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Effect of Organizational Competitive Climate on Organizational Prosocial Behavior: Workplace Envy as a Mediator

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***Abstract*—**Scarce resources are the inseparable part of organization life. This fact that only small number of the employees can have these resources such as promotion, raise, and recognition can cause competition among employees, which create competitive climate. As well as any other competition, small number wins the reward, and a great number loses, one of the possible emotional reactions to this loss is negative emotions like malicious envy. In this case, the envious person may try to harm the envied person by reducing the prosocial behavior. Prosocial behavior is a behavior that aimed to benefit others. The main propose of this action is to maintain and increase well-being and well-fare of others. Therefore, one of the easiest ways for harming envied one is to suppress prosocial behavior. Prosocial behavior has positive and important implication for organizational efficiency. Our results supported our model and suggested that competitive climate has a significant effect on increasing workplace envy and on the other hand envy has significant negative impact on prosocial behavior. Our result also indicated that envy is the mediator in the relation between competitive climate and prosocial behavior. Organizational competitive climate can cause employees respond envy with negative emotion and hostile and damaging behavior toward envied person. Competition can lead employees to look out for proof of their self-worthiness; and, furthermore, they measure their self-worth, value and respect by the superiority that they gain in competitions. As a result, loss in competitions can harm employee's self-definition and they try to protect themselves by devaluating envied other and being 'less friendly' to them. Some employees may find it inappropriate to engage in the harming behavior, but they may believe there is nothing against withholding the prosocial behavior.

***Keywords*—**Competitive climate, mediator, prosocial behavior, workplace envy.

I. Introduction

SCARCE resources are inevitable fact of organization life. Allocation of these resources such as promotion, raise, and recognition can cause competition among employees. Employees find themselves competing for resources with coworkers and eventually they may or may not gain the superior advantages. These situations can bring up negative emotions like malicious envy [1]. Competitive Climate is the amount which employees believe their reward is determined comparatively to their colleagues. Organizations have different competitive climates [1]. Organizations with high competitive climate set the rules that increase and encourage competition among their employees [2].

Even though jealousy and envy seem to be the same in everyday life, they are different concepts as most researches have suggested [3]. Jealousy and envy are different in two ways: First, envy is the desire for another person superior advantage, but jealousy happens in a relationship and it is the fear of losing a valuable relationship to a third person. Second, envy comes along with hostility, inferiority, resentment, and longing whereas jealousy comes along with fear of loss, mistrust, rage, and suffering [4].

There are two types of envy that conceptually originate from two theories of "Benign" and "Malicious" [5], or as Gershman categorized it: Competitive and destructive [6]. Benign or competitive envy occurs when envious person sees another person's superiority with pleasure and admiration. This envious behavior could even inspire and motivate the envied person, while in malicious or destructive envy, envious person's feeling is rather attributed to displeasure and disgust and often leads to desire of the failure of the envied person [7]. In this research, by envy we mean malicious or destructive envy.

Envy can be explained by several theories. One of them is social comparison theory. According to this theory, people are constantly comparing their results with the others who are similar to them [8]. In a comparison, when one notices that those on par with his/her have an additional advantage, it can cause a perception of threat to her/his self-esteem and damage to self-concept. This situation leads to malicious envy [9]. Another theory that clarifies envy, is Tesser's self-evaluation maintenance model (SEM). This theory explains that people try to keep their self-motivation according to the performance of others close to them. A very good performance by a close person who is similar to them in terms of performance can downgrade their personality whereas a bad performance can move them up [10]. When a similar other has an outstanding performance, one of the possible consequences is malicious envy [9]. Third theory for explaining envy is equity theory. This theory suggests that people compare the ratio of their input to their output with the perceived ratio of input and output of other people. When people find this ratio to be unequal (e.g., either they believe that they are underpaid or overpaid) they act accordingly so to bring their lost balance back [11]. According to Vecchio, employees show affective

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and coping responses to envy. One of these coping responses can be reducing prosocial behavior [12].

Prosocial behavior is not that kind of word that can be found in all dictionaries. Prosocial behavior is a word which was created in contrast with antisocial behavior [13]. Prosocial behaviors are extensive group of behaviors. As Brief and Motowidlo described "Acts such as helping, sharing, donating, co-operating, and volunteering are forms of pro-social behavior, They are positive social acts carried out to produce and maintain the well-being and integrity of others" [14 p.710]. Prosocial behavior is really important for organizational survival. As in Kat's pattern third essential for organization functioning are the behaviors which are over the job requirements, these behavior includes helping coworker, trying to protect organization from danger, searching a way for improving the organization, talking good about organization with the people out of organization and improving self and trying for taking responsibility. Prosocial behavior are even boarder than these behaviors [14]. It has been indicated that envious employees try to harm their envied coworker by suppress prosocial. It might be the easiest way to restore balance and protecting harmed self-esteem. [15]. We examine whether workplace envy is a mediator for competitive climate and prosocial behavior relationship in the organizational context. Research model is presented in Fig. 1.

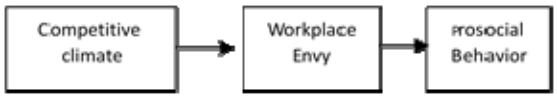


Fig. 1 Research model

II. Method

A. Population and Sample

Stratified sampling method was applied and sample size was 304 employees of National Iranian South Oil Company in Ahwaz. Respondents' demographic data are presented in Table I.

B. Measures

In order to collect data self-reporting validated questionnaire were used. For assessing envy, Vecchio [12] five item scale were used. These items were in seven-point Likert scale. (Sample item: My supervisor values the efforts of others more than she/he values my efforts). Vecchio [12] developed and validate this measure from [16]-[18]. Duffy et al. [17] reported the Cronbach alpha of Vecchio [12] scale .70 in their research. In order to test the validity of this measure in this research Cronbach's Alpha and Guttman Split-Half were measured (Cronbach's Alpha= .71 and Guttman Split-Half=.75).

Competitive climate were assessed by using Arnold, Flaherty, Voss and Mowen [2] scale. Sample item: "My manager frequently compares my results with those of other employees". Arnold et al. [2] developed Brown, Cron, and Slocum [1] scale. It is a four-item on nine-point Likert scale [2]. Cronbach's Alpha and Guttman Split-Half were measured for testing the validity of this scale (Cronbach's Alpha= .73 and Guttman Split-Half=.69).

Organizational prosocial behavior was measured through Tai Tze Suen [15]. Tai Tze Suen [15] developed Settoon & Mosshold [20] Interpersonal Citizenship Behavior Scale. In this scale, respondents rated prosocial behavior of their colleagues on this question. This scale was changed into self-report questionnaire with nine-point Likert. Cronbach's Alpha and Guttman Split-Half were measured for testing the validity of this scale (Cronbach's Alpha= .79 and Guttman Split-Half= .71).

TABLE I
RESPONDENTS' DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Gender	male	215	70.7
	female	74	24.3
	Non respond	15	4.9
Relation	single	44	14.5
	married	219	72.0
	Non respond	41	13.5
Education	PhD	4	1.3
	MA	107	35.2
	Bachelor	117	38.5
	College	35	11.5
	Diploma	26	8.6
	Non respond	15	4.9
Age	24-30	49	16.1
	30-40	122	40.1
	40-50	68	22.4
	50-60	42	13.8
	Non respond	23	7.6
Job Experience	1-5	49	16.1
	5-10	62	20.4
	10-15	54	17.8
	15-20	24	7.9
	20-25	33	10.9
	25-30	35	11.5
	30-35	17	5.6
	35-40	8	2.6
	Non respond	22	7.2

C. Analyze

For analyzing data, structural equation modeling (SEM) method and Preacher and Hayes [19] indirect effects method through SPSS and Amos were used. SEM has been long used for analyzing multivariate data and also for theory testing. SEM is far beyond from ordinary regression for testing many independents and dependents variable and also for testing the fitness of model [18].

Psychologist mostly try to examine the relationship between variable, but by understanding the process that create the effect, can lead to a great insight [19]. A variable can be count as the mediator when it can predict the relationship between the predictor and criterion. "Mediators explain how external physical events take on internal psychological significance" [20 p.1176]. In order to test the mediator effect of envy in this model, bootstrap method in macro program of Preacher and Hayes [19] was applied.

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III. Result

Descriptive statistics about all respondents for competitive climate, workplace envy, prosocial behaviors are presented in Table II.

TABLE II
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR ALL RESPONDENTS

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Competitive climate	4.00	36.00	19.46	5.05
Envy	5.00	35.00	14.7	5.31
Prosocial	8.00	72.00	55.88	10.55

For a better understanding of relationship between variables, first a correlation analysis (Pearson correlations) was done. Results are presented in Table III.

TABLE III
INTER-CORRELATION OF THE VARIABLES

	Competitive climate	Envy	Prosocial
Competitive climate	1	.15	.26*
Envy		1	.13
Prosocial			1

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Inter-correlation results indicated that prosocial and competitive climate are significantly correlated. The result for fitness of model is presented in Table IV.

TABLE IV
RESULT FOR TESTING FATTINESS OF STRUCTURED MODEL

CMIN/DF	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA
2.971	.994	.961	.967	.081

The results indicated that proposed model fits the data. For investigating the mediation effect of envy, a test of Preacher and Hayes [19] was conducted, result of which is indicated in Table V.

TABLE V
MEDIATION EFFECT OF ENVY BY PREACHER AND HAYES [19] METHOD

data	boot	Bias	Lower	Upper	sig
/0069	0/0089	0/0020	0/0068	0/0516	0/001

Results indicated that envy is the mediator of the relationship between competitive climate and prosocial behavior.

IV. Discussion

Researches indicated that competition can be the reason that people start to look out of themselves and search in their surrounding and environment for proof and self-worth. It can be said that the most horrible effect of the competition is the fact that competition is like a toxin to individual relationship and trust. Competition can weaken interpersonal relationship, and trust between coworkers. It can be hard to keep a good relation with the person that competing with, since in a competition everyone tries their best to win and even sometimes do everything to win. Competition can harm self-esteem if it does not end up wining [21]. Eventually, it can be concluded that competition is one of the main reason that leads people to constantly compare themselves with other; and by referring to social comparison theory, SEM, and equity theory, this comparing can lead to more and more envy [9]-[11]. It is not far from mind that organizational life can cause more competition, as organizational life is always offering scarce resources for only a few people. There are always valuable rewards for small number of people in the organization life. Thus, these rewards can perfectly lead to competition [3]

Envy is a painful emotion that distorts individual balance. Recently Takahashi et al. indicated in the investigation of the brain activation, anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) activation at the time of envy, it means individuals experience a pain or discomfort, which is like a physical pain in the brain [22]. When employees felt envy, they will be motivated to bring balance back or ease the pain. One possible way for envious employee for restoring balance is to harm the envied employee [23]. Takahashi et al. also indicated that when a mishap happens to the envied person, it can reduce the pain or discomfort, and a good pleasant feeling will be replaced. As they noted "This pleasure at another's misfortune is correspondent to the activation of the ventral striatum and the medial orbitofrontal cortex" [22 p.939]. Bottom-line mentality might be involved in this process too. Employees with a bottom-line mentality see every situation as competition that they must be the winner of, they see every situation as a race that they must past form the bottom line first. They cannot stand to lose [24].

Since helping and volunteer actions are not a part of the job description, this harming can just be limited to suppress the "helping", as Kim, O'neill & Cho noted "It may be a beneficial self-protective strategy for an envious employee not to help envied coworkers while still adequately performing his/her assigned duties" [25 p.532]. Therefore, it is might be easiest way for restoring balance and also not doing anything wrong. Malone [9] has found a positive relation between organizational competitive climate and negative reaction to malicious envy. They indicated that in an organization which has characterized with high competitive climate, employees direct their negative emotion caused by envy toward the envied others.

Employees cannot show their frustration and hostility caused by envy, just as easy in workplace. It is not acceptable by social norms, also it is not moral [17]. Therefor simply reducing volunteer acts or in another word reducing prosocial behavior will not be against any social norm.

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