

Investigating the Relationship between Organizational Atmosphere and Tendency to Leave Jobs and Fear of COVID-19 in Health Team Members of Health Centers In 2021

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ABSTRACT

Background: Today, we are facing the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic and its undesirable effects on healthcare providers. This study aims to investigate the relationship between the organizational atmosphere and the tendency to leave jobs and fear of covid-19 in health team members of health centers in 2021.

Methods: In this descriptive-analytical study, 120 personnel working in the health network headquarters and health centers of Koohrang city of Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari province were selected by census and studied as health team members. After explaining the objectives of the research and completing informed consent by participants, the organizational atmosphere questionnaire, the tendency to leave jobs questionnaire, and the fear of COVID-19 questionnaire are completed. Finally, collected data are analyzed via SPSSv21, descriptive tests, and T-tests.

Results: Average score and standard deviation of research variables for organizational atmosphere, leave job tendency, and fear of COVID-19 are obtained as 3.48 ± 0.59 (Above average), 3.81 ± 0.68 (Above average), and 2.14 ± 0.90 (Below average), respectively. The mediating variable of COVID-19 fear was not have a significant effect on the tendency of personnel to leave their jobs based on the organizational atmosphere ($P = 0.109$). Between the organizational atmosphere and leaving the job there was a direct relationship and meaningful ($P=0.005$). Between the organizational atmosphere and fear of COVID-19, there are indirect relationships and meaningful ($P =0.008$). But, there was no evidence of a significant relationship between the tendency to quit and the employees' fear of COVID-19 ($P = 0.140$).

Conclusion: According to the results, there is a favorable organizational atmosphere, but the desire to leave the job is high among them, although the fear of Covid-19 does not play a mediating role in this desire to leave the job. The results of this study can be used in management planning.

Key Words: Organization, COVID-19, Job

Introduction

The world society is experiencing one of the most critical undesirable health conditions in recent decades due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences, including the infection of millions and the death of hundreds of thousands. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic (Spector PE. Industrial and organizational psychology. Research and, 2008, John of Wiley and Soons, Inc P205-213,). Hence, early detection, quarantine, supportive therapies, and management of this disease are essential (Gholi pour, Salami, & Einian, 2009). This disease has challenged the capabilities of the health care system (Ghanbari et al., 2021). In general, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the mental health of medical staff, especially nurses involved in the disease, are decreased, and the fear of getting sick threatens their quality of work life. Therefore, psychological interventions should be fast, continuous, and timely (Mosakhani, Naebi, & Bakhshi, 2007). On the other hand, one of the reasons for these psychological disorders is that they cannot communicate with their family members and loved ones, because health care personnel may experience fear and extreme anxiety about spreading and transmitting the virus to their family members (Deniz, Noyan, & Ertosun, 2015). In the research of Moradzadeh et al. Entitled "Nurse experience COVID-19 unit of moral distress during organizational duty", discouragement and leaving the organization were reported as one of the negative consequences of people working in the COVID-19 unit". Despite the important position of skilled manpower in organizations, it is sometimes seen that people do not want to stay in the organization and tend to leave their jobs and professions under various conditions and reasons. The leave job tendency means to separate oneself from the organization in which one works and indicates the possibility of leaving in the near future. Today, leaving a job tendency is one of the most important challenges in all organizations, regardless of the organization

type. Due to this reason, organizations that can understand the reasons and factors affecting the willingness of employees to leave the organization will be able to apply effective policies and methods to maintain experienced human resources before leaving the organization (McNabb, 2009). Organizational atmosphere refers to the members' perceptions of the organization's fundamental elements (Armstrong, 2006). Because the atmosphere is based on individual perspectives, it has rapid variability, while also influencing people's behavior. The organizational atmosphere is related to factors such as the degree of conflict, quality of employees' life, organizational commitment of employees, behavioral effectiveness of the manager, managers, and employees' honest behavior which affects the organizations' performance (Armstrong, 2006). A mentally and physically appropriate work environment should be created for employees (McNabb, 2009). Nowadays, the effective role and high position of employees as human capital and the potential factor of creating a sustainable competitive advantage for organizations are increasingly noticed by managers (Safarkhanlou & Nezhad Ismail Azizi, 2019). Therefore, due to the daily spread of coronavirus disease and excessive fatigue in the health system and to reduce the factors affecting the tendency to leave the job of health personnel during the outbreak of COVID-19, the present study aims to investigate the relationship between the organizational atmosphere and tendency to leave jobs and fear of covid-19 in health team members of health centers in 2021.

Methods

This is a descriptive-analytical study on 120 N Personnel working in the headquarters of the health network and health centers of Koohrang city Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari province in the first half of 2021. Samples were included in the study by the census. Thus, society statistics were composed of all personnel working in the headquarters of the health network and health

centers of Koohrang city.

The criterion for entering the study was being an official or contractual worker in the Koohrang health network and willingness to participate in the research, and the unwillingness to continue participating in the study was considered as the criterion for the exit.

After explaining the objectives of the research and completing the informed consent of the staff, the questionnaire was completed. Data collection tools include questions of demographic variables (Such as age, gender, educational status, and location), questionnaires about fear of coronavirus infection, tendency to leave the job, and organizational atmosphere.

Fear of Disease Coronaviruses Scale (FDGS) in Iran is evaluated and localized by Weisi et al, (1399), (Amiri, 2016). This scale consists of 5 questions that have been developed and standardized to measure the fear of COVID-19 infection in adults. It is scored on a five-point Likert scale, with a very low score of 1, a low score of 2, an average score of 3, a high score of 4, and a very high score of 5. The convergence validity of the Coronavirus fear of future anxiety scale was correlation coefficient was 0.59, and of the death phobia, the scale correlation coefficient was 0.58 and significant at the level of 0.01. Also, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.81, which indicates its acceptable reliability (Amiri, 2016).

Organizational atmosphere description questionnaire of Halpin & Kraft designed in 2000. The questionnaire consists of 32 5-choice questions. This questionnaire measures the organizational atmosphere in 8 dimensions. Question 1 to 4 dimensions of group spirit, 5 to 8 dimensions of harassment, 9 to 12 dimensions of sincerity, 13 to 16 interests, 17 to 20 considerations, 21 to 24 distancing, 25 to 28 influences, and dynamism, 29 to 32 measure dimensions of emphasis on production. The five-point Likert scale was used in the organizational atmosphere questionnaire. The questions in the form of a Likert scale are 5 options, with a very low score of 1 and a very high score of 5.

Questionnaire description of the organizational atmosphere: The reliability of organizational atmosphere indicators was done by the moderator and the factors of group spirit, harassment, interest, sincerity, consideration, distance, and emphasis on production were 0.814, 0.824, 0.854, 0.822, 0.856, and 0.857, respectively, and the total reliability coefficient of this questionnaire was 0.82 (Ghasemzadeh, Abbaszadeh, Hassani, & Hashemi, 2013).

Tendency questionnaire was designed and validated by Longo and Mora, (2011), (Mohammadi, Rahimi, Fakher, & Shoebi, 2016). This questionnaire includes 9 answer pack items based on a five-point Likert scale. The spectrum used in the questionnaire is based on the five Likert options spectrum (including strongly agree to strongly disagree), which strongly disagree is the number -1 and strongly agree is number 5. If the scores of the questionnaire are between 1 and 9, the amount of variables in this community is weak. If the scores of the questionnaire are between 9 and 27, the amount of the variable is at an average level, and if the scores are above 27, the amount of the variable is very good. Leave job tendency questionnaire: In the Qahramani study (2014), to obtain the validity of the questionnaire, the opinions of the supervisor and several other professors, specialists and experts have been used. They will be asked about the relevance of the questions, the clarity and comprehensibility of the questions, and whether these questions are appropriate for research questions and measure them. The changes used in the questionnaire were applied. Longo and Mora used Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the reliability of the questionnaire and reported the reliability of the questionnaire as 0.93, (2011), (Mohammadi et al., 2016). In the Qahramani study (2014), the reliability of the questionnaire was calculated at 0.83 based on a primary study on a sample of 30 people (Bamba, 2016).

To analyze data from descriptive tests as well as Pearson correlations with consideration $P < 0.05$ was used. Data were analyzed using SPSSv20

software, Sobel statistical tests, T-test, Pearson correlation test, Sobel and Regression test.

Ethical approval for this study has been obtained by the ethics committee affiliated with Shahrekord Branch, Islamic Azad University, Shahrekord, Iran, IR.IAU.SHK.REC.1400.030. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants. Following the principles of Helsinki, the participants were assured that their information

will remain confidential and there is no need to mention their names. Also, if they wish, the results will be provided to them.

Results

In this study, 120 people participated which 46 people (38.3%) were men, and 74 people (61.7%) were women. Other demographic characteristics of the participants in this study are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of demographic characteristics of the participants

	Variable	Number	Percentage
Gender	Man	46	38.3
	Female	74	61.7
	Total	120	100
Age	Less than 30 year	54	45.0
	30-40	44	36.7
	41-50	20	16.7
	More than 51 year	2	1.7
	Total	120	100
Work's experience	Less than 2 year	33	28.0
	2.5-5	35	29.7
	5.5-10	13	11.0
	More than 10.5 year	37	31.4
	Total	118	100
Education level	Not reported	2	-
	Diploma and lower	36	30.0
	Associate	21	17.5
	Bachelor	46	38.3
	Graduate	17	14.2
	Total	120	100

By performing the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to check the normality of the test results, it was determined that the mean scores of all three variables have a normal distribution ($P > 0.05$). Therefore, parametric methods are used to perform the tests.

The average score of the organizational atmosphere questionnaire is determined 3.48 ± 0.59 . Due to the T-test single group and comparison of mean with limit medium, the organizational atmosphere average score is above average and it can be concluded that the organizational atmosphere in the health centers of

Koohrang city is favorable. The average score of leave job tendency is obtained at 3.81 ± 0.68 . Due to the T-test single group and comparison of mean with limit medium, the average score of leave job tendency is above average and it can be concluded that the staff of health centers in Koohrang city tend to quit their jobs. The average score of fear of COVID-19 infection is obtained at 2.14 ± 0.90 . Due to the T-test single group and comparison of mean with limit medium, the average score of leave job tendency is below average and it can be concluded that the staff of health centers in Koohrang are not afraid of COVID-19, Table 2.

Table 2. T-test single group score results of organizational atmosphere, leave job tendency and the fear of getting COVID-19

Variable	Average	Standard deviation	T-Test statistics	Degrees of freedom	The significance level	95% confidence interval
Organizational atmosphere	3.48	0.59	8.968	117	0.000	3.39 - 3.59
Leave job tendency	3.81	0.68	13.096	117	0.000	3.69 - 3.94
Fear of COVID-19	2.14	0.90	-10.446	119	0.000	1.98 - 2.30

By performing the Sobel test and calculating the test statistics obtained $Z = 1.227$, and since the significance level was calculated $P = 0.109$, it is concluded that the mediating variable of

COVID-19 fear has not a significant effect on staff leave job tendency based on organizational atmosphere, Table 3.

Table 3. The results of the Sobel test examine the effect of the mediating variable fear of COVID-19

	Regression coefficient	The standard error	Z-Test statistics	The significance level
The effect of organizational atmosphere variables on fear of the COVID-19	-0.036	0.137	1.227	0.109
The effect of the variable fear of the COVID-19 on leave job tendency	0.419	0.070		

Pearson test correlation shows a direct and meaningful relationship between the organizational atmosphere and leaves job tendency ($r = 0.377$), an inverse and significant relationship between the

organizational atmosphere and the fear of COVID-19 ($r = 0.243$), and no significant relationship among leave job tendency and fear of the COVID-19 ($r = 0.137$), Table 4.

Table 4. Comparison of correlations between average organizational atmosphere score, quit job tendency, and fear of COVID-19 infection.

Variable	Organizational atmosphere	Tendency to leave the job	Fear of the Corona
Organizational atmosphere	1	$r = 0.377$ $*P = 0.000$	$r = -0.243$ $*P = 0.008$
Tendency to leave the job	-	1	$R = -0.137$ $*p = 0.140$
	-	-	1

* Significant at the level of 0.05

Variance analysis test shows that average scores of COVID-19 fear ($P = 0.018$), the leaving job tendency ($P = 0.010$), and organizational atmosphere ($P = 0.002$) have a significant difference according to the staff work experience. By performing the LSD post hoc test, it is identified that fear of COVID-19 among people with more than ten years of experience, people with less than two years of experience, and

between 2 and 5 years there is a significant difference ($P < 0.05$), and fear of COVID-19 was lowest in people with experience less than two years. Tendency to leave the job only between people with less than two-year work experience and other groups had a significant difference ($P < 0.05$), and the leave job tendency was the lowest in people with less than 2 years of experience. The average score of organizational atmosphere among

people with a work experience of 5-10 years, people with a work experience of fewer than two years and people with a work experience of 2-5 years there was a significant difference ($P < 0.05$),

and people with less than two years of work experience had the lowest and people with 5 to 10 years of experience had the highest organizational atmosphere score, Table 5.

Table 5. Variance analysis results comparing scores of fear of COVID-19 infection, tendency to leave the job and organizational atmosphere based on work experience

Variable	Groups	Total squares	Degrees of freedom	Average squares	Test statistics F	The significance level	
Work experience	Questionnaires average scores of the fear of coronavirus	Among groups	7.433	3	2.478	3.489	0.018 a
		Intergroup	80.960	114	0.710		
		Total	88.393	117			
	Questionnaires average scores of the leave the job tendency	Among groups	5.022	3	1.674	3.998	0.010 a
		Intergroup	46.829	112	0.419		
		Total	51.914	115			
	Questionnaires average scores of organizational atmosphere	Among groups	5.049	3	1.683	5.476	0.002 a
		Intergroup	34.425	112	0.307		
		Total	39.474	115			

Regarding other demographic variables gender, education, and age group there were no significant differences between average organization scores, fear of COVID-19 infection and tendency to quit the job ($P > 0.05$).

Discussion

The present study aims to investigate the relationship between the organizational atmosphere and the tendency to leave jobs and fear of covid-19 in health team members of health centers in 2021.

The results show that mediating variable of COVID-19 fear has not a significant effect on the tendency of employees to leave their jobs based on organizational atmosphere. According to the literature review, research that exactly investigates the relationship between the organizational atmosphere and the tendency of team members to leave their jobs in the health centers with a mediating role of COVID-19 fear has not been found.

In the most similar study, Sayed and Al-Shafi investigate the evaluation of job satisfaction, job stress, and nurse tendency to leave the job during

the COVID-19 pandemic period at Zagazig Hospital Country Egypt, 2020. And, they found that 75% of nurses have job stress and also only 4% of them did not think about leaving their job during the COVID-19 epidemic (Aghoshani, Doumehri, Zamani, & Soleimani, 2016).

Ying an, et al. a cross-sectional study entitled "The prevalence of depression and its impact on the quality of life of frontline nurses in emergency departments during the outbreak of COVID-19" in China has done in 2020. The study sample consists of 1103 nurses working in emergency departments. The results show that depression was significantly associated with the type of hospital and direct care of COVID-19 patients. After controlling for change variables, depressed nurses had a lower quality of life than their colleagues (Khodyari, Shariat, & Salajegheh, 2016).

Another cross-sectional study aiming to examine the factors associated with mental health problems among care providers COVID-19 was developed by Jinabu et al., China, 2020. Outcomes show that nurses, women, and those at the forefront of the

fight against the disease have poor mental health and severe symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress (Alian ghiasi, Baseri, Safaeizadeh, & Kaveh, 2015).

As can be seen, the results of the mentioned studies are different and the COVID-19 epidemic has had a negative psychological effect on nurses, while in the present study, fear of COVID-19 had less effect on the health care team. In this regard, it is necessary to mention a few points that the present study was performed on the care team working in health centers, but the previously mentioned studies were performed on hospital nurses and emergency departments, whose workload, due to the increase in patients due to the COVID-19 epidemic, more work shifts have caused dissatisfaction and a desire to leave the job. However, in health centers, despite the presence of suspicious and affected patients, compared to hospital and emergency nurses, workload and job stress were lower. On the other hand, it can be inferred that although the fear of COVID-19 is worrying, it alone has not been able to force people to leave their jobs.

Also, Koohrang city where the present study was conducted, was associated with a lower prevalence of COVID-19 (at the time of the study) due to geographical conditions and less communication with other neighboring cities than previous study environments such as China. These factors have been effective in not influencing the organizational atmosphere mediated by the fear of COVID-19 in the leave job tendency of staff.

In the study of Haji et al. 2021, Iran, in order to predict leave the job of Imam Khomeini Hospital nurses in Mahabad during the COVID-19 pandemic period based on the components of job stress and resilience, it is found that there is a positive and significant relationship between the leave job tendency with job stress, and job stress predict the tendency of nurses to leave the job. There is also a significant negative relationship between resilience and the desire to leave the job. And resilience predicts the tendency of nurses to leave their jobs. Therefore, it is appropriate that

managers reduce the tendency of nurses to quit their jobs by reducing job stressors and implementing resilience training programs during the COVID-19 pandemic (Estalaki, 2017).

In the current study, the results show a favorable organizational atmosphere in the health centers of Koohrang city. The organizational atmosphere has significant effects on employee behavior and the organization's performance. The transcendent atmosphere of the organization, on the one hand, reduces harassment and on the other hand improves team spirit, intimacy, interest, and production. And also by solving the problems arising from the management, a better organizational atmosphere can be provided that causes employees' satisfaction. (Khosravizadeh, Kamankesh, Moghadasi, & Zohrevandian, 2019). Furthermore, it was found in this study that there is a direct relationship between the organizational atmosphere and leave job reluctance and an indirect relationship between the organizational atmosphere and fear of COVID-19. But, there is no significant relationship between leave the job tendency and personnel fear of COVID-19.

Consistent with these results, in a study with the title of "Organizational atmosphere and the tendency to leaving the job" among consultants in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2011, the results show a negative correlation between the organizational atmosphere and the tendency to leave jobs in employment consultants. An inadequate work environment was associated with the intention to leave the organization (Faez, Zakerian, Azam, Hancock, & Rosecrance, 2021). The assessment of the organizational atmosphere effects on the tendency to leave the organization mediated by job satisfaction and organizational commitment among first secondary school teachers in District 6 of Mashhad is performed. The results show that there is a significant relationship between the effects of the organizational atmosphere on the tendency to leave the organization. The results of this study also showed that job satisfaction and organizational commitment moderate the effect of organizational

atmosphere and the tendency to leave the organization relationships (Marcatto, Di Blas, Luis, Festa, & Ferrante, 2022).

Considering the results, due to the high score of organizational atmosphere in the study environment, maybe this favorable organizational atmosphere prevailing in the health network of Koohrang city has been able in reducing the fear of COVID-19. However, despite the favorable organizational atmosphere, the tendency of staff to leave the job is high and other factors play a role in this matter that should be considered in future research.

The results of the present study also show that there is a significant difference in COVID-19 fear between those with more than ten years of experience, with less than two years of experience, and between 2 and 5 years. People with less than two years of work experience had the lowest tendency to quit and the highest score of COVID-19 fear. People with less experience seem to be more afraid of COVID-19. However, they have just been hired and their enthusiasm for employment and fear of losing their jobs have made them less inclined to leave their jobs.

Conclusion

The results of this study show a favorable organizational atmosphere in Koohrang health care providers. But the tendency to leave the job is high among them and the fear of COVID-19 does not play a mediating role in this desire, and the cause must be sought in other factors. Considering the significant relationship that was observed between the organizational atmosphere and the fear of COVID-19 in the study population, maybe the appropriate organizational atmosphere created in this area has eliminated the fear of COVID-19 infection despite the epidemic.

Due to the willingness of the studied personnel to leave the job, leaving the job has costs and problems for the organization, such as, selection cost, recruitment, guidance and training of new staff, pressure on remaining staff and loss of social capital, wasting managerial measures and

demoralization, the lack of other employees motivation, loss of experienced, skilled, and trained personnel, a valuable human of the organization, back-stay brings with it; managers and policymakers in the field of health care must identify the influential factors and causes of this phenomenon and take action to improve the situation before this tendency becomes an act to leave the job.

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Conflict interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Authors' contribution

Conceptualization, Z. K.; Methodology, Z. K and A. S.; Data collection, A.S.; Writing an original draft, Z. K.; Data analysis, Z. K and A. S.; Supervision, Z. K. All authors read and approved the final manuscript and are responsible for any questions related to the article.

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