intentions and actual turnover (Abrams, Ando & Hinkle, 1998; Bartel, 2001; Bhattacharya, Rao, & Glynn,

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1995; Haslam, 2001; Mael and Ashforth, 1995; Pratt, 1998; Tyler, 1999; Van Knippenbery, 2000), much less is known concerning the antecedents of organizational identification. Bullis and Bach (1991) reported that multiplex network relationships were positively related to identification. Myer and Kassing (1998) discovered that supervisor's communication competence was a significant predictor of subordinate identification. This study sought to extend existing research on organizational identification by exploring the relationship between employee perceptions of organizational culture and identification.

Organizational Culture

Over the last decades, a substantial body of research has accumulated regarding the nature and prevalence of organizational culture (Amsa, 1986; Brown, 1992; Gamble & Gibson, 1999; Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv & Sanders, 1990; Lindo and Shurtz, 1998).

Glaser, Zamanou, & Hacker (1987) defined organizational culture as the shared patterns of beliefs, symbols, rituals, and myth that evolve over time and work as the glue that holds the organization together. They also recognized the need to measure these organizational characteristics and examined six dimensions of organizational culture based on management and communication research; specifically, teamwork (Allender, 1984), morale (Poole, 1985), information flow (Borman, 1983), involvement (Solmon, 1985), supervision (Harrison, 1985), and meeting (Hall, 1984).

Dimensions of organizational culture. The first dimension refers to teamwork, which is the degree that employees perceive their work group functioning as a team. It also involves the extent to which management and employees are seen to have a productive working relationship. The second dimension is morale that refers to whether workers feel motivated to be efficient and productive. It also covers the extent to which employees feel respected by people in their work group and the rest of the organization. The third dimension is information flow. It observes whether workers get enough

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information to be efficient and productive and if they know why changes are made. The fourth dimension is involvement. It shows if workers feel they can participate in decisions that affect their work, and if they perceive that their ideas are asked for and valued. The fifth dimension is supervision, which refers to whether or not job requirements are made clear by the supervisor. In addition, this dimension measures whether the supervisor takes criticism well, is a good listener, delegates responsibility, and acknowledges when a job is well done. The six dimension is meeting. It refers to the perception of time in meeting and whether meeting is productive and triggers participant's creativity and discussion

Organizational identification

In recent years, organizational theorists have examined the ways people define themselves in terms of their relationships to organizations, thus applying the concept of social identifications to the workplace (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Eisbach, 1999; Haslam, Van Knippenberg, Platow & Ellemers, 2003; Pratt, 1998). Organizational members are said to identify with the organization when they define themselves at least partly in terms of what the organization is thought to represent. The other fundamental perspective in study of OI was put forth by Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail (1994).

Dimensions of organizational identification.

1. Organizational identification is defined as the degree to which a member defined himself or herself by the same attributes that he or she believes define the organization. Strong organizational identification occurs when, (a) one's organizational identification is more salient than alternative identities, and (b) his or her self-concept has many of the same characteristics he or she believes define the organization as a social group. The members of an organization are said to become attached to their organization when they incorporate the characteristics attributed to the organization into their self-concept. In this

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perspective, the self-concept refers to the totality of self-descriptions and self-evaluations subjectively available to an individual (Hogg & Abram, 1988).

2. Organizational disidentification is defined as a self-perception based on a cognitive separation between one's identity and one's perception of the identity of an organization, and a negative relational categorization of oneself and the organization (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001. Elsbach (1999) notes that disidentification is an active separation from the organization, not just a coincidental or benign mismatch of attributes. It is important to note that disidentification is not merely the opposite of identification. Disidentificaton is a separate variable and a unique psychological state. Whereas identification consists of connecting to oneself, disidentification consists of disconnecting aspects of the organization from oneself (Ashforth, 2001; Disanza & Bullis, 1999; Pratt, 2000).

3. ambivalence identification is defined as the interpersonal relationship that individuals are capable of (a) consciously attending to positive and negative aspects of another entity, and (b) maintaining the state of ambivalence over the long term, even for many years (Thompson & Holmes, 1996). The component of ambivalence that reflects the positive associations would be encouraged by most organizations, whereas the negative component would be discouraged. This mixed message can create isolation and stress for the ambivalent individual as well as perceptions of hypocrisy and pressure to conform (Meyerson & Scully, 1995).

4. Neutral identification. Finally, one's self-perception may be based on the explicit absence of both identification and disidentification with an organization. Elsbach (1999) termed this neutral identification. Elsbach notes that although the individual neither identifies nor disidentifies with the organization, the weakness of his or her affiliation may still be acknowledgeable, even salient. That is, rather than neutral identification merely being the absence of perceptions and attachment, it may be a cognitive state and mode of self-definition in its own right. Individuals may also

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consciously avoid extreme attachments (either positive or negative) because of past experiences with organizations, self descriptions, or management styles. Hence, the actual lack of organizational identification and disidentification in itself can be self defining to individuals. In most cases, neutral identification would be considered as a suboptimal state; and employee defining him or her as neutral toward the organization is less likely to feel engaged in and contribute to the organization than one who does, particularly via extra role behaviors.

Sample and procedure

The organizational identification and organizational culture questionnaires were distributed to 300 employees working in an industrial organization in Ahvaz, Iran. Questionnaires were sent to the employees. They were informed about the research and about the fact that responding was voluntary and anonymous. The sample consisted of 83% males and an 17% females. Of the 300 employees, 69% earned a high school diploma, 21% received some college education, and the remainder of the sample did not indicate their education level.

Measures

Organizational identification was measured with Mael's (unpublished, 1988; Mael & Ashforth, 1995) six-item scale [alpha= .89] (e.g., when I talk about this organization, I usually say "we" rather than "they"). Disidentification, ambivalent identification, and neutral identification were measured with three correspondenting scales developed by Kreiner (Kreiner, 2002; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004). Each of these scales comprised six items. Organizational disidentification was operationalized such as to express self-definition via a cognitive and affective separation from the employing organization, when a person distances him-or-herself from it. While nonetheless remaining a member of it (alpha= .87); A sample item is "I have tried to keep the organization I work for a secret from people I meet".

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Ambivalent identification was operationalized with items measuring mixed feeling about one's association with the organization (Alpha= .92); a sample item is "I find myself being both proud and embarrassed to be a part of this organization".

Neutral identification was operationalized with items measuring one's lack of identification and dissidentification with the employing organization (Alpha= .95); a sample item is "I'm pretty neutral toward the success or failure of this organization." .The response was given on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 representing strong it disagree and 7 strongly agree.

Organizational culture. I employed the organizational culture survey (OCS) developed by Glaser, Zamanou & Hacker (1978). The OCS, as reported by Rubin, Palmreen & Sypher (1994), is consisted of 36 Likert-type items designed to measure an employee's perceptions of an organization's culture across 6 dimensions: teamwork, morale, information flow, involvement, supervision, and meeting. Employ responses were solicited using a five-point scale ranging from (1) to a very little extent to (5) to a very great extent. Schrodt (2002) employed the OCS to operationalize the organizational culture constructs. Schrodt (2002) reported that all of the OCS subscales had good reliabilities and validities, with alphas ranging from .83 to .94, and factor loading ranging from .60 for the meeting subscale to .80 for the morale subscale.

I used the simple correlation (Pearson's) to examine the strength and direction of relationship between subfactors of organizational culture and identification dimension. These correlations are presented in Table 1. In addition I assessed the predictive ability of independent variables by using multiple regression analysis, with facets of organizational identification as the dependent variables and facets of organizational culture as the independent variables.

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Results

Hypothesis 1: Facets of organizational culture are correlated to organizational identification. Results from Table 1 demonstrate that there are significant and positive relationships between facets of organizational culture and organizational identification ranging from .19 for teamwork to .36 for morale and involvement. The hierarchical multiple regression analysis (Table 2) indicates that the combination of the six facets of organizational culture was able to significantly predict organizational identification ($F= 6.45$, $P<.001$). The adjusted R of .15 indicated that 19% of the variance in the organizational identification was accounted for by this regression model. Therefore, hypothesis I was supported.

Next attention was focused on determining which of the facets of organizational culture is most closely related to organizational identification. For this purpose, the researcher employed the stepwise multiple regression technique. The statistics on the three variables that entered the stepwise multiple regression equation for organizational identification are given in Table 2. Morale was the first and the most salient of the variables that entered the regression equation, and accounted for .12 of the variation in organizational identification. At step 2, involvement accounted for an additional .03, at step 3 information flow accounted for an additional .03 of the dependent variable variance. Together, these three variables accounted for .18 of the organizational identification variance.

Hypotheses 2: Facets of organizational culture are correlated to ambivalent identification. The results of this hypothesis are shown in Table 1. From this Table, it can be seen that there are significant and negative correlations between teamwork conflict, climate morale, informational flow, involvement, supervision and meeting with organizational ambivalent identification. The results of the hierarchical multiple regression analyses in Table 3 indicate that the combination of the six facets was able to significantly

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predict ambivalent identification (F= 5.29, P<0.001). Therefore hypothesis I was supported. The result of the stepwise multiple regression technique (Table 3) show that supervision was the first and the most salient of the six variables that entered the regression equation, and accounted for 12% of the dependent variable. This variable with teamwork conflict explained 14% ambivalent.

Hypothesis 3: Facets of organizational culture are correlated to neutral identification. As expected neutral identification was negatively correlated with teamwork (r= -.26, P< 001), morale (r= -.28, P< 001), informational flow (r= -.14, P< 05), involvement (r= -.21, P< 001), supervision (r= -.23, P< 001), and meeting (r= -.20, P< 001). The regression analysis in Table 4 reveals that the significant F value (F= 3.27, P< 001) indicates that facets of organizational culture explain a significant amount of variance in neutral identification. Thus hypothesis 3 was supported. The results of stepwise regression technique show that climate morale, and teamwork conflict had the most significant effect on neutral identification.

Hypothesis 4: Facets of organizational culture are correlated to organizational disidentification. As shown in the Table 1 the facets of organizational culture have negative and significant relations with disidentification ranging from -.17 to -.28. The regression analysis in Table 5 reveals that the predictive variables collectively account for a significant amount of variance in disidentification. Thus, hypothesis 4 was supported. The results of the stepwise multiple regression reveals that climate morale is the most profound influence on disidentification.

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Table 1.

Means, standard deviations and the correlation matrix for organizational culture and organizational identification

	Variables	Mean ± SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Teamwork	21.43 ± 7.15	-	.49**	.41**	.44**	.50**	.40**	.19*	-.30**	-.26**	-.28**
2	morale	20.52 ± 7.01	.49**	-	.64**	.72**	.64**	.61**	.36**	-.32**	-.28**	-.34**
3	Information flow	19.95 ± 6.95	.41**	.64**	-	.72**	.44**	.59**	.20**	-.20**	-.14*	-.18**
4	Involvement	20.24 ± 7.51	.44**	-72**	.72**	-	.60**	.59**	.36**	-.21**	-.26**	-.26**
5	Supervision	18,19 ± 6.27	.49**	.64**	.44**	.60**	-	.55**	.31**	-.30**	-23**	-.28**
6	Meeting	18.26 ± 5.13	.40**	.61**	.59**	.56**	.55**	-	.24**	-.20**	-.20**	-.17*
7	Identification	18.23 ± 6.71	.19*	.36**	.20**	.36**	.31**	.24**	-	-.45**	-.41**	-.55**
8	Ambivalent	10.12 ± 2.03	-.29**	-.32**	-.20**	-.21**	-.30**	-.20*	-.45**	-	.35**	.32
9	Neutral	9.21 ± 3.12	-.26**	-28**	-.14*	-.26**	-.23**	-.20**	-.41**	.35**	-	.28**
10	Disidentification	7.45 ± 2.78	-.28**	-.34**	-.18**	-.28**	-.26**	-.11*	-.55**	.32	.28**	-

* P<.05 ** P<.01

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Table 2.
The facets of organizational culture regressed on identification

Hierarchical regression				Stepwise regression				
Variables	Beta	t	p	Variables	Beta	t	p	$\Delta R^{\hat{}}$
Teamwork	.08	.09	.92	morale	.30	2.92	.001	.12
morale	.30	2.61	.01	Involvement	.33	3.09	.001	.03
Information flow	.26	2.46	.01	Information flow	.27	2.65	.001	.03
Involvement	.33	2.96	.03					
Supervision	.06	..6	.95					
Meeting	.01	.19	.84					
Adjusted $R^{\hat{}}$ = .15 F = 6.45 P<.001				F = 13.10 P<.001				

Table 3: The facets of organizational culture regressed on ambivalent identification

Hierarchical regression				Stepwise regression				
Variables	Beta	t	P	Variables	Beta	t^{-}	p	$\Delta R^{\hat{}}$
Teamwork	-.14	-1.58	.05	Supervision	-.25	-3.12	.002	.12
morale	-.13	-1.48	.13	Teamwork Conflict	-.17	-2.07	.04	.2
Information flow	-.03	-.32	.74					
Involvement	.15	1.33	.18					
Supervision	-.24	-2.46	.01					
Meeting	.01	.15	.87					
Adjusted $R^{\hat{}}$ = .14 F = 5.29 P<.001				F = 14.26 P<.001				

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Table 4.
The facets of organizational culture regressed on neutral identification

Hierarchical regression				Stepwise regression				
Variables	Beta	t	P	Variables	Beta	t	p	ΔR²
Teamwork	-.16	-1.82	.05	Climate morale	-.18	-2.17	.03	.07
morale	-.14	-1.14	.05	Teamwork Conflict	-.17	-2.04	.04	.03
Information flow	.17	1.57	.11	F = 9.23 P<.001				
Involvement	.13	-1.45	.14					
Supervision	-.03	-.34	.72					
Meeting	-.03	-.33	.74					
Adjusted R² = .10 F = 3.75 P<.001								

Table 5.
The facets of organizational culture regressed on disidentification

Hierarchical regression				Stepwise regression				
Variables	Beta	t	P	Variables	Beta	t	p	ΔR²
Teamwork	-.15	-1.64	.10	Morale	-.35	-4.97	.001	.12
morale	-.25	-2.17	.03	F = 24.73 P<.001				
Information flow	.13	1.25	.21					
Involvement	-.13	-1.13	.26					
Supervision	-.07	-.79	.42					
Meeting	.08	.84	.39					
Adjusted R² = .13 F = 5.39 P<.001								

Discussion

The results of this research demonstrated that each of the six dimensions of organizational culture (i.e., teamwork, morale, informational flow, involvement, supervision and meeting), maintained a positive, and significant

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relationships with organizational identification and negative, significant relationship with ambivalent identification, neutral identification and disidentification.

Results illustrate the importance of supervisors in building employees identification with the organization. Employees who identified with the organization were individuals who believed they had supervisors who were easy to talk to, listened to problems, and could be relied on when work life got difficult (Smidts, Pruyn &Van Riel, 2002). Thus, it is suggested that organization leaders develop supportive work climates that are characterized by trust, respect, and openness as a way to promote employees identification.

A positive communication climate and involvement will strengthen organizational identification, because it is rewarding and thus serves a member's self-enhancement. Involvement is closeness achieved through tasks and activities. It results in enjoyable and involving activities, social identity and self-definition, being valued for one's skills and abilities, opportunity for power and influence, conditional positive regard, and supportive for one's beliefs and values

Receiving adequate information about one's own role and the achievement of one's organization also positively affects organizational identification. Being well- informed about organizational issues (such as goals and objectives, new developments, activities and achievements) will enable an organization's member to discover the salient characteristics that distinguish this organization from others (Dutton et al., 1994) and thus enhance social categorization. Furthermore, repeated exposure to information about the organization may increase its perceived attractiveness and may thus reassure members that they work for an organization that is worth being associated with. In organizations that are perceived favorably by their members, organizational identification is more likely to occur (Dutton et al., 1994), because it enhances the feeling of self-worth.

The result also show that teamwork play an important role in shaping

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employee's organizational identification. Identification is a participative, dynamic process by which individuals are connected with or linked to other persons and elements of the social world. It is a process by which individual's communication with others to create an identity for themselves and to become part of a large social collective (Cheney & Christiansen, 2001). Teamwork promotes a sense of belonging among individuals, allowing them to learn desirable identity characteristics and make decisions congruent with group norms, values, and ideals. Individuals identify with targets or reference group (Rousseau, 1998). Teamworks are common reference groups to witch people become attached. When individuals identify with a particular reference group, they are more likely to stay in that reference group (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985).

In addition, current research shows that there are significant relationship between meeting and dimensions of identification. Kreiner & Ashforth (2004) have shown that workers enjoy meeting other workers from different departments because it helps them understand better what others do and they may share the same challenges. This provides a broader perspective within the organization, and can enhance organizational identification.

This study revealed that organizational morale was considerably more meaningful in predicting facets of organizational identification, than other facets of organizational culture. An employee's perceptions of how an organization treats its members are fairly significant, given its influence on employees identification facets. The fact that organizational morale emerged as the strongest predictor of organizational identification may provide meaningful insights into the processes by which organizations can exert unobtrusive, concretive control. The OCS morale subscale measured employee's perceptions of the relationship between the organization and its labor force employees identified most with the organization when they perceived an atmosphere of trust and respect within the organization. Moreover, employees reported higher levels of identification when the

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organization served as a source of motivation.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the present study adds a relatively unique contribution to the literature. The present study is the first to establish a significant link between organizational culture and disidentification, ambivalence and neutral identification. Past work has reported correlations between organizational culture and organizational identification (schrodt, 2002).The present study imply that attempts to enhance organizational culture may be beneficial in the reduction of disidentification, ambivalent, and neutral identification.

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