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# The Impact of Organisational Climate on Staff Creativity: An Empirical Study of the Interplay

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The article aims to empirically review the impact of organisational climate on staff creativity, with job satisfaction as a mediating variable.

**Research Design & Methods:** Following a literature search, a conceptual model of the interplay between organisational climate, job satisfaction, and staff creativity was formulated. The proposed model was empirically verified by means of a confirmatory analysis via structural equation modelling (SEM CFA) on a sample of 1,000 employees, with the use of data collected in December 2023 and with a focus on exploring the impact of organisational climate on staff creativity through their job satisfaction.

**Findings:** The quantitative research enabled us to test the relation model between organisational climate and staff creativity. The results of the study confirm the indirect effect, through job satisfaction, of organisational climate on the creativity of employees.

**Implications/Recommendations:** The study suggests that job satisfaction plays a key role as a mediator in the interplay between organisational climate and staff creativity.

**Contribution:** The study fills a gap with regard to the interplay between organisational climate and staff creativity, taking into account the job satisfaction mediation. Further research could look more closely at the impact of individual organisational climate components on staff creativity. Future research could add other mediators and moderators between the variables.

**Article type:** original article.

**Keywords:** organisational climate, staff creativity, job satisfaction, human capital.

**JEL Classification:** M12, M54, J24.

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## 1. Introduction

Organisational climate is linked to a range of employee attitudes (Karatepe, Aboramadan & Dahleez, 2020; Mutonyi, Slåtten & Lien, 2020; Góralczyk, 2022). Meta-analyses of independent studies likewise bear this out: there are strong correlations between organisational climate and organisational commitment, job satisfaction, intention to leave the organisation, as well as their outcomes, i.e., effectiveness and job performance. Other studies have also found a link between organisational climate and counterproductive employee actions along with workplace violence (Turek, 2018). Research has largely focused on the connection between how people perceive and feel about what is happening in the organisation encompassing employee attitudes and their economic impact. Meanwhile, revolutionary technological developments and labour market circumstances shine a light on the quality of employees' competences, which determine the way individuals and organisations evolve today. One of these traits is creativity, and it plays a key role. These notions led us to conduct the research presented in this paper on the relation between organisational climate and the creativity of Polish employees in 2023. The aim was to empirically verify the impact of the former on the latter, with job satisfaction as a mediating variable.

The article consists of five parts: 1) a theoretical background on the nature of organisational climate and its links with job satisfaction and staff creativity, which are the basis for the research hypotheses, 2) a section on methods of empirical research, including a brief account of the objective, assumptions, the research sample, 3) a section describing the outcomes of statistical analyses, 4) a discussion section, with conclusions, and 5) a section presenting the limitations and direction for future research. Following the literature search, a conceptual model of the interplay between organisational climate, job satisfaction, and staff creativity was formulated. The proposed model was empirically verified by means of a confirmatory analysis via structural equation modelling (SEM CFA) with a focus on exploring

the indirect impact, through job satisfaction, of organisational climate on staff creativity. The analytical data were provided by the authors' empirical survey, conducted using the CAWI method in December 2023, on a sample of 1,000 respondents.

## **2. Theoretical Background**

### **2.1. Organisational Climate in Relation to Staff Creativity**

A review of theoretical approaches indicates a diversity of concepts and interpretative latitude, resulting in dozens of definitions for the notion of organisational climate (Wziątek-Staśko & Krawczyk-Antoniuk, 2022b). Wziątek-Staśko and Krawczyk-Antoniuk (2022a) believe that organisational climate continues to be a subject of scholarly interest, yet it is frequently addressed in an overly intuitive manner, or it is marginalised. In a similar vein, Wojciechowska and Dziwulski (2021) observe that the body of research produced by Polish scholars in this area remains limited and would benefit from further expansion, systematisation, and development, as well as greater consistency and conceptual clarity.

We have adopted a definition that recognises organisational climate as a set of generalised opinions and perceptions, shared by employees, about objective and important factors as well as behaviours, concerning the internal environment of an organisation (von Rosenstiel & Bögel, 1992). Organisational climate refers to the common understanding, feelings and attitudes of the members of an organisation towards its basic components. It reflects the norms, values and attitudes that distinguish one organisation from another (Emmanuel, Nwakoby & Augustina, 2020). It also influences the behaviour of all members of the organisation along with their motivation and satisfaction (Amiri *et al.*, 2023).

An unfavourable organisational climate creates an environment full of suspicion and hostility, causing cooperation to break down. The right climate, by contrast, effectively improves staff morale and participation in decision-making, enhances staff creativity and innovation, and thus increases productivity (Moslehpour *et al.*, 2019). It has a significant impact on staff behaviour and performance, as well as on the efficiency of the organisation as a whole (Yesuf, Getahun & Debas, 2024). The variety of organisational climate components identified in the relevant literature is confirmed by the development of dozens of organisational climate survey tools (Juchnowicz, Mazurek-Kucharska & Turek, 2018).

The organisational climate is influenced by both external and internal determinants. The former include the business environment, technological advances, and labour market situation, while the latter include strategy, organisational culture, structure, management style and practices. Hence, staff competences that respond to today's challenges play an important role in its formation. Among these, creativity holds a special position, especially given the role it plays in creating an organisa-

tion's innovative potential – namely, in generating ideas and initiating action across various areas of the organisation's activity. At the same time, the organisational climate creates conditions for the development of staff creativity, i.e. the type of working environment that can potentially foster creative work.

Creative people are often curious, open to change, and have intrinsic motivation. These traits shape the individual's relatively durable ability to come up with new ideas and solutions, as well as to engage in entrepreneurial creative thinking and action (Wojtczuk-Turek, 2014). Creativity is also featured in the competency profiles utilised in human resource management practices (Pocztowski, 2018). It is unique because it cannot be effectively developed by traditional means such as issuing orders, instructions or offering financial incentives. It can be inspired and nurtured, but not directly controlled (Zawadzki, 2010).

That it is among the paramount attributes of human capital is evidenced in the conclusion from Steve Jobs' biography: the key to gaining market advantage in the 21st century is to have creativity combined with technology and a passion for developing breakthrough products and services (Lipka & Waszczak, 2012). Creative ideas transformed into innovative discoveries and implementations have been a key source of competitive advantage since the 1990s (Sołoducho-Pelc, 2018). Following an analysis of the literature on organisational climate and staff creativity, the first hypothesis was formulated:

H1: Organisational climate has a positive impact on staff creativity.

## **2.2. The Impact of Job Satisfaction on How Organisational Climate Affects Staff Creativity**

Job satisfaction goes a long way to determining the quality of human capital (Schultz & Schultz, 2002). We assume that satisfaction (or lack thereof) is the positive or negative feelings and behaviours that relate to the job duties performed by employees. Defining satisfaction solely as feelings or sensations (e.g. Locke, 1969), and thus confining it within the emotional sphere, limits its consequences (Juchnowicz, 2014). The vital role of satisfaction is evident in its capacity to anticipate and also influence various attitudes towards one's work, profession, and organisation. These are essential components of a staff's competence potential for creativity, flexibility, and a willingness to develop (Ćulibrk *et al.*, 2018; Wang *et al.*, 2022).

In addition to the direct impact job satisfaction has on competence potential, research findings also point to links with other components of organisational human capital, including an individual's affective well-being, organisational climate, and organisational culture (Carr *et al.*, 2003). Satisfied employees are often more motivated and committed to their duties. This results in a greater willingness to undertake challenges, do experiments and consider new solutions, all of which are crucial for creativity (Shalley & Gilson, 2004). Research has shown that job

satisfaction is enhanced by a positive organisational climate, particularly one that is open, has a collaborative spirit, and is accepting of diversity, all of which are conducive to unleashing creative potential (Schneider & Snyder, 1975; Amabile, 1988). Indeed, job satisfaction can act as a catalyst to creativity, stimulating employees into more exploratory thinking, generating ideas, and experimenting with new solutions (Woisetschläger, Hanning & Backhaus, 2016). This is particularly relevant when considering knowledge workers and the Y and Z generations, which view creativity and job satisfaction as important values (Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010; Twenge, 2023).

Creativity falls under the discretionary behaviour of employees, which involves the conscious and deliberate use of creative abilities to generate solutions or ideas that benefit the organisation, even though this is often not formally required. As such, it is a sort of unofficial contribution by an employee, which may be viewed as a way to compensate for any perks that they receive (Yesuf, Getahun & Debas, 2024). While this was initially explained by social exchange theory (Blau, 1986), more recent research confirms the positive correlation between staff satisfaction and discretionary behaviour (Bettencourt, Brown & MacKenzie, 2005).

Creativity manifests an employee's autonomy – his or her ability to take autonomous decisions and initiative on the job (Ryan & Deci, 2000). By being creative, employees manifest their active role in the organisation and express their loyalty through creative actions for the benefit of the organisation. A mutual exchange between an employee and the organisation, one in which the latter particularly values creativity, can additionally stimulate the employee's desire to engage more in creative processes. When employees evaluate the exchange with the organisation positively, the result is job satisfaction (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2000).

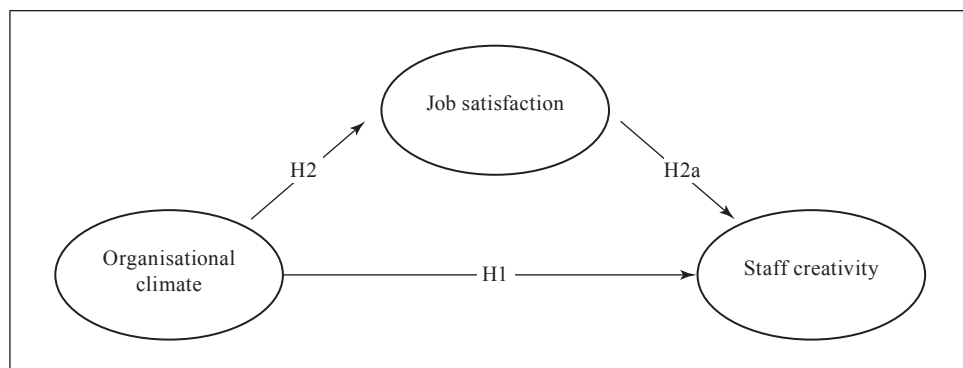


Fig. 1. The Impact of Organisational Climate on Staff Creativity, Allowing for the Mediating Effect of Job Satisfaction – Research Model

Source: the authors.

Following a literature review on the interplay between organisational climate, job satisfaction and staff creativity, the second hypothesis and its sub-hypothesis were formulated:

H2: Organisational climate has a positive impact on job satisfaction.

H2a: Organisational climate, by enhancing job satisfaction, has a positive impact on staff creativity.

The dependencies between the study constructs are displayed in Figure 1.

### **3. Research Method**

#### **3.1. Research Sample Characteristics**

To test the model of the interplay between organisational climate and job satisfaction and staff creativity, a quantitative survey was conducted in December 2023 on a sample of active Polish employees ( $N = 1,000$ ). It used the CAWI method, based on a nationwide, accredited survey panel. The survey process was executed by Biostat. A predetermined target sample size was identified, and the data collection phase was concluded upon reaching this established sample size. A representative sample was achieved by means of random scheme selection. The survey was dominated by respondents with tertiary education (57%), employed under a contract of employment (83%) in non-managerial positions (74%), in the private sector (75%). The majority of the sample was female (68%). The sample was balanced in terms of age (30% each from Generations X, Y and Z and 10% baby boomers) and in terms of the size of the organisation (15% of respondents from micro, 23% from small, 25% from medium, 14% from large, and 23% from very large companies).

#### **3.2. Variables**

To measure organisational climate, the study used an 18-statement questionnaire originally developed by von Rosenstiel and Bögel (1992) and adapted for Poland (Durniat, 2018). It was further supplemented with our own questions to assess job satisfaction (3 statements) and staff creativity (4 statements). The respondents rated the statements on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 standing for “strongly disagree” and 5 for “strongly agree.”

To confirm that the tested constructs were valid and the variables appropriate, confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) were performed. The confirmation of the theoretical model was an attempt to match the data collected with the theoretical concept underlying the construction of the questionnaire. Those statements within the construct that did not meet the requirements – one statement for creativity and two for organisational climate – were removed from the CFA so we could proceed with structural equation modelling (SEM) in the next stage.

The dependent variable in the model was staff creativity. It was measured using three statements that explored declarations of setting a variety of career goals, of being eager to learn, and of being ready to engage in new assignments. For the dependent variable, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was 0.767.

The explanatory variables were measured as follows:

1) organisational climate – the variable was measured with 16 items to determine: overall assessment of organisational climate, fellow employees, supervisors, work arrangements, information and communication, performance reviews and promotion opportunities. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient here was 0.955;

2) job satisfaction – the variable was measured using three items to determine: the degree of enjoyment from one's work, the degrees to which one is proud and aware of the sense of one's work. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was 0.878.

All the variables were constructed in a reflective manner. The standardised estimates for path loadings between the statements and each of the constructs were significant and exceeded the loading value of 0.5 (Table 1).

Table 1. The Model Variables

Variable	Item	Path Loading Value
Staff creativity	I set myself a variety of professional and personal goals	0.808
	I try to keep learning all the time	0.795
	I often pick up new tasks at work not out of duty, but to make something better or more efficient	0.591
Organisational climate	It is a pleasure to work in our company	0.802
	In our company, care is taken to make the working conditions decent	0.790
	Our company is committed to employee well-being	0.844
	If people face trouble at work, they can count on their co-workers for help	0.691
	Our sense of community is lacking; everyone just takes care of themselves	0.538
	Everyone is free to express their own views and sentiments here	0.690
	Good work is duly rewarded by our superiors	0.806
	Our supervisors make sure that cooperation between employees is smooth and conflict-free	0.774
	The goals and tasks set for us are engaging challenges	0.713

Table 1 cnt'd

Variable	Item	Path Loading Value
	Engaging and somewhat extraordinary tasks are distributed fairly	0.752
	We are updated well enough on key business matters and events	0.750
	Our management considers the staff's ideas and suggestions	0.781
	The briefings as well as the rollout of new hardware and software are so well-reported that we always know what is to come	0.721
	Our pay system is fair	0.769
	Job achievements are fairly recognised in our company	0.822
	Our company appreciates receiving new ideas and suggestions	0.816
Job satisfaction	I enjoy my job, and go to work with pleasure	0.819
	I believe that my work serves a purpose	0.846
	I take pride in my work	0.858

Source: the authors.

4. Research Findings

4.1. General Remarks

The objective of the study was to assess the quality of a conceptual model which assumed some relations between organisational climate, job satisfaction, and staff creativity. The model employed latent variables, i.e. variables that cannot be directly observed, but can be detected through other observable variables (Juchnowicz, Kinowska & Gąsiński, 2024). Using CFA and path analysis, the structure of the variables was verified and the relations between the latent variables were examined.

Analyses were conducted with IBM SPSS AMOS software (version 29).

4.2. Validation of the Measurements

At the preliminary stage of the analyses, validity and reliability of the scales were checked. The CR values for the latent variables were above 0.7, thus providing evidence of structural and convergent construct validity. The AVE values for all latent constructs were higher than 0.5, so the convergent validity was considered sufficient. Meanwhile, discriminant validity was verified using the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), which holds that the square root of the AVE should be greater than the correlation between the constructs. The requirement is met, save one correlation. The scales in question reveal both convergent and discriminant validity, which confirms their theoretical validity (Table 2).



Table 2. Evaluation of the Psychometric Properties of the Scales

Construct Scale	CR	MSV	AVE	Correlations/Square Root of AVE <sup>a</sup>		
				Organisational climate	Job satisfaction	Staff creativity
Organisational climate	0.955	0.651	0.573	<b>0.757</b>	–	–
Job satisfaction	0.879	0.651	0.708	0.807	<b>0.841</b>	–
Staff creativity	0.779	0.370	0.545	0.479	0.608	<b>0.738</b>

<sup>a</sup> On the diagonal, the square root of AVE is in bold type.

Notes: CR – composite reliability, MSV – maximum shared variance, AVE – average variance extracted.

Source: the authors.

### 4.3. Estimation of the Structural Model

A model of the construct relations was estimated using the SEM CFA approach. The measurement model can be considered a good fit with the chi-square value standing at 1,618.465 (206 *df*),  $p < 0.001$ . Absolute fit indices, like GFI = 0.856 and AGFI = 0.823, are at a satisfactory level (close to 0.9). Relative fit indices (called the incremental fit) are also close to 0.9. The RMSEA of 0.083 is not too far away from 0.08, which is regarded as an acceptable value, and the confidence interval for the RMSEA includes no value of 0.1, which would disqualify the model.

To probe the relations between organisational climate, job satisfaction and staff creativity, path coefficients were estimated (Table 3).

Table 3. Path Coefficients for the Studied Interplay of Variables

Structural Paths	Path Coefficients
Organisational climate → staff creativity	–0.035
Organisational climate → job satisfaction	0.807*
Job satisfaction → staff creativity	0.636*
Organisational climate → job satisfaction → staff creativity	0.479*
RMSEA	0.083
CFI	0.910
AGFI	0.823

\*  $p < 0.001$ .

Source: the authors.

The variables in our model explained around 37% of the staff creativity variances ( $R^2 = 0.370$ ) and around 65% of the job satisfaction variances ( $R^2 = 0.651$ ).

The findings support the hypothesis that organisational climate has an indirect effect on staff creativity through job satisfaction (H2a) ( $\beta = 0.479, p < 0.001$ ). They also confirm the hypothesis that organisational climate has an effect on job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.807, p < 0.001$ ).

Due to a lack of statistical significance, the hypothesis that organisational climate boosts staff creativity (H1) was rejected ( $\beta = -0.035, p > 0.1$ ).

## 5. Conclusions

Our findings confirm that organisational climate influences staff creativity significantly, albeit indirectly, via job satisfaction. Confirming the positive impact of organisational climate on job satisfaction is a step towards understanding the mechanisms behind employee job satisfaction, including the levels of that satisfaction. The results suggest that job satisfaction plays a key role as a mediator in the interplay between organisational climate and staff creativity, which is consistent with findings reported in the literature (Amabile, 1988; Schneider, Ehrhart & Macey, 2013).

The direct impact of organisational climate on staff creativity requires additional exploration. In the studies conducted, there was no empirical support for the hypothesis that organisational climate directly affects staff creativity. This implies that all of the influence was mediated by job satisfaction. Other studies have found that organisational climate can influence creativity through factors other than satisfaction, such as autonomy and encouragement from superiors (Zhou & George, 2001).

The findings show that the interplay between organisational climate, job satisfaction, and staff creativity is complex. This can be relevant to both researchers and human resource management (HRM) departments alike. The findings also suggest the need to consider job satisfaction as a mediator in the relation between organisational climate and staff creativity. This approach can contribute to the development of more sophisticated theories of creativity in the organisational context.

The results might also encourage HRM practitioners to foster a positive organisational climate, thereby enhancing job satisfaction and boosting staff creativity. The study implies that job satisfaction should be taken into account while designing HR policies and HRM practices. Initiatives addressing motivation, career development or employee/supervisor rapport-building can contribute to higher job satisfaction and, ultimately, higher staff creativity.

The study confirmed that organisational climate has an indirect effect on staff creativity through job satisfaction. At the same time, a direct effect was not found. Nonetheless, the study suggests that job satisfaction indeed plays a key role in medi-

ating between organisational climate and staff creativity. The results indicate the interplay between the variables is complex. They also clearly show that theories of creativity in organisations call for further development, with job satisfaction as a mediating factor.

## **6. Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

Ultimately accomplished with a static approach, the study captures the interplay between organisational climate, job satisfaction, and staff creativity. Accordingly, the relations were time-dependent and variable in nature. Further study of the relations would benefit from a long-term perspective.

This study focused specifically on Polish employees. To generalise the results, it would be necessary to undertake research covering staff in other countries and regions.

A research study on organisational climate and staff creativity should integrate dual perspectives: those of employees and employers. The present study analysed the interplay between the constructs on a sample of employees. To achieve a more complete picture, it would be advisable to conduct the study from the perspective of employers. In addition, this study measured the constructs through a specially designed employee self-assessment questionnaire. Conducting validating research on the results by means of other evaluation sources would be revealing.

In future research, the components of the constructs under study and the relations between them should be studied in greater detail. Moreover, future research can be extended to include other mediators and moderators of the interplay between organisational climate and staff creativity. Comparative studies between different sectors and types of organisations could be conducted to gain insight into how these factors alter the impact of organisational climate on staff creativity.

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## **Authors' Contribution**

The authors' individual contribution is as follows: Marta Juchnowicz 40%, Hanna Kinowska 40%, Hubert Gąsiński 20%.

## **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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