



**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN**

**Organisational climate and its effect on job engagement: Exploring the mediating effect of employees' level of job satisfaction.**

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Social Science in Organisational Psychology

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2013

**COMPULSORY DECLARATION:**

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## **Abstract**

This study examined two under-researched organisational climate facets, integration and family-focused supervisor support, as predictors of employees' job engagement. It further set out to explore the extent to which job satisfaction mediated these relationships. Results were based on self-reported survey data from 226 South African employees in the publishing, distribution and advertising industries. Standard multiple regression analysis showed that climates of both integration and family-focused supervisor support were significant predictors of job engagement. Baron and Kenny's four-step approach to mediation revealed that job satisfaction fully mediated the relationships between each of the organisational climate facets and job engagement. Implications for organisational climate research and managers are discussed.

## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Ameeta Jaga, thank you for going the extra mile and reading far more literature reviews and proposals than were necessary. Thank you to Dr. Suki Goodman and the rest of the section of Organisational Psychology for affording me the opportunity to complete my Masters at the University of Cape Town.

I would also like to thank my classmates; this journey together had been a pleasure. Finally, thank you to all my friends and family for the emotional support you gave me throughout the year.

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## CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

### Introduction

Advancements in technology and globalisation place pressures on many organisations and their employees to perform. Organisations functioning in these competitive environments need to respond to greater customer demands whilst simultaneously developing a competent, engaged and satisfied workforce. Organisations that are successful in meeting these challenges seem to foster effective organisational climates (Topuz and Ferman, 2005). Organisational climate is regarded as the shared perceptions employees have regarding the events, practices, and procedures of their organisation (Patterson, West, Shackleton, Dawson, Lawthom, Maitlis, Robinson, & Wallace, 2005). Researchers have consistently evidenced the influence of a resource-rich organisational climate on employee outcomes that, in turn, enhance an organisation's productivity and competitiveness (Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009). In a South African context, little is known about the influence of organisational climate on employee outcomes.

Operational inconsistencies in organisational climate research are somewhat due to the multi-faceted nature of the climate construct and the varied ways in which climate has been conceptualised and measured (Patterson et al., 2005). Patterson et al. (2005) argued that organisational climates should be viewed and measured by its specific facets rather than treating it as a global construct. However, Kuenzi and Schminke (2009) contended the importance for combining a global and facet approach simultaneously. Researchers who examine climate using a global approach have found that employees' positive perceptions of their organisational climate to be a strong predictor of meeting sales' targets, customer satisfaction, staff retention, overall performance (e.g., Gelade & Ivery, 2003), work attitudes (e.g., Glisson & James, 2002), charismatic leadership (e.g., Koene, Vogelaar & Soeters, 2002) and job satisfaction (e.g., Castro & Martins, 2010). When considering research that examined climate in specific facets, an innovative climate was positively related to organisational innovation (e.g., Jung, Chow & Wu, 2003) and organisational performance (e.g., King, de Chermont, West, Dawson & Hebl 2007), while a climate characterised by strong supervisory support was related to reduced critical incidents,

anxiety and stress (e.g., Bachrach & Bamberger, 2007). Probst, Brubaker and Barsotti (2008) found that a climate emphasising employee safety was negatively related to the experience of on-the-job injuries. Hence, there is evidence to show that positive climates contribute to beneficial organisational outcomes. This study adopts the facet-specific approach to conceptualising and measuring organisational climate. Specifically, it considers two under-researched but important climate dimensions, integration and family-focused supervisory support and their relation to job engagement.

As South African organisations have to deal with greater levels of competitiveness, and a more diverse workforce, these two climate dimensions deserve attention. An integrative climate refers to the ‘extent of interdepartmental trust and cooperation’ perceived by an employee (Patterson et al., 2005, p. 386). Organisations that are able to foster an integrative climate promoting contextual behaviours such as trust and cooperation are able to provide improved customer service levels, thereby enhancing its competitive ability (Aguinis, 2013). When there is trust and collaboration between departments, organisations are able to leverage on quicker response rates because there is a high level of integration. This facet of climate is particularly relevant as more organisations incorporate work teams into their organisational design (Aguinis, 2013). Aguinis (2013) argued that integration is an important element in team effectiveness.

Secondly, as the demographics of the South African workforce is changing with more females and single parents entering the workforce (Mostert & Oldfield, 2009), the need for organisations to support employees with multiple roles is becoming increasingly important in retaining a diverse workforce. Valcour (2007) argued that even for employees who do not yet have families, organisations promoting climates of family support is increasingly becoming an important value proposition. This is because it signifies that the organisation is concerned about employee wellbeing (Anderson, Coffey & Byerly, 2002).

Family-focused supervisory support refers to the support given to an employees’ ability to successfully manage work and family/personal responsibilities (Anderson et al., 2002). In this study, the notion of family is broad and includes immediate and

extended family members of single and married employees. Organisations that are able to foster a climate of family-focused supervisor support are at an advantage, as empirical findings have confirmed the positive contribution of supervisor support to successful organisational and employee outcomes (Casper, Harris, Taylor-Bianco & Wayne 2010). In fact, Behson (2005) argued that support from one's supervisor in managing one's work-family interface has a greater influence on positive employee outcomes than formal work-family policies. Casper et al. (2010) suggested this is due to a social exchange relationship, which occurs in the face of more informal supportive behaviours. Hence these two facets of climate seem relevant, as the pressure to ensure that organisations remain competitive within their respective markets, while simultaneously prioritizing employee well-being.

This study adds to the limited research on the beneficial outcome, job engagement, associated with a positive climate. An integrative and family-focused supervisory supportive climate is likely to create positive emotional and cognitive experiences for an employee making it easier to meet his/her work and life demands (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). Consequently contributing to higher levels of job engagement. Schaufeli, Salanova, González-romá and Bakker (2002 p. 74) defined job engagement as a 'positive fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption.' This focus on job engagement is in line with the recent growing interest in positive organisational scholarship (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008), whereas past literature on organisational wellbeing research has predominantly focused on preventing negative outcomes (e.g. job burnout).

Engaged workers are positive about their work and feel that they are performing their jobs well (Bakker & Leiter, 2010). Job engagement has been found to increase individual job and organisational performance (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). The majority of research on organisational climate has examined its direct relationship with employee outcomes. This study extends such research by examining the mediating role of job satisfaction between climate and job engagement.

Job satisfaction is 'the extent to which people like or dislike their jobs' (Spector, 2008, p. 223). Some researchers have argued that job engagement and job satisfaction are synonymous (Macy & Schneider, 2008). However, Alarcon and Lyons (2011)

offer empirical validation that the two constructs are distinct. Researchers who have investigated the relationship between job satisfaction and job engagement (Maylett & Riboldi, 2008; Tiwari, 2011) found that job satisfaction, as a cognitive appraisal of one's work experience, is an important component leading to job engagement. Thus in this study, job satisfaction is viewed as a mechanism through which the climate facets, integration and family-focused supervisor support relate to job engagement.

### **Aim of the Research**

There have been inconsistencies in the conceptualisation and measurement of organisational climate resulting in inconsistent findings (Patterson et al., 2005). This study examines two distinct facets of organisational climate that has received little attention in existing climate research. His study, therefore, aims to add to the limited South African literature examining the relationship between a climate of integration and family-focused supervisory support, and their relationships with employees' job engagement. Further it investigates the mediating role of job satisfaction on these relationships amongst South African employees.

### **Research Questions**

- Does a climate of integration and family-focused supervisor support contribute to job engagement amongst South African employees?
- Does job satisfaction mediate the relationships between these climate facets and levels of employee job engagement?

The findings of this study contribute to the limited body of research on the nature of organisational climate, focusing on two facets that are increasingly important in the retention of a contemporary workforce. It also expands on the limited literature on the relationship between climate and job engagement in a South African context. To the researchers knowledge no studies have examined the mediating role of job satisfaction on these relationships and this adds to literature in this field. On a practical level, the findings of this study can assist organisations in identifying

strategies to foster resource-rich climates that can contribute to enhanced job and organisational performance.

### **Structure of the Dissertation**

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the research problem by highlighting the research background, problem statement and aims. Chapter 2 reviews the most relevant literature pertaining to the variables under investigation. In this chapter the main theories are discussed and a review of past findings on the relationships of interest is presented. This is followed by the hypotheses under investigation in the present study. Chapter 3 will provide a detailed account of the method followed to conduct the study for replication purposes. The chapter will describe the research design, the participants, the instruments, the measures, the data collection procedure and the data analysis used. In Chapter 4 the statistical results will be presented. Finally, Chapter 5 will discuss these results with reference to the current literature and offer recommendations for future research and practice.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a focused review of the literature relevant to the constructs under investigation. The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section discusses the Conservation of Resource Theory as the theoretical framework underpinning the relationship under investigation. Secondly, the chapter provides a comprehensive discussion on organisational climate and its various dimensions as suggested by Patterson et al. (2005). Thirdly, the chapter provides a review of past literature (albeit limited) that has investigated the relationship between each of the two climate facets and job engagement, and present an argument for the potential mediating role of job satisfaction in these relationships.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study draws on Conservation of Resource (COR) Theory (Hobfoll, 1989) as the main theoretical framework in understanding the relationship between organisational climate and job engagement. The early application of Conservation of Resource (COR) Theory was mainly used as a framework in explaining employee stress and burnout within the context of the workplace (Hobfoll & Freedy, 1993) in that, psychological stress occurs when resources are depleted. Since then, the theory has been extensively applied to burnout research (Halbesleben, 2006; Lee & Ashforth, 1996). Recently, theoretical developments have shown its applicability in understanding the positive employee wellbeing perspective (Avey, Luthans & Youssef, 2010).

The argument of COR Theory (Hobfoll, 2001) is that people aim to obtain, retain, protect and foster the resources that they value the most. Job resources, specifically, have been described as the 'physical, psychological, social and/or organisational aspects of one's job that are either functional in achieving work-related goals, reduce job demands and the associated psychological and physiological costs, or stimulate personal growth, learning and development' (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, p. 312). Hobfoll (2001) argued that the motivation to obtain, retain, foster and protect these resources is a continual process governed by three key principles and corollaries:

### **Principle 1: The primacy of resource loss.**

This first principle suggests that one's expectation of resource loss is more motivationally salient than one's expectation of gaining a particular resource. In other words, when employees are faced with the threat of resource loss, such as the energy depletion of having to meet conflicting work and family demands, they are more likely to protect the loss of a resource than to actively seek out gaining additional resources (Gorgievski & Hofboll, 2008).

### **Principle 2: Resource investment.**

The second principle is that in order for one to protect or gain resources they must be willing to invest other resources. This suggests that resource management is an important practice as it insures that in the case of resource depletion other resources are available to counter the loss. Hobfoll (2001) further proposed a corollary to this principle that 'those with greater resources are less vulnerable to resource loss and more capable of orchestrating resource gain. Conversely, those with fewer resources are more vulnerable to resource loss and less capable of resource gain.'

### **Principle 3: Loss and gain spirals.**

Hobfoll (1990) posited that the process of gaining or losing resources is a cyclical one. As an employee loses resources they increasingly become vulnerable to further resource loss. On the contrary, when one gains resources these resource gains build on themselves, which ultimately lead to better health and wellbeing for employees.

This idea can be further understood through Fredrickson's (2001) Broaden-and-Build Theory. She suggested that positive emotional experiences, as a result of increased job resources, will lead to a greater thought-action repertoire, which will likely lead to more positive experiences and thus an upward spiral to greater health and wellbeing within the workplace.

COR theory helps to understand the relationship between a climate of integration and family-focused supervisor support (viewed as a resource), and job engagement, because employees who perceive a resource-rich environment through a positive climate are more capable of sustaining their levels of job engagement (Gorgievski & Hofboll, 2008). This is because they will feel resourced in facing the likely demands

of their working environments and because feeling resourced makes resource replenishment easier (Lingard, Francis & Turner, 2010).

As the nature of organisational climate has been somewhat confusing in research, a brief discussion is provided on the nature and conceptualisation of the construct, before a review of climate and job engagement research is presented.

### **The Nature of Organisational Climate**

The perceptions employees' possess of their working environment are regarded amongst scholars as central to organisational behaviour (Patterson et al., 2005). This understanding requires a clear conceptualisation of the concept by (1) defining organisational climate in its contemporary state, (2) arguing a facet-specific vs. global perspective, and (3) distinguishing organisational climate from organisational culture.

#### **Defining organisational climate in its contemporary state.**

The human relations movement during the 1930's evidenced a research shift from the physical environment to the psychological environment (Litwin et al., 2001). This shift prompted the first research of organisational climate by Kurt Lewin in 1939. Lewin, Lippit and White (1939) found that certain social climates were shaped by particular leadership styles, and resultantly influenced employee productivity. Most contemporary climate researchers acknowledge that organisational climates manifest through employee perceptions (James & Jones 1974; Patterson et al., 2005; Schneider & Reichers, 1984; Schneider, 1975, 2000). These perceptions may evolve from the actual organisational environment, but this is not always the case. (Table 1 presents the developments of the definition of organisational climate).

#### **Presenting a case for a facet-specific vs. a global approach to conceptualising climate.**

Many earlier studies on organisational climate research utilised a global conceptualisation of the construct (Forehand & Gilmer, 1964; Glick, 1985; James 1982; James & Jones 1974; James, Joyce & Slocum, 1988; Taguiri & Litwin, 1968).

This is because the aim of these studies was to investigate how holistic situational influences affected employees' work behaviour (Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009). James and Jones (1974) suggested that employees developed holistic work environment perceptions that could be applied to a variety of contexts and industries. However, Glick (1985) argued that adopting a global perspective of organisational climate was problematic as researchers developed varied definitions leading to research inconsistency and ambiguity. Secondly, he argued that the processes for aggregating employees' individual perceptions of climate to the unit or organisational level were lacking. Furthermore, Schneider (2000) indicated that many of the global climate dimensions were not theoretically grounded. Patterson et al. (2005) supports these views stating that domain-specific climate research provides a more precise understanding of employees' perceptions of distinct climates.

As such, providing evidence into a specific aspect of an organisational environment allows the organisation to take the necessary strategies in achieving a desired outcome (Patterson et al., 2005). For example, if an organisation finds that a strong family-focused supervisory supportive climate contributes to improved levels of employee's job engagement, then appropriate policies and training interventions that facilitate family-focused supervisory support can be established.

### **Distinguishing organisational climate from organisational culture.**

Organisational climate is closely linked to and sometimes used interchangeably with organisational culture (Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009; Patterson et al., 2005). The argument in differentiating the two concepts lies at the level of analysis. Although both climate and culture guide how employees behave within their work environments, McLean (2005) argued that the two concepts are conceptually distinct. Organisational culture refers to the deeply held assumptions, meanings and beliefs that are shared amongst the employees at an organisational level; these shared values are often regarded as invisible or unconscious. Organisational climate, on the other hand, refers to the behavioural manifestations that evolve from these assumptions, meanings and beliefs held at an individual level (McLean, 2005). For example, one's perception of the safety policies, procedures and practices within the organisation will be based upon the underlying assumptions, meanings and beliefs regarding safety in

the workplace. In line with the aims of this study to examine individual level perceptions of climate facets, this study defines organisational climate as the shared perceptions that employees' have regarding the policies, practices and procedures that an organisation rewards, supports and expects (Schneider & Reichers, 1983).

Table 1

*Developments in Organisational Climate Definitions*

Author	Date	Definition
Forehand and Gilmer	1964	A set of characteristics that describe an organisation and that (a) distinguish the organisation from other organisations (b) are relatively enduring over time (c) influence the behaviour of people over time.
Taguiri and Litwin	1968	The relatively enduring quality of the total organizational environment that (a) is experienced by the occupants, (b) influences their behavior, and (c) can be described in terms of the values of a particular set of characteristics (or attributes) of the environment.
Cambell et al.	1970	A set of attributes specific to an organization that may be induced from the way the organization deals with it's members and its environment. For the individual member within an organisation, climate takes the form of a set of attitudes and expectancies which describe the organization in terms of both static characteristics (such as degree of autonomy) and behavior-outcome and outcome-outcome contingencies
Gavin and Howe; Joyce, James and Slocum	1975	The average psychological climate in an organization when there is individual level perceptual agreement
Schneider and Reichers	1983	A set of shared perceptions regarding the policies, practices and procedures that an organisation rewards supports and expects
Litwin et al.	2001	A group of measurable characteristics that members could perceive directly or indirectly in the work environment.

## **Organisational climate facets as antecedents of job engagement.**

Bakker, Albrecht and Leiter (2011), using the Job Demands-Resource Model as a framework (developed from COR theory), explained that an employees' positive perception of a supportive, involving and challenging organisational climate accommodates their psychological needs. As a result, employees become more engaged in their job roles by investing time and energy into it. These findings are supported by several researchers (Christian, Garza & Slaughter, 2011; Crawford, Lepine & Rich, 2010; Dollard & Bakker, 2010; Nahgrang, Morgeson & Hoffman 2011) (see Table 2 for a summary of research findings).

In line with COR theory, Gorgievski and Hobfoll (2008) noted that an organisation not only provides the demands that lead to energy depletion, but also provide resources. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) found that such resources are strong predictors of job engagement. In the context of this study, employees may be faced with the demands of achieving work-related goals that require the collaborative input of colleagues outside of their department. Likewise employees, who occupy multiple roles such as work and family, may benefit from a climate that encourages their supervisors to support them in meeting their multiple demands. Hence employees who perceive their environments as providing climates of integration and family-focused supervisor support, will be equipped with resources to counteract the demands of their working environment, and will more likely enhance their engagement in their work role.

### **Job Engagement**

The idea of being engaged in one's work was first conceptualised in the work of Khan (1990). Khan (1990) suggested that individuals are engaged when they express their personal self physically, cognitively and emotionally in the performance of their work. The emergence of positive psychology over the last decade has resulted in a growing amount of empirical research on the construct (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008). More recent developments in the construct by Bakker et al. (2008) has indicated that job engagement (a positive perspective to employee wellbeing) is more than just the opposite of burnout. Rather it encapsulates the optimal functioning of an

employee, characterised by a long lasting stable presence of personal energy in one's work role (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006). Bakker et al. (2008, p. 209) defined job engagement as a "positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption". Vigour refers to having feelings of resilience and energy while invested in challenging work. Dedication is a high level of involvement in the job, which can be characterised by feelings of pride, enthusiasm, significance and inspiration. Finally, absorption refers to being completely present in the task which often results in losing track of time (Bakker et al., 2008).

Studies suggest that the link between job engagement and job performance has proven to be strong (Bakker, Demerouti & Verbeke, 2004; Bakker, Gierveld & van Riswijk; Gierveld & Bakker, 2005; Salanova et al., 2005; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2007). This is because organisations that provide an environment that optimises an employees' level of cognitive and emotional attachment to their work is key to the optimal functioning and health of the employees and the organisation itself (Bakker et al., 2011). Understanding the factors that contribute to employees' job engagement is important for organisations. Thus examining the relationships between the climate facets of integration and family-focused supervisor support is deserving of attention.

### **An Integrative Organisational Climate and Job Engagement**

As global competition increases, organisations are increasingly adopting team structures and creating inter-department goals to remain successful. An integrative climate is defined as the perceptions employees' have of "the extent of interdepartmental trust and cooperation" (Patterson et al., 2005, p. 386). To the researcher's knowledge, no previous studies have examined the relationship between an integrative climate and job engagement; hence this review will include findings from the limited literature between an integrative climate and other employee level and organisational level outcomes. This will be followed by an argument for why there may be a relationship between an integrative climate and job engagement that is worth investigating.

Hwang and Chang (2009) investigated the relationship between climate facets and turnover intentions amongst 852 healthcare personnel in Korea. Multiple regression analysis revealed that an integrative climate explained a significant proportion of the variance in turnover intention. However, the results were only significant amongst administrative staff. Hwang and Chang (2009) suggested that this relationship was occupation specific. They indicated the need for organisational climate research to look at different occupations so as to guide organisational strategy decisions for each occupational category accordingly.

In a qualitative study, Hannevik, Lone, Bjørklund, Bjørkli, and Hoff (2013) explored the influence of climate facets on the success of large-scale projects. Interview data collected from 18 Norwegian employees working in the oil and gas industry was analysed deductively and coded according to Patterson's 17 climate facets. Thematic analysis revealed that an integrative climate in which there was high-perceived levels of interdepartmental cooperation and trust were key to the success of large-scale projects. Similarly, in a quantitative study by Yen, Li and Niehoff (2008) conducted amongst 254 employees across various industries, multiple regression analysis showed that an integrative climate was a significant predictor of project success. Yen et al. (2008) explained that the reason for this predicted relationship was because in such a climate employees have a greater desire to contribute.

Based on the above findings and drawing on the arguments of COR theory, it is proposed in this study that an integrative climate is likely to contribute to employees' levels of job engagement. In support of this argument Bakker, Albrecht and Leiter (2011) contended that job engagement levels amongst employees are enhanced when they experience trust, respect and mutual benefit. This is because such perceptions create the belief amongst employees that there is potential for fairness, equity, growth and opportunity within the organisation. Similarly, Albrecht (2010) found that employees, who feel they can trust and rely on others within the organisation, feel more confident about taking risks and achieving their goals. Consequently, they are likely to give greater cognitive and emotional investment into their job roles, thereby experiencing increased job engagement.

H1: Employees' positive perceptions of an integrative organisational climate will predict job engagement.

### **A Climate of Family-Focused Supervisor Support and Job Engagement**

Increased competition and advancements in technology have intensified work demands (Lewis, Gambles & Rapoport, 2007). Employees, both single and married, have started re-evaluating employment decisions in terms of how they can meet their multiple role demands (Beham & Drobnic, 2010). These role demands may include family commitments such as, attending a child's music concert or personal commitments such as a medical appointment. Research shows that employees do not yet need to have their own families to value this climate of support; rather a family supportive climate is being increasingly viewed by potential and existing employees as an important talent management strategy (Valcour, 2007). Hence, although much research has been conducted on the climate facet of general supervisor support, a climate of family-focused supervisor support is becoming increasingly important in attracting and retaining the contemporary workforce.

Prior research has suggested that although many firms have formal work-family policies in place, such as schedule flexibility and flexible working arrangements, few employees make use of them in fear of jeopardising their careers (Allen, 2001; Thompson, Beauvais, Lyness, 1999). This is because an employees' supervisor is directly responsible for the implementation of such policies and has discretion regarding its use amongst his or her subordinates. Furthermore, employees who may decide to use such policies may be viewed as lacking commitment to their careers. In other words, employee's perceptions of organisationally imposed policies, practices and procedures are validated by the informal actions of the supervisor, as they are the one's who personify the organisation to the workforce (Valcour, Ollier-Malaterre, Matz-Costa, Pitt-Catsouphes & Brown, 2011).

Anderson et al. (2002) referred to family-focused supervisory support as a social supportive resource that may or may not occur in the presence of formal organisational policies. They explain that the presence of such informal support is largely dependent upon the supervisor's personal beliefs and experiences with regard

to work-family issues. Thus, the presence of formal policies may not be enough to influence the supportive behaviour of supervisors.

Table 2

*A Summary Of Job Resources as Antecedents of Job Engagement*

Author	Date	Job Resource	Findings
Bakker et al.	2005	Autonomy	Significant
	2005	Supervisory Coaching	Significant
Hakanen et al.	2005	Social Support	Non-Significant
	2005	Feedback	Significant
	2006	Social Climate	Significant
	2006	Job Control	Significant
	2006	Innovative Climate	Significant
Crawford et al.	2010	Supervisory Support	Significant
		Positive workplace climate	Significant
Nahgrang et al.	2010	Social Support	Significant
	2011	Social Support	Significant
Swanberg et al.	2011	Safety Climate	Significant
		Perceived Supervisor Support	Significant
Christian et al.	2011	Social Support	Significant
Dollard and Bakker	2010	Psychosocial Safety Climate	Significant
		Perceived Supervisor Support	Significant
Barbier et al.	2013	Perceived Supervisor Support	Significant
	2013	Perceived Organisational Support	Significant
Barbier et al.	2013	Development Opportunities	Significant
Brough et al.	2013	Perceived Supervisor Support	Significant
		Perceived Colleague Support	Significant
Xu & Thomas	2011	Leadership support	Significant

Again, due to the paucity of research on the relationship between a climate of family-focused supervisor support and job engagement, the review that follows incorporates findings from general supervisor support. Employee perceptions of supervisory

support have shown strong empirical evidence in its relationship with job engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Barbier, Hansez, Chmiel, & Demerouti, 2013; Brough et al., 2013; Hakanen et al., 2006; James, McKechnie & Swanberg, 2011; Richman et al., 2008; Hakanen et al., 2006; Salanova, Agut & Peiro, 2005; Siu et al., 2010; Swanberg, McKechnie, Ojha & James, 2011). Referring to Job Characteristics Theory (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), Swanberg et al. (2011) explained that employees' psychological state of engagement is influenced by the social, psychological and tangible resource that supervisor support provides.

Swanberg et al. (2011) studied 1343 employees across 375 retail stores in the United States. Their findings revealed a direct predictive relationship between supervisory support and job engagement and in addition, they found that supervisory support mediated the relationship between work schedule satisfaction and job engagement. Siu et al. (2010) found a similar relationship between family supervisory support and job engagement amongst 4026 employees in China. They suggested that in countries characterised by high levels of collectivism, supervisors who are supportive towards employees' family demands are likely to enhance their employees' feelings of job engagement.

In line with Conservation of Resources Theory, it is proposed that employees', who perceive their supervisors as supportive of their family and personal commitments, are likely to be psychologically invested in their job because one is able to protect and gain important resources, which are beneficial in coping with the multiple demands one faces in their work and family roles (Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009).

H2: Employees' positive perceptions of family-focused supervisory supportive organisational climate will predict job engagement.

### **The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction on the Relationship Between Climate Facets and Job Engagement**

Mediator variables explain how or why a predictor variable influences an outcome variable (Baron and Kenny, 1986). Job satisfaction is a well-established employee attitude and refers to "the extent to which people like their work" (Abraham, 2012, p.

27). In the same manner that COR theory is used to explain the relationship between climate and engagement, it can be drawn on to understand the relationship between climate and job satisfaction (Hobfoll, 2002) a relationship, which has been supported by past research (Kaya, Koc & Topcu, 2010). Additionally, the relationship between job satisfaction and job engagement has been supported by previous research (Abraham, 2012; Maylett & Riboldi, 2008; Tiwari, 2011). Hence, job satisfaction acts as a linking mechanism between employees' perceptions of their organisational climate and the levels of job engagement. This linking mechanism can also be understood by a previous study (Cheung, Wu, Chang & Wong, 2009), which found that job satisfaction mediated the relationship between a close supervisor-subordinate relationship and organisational commitment amongst 196 Chinese employees. This study suggested that job satisfaction extended the effects of a positive supervisor-subordinate relationship, which ultimately lead to positive employee outcomes.

Specifically in the context of this study, employees who perceive an integrative climate may feel satisfied in their job because they view the inter-departmental collaboration and trust as resources that benefit the accomplishment of their work goals (Ferguson, Carlson, Zivnuska & Whitten, 2012). Consequently, this positive experience is likely to lead to greater levels of energy and motivation experienced by the employee and greater job engagement. Based on the above reasoning, job satisfaction is likely to mediate the relationship between an integrative climate and job engagement.

Similarly, when employees perceive a climate of family-focused supervisor support that helps them in fulfilling their multiple role commitments, they are likely to experience a positive state of job satisfaction (Anderson et al., 2002). This experience consequently contributes to higher levels of psychological investment in their jobs. Hence, it is proposed that job satisfaction is likely to mediate the relationship between a climate of family-focused supervisor support and job engagement.

Hypothesis 3a: The positive relation between a climate of integration and job engagement is mediated by job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3b: The positive relation between family-supportive supervision and job engagement is mediated by job satisfaction.

## Summary

This chapter has addressed some pertinent issues in studying organisational climate and presented a case for adopting the facet approach. Further it reviewed the limited research on the relationship between two under-researched but increasingly important climate facets, integration and family-focused supervisor support, and job engagement with reference to Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 2001). Finally, it argued the mediating role of job satisfaction on these relationships. Figure 1 provides a conceptual model of the relationships under investigation in this study.



*Figure 1. Proposed theoretical model under investigation*

## CHAPTER 3: METHOD

The focus of this research is to examine the relationship between two organisational climate facets (integration and family-focused supervisory support) and job engagement. This study will further explore the mediating nature of job satisfaction within this relationship. The chapter is divided into five sections, which will explain the research design, participants, procedure, measures and data techniques used.

### Research Design

In order to establish the nature of the relationships in question, the researcher employed a descriptive research design that was deductive in its approach (Hair, Babin, Money, & Samouel, 2003). The design was characterised by its cross-sectional nature using self-report questionnaires to collect quantitative data. This specific data collection method was employed as it allowed statistical analysis to be conducted, assuring the researcher could make inferences regarding the relationships between the dependant and independent variables (Terre Blanche & Durheim, 2011). Furthermore, the use of this research design assisted the successful completion of the study due to the researcher's time and cost constraints.

### Participants

The study's results were based on the responses of 226 participants. Of the total sample, 62 (27.4%) were male and 164 (72.6%) were female. Their ages ranged from 15 years to 63 years ( $M = 37.4$ ,  $SD = 8.8$ ). The majority race group represented was White (45,6%) followed by Coloured (37,6%), then Black (6.2%) and Asian (3.1%), 1.3% of respondents indicated "other race", while 6.2% preferred not to answer. Sixty five per cent of respondents indicated that they were married or cohabiting as opposed to being single, and 93.4% of the participants occupied full-time employment positions. The participants predominantly held an undergraduate degree/diploma (41.6%), 4.4% of respondents indicated that their highest level of educational qualification was Matric or below, and 29.2% had completed their postgraduate studies. 58.8% of respondents indicated they had dependent children within their care,

while 42.5% of respondents had been with their current organisation for less than five years.

## **Procedures**

Approval to conduct this research was obtained by the various Human Resource Directors of the participating organisations. Each Human Resource Director was assured that appropriate research protocol would be used throughout the study and that all information would remain anonymous and confidential. In addition, ethical approval for this study was obtained from the University of Cape Town's Faculty of Commerce Research Ethics Committee prior to data collection.

An anonymous electronic survey was designed and distributed using Qualtrics. The advantage of using electronic surveys is that respondent's perception of confidentiality is greater and thus, they are more likely to provide more honest responses (Zutshi, Parris & Creed, 2007). The survey link was distributed via email to 1330 employees across three South African organisations within the publishing, distribution and advertising industries. Of the 1330 surveys distributed, only 226 responses were useable, yielding a response rate of 17%. Despite this response rate being low, it is in line with acceptable response rates for electronic surveys (Kaplowitz, Hadlock & Levine, 2004). Data was collected using non-probability convenience sampling due to time and resource restraints (Terre Blanche & Durheim, 2011). An electronic mail was sent to participants in the three organisations, inviting them to participate in the study by clicking on the electronic survey link. A cover letter provided the employee with information regarding the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of participation, anonymity and confidentiality. In order to increase the response rate, the employees were offered an incentive. These employees were entered into a lucky draw, where they would stand a chance of winning either a R500 retail gift voucher or a free life coaching session. Upon completion of the questionnaire the participants were invited to send their name to a separate electronic mail address that was set up for the purposes of the lucky draw, in order not to compromise the anonymity of their responses. The survey was made available to the employees for a period of three weeks during July and August 2013.

## Measures

Measures that were previously found to be reliable and valid were used to assess the constructs of interest.

*Integration.* Integration was measured using a 5-item scale developed by Patterson et al. (2005). The items were rated on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 6 = Strongly Agree). An example of an item in the scale was “people in different departments are prepared to share information.” Two of the items were reverse coded. Patterson et al. (2005) reported a high Cronbach alpha of 0.86.

*Family-focused supervisory support.* An adapted version of the 6-item scale developed by Anderson et al. (2002) was used to measure family-focused supervisory support. This scale was used because the items refer to the extent to which a supervisor provides support for one’s family or personal issues. Hence, the items would be applicable to participants with or without families. Anderson et al. (2002) reported a coefficient alpha of 0.89. A sample item was “I feel comfortable bringing up personal or family issues with my supervisor.” The items were rated on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 6 = Strongly Agree).

*Job Engagement.* Job engagement was measured using the short version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003). The scale consisted of nine items measuring, specifically, the engagement dimensions of vigour, dedication and absorption (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). The scale has been validated in South Africa by Storm and Rothman (2003). A sample item was “at my work, I feel bursting with energy” (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Reported alpha coefficients by Schaufeli and Bakker (2006) for the full scale, across 10 countries, ranged between 0.85 and 0.92 (median = 0.92). For the different dimensions of engagement, Schaufeli and Bakker (2006) reported alpha coefficients ranging from 0.60 to 0.88 for vigour (median = 0.77), 0.75 to 0.90 for dedication (median = 0.85) and 0.66 to 0.86 for absorption (median = 0.78). The items were rated on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 6 = Strongly Agree).

*Job satisfaction.* Job satisfaction was measured using a 3-item scale developed by Kim, Price, Mueller and Watson (1996). Chu, Lee and Hsu (2006) also used this scale amongst a sample of 265 public health nurses across Taiwan and reported a high alpha coefficient of 0.83. An example item was, “most days I am enthusiastic about my job.” Participants were required to rate the extent to which they agreed/disagreed with the items on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 6 = Strongly Agree).

*Demographic items.* Demographic items were included in the questionnaire to describe the sample. These items included the respondents age, sex, marital status, number of dependents, level of highest qualification, ethnicity, length of employment, income, level of employment, organisational type and industry.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

The data analysis was carried out using the statistical software SPSS version 21. Prior to conducting specific statistical analysis techniques the data needed to be entered, cleaned and coded. Following the data preparation, the quantitative data was analysed through descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis, Pearson-product moment correlation and multiple regression analysis (Burns & Burns, 2008). The statistical data analysis is presented in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Based on the relevant statistical analyses conducted, this chapter is divided into seven sections. The first section presents the results of the scale's validity using exploratory factor analysis. Section two presents the reliability of the scales, using Cronbach's coefficient alpha. Section three explains the descriptive statistics. The fourth section uses Pearson-product moment correlation analysis to assess the relevant relationships under investigation. Section five presents the results of the standard multiple regression analysis used to explain the extent to which each independent variable predicted the outcome variable. Section six uses Barron and Kenny's (1986) step-by-step regression procedure to determine the mediating effect of job satisfaction on each of the two relationships under investigation. The final section gives a summarised account of how the findings link to the four hypotheses proposed in Chapter two.

### **Exploratory Factor Analysis**

In order to determine the underlying factor structure evident in the variables of each measure, an exploratory factor analysis was used (Burns & Burns, 2008). Principle axis factoring as opposed to principal component analysis was used, as it is recommended for data structuring rather than data reduction purposes. Furthermore, factor loadings greater than 0.3 were necessary for practical significance (Hair et al., 2003). Eigenvalues, which indicate the common variance explained by a factor, were set at a minimum value of one (Williams, Brown & Onsman, 2012). Finally, for factor analysis to be conducted on the data Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy needed to be greater than 0.5, and Bartlett's test of sphericity had to be significant (Burns & Burns, 2008).

#### **Integrative climate and family focused supervisory support scales.**

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted using the five items from the integrative climate scale and the six items from the family-focused supervisory supportive scales. It was appropriate for exploratory factor analysis to be conducted on the data as the KMO value was 0.855 and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ( $\chi^2_{(55)} = 1631.791.207, p < 0.001$ ).

The Principle-Axis extraction using varimax rotation revealed two significant factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0, accounting for 47.1% and 21.0% of the total variance respectively. Table 4 represents the factor loadings onto two factors. The family-focused supervisory support scale items loaded onto factor 1 with all factor loadings greater than 0.7 ( $0.761 < r < 0.879$ ). The integrative climate scale items loaded onto factor two with the factor loadings ranging from 0.560 to 0.817.

Table 3

<i>Integrative Climate and Family-Focused Supervisor Support Scale Factor Loadings</i>			
Item	Description	IC	SS
IC1	There is very little conflict between departments here	<b>0.761</b>	0.179
IC2	People in different departments are prepared to share information	<b>0.805</b>	0.217
IC3	Collaboration between departments is very effective	<b>0.817</b>	0.184
IC4	There is very little respect between some of the departments here*	<b>0.573</b>	0.067
IC5	People are suspicious of other departments *	<b>0.560</b>	0.058
FFSS1	My supervisor is supportive when I have a work problem now	0.160	<b>0.761</b>
FFSS2	My supervisor accommodates me when I have family or personal business to take care of - for example, medical appointments, meeting with child's teacher etc.	0.129	<b>0.785</b>
FFSS3	My supervisor is understanding when I talk about personal or family issues that affect my work	0.096	<b>0.879</b>
FFSS4	I feel comfortable bringing up personal or family issues with my supervisor	0.149	<b>0.783</b>
FFSS5	My supervisor really cares about the effects that work demands have on my personal and family life	0.204	<b>0.864</b>
FFSS6	My supervisor is fair and doesn't show favouritism in responding to employees' personal or family needs.	0.188	<b>0.819</b>
Eigenvalues		2.310	5.181
Individual total variance (percent)		21.00%	47.10%
Cumulative total variance (percent)		21.00%	68.10%

Notes N = 226 after listwise deletion of missing data; Principal factor analysis with varimax normalised data; IC = Integrative Climate; SS = Family-focused Supervisor Support. \*reverse coded items

### **Job satisfaction scale.**

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity produced criteria that supported the use of principal-axis factoring analysis (KMO = 0.721,  $\chi^2_{(3)} = 319.913$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Principal-axis factoring analysis was performed on the three items of the job satisfaction scale. As expected, the results revealed that all three items loaded onto one factor with an eigenvalue of 2.345, explaining 78.175% of the total variance. Factor loadings for all the items were greater than 0.7 ( $0.736 < r < 0.876$ ) (see Table 5). Therefore, the scale was unidimensional and the factor assumed to measure job satisfaction.

Table 4

*Job Satisfaction Scale Factor Loadings*

Item	Description	Factor Loading
JSAT 1	Most days I am enthusiastic about my job	.851
JSAT 2	I find enjoyment in my job	.876
JSAT 3	Overall I am satisfied with my job	.736

Notes N = 226 after casewise deletion of missing data; Principal factor analysis with varimax normalised data; JSAT = Job Satisfaction.

### **Work engagement scale.**

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity was conducted on the data and produced criteria that supported the application of principal-axis factoring analysis (KMO = 0.888,  $\chi^2_{(36)} = 1160.934$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Principle-axis factoring was used to analyse the nine items of the UWES. The results revealed that all items loaded onto one factor. An eigenvalue of 5.030 was reported and explained 55.885% of the total variance. All items had a factor loading greater than 0.4, ranging from 0.422 to 0.859 (see, Table 6). Thus the scale was deemed a unidimensional measure of work engagement. This finding is in line with Hallberg and Schaufeli (2006) who found, through confirmatory factor analysis, that work engagement can be represented on a single dimension.

Table 5

*Utrecht Work Engagement Scale Factor Loadings*

Item	Description	Factor Loading
WE 1	At my work, I feel bursting with energy	.790
WE 2	I am enthusiastic about my job	.843
WE 3	I am immersed in my work	.611
WE 4	At my job, I feel strong and vigorous	.815
WE 5	I get carried away when I'm working	.422
WE 6	My job inspires me	.859
WE 7	When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work	.834
WE 8	I feel happy when I am working intensely	.606
WE 9	I am proud of the work that I do	.515

Notes  $N = 226$  after listwise deletion of missing data; Principal factor analysis with varimax normalised rotation; WE = Work Engagement.

### Reliability Analysis

Using Cronbach coefficient alpha ( $\alpha$ ), the reliability of each of the four scales was assessed. Alpha values of greater than 0.7 were considered to be acceptable (Burns & Burns, 2008). High alpha values indicated a high level of internal consistency between the items. The results of the reliability analyses for this study indicated that the alpha coefficients for each of the scales were well above the acceptable threshold of 0.7 ( $0.833 < \alpha < 0.926$ ) (see Table 8 along diagonal).

The corrected item-total correlations for all the scales were above the conventional cut off of .30 (Leech, Barret & Morgan, 2008). The lowest item-total correlation was 0.406 and the highest was 0.856. No items were thus removed from the scales.

### Descriptive Statistics

In order to investigate the distribution of scores for each of the four scales, a full set of descriptive statistics was conducted on each scale (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 2011). The summary of descriptive statistics is illustrated in Table 7. Reported perceptions of an integrative climate were slightly above the mean ( $M = 3.49$ ;  $SD = 0.6$ ) on a 6-point Likert Scale. Employee perceptions of family-focused supervisory

support were high with a mean of 4.46 ( $SD = 1.14$ ). Job satisfaction levels were also high with a mean score of 4.37 ( $SD = 1.06$ ), while similarly; the work engagement scale reported a mean score of 4.32 ( $SD = 0.81$ ). With regards to the distribution of the data for each composite variable, Table 7 explains that for the integration climate, family-focused supervisor support and work engagement the data can be described as normally distributed, as the Skewness statistic does not exceed 1.0 or -1.0. On the other hand, the distribution of the data for the job satisfaction scale was slightly skewed to the left.

Table 6  
*Descriptive Statistics for Summary Scales*

Variables	N	M	SD	SE	Skewness	Kurtosis
Integration Climate Scale	226	3.49	0.60	0.04	-0.21	1.88
Family-Focused Supervisor Support Scale	226	4.46	1.14	0.08	-0.91	0.56
Job Satisfaction	226	4.37	1.06	0.07	-1.11	1.22
Work Engagement	226	4.32	0.81	0.05	-0.92	1.71

Notes.  $N$  = Number of respondents after listwise deletion of missing data;  $M$  = Mean;  $SD$  = standard deviation;  $SE$  = standard error of mean.

### Correlation Analysis

Pearson-Product Moment correlation analysis was conducted with listwise deletion of missing data, in order to determine the extent to which employee perceptions of an integrative climate and a supervisory supportive climate related to job satisfaction and work engagement; and the extent to which job satisfaction related to work engagement. The correlation values at the significance level  $p < 0.01$  is represented in Table 8. To determine the strengths of the relationships the following criteria by Burns and Burns (2008) were used: coefficients below 0.4 are considered weak, between 0.4 and 0.7 are regarded as moderate relationships and greater than 0.7 are strong relationships.

The results revealed a significant but weak relationship between an integrative climate and employee levels of job satisfaction ( $r = 0.307$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Similarly, a weak but

significant relationship was found between perceptions of an integrative climate and levels of work engagement ( $r = 0.280, p < 0.01$ ).

The results revealed that there is a significant moderate positive relationship between family-focused supervisory support and employee levels of job satisfaction ( $r = 0.484, p < 0.01$ ) and work engagement ( $r = 0.469, p < 0.01$ ). Therefore, when one experiences increased levels of support from supervisor's one's levels of job satisfaction and work engagement increase too.

The results revealed that a significantly high correlation existed between job satisfaction and job engagement ( $r = 0.855; p < 0.01$ ). Therefore, employees with increased levels of job satisfaction are likely to have increased levels of work engagement. This high correlation is possibly due to the similarities between the two constructs as Tiwari (2011) suggested job satisfaction forms part of the job engagement construct on a cognitive level.

Table 7

*Correlation Analysis*

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Integrative Climate	(0.83)			
2. Family-Focused Supervisory Support	<b>0.274**</b>	(0.93)		
3. Job Satisfaction	<b>0.307**</b>	<b>0.484**</b>	(0.86)	
4. Work Engagement	<b>0.280**</b>	<b>0.469**</b>	<b>0.885**</b>	(0.90)

Note.  $N = 226$  after listwise deletion of missing data: \*  $p \leq 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ ; Cronbach's Alpha reflected on the diagonal,

**Standard Multiple Regression Analysis**

Standard multiple regression analysis was conducted in order to examine the strength of the relationship between the dependant variable, job engagement, and the two independent variables, integrative climate and family-focused supervisory support. Using the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), this study was able to assess the degree to

which the two independent variables account for variation in experiences of job engagement amongst the sample. Therefore, as  $R^2$  increases the greater the explanatory power of the independent variable (Burns & Burns, 2008).

The climate facets, integrative climate and family-focused supervisor support were entered into the model as independent variables and job engagement was entered as the dependent variable. The multiple regression results revealed that the adjusted squared multiple correlation was significantly different from zero ( $F = 36.188, p < 0.001$ ). In addition, 23.8% of the variance in the overall levels of job engagement was explained by perceptions of an integrative climate and family-focused supervisory support. The multiple regression analysis results indicated that both the independent variables uniquely and significantly contributed to the prediction of work engagement. Interestingly, family-focused supervisory support was by far a stronger predictor, explaining 42.4% of the variance in job engagement ( $\beta = 0.302, t = 7.017, p < 0.001$ ), compared to employee perceptions of an integrative climate, which explained 16.4% of the variance ( $\beta = 0.220, t = 2.708, p < 0.01$ ).

### **Assumptions of Multiple Regression Analysis**

There are several assumptions that need to be met prior to conducting multiple regression analysis on the data. These include (1) assumptions of multicollinearity, and (2) normality of error distribution (Burns & Burns, 2008). Burns and Burns (2008) suggested that highly significant correlations ( $r > .90$ ) between the independent variables may have adverse effects in the predictive and explanatory power of the regression analysis. Table 7 revealed a significantly weak correlation between an integrative climate and a climate of family-supportive supervisor behaviour ( $r = 0.274$ ). In addition, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) articulates the degree to which collinearity among the predictors reduces the accuracy of an estimate and that a VIF value should not be greater than 10 (Burns & Burns, 2008). In this study, the independent variables showed a VIF value equal to 1.081. Finally, the assumption of standard normal probability distribution for the dependant variable, work engagement was measured using residual plots. The scatterplot revealed that there was not much deviation of the observed values from the diagonal line, assuming

homoscedasticity. Hence all the assumptions for the utilisation of multiple regression analysis were met.

### **The Mediating Effect of Job Satisfaction**

The role of a mediator is to explain why an independent and a dependent variable are related, as it aims to increase the accounted variance within a specific model. In other words, the independent variable works through the mediator variable to explain its relationship with the dependent variable (Mackinnon, 2012).

In order to test the mediating effect of job satisfaction on the relationships of climate and engagement, Baron and Kenny's (1986) four-step approach was employed. This approach is considered the most popular of all the mediation approaches and was considered over other approaches, as it is most suited to null hypothesis significance testing (Kraemer, Kiernan, Essex & Kupfer, 2008).

Baron and Kenny's (1986) four step approach to mediation requires that three regression analyses be conducted to ensure four conditions are met. For the purposes of this study, the four conditions are: (1) The regression coefficient of the relationship between the study's independent variables and work engagement is analysed to determine whether a significant relationship exists. A significant relationship has to exist for mediation to be conducted. (2) The regression coefficient of the relationship between job satisfaction (the mediator variable) and the two independent variables are analysed. Again these relationships have to be significant to follow with mediation. (3) A significant regression coefficient must exist between job satisfaction (mediating variable) and job engagement (dependent variable). (4) When the final regression model is run and a significant relationship between the mediator and dependent variable exists then the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable should no longer be significant.

Three regression analyses were thus performed to test the mediating effect of job satisfaction on each of the two relationships between a climate of integration and job engagement and a climate of family-focused supervisor support and job engagement. The results of both mediating effects are represented in Table 8 and Table 9.

Table 8

*Summary of Mediation Effect of Job Satisfaction on Integrative Climate and Job Engagement*

	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error	Beta
Analysis One:				
IC on JE	0.280**	0.078	0.086	0.280**
Analysis Two:				
IC on JS	0.307**	0.094	0.112	0.307**
Analysis Three:				
Step 1: JS on JE	0.855**	0.731	0.026	0.849**
Step 2: IC on JE	0.855	0.731	0.049	0.019

Note: \* =  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* =  $p < 0.001$ ; IC = Integrative Climate; JS = Job Satisfaction; JE = Job Engagement

Table 9 shows that an integrative climate predicted job engagement ( $\beta = 0.280$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). In the second regression analysis, an integrative climate predicted job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.307$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). In the third regression analysis, job satisfaction predicted job engagement ( $\beta = 0.849$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and the effect of an integrative climate on job engagement were significantly lower in the third regression analysis than it was in the first ( $\beta = 0.019$ ,  $p = 0.594$ ).

In summary, the results revealed that the relationship between perceptions of an integrative climate and work engagement is non-significant when controlling for the mediating effects of job satisfaction. Therefore, hypothesis 3a that job satisfaction fully mediates the relationship between employee perceptions of an integrative climate and their levels of work engagement is supported.

Table 9

*Summary of Mediation Effect of Job Satisfaction on a Family-Focused Supervisory Supportive Climate and Job Engagement*

	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error	Beta
Analysis One:				
FFSS on JE	0.469**	0.220	0.042	0.469**
Analysis Two:				
FFSS on JS	0.484**	0.234	0.054	0.484**
Analysis Three:				
Step 1: JS on JE	0.855**	0.731	0.030	0.820**
Step 2: FFSS on JE	0.857	0.735	0.028	0.073

Note: \* =  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* =  $p < 0.001$ ; IC = Integrative Climate; FFSS = Family-Focused Supervisory Support; JS = Job Satisfaction; JE = Job Engagement

Table 10 explains that a family-focused supervisory supportive climate predicted job engagement ( $\beta = 0.469$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). A second regression analysis was conducted and revealed that a family-focused supervisory supportive climate predicted job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.484$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The third regression analysis revealed that job satisfaction predicted job engagement ( $\beta = 0.820$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) while the relationship between a family-focused supervisory supportive climate and job engagement was non-significant ( $\beta = 0.073$ ,  $p = 0.066$ ). As a non-significant relationship occurs between employee perceptions of a family-focused supervisory supportive climate and work engagement when controlling for the mediating effect of job satisfaction, hypothesis 3b can be confirmed- job satisfaction fully mediates this relationship.

### **Final Notes**

The results of this study were in favour of the hypothesized conceptual model. The exploratory factor analysis revealed the unidimensionality of each of the four scales used. A Pearson-product moment correlation showed significant positive correlations between the independent variables, perceptions of an integrative climate and family-focused supervisory support, and the dependent variable job engagement. Finally, standard multiple regression analysis revealed that both independent variables significantly predicted changes in employees' level of job engagement. These

findings support hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2. Interestingly, family-focused supervisory support was a much stronger predictor of job engagement than an integrative climate. The mediation analysis further revealed that employees' level of job satisfaction fully mediated the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables. Table 10 summarises the main findings of the study based on the analysis of the results. The findings are presented with reference to the hypotheses proposed in Chapter Two.

Table 10

*Hypotheses and Summary of Results*

Hypotheses	Data Analysis Technique	Level of Support
1. Employee perceptions of an integrative climate predicts job engagement	Pearson-product moment correlation; standard multiple regression analysis	Supported
2. Employee perceptions of a family-focused supervisory supportive climate predicts job engagement	Pearson-product moment correlation; standard multiple regression analysis	Supported
3a. An integrative organisational climate will relate to job engagement as mediated by the employees' job satisfaction.	Standard multiple regression analysis	Supported
3b. Employee's perceptions of supervisory support will relate to job engagement as mediated by the employees' job satisfaction.	Standard multiple regression analysis	Supported

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This study set out to examine two under-researched climate facets as predictors of job engagement, which is regarded as an important mental-state of being for optimal individual performance (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006). Furthermore, it explored job satisfaction as a linking mechanism in these relationships, which to the researcher's knowledge has not been previously examined. Analyses were conducted on self-reported cross-sectional survey data in order to test the hypotheses. This chapter begins with an overview of the results and presents the findings in line with extant research in the area.

In this study the researcher acknowledges that organisational climate research can be viewed from multiple perspectives (Patterson et al, 2005). However for this study a facet approach to conceptualising and measuring climate was adopted. This is because investigating distinct climate facets within particular organisations was viewed as theoretically and practically beneficial, as it serves to provide the organisations with a clearer understanding of the strategies and interventions needed to foster those specific climates, which lead to important outcomes (Schneider, 2000). This chapter will conclude with a discussion of the implications of these findings for management, and further notes some study limitations and recommendations for future research.

### **Contributions of this Study**

The main aim of this study was to add to the limited organisational climate literature within a South African context, with a specific focus on the following:

1. Evaluating data regarding the levels of perceived climate and job engagement amongst South African employees
2. An empirical understanding of the relationship between an integrative organisational climate and job engagement amongst South African employees.
3. An empirical understanding of the relationship between a family-focused supervisory supportive climate and job engagement amongst South African employees.

4. An empirical understanding of the mediating role of job satisfaction between the two previously mentioned relationships.

Each of the above mentioned contributions will be examined in turn.

### **Evaluating Data Regarding the Levels Of Perceived Climate and Job Engagement Amongst South African Employees**

The results showed that on average the respondents perceived their working environments to be fairly integrative and that their direct supervisors were highly supportive of their family demands. The results also revealed that the majority of respondents were satisfied with their jobs and felt engaged in their work roles. Firstly, this suggests that the organisations that the respondents worked for were structured in such a way that promoted and allowed for inter-departmental integration (Daft, 2009). Secondly, their supervisors were likely to value family demands (Anderson et al., 2002). Finally, the high scores of the two outcomes (job satisfaction and job engagement) suggest the respondents are exposed to a great deal of job resources (Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009). Two of these resources have been identified in this study, however it is likely that the respondents are exposed to more resources that contribute to their high levels of satisfaction and engagement.

### **The Relationship Between an Integrative Organisational Climate and Job Engagement**

The findings of the multiple regression analysis confirmed the first hypothesis, that job engagement levels of employees were substantially and significantly predicted by the respondents' perceptions of an integrative organisational climate. This suggests that respondent's who perceived high levels of inter-departmental trust and cooperation were likely to be more engaged in their job roles. Possible reasons for this relationship may be that when employees perceive a climate of integrations they may experience less conflict, because departments are willing to share valuable information, which helps the employees fulfil their work roles more effectively. Hence, employees may feel respected and positive about their environment in which they work, consequently being more engaged in their job. This experience is in line

with Conservation of Resource Theory, as employees will view their work environment as resourceful in coping with work-related demands and more equipped to secure on additional resources. The principles of COR Theory (Hobfoll, 2001) suggest that employees who view their organisation in this way are firstly, likely to experience positive affect, as an integrative climate protects one from various resource losses, such as a key resource needed for engagement levels – energy (Gorgievski & Hofboll, 2008). Secondly, a resource rich integrative environment allows for resource investment, as such employees may feel more willing to engage in more risk-taking activities. Therefore, they are able to invest more of themselves emotionally and cognitively and thus be more engaged in their job roles (Albrecht, 2010). Finally, such resources will lead to upward spirals to further resources. For example, effective collaboration may lead to work being completed in a timeous manner and therefore, employees may experience less stress, more time for family and friends which, according to COR theory, should ultimately lead to positive cognitive and emotional experiences such as job engagement.

This finding is a unique contribution to both organisational climate and job engagement literature, as no previous studies have investigated this relationship. However studies that have considered other positive resource-rich climate facets have also shown that they help contribute to beneficial employee attitudes (e.g., Bakker, Demerouti, Hakanen & Xanthopolou, 2007; Farooqui, 2012; Imran, Saeed & Fatima, 2010).

### **The Relationship Between a Family-Focused Supervisory Supportive Climate and Job Engagement**

The results from the multiple regression analysis confirmed hypothesis 2, that employees who perceive a climate of family-focused supervisor support are likely to feel greater levels of job engagement. This finding is consistent with the limited findings on this relationship by Swanberg et al. (2011) and Siu et al. (2011), who investigated family-focused focused supervisory support and job engagement. Similar findings (Brough et al., 2013; Barbier et al., 2013; Siu et al., 2010; James, Mckechnie & Swanberg, 2011; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Richman et al., 2008; Swanberg,

McKechnie, Ojha & James, 2011; Hakanen et al., 2006; Salanova et al., 2005) were also found for more general measures of supervisory support and job engagement.

Speculations for reasons for this relationship is that employees with multiple roles such as a work role and a family role, are likely to experience pressure from each role that may be incompatible (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). Given the nature of the contemporary workforce, employees value their work role but are increasingly concerned about having time and energy to fulfil their personal and family commitments (Beutell & Wittig-Berman, 2008). Hence, employees who have supervisors who are supportive of their family and personal commitments are likely to feel more positive about their jobs. This is because, instead of employees feeling as though they have to separate their work and non-work life, they feel supported by their supervisor in managing their multiple role commitments more effectively. This support can either be in the form of emotional support. For example, outwardly expressing their concern about the illness of a subordinate's child, or the support can be instrumental. For example, providing a subordinate with time-off from work to tend to an ill child (Anderson et al. 2002)

COR theory helps to understand this relationship. Employees who face conflicting demands from their work and family lives are likely to lose energy resources. When employees perceive that their supervisor is supportive of their family responsibilities, for example allowing an employee to leave work early to attend a child's concert, they feel resourced and therefore more positive about their job (Crawford et al., 2010; Nahagrang et al., 2011).

Another explanation to this relationship could be explained through social exchange theory. Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) suggests that when one party treats another party favourably, the other party is obliged to reciprocate such actions, thus leading to favourable outcomes for both parties (McNall, Nicklin & Masuda, 2010). The reciprocation often comes in the form of positive attitudes and ultimately positive feelings towards one's job and organisation (McNall et al. 2010). In this case, when a supervisor shows support of a subordinate's family demands, according to social exchange theory, the subordinate will reciprocate the support with positive attitudes towards his job, such as being more engaged in his or her task.

It should be noted that positive perceptions of a family-focused supervisor supportive environment was a stronger predictor of employee job engagement levels than a positive integrative climate. Therefore, while both significantly predict employee engagement levels, this study's results suggest that a greater focus for managers should be on facilitating a climate where supervisors exhibit supportive behaviours towards the multiple demands of employees' work and family lives. This is particularly important as South African organisations have a strategic priority to attract and retain a diverse workforce.

### **The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction**

The results of this study confirmed that the relationships between an integrative and family-focused supervisor supportive climate with job engagement are fully mediated by job satisfaction. Hence, hypothesis 3a and 3b are supported. These findings add to the gap in literature as no previous studies to the researcher's knowledge have examined these mediating relationships. However, Abraham (2012) indicated that various job resources, including autonomy, manager recognition, job variety, and communication with other employees and work-family balance, to be predictors of job satisfaction. Abraham (2012) further added that job satisfaction would ultimately lead to increased levels of job engagement, although this was not confirmed empirically.

The reason for this mediating relationship may be due to a number of reasons. Firstly, the resource-rich nature of these two organisational climate aspects will lead to overall feelings of job satisfaction, which is distinct from job engagement in that it is a feeling of satisfaction with the overall job and not specifically the task at hand. As COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001) suggests the positive affect associated with job satisfaction will lead to more resources and ultimately spiralling towards a feeling of being engaged in one's specific work task. Secondly, although job satisfaction and job engagement are distinct constructs, this study shows a high correlation between the two constructs and factor analysis found that job satisfaction items cross loaded with a number of work engagement items. This may indicate that job satisfaction represents the cognitive component of job engagement, as previous studies have suggested

(Tiwari, 2011; Maylett & Riboldi, 2008), and thus plays an important but not complete role in employees feeling engaged at work.

The next section will outline the strategies organisations and their managers can adopt to facilitate positive perceptions of each of the two climate facets.

### **Managerial Implications**

Due to increasingly competitive markets, through technological advancements and globalisation, organisations are faced with the challenge of retaining important human resources. This is specifically true within the South African context, as highly skilled workers are often lured to other countries with the promise of significantly increased salaries and additional benefits, as well as a better quality of life for their families. Research has found that job engagement to be closely related to positive employee and organisational outcomes such as, organisational commitment and reduced turnover intention (Halbesleben, 2010). Therefore, if organisations wish to be competitive within the global market they must understand the factors that contribute to increasing employee levels of job engagement.

### **Facilitating an Integrative Organisational Climate**

Inter-departmental integration does not only have positive consequences for the success of organisations but, as this study has found, is beneficial to the feeling of engagement an employee has to their work-role. The complex nature of inter-personal interaction and the competing demands for organisational resources suggests that ensuring people and their department's work together effectively can be a challenging process. There are a number of ways in which management can ensure that their perceived organisational environment is characterised by inter-departmental trust and cooperation.

Firstly, in ensuring an effective integrative climate, management must allocate resources appropriately (Rowland, 2012). Appropriate resource allocation allows team members to fulfil their role optimally as well as reduce potential conflict between departments or team members. To ensure this happens, clear and open

communication regarding the distribution of limited resources and the appointment of an experienced and respected project manager is needed (Rowland, 2012). A project manager should also ensure clear and specific goals are set, conflicts are resolved appropriately and that clear protocol is set out for decision-making.

Secondly, inter-departmental integration stems from the support it is given by top management. A supportive culture that rewards risk taking and does not punish the failure of risky projects may increase cross-functional integration, as employees are not averse to taking on complex projects that require the collaboration of multiple departments (Sanzo, Santos, Garci & Trespalacios, 2011).

Thirdly, managers can foster inter-departmental trust by ensuring that team-members are working within a close proximity to one another, ensure the stability of team members, implementing formal programs that improve employees' understanding of the work and contribution of other departments and allowing team members to move temporarily between departments, which will assist those employees to gain better perspective of the work of other departments (Sanzo et al., 2011). Furthermore, integrative behaviours must form part of the criteria for each team member's performance evaluation (Rowland, 2012). Appropriate behaviours that create an integrative climate must be rewarded as it signifies its importance within the organisation.

Finally, Daft, Murphy and Willmot (2010) state that organisations, which operate in highly uncertain and competitive environments, are likely to experience a greater lack of inter-departmental integration. They believe that the higher the uncertainty within an organisation the greater the need for an integrative organisational climate. They suggest that to increase the level of integration between departments, organisations need to move from a more mechanistic organisational structure to a more organic structure. Organic structures break away from the traditional hierarchical organisational structures characterised by strict rules and regulations and thus, the decision-making processes are decentralized. Organic structures promote a more informal approach to responsibility and assigning tasks by encouraging more teamwork. Additionally, they suggest the appointment of a liaison, which is likely to

increase integration through understanding other points of view and effectively sharing information.

### **Facilitating a Family-Focused Supervisor Supportive Climate**

The findings of this study and other studies (Anderson et al., 2002; Behson, 2005) provide evidence for the need for informal supportive climates as they significantly predict positive outcomes for organisations and their employees. However, facilitating such a climate is a complicated one as Swanberg et al. (2011) have argued that it is largely dependent on the relationship between the supervisor and the individual employee. As such, a supervisor's long standing attitudes, values and beliefs towards the family demands of their subordinates, will be the key determinant of the nature of such a climate. Furthermore, Anderson et al. (2002) state that these supervisor attitudes are a result of past experiences, which could be based on their own family-related demands or how subordinates have used the family-friendly policies afforded to them. In other words, supervisors are less likely to demonstrate family supportive behaviours, as they may not understand such needs, or they have experienced subordinates abusing such opportunities.

Understanding that a family-focused supervisor supportive climate is largely based on the attitudes, beliefs and values of the supervisors themselves, provides organisations with an understanding of how to facilitate such a climate. The most well documented approach has been leadership seminars and workshops, addressing appropriate behavioural strategies (Behson, 2002). These workshops aim to provide supervisors with the most appropriate behavioural training, raising their awareness regarding the employee and organisational benefits of supporting work and family needs (Tay & Quazi, 2010). Behavioural training should further teach supervisors the most appropriate ways in which to support employees' family or personal needs. Additionally, these behaviours should be directly linked to their performance appraisals where there should be positive and negative consequences for supervisors who display such behaviours (Olde-Dusseau, Britt & Greene-Shortridge, 2012). Finally, family-focused supervisor supportive behaviours should be linked to selection criteria used within the recruitment process (Hammer, Kossek, Anger, Bodner, Zimmerman, 2011).

Supervisors can attend workshops to equip them in adopting strategies that allow their employees to better manage their family responsibilities without negatively impacting their careers. Managers should not view family roles negatively as they benefit the way men and women perform at work. For example family-to-work enrichment, defined by Greenhaus and Powell (2006) as “the extent to which experiences in one role improve the quality of life in another role” (p.72), demonstrates the positive beneficial effects of combining a work and a family role. Several empirical studies have found that when employees transfer positive resources from their family role to their work role, leading to an improved quality of work life (family-to-work enrichment), they experience positive work outcomes such as job satisfaction and affective commitment (McNall, Nicklin & Masuda, 2010).

Clark (2001) found that employees, who have control over the conditions of their work and have enhanced perceptions of autonomy, experienced greater levels of job satisfaction, a linking mechanism to job engagement. Policies and practices that support the work and family roles of employees should not solely be aimed at woman, as the balance between work and family is an important issue for both genders (Stevens et al., 2006).

Adopting these policies and practices is important for organisations wishing to remain competitive within their respective industries, as employees are looking for employers who will assist them in achieving their career goals while allowing them to be responsible family members (Valcour et al., 2011).

### **Research Limitations**

The findings of this study must be understood in the context of a few methodological limitations. These limitations have occurred due to resource constraints on the part of the researcher.

The study was cross-sectional in time and as relationships between variables often changed over time, statements regarding the causality of the relationships cannot be made (Bakker et al., 2007; Bowen & Wiersema, 1999). In order to overcome such a

constraint a longitudinal study design should be considered for future studies examining these relationships (Bowen & Wiersema, 1999).

Secondly, due to the collection of self-report data the results may be susceptible to common method variance (Terre-Blanche & Durheim, 2011). Although employee's perceptions regarding the state of their working environment is important information, the objectivity of each response should be called into question (Bakker et al., 2007). Thus, a combination of self-report surveys and other-rating systems should be adopted when evaluating organisational climates.

Finally, the non-probability convenient sampling approach adopted for this study does not provide a clear representation of the population. The results can therefore not be generalised to all employed people of South Africa (Terre-Blanche & Durheim, 2011). Future studies should aim for a random probability sample.

### **Directions for Future Research**

As previously discussed, an organisational climate can be measured from a global and a facet-specific perspective (Patterson et al., 2005). Future research can increase the number of climate facets examined and amongst different levels in the organisation. In this way, comparisons can be made as to which climate facets are the most significant predictors of job engagement for employees in distinct levels of the organisation. For example, a climate of autonomy may be affective for employees in administrative positions, but may not be very important for middle managers.

Understanding the specific climates that would be most conducive to facilitating job engagement has important implications for organisations and managers, as it provides insight into the most appropriate strategies and interventions needed to facilitate a working environment that is most suitable to employees working at their optimal level of functioning.

With such information, organisations can also be more specific in their resource allocation, thereby increasing their competitiveness. Such research could go beyond the climate facets developed by Patterson et al. (2005), especially as these have been

established primarily in Anglo-based societies. In South Africa, a country with multiple ethnicities, employees may value different climates. Research has suggested that cultural differences in terms of levels of collectivism and individualism exist (Schein, 2004). Hence, future research can possibly begin with a qualitative study exploring the climates that are most valued by South African employees of different ethnicities. Quantitative studies can then follow investigating the relationship between these culturally salient climate facets and job engagement. Future studies can also place cultural variables as moderators to the relationship between climate facets and job engagement. This will have important implications for understanding the mechanisms through which organisations increase employee job engagement amongst different cultural groups in South Africa.

Another important direction for further research would be to understand how varying levels of support effect job engagement. Understanding how formal organisational support, through the implementation of policies, and informal supervisory and colleague support effects employees levels of job engagement will have important organisation strategy decision implications (Hammer et al., 2011).

## **Conclusion**

Organisational climate research has been a poorly understood construct, due mainly to the multiple perspectives previous studies have taken (Patterson et al., 2005). It is clear that understanding the construct from a global perspective or understanding more specific climate facets has its own advantages and disadvantages (Ashkanasay, Wildrom & Peterson, 2000). This study has approached organisational climate from a facet-specific approach, as it provides organisations and their managers a clearer understanding of the factors predicting job engagement. Organisations can consequently design the most appropriate strategies and interventions to ensure employees feel more engaged in their work-roles. This study extends the limited research on two under researched facet-specific organisational climates, integration and family-focused supervisor support and the role they play in fostering a more engaged South African workforce.

Through the principles of COR Theory (Hobfoll, 2001) and the subsequent positioning of positive organisational climate facets as job resources, the findings of this study show that employees who perceive their work environments as more integrative, characterised by trust and cooperation between departments will positively predict feelings of engagement amongst employees. Additionally, the findings also suggest that the resource-rich nature of family-focused supervisory support will also predict heightened engagement amongst the workforce. Furthermore, this study revealed the full mediating nature of job satisfaction. Firstly, this contributes to job satisfaction research indicating two organisational climates that predict job satisfaction amongst employees. Secondly, it contributes to the understanding of the role job satisfaction plays in employee's level of engagement.

These findings highlight the need for organisations to facilitate positive perceptions of inter-departmental integration and family-focused supervisory support. Further empirical studies are needed to understand the role of various organisational climate facets and their relation to job engagement within the South African workforce. An engaged workforce is an optimally functioning one (Hallberg & Bakker, 2008), and due to the high competition amongst organisations today the need to facilitate employee engagement levels is pressing. Therefore, organisations need to, through strategies, policies, practices and procedures facilitate organisational environments that are highly resourceful.

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## **Appendix**

### **Integrative Climate and Family-Focused Supervisor Support Scale Items**

IC1 There is very little conflict between departments here

IC2 People in different departments are prepared to share information

IC3 Collaboration between departments is very effective

IC4 There is very little respect between some of the departments here

IC5 People are suspicious of other departments

FFSS1 My supervisor is supportive when I have a work problem now

FFSS2 My supervisor accommodates me when I have family or personal business to take care of - for example, medical appointments, meeting with child's teacher etc.

FFSS3 My supervisor is understanding when I talk about personal or family issues that affect my work

FFSS4 I feel comfortable bringing up personal or family issues with my supervisor

FFSS5 My supervisor really cares about the effects that work demands have on my personal and family life

FFSS6 My supervisor is fair and doesn't show favouritism in responding to employees' personal or family needs.

### **Utrecht Work Engagement Scale Items**

WE1 At my work, I feel bursting with energy

WE2 I am enthusiastic about my job

WE3 I am immersed in my work

WE4 At my job, I feel strong and vigorous

WE5 I get carried away when I'm working

WE6 My job inspires me

WE7 When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work

WE8 I feel happy when I am working intensely

WE9 I am proud of the work that I do

**Job Satisfaction Scale Items**

JS1 Most days I am enthusiastic about my job

JS2 I find enjoyment in my job

JS3 Overall I am satisfied with my job