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The Role of Transformational Leadership and Organizational Climate in Organizational Self-Esteem of Mashhad Firefighters

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Original Article

Abstract

INTRODUCTION: This study aimed to investigate the impact of transformational leadership and organizational climate on the organizational self-esteem of the Mashhad Fire Department.

METHODS: The present applied research is a descriptive survey. The statistical population of this study consists of all 210 firefighters in Mashhad fire headquarters. The sample size was calculated according to Morgan's table comprising 132 individuals selected through simple random sampling. Data collection was accomplished through three questionnaires: Bass and Avolio's (2000) Transformational Leadership Questionnaire (TLQ), Sussman and Deep's (1989) Organizational Climate Questionnaire, and Pierce et al.'s (1989) Organizational-Based Self-Esteem Questionnaire, whose validity and reliability were confirmed. The collected statistical data were analyzed within SPSS and Smart PLS software.

FINDINGS: Data analysis confirmed all research hypotheses. Transformational leadership has a direct impact on organizational self-esteem with a path coefficient of 0.62. The organizational climate has a direct impact on organizational self-esteem with a path coefficient of 0.63. Components of transformational leadership including idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration affect organizational self-esteem. Components of organizational climate including clarity of and agreement on organizational goals, clarity of and agreement on role, satisfaction with rewards, satisfaction with and agreement on procedures, and effectiveness of relations affect organizational self-esteem.

CONCLUSION: Managing directors ought to reinforce employees' self-esteem to improve the performance of employees and boost productivity in the organization. In this regard, they must exercise an appropriate style in dealing with employees, which is the transformational leadership style. Moreover, a decent organizational climate should be created to build and boost self-esteem in employees and consequently enrich their performance towards fulfilling organizational goals.

Keywords: Organizational Climate; Organizational Self-esteem; Transformational Leadership.

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Introduction

The research studies conducted in recent years demonstrate the significance of transformational leadership as a flourishing management method in modern organizations. Moreover, studies point to organizational climate as a crucial factor in the efficacy and productivity of organizations. In the present study, we intend to examine whether transformational leadership and organizational climate can be beneficial in improving organizational status through enhancing organizational self-esteem. The answer to this question is doubly critical for the present study's statistical population, i.e., firefighters whose self-esteem considerably influences their

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performance.

Self-esteem has been a concept of interest to numerous psychologists and investigators in the preceding few decades. It is undoubtedly among the more important personal, social, and psychological issues. In terms of antiquity, the topic of self-esteem is rooted in issues raised by scholars and philosophers of education in the past (1). Throughout the thousands of years of historical reports, the theories of philosophers and scholars have declared that for man, no proposition is more valuable than his judgment of himself (2). Self-esteem is the value we associate with ourselves and is our fundamental assessment of our value as human beings (3). Self-esteem is defined as the degree to which individuals consider themselves empowered, important, successful, and valuable (4). Organizational self-esteem reflects the value of intra-organizational "self-perception" that individuals display as members of the organization. Employees with high organizational self-esteem believe that they have a considerable and beneficial ability as a member of the organization (5). Self-esteem is a self-assessment that reflects a person's level of confidence in his or her abilities, importance, success, and value. Self-esteem is the general evaluation of one's value, and assessment of one's awareness of their ability, importance, and dignity in past experiences (2).

The basic concept of transformational leadership was introduced by Burns regarding his research on political leaders. Transformational leaders assist their followers to contemplate old issues from a fresh perspective and motivate them to strive beyond the ordinary. Transformational leaders instill in their followers to think beyond personal and individual goals and interests and to rather concentrate on bigger organizational, national, or global goals (6). The issue of transformational leadership was first raised by Downtown. In any case, its emergence as a substantial attitude to leadership began with the work by political sociologist James McGregor Burns titled "Leadership". In his work, Burns attempts to associate leadership as a role with compliance. He writes of leaders who were able to incite the motivations of followers resulting in successfully fulfilling the goals of followers and leaders (7). Bass and Avolio (1991) revealed that transformational leaders can enhance performance by encouraging and inspiring their followers and set higher expectations from their followers by establishing a sense of inspiration (8). Transformational leadership is a type of leadership in which leaders have divine gifts and provide spiritual motivation and particular attention to their followers and guide them by infiltrating their hearts (9). According to research studies, there are four components of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individual consideration, and intellectual stimulation (10).

The organizational climate can be defined as employees' perception of organizational events, actions, and behaviors. The process of understanding organizational climate illustrates how people detect unidentified intra-organizational issues and challenges independently and build a new framework of tools and objectives to use them (11). Climate distinguishes organizations from one another and accordingly influences the outcomes and activities of an organization. It can boost employee morale and motivation and influence the attitudes and actions of members. Organizational climate acts as a bridge. On one side of the bridge are the objective and tangible aspects of the organization, e.g., the structure, rules, and methods of leadership. On the other side are the morale and attitude of employees (12). Organizational climate is composed of the descriptive and discerning characteristics of an organization, e.g. structure and processes, interpersonal relationships, service compensation, employee behavior, performance expectation, and growth opportunities, which is stable over time, perceived by the members, and influential in their emotions and behavior (13).

Organizational climate is the general perception of employees about their work environment, which is influenced by many factors, e.g., formal and informal organization, employee personality, and the leadership method in the organization (14). For individual members within the organization, the climate is a set of traits and expectations that depict the overall pattern of organizational activities (15). The organizational climate is a stable quality experienced by employees, which influences their behavior and can be recognized as a part of the organizational environment (16). The organizational climate is the quality of the internal environment of the organization and is portrayed with certain characteristics such as openness,

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liveliness, calmness, informality, apathy, impersonality, hostility, hardness, and closeness (17). The organizational climate has a tangible impact on employee motivation. A satisfactory work environment increases employee morale, loyalty, and productivity (18). The organizational climate prompts employees to act innovatively. Rewarding and encouraging employees to innovate is vital to sustaining the innovation climate (19). Various factors influence the organizational climate: cultural, individual, social, material, physical, and organizational environments, ethical considerations, support, identity, and freedom (12).

Several research studies have been conducted on the present problem, some of which are referred to as research backgrounds. The results of the study by Shabani and Sohrabian Moghaddam (2019) showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between organizational climate and self-esteem. In the present study, we found that there is a direct and significant correlation between all five components of organizational climate including purpose, role, procedure, relationship, and reward with self-esteem (20). The study by Salarzehi et al. (2019) suggested that spiritual leadership has a positive and strong impact on organizational self-esteem (1). The study by Haji Sadeghi (2019) ascertained that organizational climate has a positive relationship with organizational self-esteem and job satisfaction (21). The study by Rahimi and Fesenduz (2015) revealed that spiritual leadership has a positive and statistically significant impact on workplace spirituality, organizational justice, and organizational self-esteem (22). In the study by Amiri (2013), the results obtained from the analysis exhibited that there is a positive and significant relationship between organizational self-esteem with organizational feedback and job adaptation and its dimensions (23). Gilani et al. (2015) conducted a study called "The Relationship between Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Self-Esteem". It confirmed the relationship between the three dimensions of spirituality in the workplace and organizational self-esteem (24). The study by Memarbashi et al. (2012) indicates that as the sense of unity and self-esteem increases, the rate of job performance increases as well (25). Lateral findings of the study by Nikpeyma et al. (2010) indicate that organizational climate can inflict self-esteem in employees (26). Fooladvand (2007) revealed that there is a statistically significant relationship between organizational climate and employees' mental health (27). A research study by Sholikhah et al. (2019) reflected that spiritual leadership has a positive and significant impact on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Moreover, spiritual leadership has a positive impact on organizational self-esteem (28). A study by Hunsaker (2017) suggested that spiritual leadership has a positive and significant impact on organizational citizenship behavior (29). A study by Arnetz et al. (2016) displayed no relationship between the dimensions of organizational climate and self-esteem (30). The results of the study by Haider et al. (2019) show that organizational self-esteem has a positive and significant impact on organizational citizenship behavior (31). Kark et al. (2003) reflected that transformational leadership styles can influence organizational innovation both directly and indirectly (32). In the present study, independent variables are transformational leadership and organizational climate, while the dependent variable is organizational self-esteem.

Materials and Methods

The present applied research is a descriptive survey. The statistical population of this study consists of all 210 firefighters in Mashhad fire headquarters. The sample size was calculated according to Morgan's table comprising 132 individuals selected through simple random sampling. Data collection was accomplished through three questionnaires: Bass and Avolio's (2000) Transformational Leadership Questionnaire (TLQ) (33), Sussman and Deep's (1989) Organizational Climate Questionnaire (34), and Pierce et al.'s (1989) Organizational-Based Self-Esteem Questionnaire (35). The experts' statements confirmed the content vclimatealidity of the questionnaires. Nonetheless, in addition to confirming the reliability of the questionnaires based on background research studies, Cronbach's alpha was calculated to evaluate the reliability of the questionnaires, the results of which are presented in the Table 1.

Given that for all variables Cronbach's alpha values of above 0.7, the tool is adequately reliable. Two methods of descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the research data. Descriptive statistics are used to

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purify the collected data and to summarize the statistical sample and research variables. In the descriptive statistics, demographic variables (age, gender, etc.) are explored and measures of central tendency, dispersion, and frequencies (mean, variance, and frequency charts, etc.) are calculated. Meanwhile, inferential statistics, relying on structural equations, analyze the data and test the hypotheses using Smart PLS software. In general, there are two types of measurement and structural models. The measurement model specifies how to measure a latent variable using two or more observable variables. In other words, it relates a set of observable variables to a smaller set of latent variables. The structural model shows the relationships between internal and external latent variables and provides the possibility to assess the direction and intensity of causal effects between these variables. Therefore, measurement models define which observable variables measure which latent variables. Moreover, structural models determine which independent variables affect which dependent variable. The coefficients in these diagrams are divided into two categories. The first category is the relationships between latent variables and observable variables, which are called factor loads. Based on factor loads, it can be determined which variable contributes more to the measurement of the relevant structure and which variable contributes less. In other words, a variable with a larger factor load has a greater share in the measurement of the relevant structure. Likewise, a variable with a smaller factor load has a smaller share. All coefficients are tested using t-statistic. This statistic is significant when its absolute value is more than 1.96. Considering the level of significance, the hypotheses are either rejected or accepted.

Table 1. Cronbach's alpha for the Transformational Leadership Questionnaire (TLQ)

Variable or Component	Questions	Number of Qs	Cronbach's Alpha
Transformational Leadership	1-20	20	0/90
Intellectual Stimulation	1-5	5	0/74
Idealized Influence	6-12	7	0/80
Inspirational Motivation	13-16	4	0/73
Individual Consideration	17-20	4	0/72
Organizational Climate	1-20	20	0/90
Clarity of and Agreement on Organizational Goals	1-4	4	0/74
Clarity of and Agreement on Role	5-8	4	0/70
Satisfaction with Rewards	9-12	4	0/76
Satisfaction with and Agreement on Procedures	13-16	4	0/71
Effectiveness of Relations	17-20	4	0/77
Organizational Self-Esteem	10	0/7	0/81

Table 2. Demographic Description

Age	Frequency	Percentage	Work Experience	Frequency	Percentage
20-25 years	9	6/8	< 5	48	36/4
26-30 years	15	11/4	6-10 years	50	37/9
31-35 years	49	37/1	11-15 years	24	18/2
35 <	59	44/7	15 <	10	7/6
Total	132	100	Total	132	100

Findings

Based on the data analysis, first descriptive statistics tables including demographic description and descriptive study of research variables, and then cases related to inferential statistics and tests of research hypotheses are presented.

According to the Table 2, it can be seen that 6.8% of the participants were 25-25 years old, 11.4% were 26-30 years old, 37.1% were 31-35 years old, and 44.7% were 35 ≤ years old. In addition, 36.6% of the participants had a service history of 5 years and less, 37.9% had a service history of 6 to 10 years, 18.2% had a service history of 11 to 15 years, and 7.6% had a service history of 15 years and more.

The Table 3 provides a descriptive study of research variables according to the opinions of 132 respondents selected from firefighters in Mashhad. It suggests that the mean score of

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opinions on organizational self-esteem is 3.86 and the dispersion equals 0.57. The mean score of opinions regarding organizational climate is equal to 2.74 and the dispersion is 0.48. The mean score of opinions on transformational leadership is 3.88 and the dispersion is equal to 0.47. The following evaluates the normality of the variables based on the statistical data obtained about the research variables.

According to the Table 4, since the skewness and kurtosis for all variables are in the range (–2, 2), we conclude that the data is normally distributed. Hence, the Pearson correlation coefficient between all research variables is presented in the Table 5.

Table 3. Descriptive study of research variables

Variable	Number	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Organizational Self-Esteem	132	2	5	3/86	0/57
Organizational Climate	132	1/35	۳/۸۰	2/74	0/48
Clarity of and Agreement on Organizational Goals	132	۰/۵۰	۳/۷۵	2/47	0/57
Clarity of and Agreement on Role	132	1/50	٤/۰۰	2/82	0/60
Satisfaction with Rewards	132	1/50	٤/۰۰	2/80	0/53
Satisfaction with and Agreement on Procedures	132	1/00	3/75	2/76	0/59
Effectiveness of Relations	132	1/50	3/75	2/86	0/53
Transformational Leadership	132	2/41	4/95	3/88	0/47
Intellectual Stimulation	132	2/60	4/80	3/81	0/51
Idealized Influence	132	2/29	5	3/82	0/52
Inspirational Motivation	132	2/50	5	4/02	0/56
Individual Consideration	132	2/25	5	3/86	0/61

Table 4. Normality Test of the Variables

Variable	Skewness	Kurtosis
Intellectual Stimulation	-0/05	-0/38
Idealized Influence	-0/18	-0/36
Inspirational Motivation	-0/21	-0/59
Individual Consideration	-0/75	-0/05
Transformational Leadership	-0/43	0/24
Clarity of and Agreement on Organizational Goals	-0/40	0/95
Clarity of and Agreement on Role	0/33	-0/35
Satisfaction with Rewards	-0/13	0/20
Satisfaction with and Agreement on Procedures	-0/76	0/34
Effectiveness of Relations	-0/44	0/08
Organizational Climate	-0/27	0/30
Organizational Self-Esteem	-0/51	0/48

Table 5. Correlation between transformational leadership and organizational climate and their components with organizational self-esteem

Variables	Organizational Self-Esteem		
	Number	Correlation Coefficient	Significance Level
Intellectual Stimulation	132	0/59**	0/001
Idealized Influence	132	0/46**	0/001
Inspirational Motivation	132	0/53**	0/001
Individual Consideration	132	0/53**	0/001
Transformational Leadership	132	0/61**	0/001
Clarity of and Agreement on Organizational Goals	132	0/51**	0/001
Clarity of and Agreement on Role	132	0/53**	0/001
Satisfaction with Rewards	132	0/55**	0/001
Satisfaction with and Agreement on Procedures	132	0/52**	0/001
Effectiveness of Relations	132	0/55**	0/001
Organizational Climate	132	0/62**	0/001

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The coefficients in this Table show that there is a relationship between transformational leadership and its components and organizational climate and its components with the organizational self-esteem of employees.

To test the hypotheses, we utilized structural equation modeling, path analysis, and Smart PLS software, the results of which are presented here:

The first main hypothesis

transformational leadership has a direct and significant impact on the organizational self-esteem of firefighters in Mashhad. The Figure 1 shows the path coefficients between the target variables which are reported and interpreted in the Table 6.

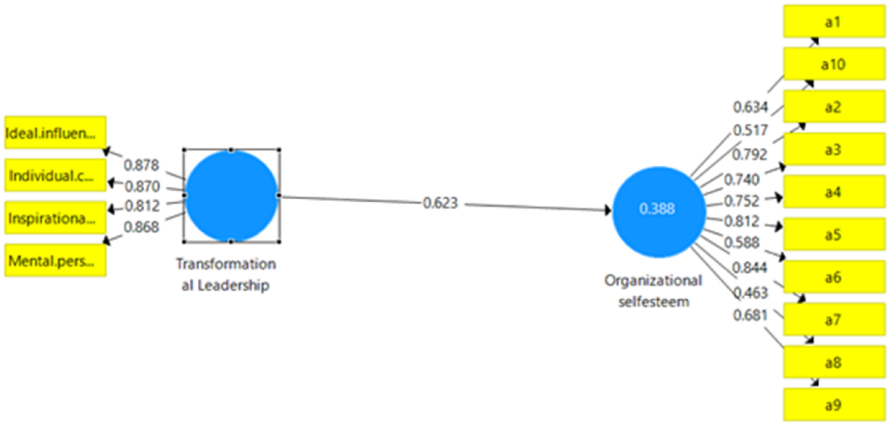

Figure 1. Path coefficient of transformational leadership on organizational self-esteem

Table 6. The direct impact of transformational leadership on organizational self-esteem

Path	Path Correlation	Standard Error	t-statistic	Significance Level	Result
Transformational Leadership → Organizational Self-Esteem	0/62	0/06	9/51	0/001	Confirmed

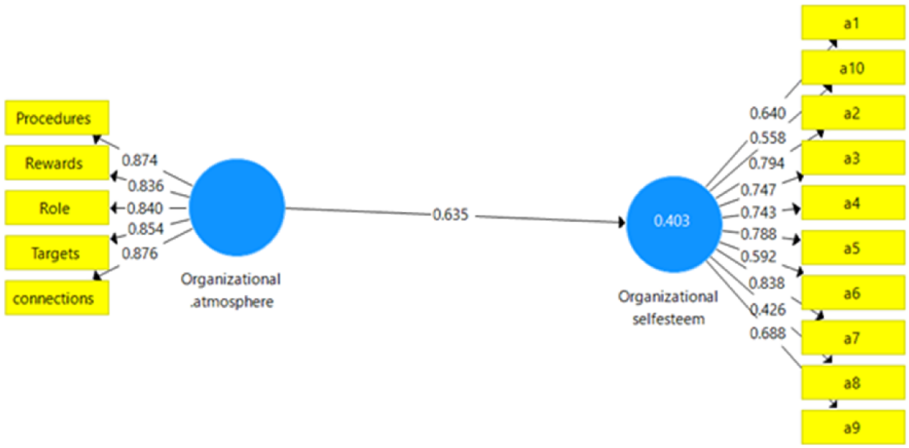

Figure 2. Path coefficient of organizational climate on organizational self-esteem

Table 7. The direct impact of organizational climate on organizational self-esteem

Path	Path Correlation	Standard Error	t-statistic	Significance Level	Result
Organizational Climate → Organizational Self-Esteem	0/63	0/07	9/80	0/001	Confirmed

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According to the results in the Table 6, transformational leadership has a direct impact on organizational self-esteem. Given that the significance level is < 0.01 and the t-statistic is > 1.96, we conclude with 99% confidence that increased organizational self-esteem leads to increased transformational leadership.

The second main hypothesis

organizational climate has a direct and significant impact on the organizational self-esteem of firefighters in Mashhad. The Figure 2 shows the path coefficients between the target variables which are reported and interpreted in the Table 7.

According to the results in the Table 7, the organizational climate has a direct impact on organizational self-esteem. Given that the significance level is < 0.01 and the t-statistic is > 1.96, we conclude with 99% confidence that increased organizational self-esteem leads to increased organizational climate.

Table 8. The impact of transformational leadership components on organizational self-esteem

Path	Path Correlation	Standard Error	t-statistic	Significance Level	Result
Intellectual Stimulation → Organizational Self-Esteem	0/60	0/06	9/94	0/001	Confirmed
Idealized Influence → Organizational Self-Esteem	0/48	0/09	5/37	0/001	Confirmed
Inspirational Motivation → Organizational Self-Esteem	0/55	0/06	8/65	0/001	Confirmed
Individual Consideration → Organizational Self-Esteem	0/57	0/05	10/61	0/001	Confirmed

Table 9. The direct impact of clarity and agreement of organizational goals on organizational self-esteem

Path	Path Correlation	Standard Error	t-statistic	Significance Level	Result
Clarity of and Agreement on Organizational Goals → Organizational Self-Esteem	0/52	0/08	6/88	0/001	Confirmed
Clarity of and Agreement on Role → Organizational Self-Esteem	0/57	0/05	9/98	0/001	Confirmed
Satisfaction with Rewards → Organizational Self-Esteem	0/58	0/06	9/5	0/001	Confirmed
Satisfaction with and Agreement on Procedures → Organizational Self-Esteem	0/55	0/06	9/13	0/001	Confirmed
Effectiveness of Relations → Organizational Self-Esteem	0/60	0/60	10/98	0/001	Confirmed

In the following, sub-hypotheses are tested. Several sub-hypotheses have been associated with the impact of transformational leadership components on organizational self-esteem, which is presented in the Table 8 to avoid research rhetoric.

Several sub-hypotheses have been associated with the impact of organizational climate components on organizational self-esteem, which is presented in the Table 9 to avoid research rhetoric.

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to investigate the impact of transformational leadership and organizational climate on organizational self-esteem. In this regard, two main hypotheses and nine sub-hypotheses have been proposed. According to the data collected from the statistical population (Mashhad Fire Department), the hypotheses were analyzed and tested. The data analysis results confirmed all the hypotheses. Transformational leadership has a direct impact on organizational self-esteem with a path coefficient of 0.62. Organizational climate has a direct impact on

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organizational self-esteem with a path coefficient of 0.63. The components of transformational leadership comprise intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and individual consideration which influence organizational self-esteem with path coefficients of 0.60, 0.48, 0.55, and 0.57, respectively. Components of organizational climate include clarity of and agreement on organizational goals, clarity of and agreement on role, satisfaction with rewards, satisfaction with and agreement on procedures, and effectiveness of relations which influence organizational self-esteem with path coefficients of 0.52, 0.57, 0.58, 0.55, and 0.60, respectively. On the one hand, hypothesis testing shows that transformational leadership and its components (intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and individual consideration) have a direct and significant impact on organizational self-esteem. The finding is consistent with the results of previous research studies, e.g., Salarzehi et al. (2019), Rahimi and Fesenduz (2015), Gilani et al. (2015), and Sholikhah et al. (2019). On the other hand, hypothesis testing indicates that the organizational climate and its components (clarity of and agreement on organizational goals, clarity of and agreement on role, satisfaction with rewards, satisfaction with and agreement on procedures, and effectiveness of relations) have a direct and significant impact on organizational self-esteem. The finding is inconsistent with the findings of Arnetz et al. (2016) and consistent with the findings of Shabani and Sohrabian Moghadam (2019), Nikpeyma et al. (2010), Fooladvand (2007), and Haji Sadeghi (2019). Given that transformational leadership has a positive and significant impact on organizational self-esteem, it is suggested that transformational leaders play their crucial part by setting organizational goals, clarifying what is expected of employees, depicting the vision of a desirable future, and encouraging the employees to achieve it. Leaders must build a sense of hope in employees and motivate them to maintain a positive attitude towards themselves and the organization and to consider themselves valuable for the organization. Followers with higher levels of self-esteem are delighted with their work and career and never accept failure at work. Furthermore, once the firefighters feel that they are taken care of, their needs are met, their efforts are appreciated, and that they have an essential and valuable place in society and the organization, their self-esteem will boost and they will dedicate themselves to the organization and accomplishing organizational goals. To build a favorable climate and environment for work, it is suggested that leaders provide conditions for employees to do their job successfully by updating their knowledge, participating in training workshops, and getting acquainted with other valid methods. It is suggested that firefighters establish a better climate in the organization by holding regular meetings and encouraging employees to participate, conveying problems and shortcomings in the workplace, and coming up with solutions to cope with them based on consultation, consensus, and execution. It is suggested that firefighters provide a healthier and friendlier atmosphere to improve the self-esteem of employees working in the organization, which is vital for additional efficiency and effectiveness of the organization.

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