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## **Safe Climates, Satisfied Staff: The Crucial Role of Organizational Support in Healthcare Settings**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The broader object of this study was to explore the impact of psychosocial safety climate (PSC) and organizational social support on the job satisfaction of highly overloaded and sensitive staff of health care sector of public sector hospital. The quantitative cross-sectional survey method is used in the study to achieve the aforementioned objective. Sample of the study comprised of 250 health care professionals from tertiary care hospital, Participants are approached at their respective workplaces and after getting their consent they were asked to fill the survey form in person. It is assured to them that data took from them will only use for research purpose and their identity will remain confidential. Findings of the study revealed that a significant positive correlation exist among psychosocial safety climate, organizational social support and job satisfaction. PSC and organizational social support significantly predict the job satisfaction of health professionals. Moreover, organizational social support significantly moderates the relationship between psychosocial safety climate and job satisfaction. A strong PSC can offer a protective organizational structure that improves interpersonal support and job satisfaction because health professionals often deal with high workloads, emotional strain, and complex patient demands. By increasing motivation, engagement, and retention, strengthening PSC may potentially benefit patient outcomes in addition to the well-being of medical personnel.

**Keywords:** Psychosocial safety climate, organizational social support, job satisfaction, health professionals

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## INTRODUCTION

A healthy and satisfied work force is the key asset of any organization, but in the services providing sectors specifically in health sector the importance of a mentally healthy and satisfied workforce becomes crucial because of the demands of this profession. However, because of the nature of their work, health professionals are frequently subjected to organizational pressures, high job demands, and emotional strain, all of which can have an impact on their psychological health and job satisfaction (Dollard & Bakker, 2010). Along with this notion there are some factors which can improve the quality and efficiency of the work of health professionals by acting like a cool breeze in their stressful environment. One of those factors is related to the climate of the organization which is known as psychosocial safety climate. The Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC), which refers to common views of organizational policies, practices, and procedures for the protection of workers' psychological health, is one of the crucial frameworks utilized to comprehend such workplace experiences (Hall, Dollard, & Coward, 2010). As mentioned by Idris, Dollard and Tuckey (2015) that high levels of PSC in an organization can reduce the burnout and job stress, and increase the job satisfaction of the employees. It is also evident from another research (Potter, Bailey & Dollard, 2019) conducted on university professionals that PSC has negative correlation with turnover intention, disengagement and psychological distress.

As it is mentioned earlier that the organizational and healthcare psychology researches mainly focused on those factors which can improve the quality and effectiveness of the work of health care professionals. Along with PSC, there is another work outcome which is of utmost importance and i.e. job satisfaction of the employees. A research conducted by Lu, Zhao and While (2019) about the job satisfaction of hospital nurses, revealed that the job satisfaction of the nurses has an impact on multiple job outcomes including, employee's performance, organizational effectiveness, employee's retention, patient safety and overall quality of healthcare.

Organizational researchers and health psychologist are constantly working on different organizational factors which can buffer the negative impacts of job stress and workload on employees. Organizational social support (OSS) is among those factors which mitigate the negative impacts and strengthen the above-mentioned relationship of psychosocial safety climate

and job satisfaction. The OSS refers to the perception of employees that how much they are valued, appreciated, and supported by the management t of the organization and their colleagues as well (Eisenberger, Rhoades & Wen,2020). In health care organizations where employees have to face high job demands and higher workloads, the OSS reduces their stress by enhancing resilience, motivation and job satisfaction (Winnubst, 2017).

In light of the above-mentioned literature the current study is designed to explore the role of OSS in the relationship of PSC and job satisfaction of health care professionals in our local context. It is necessary because as we know that available indigenous literature is very short about those factors which can buffer the impact of highly demanding professions. The outcomes of the study serve the purpose of guidance to the healthcare systems and their management that how they can increase the satisfaction of their employees in such a demanding job. Moreover, outcomes of the study will also add to the indigenous literature of occupational psychology.

### **Job satisfaction and PSC**

As mentioned by Dollard and Bakker (2010) that PSC is a key factor of psychological well-being and safety of the employees at their workplace. PSC comprised of four sub factors included management commitment, management priority, organizational communication and organizational participation. It is evident from available literature that the employees of the organization with higher PSC has increased organizational commitment, higher job satisfaction and less job stress (Idris et al., 2015. Potter, Bailey& Dollard.,2019). In another study, conducted on nurses, Winwood, Bowden and Stevens (2013) found that PSC is negatively associated with job stress and burnout and positively correlated with job satisfaction and retention.

### **Job satisfaction and OSS**

The support from organization is a key factor to increase the performance of the employees and their job satisfaction as well. It is mentioned in the study of Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) that the support from peer, management and from the whole organization has several positive work and health outcomes which includes increased motivation and job satisfaction, while on the other hand higher levels of organizational social support also decrease the turn over intention of the employees. Similarly, in another study conducted on nurses Shen

and his colleagues (2014) explored a very crucial role of organizational social support for job satisfaction and positive work attitudes of the employees. However, the moderating role of OSS for job satisfaction is not studied much therefore, this study is designed to fill this gap in the study.

### **The Moderating Role of OSS**

The job Demands Resources (JD-R) model is well known and well-studied model of organizational studies, the authors (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) of this model has anticipated that job resources like OSS can buffer the negative impacts of job demands and as a result the chances of getting favorable work outcomes increases. Similarly, in the model of Psychosocial safety climate Idris and Dollard (2016) anticipated that in the organization where PSC is high, the employees feel more satisfied and the OSS can also increase this satisfaction to many folds. However, the positive impacts of PSC can be reduced if the organizational social support is lacking in an organization which may increase disengagement and dissatisfaction. In several other researches (Idris et al., 2015; Winwood et al., 2013) it has been found that PSC is a strong predictor of job satisfaction in different sectors which also includes health sector. as it is mentioned earlier that OSS has variety of impact on work and health outcomes of many profession which also include the psychological health, wellbeing and satisfaction of the employees (Eisenberger et al., 2020; Winnubst, 2017). The moderating role of organizational social support in the PSC–job satisfaction relationship, particularly among health workers in developing environments, has been the subject of fewer studies. In order to close this gap, the current study examines data from 250 healthcare workers with the goal of determining if organizational social support mitigates the impact of PSC on job satisfaction.

### **Hypotheses**

1. Psychosocial safety climate positively correlates with organizational social support and Job satisfaction.
2. Organizational social support positively correlates with job satisfaction.
3. Psychosocial safety climate positively predicts Job satisfaction.
4. Psychosocial safety climate positively predicts the Organizational social support.

5. Organizational social support positively predicts the job satisfaction among health professionals.
6. Organizational social support moderates the relationship between psychosocial safety climate and job satisfaction.

## **Sample**

The sample of the study comprised of 250 health professionals of tertiary care hospitals of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The sample was comprised of doctors and Inclusion criteria of the sample was of at least 6 months experience in the respective hospital. It has been found that the percentage of female participants (68.4%) was greater than male participants (31.6%). Among the participants of the study 54.4% were married and 45.6 were unmarried. Similarly, 36% participants belong to nuclear family system and 64% were living in joint family system. Moreover 50.8% participants were doing regular job while 49.2% were contractual

## **Instruments**

Instruments used in the study are following:

### **Psycho social safety climate scale**

PSC refers to policies, practices, and procedures for the protection of worker psychological health and safety (Dollard & Bakker, 2010). Scores obtained on PSC-12 questionnaire (Dollard & Baker, 2010) will be the index of PSC. High score on PSC will indicate the better perception about psychosocial safety climate of organization.

### **Organizational social support scale.**

Social support in an organization can be defined as the interaction between newcomers and insiders, and it serves as the basic source through which early socialization take place (Reichers, 1987). In present study, score obtained on organizational social support scale which is a subscale of COPSOQ III (Burr et al, 2019) is used in which social support from colleagues and social support from supervisor will be the index of social support.

## Job satisfaction scale

Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experience”. In this study the scores obtained on job satisfaction scale which is a subscale of COPSOQ III (Burr et al., 2019) will be the index of job satisfaction.

## Procedure

In current study cross-sectional quantitative research design is adopted and survey method is used to collect data from sample. The data is collected through personal approach to the sample. Participants of the study are approached at their respective work places and then briefed about the purpose of the research. It has been assured to the participants that the information taking from them will only be used for research purpose and their information will remain confidential.

## Results

In current study multiple analysis has been used to test the hypotheses of the study. These analyses include correlation, regression and moderation analysis.

**Table1.** *Summary of correlation analysis for the study variables (N=250)*

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	PSC	OSS	JS
PSC	34.72	12.27	-	.74***	.41***
OSS	53.16	16.82	-	-	.31***
JS	16.46	3.67	-	-	-

*Note:* \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , PSC= Psychosocial safety climate, OSS= organizational social support, JS= Job satisfaction

The hypothesis 1 and 2 of the study are about the relationship of study variables. Correlation analysis is computed to test those hypotheses. Table 1 presents the findings for correlation analysis. It is found that psychosocial safety climate, organizational social support and job satisfaction are positively correlated with each other. The correlation between the study

variables is significant. These findings illustrate that the hypotheses 1 and 2 of the study are accepted. Moreover, the mean and standard deviation of the study variables also given in the table.

**Table 2.** Summary of regression analysis for predicting job satisfaction from psychosocial safety climate and organizational social support (N=250)

Variable	<i>B</i>	SE. <i>B</i>	$\beta$	Job satisfaction	
				<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	12.17	.64	-	19.09	.000
PSC	.12	.017	.41	7.12	.000
F	50.67				.000
R <sup>2</sup>	.170				
Constant	12.92	.74		17.55	.000
OSS	.07	.013	.31	5.04	.000
F	25.39				.000
R <sup>2</sup>	.093				
OSS					
Constant	17.92	2.15	-	8.32	.000
PSC	1.02	.058	.74	17.35	.000
F	301.03				.000
R <sup>2</sup>	.548				

*Note:* PSC= Psychosocial safety climate, OSS= organizational social support

Regression analysis is computed in the study to test explore the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> hypotheses of the study which were about the predictive relationship of input variables with output variable. As mentioned in Table 2, it is found that psychosocial safety climate significantly predicts job satisfaction among health professionals, which satisfy the hypothesis 3 of the study. It is also revealed that PSC is significant predictor of Organizational social support among health workers, so the 4<sup>th</sup> hypothesis of the study also satisfied. Similarly, 5<sup>th</sup> hypothesis stated that organizational social support significantly predicts job satisfaction which is also endorsed by the

findings mentioned in Table 2. However, the variance explained by psychosocial safety climate in job satisfaction is greater than the variance explained by organizational social support. Therefore, the moderating effect of organizational social support has been explored between the relationship of psychosocial safety climate and job satisfaction and summarized in table 3.

**Table 3.** Moderating effect of organizational social support in the relationship of Psychosocial safety climate and jobs satisfaction (N=250)

Variable	<i>B</i>	SE. B	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Job Satisfaction	
					95% CI	
					LL	UL
Constant	20.33	1.99	10.19	.000	16.40	24.25
PSC	.127	.062	2.03	.04	-.350	-.003
OSS	.157	.040	-3.89	.000	-.236	-.077
PSC×OSS	.065	.001	4.36	.000	.002	.006
R <sup>2</sup>	.23					
F	24.40			.000		

*Note:* PSC= Psychosocial safety climate, OSS= organizational social support

Moderation analysis is computed to test the 6<sup>th</sup> hypothesis of the study. Table 3 is summarizing the findings of moderation analysis of the study variables. It is found that organizational social support significantly moderates the direct relationship of psychosocial safety climate and job satisfaction among health professionals. It is also revealed by the value of R<sup>2</sup> that the variance explained along with the moderation of organizational social support is greater than the variance explained by without moderating variable. The values of 95% confidence also indicated the significance of the moderating relationship.

## Discussion

The broader objective of this study was to explore the impact of psychosocial safety climate on organizational social support and job satisfaction of the health professional. This



study also aims to investigate the moderating effect of organizational social support in the association between psychosocial safety climate and job satisfaction. As OSS is a significant workplace resource. In this study a spectrum of six hypothesis is formed to achieve the broader objectives of the research. Multiple analysis included correlation, regression and moderation analysis are used to test the hypothesis of the study. Findings of the study endorsed the hypotheses of the study. Here we will discuss each hypothesis of the study in light of the findings and previous literature.

First hypothesis of the study is about the positive relationship of psychosocial safety climate, organizational social support and job satisfaction. A key organizational component that affects various job demands, job resources, and job outcomes is the psychosocial safety climate (PSC). This study demonstrated substantial positive correlation between the organizational social support, PSC and job satisfaction. According to these results, workers feel more socially supported at their workplace when their psychological well-being and safety are given top priority by their employers. The PSC's theoretical perspective of the macro-level resource that establishes a standard for the supportive organizational practices aligns with this outcome. (Dollard & Bailey, 2019). By sending a message to the managers and the coworkers that the employee well-being is important, a vigorous PSC encourages the resource sharing & supportive behavior. The results of this study are consistent with the empirical evidences. According to Geisler, Berthelsen and Muhonen (2019), the social workers who have worked for the companies with higher PSC reported greater peer and managerial assistance, which indicates that the PSC might have created an environment for the employees where the social resources are instantly available. Similarly, Dollard and Bailey (2019) have found that the PSC is associated with the supportive communication, conviction, and the leadership commitment. Furthermore, for organizational resources such as the social support across a range of occupational groups, Boudrias et al. (2021) identified PSC as a crucial antecedent of organizational resources in a systematic review. The progressive relationship between the PSC, job satisfaction and the social support has significant consequences in the healthcare settings.

Because health professionals frequently deal with the heavy workloads, complex demands from the patients and the emotional strains, a robust PSC can provide a protective organizational structure that improves the interpersonal support and the job satisfaction. In addition to the welfare of the medical staff, it may improve patient outcomes by hovering

motivation, patient engagement, and retention. The second hypothesis of this study highlights the positive correlation between the organizational social support and the job satisfaction. The findings of this study reinforced the second hypothesis for the health professionals. The finding of this study is well-grounded in the organizational support theory, which states that the workers are more committed and satisfied when they believe that their employer will value their contributions and the well-being (Eisenberger, Rhoades Shanock & Wen, 2020). The organizational support improves optimism, the work attitudes and acts as a stress buffer for the employees, especially in the demanding industries like healthcare. Zheng et al. (2024) showed that the job satisfaction and the professional well-being were directly influenced in the nurses by the perceived organizational support. In a similar study, Caesens and Stinglhamber (2014) discovered that the organizational support was a predictor for the employees' satisfaction and decreased turnover intentions. According to Adisa et al. (2022), the friendly collegial networks and the supportive leadership, also helps to improve the emotional well-being of the healthcare workers. For the health professionals, the organizational social support is a predictor of the engagement job satisfaction as well as job retention. The two problems that are very common in the medical field are turnover and the burnout. Improving the hospital's support networks might assist to lower the turnover and burnout. Consequently, to enhance the job satisfaction among the health professionals, strengthening of the support system, mentoring, and supportive leadership is crucial.

The third hypothesis of the study predicted that the PSC positively forecasts the job satisfaction. The results of this study confirm the third hypothesis. The results suggested that the PSC not only influences the workers' attitudes toward their occupations, but it is also going beyond the correlational relationships. According to a theory, PSC offers a safe environment to the employees that prioritizes the psychological well-being; lower the stress levels and improve the job satisfaction (Dollard et al., 2019). The PSC may also serve as a buffer that can maintain the motivation and engagement in the high-stress healthcare environments. Empirical evidences also support this predictive relationship. According to Lintanga and Rathakrishnan (2024), at the departmental level PSC predicted the public sector employees' job satisfaction level. According to Dollard and Bailey (2019), PSC also nurtures the favorable work-related outcomes and the employee's health. Additionally, in a systematic review it was revealed that the PSC not only predicted the job satisfaction level consistently, but it also predicted the work engagement, and

lower burnout across different occupational groups, with healthcare workers being a predominantly studied population (Boudrias et al.2021). In practice, PSC can be strengthened through the leadership commitment, open communication, and the supportive policies. This indicates that for the healthcare systems, making investments in psychological safety will not only safeguard the employees but will also promote the job satisfaction, which could eventually result in the improved quality of the patient care.

The fourth hypothesis of the study stated that the organizational social support would be positively predicted by PSC. The results of the study supported this hypothesis that PSC predicts the organizational social support by highlighting its function as an appropriate antecedent that can influence the supportive behaviors. Psychosocial well-being is a priority in the organizations with strong PSC, which communicates to the peers and the leaders about the value of mutual support (Geisler, Berthelsen & Muhonen, 2019). In this regard, PSC can influence the environment positively by manifesting and embedding the social support in the work environment. The predictive relationship of PSC and organizational support is also reinforced by the empirical data. Geisler et al. (2019) discovered that the PSC's impact on the social workers' organizational support was not only linked to the retention but it also predicted the organizational support. The higher PSC ratings were linked to the peer and supervisory support (Dollard & Bailey, 2019). This dynamic is very valuable for the healthcare organizations. Leaders can indirectly strengthen the support networks, which are compulsory in the high-stress situations like in the healthcare setting by establishing the cultures that place a very high priority on the psychological safety. This predictive relationship of incorporating the PSC into organizational policy as a way to improve worker support.

The results of our study also supported the fifth hypothesis of the study, which states that job satisfaction among health professionals is predicted by the organizational social support. This highlights the support as a causal predictor of the satisfaction rather than just a correlate. With sometimes high workloads and high levels of emotional strain, organizational support is a critical employment resource that can determine an employee's overall job satisfaction in the healthcare sector. This predictive role is supported by recent research, Zheng et al. (2024) demonstrated that organizational support was a predictor of nurses' job satisfaction and professional quality of life.

Similar results were also found by Adisa et al. (2022), that the coworker's and the manager's support had a direct impact on job satisfaction and ultimately it can decrease the stress at work. In a number of different professional groups, Caesens and Stinglhamber (2020) also discovered that the organizational support was an important predictor of the employee commitment and their satisfaction. These findings have very important suggestions for the healthcare industry. Leaders and administrators that invest in fostering supportive cultures through appreciation, balanced policies, and readily accessible resources may not only increase job satisfaction but also reduce employee turnover and enhance patient outcomes.

Finally, our results validated the study's sixth hypothesis, which argues that the association between PSC and work satisfaction is moderated by the organizational social support. This indicates that the PSC has greater beneficial effects on job satisfaction in environments when there is substantial organizational support. In theory, PSC fosters a healthy atmosphere, but its effectiveness depends on the level of social support it receives (Dollard et al., 2017). There are evidences to support this moderating impact. Dollard et al. (2017) found that PSC reduced the detrimental effects of job demands on employee well-being, highlighting the interplay between contextual factors and workplace attitudes. Adisa et al. (2022) discovered that social support positively mediated the association between stress and job satisfaction, which is consistent with our findings. This interaction highlights that, even in healthcare organizations, whether workers interpret a positive work environment as leading to increased job satisfaction depends on the presence or absence of the social support. Law et al. (2011) showed that the social support could enhance the advantages of PSC by acting as a moderator in the association between job stressors and the satisfaction level. Therefore, policies that maximize the satisfaction of healthcare workers must combine strong organizational social support networks with comprehensive psychosocial safety practices.

## **Conclusion**

This study examined the relationships between psychosocial safety climate (PSC), organizational social support, and job satisfaction among health professionals. All six hypotheses of the study are supported by the findings and also endorsed by the available literature showed that PSC is positively correlated with job satisfaction and organizational social support, and that

organizational social support influences these associations both directly and indirectly. These results support the theory that PSC functions as a higher-order organizational resource, influencing workplace attitudes and forming social support networks. Significantly, the study adds to the increasing amount of data demonstrating that creating a positive psychosocial environment in healthcare settings improves job satisfaction, which is essential for performance, retention, and eventually the standard of patient care.

### **Limitation**

The study contains a number of shortcomings in spite of its contributions.

- The cross-sectional design restricts the ability to establish causal inferences; longitudinal or experimental studies are needed to confirm the predictive pathways identified.
- Second, only health professionals with at least six months of experience were included in the sample, which would limit its applicability to staff members with less experience or to other occupational categories.
- Third, the use of self-report measures increases the risk of social desirability effects and common method bias.
- Lastly, while the study was carried out in a single country, the findings may not be as applicable in other nations due to organizational or cultural variations in healthcare systems.

### **Suggestions**

- Building a strong PSC should be a top priority for healthcare administrators at the organizational level. This can be achieved by putting in place policies that prioritize employee well-being, promote open communication, and demonstrate a clear leadership commitment to psychological health.
- To further understand the causal relationships between PSC, organizational social support, and job satisfaction, longitudinal designs are advised for future studies.
- Lastly, to create a more complete model of how psychosocial climates affect health professionals' job attitudes, future research might examine additional mediators (such work engagement, emotional exhaustion) and moderators (like workload, resilience).

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