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WORK CLIMATE: WEATHER OF WORK PLACE

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ABSTRACT

"Work climate is a set of shared perceptions regarding the policies, practices and procedures that an organization rewards, supports and expects (Schneider & Reichers, 1983)." A dominant approach emerged in the literature and the majority of climate researchers examine climate as perceptual in nature versus being an actual characteristic of the organization (James, 1982; James & Jones, 1974; James, Joyce, Slocum, 1988; Schneider, 1975; Schneider, 2000). Bruke, Bourcki & Kaufman (2002) identified three types of perspective of work climate viz. Social constructionist perspective, general climate perspective, and multiple stakeholder perspective. Common goals, clear duties, responsibilities, rules and ways of action among employees are features characteristic of work climate. Confidence in the future and trust in the ability to solve problems lay the foundation for a good work climate. Employees working in organizations with a good climate are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs, and more committed to their organizations (Glisson and James 2002).

To define work climate is a very difficult task. There are so many perspectives to define the term climate. There is a lot of research debate found on whether the climate is an individual level concept or organizational level concept. Further on the organizational point of view researcher are scattered on the issue whether work climate should be conditions that were shared or as perceptions that were shared by the individuals (Tagiuri & Litwin, 1968).

The concept of work climate was introduced in the late 1950's and in the early 1960's by a group of socialist/ behaviorist with the concern of management and organizational effectiveness (Argysis,1957; Gellerman, 1959; Mc Gregor, 1960). They reasoned that organizational practices and procedures can influence the perceptions of the employee's orientation towards goals and values of the organization. They assumed that organization communicate a particular 'climate' to their employees through behaviours towards the employees. A good work climate can improve an individual's work habits, while a poor climate can erode good work habits. Most importantly, a positive work climate leads to and sustains staff motivation and high performance (Litwin and Stringer 1968, Stringer 2002).

Various researchers viewed the concept of work climate with different point of view. Few viewed the work climate on macro organizational structure (Hellriegel & Slocum, 1974; James and Jones, 1974; Schneider, 1975; Payne & Pugh, 1976). Few of them emphasized the role of individual motivation, particularly the need of achievement (Litwin & Stringer, 1968; Jones and James, 1979; and Joycee & Slocum, 1979). Few viewed the concept on the basis of cognitive processing approach (Woodman & King, 1978; Powell & Butterfield, 1978, Naylor et al., 1980; Naylor, Pritchard & Ilgen, 1980). Some of the researcher tried to understand the concept from social learning perspective (Schneider, 1975; James, Hartmen, Stabins and Jones, 1977; Jones & James, 1979; Schneider et al,, 1980). Some of them viewed that the psychological climate is the meaning an individual attaches to a work as they precieve and when these perception are

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aggregated with some level of agreement, this becomes a meaningful measure of organizational climate of the organization (James & Jones, 1974; James et al., 1978; Jones & James, 1979). Work climate is the "weather of the workplace." Just as weather conditions can affect your daily activities, work climate influences your behavior at work. James, Hartman, Stebbins and Jones (1977), viewed that employee perception of instrumentalities in a work setting are potentially excellent source of data in climate research.

Some coined the concept of work climate as a psychological variable which is an attribute of the setting, a way for people to make sense out of all of the stimuli around them (Weick, 1979; Naylor et al., 1980; Scheneider et al., 1980; Scheneider,1980) on the basis of empirical research characterized climate as friendly climate (Scheneider, 1973) a climate for service (Scheneider et al., 1980), a climate for safety (Zohar, 1980) and a climate for achievement (Litwin & Stringer, 1968). To justify this characterization Scheneider (1980) mentioned that the difference in perception is due to difference in people.). Therefore from the above discussion the dominant approach that is emerging is that work climate research is perceptual in nature (James, 1982; James & Jones, 1974; James, Joycee & Slocum, 1988; Schneider, 1975; Schneider, 2000).

Definitions of Work Climate

Work climate may be defined as settings, situations, conditions and circumstances under which people work. Briner (2000) defined work climate a very broad category that encompasses the physical settings, characteristics of job itself, broader organizational features and even aspects of extra organizational settings.

Work climate may be define as a group of measurable characteristics that members could perceive directly or indirectly in the work settings, a description of environmental factors, which could help researchers ascertain the effects of work climate on employee motivation. The relatively enduring quality of the internal environment of the organisation that is experienced by the members influences their behaviour and can be described by the values of a certain set of characteristics of the organization. (Rosenstiel, Nerdinger (2011)

How others view the group's perceptions of an organization becomes the climate (Hoy & Tarter, 1992). Whether the perceptions of climate are those held by the teachers within a school or by the students, the collective consensus of climate based on the group's perceptions becomes the climate of the organization (Dunn & Harris, 1998).

It is further elaborated by Briner, (2000) as a very broad category that encompasses the physical setting (e.g. heat, equipments etc.), characteristics of the job itself (e.g. workload, task complexity), broader organizational features (e.g. culture, history) and even aspects of the extra organizational setting . It means that work climate the sum of the interrelationship that exists among the employees and the employers and the environment in which the employees work which includes the technical, the human and the organizational environment.

The most famous and cited definition of work climate is that

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"Work climate is a set of shared perceptions regarding the policies, practices and procedures that an organization rewards, supports and expects (Schneider & Reichers, 1983)."

Climate and synonymous terms

- **Climate vs Culture**

The definitions of climate and culture are often blurred. According to Ashforth (1985), a useful distinction is that culture consists of shared assumptions and ideologies, whereas climate is defined by shared perceptions of behaviors (Hoy & Tarter, 1997). While climate is the way it feels to work in a group, culture is the pattern of shared values and assumptions that organizational members share.

Climate describes the shared perceptions of the people in a group or organization, while culture includes how people feel about the organization and the beliefs, values, and assumptions that provide the identity and set the standards of behavior (Stolp & Smith, 1995). Simply stated, culture refers to "the way we do things around here" (Deal & Peterson, 1999). Climate, on the other hand, refers to the feel of the environment of the organization. Both impact behaviors of the people in the group, but climate is viewed as a narrower concept than culture. Culture goes deeper to include the immediate environment and what people believe and value. Culture is a product of the relationship history in a school while climate is a function of how people perceive those relationships in the present (Stolp & Smith, 1995).

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"Studies of climate usually deal with perceptions of behavior, use survey research techniques, employ multivariate statistics, have their intellectual roots in industrial and social psychology, assume a rational-systems perspective, examine climate as an independent variable, and are interested in using the knowledge to improve organizations. In contrast, studies of culture typically focus on assumptions, values, and norms, use ethnographic techniques, eschew quantitative analysis, have their intellectual roots in anthropology and sociology, and assume a natural-systems perspective" (Hoy, Tarter & Kottkamp, 1991, p. 8).

- **Climate vs Environment**

The workplace climate is the product of a variety of employees' reactions and behaviors, which are affected by their perception of their workplace at any given moment. Changes to their impressions and emotions are ordinarily caused by specific events that occur at work, for example, a dismissal, a change in management or its vision, an acquisition, etc. Work environment is also labeled by researchers as work climate or organizational climate and refers to the concept of environmental quality perceived by people concerned. Deer (1980) suggests that the word 'climate' when used in a meteorological sense refers to the average daily weather conditions over a period of time. In the organizational sense, it refers to the norm or average of the perceptions which individuals have of their daily work environments.

Factors of work climate

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West and Farr(1989) mentioned autonomy, resources, cohesive group work, clear feedback, participative leaders, group/ organizational support for innovation, challenging tasks, time and little work overload, foster healthy work climate.

Kohn (1990) defined psychological safety as the freedom employee feel in expressing themselves without negative repercussions in terms of their career and psychological meaningfulness refers to reciprocity employee feels in returns they receive for the energy they input into their work.

Brown and leigh (1996) focused on two specific dimensions of work climate, safety and meaningfulness, to test climate's relationship to job involvement, effort and performance.

Carr, Schmidt, Ford, and Deshon (2003) examined the relationship between the three higher order facets of climate (i.e., affective, cognitive, and instrumental) as conceived by Ostroff (1993), the mediating nature of job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and the individual level outcomes of job performance, psychological well-being, and withdrawal. As hypothesized, affective, cognitive, and instrumental climate could account for a substantial amount of variance in individual level work outcomes; cognitive and affective states of job satisfaction and organizational commitment would mediate the effects of climate on individual-level outcomes, and differences were detected in the relationships between the three higher order climate factors, the two mediating variables, and the individual level outcomes. These results highlight the importance of mediating variables in this line of research but none of the studies tested the mediating effect of organizational citizenship behavior.

In a similar study, Parker et al. (2003) performed a meta-analysis of relationships between climate perceptions and individual-level work outcomes and classified climate according to a model posited by Jones and James (1979), which described four dimensions of climate perceptions: (1) role stress and lack of harmony, (2) job challenge and autonomy, (3) leadership facilitation and support, and (4) work-group cooperation, friendliness, and warmth. A fifth dimension, which was subsequently dropped from James and his colleagues' (1990) model, organizational and subsystem attributes, was also added as a category for the purpose of meta-analysis. Parker et al. examined whether work attitudes (job satisfaction, job involvement, and commitment), psychological wellbeing, and motivation were affected by climate and whether they mediated the impact of psychological climate on organizational outcomes such as performance. Thus the results of a meta-analysis by Parker and colleagues (2003) supported the relationships between psychological climate and work attitudes, motivation, psychological well-being, and employee performance, with the stronger of the relationships belonging to employee work attitudes and psychological well-being. Parker et al. (2003) also found that work attitudes and motivation fully mediated the impact of psychological climate on employee performance. The climate dimensions of leadership, work group, and organization were strongly related to work attitudes, while the dimensions relating to job characteristics Psychological climate and its relation to work performance and well-being: The mediating role of climate and leadership were found to have the strongest association with psychological wellbeing. These results tell us something about the importance of using both performance and well-being as output variables.

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Opperman (2002) was quoted in Yusuf and Metiboba, (2012), to define work climate as composition of three major sub-environments which include the technical environment, the human environment and the organisational environment. According to them technical environment refers to tools, equipment, technological infrastructure and other physical or technical elements of the workplace. The human environment includes the peers, others with whom employees relate, team and work groups, interactional issues, the leadership and management. The human environment can be interpreted as the network of formal and informal interaction among colleagues; teams as well as boss-subordinate relationship that exist within the framework of organisations. Such interaction (especially the informal interaction), presumably, provides avenue for dissemination of information and knowledge as well as cross-fertilization of ideas among employees. Of course, it has been established in previous studies that workers' interpersonal relations at workplace tend to influence their morale (Clement, 2000; Stanley, 2003). According to Yusuf andMetiboba, (2012) the third type of work environment, organisational environment includes systems, procedures, practices, values and philosophies which operate under the control of management. In the words of Akintayo (2012) organisational environment refers to the immediate task and national environment where an organization draws its inputs, processes it and returns the outputs in form of products or services for public consumption. The task and national environment includes factors such as supplier's influence, the customer's role, the stakeholders, socio-cultural factors, the national economy, technology, legislations, managerial policies and philosophies. All these go a long way in influencing people's psych and attitude towards work.

These three types of environments can further be categorized into two basic types, based on the influence they exert on the people at work. In his study of employee personality profile at work as influenced by the working environment, Kyko (2005) posits that employee personality profile is not static. It is dynamic and change with the working experiences in the organization nvironment. Hence, Many authors classify the work environment into conducive and toxic environments (Akinyele, 2010: 302; Chaddha, Ravi&Noida, 2011: 121;Yusuf&Metiboba, 2012; Assaf,&Alswalha, 2013).

Goleman (2001) finds that "50 to 70 percent of employees' perception of working climate is linked to the characteristics of the leader." For a Watkins & Whalley (2000) leaders can sustain performance improvements by creating a climate that motivates, develops, and retains talented people. Stringer (2002) argued that is "the most important determinant of work climate what the boss of a work group does. The boss's behavior drives climate, which arouses motivation. And aroused motivation is a major driver of bottom-line performance." Furthermore the school principal who leads a work group of teachers, has to include his them in his task creating and sustaining a desirable work environment that will motivate his staff.

Sundgren et al. (2005) found that information sharing and intrinsic motivation are important qualities of working climate.

Tidd and Bessent (2009) emphasized six factors that they claimed were critical for a climate; trust and openness, challenge and involvement, support and space for ideas, conflicts and debates, risk taking and freedom.

Crespell and Hansen (2009) identified six dimensions were the most important indicators of climate that are team cohesion, supervisory encouragement, resources, autonomy, challenge and openness to innovation.

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Joycee & Slocum (1979) showed that people can be clustered into sets based on their perceptions of the organization. These clusters seems to form on the basis of meaningful organization roles i.e. by job functions, by units, by leader etc. this finding revealed that not only do organization have multiple climate based on the kinds of issues relevant for particular criteria of interest (e.g. safety, service) but also as a function of the unit of analysis (e.g. role, job, level) of interest. Powell and Butterfield(1978), then speaks of subsystem climates and Scneider and Snyder (1975) show how level or position in an organization yield different perceptions. The possible cause of these differences may be the leader, difference in perception of difference in people.

Models of Work Climate

Sr. No.	Author/ Authors	Dimensions
1	Siegel & Kaemmerer (1978)	Support for creativity, tolerance of difference, personal commitment.
2	Day & Bedeian (1991)	Structure, responsibility, warmth-support, reward, pressure, standards, risk.
3	Moxnes and Eilertson (1991)	Enthusiasm, less conflict, able supervisor, communication about personal problem, open atmosphere, operator centered, well organized, eager to work, satisfaction.
4	Lehman and Simpson (1992)	Faith in management, Job satisfaction, job tension, loyalty, organizational commitment, power, control of job situation.
5	Morrison and Brantner (1992)	Leadership Climate
6	Ostroff (1993)	Participation, Cooperation, warmth, growth, innovation, autonomy, achievement, hierarchy and structure.
7	Cullen, Victor & Bronson (1993)	Self interest, company profit, Team interest, Social responsibility, personal morality, Rules, standard Operating procedures, Laws.
8	Agrell & Gustafson (1994)	Participation and participation safety support for innovation, vision and group goals, task orientation and climate for excellence.
9	Scott & Bruce (1994)	Support for creativity, tolerance of differences, personal commitment, perception of reward innovation dependency, resource supply
10	Deshpande (1996)	Professionalism, caring, rules, Instrumental, Efficiency, Independence
11	Vaicys, Barnett & Brown (1996)	Team spirit, Rules, codes, Social responsibility, self interest, efficiency, personal Morality.
12	Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby & Herron (1996)	Organizational encouragement, sufficient resources, freedom, challenging work, supervisory

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		encouragement, work group supports.
13	Griffin and Mathieu (1997)	Communication flow, Motivation Index, Human Resources, Planning and Utilization.
14	DeConinck & Lewis (1997)	Caring, Law, Rules, Independence.
15	Kivimake, Kuk, Elovaino, Thomson, Kalliomake-Levanto & Heikkila (1997)	Vision, participative, safety, task, orientation, support for innovation, interaction frequency
16	Hemingway and Smith (1999)	Work pressure, autonomy, peer cohesion, supervisor support.
17	Shadur, Kienzle &Rodwell (1999)	Bureaucracy, innovation, support.
18	Bourne & Snead (1999)	Cultural environment, External stakeholder, Employee Ethics, ethical conflict situation.
19	Amabile & Conti (1999)	Organizational encouragement, sufficient resources, freedom, challenging work, supervisory encouragement, work group supports.
20	Borucki & Bruke (1999)	Concern for employee, concern for costumers
21	Deshpande, George & Joseph (2000)	Professionalism, caring, rules, Instrumental, efficiency, Independence.
22	Griffin & Neal (2000)	Manager values, safety inspections, personnel training, safety, communication.
23	Tsai (2001)	Psychological climate for service friendliness
24	Glisson and James (2002)	Depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, role conflict.
25	Barnett and Vaicys (2002)	Self interest, Team/ friendship, social responsibility, Rules/ codes.
26	Peterson (2002)	Rules, Laws, Employee Focus, Community Focus, Personal ethics, self interest, efficiency.
27	Baer & Frese (2003)	Climate for initiative, climate for psychological safety.
28	Forte (2004)	Caring, Law and Code, Rule, Instrument, Independence
29	Liao & Chuang (2004)	Global service Climate
30	Dejoy, schaffer, Wilson, Vandenberg & Butts (2004)	Employee perception of management support for safety, importance of safety issues.
31	Jaffe & Tsimerman (2005)	Law & codes, Caring, Rules, Instrumental, efficiency,. Independence.
32	Gelade & Young (2005)	Team climate, Support climate
33	Schneider, Ehrhart, Mayer, Saltz & Niles-Jolly (2005)	Global service Climate
34	Zacharatos, Barling & Iverson (2005)	Management values, safety communication, training, systems.

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35	Wallace, Popp, & Mondore (2006)	Supervisory practices, expectations regarding safe work practices
36	Mayhew, Grunwald & Dey (2006)	Diversity Friendly
37	Rik Verhaege, Peter Vlerick, Guy De Backer, Georges Van Maele, Paul Gemmel (2008)	Psychological well being, efficiency,
38	Amir (2010)	Layout of work, goals, arranged area,
39	Chandrasekar (2011)	Leader's motivation and support, encouragement, performance.
40	Ajala (2012)	Surroundings, performance, employee satisfaction.
41	Oswald (2012)	Physical climate, Behavioural/ psychological Climate.
42	Jian Li, Matthias Weigl, Jurgen Glaser, Raluca Petru, Johannes Siegrist, Peter Angerer (2013)	Psychosocial environment, depressive symptoms. rewards
43	Oludeyi (2015)	Management, Boss, company policies, working conditions, Interpersonal relationship
44	Sylvie Laforet (2016)	Rules, Psychological climate, organizational behaviour leaders, organizational culture.
45	Miikka Palvalin (2017)	Organizational performance, productivity, job satisfaction, work engagement, appreciation, work life balance.

Conclusions:

A dominant approach emerged in the literature and the majority of climate researchers examine climate as perceptual in nature versus being an actual characteristic of the organization (James, 1982; James & Jones, 1974; James, Joyce, Slocum, 1988; Schneider, 1975; Schneider, 2000). Bruke, Bourcki & Kaufman (2002) identified three types of perspective of work climate viz. Social constructionist perspective, general climate perspective, and multiple stakeholder perspective. To elaborate it further they pointed out that in Social constructionist perspective the individual's perceptions arise primarily from their interaction with each other and their organizational context and therefore, the 'construction' of their beliefs about the current work climate occurs almost in that work environment (Scheider & Reichers, 1983; Ashforth, 1985; Kozlowski & Doherty 1989; Ashkanasy, Wildrerom & Perterson, 2000). The social constructionist perspective is mainly based on choosing a referent and then measuring employee perception of characteristics of work climate. The prominent measured characteristics of work climate are with respect to creativity and innovation (Kossek & Zonia, 1993), customer service (Scheidner, 1990), organizational trust (McKnight & Webster, 2001), team climate (Anderson & West, 1996; Ekelund, Jorstad & Maznevski, 2000). These types of climate are also known in literature as "Climate for something" or "facet-specific climates" (Schneider and Reichers, 1983;

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Rousseau, 1988). Bruke, Bourcki & Kaufman (2002) pointed out that social constructionist approach are more inductive and items in it are more situational and content specific.

The second perspective that Bruke, Bourcki & Kaufman (2002) identified is general psychological climate perspective which primarily emphasizes the importance of personal values (e.g. Clarity, responsibility, support and friendly social relations) in identifying the various characteristics of the work climate. In this context James and James (1989) hypothesize the employee perceptions of the work climate reflect a higher order factor comprising an emotional evaluation of the degree to which work climate is perceived to be determined. James and his colleague not only emphasized on the general factor but they also pointed out that in addition to this general factor there are other dimensions such as leader facilitation and support, role stress, and lack of harmony, work group cooperation and job challenge etc. also exists.

The third perspective on which Bruke, Bourcki & Kaufman (2002) stressed is multiple stakeholder perspective. They mad the basis for it the work of James and James (1989), who argued that in addition to personal values, the values imposed by the organization towards important stakeholders are important factors which results in the characterization of one's own work climate. Bruke, Bourcki & Kaufman (2002) proposed that psychological climate not only personal value but also the value imposed by the organization towards the stakeholders such as customers, suppliers, and the general public and specifically in school perspective the students, teachers, principal, management/ government etc.

Common goals, clear duties, responsibilities, rules and ways of action among employees are features characteristic of work climate. Confidence in the future and trust in the ability to solve problems lay the foundation for a good work climate. Employees working in organizations with a good climate are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs, and more committed to their organisations (Glisson and James 2002).

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