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Organizational Climate and Workplace Deviance: A Bibliometric and Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

This article presents a systematic and bibliometric review of 267 peer-reviewed publications (2020–2025) to examine how organizational climate relates to workplace deviance. Using PRISMA-guided screening and dual bibliometric–content synthesis, publication trends, research clusters and core constructs across the field were mapped out. The review shows that organizational climate facets such as ethical climate, organizational justice, organizational support, benevolent climate, among others anchor the literature, alongside deviance forms such as counterproductive work behavior, incivility and aggression. Substantively, positive climates consistently align with lower deviance and better individual and organizational outcomes, while hostile or politicized climates are associated with elevated deviance. Yet constructs and measures are applied unevenly across studies, limiting cumulation and cross-study comparability. Results also highlight moral disengagement, emotional exhaustion and psychological contract breach as central mediating mechanisms and moderators such as leadership styles, cultural values and resilience. The review unifies existing evidence, strengthens theoretical clarity, and proposes future research using longitudinal, multilevel, and context-aware methods.

Keywords: Organizational Climate, Organizational Environment, Workplace Deviance Deviant, Workplace Behavior

1. Introduction

The relationship between organizational climate and workplace deviance has increasingly attracted scholarly attention, reflecting the growing recognition that the social and psychological environment within organizations significantly shapes employee behavior, performance, and ethical conduct. Since the seminal works on organizational climate in the mid-20th century, this construct has evolved into a multidimensional framework encompassing employees' shared perceptions of organizational policies, practices, and procedures [1]. According to Vedadi et al., organizational climate shapes the shared perceptions through which employees interpret their responsibilities, evaluate the fairness and clarity of organizational policies and determine the appropriateness of particular courses of action [1]. A supportive and transparent climate encourages individuals to view their roles as meaningful and aligned with organizational values, fostering cooperation, trust, and constructive communication with colleagues. This, in turn, reinforces adherence to institutional norms and ethical standards, promoting behaviors that advance collective objectives. Conversely, climates characterized by ambiguity, perceived injustice, or a lack of managerial support can distort employees' role perceptions, weaken interpersonal trust, and erode commitment to organizational norms. Such environments may inadvertently legitimize or rationalize deviant acts, whether subtle, such as withholding effort, or overt, such as violating procedural rules that undermine organizational performance and cohesion [2].

Workplace deviance defined as voluntary behavior that violates organizational norms and threatens the well-being of the organization or its members remains a persistent concern for both scholars and practitioners [3]. This construct encompasses a range of counterproductive work behaviors (CWB), from minor acts such as time-wasting and incivility to severe misconduct including theft, fraud, and sabotage. The interplay between organizational climate and workplace deviance is complex, shaped by factors such as perceived justice, leadership styles, ethical norms, and

the availability of supportive resources [4]. Favorable climates characterized by trust, fairness, and support are often associated with lower levels of deviance, while climates perceived as unfair, stressful, or neglectful may amplify deviant tendencies [5].

Despite the substantial body of research on both constructs, there remains a lack of integrated evidence that consolidates the fragmented findings into a coherent theoretical and empirical understanding. Studies often diverge in their conceptualizations of organizational climate (example: ethical climate, safety climate, service climate) and workplace deviance (example; interpersonal vs. organizational deviance), complicating cross-study comparisons and the identification of consistent patterns [6-8]. Moreover, the mechanisms through which organizational climate influences deviant behavior such as the mediating roles of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and moral disengagement, and moderating effects of leadership, cultural context, and individual differences are frequently explored in isolation, leaving gaps in understanding the full spectrum of influencing factors [9,10].

Bibliometric and systematic literature reviews offer a powerful approach to address these gaps by mapping the intellectual structure, thematic evolution, and methodological trends within this research domain. While narrative reviews have examined subsets of this literature, few have employed a combined bibliometric and systematic methodology to provide a comprehensive synthesis of the field. This is particularly relevant given the global diversity in organizational climates and the varying prevalence and forms of workplace deviance across cultural, economic, and institutional contexts [11]. Without such an integrated approach, it remains challenging to trace how scholarly conversations have evolved, identify underexplored mediators and moderators, and assess methodological robustness across studies.

Accordingly, this study undertakes a bibliometric and systematic literature review to examine the intersection of organizational climate and workplace deviance. The objectives are threefold:

i. 1 to map the intellectual and thematic structure of existing research, identifying influential authors, countries, journals, and research clusters;
ii. 2 to synthesize the empirical evidence on mediating and moderating variables that shape the organizational climate–workplace deviance relationship; and
iii. 3 to uncover methodological patterns and gaps that can inform future research agendas. By integrating quantitative bibliometric mapping with qualitative systematic synthesis, the study contributes to theory-building, practical interventions, and policy guidelines aimed at fostering positive organizational climates that mitigate deviant behavior.

The contribution of this review is threefold. First, it presents the first comprehensive bibliometric and systematic analysis of the organizational climate–workplace deviance nexus, addressing a gap in consolidated evidence. Second, it examines the full range of mediators and moderators identified in the literature, thereby enhancing theoretical clarity. Third, it highlights methodological limitations and proposes directions for advancing scholarly inquiry in diverse organizational and cultural settings. Collectively, these contributions provide valuable insights for academics, practitioners, and policymakers seeking to align organizational climate strategies with the goal of reducing deviance and promoting ethical, productive workplaces.

This paper addresses the following research questions:

i. What are the intellectual, thematic, and geographic trends in the literature examining the relationship between organizational climate and workplace deviance?
ii. How have mediating mechanisms been conceptualized and examined in linking organizational climate to workplace deviance?
iii. To what extent are moderators recognized in this relationship, and what gaps remain in understanding contextual influences?

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 outlines the methodology for the bibliometric and systematic review. Sections 3 and 4 present the results of the bibliometric mapping and systematic synthesis, respectively. Section 5 offers a future research agenda, and Section 6 concludes.

2. Methodology

This study adopts a combined bibliometric and systematic literature review (SLR) approach to comprehensively examine the intellectual structure, thematic evolution, and methodological patterns in the literature on organizational climate and workplace deviance. The systematic review component follows a structured and replicable process in line with the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines to ensure transparency, rigor, and replicability in identifying, screening, and synthesizing relevant peer-reviewed studies.

The bibliometric review complements this by mapping publication trends, key authors, contributing institutions, and co-occurrence networks, providing a macro-quantitative overview of the field's evolution over time. The integration of both methods enables a dual-layer analysis: a macro-level bibliometric mapping to identify the intellectual and geographic landscape of research on organizational climate and workplace deviance, and a micro-level qualitative synthesis to uncover mediating and moderating mechanisms, conceptual frameworks, and methodological gaps. Consistent with the approaches of Mio et al. and Pizzi et al., this integration strengthens the capacity to identify thematic clusters, emerging research areas, and underexplored intersections between organizational climate and deviant workplace behavior [12,13].

The review follows a three-stage process:

i. Formulation of research objectives which is consistent with defining the scope, inclusion/exclusion criteria, and guiding research questions.
ii. Execution of systematic and bibliometric data collection and screening which involves identifying, retrieving, and filtering studies according to predefined search protocols.

iii. Analysis and synthesis of findings which involves employing bibliometric mapping and thematic coding to identify patterns, gaps, and future research directions.

2.1. Systematic Literature Review Methodology

In line with best practices (Following best practices for SLRs, Scopus was chosen as the primary database due to its extensive coverage of high-impact, peer-reviewed journals in management, psychology, and organizational studies [12,13]. To ensure credibility and minimize bias, the search results from Scopus were cross-verified using Web of Science, JSTOR and Google Scholar.

The systematic search was conducted in July 2025, covering the period 2000–2025 to capture both foundational and contemporary perspectives on organizational climate and workplace deviance. This timeframe reflects the steady growth of research in organizational behavior, ethics, and counterproductive work behaviors over the past two decades. Boolean search strings combined key terms for organizational climate and workplace deviance, including related constructs: (organizational climate OR organisational climate OR organizational culture OR work environment OR workplace climate) AND (workplace deviance OR counterproductive work behavior OR unethical behavior OR workplace incivility OR abusive supervision OR employee misconduct OR workplace aggression). This resulted in an initial retrieval of 1,029 articles. After applying filters (business, management, and social science subject areas; journal articles only; English language), duplicates and irrelevant entries were eliminated. Duplicates and incomplete entries were removed, followed by title and abstract screening. Articles were excluded if they were:

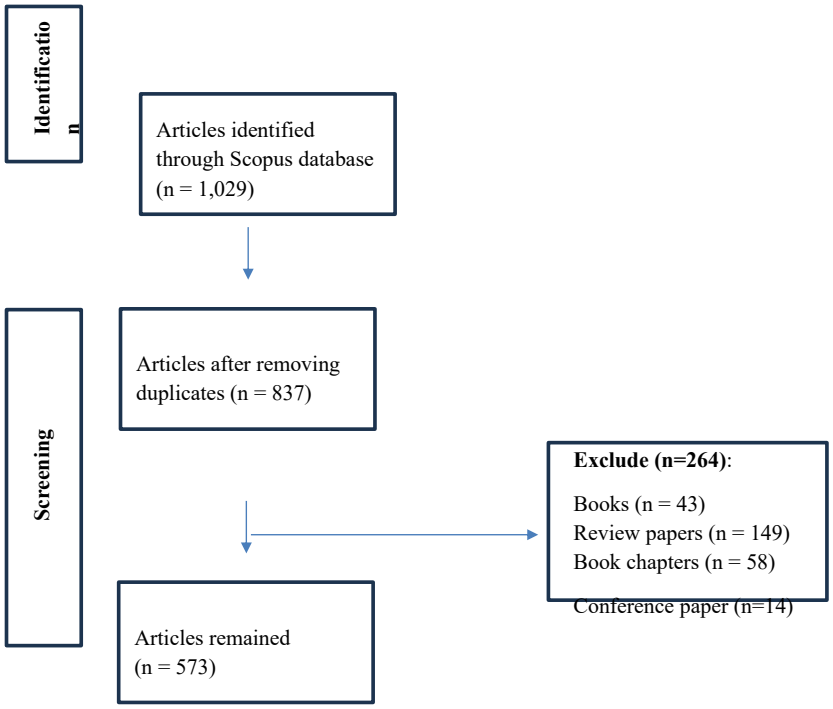
- non-SSCI indexed papers (n = 102)
- Out of research purpose: example: studies unrelated to organizational or workplace contexts, or using "climate" and "deviance" in unrelated senses (n = 105)
- Book (n = 43)
- Book chapters (n = 58)
- Review studies (systematic reviews, literature reviews, or secondary studies) (n = 149)
- Conference papers and abstracts without full text (n = 52)
- Non-empirical or purely conceptual (n = 99)

After exclusion, a final sample of 267 articles was retained for bibliometric and content analysis. Each article was read thoroughly and tagged using open coding. Similar to the approach adopted by Pizzi et al. and Caputo et al., each article was read in full and coded using open coding to capture:

- Type of organizational climate examined (e.g., ethical climate, safety climate)
- Type of workplace deviance (e.g., interpersonal, organizational)
- Mediators and moderators investigated
- Theoretical frameworks used
- Geographic and sectoral context.
- Research design and methodology

This flexible coding approach reduced the bias of rigid taxonomies while ensuring that thematic nuances were captured, enabling a richer interpretation of the literature [13].

Figure 1 presents the systematic selection process for the study, outlining a step-by-step flow from initial database search and duplicate removal through to screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion of studies for review.



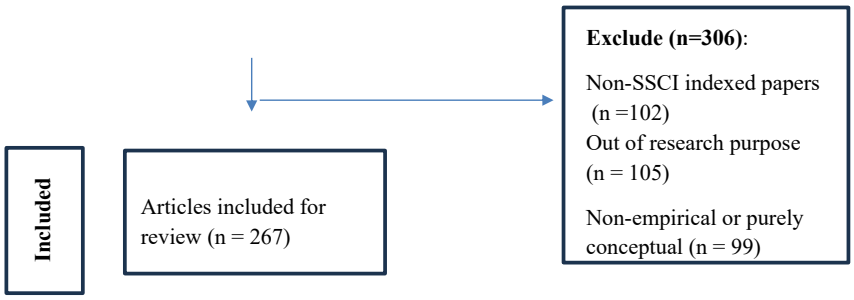


Figure 1: The Systematic Selection Process for the Study

2.2. Sample Analysis

Descriptive statistics and frequency distributions were generated using Microsoft Excel, a tool preferred in previous SLR studies. The analysis captured:

- Geographic spread of publications
- Country classification by income level
- Top publishing journals and their rankings
- Dominant theoretical frameworks
- Methodological approaches used
- Key research focus (SHRM and SDGs)

Beyond statistical synthesis, thematic content analysis was also carried out on the 81 articles to uncover emerging patterns and research gaps relating to the intersection of SHRM and the SDGs. Particular attention was paid to how HRM strategies contribute to sustainable development through the influence of mediators and moderators.

2. 3. Sample Analysis

Microsoft Excel, the instrument of choice for earlier SLR research, was used to create descriptive statistics and frequency distributions. The analysis captured:

- Geographic spread of publications
- Country classification by income level
- Top publishing journals and their rankings
- Dominant theoretical frameworks
- Methodological approaches used
- Key research focus

In order to identify new trends and research gaps on the relationship between organizational climate and workplace deviance, thematic content analysis was also performed on the 267 articles in addition to statistical synthesis. The role that mediators and moderators play in the relationship between the two variables under study was given special consideration.

3. Bibliometric Analysis

3.1. Sample Statistics

In this study, bibliometric techniques were applied to 267 systematically selected publications on organizational climate and workplace deviance, including related constructs such as organizational culture, work environment, counterproductive work behavior, unethical conduct, workplace incivility, and abusive supervision. These articles, published between 2020 and 2025, capture both foundational contributions that shaped early theoretical discourse and contemporary perspectives that reflect current empirical and conceptual advancements in the field. The bibliometric mapping provides insights into the evolution of scholarly interest on the subject matter which illustrates the growth trajectory of the field and identifies the most influential authors, journals among others contributing to its development.

3.2. Geographic Distribution of Publications

Table 1 presents the results on publication by country, while Table 2 shows the top 4 contributing countries. The results indicate that the United States leads with 39 papers, followed closely by India and China with 30 studies each. Pakistan, United Kingdom, Canada and Australia recorded 18, 15, 13 and 10 studies respectively. Countries like Japan, South Africa, Romania, Germany among others, also contributed, though marginally. The data indicates that research on the topic is heavily concentrated in a few leading economies. The underrepresentation of studies in countries, especially in Africa, the Middle East, and parts of Latin America may limit the diversity of perspectives and the applicability of findings in contexts with different economic, cultural, or environmental conditions.

Country	Frequency	Percentage
United States	39	14.61
India	30	11.24
China	30	11.24
Pakistan	18	6.74
United Kingdom	15	5.62
Canada	13	4.87
Australia	10	3.74
Turkey	9	3.37
Indonesia	8	3.00
Portugal	5	1.87
Taiwan	5	1.87
Spain	5	1.87
Netherlands	5	1.87
South Korea	4	1.50
Iraq	4	1.50
Malaysia	4	1.50
Poland	4	1.50
Saudi Arabia	3	2.47
Norway	3	2.47
France	3	1.23
Brazil	3	1.23
Belgium	3	1.23
UAE	3	1.23
South Africa	3	1.23
Jordan	3	1.23
New Zealand	3	1.23
Cyprus, Romania, Jordan, Nigeria, Germany, Lebanon, Bangladesh, Egypt, Iran.	2 (Each)	0.75 (Each)
Others (1 publication each)	20	7.49
Total	267	100

Table 1: Publication by Country

Country	Articles	Region
United States	39	North America
China	30	Asia
India	30	Asia
Pakistan	18	Asia
United Kingdom	15	Europe

Table 2: Top 5 Countries by Publication

3.2.1. Classification of Countries into Levels of Development

Table 3 presents the geographic distribution of publications contributing to the study's focus. The analysis reveals a strong presence of high-output countries, with the United States leading at 39 publications (14.61%), followed by India and China with 30 publications each (11.24%). Other notable contributors include Pakistan (6.74%), the United Kingdom (5.62%), and Canada (4.87%). Collectively, these six countries account for over half of the total output.

The data also show that emerging economies, particularly from Asia such as India, China, Pakistan and Indonesia play a significant role

in shaping the discourse, reflecting increasing research capacity and interest in the field. Developed countries from North America, Europe, and Oceania also contribute substantially, reflecting their established research infrastructure and global academic reach. However, minimal contributions from less developed countries in Africa and Latin America, highlight a critical gap in representation.

Classification	Countries	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Developed economies	Spain, Austria Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Netherlands, United States, Canada, South Korea, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Norway, France, Belgium, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, Finland, Ireland, Japan, Slovakia.	126	47.19
Emerging economies	China, India, Malaysia, Poland, United Arab Emirates, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Brazil, Indonesia, Taiwan, Lebanon, Czech Republic, Oman, Hong Kong, Macao China.	115	43.07
Developing economies	Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nigeria, Ghana, Mozambique, Thailand, Nepal, Ethiopia, Viet Nam, Serbia, Cyprus, Romania, Jordan, Egypt, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago	26	9.74
Total		267	100

Table 3: Classification of Countries into Level Development

3.3. Top Publications by Journals

Table 4 presents the top 10 journals contributing to the body of literature examined in this study. Journal of Business Ethics and International Journal of Conflict Management jointly lead the rankings, each with 13 articles over the review period. They are followed by Journal of Organizational Behavior (9 articles) and Personnel Review (8 articles). Several other journals, including International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management and International Journal of Hospitality Management, contributed 7 articles each, while Journal of Organizational Effectiveness published 6. The temporal trend indicates steady publication activity across the years, with notable peaks in 2021 and 2025, suggesting growing interest in the subject matter in both early and recent phases of the study period.

Year	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
2020	11		1	1	1			1		
2021	14	4	2			2				
2022	3	2	1	1	2			1		1
2023	2	3	1	4	1	1	1		1	1
2024	1	2	1	1	1	2	2		2	1
2025		2	2			2	2	3	2	2
Total	31	14	8	7	5	7	5	5	5	5

Table 4: Top 10 Contributing Journals

Note: (1) Journal of Business Ethics, (2) International Journal of Conflict Management, (3) Journal of Organizational Behavior, (4) Personnel Review, (5) International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, (6) International Journal of Hospitality Management, (7) Journal of Organizational Effectiveness, (8) Evidence-based HRM, (9) Cogent Business and Management, (10) Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal.

3.3.1. Journal Ranking

As shown in Table 5, according to the ABS Academic Journal Guide, 20% of the top ten journals fall within the 4-star category, indicating a preference for top ranked journals. Additionally, 40% of these journals are ranked 3-star, representing moderately established and respected platforms with consistent academic impact and recognition. The presence of 2-star journals at 30%, demonstrates that a significant portion of the research has been published in lower-tier journals. Only 10% of the publications appeared in 1-star journal.

Journal Ranking	Frequency	Percentage (%)
4-star	2	20
3-star	4	40
2-star	3	30
1-star	1	10
Total	**10**	**100.00**

Table 5: Contributing Journals by Ranking

3.4. Year-Wise Publication of Articles on SHRM

Figure 2 shows the yearly distribution of publications from 2020 to 2025. The year 2025 records the highest share of publications at 25%%, reflecting a peak in scholarly engagement with the topic. This is followed closely by 2024 (22%) and 2023 (16%), together accounting for the majority of contributions within the review period. Cumulatively, these three years represent 63% of the total output, indicating a concentrated surge of academic activity in the recent past.

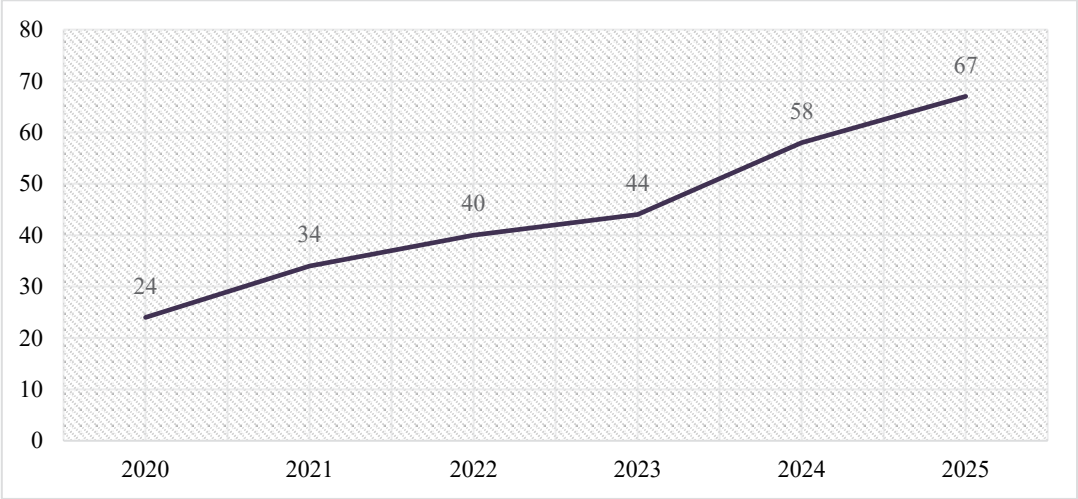


Figure 2: Publication by Year

3.5. Methods/Approach

As can be seen in Figure 3, 74% of the studies used quantitative techniques, which dominated the methodological landscape. Regression analysis, surveys, and structural equation modelling were among them. Of the sample, 14% were qualitative research (such as interviews and case studies) and 12% were mixed-method methods. The over-reliance on quantitative designs emphasises the need for more interpretive, context-rich techniques to better understand how organisational climate and mechanisms function in practice, especially in situations that have received little research.

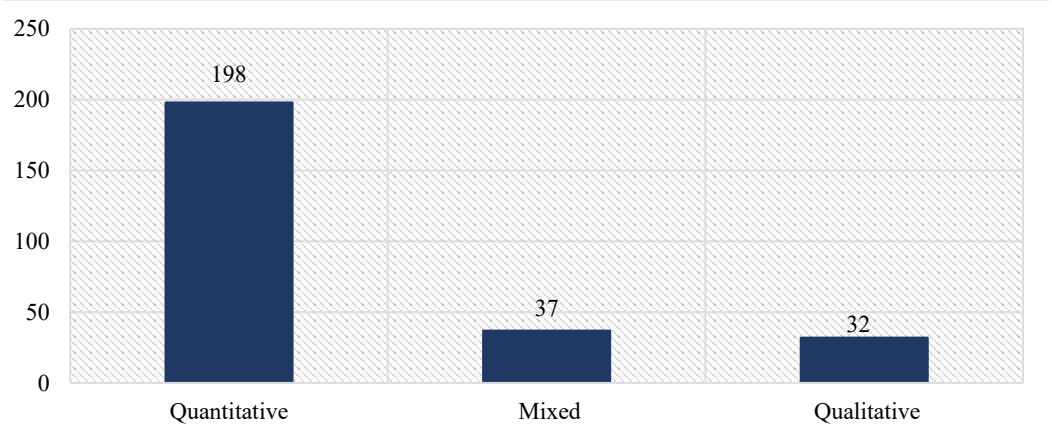


Figure 3: Methods

3.6. Organizational Focus

Figure 4 presents the organizational focus of the studies reviewed. The business and corporate sector (51.31%) was the most examined context, indicating strong research interest in private sector organizations. This was followed by healthcare institutions (12.73%) and the public sector and government organizations (6.74%). Educational institutions accounted for 6.37% of the studies, while manufacturing and industry represented 5.62%. Research in hospitality and tourism (4.12%), finance and banking (1.50%), and technology and IT (0.75%) was comparatively limited.

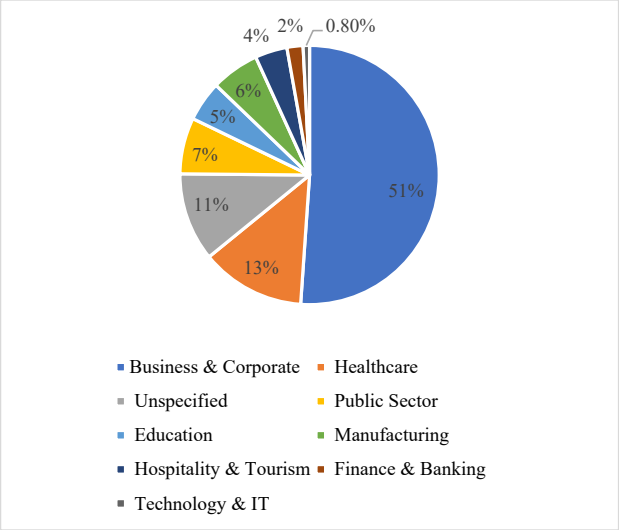


Figure 4: Organizational Focus

3.7. Top Contributing Theories

Table 6 lists the theoretical frameworks most frequently applied in the selected studies. The analysis of contributing theories reveals that the majority of studies (79.03%) did not explicitly state an underpinning theoretical framework in their abstracts, which may limit the theoretical grounding and comparability of findings across the literature. Among the specified theories, the Conservation of Resources Theory (7.49%) and Social Exchange Theory (5.24%) emerged as the most frequently applied, reflecting their strong relevance to understanding workplace behaviors, resource allocation, and organizational dynamics. Other notable frameworks included the Transformational Leadership Theory (2.62%), Job Demands-Resources Model (1.12%), and Social Identity Theory (1.12%). The relatively low diversity of explicitly cited theories suggests an opportunity for future research to incorporate a broader range of conceptual lenses to enrich explanations and strengthen the theoretical rigor of studies in this domain.

Theories	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Conservation of resources theory	21	7.49
Social exchange theory	15	5.24
Transformational leadership theory	7	2.62
Job-Demands-Resources model	3	1.12
Social identity theory	3	1.12
Self-determination theory	2	0.75
Servant leadership theory	2	0.75
Theory of planned behavior	1	0.37
Resource-based view	1	0.37
Equity theory	1	0.37
Unspecified	211	79.80
Total	**267**	**100**

Table 6: Most Contributing Theories

3.8. Top 10 Cited Authors

Table 7 presents the top 10 most cited authors in the reviewed literature. The citation analysis was based on the frequency of citations recorded in Scopus for each article. This ranking highlights the most influential contributions shaping the discourse within the study's thematic scope.

The most cited paper is by Kuenzi et al., which examines the creation of an ethical organizational environment through the interplay of ethical leadership, ethical climate, and unethical behavior, with 191 citations [14]. This foundational work underscores the critical role of ethical leadership in fostering organizational integrity.

Authors (year)	Paper title	Journal	Total citations	Year
Kuenzi et al.	Creating an ethical organizational environment: The relationship between ethical leadership, ethical climate and unethical behavior.	Personnel Psychology	191	2020
Wang et al.	Relationships among workplace incivility, work engagement, and job performance.	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights	114	2020
Wang et al.	Not All Followers Socially Learn from Ethical Leaders: The Roles of Followers' Moral Identity and Leader Identification.	Journal of Business Ethics	105	2021
Graham et al.	Egoistic norms, organizational identification, and unethical pro-organizational behavior: The moderating role of leader ethical leadership.	Human Relations	91	2020
Zhao et al.	Doing It Purposely? Mediation of Moral Disengagement in the Relationship Between Workplace Ostracism and Counterproductive Work Behavior.	Journal of Business Ethics	86	2022
Carpenter et al.	Unit-Level Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB): A Multi-Level Examination of Group Climate and Organizational Citizenship Behavior.	Journal of Management	78	2021
Lata & Chaudhary	Workplace Spirituality and Experienced Incivility: Moderating Role of Job Resources.	Journal of Business Ethics	66	2021
Said & Tanova	Workplace bullying in the hospitality industry: A moderated mediation model of resource depletion and job performance	International Journal of Hospitality Management	65	2021
Shewazy	Current workplace issues and behaviours in tourism and hospitality	Current Issues in Tourism	63	2022
De Hoogh et al.	Showing one's true colors: Leader Machiavellianism, leader-member exchange, and follower outcomes.	Journal of Organizational Behavior	62	2021

Table 7: Top 10 Cited Research Authors

The second most cited is Wang & Chen, whose article on workplace incivility, work engagement and job performance published in Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights has received 114 citations, offering significant insights into how workplace dynamics influence employee outcomes [15]. Wang et al. follow closely with 105 citations for their study in Journal of Business Ethics, which investigates how followers' moral identity and leader identification shape learning from ethical leaders [16,17]. Graham et al., with 91 citations, contribute important findings on how leader ethical leadership moderates the relationship between egoistic norms, organizational identification, and unethical pro-organizational behavior [18].

Other notable works include Zhao et al. with 86 citations and Ye et al. with 82 citations [19]. Contributions from Carpenter et al., Lata & Chaudhary, Said & Tanova, and Shehawy also make up the top 10 list [20-23].

3.9. Organizational Climate Antecedents, Practices, Mediators, Moderators and Outcomes

Figure 5 illustrates organizational climate as both a safeguard and a catalyst in shaping workplace deviance, highlighting its dual role in either curbing or enabling counterproductive behaviors.

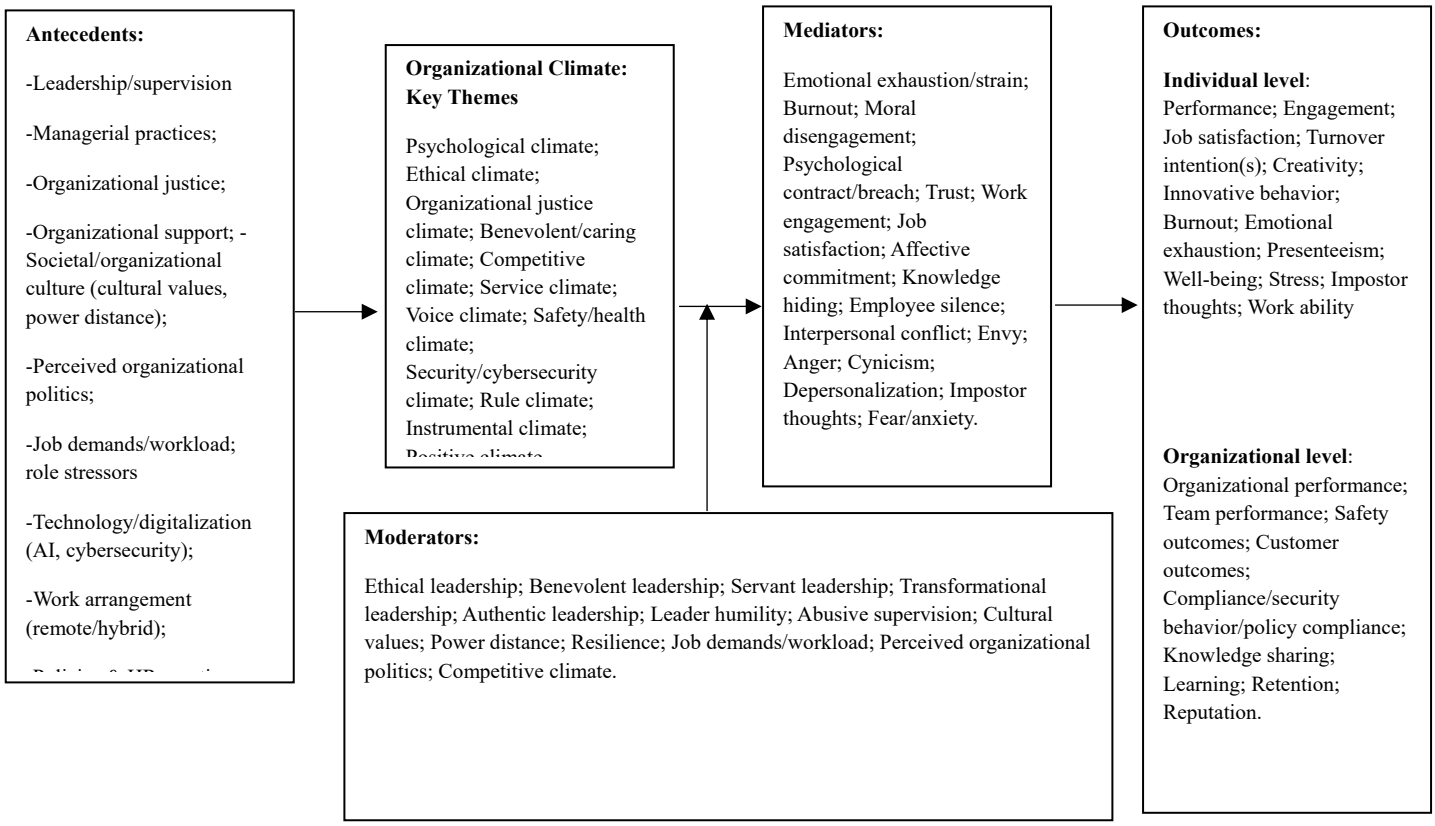


Figure 5: Example of Antecedents, Moderators, Mediators and Outcomes of Organizational Climate

3.9.1. Antecedents of Organizational Climate

The review identified antecedents at multiple levels. At the organizational level, leadership emerged as the most critical driver, shaping norms, ethical conduct, and employee behavior. Strong leadership often set the tone for climate by influencing decision-making, supervisory practices, and overall direction.

Closely related, the work environment and organizational culture played a pivotal role, with factors such as workplace conditions, support structures, and cultural norms guiding how employees perceive fairness, safety, and belonging within their organizations. Other organizational antecedents included support and trust, employee relations and ethics and values. Structures, policies, and formalized HR practices, though less frequently emphasized, were also important levers for reinforcing climate.

At the individual level, antecedents such as responses to job demands and stressors, perceptions of fairness and justice, and expectations embedded in the psychological contract were highlighted. Employees' experiences of workload, equity, and recognition shaped their sense of climate and contributed to either positive engagement or workplace deviance.

3.9.2. Key Themes of Organizational Climate

Several key thematic areas of organizational climate that shape employee behavior and organizational outcomes were identified. These include ethical and leadership climate, supportive and trust-based climate, fairness and justice orientation, innovation and learning culture, employee well-being and engagement, and performance-driven climate.

For example, in the domain of ethical and leadership climate, several studies emphasized the role of ethical leadership in fostering climates that discourage deviance and promote organizational integrity. Leaders set the tone through fairness, transparency, and value-driven actions, which create trust among employees and reduce the likelihood of counterproductive behavior. Supportive and trust-based climates were also consistently identified as critical.

Studies highlight that when organizations invest in psychological safety, social support and trust, employees are more likely to feel secure, valued and motivated to engage positively in their work. A recurring theme is the importance of fairness and justice orientation. Studies frequently noted that perceptions of equity in resource distribution, decision-making and interpersonal treatment significantly influence the climate. When fairness is prioritized, employees reciprocate with commitment and ethical conduct. The literature also points to an innovation and learning culture as a core practice of organizational climate. Organizations that encourage experimentation, creativity and continuous learning not only foster employee engagement but also build resilience to environmental uncertainties. Such climates strengthen adaptability and long-term organizational performance.

Another prominent theme is employee well-being and engagement. Many studies linked climate to stress management, work-life balance and employee empowerment. Finally, several studies emphasized a performance-driven climate, where clear expectations, accountability systems, and alignment of goals foster a sense of purpose and productivity.

3.9.3. Moderators of Climate-Deviance Relationship

Moderators including leadership style, organizational support, cultural values and resilience were found to shape the strength of the relationship between organizational climate and deviance. Trustworthy and responsible leadership, for instance, can buffer the negative impact of a toxic climate by modeling ethical behavior. Similarly, organizational support and fairness perceptions strengthen the positive influence of climate on employee engagement and reduce tendencies toward deviance. Individual differences such as resilience, moral identity, and psychological contract perceptions were also found to moderate how employees react to organizational climates.

3.9.4. Mediators of Climate-Deviance Relationship

The review identified several mediators through which organizational climate influences workplace deviance. Moral disengagement, psychological safety, emotional exhaustion, job engagement, and organizational identification were among the most cited mechanisms.

For example, studies on moral disengagement reveal that hostile climates enable employees to justify counterproductive behaviors. Conversely, climates that promote psychological safety and engagement encourage employees to invest more positively in their roles, thereby reducing deviance. Organizational identification also mediates this relationship by ensuring that employees align their actions with collective goals rather than self-serving behaviors.

3.9.5. Outcomes of Organizational Climate

Organizational climate was linked to both micro-level (individual) and macro-level (organizational and societal) outcomes:

i. Micro-Level Outcomes: Studies revealed that positive organizational climates foster a range of beneficial employee-level outcomes, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, trust, psychological safety, and reduced deviant behaviors. For example, Shin, Choi, & Kim found that supportive climates significantly improved employee trust and reduced workplace deviance [24]. Similarly, Zeeshan et al. and Waseem demonstrated that climates emphasizing fairness and ethical leadership fostered stronger employee engagement and job satisfaction [25,26]. Other studies reported that supportive climates reduced stress and emotional exhaustion while promoting motivation and well-being [27,28]. Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara, Ruiz-Palomino & Linuesa-Langreo also showed that employees working in trust-based climates displayed higher citizenship behaviors and lower counterproductive work behaviors [29].

ii. Macro-Level Outcomes: At the organizational level, climate was associated with enhanced productivity, innovation, collaboration and resilience. Shin, Choi, & Kim showed that a learning-oriented climate improved organizational adaptability, while Michulek et al. reported that climates fostering innovation increased performance and competitiveness [24,30]. Similarly, Zhang et al. found that positive climates facilitated long-term organizational growth through improved collaboration and knowledge-sharing [31]. Research by Siddique, Siddique, & Siddique and Ambrose & Ganegoda highlighted how ethical and supportive climates enhance reputational capital, stakeholder trust, and organizational sustainability [32,33]. At a broader level, Coo et al. revealed that climates promoting inclusivity and equity supported societal outcomes by strengthening fairness and social justice in workplace systems [34]. Collectively, these findings suggest that organizational climate plays a dual role: at the micro level, it enhances employee well-being and ethical conduct, while at the macro level, it drives organizational adaptability, reputation, and contribution to broader societal goals of sustainable development.

3.10. Keywords

Figure 6 illustrates the key words which are consistent with research on organizational climate and workplace deviance. Core constructs such as organizational climate, workplace deviance, counterproductive work behavior, incivility, and abusive supervision dominate the field.



Figure 6: Tree Map of Keywords

Much of the literature emphasizes employee outcomes including performance, turnover, engagement, burnout, well-being, and creativity, showing how positive climates foster desirable behaviors while hostile climates encourage deviance. Underlying these relationships are psychological and social mechanisms like trust, fairness, psychological contracts, and social exchange which explain why employees respond to organizational cues with either constructive or destructive behaviors. Leadership and contextual moderators including ethical or abusive leadership, cultural values, job demands, and resilience play a critical role in shaping these outcomes. The field is also largely theory-driven, often using Conservation of Resources and Social Exchange Theory to frame findings, while systematic and bibliometric methods reveal dominant patterns and gaps. Broader influences such as innovation, societal culture, and cybersecurity climate further situate deviance within wider organizational and cultural contexts

4. Discussion and Future Direction

Drawing on a dual bibliometric–systematic review of 267 studies, we synthesize the literature on organizational climate and workplace deviance to establish a robust platform for future inquiry. The analysis reveals key gaps, delineates future research trajectories for understanding the organizational climate–workplace deviance nexus (Table 8).

RQs	Research Question	Reference
1	Which mechanisms most strongly link climate types to deviance when tested together?	Siddiqui et al. 2025
2	How can Do ethical/benevolent leadership styles reduce deviance beyond unit climate effects, and under what conditions?	Griep et al. 2025
3	How do broader, time-lagged outcomes (safety, compliance, customer impact) respond to climate compared with performance/burnout?	Walter & Oliveira, 2025
4	How does the climate–deviance link differ across informal, rural, post-conflict, and remote/cyber contexts and cultures?	Rafferty, 2025
5	Which mediator–moderator combinations (example: resilience, culture) reliably explain when climate curbs deviance?	Medan et al. 2025
5	Which mediator–moderator combinations (example: resilience, culture) reliably explain when climate curbs deviance?	Medan et al. 2025
6	Do the most predictive climate facets hold with longitudinal, multi-source, and digital-trace data versus single-source surveys	Vedadi et al. 2025

Table 8: Key Questions for Future Research Agenda

4.1. Key Issue 1: Under-Specified Mechanisms Linking Climate to Deviance

Studies frequently invoke mediators such as moral disengagement, psychological contract breach, emotional exhaustion, envy, knowledge hiding employee silence and interpersonal conflict [3,4]. Yet these mechanisms are rarely modeled together. The field needs theory-driven serial and parallel mediation tests (example: climate → emotional exhaustion → deviance) and cross-construct comparisons to identify dominant pathways under varying climates (ethical vs. competitive).

4.2. Key Issue 2: Leadership–Climate Asymmetry

Studies emphasize abusive supervision and destructive leadership as antecedents of incivility and CWB, while ethical/benevolent/servant leadership and leader humility are less systematically examined as protective climates [2,9]. Future research should use multilevel designs that separate unit-level climate from leader behavior, test cross-level moderation (example ethical leadership × competitive climate), and examine leader behavior as a climate-crafting intervention.

4.3. Key Issue 3: Narrow Outcome Bandwidth

Outcomes cluster around performance, engagement, turnover intentions, burnout, well-being, creativity, with fewer studies on safety, customer outcomes, compliance/ethics, error reporting, learning quality or spillovers (home strain, team contagion) [4,5]. Future work should broaden and time-lag outcomes, distinguish interpersonal vs. organizational deviance, and estimate downstream costs (retention, reputation, legal exposure) [3,11].

4.4. Key Issue 4: Focus on Formal Employment Settings

Most studies focus on formal, urban, and corporate environments, while the informal sector, rural economies, and post-conflict recovery contexts remain largely neglected. Yet, these areas are critical for achieving sustainable outcomes but continue to be understudied.

4.5. Key Issue 5: Mediators and Moderators Need Convergence

Across studies, recurrent mediators include emotional exhaustion, work engagement, job satisfaction, trust, psychological contract, moral disengagement, affective commitment, knowledge hiding, employee silence, interpersonal conflict, while common moderators include ethical/abusive/benevolent/transformational leadership, cultural values, job demands, resilience, perceived organizational politics, competitive climate [2,3]. A unified agenda should (a) pre-register core mediator–moderator sets, (b) test theory-consistent contingencies, and (c) examine mediated moderation and moderated mediation to map when and how climates curb deviance.

4.6. Key Issue 6: Methodological Concentration and Common-Method Bias

Most studies rely on cross-sectional, single-source surveys, limiting causal inference and inflating shared-method variance [3,4]. The field would benefit from longitudinal/experience-sampling, multi-source ratings (self/peer/supervisor), objective traces (e-logs of cyber-deviance, HR cases), and field experiments, alongside dominance analysis or Bayesian model comparison to identify the most explanatory organizational climate facets. The table 9 below presents the Overview of organizational climate practices and its impact on workplace deviance outcomes.

Organizational Climate practices	Impact on Workplace Deviance
Ethical Climate development	• Sets clear fairness/respect norms that deter incivility and counter-productive work behavior. • Lowers moral disengagement and rationalizations for rule-breaking. • Builds trust and identification, reducing retaliation motives. • Signals consequences consistently, increasing accountability.
Benevolent Leadership	• Communicates care/support, reducing interpersonal deviance/bullying. • Increases affective commitment that curbs sabotage/withdrawal. • Buffers strain, lowering anger-driven misconduct
Justice Climate Building	• Peer expectations curb collusive deviance. • Shared fairness schemas reduce favoritism-driven acts. • Promotes equitable workload to avoid shortcutting
Voice and Safe Reporting	• Lowers silence/knowledge hiding through care signals. • Enhances commitment that offsets withdrawal behaviors. • Encourages discretionary compliance with policies.

Table 9: Overview of organizational climate practices and its impact on workplace deviance outcomes

4.5. Implications of the Study

Using bibliometric and systematic methods, the findings offer clear implications for theory, management practice, and policy in the context of organizational climate and workplace deviance.

4.5.1. Theoretical Implications

This study advances the literature by positioning organizational climate as a central driver of both interpersonal and organizational deviance, while clarifying the roles of key mediators (such as emotional exhaustion, moral disengagement, psychological contract breach) and key moderators (such as ethical/benevolent leadership, competitive climate, perceived organizational politics). In line with social exchange and conservation of resources perspectives, the results highlight how supportive, fair, and ethical climates foster reciprocity and resource gain, reducing deviance, whereas hostile or competitive climates promote resource loss and retaliatory behavior. The study also underscores the need for integrated organizational climate models that combine ethical, justice, support, and competitive facets, rather than treating them in isolation. Future theory building should (a) test serial and parallel mediation (example: climate → exhaustion/moral disengagement → deviance), (b) use multilevel and cross-level models that separate unit climate from leader behavior, and (c) establish measurement invariance and shared item banks so results cumulate across settings and cultures.

4.5.2. Practical Implications

For managers, the findings call for organizational climate-shaping interventions that go beyond short-term performance targets to focus on civility, fairness, and support. Practical steps include: clarifying role expectations and workloads, strengthening procedural and interactional justice, building ethical leadership through coaching and accountability, setting civility norms with visible reinforcement, and creating safe, protected reporting channels for incivility and misconduct. Routine climate monitoring (brief pulse surveys, peer/supervisor observations) and multi-source data (not just self-reports) can help detect early signs of strain (exhaustion, silence, knowledge hiding) before they spill over into deviance.

In hybrid/remote and technology-intensive workplaces, managers should extend climate practices to digital spaces (e.g., norms for online conduct, clear rules for cyberloafing/cyber-incivility, privacy-respecting monitoring of IT misuse). Bundling small "nudges" (e.g., civility prompts) with structural changes (workload redesign, policy clarity) is likely to yield stronger and more durable reductions in deviance.

Organizations and regulators can reinforce healthy climates by embedding anti-bullying/incivility codes, whistleblower protections, and psychological safety standards into compliance frameworks and audits. Public agencies, SMEs and firms in the informal or rural sectors should be supported with simple climate toolkits such as justice checklists, civility charters, short training modules) that are low-cost and scalable.

5. Conclusions

This study conducted a bibliometric and systematic review of the intersection between organizational climate and workplace deviance, drawing insights from 267 publications. The synthesis positions organizational climate across ethical, justice, support, competitive, and psychological facets as a central lever shaping both interpersonal and organizational deviance. It highlights consistent pathways through emotional exhaustion, moral disengagement, and psychological contract breach, and underscores contingent effects of leadership (ethical, benevolent, abusive) and context (culture, remote/cyber work). Despite growing scholarly attention, the review identifies persistent conceptual fragmentation in climate measurement, narrow outcome bandwidth (example: limited attention to safety, compliance, and customer outcomes), and methodological concentration in cross-sectional, single-source designs. It also notes the underrepresentation of informal and rural settings and the scarcity of field-tested interventions that explicitly shift climate to reduce deviance.

The study calls for a renewed research agenda that integrates climate facets within coherent models, employs longitudinal and multilevel methods with multi-source and digital-trace data, and pre-registers core mediator–moderator sets to enable cumulative theory tests. Future work should broaden outcomes (including safety, learning, ethics/compliance, and long-run organizational costs), compare serial and parallel mechanisms over time, and rigorously evaluate climate-shaping interventions (civility norms, justice/support practices, leadership development) for effect sizes, costs and durability [35-268].

By linking climate improvement to organizational strategy and policy instruments, research and practice can help build inclusive, ethical, and resilient workplaces that curb deviance.

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