

The effect of organizational aesthetics on self-esteem, mental health and morale in employees

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Abstract

Purpose - The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of the organizational aesthetics on self-esteem, mental health and morale in employees.

Design/methodology/approach - The method of research is the grounded theory. This method is one of the methods used in qualitative research. Its analysis involves open coding, axial coding, and selective coding to qualitative research software, NVivo10 is used to sort, arrange and classify data. Besides, deep interviewing is used to collect data. The statistical population of this research is employees of the social insurance organization in Kerman city of Iran. Sampling method is theoretical sampling which is one of the basic steps in the process of grounded theory.

Findings - The results of the research showed that organizational aesthetics strategy causes increasing of self-esteem, improvement of mental health and morale in employees.

Research limitations/implications - The study is purely based on qualitative approach.

Practical implications - The results of the study are useful for individual and organizational development.

Originality/value - This study has developed the first comprehensive model about the effect of organizational aesthetics on self-esteem, mental health and morale in employees.

Keywords - Aesthetics, Organizational aesthetics, Self-esteem, Mental health, Morale.

Paper type - Research paper.

1. Introduction

Beauty in work is a strange phenomenon in the organization (Witz *et al.*, 2003). Awareness of the beauty of work in studying organizational life includes how individuals and groups act in the organization and behave in an organization according to their emotions, desires, tastes and talents. Aesthetics is a new way of working for a job, a leadership style, a form of communication with others at work (the appearance and characteristics of the workplace). The artifacts produced in the organization are the symbolic elements of an organization's image. The purpose of the aesthetic attitude is to give attention to sense. In other words, aesthetics



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is formed on the basis of this formula that the feelings of individuals in the organization are different. the next aesthetic dimensional research in organizational life is to highlight the material and physical matters that we are dealing with in the organization on a daily basis. In other words, it is the materiality of which the organizational artifacts are built upon, and then we recognize the beauty of the artifacts based on the basis of their ugliness, their beauty, and then the materiality of the organization goes beyond all the knowledge that is relevant to the organization. This is not an exclusively psychological phenomenon; this dimension brings a kind of sensory knowledge that is shaped by the association of organizational members with the organization's members (Strati, 2010).

Over the past few decades, most attention has been paid to aesthetics in everyday life, and as a new research line. Strati and Gagliardi are both pioneers in the study of aesthetics in the organization. Aesthetics is a mean to develop more insight into structured meanings and organizational upgrades. Strati highlight the importance of office decor, the location and style of office chairs as a means to understand the social structure of the workplace. For Strati, organizational arrangements are both material and immaterial. Gagliardi (1996) argues that our experience of reality is a sensory experience that the other name of this sensory experience is the aesthetic experience which experience cannot be expressed in words due to its subconscious nature. He has referred to the role of organizational artifacts. According to his view, artifacts are defined as the product of human action, which exists independently of its maker, which aims to solve a problem or satisfy needs. The aesthetics is a way to re-focus on the tangible and physical perspectives of organizational life (Weggeman *et al.*, 2007). Organizations that are not even active in the arts can take advantage of the organizational aesthetic approach. For example, Weight Watchers Company, which focuses on personal health and lifestyle management, has become a multinational corporation and has gained a lot of success so far. Stenström (2007) indicated that the success factor of the Weight Watchers company is due to aesthetics, including the main focus on the characteristics of physical and physical attributes of employees in organizational life Bathurst (2007). Organizational aesthetics is often a sensory map of the staff and a visual sense of the visitor of the organization so that these sentiments are the core values of the organization in which the employee is an ideal one (Gagliardi, 1990; Witkin, 1990; Baldry, 1999). Aesthetics is an effective mechanism for shaping the emotions, attitudes and behaviors of individuals in a certain space (Wasserman *et al.*, 2000). In general, based on the view of these researchers, the main basis for the formation of the aesthetic phenomenon of the organization is paying attention to the emotions, attitudes and behaviors of individuals. In other words, It can be said that the aesthetics of the organization has a psychological approach.

The main purpose of this research is to investigate the effect of organization's aesthetics on self-esteem, mental health and morale in employees. Researchers and clinical experts focus on self-esteem as an important area. Self-esteem is effective in motivating, applying behaviors and life satisfaction. Besides, it has a well-established connection with health throughout life (Lonnqvist *et al.*, 2009). The concept of mental health is defined in several ways. Some have emphasized this concept of adherence to cultural norms. For example, what a person's culture suggests that should be done. Some mental health is centered around as an ideal factor, and few people have achieved it. Mental health means being able to work for an innovative and mundane work (Gross and Munoz, 1995). Moreover, mental health relies on the inner sense of being good and ensuring its efficiency, self-reliance, and the capacity to compete. Also, self-fulfillment is a potential intellectual and emotional ability. Mental health issues in the workplace may be due to increased occupational errors, poor decision making, loss of motivation and commitment, as well as tension and conflict with colleagues (Jalilian *et al.*, 2017). Morale is a concept that has been heavily debated and has little understanding and difficult to define. It is necessary to understand the morale of employees in group activities. The field depends on the recognition of common goals. Wiles (1979) defines morale as the motivational and mental reactions of a person in a job (Magoon and Linkous, 1979). Therefore, research questions include:

- i. Is there any relationship between organizational aesthetics and employee's self-esteem?
- ii. Is there a relationship between organizational aesthetics and employee's mental health?

To examine the effect of organizational aesthetics on these three variables, the grounded theory method was used. The results of the research showed that the aesthetics of the organization results in increasing self-esteem, improvement of mental health and improvement of morale in employees.

2. Literature review

2.1 Aesthetics

Aesthetics is a branch of Western philosophy that expresses a form of understanding, perception, imagination and experience of objects. We describe objects with such words as beautiful, ugly, delicate, hateful. Aesthetics is related to senses, empathy, intuition, and perception (Ramirez, 2005).

2.2 Organizational aesthetics

Aesthetic thinking in everyday life can be found in a completely different way in the organization. Theorists have studied the aesthetic attitude in many organizational phenomena, for example, the application of this attitude in conflict management (Strati, 2008). In general, the following can be said: The organization's aesthetics is a subset of organizational studies that draws the attention of researchers to irrational elements in the organization's life. In other words, this was hidden in traditional studies of management and organization. The roots of this approach to symbolism studies came back to the 1980s. Aesthetic elements emanate from meaningful feelings of employees, employees' perceptions and judgments about organizational life based on sensory confrontation with the environment around them. Employees give their opinions about office decor, a managerial decision-making process for communication, corporation identity recognition, and organizational organizational culture. In these examples, aesthetics manifests itself in most aspects of organizational life (Warren, 2006).

2.3 Self-esteem

self-esteem is one of the most important things that affects the development of talent and creativity, and also one of the most important factors in the growth and prosperity of humans in the last decade. It has attracted researcher's attention on all thoughts, perceptions, excitements, aspirations, values and goals of self-esteem (Mirzaie Alwilde *et al.*, 2012). Maslow paid attention to this fact in the hierarchy of needs that individuals move in the hierarchy of needs. Their basic needs include security, belonging, respect, and Self-esteem (Saghravani and Ghaur Baghbani, 2010). Self-esteem is defined as a value that people perceive themselves as the result of perceptions of lifestyle and experiences of their lives, and that one who is satisfied with his body is associated with self-esteem (Erkaya *et al.*, 2018).

2.4 Mental health

Mental health is one of the components of a healthy lifestyle, and countless factors contribute to it. It is seeking to prevent negative emotions such as stress, depression, anxiety, and signs of a disease in people. Psychologists believe that mental and physical health is the needs and desires of all humans, and we all try to have healthy relationships (Hejazi and Ghanizadeh, 2018). The lack of mental health and distress is the main cause of absenteeism, a decrease in the productivity and circulation of employees. Stress is the main cause of lack of mental health that leads to anxiety and depression (Gray *et al.*, 2001). The relationship between what people are doing for livelihood and their psychological well-being were studied by sociologists such as Engels, Marx, Durkheim and Weber. These early sociologists examined the conditions of work and the psychological reactions of workers to their work as the results of structural and economic relations. Numerous researches mentioned that the link between work and mental health are associated with occupational stress. Indeed, research

suggests that many workers feel stress-induced work-related stress, and they feel that they are more likely to be exposed to digestive diseases. Most researches on the relationship between work and mental health have been done by occupational health psychologists (Tausig, 2014).

2.5 *Morale*

Morale is a phenomenon which manifests itself from the boundaries of the organization, past administration, its effects in private and out of the environment. The low morale of employees in the work is very unfavorable. (Gall, 1992) in a study revealed that a soldier's clothes had an unbearable effect on his feelings and spirits. According to this, clean clothing and the appearance of this kind of feeling in the soldiers are important to their commanders. Such emotion lead to enhance the spirit and soul of the soldiers. As a result, the morale of the soldiers improves (Khorsandi *et al.*, 2013).

3. Objective

The main purpose of this study is to examine the role of organizational aesthetics on self-esteem, mental health and morale in employees.

4. Research methodology

The statistical population of this research is employees of the social insurance organization in Kerman. Sampling method is theoretical sampling method. Theoretical sampling is one of the basic steps in the process of grounded theory. This type of sampling is formed during the research process. In other words, the researcher does not already identify the sample groups, since the obtained data are the guide for the continuation of the research path. The researcher needs to develop some critical capabilities in order to support some decisions, for example selecting the best cases through data integration (Roman *et al.*, 2017). In this research, knowledgeable subjects were selected for research in order to participate in the research. Deep interviewing is used to collect data, and the deep interview is the mainstay of the basic theory. In this way interviewing the interviewee is given more opportunity to guide the flow of talks (Ansari-Ranani and Tounkenejad, 2010). Interviews are recorded so that the discussions can be conducted more than once with a more detailed analysis of the controversial views of the participants. Theoretical sampling continues until the categories arrive at the theoretical saturation. Theoretical saturation means that no other new data related to the phenomenon category should be created. An interview was conducted with 24 employees of the insurance organization in Kerman city of Iran, which received 24 theoretical coverage and the researcher interrupted the interview. In other words, other interviews replicated the responses of previous interviews. This research was carried out using the ground theory method. The process of grounded theory consists of three stages. In the first stage of coding, the researcher carefully reads the phrases, words, and stories that are individually obtained from the interviews by reading the texts. At this stage, The researcher can analyze the line by line of expressions, words of sentences and coding documents. Glaser suggested that a novice researcher should start with line-by-line analysis. In the first stage of the coding process, the researcher compares the incidents in order to identify similarities and differences. In the second step of the coding process, the researcher examines and analyzes the codes in higher-level categories and concepts (Schreiber and Stern, 2001). In the third stage, the process of coding the initial theoretical framework and research theorems are created.

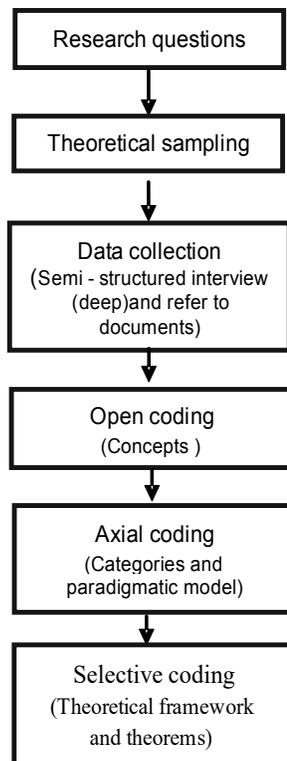


Figure 1.
The process of grounded theory (Izvercian *et al.*, 2016)

5. Results and analysis

The results of the three-step process of the grounded theory include:

Step 1. Open coding - In the first phase of the grounded theory, the data are first separated from each other and the main concepts and categories are embedded within them. At this time, the similarities and differences in the data are examined and based on them, vacancies are identified in areas that require more questions (Ansari-Rananiand Tounkenejad, 2010). In this phase, the Nvivo qualitative analysis software was used, sine the purpose of this software is to support the underlying theory process. It provides a quick method for the data analysis process in order to be more reliable in the results and support the decision-making process (Roman *et al.*, 2017).

Step 2. Axial coding - At this stage, the categories that are separated in the preceding phase are interconnected, based on the relationship with other categories and concepts in the new mix, and are analyzed with new data, and a Paradigm model is created.

Paradigm model components of axial coding stage are

- i. causal condition (the root causes of the main phenomenon emotions), beauty perception, beauty value, beauty experience, beauty need, beauty judgments as individual components, group norm and social learning as a group component and organizational justice, organizational spirituality, organizational culture, organizational components are as the indicators of causal conditions.
- ii. The main category(the axis of the process is being explored and other categories are related to this topic. The main category in the organizational aesthetics model is the desire for beauty in the employees.
- iii. Action strategies (the strategy is for controlling, managing, dealing with and responding to the main category), 3- the organizational aesthetics as the main strategy for satisfying the desire for beauty in the employees,
- iv. Special condition (specific conditions affecting the organizational aesthetics strategy, (Personality traits, apparent features, physical features, gender and age specific conditions affecting the organizational aesthetics have been identified.
- v. General conditions (general conditions affecting the organizational aesthetics strategy.

(Organizational artifacts, organizational climate and leadership Style general conditions affecting the organizational aesthetics have been identified.

- vi. Psychology consequences (results applying organizational aesthetic strategy), increasing self-esteem, improving mental health and improving morale as the psychology organizational aesthetic outcomes.

Step 3. Selective coding - the result of the stage of the coding is the choice of propositions or theorems of research based on the internal relations of the categories. Based on what is said in the description of the axial coding components, the following theorems are obtained:

- i. Emotions, beauty perception, beauty value, beauty experience, beauty need, beauty judgments as individual components, group norm and social learning as a group component and organizational justice, organizational spirituality, organizational culture, organizational components which are the causal conditions for creating a desire for beauty in the staff.
- ii. Organizational aesthetic is considered as the main strategy for the management, control and satisfaction of the desire for beauty in the staff.
- iii. Personality traits, apparent features, physical features, gender and age specificare specific conditions for the emergence of an organizational aesthetic.
- iv. Organizational artifacts, organizational climate and leadership style are general conditions for the emergence of an organizational aesthetic.
- v. Increasing self-esteem, improving mental health and improving morale are recognized as the organizational psychology aesthetic outcomes.

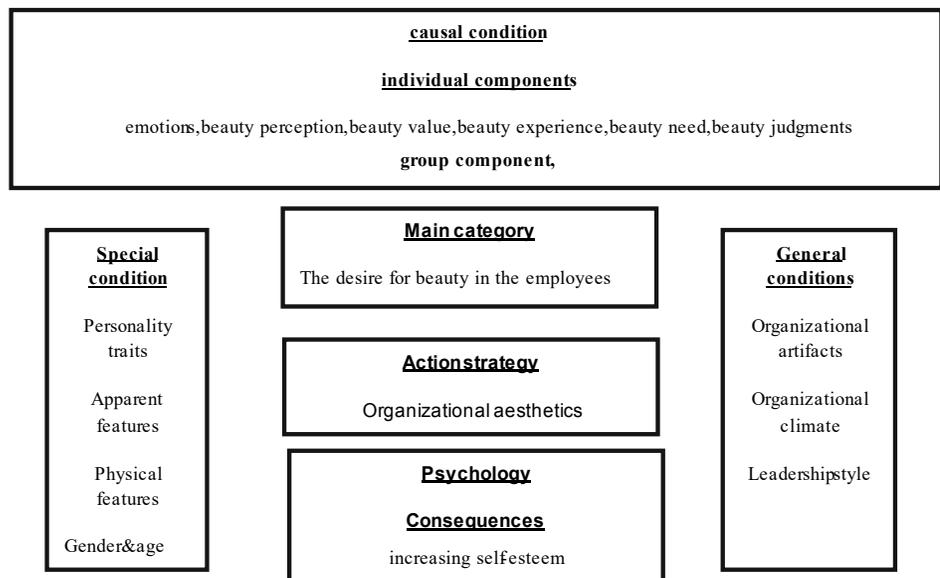


Figure 2.
The proposed organizational aesthetics model based on grounded theory

6. Conclusion

The results of the research showed that organizational aesthetics as a major strategy for increasing self-esteem, can improve mental health and morale in the staff. On the basis of other results, this study was carried out in a grounded theory. It became clear that the desire for beauty is the central issue and the foundation of the organizational aesthetics strategy. According to the interviewees, "Human beings have a tendency to be beautiful. God has created them on a beautiful basis, God is beautiful and loves beauty, Human being is based on beauty, and man naturally feels the beauty of his radar, Man is anxiously interested in beauty, Beauty is inside and outside his body". Many scholars believe that some attributes have been laid down in their institutions. One of these innate characteristics of human beings is cynical and cute (Ghasemi, 2005). In this study, factors such as the feeling of beauty, the perception of beauty, the value of beauty, the beauty of experience and the beauty of the individual situation create a desire for beauty in the staff. Considering each of these individual factors lead to increased self-esteem, improved mental health, and increased

morale in the staff. For example, the sense of beauty in the organization results in intimacy between the employee and the client, and also the sensation of sensual beauty with excitement. "He sees the feeling of beauty as a feeling of excitement. Personality traits, apparent features and physical characteristics, and age and gender are specific conditions affecting organizational aesthetics strategy. (Shilling, 1993) states that the commitment to maintaining a physical state means controlling weight and taking care of beauty, as well as paying attention to your diet to keep Bardon's appearance (Thassur and Tang, 2013). The appearance and tone of the front line staff when talking to customers in audio that meets the criteria for aesthetics can be very helpful in better representing the company's image. The fabrication division relies on the beautiful appearance and the loud voice of the frontline staff, since this criteria can play an important role in the quality of service industry (Thassur and Tang, 2013). Organizational artifacts, organizational climate and leadership styles have been identified as interfering conditions or general conditions affecting organizational aesthetics. Organizational artifacts are the first intervening, or general, influences on the organizational aesthetics strategy. Based on the viewpoint of contributors in the study, "Desk, chairs and decor are the most important factors in the organization; Office furniture is important in the beauty of the organization". Strati presents the importance of office decor, the location and style of office chairs as a means of understanding social structure in the workplace (Weggeman *et al.*, 2007). McMurray indicates organizational artifacts include objects and supplies of buildings and offices, artistic objects, location, language, clothing code, history, ceremonies and behavior (Bjerke and Ind, 2015).

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