




## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# The Effect of Teachers' Perceived Psychological Climate on Job Performance

Cansu Bayrakcı \*<sup>1</sup> | Özgenur İskender <sup>2</sup> | Mustafa Taşkın <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ministry of National Education, Sakarya, Turkey

<sup>2</sup>Institute of Educational Sciences, Sakarya University, Sakarya, Turkey

<sup>3</sup>Ministry of National Education, Sakarya, Turkey

### Correspondence:

Cansu Bayrakcı  
Email: cansualann.91@gmail.com

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of teachers' perceived psychological climate on their job performance. The study group of the research consists of 397 teacher participants, 129 male and 268 female, working in Kocaeli in the 2020-2021 academic year. In the research, the Psychological Climate Scale, the Job Performance Scale and the Personal Information Form created by the researchers were used as data collection tools. After testing the normal distribution of the data, the Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to reveal the relationships between the variables in the study. Simple linear regression analysis was used to determine the predictor of psychological climate perception on teacher job performance. As a result of the research, it was seen that the teachers' psychological climate perceptions were relatively positive, except for the dimension of self-expression, and their self-reported job performance levels were above the average. In addition, it has been determined that there is a high level of relationship between teachers' psychological climate perceptions and dimensions and their job performance. In addition, it was determined that the perceived psychological climate significantly predicted teacher job performance. In this context, it was found that the psychological climate perceived by the teachers explained approximately 53% of the variance in their job performance.

**Keywords:** *Psychological Climate, Job Performance, Teachers, Social Psychology.*

## **Introduction**

Humankind is a social being by nature. A person, who has always been in a social environment from the moment he was born, spends most of his life at work with his colleagues. It has always been an important point for individuals to harmonize with each other in every environment where they live collectively. Individuals who cannot adapt to each other cause uneasiness in the workplace and this affects their activities in the workplace. In order for all kinds of organizations, regardless of official or private, to continue their existence in the globalizing world, they need to determine the direction of the psychological climate in the organization and how this affects the job performance of individuals before judging the individuals according to the work they do. Since the unrest in the workplace also affects the work of the individuals, the desired efficiency cannot be obtained and this affects both the employee and the employer.

James and Jones (1974), who were the first researchers to use the concept of psychological climate, defined psychological climate as all of the feelings that depend on the environment, the job, the employer/manager, the opportunities for promotion in the workplace, the salary they receive, and the behaviors found in the workplace culture. Everything in an organization, both materially and morally, affects the climate of that organization. Although the psychological climate is seen as a social situation, according to O'Neill and Arendt (2008), it is related to how the individual perceives the work environment he is in. Every individual working influences and creates the climate.

On the other hand, the concept that indicates whether the employees perform their duties well or not is called job performance. Job performance has been defined as the general evaluation of the behaviors expected from the employees from the moment they start working in the workplace (Motowidlo et al. 1997). In today's competitive world, it has become the most important concept for workplaces and needs to be developed. The employer expects the job performance of its employees to increase day by day in order to maintain its existence. However, this performance is not always the same for every individual. There are multiple factors that affect job performance. The most important of these is the culture of the organization that the individual is in, namely the climate of the organization. It is inevitable that the climate in the school affects the performance of teachers. In this study, it is investigated how the psychological climate perceived by teachers reflects on their job performance.

### **Teachers' Perceived Psychological Climate**

Psychological climate is the level of employees' finding the workplace safe and meaningful (Brown & Leigh, 1996). Yılmaz (2018) defines the psychological climate as the combination of everything that individuals feel and think, which occurs in their perceptions according to the rules in their workplace and all the positive and negative characteristics of the workplace. As the common point of all definitions, psychological climate cannot be dependant to a group (Barkhi & Kao, 2011; Day & Bedeian, 1991), and it is a concept that has multiple dimensions depending on individual experiences and perceptions of individuals (Koys & DeCotiis, 1991).

Although the definitions are supportive of each other, there are many different views on the dimensions of the psychological climate. Depending on the ethnographic research of Kahn (1990),

Brown and Leigh (1996) conducted a general research on dimensions and divided them into two as psychological safety and psychological significance. These two dimensions became the basis of the six headings of psychological climate by Koys and DeCotiis (1991), as supportive management, openness in the role, contribution, recognition, self-expression and challenge. O'Neil and Arendt (2008) also listed the dimensions as trust, autonomy, self-expression, organizational structure and pressure. Perceived management support, role salience, perceived contribution and approval, self-expression, and professional difficulty (Brown & Leigh, 1996) are considered to be the dimensions of psychological climate, while according to Manning (2010), managerial support and facilitation, work standards and in-service education, organizational rules-pressure, cooperation among the working group, spirit and friendship, disagreement and conflict, standards and goals formed the dimensions of the psychological climate. Amenumey and Lockwood (2008) stated the deficiency in the creation of the dimensions of the psychological climate and stated that the dimensions are facilitating work, customer orientation, performance feedback, role clarity, internal service, managerial practices, and information/communication. Although Parker stated that researchers should reach a certain consensus on the characteristics of the dimensions of psychological climate, researchers have always thought differently on this issue. The reason for this is that people's perceptions and personality traits are different. When we look at the dimensions of the psychological climate in general, it is seen that the researches have certain common points. The behavior of the managers towards the employees, the trust of the individuals in the workplace where they work and the rules of the workplace affect the psychological climate perception of the individuals.

The characteristic of the psychological climate is more important in the teaching profession. The psychological climate in a school consists of school administrators, teachers, school personnel, students and parents. The psychological climate perception of a teacher who is active in the school and is congratulated for these activities, who clearly knows his duties at the school and fulfils these duties properly is relatively high (Yılmaz, 2018). School administrators, other teachers, students, staff and parents greatly affect the school climate. Everyone in this climate is affected in every direction, whether positive or negative. In a negative school climate, individuals' respect for each other, tolerance and communication are quite weak. In a positive school climate, it is seen that the commitment of the individuals to each other, respect, working in cooperation and tolerance are at the forefront (Çakalçı, 2019). It should not be forgotten that the psychological climate in the school can directly affect the motivation of the teacher, and this is one of the most important problems in education that must be overcome (Argon & Limon, 2017).

### **Teachers' Job Performance**

All the activities that people do in their workplaces, such as the product and result, are the job performance of individuals. According to Visveswaran and Ones (2000), job performance is all of the behaviors in which individuals are firmly attached to the goals of the workplace and are measured/observed by participating in appropriate pursuits. Mathis and Jackson (2009), on the other hand, defined job performance as the dependence on the multiplicity and quality of the products resulting from the work, the timeliness of the product, the continuity of the working life in the workplace and the active participation of the individuals in the work. Job performance is divided into three as task performance, contextual performance and innovative performance.

Task performance is the whole of the performance that creates the main dynamic in the workplace and that occurs with the occurrence of the duties and responsibilities that the employees have to perform (Akbarova, 2019). Satavuthi and Chaipoopirutana (2014) also made a similar definition and stated that task performance is the fulfilment of job descriptions attributed to employees. When the literature is examined, task performance has been defined by many researchers with the same meanings. When we look at all these definitions in general, task performance is seen as a performance that supports all the structures of the workplace and contributes to the workplace as a producer in every aspect (Kurt, 2013; Van Scotter, 2000).

Contextual performance refers to the willingness of employees to participate in the activities carried out in the workplace, to act together with their colleagues, to adopt the mission of the place where they are connected by following the rules of the workplace (Gözoğlu, 2017). Borman (2014), on the other hand, defines contextual performance as employees' volunteering in tasks that are not included in their job descriptions, doing their best to make their work successful, being individuals who are prone to working together, and acting in accordance with the rules of the workplace.

Innovative performance, on the other hand, is to be constantly open to innovation and to improve oneself both individually and organizationally. In order for individuals to come out of the competitive environment in the business world profitably, where they work, companies need to constantly work to take themselves forward. Employees who improve their innovative performance not only bring their companies to the fore, but also protect and further their own assets in the company (Crescenzia & Gagliardic, 2018).

Although all three performances seem to be separate from each other, we cannot consider these three performances separately from each other. Since the attitude of the employee to his job and the environment in the workplace will affect his performance, contextual performance includes task performance (Altunova, 2019). In addition, employees who do not develop their innovative performance run the risk of not being able to maintain their presence in the workplace for a long time. As it can be seen, these three performances are what keep a workplace or an employee alive.

When the word job performance is mentioned, most of the definitions are suitable for task performance in general, since a commercial relationship comes to mind. Task performance is product/result oriented. However, in the definition of job performance in the service sector, it is necessary to specify the contextual performance as well as the definition of task performance. Since individuals working in the service sector are faced with people instead of machines, job performance in this sector also includes attitudes towards work, behaviors and emotions of individuals (Bitner, Booms & Tetreault 1990). The elements necessary to increase the job performance of individuals working in the service sector are based on spirituality rather than materiality. In other words, individuals' positive perceptions of their environment are reflected in their job performance. This is also very important for the teaching profession, which is the most prominent profession in the service sector. Since teachers have a positive environment in the institution they are in, their job performance will also increase, as this will be reflected in their activities. As stated in many studies, there is a positive correlation between job performance and psychological climate.

## Methodology

In this section, the research design, the sample, the measurement tools used in the research and the data analysis process are presented.

### Research Design

This research is structured in correlational design. The purpose of the correlational design is to determine whether two or more variables are related to each other (Marczyk, DeMatteo & Festinger, 2005). In this context, the research focused on the interrelationship between teachers' perception of psychological climate in their schools and their level of job performance, and the effect of psychological climate perception on job performance. The research model is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

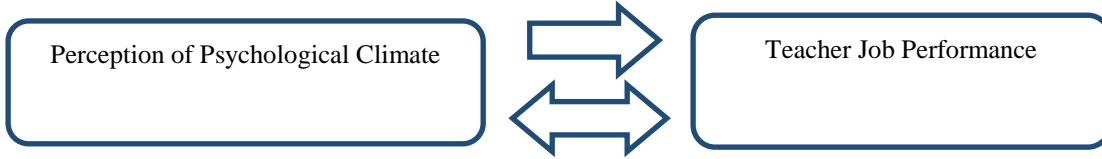


Figure 1. Research Model

### Participants

The sample of the research consists of 397 teachers working in Kocaeli/Turkey in the 2020-2021 academic year. Participants were reached on a voluntary basis and convenient sampling method (Patton, 2002) was used in the study. The demographic information of the participants is presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** Demographic information of the participants

	Group	n	%
Gender	Female	268	67,5
	Male	129	32,5
Age	20-29	42	10,6
	30-39	141	35,5
	40-49	149	37,5
	50 and over	65	16,4
School	Pre-school	17	4,3
	Primary school	129	32,5
	Secondary school	103	25,9
	High school	148	37,3
Seniority	0-5 years	45	11,3
	6-10 years	77	19,4
	11-15 years	66	16,6
	16-20 years	71	17,9
	21-25 years	69	17,4
	26 years and over	69	17,4
Degree	Undergraduate	329	82,9
	Graduate	68	17,1
	Total	397	100

As seen in Table 1, of the teachers participating in the research, 268 (67.5%) were female, 129 (32.5%) were male; 42 of them are in the age range of 20-29 (10.6%), 141 of them are in the age group of 30-39 (35.5%), 149 of them are in the age group of 40-49 (37.5%), and 65 are in the age range of 50 and over (16.4%). On the other hand, 17 participants (4.3%) work in pre-school, 129 participants (32.5%) in primary school, 103 participants (25.9%) in secondary school and 148 participants (37.3%) in high school. When the seniority of the participating teachers was evaluated, it was determined that 45 teachers had 0-5 years (11.3%), 77 teachers had 6-10 years (19.4%), 66 teachers had 11-15 years (16.6%), 71 teachers had 16-20 years (17.9%), 69 teachers had 21-25 years (17.4%) and 69 teachers had 26 years or more (17.4%) seniority. Finally, 329 (82.9%) of the teachers are undergraduate and 68 (17.1%) are graduates.

## Data Collection Tools

### *Psychological Climate Scale*

“The Psychological Climate Scale”, developed by Brown and Leigh (1996) and adapted into Turkish by Argon and Limon (2017) in the context of educational organizations, was used to measure teachers' perceptions of the psychological climate at school. The scale, which originally consisted of six dimensions and 21 items, exhibited a structure consisting of four dimensions and 19 items as a result of the adaptation work. The dimensions and item numbers of the Turkish scale are as follows: “Supportive school management (6 items)”, “Perceived Organizational Contribution and Approval (6 items)”, “Self-Expression at School (4 items)” and “Role Clarity (3 items)”. Two items in the scale were reverse coded (Items 5 and 15). Response options on the 5-point Likert-type scale range from (1) Strongly Disagree to (5) Strongly Agree. An example of the statements in the scale is the statement "Our school administrators do not leave room for any uncertainty about what I will do". In the adaptation study conducted by Argon and Limon (2017),

findings revealed that the scale is valid (exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses) and reliable (Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient).

### *Job Performance Scale*

“Job Performance Scale” (Kirkman & Rosen, 1999; Sigler & Pearson, 2000) was used to measure teachers' job performance levels. The Turkish adaptation of the scale was carried out by Çöl (2008). The scale is one-dimensional and consists of four items. Response options on the 5-point Likert-type scale range from (1) Strongly Disagree to (5) Strongly Agree. An example of the statements in the scale can be shown as "I reach my business goals more than enough". In the study conducted by Çöl (2008), findings revealed that the scale is valid (exploratory factor analysis) and reliable (Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient).

## **Data Analysis**

Within the scope of the research, data were collected online. A Google Form containing the personal information form created by the researchers and the measurement tools mentioned above was prepared. The link of the relevant form was shared with the participants via the school WhatsApp groups. The data collection process was completed between 02 November and 13 December 2021. The answers of the participants were taken over Google Forms and transferred to the SPSS program to be ready for analysis.

First of all, it was checked whether the data set met the assumption of normal distribution. For this purpose, the kurtosis-skewness values were examined and the fact that the relevant values were in the range of (+-) 1.96 both in the context of the psychological climate scale dimensions and in both scales shows that the assumption of normal distribution is met (Field, 2009). Table 2 presents the relevant values.

**Table 2.** *Skewness-Kurtosis values*

Variable	Skewness	SE	Kurtosis	SE
Supportive school management (SSM)	-,991		,297	
Perceived Organizational Contribution and Approval (POCA)	-1,148		,754	
Self-Expression at School (SES)	-,802	,122	,311	,244
Role clarity (RC)	-,573		-,573	
Psychological climate scale (PCS)	-1,113		,791	
Job performance scale (JPS)	-1,519		1,745	

Based on the normal distribution assumption of the data, arithmetic mean and standard deviation values were examined within the scope of descriptive analyses; Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to reveal the relationships between variables. Simple linear regression analysis was used to determine the predictor of psychological climate perception on teacher job performance. In addition, the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients of the measurement tools used in the current study were calculated and the reliability analyses were repeated. According to the findings, the Cronbach Alpha coefficients were  $\alpha=.916$  in the “supportive school management” dimension of the psychological climate scale;  $\alpha=.941$  in the dimension of “organizational contribution and endorsement”;  $\alpha=.749$  in the dimension of “self-expression”; and  $\alpha=.919$  in the dimension of “role salience”;  $\alpha=.963$  for the psychological climate

scale and  $\alpha=.961$  for the job performance scale. These findings indicate that the reliability criterion is met (Büyüköztürk, 2018).

The ranges used in the interpretation of the arithmetic means of the variables are as 1.00-1.80=Strongly disagree; 1.81-2.60=Disagree; 2.61-3.40=Undecided; 3.41-4.20=Agree and 4.21-5.00=I totally agree.

## Findings

This section presents the findings of the research. The descriptive findings regarding the variables are presented in Table 3 below.

**Table 3.** *Descriptive findings*

Scale	N	Minimum	Maximum	Average	SE
SSM	397	1,00	5,00	3,62	1,06
POCA	397	1,00	5,00	3,72	1,06
SES	397	1,00	5,00	3,40	,95
RC	397	1,00	5,00	3,43	1,19
PCS	397	1,00	5,00	3,57	,97
JPS	397	1,00	5,00	3,98	1,08

Table 3 presents the descriptive findings regarding the variables discussed in the study. According to the findings obtained; the arithmetic mean of the scores obtained by the participants in the supportive school management dimension ( $\bar{x}=3.62$ ), the perceived organizational contribution and approval dimension ( $\bar{x}=3.72$ ), the self-expression dimension ( $\bar{x}=3.40$ ), the role clarity dimension ( $\bar{x}= 3.43$ ) and ( $\bar{x}=3.57$ ) in general on the psychological climate scale. The arithmetic averages are found to be at “I am undecided” in the dimension of self-expression at school; and “I agree” in the dimensions of supportive school management, perceived organizational contribution and approval, role clarity and psychological climate scale in general. On the job performance scale, the arithmetic mean is at ( $\bar{x}=3.98$ ) and can be interpreted as “I agree”. Based on the findings, it can be said that teachers' psychological climate perceptions are relatively positive except for the dimension of self-expression and self-reported job performance levels are above the average.

**Table 4.** *The relationship between perceived psychological climate and job performance*

Variable	SSM	POCA	SES	RC	PCS
JPS	,66**	,73**	,63**	,62**	,73**
Sig.	,00	,00	,00	,00	,00
N	397	397	397	397	397

Table 4 presents findings on the reciprocal relationships between teachers' perceived psychological climate and job performance levels. According to the table, there are relationships between job performance and supportive school management dimension ( $r=.66$ ;  $p<.00$ ); between perceived organizational contribution and approval ( $r=.73$ ;  $p<.00$ ); between self-expression ( $r=.63$ ;  $p<.00$ ); between role clarity ( $r=.62$ ;  $p<.00$ ) and between psychological climate perception in general ( $r=.73$ ;  $p<.00$ ). When the correlation coefficients are evaluated, there are "High" (Büyüköztürk,



2018) relationships between teachers' psychological climate perceptions and dimensions and their job performance.

**Table 5.** *The effect of perceived psychological climate on teacher job performance*

Variable	Beta	SH	Standardized Beta	t	p	R	R2	F	F (p)
Constant	1,07	,14	-	7,61	,00	,73	,53	457,61	,00
PCS	,81	,03	,73	21,39	,00				

Table 5 presents simple linear regression analysis findings regarding the predictive level of perceived psychological climate on teacher job performance. According to the findings, perceived psychological climate significantly predicts teacher job performance ( $R=.73$ ;  $R^2=.53$ ;  $F(1,395)=457.61$ ;  $p<.01$ ). In this context, it can be stated that the psychological climate perceived by the teachers explains approximately 53% of the variance in their job performance.

## Discussion

The institutions that will develop a country and prepare it for the future are educational institutions. The more forward-looking education is in the country, the more advanced the country's development will be. While this forward-looking idea is of interest to the education community, the responsibility of the stakeholders is to improve student and teacher arousal and the motivation to understand and explain. Since the teacher is involved in the explain side of this motivation, the performance is expected to be at the highest level. According to Limon (2022), teachers' job performances should be high in order to achieve the social goals in educational institutions. High job performance depends on the climate of the organization.

The aim of this study, titled *The Effect of Teachers' Perceived Psychological Climate on Work Performance*, is to see how a climate perception that originates from teachers' school administrators, students, parents, and most of all their self, reflects on their job performance. The findings obtained as a result of the research are that there is a positive relationship between teachers' perceived psychological climate and job performance levels, as is the result of many studies in the literature, and that the perceived psychological climate predicts teacher job performance.

Other findings of the study show that teachers have a positive perception of psychological climate. However, there is indecision only in the dimension of self-expression at school. On the other hand, teachers' self-reported job performance levels are relatively high. Teachers' perception of psychological climate is affected by not only personal factors, but also many factors other than themselves. Since each teacher's personality is different, their expectations from themselves and their profession also differ. In a study by Eroğlu (2018), how and how much of these varying expectations of teachers are met at school; reveals the extent to which this situation affects their psychological perceptions. In parallel with this, Dorozynska (2016), in her study on the school environment, concluded that while the relationship of teachers with management, students and parents affects their job performance positively, issues such as stress, negligence and indifference at school affect them negatively.

As seen in most studies, there is a positive correlation between psychological climate perception and job performance. On the contrary, in a study conducted by Eroğlu and Özen (2019),

it was concluded that teachers' perceptions of psychological climate do not affect their work motivation, but that the sub-dimensions of work motivation affect their perceptions of psychological climate. In this study, we see that job performance and psychological climate are in an absolute relationship with each other, even if the effect is in the opposite direction. Although it is seen in many studies that the psychological climate affects the internal motivation positively (Yılmaz, 2018), it should not be forgotten that the individual's internal motivation also affects the psychological climate. At the same time, if the individual does his job lovingly and willingly, it means that his job performance is high. If the individual cares about his job and trusts that he will be successful in that job, his performance level will be quite high (Çöl,2008).

## **Conclusion**

It is getting harder and harder for organizations to survive in a world that is rapidly adapting to innovation and being renewed day by day. In order for an organization to survive in a world that is constantly transforming, it must renew itself and be open to innovations that may come at any time. The factor that will move workplaces forward is their employees. The performance of the employees in the workplace is important both for their promotion and for the continuation of the organization's existence. High job performance depends on multiple factors. The most important of these is the psychological climate in the organization. Psychological climate is a factor that both affects and is affected by every individual in an organization. The higher the perception of psychological climate in an organization, the higher the job performance of that organization will be. Individuals who are unhappy at work cannot fully demonstrate their performance. When even one person has a low climate perception, it affects everyone else and the organization. Today's workplaces are aware of this effect and try to change the psychological climate perception in the organization with various activities, awards, bonuses, etc. to the highest level.

The situation in educational institutions is not different from this. Every individual working in a school, private teaching institution or study centers determines the psychological climate of the institution. The importance of the psychological climate is very high in these institutions where we have teachers who train individuals who will shape the future. Teachers, who have an uneasy environment in the institution they work in, reduce their performance by reflecting this to their lessons. Educational institutions should be supported with activities to improve the organizational climate, and the follow-up of these activities should be subject to an inclusive and objective independent audit in order to positively affect educational activities. It has been proven by various studies that the psychological climate perceptions of educators who are rewarded and appreciated by the administration are positively affected.

There are many studies on this subject in the literature. Most of these studies indicate that teachers' perception of psychological climate is directly related to their job performance. In the current study, the relationship between teachers' perceived psychological climate and self-reported job performance levels was examined. First of all, descriptive findings regarding the variables were evaluated. Accordingly, teachers have a positive perception about the support provided by the school management, their contribution to the school and their approval, and role clarity; however, it can be said that they experience an indecision about their ability to express themselves at school. In general, it was seen that the psychological climate perceived by the teachers in the

schools was also positive. In addition, it can be stated that teachers consider their performance adequate. Finally, a positive psychological climate perception contributes to an increase in teachers' job performance levels.

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