Climate of fear in organisational settings: Construct
definition, measurement, and a test of theory

Neal M. Ashkanasy and Gavin J. Nicholson
The University of Queensland

Conditionally accepted paper submitted for publication in the
Australian Journal of Psychology

Please direct all correspondence to:
Neal M. Ashkanasy
UQ Business School
The University of Queensland
Brisbane Qld 4072
Phone: (07) 3365-7499
Fax: (07) 3365-6988
e-mail: n.ashkanasy@uq.edu.au
This paper reports a study that explored a new construct: ‘climate of
fear’. We hypothesised that climate of fear would vary across work sites
within organisations, but not across organisations. This is in contrast to
measures of organisational culture, which were expected to vary both within
and across organisations. To test our hypotheses, we developed a new 13-
item measure of perceived fear in organisations and tested it in twenty sites
across two organisations (N = 209). Culture variables measured were
innovative leadership culture and communication culture. Results were that
climate of fear did vary across sites in both organisations, while differences
across organisations were not significant, as we anticipated. Organisational
culture, however, varied between the organisations, and within one of the
organisations. The climate of fear scale exhibited acceptable psychometric
properties.
Working in modern organisations in industrialised societies has become increasingly stressful because of the pressures of “hypercompetition” (D’Aveni, 1995), often manifested through downsizing (Jalajas & Bommer, 1996) and increased job insecurity (Hartley, Jacobson, Klandermans, & Van Vuuren, 1991; Jordan, Ashkanasy, & Härtel, 2002; Kanter, 1989). Despite the wide dissemination of progressive management practices (Kanter), a likelihood of fearfulness amongst employees is associated with these stresses. Jalajas and Bommer, for example, found that fearfulness was a direct consequence of organisational downsizing. More recently, Jordan et al. noted that downsizing leads to emotional consequences like fear. To date, however, no standardised measure of this phenomenon has been developed. The aim of the present study therefore was to develop a measure of the “climate of fear”, and to explore empirically some of the properties of the measure. Specifically, we examined the validity of the scale in terms of its relationship with two measures of organisational culture: innovative leadership and communication, and demonstrated that climate of fear varied between worksites within the organisation, but not across organisations.

**Climate of Fear**

Reichers & Schneider (1990) note that a common element of climate in organisations is an emphasis on shared perception of organisational
attributes by members (see also Kopelman, Brief, & Guzzo, 1990). Thus, if an emotional climate is to exist, it requires a shared perception of the emotion in question. Emotion can be conceptualised as “a feeling that motivates, organises, and guides perception, thought, and action” (Izard, 1991, p. 14). As such, emotion is a phenomenon that can be communicated to others (e.g., see Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1992). Further, because communication occurs through social networks and involves sharing of meaning (Putnam and Cheney, 1985; Rogers & Kincaid, 1981), personal displays of emotion lead to a shared perception of emotion among organisational members—an emotional climate.

Our rationale for selecting fear as the appropriate emotion for this study was predicated on the strong biological evidence of a monopolar reaction to fear (LeDoux, 1996, 1998), coupled with the attention paid to fear in the workplace by contemporary organisational researchers (e.g., Fineman, 1993; Flam, 1993; Funlop & Rivkin, 1997). For instance, Deming (1982) argued that fear inhibits quality, while Argyris (1993) posited that fear distorts organisational learning. From another perspective, fear in Lewin’s field theory can be conceptualised as a positive force (see also Cartwright, 1976; Funlop & Rivkin); it shocks actors to shift cognitive gears from automatic (or culturally ingrained) to conscious (or malleable) processes via Schein’s (1985) disconfirmation process. Irrespective of
The approach we have adopted is based on the perspective of fear as a distinctly emotional phenomenon. In this respect, Fischer, Shaver, and Carnochan (1990; see also Izard, 1991) posit that emotions are structured on three levels. At the highest (superordinate) level, organisms appraise whether the event advances or inhibits their goals (i.e., positive and negative emotions). At the second (basic) level emotions fall into five broad types: love and joy (positive); and anger, sadness, and fear (negative). These five basic emotions are then subdivided at a third (subordinate) level into discrete emotions. For instance, Fischer et al. categorise horror and worry as subordinate to the basic emotion of fear.

For this study, however, we have adopted a broad view of fear, based on Rachman’s (1974) view that fear is a generalised experience of apprehension in the workplace. We adopted this broad definition because investigation of common manifestations and measures of a construct can be more meaningful than examining extreme behaviours (e.g., turnover, absenteeism, workplace violence, see Glomb & Miner, 1998). In particular, by defining fear as a relatively weak emotion in organisational contexts, its occurrence can be expected to be more prevalent.
Finally, it is important to distinguish fear from trust. In this regard, Kramer and Tyler (1996) stress that trust is an attitude. Our study, by contrast, was focused on an emotional dimension, fear. Thus, our research contributes to the renewed interest in emotions in work settings, an area that has been largely ignored until recently (see Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Ashkanasy, Härtel, & Zerbe, 2000; Fineman, 1993, 1996, 2000; Fisher & Ashkanasy, 2000).

Organisational culture

In order to establish convergent and discriminant validity for our measure of climate of fear, we included two measures of organisational culture in our study. The differentiation of climate and culture is controversial (see Reichers & Schneider, 1990), however, so we employed Schein’s (1985) view of culture as distinctively a derivative of personal values and basic assumptions. In this respect, Rousseau (1990) has noted that questionnaire measures of organisational culture tap into members’ beliefs about values and practices in their organisation. We focused on two aspects of organisational culture identified by Broadfoot & Ashkanasy (1994; see also Ashkanasy, Broadfoot, & Falkus, 2000): communication and innovative leadership.

A communication culture is associated with free sharing of information within the organisation, both top-down and bottom-up (Rogers...
Later published as Climate of fear in organizational settings: Construct
definition, measurement, and a test of theory. Australian Journal of
Psychology, 55, 24-29.

A culture of innovative leadership, on the other hand, embodies a willingness to be responsive to employees and to new ideas, to keep employees well informed, and to set clear goals and plans (Reynolds, 1986). Both cultures are usually communicated from the top (Schein, 1985). Since organisational culture theory posits that different organisations will have different underlying assumptions, values, and artefacts (Schein), we would expect to find that innovative leadership culture and communication culture varies between organisations.

A limitation of this approach, however, is that it does not recognise that culture can still vary within organisations. The differentiation perspective (Meyerson & Martin, 1987) holds that culture is characterised by diversity within organisations. Thus, as Van Maanen and Barley (1985) argue, culture often varies according to department within organisations.

Hypotheses

Since climate is a shared perception within discrete work groups, we expected to find that the emotional climate of fear would also differ within organisations. This is because the climate of fear is conceptualised as a derivative of close social networks that exist within work groups. In contrast, a generalised organisational effect reflects entrenched socialisation practices that are communicated from the top (De Rivera, 1992; Krackhardt, 1990; Schein, 1985). Indeed, given current regulatory practices and the
emphasis on empowerment and total quality management (Deming, 1982), it is reasonable to expect modern corporate managers actively to promote practices conducive to reduced levels of fear. Thus, we would expect that a climate of fear is likely to be found in pockets within organisations, rather than to appear as something that applies throughout an organisation. This is in contrast to organisational culture, which we expected to vary both within and between the organisations based on Schein’s (1985) concept of culture as a set of embedded assumptions.

De Rivera (1992) has noted that climate is more variable than culture; that it is closely related to events; and that employees are generally aware of the source. Further, and as Rousseau (1990) has pointed out, individuals organise their world by constructing meanings according to the patterns that emerge from shared events. Climate is therefore a first stage in this development, and is driven at a worksite level, including site-specific leadership style. More stable constructs, such as values, beliefs, assumptions, and their associated artefacts (i.e., culture), result on the other hand from socialisation patterns instituted throughout the entire organisation (see Schein, 1985). This leads to the conclusion that climate should differ between sites in an organisation as a result of worksite-specific differences, but that there is unlikely to be an organisation-wide climate that is discernable from another organisation’s climate. Culture, on the other hand,
can exist as an organisational phenomenon (Meyerson & Martin, 1987), so that we expected that differences between two organisation’s cultures would be detectable.

Although we hypothesised that climate of fear and culture dimensions act in different ways, this is not to say that these constructs are completely independent. For instance, in order to increase communication, there is a need to create a supportive climate (Weaver, 1993). Since the aim of fear is to isolate people (Flam, 1993), and communication is a process of connecting, we expected a climate of fear to be linked negatively with communication culture. Similarly, innovative leadership requires risk-taking (Locke & Jain, 1995). Since risk-taking is intrinsically inhibited by fear (Jalajas & Bommer, 1996), we expected that the culture of innovative leadership would also be negatively related to the emotional climate of fear.

The emerging identification of communication as a means of transmission, not only of information and messages, but also of meanings (Putnam & Cheney, 1985), means that we also expected to find that communication and innovative leadership would be related. Even if we adopted the modernist tradition of treating communication as both instrumental and utilitarian (Putnam, Phillips, & Chapman, 1996), a significant relationship should still be expected.
Method

Participants

The research was carried out in two organisations in eastern Australia: a fast food chain and a restaurant chain. Each organisation had twelve sites, paired and selected on the basis of geographical location to control for possible demographic and/or regional difference. Participants were then drawn from these sites. Each restaurant was forwarded fifty questionnaires and each fast food outlet thirty questionnaires (N = 960). The useable response rate to the survey was 22% (N = 209). Eleven of the twelve fast food sites returned a set of completed questionnaires while nine of the twelve restaurants returned their questionnaires (although one restaurant returned only one).

One hundred and forty-three participants were from the fast food chain and 66 were from the restaurant chain. In the fast food chain, 93 participants were female, and 50 were male; compared with 24 females and 39 males (three people failed to identify their gender in the restaurant sample). On average, fast food chain staff had been with their organisations for 3.18 years (SD = 3.45) and in their present position for 2.36 years (SD = 2.25). Restaurant staff had been with their organisations for 2.65 years (SD = 2.21) and in their present position for 1.88 years (SD = 1.57). The mean age of fast food participants was 19.23 (SD = 4.71) compared to
Measures

The questionnaire instrument comprised three measures. The first measured the emotional climate of fear, and was specifically designed for this study. The other two comprised existing measures of organisational culture (innovative leadership and communication) developed by Broadfoot & Ashkanasy (1994). Demographic information was requested at the end of the survey. All items were self-report, and employed a Likert-style scale ranging from 7 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree).

Climate of fear

To measure climate of fear, a thirty-item instrument was developed initially. This was administered in a pilot study to 42 first-year MBA students. Although ostensibly different from the respondents in the main study, the pilot group respondents had a minimum of two years’ full-time work experience, and were instructed to draw on this experience in completing the questionnaire. Pilot study participants were invited to

21.63 (SD = 6.11) for the restaurant chain. Twenty-three (or 16.2%) of the fast food participants identified themselves as management and 119 as staff, while 9 restaurant participants (or 14.5%) identified as managers and 53 as staff. All participants had undertaken secondary schooling, with 55 fast food participants (40.15%) reporting tertiary education compared with 38 restaurant participants (or 62.30%).
Preliminary analysis of the questionnaire responses indicated a Cronbach alpha of 0.93. Two concerns were apparent, however. The first was that a high Cronbach alpha suggests redundancy, a potential threat to validity (see Boyle, 1991). The second, identified in respondents’ feedback, was that bias might have been induced by the negative connotations of the word “fear”.

To deal with the high alpha, we used exploratory factor analysis to identify a subset of the highest loading items to be retained in a shortened scale. The resulting 13-item scale alpha was 0.79. To counter the concern with bias, half of the questions in the final measure were reversed, so that a balance was provided in the questionnaire between “fear” and “no-fear” items. The reversed items specifically avoided a trust connotation and focussed on the absence of the emotion of fear (e.g., “I feel at ease in this workplace because …”).

Organisational culture measures

The two measures of organisational culture were drawn from Broadfoot & Ashkanasy’s (1994) Organisational Culture Profile. Both the 5-item communication culture and 7-item innovative leadership scales have demonstrated acceptable reliability with alphas of .85 for communication

culture and.91 for innovative leadership culture. Ashkanasy et al. (2000) reported similar reliabilities in a follow-up study. There was one overlapping item in the innovative leadership and communication culture measures. Correlations were adjusted for this overlap during analysis.

Procedure

Questionnaires were distributed through both organisations’ internal mail systems with a covering letter from the relevant HR Manager. Employees were instructed to complete the questionnaire and return it to the worksite in the separate envelope provided. The worksite then returned the sealed completed questionnaires through the internal mail system to head office, where they were collected.

To ensure the confidentiality of participants, no identifying information was requested, and each participant was provided with a separate sealable envelope for survey return. This confidentiality was assured in writing. The organisations received the consolidated feedback, but this was presented in such a way as to make the identification of individual respondents impossible.

Results

Instrument reliability

Cronbach alphas were all in the range .79 to .85 (Table 2), which exceed Nunnally’s (1978) threshold for acceptable reliability (.70). Alphas

were also below .90, and therefore also avoid the problem of redundancy (Boyle, 1991). Principal axis factor analysis (Boyle, Stankov, & Cattell, 1995) revealed unitary solutions for the innovative leadership and communication scales, and also for the climate of fear scale. In the latter respect, one factor accounted for 31.1% of variance (Eigen value = 4.04). Table 1 lists the items in the climate of fear scale, including the effect on alpha if the item was deleted.

Table 1 Climate of Fear Items, showing Cronbach alpha if deleted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Alpha if item deleted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel people aren’t totally truthful with me because they worry about what they have to tell me.</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that I can be totally honest with management on all work related issues.</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel fearful or anxious when I am at work.</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable about giving suggestions – they aren’t treated as criticism.</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel uneasy at work because I do not receive all the information I need to do my job properly.</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I make a mistake, I am confident about telling co-workers and would never lie about it.</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I dread repercussions at work because they are unpredictable.</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not feel apprehensive about discussing sensitive work issues with management.</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel anxious about speaking up in this organisation, because you have to be able to prove all your remarks.</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel at ease in this workplace because punishment is only applied to those who have done something wrong.</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel so fearful when I make a mistake, that I would hide it from or lie about it to management.</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel safe discussing sensitive work issues with co-workers.</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel afraid at work because management comes down hard on mistakes as an example to others.</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * Reversed Item

Descriptive statistics

Table 2 shows means, standard deviations, correlations, and alphas for the three measured variables. As we anticipated, correlations revealed a
positive relationship between innovative leadership and communication, and significant negative relationships between climate and innovative leadership culture as well as between climate and communication culture.

Table 2
Means, Standard Deviations, Intercorrelations, and Coefficient Alphas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>No. of items</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Climate of fear</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>35.78</td>
<td>13.26</td>
<td>(.81)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Innovative leadership</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>34.18</td>
<td>9.27</td>
<td>-0.29**</td>
<td>(.85)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Communication culture</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23.17</td>
<td>7.10</td>
<td>-0.33**</td>
<td>.55**</td>
<td>(.79)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:

n=188
7-point Likert-style scale
Correlations are adjusted for one overlapping item in the innovative leadership and communication scores.
*p < .01

Hypothesis tests

Table 3
Analysis of Variance for the Between Organisation and Within Organisation Effects on Climate of Fear, Culture of Innovative Leadership, and Communication Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Climate of fear</th>
<th>Innovative leadership culture</th>
<th>Communication culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>df</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>df</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between organisation</td>
<td>(1,194)</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>(1,202)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within fast food chain organisation</td>
<td>(10,116)</td>
<td>2.03*</td>
<td>(10,119)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within restaurant chain organisation</td>
<td>(8,53)</td>
<td>2.17*</td>
<td>(8,56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within restaurant chain organisation</td>
<td>(7,52)</td>
<td>2.41*</td>
<td>(7,55)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

* Result if Site 7 is deleted from the analysis (since n = 1).
*p < .05; **p < .01
Table 3 presents the results of ANOVA on the between and within organization effects. Missing data were handled using listwise deletion.

Table 4
Mean Scores and Standard Deviations on Climate of Fear, Communication Culture, and Culture of Innovative Leadership in the Fast Food Organisation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Climate of Fear M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Communication Culture M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Innovative Leadership Culture M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>36.00</td>
<td>11.92</td>
<td>22.80</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>33.60</td>
<td>5.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>36.72*</td>
<td>10.27</td>
<td>24.65</td>
<td>6.02</td>
<td>37.88</td>
<td>7.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44.27abcde*</td>
<td>17.51</td>
<td>15.72</td>
<td>6.37</td>
<td>28.09</td>
<td>9.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>18.00</td>
<td>27.50</td>
<td>10.61</td>
<td>41.50</td>
<td>6.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40.14*</td>
<td>21.02</td>
<td>25.86</td>
<td>5.90</td>
<td>32.57</td>
<td>10.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>38.00*</td>
<td>11.64</td>
<td>17.27</td>
<td>6.81</td>
<td>25.72</td>
<td>7.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>33.05</td>
<td>5.99</td>
<td>23.82</td>
<td>5.87</td>
<td>31.47</td>
<td>8.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37.44</td>
<td>11.70</td>
<td>21.22</td>
<td>6.02</td>
<td>30.33</td>
<td>9.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>28.95</td>
<td>10.64</td>
<td>27.40</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>40.20</td>
<td>6.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>31.69</td>
<td>9.58</td>
<td>28.50</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>40.94</td>
<td>4.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
* Site score differs from Site 10 (p < .05).
# Site score differs from Site 4 (p < .05).
* Site score differs from Site 7 (p < .05).
# Site score differs from Site 8 (p < .05).
P Site score differs from Site 11 (p < .05).

Means scores on each of the three variables for each site in the fast food chain are listed in Table 4, including the results of Tukey post-hoc difference tests. Table 5 provides similar results for the restaurant chain.
As predicted, there were significant between-organisation effects for both communication culture and innovative leadership culture, while there was no significant between-organisation effect for the climate of fear measure. Further, and also as expected, there were significant within-organisation effects for both organisations on climate. In respect of the culture measures, however, there was only a significant within-organisation effect on innovative leadership culture and communication culture in the fast-food organisation. There were no significant within-organisation effects for either culture measure in the restaurant chain.
Discussion

This aim of this research was to investigate the construct of emotional climate in organisational settings, and to test a measure of the construct. The construct is differentiated from previously studied variables such as trust, which is an attitudinal phenomenon (Kramer & Tyler, 1996). We have defined the climate of fear as a specifically emotional construct. Our results indicate that the construct conforms to theoretical expectations, and that the measure we used exhibited good psychometric properties.

As our theory predicted, climate of fear proved to vary between worksites, but there was no significant organisation effect. This affirms that there is an effect on individuals’ perceptions at the worksite level, causing them to share a perception of fear in the workplace that is greater than organisation-wide impacts.

In contrast, both culture measures varied significantly between the organisations. We also found a within-organisation effect on the organisational culture measures for the fast food organisation, but not for the restaurant chain. This supports the existence of a diversified culture in the fast food organisation (see Meyerson & Martin, 1987), but an integrated culture in the restaurant chain. Follow-up qualitative observations supported this view. The fast food chain was characterised by high formalisation of policies, which allowed on-site managers to run each site as
they saw fit, provided standard technical operating procedures were followed. The restaurant chain, however, was a more complex operation, where headquarters exercised management prerogatives all the way down to the site level.

All three dependent measures were correlated; communication and innovative leadership culture were positively related, and both communication and innovative leadership culture were negatively associated with climate of fear. It is, however, notable that the correlation between the two culture measures was significantly different (p < .01) from the absolute values of the correlations between each culture measure and the climate of fear. This further supports our conclusion that the climate of fear measure exhibited both convergent and discriminant validity, in that it was negatively correlated with the other measures (as expected), but not so strongly as to imply that the new scale is completely independent of the culture measures (see Nunnally, 1978).

The implication of this finding is that, while organisational culture can be conceptualised as an integrated construct within an organisation, there is less reason to conceive of a single emotional climate for an organisation. This is because a climate of fear is not a derivative of systemic influence from top-level management, as Schein (1985) maintains is the case for organisational culture. Instead, culture depends on social perception

processes operating within cohesive work groups (Krackhardt, 1990; Rogers & Kincaid, 1981). Thus conceptualisation of emotional climate in a multi-worksite organisation is appropriately seen as a diversity of climates, in contrast with the idea of a single prevalent emotional climate within the organisation.

The results of this research have implications for both theory and research. From a research perspective, the availability of a standardised measure of climate of fear will enable further systematic investigation of this construct, and contribute to the growing body of research on emotions in organisational settings. For practitioners, our results suggest that the climate of fear is real, but that it that it may be a localised phenomenon, determined in part by the management practices adopted at specific work sites. Thus, while the overall average score of climate of fear was well below the scale mid-point of 52, mean scores at specific locations approached this value. This implies that, even in organisations where progressive human resource management techniques are implemented, such progressive policies may be offset in localised pockets by the practices implemented by shop-level managers.

Finally, the results of the present study must be interpreted in the light of four limitations. The first of these is that the research was conducted in a single industry (prepared food retailing), and was limited to two
organisations. Further, the response rate varied between the two organisations (including participation of worksites). The results across the organisations were remarkably consistent, however, especially in respect of the climate of fear measure. This suggests that a measure of confidence in our findings can be justified. Nevertheless, further research is needed to establish the generalisability of the climate of fear construct in other organisations and industrial settings.

The second limitation is that our results and interpretations are based partially on acceptance of the null hypothesis. Acceptance of the null, however, becomes a viable option where there is confirmatory evidence or, in our case, triangulated effects (Frick, 1995). Following Frick’s approach, we found that (a) there were between-organisation effects on both innovative leadership culture and communication culture, (b) there was no significant organisation effect for climate of fear, (c) the slopes of these effects were significantly different from each other. Thus it would seem reasonable to accept the null that there is no between organisation effect for climate of fear.

A further limitation of our study is that we based our findings upon a single questionnaire, where all responses were on a 7-point Likert-style scale. The resultant common method effect can potentially result in spurious correlations (Williams & Brown, 1994). We acknowledge that our
results may have been influenced by this effect. This may not be all that
great a concern, however, because our main findings were that climate of
fear varied within the organisations, not between them, while the culture
measures varied across the organisations.

Finally, our results are limited to the extent that our measures are
based on perceptions of fear, rather than actual fear-related behaviours. In
this instance, however, this may not be such a bad thing since it is the
perception of a climate of fear that we are interested in. If our respondents
were reporting that they perceive a fearful working environment, then this is
clearly consistent with the notion of a climate (Reichers & Schneider, 1990).

References

Press.


Ashkanasy, N.M., Broadfoot, L., & Falkus, S. (2000). Questionnaire
measures of organizational culture. In N. M. Ashkanasy, C. P. M.
Wilderom, & M. F. Peterson (Eds.). *Handbook of Organizational Culture
Preprint version


Boyle, G. J. (1991). Does item homogeneity indicate internal consistency or item redundancy in psychometric scales? Personality and Individual Differences, 12, 291-294


Preprint version

Later published as Climate of fear in organizational settings: Construct
definition, measurement, and a test of theory. Australian Journal of
Psychology, 55, 24-29.

Sons.

Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Center for
Advanced Engineering Study.

Fineman, S. (1993). Organizations as emotional arenas. In S. Fineman,

and W.R. Nord (Eds.), *Handbook of Organization Studies* (pp. 543-564).


develop and how they organize development. *Cognition and Emotion, 4*,
81-127.

Fisher, C.D., & Ashkanasy, N.M. (2000). The emerging role of
emotions in working life: An introduction. *Journal of Organizational
Behavior, 21*, 123-129.

Flam, H. (1993). Fear, loyalty and greedy organizations. In S. Fineman,
Preprint version

Later published as Climate of fear in organizational settings: Construct
definition, measurement, and a test of theory. Australian Journal of
Psychology, 55, 24-29.

Cognition, 23, 132-138

organizations. Management Learning, 28, 45-63.

behaviors in organizations: Assessing model-data fit. Paper presented at the
First Conference on Emotions and Organizational Life, San Diego, CA.

Hartley, J., Jacobson, D., Klandermans, P. G., & Van Vuuren, C.V.
Publications.


Izard, C. E. (1993). Four systems for emotion activation: Cognitive and

behaviors and motivations of survivors. Organization Development Journal,
14, 45-54.

intelligence as a moderator of emotional and behavioral reactions to job


LeDoux, J. (1998). Fear and the brain: Where have we been, and where are we going. *Biological Psychiatry, 44*, 1229-1238


Preprint version


Preprint version


Author notes


We would like to express our appreciation to Charmine Härtel and Terri Scandura for their comments on earlier drafts of this paper. We also thank Associate Editor Gerard Fogarty and the anonymous reviewers for their assistance and insightful comments.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Neal M. Ashkanasy, UQ Business School, The University of Queensland, Brisbane, QLD, 4072, Australia. Electronic mail may be sent to n.ashkanasy@uq.edu.au.
Preprint version