

The Mediating Role of Psychological Well-Being in the Impact of Ethical Climate Perception on Organizational Identification among Nurses

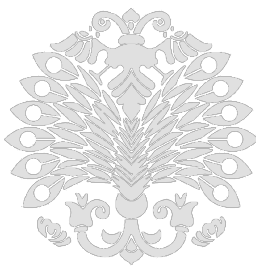
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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to examine the mediating role of psychological well-being in the relationship between ethical climate perception and organizational identification among nurses.

Methods: This study employs a quantitative research method and utilizes a "relational research design." The sample of the study consists of 260 nurses actively working at a state hospital in Türkiye. Data analysis was conducted using the SPSS program with the addition of the Process Macro software.

Results: The analyses revealed a significant and positive relationship between the variables. The results indicated that nurses' perceptions of ethical climate, psychological well-being, and organizational identification were above moderate levels. Correlation analyses revealed significant positive relationships between ethical climate perception and psychological well-being ($r = .316, P < .001$), ethical climate perception and organizational identification ($r = .379, P < .001$), and psychological well-being and organizational identification ($r = .200, P < .001$). Analysis using the PROCESS Macro (Model 4) revealed that psychological well-being mediates the effect of perceived ethical climate on organizational identification.

Conclusion: The study found that psychological well-being plays a full mediating role in the effect of ethical climate perception on organizational identification among nurses. These findings empirically indicate that a positive ethical climate fosters nurses' organizational identification primarily by enhancing their psychological well-being. Therefore, hospital management is advised to focus on cultivating an ethical organizational climate to support nurses' well-being and, consequently, their identification with the institution.

Keywords: Ethics, Identification, Nursing, Psychological well-being

INTRODUCTION

Organizational culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, norms, and assumptions that guide employees' behaviors and shape organizational practices. It is widely accepted that organizational culture provides a framework through which individuals interpret organizational events and determine appropriate attitudes and behaviors. As an integral component of organizational culture, ethical climate reflects employees' shared perceptions regarding ethical values, norms, and standards within the organization. Ethical climate is considered to guide employees in distinguishing acceptable from unacceptable behaviors and to influence decision-making processes by defining what is considered ethically appropriate. Therefore, ethical climate can be regarded as a cultural mechanism through which organizations communicate ethical expectations to their members. Ethical climate is an organizational climate that governs moral aspects of organizational processes, reflecting policies and practices.^{1,2} The ethical climate of an institution is an integral part of its organizational culture.

Victor and Cullen² suggest that employees learn how to behave in an organization through formal and informal socialization after entering it. They learn which values are respected and rewarded, determining what is considered ethically right. Organizational values related to ethical issues and what is deemed ethically appropriate constitute the ethical climate of an institution. Factors influencing the ethical climate in an

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organization include the actual behavior of top management, personal interests, company profits, business efficiency, team interests, friendships, social responsibility, personal ethics, and rules, laws, and professional codes.³ When considering the elements affecting ethical climate, it is observed that factors such as the behavior of top management towards employees, friendships established in the workplace, and personal interests positively influence the motivation, productivity, and organizational commitment of employees. Accordingly, it is believed that as the perception of ethical climate increases within an organization or as an organization adheres to ethical rules, is likely to increase employees' organizational loyalty to the organization.

Organizational identification refers to the degree to which employees define themselves in terms of their membership in an organization and internalize its values and goals.⁴ In this context, organizational identification is a process in which an individual perceives themselves as a member of a specific organization while defining themselves in general. It involves the development of a sense of unity or belongingness to the organization through the alignment of individual and organizational values.⁴ In other words, it can be expressed as the similarity or congruence between an employee's personal goals and the goals of the organization.⁵ As the similarity between the employee and the organisation increases, organisational identification tends to strengthen. However, this process does not occur in isolation; it is closely linked to employees' internal psychological states. When employees align their values with those of an ethical and supportive organisation, this congruence strengthens their organisational bond and significantly improves their overall psychological experience at work. This profound internal experience is directly linked to psychological well-being.

Psychological well-being can be defined as an individual's ability to continue personal and professional development and to establish meaningful relationships with their surroundings.⁶ The model of psychological well-being consists of six dimensions. The first dimension is autonomy, wherein individuals should be able to direct their lives independently of environmental factors and make their own decisions. Another dimension is environmental mastery, where individuals can manage their environment, recognize its advantages, and use them in line with their own goals. The dimension of personal growth indicates a tendency to engage in lifelong learning and to complete personal deficiencies. When looking at the dimension of purpose in life, individuals believe that life has a purpose and consider it a meaningful phenomenon. Those who score high in the dimension of positive relations are warm,

sincere, and trustworthy individuals, having high-quality relationships with others. The last dimension is self-acceptance, where individuals are aware of their positive and negative aspects and are at peace with their past.^{7,8} From this perspective, it can be said that psychological well-being is closely related to an individual's self-awareness, awareness of their environment, and communication and interaction with others. In other words, individuals with high levels of psychological well-being are likely to establish healthy relationships both in the workplace and family settings. Psychological well-being refers to individuals' positive functioning in emotional, cognitive, and social domains, encompassing aspects such as purpose in life, personal growth, and positive relations with others.⁷ Ethical work environments contribute to psychological well-being by reducing uncertainty, stress, and moral conflicts, while promoting feelings of fairness and emotional safety.^{9,10} Particularly in healthcare settings, nurses are frequently exposed to ethically challenging and emotionally demanding situations, making ethical climate a critical factor for sustaining their psychological well-being.

When ethical rules are followed in the tasks and processes within an organization, employees are treated fairly, and a just management prevails, it can be said that an ethical climate prevails in that organization.¹¹ In such an environment, employees feel safe and know the consequences of their actions, whether right or wrong. In this sense, the ethical climate can have a guiding function for employees. The way employees think and behave in such an environment affects their loyalty and belongingness to the organization. In other words, being in an organization where employees feel safe, believe in its fairness, and trust that they will be rewarded for their efforts will lead to their endorsement of the organization and an increase in their organizational identification. All these factors are believed to contribute to employees' ability to establish happier and healthier relationships with themselves and their surroundings. Therefore, the aim of this research is to determine whether psychological well-being plays a mediating role in the effect of perceived ethical climate on organizational identification among nurses. Although previous studies have demonstrated that ethical climate is positively associated with organizational identification^{12,13} and psychological well-being¹⁵, the underlying mechanism through which ethical climate influences organizational identification remains insufficiently explored, particularly in healthcare settings. Nurses are frequently exposed to ethically challenging situations, which may directly affect their psychological well-being and their sense of belonging to the

organization.¹⁴ Despite the growing body of literature, there is a significant research gap regarding the mediating role of psychological well-being in this relationship. The present study aims to address this gap by investigating whether psychological well-being mediates the effect of perceived ethical climate on organisational identification among nurses. Integrating these three constructs into a single empirical model will enrich the existing organisational behaviour literature and provide healthcare administrators with evidence-based insights to help them design supportive work environments that sustain nurses' well-being and institutional loyalty.

AIM

The main purpose of this study is to examine whether psychological well-being plays a mediating role in the relationship between ethical climate perception and organizational identification among nurses

Research Questions/Hypotheses.

The hypotheses proposed in the research are as follows:

H1: Ethical climate perception has a significant and positive effect on organizational identification.

H2: Ethical climate perception has a significant and positive effect on psychological well-being.

H3: Psychological well-being has a significant and positive effect on organizational identification.

H4: Psychological well-being plays a mediating role in the impact of ethical climate perception on organizational identification.

METHODS

Design

This research employed a quantitative approach and a correlational design. The proposed research model was tested using regression-based mediation analysis conducted with Hayes' PROCESS Macro to examine direct and indirect relationships between ethical climate perception, psychological well-being, and organisational identification. This section of the study provides an explanation of the research model, population, sample, data collection process, tools used for data collection, and data analysis.

Model

Ethical climate, as the variable of the research, is a concept that can have significant implications for both employees and organizations. Its existence in organizations leads to increased unity, togetherness, and motivation among employees,¹⁵ enhanced job satisfaction and firm performance,¹⁴ and increased organizational commitment and decreased turnover.¹⁶ In DeConinck's¹² study that investigated the effect of an ethical work environment on

salespeople's organizational identification, trust in management, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions, it was found that ethical climate positively influenced organizational identification. Unethical behavior is a source of stress. Exposure to or even witnessing unethical behavior leads to negative emotions, which negatively affect psychological well-being. Ethical climate contributes to reducing stress.⁹ There is a negative relationship between perceived stress and psychological well-being.¹⁷ Zakipour and Shabrava¹⁰ stated in their study that ethical climate predicts psychological well-being. Therefore, it is believed that the perception of ethical climate may have an impact on both organizational identification and the level of employees' psychological well-being. In this context, the conceptual model developed in the study is presented in Figure 1.

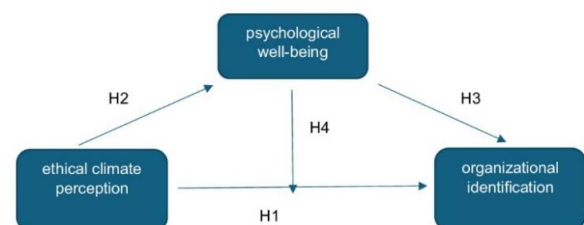


Figure 1. Research Model

In the research, ethical climate perception is determined as the independent variable, organizational identification as the dependent variable, and psychological well-being as the mediating variable.

Population, Sample, and Data Collection Process

The population of the research consists of nurses working at a state hospital in Türkiye. As of 2022, the number of nurses employed at the hospital is 450. In determining the sample size, a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, which are widely accepted standards in the social sciences, were taken into consideration¹⁸. In this context, the following formula proposed by Yazıcıoğlu and Erdoğan was used¹⁹:

$$n = \frac{N * t^{2*} (p*q)}{[d^2 * (N-1) + t^{2*} (p*q)]}$$

$$n = 450(1,96)^2 \times (0,50 \times 0,50) / [(0,05)^2 \times (450-1) + (1,96)^2 \times (0,50 \times 0,50)] = 207,5$$

As a result of the calculation, it was determined that a minimum sample size of 208 participants would be sufficient to conduct the study with a population of 450 individuals at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. Accordingly, a total of 270 individuals who agreed to participate in the study were reached, and the analyses were conducted based on these data.

Data collection was conducted using two different methods. Firstly, nurses were invited to participate in an online survey administered through Google Forms. Participation in the survey was based on voluntary consent. Since the desired sample size could not be reached through this method, printed questionnaires were subsequently distributed, and a total of 270 nurses provided data. Data were collected between February and March 2023.

Data Collection Instruments

The data for the research were collected using the survey method. The first part of the questionnaire included questions related to employees' demographic characteristics. In the other sections, the Ethical Climate Perception Scale (ECPS), the Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS), and the Organizational Identification Scale (OIS) were used. Ethical climate perception was measured using a one-dimensional scale consisting of nine items, developed by Schwepker et al.²⁰ and adapted by Ay et al.²¹ In the Turkish validity and reliability study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale was reported as .860. In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated as .855, indicating a high level of internal consistency. Psychological well-being was measured using an eight-item, one-dimensional scale developed by Diener et al.²² and adapted into Turkish by Telef²³. The Turkish adaptation study reported a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .800. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found to be .819, demonstrating that the scale is reliable for the current sample. Organizational identification was measured using a six-item, one-dimensional scale developed by Mael and Ashforth²⁴ and translated into Turkish by Tak and Aydemir²⁵. In the Turkish validity and reliability study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was reported as .870. In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated as .843, indicating satisfactory internal consistency.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from Cappadocia University Ethics Committee (Date: December 30, 2022; Number: E-64577500-050.99-33257). In addition, institutional permission for data collection was received on March 22, 2023.

Analysis of Data

The data for the research were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 25 (IBM SPSS Corp., Armonk, NY, USA) software. Prior to analysis, questionnaires containing missing or erroneous data were excluded, resulting in a final sample of 260 participants. To assess the validity and reliability of the scales used in the study, exploratory factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha coefficient calculations were performed.

A normality test was conducted to determine whether the data followed a normal distribution. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize the data and determine the mean and standard deviation values of the scales. To test the relationships between variables, a correlation analysis was conducted. The Process Macro software, developed by Hayes²⁶, was added to the SPSS program to test whether psychological well-being plays a mediating role in the impact of ethical climate perception on organizational identification. In the mediation test, Model 4 of the Process Macro was used. In mediation analysis, if the independent variable fails to significantly predict the dependent variable, "full mediation" can be inferred, and if there is a significant reduction in the predictive effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, "partial mediation" can be suggested.¹⁸

RESULTS

This section presents the findings of the study, beginning with the demographic characteristics of the participants, followed by validity and reliability analyses, descriptive statistics, and hypothesis testing results.

The descriptive characteristics of the participating nurses are presented in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, 57.9% of the nurses were female and 42.1% were male. In terms of age distribution, 20.2% were between the ages of 18 and 28, 58.6% between 29 and 39, 10.1% between 40 and 50, and 11.1% between 51 and 61. The majority of nurses (64.2%) were married, while 35.8% were single. Regarding institutional tenure, 8.8% had been employed for less than one year, 28.1% for one to five years, 15.8% for six to ten years, 15.4% for eleven to fifteen years, and 31.9% for fifteen years or more.

Validity and Reliability Analysis

To test the construct validity of the scales, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed. In terms of sample adequacy, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure should be 0.60 or higher, and the p-value obtained from Bartlett's Test of Sphericity should be statistically significant.²⁷ In the current study, the suitability of the data for factor analysis and sample adequacy were examined using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) criterion and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. In this regard, the results of factor analysis for ethical climate perception, psychological well-being and organizational identification scale were presented.

For the ethical climate perception scale used in the study, factor analysis was conducted to evaluate the construct validity and the adequacy of the variance explained in the

Table 1. Descriptive Characteristics of Nurses (n = 260)

Variable	n	%
Gender		
Female	151	57.9
Male	109	42.1
Age		
18-28	53	20.2
29-39	152	58.6
40-50	26	10.1
51-61	29	11.1
Marital Status		
Married	167	64.2
Single	93	35.8
Years of Employment		
<1 year	23	8.8
1-5 years	73	28.1
6-10 years	41	15.8
11-15 years	40	15.4
≥15 years	83	31.9

relevant variable. The KMO coefficient was found to be .914, and the Bartlett value was <.001. Therefore, the data were found to be sufficiently large for factor analysis. The factor structure of the scale with factor loading values above 0.45 was determined to be compatible with the literature and identified as a single dimension, explaining 54.066% of the total variance. The relevant values are presented in Table 2.

In the research, the validity and adequacy of explained variance of the psychological well-being scale were evaluated through factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was found to be .833, and the Bartlett's test value was <.001, indicating that the data structure is of sufficient size for factor analysis. The factor analysis with Varimax rotation revealed that the scale with factor loading values above 0.45 is consistent with the literature and determined to be unidimensional, explaining 44.686% of the total variance. The relevant values are presented in Table 2.

In the research, the validity and adequacy of explained variance of the organizational identification scale were evaluated through factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was found to be .835, and the Bartlett's test value was <.001, indicating that the data structure is of sufficient size for factor analysis. The factor analysis with Varimax rotation revealed that the scale with factor loading values above 0.45 is consistent with the literature and determined to be unidimensional, explaining 56.286% of the total variance. The relevant values are presented in Table 2.

To test the reliability of the scales, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of the scales were calculated. According to Nunnally²⁸, a value of .70 and above is considered to be

Table 2. Factor Analysis Results

No	Statements	Factor Loading
Ethical Climate Perception Scale		
1	The organization I work for has formal, written ethical rules.	.623
2	The top management of the organization has ensured that unethical behaviors are not tolerated under any circumstances.	.833
3	There are individuals with leadership qualities that guide employees to exhibit honest behaviors.	.767
4	Negative behaviors in the work environment are addressed promptly.	.794
5	The ethical rules of the organization I work for are strictly implemented.	.814
6	Ethical principles are supported by the company's policies.	.790
7	In the organization I work for, there is an environment that occasionally encourages undesirable behaviors.	-.196
8	The principles related to ethical values are strictly enforced in the organization I work for.	.811
9	If an employee in the organization engages in unethical behavior for their own benefit, they are immediately penalized.	.764
	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)	.914
	Bartlett's Test (Sig.)	<.001
	Total Explained Variance (%)	54.066
Psychological Well-Being Scale		
1	I lead a purposeful and meaningful life.	.699
2	My social relationships are supportive and satisfying.	.788
3	I am engaged and interested in my daily activities.	.796
4	I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others.	.560
5	I am skilled and competent in activities that are important to me.	.533
6	I am a good person and living a good life.	.702
7	I am optimistic about my future.	.676
8	People respect me.	.532
	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)	.833
	Bartlett's Test (Sig.)	<.001
	Total Explained Variance (%)	44.686
Organizational Identification Scale		
1	When someone criticizes the organization, I perceive it as a personal insult.	.675
2	I am deeply concerned about what others think about the organization.	.747
3	When the organization is discussed, I generally say 'we' instead of 'they'.	.786
4	The organization's successes are my successes.	.793
5	When someone praises the organization, I see it as a personal compliment.	.760
6	If there is a negative story about the organization in the media, I feel embarrassed.	.734
	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)	.835
	Bartlett's Test (Sig.)	<.001
	Total Explained Variance (%)	56.286

sufficient for the reliability of a scale. These Cronbach's Alpha values are .855 for the perception of ethical climate scale, .819 for the psychological well-being scale and .843 for the organizational identification scale.

Normality Test

A normality test was conducted on the data, and Skewness and Kurtosis values were examined, revealing that the values were between -1.5 and +1.5. According to Tabachnick and Fidell²⁷, the data was found to be normally distributed. Therefore, the prerequisite for conducting parametric tests in the research, namely normal distribution, has been met.

Descriptive Statistics

Mean and standard deviation values were calculated for the nurses' perceptions of ethical climate, psychological well-being, and organizational identification in order to determine their levels. The analysis results indicate that the nurses' levels of ethical climate perception, psychological well-being, and organizational identification are above average and can be considered as high. The respective values are presented in Table 3.

Hypothesis Testing

The findings of the correlation analysis conducted to determine the relationships between variables and

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

Scale Items	$\bar{X}$	SD
ECPS1	3.803	.061
ECPS2	3.580	.066
ECPS3	3.492	.067
ECPS4	3.250	.066
ECPS5	3.150	.073
ECPS6	3.573	.061
ECPS7	3.303	.067
ECPS8	3.223	.068
ECPS9	3.300	.070
PWBS1	5.034	.097
PWBS2	5.173	.096
PWBS3	5.046	.100
PWBS4	5.376	.085
PWBS5	5.369	.087
PWBS6	5.307	.088
PWBS7	4.696	.116
PWBS8	5.438	.082
OIS1	2.868	.070
OIS2	3.255	.069
OIS3	3.550	.064
OIS4	3.554	.065
OIS5	3.263	.067
OIS6	3.364	.066

SD, Standard Deviation; $\bar{X}$, Mean; ECPS, Ethical Climate Perception Scale; PWBS, Psychological Well-being Scale; OIS, Organizational Identification Scale

Table 4. Results of Correlation Analysis (N=260)

	Ethical Climate Perception	Psychological Well-being	Organizational Identification
Ethical Climate Perception	1		
Psychological Well-Being	.316**	1	
Organizational Identification	.379**	.200**	1

** $P < .001$

the directions of these relationships are presented in Table 4.

According to the correlation analysis, it was determined that there is a significant and positive relationship between ethical climate perception and psychological well-being ($r = .316$, $P < .001$); a significant and positive relationship between ethical climate perception and organizational identification ($r = .379$, $P < .001$); and a significant and positive relationship between psychological well-being and organizational identification ($r = .200$, $P < .001$). After observing significant relationships between variables, a mediation test was conducted. The results of the mediation model analysis are presented in Table 5.

Based on the analysis results, it was observed that ethical climate perception significantly predicted organizational identification ($R^2 = .144$; $\beta = .379$; $t = 6.578$; $P < .001$; 95% CI = .292- .541) and also significantly predicted psychological well-being ($R^2 = .100$; $\beta = .316$; $t = 5.358$; $P < .001$; 95% CI = .277- .599). The bootstrap analysis conducted to determine the direct and indirect effects in the mediating model being tested in this study indicated that when examining the impact of ethical climate perception on organizational identification, ($R^2 = .151$; $\beta = .351$; $t = 5.790$; $P < .001$; 95% CI = .254- .516), controlling for psychological well-being, the predictive effect of ethical climate perception on organizational identification became non-significant ($R^2 = .151$; $\beta = .089$; $t = 1.468$, $P = .143$; 95% CI = -.024- .165). Accordingly, it can be concluded that psychological well-being plays a full mediating role in the relationship between ethical climate perception and organizational identification. Therefore, hypotheses H1, H2, H3, and H4 are supported.

Table 5. Results of Mediation Analysis

	R ²	F	β	t	P	CI
Model 1						
Independent Variable→ Dependent Variable						
Ethical Climate Perception → Organizational Identification	.144	43.276	.379	6.578	<.001	.292- .541
Model 2						
Independent Variable→ Dependent Variable						
Ethical Climate Perception → Psychological Well-being	.100	28.712	.316	5.358	<.001	.277- .599
Model 3						
Independent Variable→ Dependent Variable						
Ethical Climate Perception → Organizational Identification	.151	22.812	.351	5.790	<.001	.254- .516
Psychological Well-being			.089	1.468	.143	-.024- .165
R ² , Coefficient of Determination; F, F-statistic; t, t-statistic; P,Probability value; CI, Confidence Interval						

DISCUSSION

The primary objective of this study was to examine the mediating role of psychological well-being in the relationship between ethical climate perception and organizational identification among nurses. Overall, the findings supported all proposed hypotheses, demonstrating that an ethical work environment is critically tied to nurses' mental health and their subsequent institutional loyalty.

Consistent with the first hypothesis (H1), ethical climate perception was found to have a positive and significant effect on organizational identification. This finding aligns with studies conducted among healthcare professionals and other occupational groups emphasizing the critical role of ethical climate in shaping employees' attitudes. For instance, DeConinck¹² and Teresi et al.¹³ demonstrated that ethical climate enhances organizational identification by fostering trust, fairness, and value congruence within organizations. Similarly, Zagenczyk et al.²⁹ reported a positive relationship between perceived ethical climate, perceived organizational support, and emotional organizational attachment. In the specific context of nursing practice, where professionals frequently face critical life-and-death decisions, perceiving the hospital as an ethical institution is paramount. When healthcare organizations prioritize transparent decision-making and fair processes, nurses feel a stronger alignment between their professional ethical values and the hospital's goals, thereby strengthening their emotional attachment and sense of belonging to the organization.

Confirming Hypothesis 2 (H2), it was observed that the ethical climate perception of the participants had a significant positive effect on their psychological well-being. From a psychological perspective, this aligns with previous findings suggesting that ethical work environments reduce stress and moral distress while promoting emotional safety and meaningfulness at work^{13,15}. Furthermore, when examining the broader literature, there is a positive relationship between ethical climate and job satisfaction.^{30,31} Yalçın and Macit³² conducted a study in a healthcare institution and found a negative and significant relationship between the level of psychological well-being and the intention to leave the job. Nurses, in particular, are frequently exposed to ethically complex and emotionally demanding situations. Therefore, working in an ethically supportive climate acts as a vital psychological buffer. It enhances their psychological resources, enabling them to cope more effectively with occupational stressors and moral dilemmas, ensuring that their attitude towards their job remains positive.

Supporting Hypothesis 3 (H3), the participants' psychological well-being was also found to have a significant positive effect on organizational identification. Looking at previous research in the literature, a study on healthcare workers showed that there is a significant and positive relationship between organizational commitment and psychological well-being.³³ Similarly, in the study conducted by Panaccio and Vandenberghe³⁴, a significant and positive

relationship was found between psychological well-being and organizational commitment. In the highly demanding environment of healthcare, nurses require substantial emotional bandwidth. When nurses maintain high levels of psychological well-being, they possess the internal strength needed to establish meaningful connections with their workplace. Consequently, a healthy psychological state acts as a foundation for nurses to fully internalize the hospital's mission and identify themselves as an integral part of the institution.

Finally, supporting Hypothesis 4 (H4), one of the most significant findings of the study is that psychological well-being fully mediated the relationship between ethical climate perception and organizational identification. This indicates that ethical climate perception influences organizational identification primarily through its impact on nurses' psychological states. As Bartels et al.³⁵ stated, in organizations where an ethical climate is dominant, ethical problems occur less frequently and are dealt with more effectively. Comparing this with Büte³⁶, who found that ethical climate has positive effects on organizational trust, it can be inferred that effectively handling ethical problems increases loyalty to ethical principles. This result extends previous research by empirically demonstrating the underlying mechanism linking ethical climate to organizational identification. In line with the social exchange and social identity perspectives, when nurses perceive their organization as ethical and fair, they are more likely to experience higher levels of psychological well-being, which in turn strengthens their identification with the organization. This finding suggests that ethical climate does not merely function as an organizational norm system, but also as a psychological resource. Therefore, healthcare organizations aiming to strengthen organizational identification should prioritize ethical management practices that actively support employees' psychological well-being, rather than focusing solely on structural or procedural ethical policies.

The full mediating role of psychological well-being indicates that ethical climate perception influences organizational identification primarily through its impact on nurses' psychological states. This result

extends previous research by empirically demonstrating the underlying mechanism linking ethical climate to organizational identification. In line with the social exchange and social identity perspectives, when nurses perceive their organization as ethical and fair, they are more likely to experience higher levels of psychological well-being, which in turn strengthens their identification with the organization. This finding suggests that employees' emotional and psychological experiences play a central role in transforming ethical organizational practices into positive attitudinal outcomes. Overall, the findings highlight the importance of ethical climate as a multidimensional construct that not only affects organizational outcomes directly, but also indirectly through psychological well-being. From the researchers' perspective, this indicates that organizational identification among nurses cannot be fully understood without considering their psychological well-being. Therefore, healthcare organizations aiming to strengthen organizational identification should prioritize ethical management practices that support employees' psychological well-being, rather than focusing solely on structural or procedural ethical policies.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. Firstly, this study was conducted specifically on healthcare workers and a small sample group. Expanding the sample group and conducting research in different sectors could provide valuable insights. Additionally, the study area could be expanded by including different variables related to the variables that constitute the focus of this research.

This study examined the mediating role of psychological well-being in the relationship between ethical climate perception and organizational identification among nurses. The findings demonstrated that ethical climate perception positively influences psychological well-being and organizational identification, and that psychological well-being fully mediates this relationship. These results indicate that nurses' identification with their organization is shaped not only by ethical organizational practices but also by their psychological experiences in the workplace.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that healthcare organizations should prioritize the development of an ethical climate that supports nurses' psychological well-being. Ethical management practices, transparent decision-making processes, and fair treatment may

enhance nurses' well-being, which in turn strengthens their organizational identification. This highlights the importance of integrating ethical policies with employee-centered well-being initiatives in healthcare settings.

Overall, this study contributes to a better understanding of how ethical climate operates through psychological mechanisms to influence organizational outcomes in nursing contexts. Future research may expand on these findings by examining different healthcare settings, employing longitudinal designs, or incorporating additional psychological variables to further clarify the mechanisms underlying organizational identification.

Ethics Committee Approval: Ethical approval was obtained from the Cappadocia University Ethics Committee (Date: December 30, 2022; Number: E-64577500-050.99-33257). In addition, institutional permission for data collection was received on March 22, 2023.

Informed Consent: The participant included in the study were informed about the study, and consent was obtained

Peer-review: Externally peer-reviewed.

Author Contributions: Concept -GS, SDÇ; Design- GS, SDÇ; Supervision- GS, SDÇ; Resources- GS, SDÇ; Data Collection and/or Processing- GS, SDÇ; Analysis and/or Interpretation- GS, SDÇ; Literature Search-SDÇ; Writing Manuscript- GS, SDÇ; Critical Review-GS.

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