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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to examine the connections between organizational climate and well-being at work.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Connections between perceived organizational climate and well-being at work were studied through quantitative data gathered from 24 public day-care centers in Finland.

**Findings** – The unit-level analyses revealed that different types of organizational climates were connected to different types of job well-being in the unit. Organizational climate types were differentially connected to stress and cynicism, but were not connected to work engagement. Employees in units where work climate was collectively evaluated as particularly weak reported significantly lower well-being than those in units with better work climate. The most positive climates – "relaxed and friendly" and "encouraging and supportive of new ideas" – seemed to be more strongly connected to well-being than negative climates.

**Originality/value** – The study confirmed and clarified the link between organizational climate and job well-being and emphasized how different climate types have varying types of connection to well-being at work.

**Keywords** Finland, Organizational climate, Child day-care organization, Unit-level analyses, Well-being at work

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

The public service sector, whether measured in terms of gross national product or number of personnel, is the most significant domain in the economy of Finland, just as it is across Europe. Alongside the many good developments in Finnish working life during the past decades – such as greater opportunities to participate in further education and decision-making (Vartia *et al.*, 2012) – increasing time pressures and rising workloads are creating stress for many employees in the public sector (Lehto and Sutela, 2008; Vartia *et al.*, 2012). A cycle exists, where continual changes and increasing demands for productivity threaten well-being at work, while, at the same time, well-being is an important precondition for productivity (Linna *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, municipalities in Finland have adopted a widely proclaimed goal of creating and supporting employee well-being (Vartia *et al.*, 2012).

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in Finland (2005, p. 9) has broadly defined well-being at work (or occupational well-being) as an employee's ability to manage the daily workload. This ability is constructed through various issues related to the psychological and physical condition of the person. In the field of management and

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organizations, the research focus has most often been on psychological (mental) job well-being, which has been measured through negative indicators (e.g. stress, cynicism and burnout) or positive indicators (e.g. job satisfaction, engagement and commitment).

There is a broad consensus that the well-being of employees influences productivity and performance (Cooper and Worrall, 2007; Ferrie *et al.*, 2002; Haltom, 2005; Sczesny and Thau, 2004; Taris and Schreurs, 2009) and positive affective commitment (Jain *et al.*, 2008). Previous studies have listed predictors of the state of employee well-being as job demands (De Lange *et al.*, 2004), job control (Rodwell *et al.*, 2011; Mikkelsen *et al.*, 2005), social support at the workplace (Kossek *et al.*, 2011; Christian *et al.*, 2011), organizational fairness (Rodwell *et al.*, 2011; Elovainio *et al.*, 2002), management and leadership (Baptiste, 2008; Hammer *et al.*, 2011) and work climate (Kossek *et al.*, 2011; Murray *et al.*, 2010).

In Finland, the public day-care system is one of the most comprehensive in the world (Pohjola *et al.*, 2013). Thus, nearly 8 per cent of employees of municipalities in Finland work in the child day-care sector, most of them in around 2,000 day-care centers (Säkkinen, 2011). Despite the significance of the day-care sector, it has not attracted a great deal of research interest. In one of the few studies on the topic, Venäläinen (2010) noted that day-care staff reported lower levels of well-being than the workforce, in general, in Finland. She focused on job stress, which is often used as a negative indicator of well-being. Venäläinen's data strongly connects job stress to workplace climate, which was measured by one single phrase "the climate in my workplace is good" on a 4-point Likert scale.

First, we embrace Venäläinen's interesting finding and will try to increase our understanding of the connection between organizational climate and well-being in day-care centers. We broaden the focus to include the positive indicator of work engagement in addition to job stress and cynicism in the analysis. We also broaden the scope by measuring the organizational climate. Second, we seek to fill a gap in the research literature on well-being, which is mostly based on only one type of analysis. Most often, the studies on job well-being are of a variable-centered quantitative analysis type, and concentrate on relations between individual experiences of well-being and its antecedents, for example, the organizational climate. In this paper, we adopt a unit-level analysis. We examine the climates of the different workplaces (i.e. day-care centers) and their connections to employee well-being in the unit. The data were gathered from 25 public day-care centers. With this choice, we ensured relatively strong homogeneity among the organizational units in relation to the basic tasks, goals, functions, management systems, structure, work practices and personnel.

Our research questions are:

*RQ1*. What kind of connections can be found between organizational climate and the three different indicators of well-being: engagement, cynicism and stress?

*RQ2*. What kind of indications do the unit-level analysis reveal from the practitioners' point of view?

In the next section, we discuss the phenomenon of well-being in the work context, as well as the roles of engagement, cynicism and stress as its' indicators. Subsequently, we define the concepts of organizational climate and demonstrate how it is connected to well-being at work. We then describe the methodology and report on the results, and finally, discuss the most important findings of the study.

## Well-being at work: an individual or a collective challenge?

Psychological job well-being is a subjective experience that is manifested in an individual's ability to meet the demands made at work. It is very often measured by negative concepts, such as stress and burnout (Salmela-Aro *et al.*, 2011), or by positive concepts of job satisfaction (Taris and Schreurs, 2009) and work engagement (Taris, 2006). In this paper, well-being at work is studied through "work engagement" (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007; Bakker *et al.*, 2008; Schaufeli *et al.*, 2006), "stress" (Elo *et al.*, 2008) and "cynicism" as the central element of burnout (Maslach *et al.*, 2001; Näätänen *et al.*, 2003; Salmela-Aro *et al.*, 2011).

Work engagement is a concept of positive psychology designed to measure the positive, fulfilling and affective-motivational side of well-being at work rather than just the absence of well-being (e.g. stress and burnout) (Bakker *et al.*, 2008). The most often used conceptualization of work engagement is based on three sub-dimensions: vigor, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2006; Bakker *et al.*, 2008). An engaged employee is energetic, enthusiastic and often so fully immersed in work tasks that time appears to fly (Macey and Schneider, 2008). Contrary to engagement, both stress and cynicism disturb energy and enthusiasm at work. Stress is defined as arising from employees' perceiving environmental demands as exceeding the resources they have available (Shirom, 1982). Environmental factors, such as work characteristics and the social environment at work, and also the personality and motivation of an individual all play a role in these perceptions (Sulea *et al.*, 2012). Stress may manifest itself through a wide range of physiological symptoms like blood pressure or insomnia (Kivimäki *et al.*, 2000), and is therefore central when considering the risks to well-being at work. However, psychological symptoms may also arise, and cynicism is one of the first indicators that the level of well-being is in danger of deteriorating; a decline that can end in burnout and an outcome more serious than stress. While work engagement often results in high performance and indicates a willingness to stay in an organization, stress and cynicism weaken performance and can eventually lead to increased absenteeism levels through sick leave (Elo *et al.*, 2008).

The connections between the organization's psychosocial environment and individual-level well-being have been shown in several investigations within the public sector (Baehler, 2008; McHugh, 2001). The most important organizational factors for satisfactory well-being at work are leadership and superior support (Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe, 2006; Vanroelen *et al.*, 2009), participation in decision-making (Kivimäki *et al.*, 2000) and social relationships (Vanroelen *et al.*, 2009). Nevertheless, there is a level from which to view an organization that simultaneously offers a different perspective than may be found from examining separate organizational factors, but which contains them all. We have chosen the concept of organizational climate to represent this level.

Denison (1996) has contended that the organizational climate constitutes the way individuals in an organization perceive and characterize their environment in an attitudinal and value-based manner. According to Schneider (1975), the term incorporates the meanings people attach to interrelated experiences they have at work. Perceptions may, for example, include notions of cooperation, leadership support, trust, fairness, friendliness, conflicts, performance standards and commitment

(Bamel *et al.*, 2013; Jones and James, 1979). Organizational climate is a largely feeling-based phenomenon, and one that develops on a collective level and can also be tangible to external observers (Dallner *et al.*, 2000; Watkin and Hubbard, 2003). For example, Elo *et al.* (2008) categorized the different types of social climate as relaxed and friendly, encouraging and supportive of new ideas, prejudiced and clinging to old ways, strained and quarrelsome, tense and competitive and one where everyone looks after their own best interest. Diverging sub-climates can exist inside one organization (Lok and Crawford, 1999) and organizational climate relates to employee performance, job behaviors and company effectiveness (Abdel-Razek, 2011).

There is some research evidence on the connections between the features of organizational climate and factors of well-being at work (Harris and Mossholder, 1996; Rose *et al.*, 2006; Park and Kim, 2009). For example, Feldt *et al.* (2000) reported a strong relationship between positive organizational climate and a strong sense of coherence, which in turn was linked to a high level of well-being at work, in their study of four organizations in different economic areas (paper mills, banking, supermarkets and a municipal social and health-care department). In addition, Länsisalmi and Kivimäki's (1999) study revealed that work stress is lower in an innovative climate. Negative behavior has also been connected to a specific type of climate, and it is found to have a considerable impact on well-being at work and the effectiveness of organizations (Burnes, 2008).

In the next section, we investigate empirically the connection between organizational climate and the well-being of employees in the workplace.

## Methodology

The data were gathered from a communal day-care organization of 24 separate day-care centers and 436 employees via an electronic survey. The organization was facing major challenges posed by widespread organizational changes and increasing demands for efficiency.

We conducted an analysis on 342 responses (from the overall dataset of 371) that had identified the work unit. Most of the respondents were women (97 per cent) with permanent positions (81 per cent of all respondents). The response rate was as high as 85 per cent. A section at the start of the questionnaire advised informants that the data they provide would remain confidential and would be accessed only by the university research group. In addition, each of the supervisors evaluated in the study would see only the means and standard deviations in their personal results.

### *Measures*

As an indicator of engagement, the Finnish version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale with nine items was used (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2006). The responses were given on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from never (0) to every day (6) (Cronbach's alpha = 0.915). Negative job well-being was measured by part of the Bergen Burnout Inventory (BBI) (Näätänen *et al.*, 2003; Salmela-Aro *et al.*, 2011). We used questions measuring cynicism, which is one of the three central elements of burnout besides exhaustion and reduced professional efficacy. The BBI consists of 15 items, of which, five measure cynicism. The responses were given on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1) completely disagree to (6) completely agree (Cronbach's alpha = 0.829). Stress was measured using a single item:

> Stress means a situation in which a person feels tense, restless, nervous or anxious, or is unable to sleep at night because his/her mind is troubled all the time. Have you felt this kind of stress during the past few days?

This single item has proved satisfactory content, criterion and construction validity in previous studies (Elo *et al.*, 2003, 2008). A 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) completely disagree to (5) completely agree was applied.

The measurement of the organization climate was based on the five questions from the Healthy Organization Questionnaire (Elo *et al.*, 2008), in which the total scale of climate items is seen as a part of the psychosocial work environment. In this article, each item was used as an independent indicator of the organization's climate. Based on typology, the different types of social climate were:

- relaxed and friendly (A);
- encouraging and supportive of new ideas (B);
- prejudiced and clinging to old ways (C);
- strained and quarrelsome (D); and
- tense and competitive, everyone looks after his/her own best interest (E).

The responses were given on a seven-point scale ranging from totally disagree (1) to totally agree (7) (Cronbach's alpha = 0.822). Because Elo was a member of the group of researchers developing the General Nordic Questionnaire (QPSNordic) (Dallner *et al.*, 2000), the content of these two measures is very similar. According to QPSNordic, the types of social climate are tense, supportive, prejudiced, relaxed and strained.

### *Statistical methods*

The connections between organizational climate types and work-related well-being at the individual level were investigated using correlation analysis. First, the climate type in each unit was categorized as top, neutral or bottom, and then, the mean differences of work engagement, stress and cynicism in these groups were compared. All statistical analysis was aided by IBM's SPSS Statistics 19.

## Research findings

Generally speaking, the spectrum of responses regarding key variables was positively skewed and indicated that both the general organizational climate and well-being at work were at a relatively good level within the organization (Table I).

| Variables | Scale ($\alpha$) | Mean (SD) | General organizational climate | Work engagement | Cynicism |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| General organizational climate | 1-7 (0.822) | 5.56 (1.06) | – | | |
| Work engagement | 0-6 (0.915) | 5.29 (0.71) | 0.199 | – | |
| Cynicism | 1-6 (0.829) | 1.77 (0.74) | −0.325 | −0.584 | – |
| Stress | 1-5 (–) | 2.30 (0.97) | −0.338 | −0.272 | 0.406 |

**Table I.** Descriptive statistics and correlations of key variables

**Notes:** $\alpha$ = Cronbach's alpha; SD = standard deviation; all correlations significant at $p < 0.001$ level

First, we analyzed a correlation between the respondents' job well-being and their opinion of the organizational climate in their unit. The associations between different organizational climates and job well-being were measured using Spearman's rank correlation coefficient because of skewness in variable distributions. In general, the data revealed statistical connections between the type of organization climate and all three indicators of job well-being (see Table II). All climate types, A (*relaxed and friendly*), B (*encouraging and supportive of new ideas*), C (*prejudiced and clinging to old ways*), D (*strained and quarrelsome*) and E (*tense and competitive*, *everyone looks after his/her own best interest*), had significant relations to all three well-being indicators. All correlations followed the anticipated course. Positive climates A and B had positive connections with positive job well-being and negative connections with negative job well-being, while negative climates C, D and E had negative connections with positive job well-being and positive connections with negative job well-being.

However, the connections between the organizational climate types and well-being indicators were not similar. The results of the analysis showed that negative job attitudes (cynicism and stress) are generally more strongly dependent on the climate than positive job attitudes (work engagement). The positive climates also had stronger statistical connections to well-being indicators than the climate types with more negative features. The strongest relationships were between climate type A (*relaxed and friendly*) and stress and between climate type B (*encouraging and supportive of new ideas*) and cynicism. To sum up, our data show that positive climate types A and B were more strongly correlated with negative job attitudes than negative climate types C, D and E. In other words, a positive climate boosts well-being more than a negative climate diminishes it.

We can simplify and say that a person describing the organizational climate at their workplace as *relaxed and friendly* or *encouraging* (A) and *supportive of new ideas* (B), is less likely to hold a negative attitude to the job than those who describe the climate as being *prejudiced and clinging to old ways* (C), *strained and quarrelsome* (D) or *tense or competitive*, *everyone looks after his/her own best interest* (E). However, these results could at least partially be critically interpreted by saying that both well-being at work and the climate are a subjective matter and when someone enters into a negative mindset they might easily view multiple issues negatively ("all the glasses are half empty") and therefore, different negative experiences become interwoven. It would then be very difficult to identify causality between them or a possible third factor influencing them. Consequently, following the analysis at an individual level, we examined the connections between climate types and well-being at the unit level to discover whether the connection is something that transcends individual level connections.

The connections between organizational climate types and job well-being were also examined at the unit level. The unit level means that each organizational climate type was calculated and units were classified in three categories in each climate type. First, the organizational climate types C (*prejudiced and clinging to old ways*), D (*strained and quarrelsome*) and E (*tense and competitive*, *everyone looks after his/her own best interest*) were reversed so that in all climate types higher numerical values were associated with a more positive organizational climate. Second, for each organizational climate type, units with a mean climate of one standard deviation above the average unit-level climate were classified as "top climate units" and units with a mean climate one standard deviation below the average were classified as "bottom climate units". Other work units

**Table II.**
Correlations between climate types and work-related well-being

| Climate types | Work engagement (%) | Cynicism (%) | Stress (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| A. Relaxed and friendly | 0.208 Explains 4, 3 | −0.278 Explains 7, 7 | −0.341 Explains 11, 6 |
| B. Encouraging and supportive of new ideas | 0.272 Explains 7, 4 | −0.341 Explains 11, 6 | −0.298 Explains 8, 9 |
| C. Prejudiced and clinging to old ways | −0.166 Explains 2, 8 | 0.184 Explains 3, 4 | 0.160 Explains 2, 6 |
| D. Strained and quarrelsome | −0.162 Explains 2, 6 | 0.272 Explains 7, 4 | 0.260 Explains 6, 8 |
| E. Tense and competitive, everyone looks after his/her own best interest | −0.233 Explains 5, 4 | 0.298 Explains 8, 9 | 0.286 Explains 8, 2 |

**Notes:** All correlations are Spearman's correlations and all are significant (one-tailed) at $p < 0.001$; explains = $R^{2*}$ 100%

were classified as "average climate units". This type of classification distinguished those units with particularly good or bad organizational climates. With this classification criterion, 4-6 units were classified as top climate units and 3-5 units as bottom climate units. The number of workers in top climate units (between 31 and 64) clearly outnumbered those in the bottom climate units (between 53 and 75).

Differences in job well-being between the workers in the top, average and bottom climate units were investigated by the Kruskal–Wallis test, and the pairwise comparisons were investigated by the Mann–Whitney test. Non-parametric tests were used because measures of work engagement and cynicism were not normally distributed and compared groups were rather small. Distributions appeared rather similar in the top, average and bottom climate units. The equality of variances between the top, average and bottom units was examined by the non-parametric Levene test (Nordstokke and Zumbo, 2010). Variances were significantly equal in different climate categories, except in terms of relaxed and friendly work climates where workers in top climate units (0.774) had a slightly greater variance than workers in average (0.532) and bottom (0.435) climate units. Analyses were performed regardless of the differences in variance because the differences were not remarkable and the greatest variance was less than twice the size of the lowest variance.

Group sizes, means, medians, standard deviations and the significance of the group differences of work stress, cynicism and work engagement for workers in top, average and bottom climate units are shown in Table III.

The Kruskal–Wallis test and pairwise comparisons by the Man-Whitney tests indicated that work stress differed statistically significantly in the top, average and bottom climate units for the following climate types: *relaxed and friendly* (bottom vs average: $U = 5083.5$, $p = 0.005$; bottom vs top: $U = 772$, $p = 0.036$; average vs top $U = 4452$, $p = 0.621$), *encouraging and supportive of new ideas* (bottom vs average: $U = 6230.5$, $p = 0.001$; bottom vs top: $U = 898$, $p < 0.001$; average vs top $U = 3733.5$, $p = 0.019$), *tense and competitive*, *everyone looks after his/her own best interest* (bottom vs average: $U = 5980$, $p = 0.005$; bottom vs top: $U = 721$, $p = 0.019$; average vs top $U = 3546$, $p = 0.397$).

Cynicism was significantly connected with the following climate types: *prejudiced and clinging to old ways* (bottom vs average: $U = 5317$, $p = 0.012$; bottom vs top: $U = 508.5$, $p = 0.003$; average vs top $U = 3514$, $p = 0.129$) and *strained and quarrelsome* (bottom vs average: $U = 5988$, $p = 0.011$; bottom vs top: $U = 1888.5$, $p = 0.039$; average vs top $U = 6426$, $p = 0.943$). Work engagement was not connected to any climate type at the unit level.

At the unit level, different organizational climate types were connected to different types of job well-being. Both positive work climate types A (*relaxed and friendly*) and B (*encouraging and supportive of new ideas*) as well as climate type E (*tense and competitive*, *everyone looks after his/her own best interest*) were connected to work stress. Climate types C (*prejudiced and clinging to old ways*) and D (*strained and quarrelsome*) were connected to cynicism. A closer examination of connections revealed that workers in the bottom climate units had more work stress, depending on the climate type, and were more cynical than workers in the average or top climate units. Only in the case of climate type B, did workers in the top climate unit have less work stress than workers in the average climate units. The fact that the top climate units did not significantly differ

| | Work stress | | | Cynicism | | | Work engagement | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | Median | SD | Mean | Median | SD | Mean | Median | SD |
| *Relaxed and friendly* | | | | | | | | | |
| Top units ($n = 38$) | 2.18 | 2.00 | 1.11 | 2.18 | 2.00 | 0.88 | 2.18 | 2.00 | 0.80 |
| Average units ($n = 249$) | 2.25 | 2.00 | 0.94 | 2.25 | 2.00 | 0.73 | 2.25 | 2.00 | 0.73 |
| Bottom units ($n = 55$) | 2.63 | 3.00 | 0.94 | 2.63 | 3.00 | 0.66 | 2.63 | 3.00 | 0.52 |
| Kruskal–Wallis test | $H(2) = 8.518, p = 0.014$ | | | $H(2) = 3.324, p = 0.190$ | | | $H(2) = 1.043, p = 0.594$ | | |
| *Encouraging and supportive of new ideas* | | | | | | | | | |
| Top units ($n = 43$) | 1.88 | 2.00 | 0.85 | 2.18 | 2.00 | 0.88 | 2.18 | 2.00 | 0.80 |
| Average units ($n = 224$) | 2.26 | 2.00 | 0.96 | 2.25 | 2.00 | 0.73 | 2.25 | 2.00 | 0.73 |
| Bottom units ($n = 75$) | 2.66 | 3.00 | 0.96 | 2.63 | 3.00 | 0.66 | 2.63 | 3.00 | 0.52 |
| Kruskal–Wallis test | $H(2) = 19.107, p < 0.001$ | | | $H(2) = 3.301, p = 0.192$ | | | $H(2) = 0.200, p = 0.905$ | | |
| *Prejudiced and clinging to old ways (reversed)* | | | | | | | | | |
| Top units ($n = 31$) | 2.03 | 2.00 | 1.08 | 1.54 | 1.20 | 0.61 | 5.16 | 5.33 | 0.80 |
| Average units ($n = 258$) | 2.30 | 2.00 | 0.98 | 1.76 | 1.60 | 0.76 | 5.30 | 5.44 | 0.73 |
| Bottom units ($n = 53$) | 2.47 | 2.00 | 0.82 | 1.95 | 2.00 | 0.63 | 5.35 | 5.44 | 0.53 |
| Kruskal–Wallis test | $H(2) = 4.861, p = 0.088$ | | | $H(2) = 9.784, p = 0.008$ | | | $H(2) = 1.133, p = 0.568$ | | |
| *Strained and quarrelsome (reversed)* | | | | | | | | | |
| Top units ($n = 64$) | 2.17 | 2.00 | 0.90 | 1.69 | 1.60 | 0.65 | 5.28 | 5.44 | 0.73 |
| Average units ($n = 203$) | 2.28 | 2.00 | 1.03 | 1.75 | 1.60 | 0.80 | 5.27 | 5.44 | 0.76 |
| Bottom units ($n = 75$) | 2.47 | 2.00 | 0.82 | 1.89 | 2.00 | 0.62 | 5.38 | 5.44 | 0.52 |
| Kruskal–Wallis test | $H(2) = 3.964, p = 0.138$ | | | $H(2) = 7.058, p = 0.029$ | | | $H(2) = 0.084, p = 0.959$ | | |
| *Tense and competitive, everyone looks after his/her own best interest (reversed)* | | | | | | | | | |
| Top units ($n = 32$) | 2.09 | 2.00 | 1.03 | 1.67 | 1.60 | 0.68 | 5.16 | 5.22 | 0.80 |
| Average units ($n = 246$) | 2.25 | 2.00 | 0.95 | 1.76 | 1.60 | 0.76 | 5.31 | 5.44 | 0.72 |
| Bottom units ($n = 64$) | 2.62 | 3.00 | 0.94 | 1.85 | 1.60 | 0.69 | 5.30 | 5.35 | 0.59 |
| Kruskal–Wallis test | $H(2) = 9.279, p = 0.010$ | | | $H(2) = 2.435, p = 0.296$ | | | $H(2) = 1.905, p = 0.386$ | | |

**Table III.**
Connections between climate types and well-being at work

from the average climate units might be explained by the small group sizes of the top climate units reducing the predictive power of the statistical tests.

The results of the unit-level analysis indicate that a particularly low level of organizational climate in a unit has a detrimental effect on the employee job well-being, but a particularly positive organizational climate in the unit does not have a more beneficial effect on well-being than an average organizational climate does. Unit-level organizational climate was not connected to work engagement, but climate types correlated with work engagement on an individual level. This suggests that a personal evaluation of the work climate is more important to work engagement than the objective state of the organization climate in the unit.

## Discussion and conclusions

The research data supported the initial expectation that the organizational climate is connected to individual well-being at work, which is in line with previous studies (Feldt *et al.*, 2000; Harris and Mossholder, 1996; McMurray *et al.*, 2009; Park and Kim, 2009). However, our study revealed that the relationship is not the same when we examine both the negative and positive sides of well-being using the same data. On an individual level, the different types of climates (of whatever type) are connected with engagement, cynicism and stress in different ways. If an individual feels that the climate in the

workplace is *prejudiced and clinging to old ways*, this will not overly affect their feelings about well-being. On the contrary, the most positive climates – *relaxed and friendly* and *encouraging and supportive of new ideas* – seem to connect strongly with experiences of less negative job attitudes and stress. Even given that individuals with a stronger feeling of job well-being may also influence the organizational climate in a positive way, we believe that the opposite causal relationship is even stronger.

However, the main contribution of this study derives from the unit-level analysis, because, in general, the analysis of well-being has so far been of the variable-centered quantitative form. Therefore, our study complements the variable-centered line of research using both the variable-centered (individual level) and a unit-centered approach that together can capture the complexity of work well-being in the organizational setting. We generated new empirical evidence on how the organizational climate in the unit may influence the well-being of the individuals working there. The unit-level analysis revealed that different types of organizational climate were connected to different types of job well-being among the unit's members. Organizational climate types were not connected with work engagement in the unit-level analysis, but work stress and cynicism were. Employees in units with an organizational climate jointly assessed to be particularly weak reported more work stress and cynicism than those in units with a better organizational climate. In light of the results, we can claim that if there are negative features in the climate of a unit, as in those labeled *prejudiced*, *clinging to old ways*, *strained*, *quarrelsome*, *tense and competitive and everyone looks after his/her own best interest*, there is a serious threat to the well-being of employees. Thus, well-being at work is not only an individual level phenomenon but also a unit level one. To put it simply, if the climate in the unit is not healthy, it can be a contributory factor in the ill-health of employees. Correspondingly, if the climate in the unit is positive, it can help nurture employees' well-being and protect them from any potential related problems.

In light of the research results, it can be seen that organizational well-being is socially constructed, both in the individual and collective state of the mind in the workplace. However, the direction of causal relationships in this setting cannot be clearly defined. It is possible that a negative organizational climate can result in a decline in job well-being. It might also be that individuals who assess their own job well-being as low also assess the climate as bad or even create a worse organizational climate.

There may be some factors influencing both the well-being of employees and the climate in a positive or negative way. Analyzing the impact of the factors capable of causing differences between units revealed that the behavior of the leader was strongly related to the results. Thus, the widely shared view of the influence of leaders on well-being at work was also supported in our data (McHugh, 2001; Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe, 2006). It was also noticed that, in this case, the units with the highest well-being scores were smaller than the units where people submitted worse assessments of the climate. This finding is important and worth further investigation, especially in public sector organizations where centralization and creating larger units have often been fashionable. We will investigate these aspects in more depth in a subsequent research stage.

Our research also has certain limitations, which should be borne in mind when examining the results. The material in this study is relatively confined and has an uneven distribution. Additionally, the sample has been collected from only one

municipal organization in the field of child day-care. It was also not possible to test any effect of the target group being 97 per cent female. Even though Carvalho Wilks and Netó (2013) did not find any major differences between genders in relation to job well-being, they also suggest looking at both female and male dominated workplaces as well as age composition to gain a deeper understanding of well-being dynamics in organizations. The results are, however, clear and sufficiently precise to suggest that the research should be continued with a larger and broader dataset.

The statistical methods applied in this study were simple, but they gave a good and clear general view to the connections between organizational climate and well-being. The robust non-parametric versions of the statistical tests, which were utilized in this study, may suffer from slightly lower power than the parametric counterparts, but the difference is not a substantial one (Field, 2005). More sophisticated research methods could be used in future research to gain a more detailed view on the subject. Different multivariate regression methods could be applied to research questions that focus on, for example, confounding, moderating and nonlinear effects between organizational climate and well-being.

*Practical implications of the study*

Finally, we present some practical implications for public organizations and specifically for developing day-care organizations. First, on the basis of the results, we strongly suggest that the indicators of job well-being be scrutinized more comprehensively than they often are at present. Many organizations seem to put greater emphasis on physical healthcare and other individual-oriented practices (e.g. those encouraging physical activity) in their well-being development programs. Alongside that emphasis, the climate in the workplace should be seen as an important factor when developing well-being within an organization. A negative climate should be considered as a potential threat to well-being, and thus, a serious threat to efficiency, quality and productivity (Taris and Schreurs, 2009). Addressing the issue will require the management to gather information about the climate and well-being and their development within the workplace. To that end, the often-criticized workplace surveys can provide important tools for developing well-being at work. Second, job well-being is still often considered to be the responsibility of some specific individuals, especially supervisors, or a specific function, often Human Resources. In the light of our results, we suggest that people in the workplace should collectively strive to understand the threat to their individual well-being and should take responsibility for the development of the climate. "No man is an island" and, therefore, no one should delegate this responsibility to others. Third, despite highlighting collective responsibility, we would still emphasize the relevance of the role of a supervisor. Therefore, we would advocate making creation and maintenance of a positive climate an explicit objective for managers and supervisors. Senior management should, however, be aware that meeting that objective would necessitate support and adequate working conditions, and preferably units unconstrained by having too many subordinates within them. Moreover, recruiting capable supervisors and developing their skills are important in this task.

To sum up, the organizational climate can powerfully support (and even create) well-being at work. Analyzing the climate in work units within organizations and acting to improve climate in those units with a negative climate really payoff.

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