Employee Turnover Intention: The Roles of Leader Goal Orientation Profiles and Perceived Motivational Climate

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Employee Turnover Intention: The Roles of Leader Goal Orientation Profiles and Perceived Motivational Climate

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Abstract

Turnover intention remains central issue, as retaining valuable and dedicated employees can yield organizations with a competitive advantage. Drawing on achievement goal theory, we propose that leader goal orientation profile (GOP) and the perceived motivational climate (i.e., mastery and performance) influences employee turnover intention. In addition, we suggest that leader's GOP may serve as a relevant antecedent of the perceived motivational climate, and that the motivational climate functions as a mediator between leader GOP and employee turnover intention. A multisource sample of 105 leaders along with 340 employees revealed that leaders with a high mastery/high performance GOP and high mastery/low performance GOP indicated a stronger, positive influence on employee turnover intentions than leaders with a moderate mastery/moderate performance GOP. Further, the results indicated that a perceived mastery climate holds the strongest negative relationship with turnover intention. The findings point to the need for organizations to consider both ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ facilitators of employee turnover intention. Future directions are discussed.
Introduction

Turnover and turnover intention is a topic of increasing concern for organizations, as retaining a valuable workforce in a continuous global landscape is a way to achieve and sustain competitiveness (Allen, Bryant & Vardaman, 2010). Turnover intention is strongly related to actual turnover and refers to an employee's intent to leave the workplace (Holton, Mitchell, Lee, & Eberly, 2008). Given the importance for organizational purposes, considerable research has been devoted to examining the antecedents of turnover intentions and actual turnover (Park, Newman, Zhang & Hookeet, 2016). Still, there has been a predominant focus on individual-level predictors, including demographics, organizational embeddedness, organizational commitment and job-satisfaction (Hancock, Allen, Bosco, McDaniel & Pierce, 2013). The influential role of work attitudes on the process of employees staying or leaving the organization, however, have generally been limited (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Hom & Griffeth, 1995). Yet, more recently it has been emphasized a need for continued attention to the literature concerning why employees leave and how organizations may reduce turnover (Hancock et al., 2013). Moving beyond individual level predictors, the present study intends to address this topic by drawing on achievement goal theory (AGT; Ames, 1992b; Nicholls, 1989), as it provides an accredited framework for examining environmental facilitators, and may contribute in understanding the development of employee turnover intention. AGT is based on that achievement motivation can influence employees in a cognitive, affective and behavioral matter (Nerstad, Roberts & Richardsen, 2013b). Here, a combination of both personal and environmental facilitators determines achievement behavior (Keegan, Harwood, Spray & Lavallee, 2009). The present study therefore aims to investigate employee turnover intention by drawing upon AGT, more specifically through the concepts of leader goal orientation and the motivational climate.

Research has shown that leader goal orientation may be a potentially important, however largely neglected leader attribute, that may be relevant for several organizational- and employee outcomes (Hendricks & Payne, 2007). According to AGT, goal orientation is a central construct, and refers to how individuals give meaning to the context of achievements (e.g., work), and in turn how they act upon these conceptions (Roberts, 2012). AGT differentiates between two broad types of goal orientations: individual mastery orientation, which
involves focus on learning, cooperation and development; and individual performance orientation, which entails an emphasis on competition and demonstration of ability (e.g., Nicholls, 1989). In recent years, researchers have taken a more ‘complex’ approach in their stance on goal orientation (Pastor, Barron, Miller, & Davis, 2007). This approach entails the coexistence of both mastery and performance goals in predicting various individual level outcomes, thereby, applying a multiple goal orientation perspective (e.g., Darnon, Dompnier, Gilièron & Butera, 2010; Inglés, Martínez-Monteagudo, García-Fernández, Valle & Castejón, 2015). Thus, the achievement goals are orthogonal, meaning that individuals can be simultaneously high or low on both mastery and performance goal orientation (Nicholls, 1984, 1989). Following the assumption of orthogonality, investigating in terms of leader goal orientation profiles become appropriate. This study, considers how leader goal orientation profile (GOP) may directly influence employees’ turnover intention, as leaders through a position of authority provide guidelines with regards to expected, supported and rewarded behavior (Dragoni & Kuenzi, 2012). Leaders may therefore have the potential to influence several employee outcomes, such as an employee's willingness to leave the organization. Research on leader goal orientation within the organizational literature, has mostly focused on the degree to which leaders predict the goals employees adopt (e.g., Dragoni & Kuenzi, 2012; Porter, 2008; Porter, Franklin, Swider & Yu, 2016), and findings support that it plays a significant role in influencing perceptions of achievement goals (Dragoni & Kuenzi, 2012; Porter et al., 2016). Leaders may convey and embed their own orientation to the climate, and thereby, we propose that the leader may additionally influence the employees’ perceived motivational climate (Dragoni, 2005; Dragoni & Kuenzi, 2012).

The concept of perceived motivational climate has been under frequent investigation because subjective evaluations of climate have been asserted to function as important factors for psychological and behavioral responses (Ames, 1992a; Ames, 1992b). However, to the best of our knowledge only one study has specifically examined motivational climate and turnover intentions (Nerstad et al., 2013b), despite the influential role it is found to play in other individual outcomes, such as intrinsic motivation, knowledge hiding, and social exchange patterns (Černe, Hernaus, Dysvik, & Škerlavaj, 2017; Černe, Nerstad, Dysvik, & Skerlavaj, 2014; Harwood, Keegan, Smith & Raine, 2015). According to AGT, the motivational climate is constituted by two sub-climates, a mastery climate...
which is recognized to compromise an emphasis on learning, development, effort and cooperation, and a performance climate which is associated with demonstration of competence, rivalry and the value of normative ability (Ames, 1984). Further, the motivational climate represents an intersect of two important factors, motivation and context, which separately have been shown to influence employees’ willingness to quit (e.g., Holtom, Mitchell, Lee, & Eberly, 2008; Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablynski & Erez, 2001). The motivational climate is linked to an individual’s motivation by giving meaning to behavior, and guiding decisions for which goals to adopt, and thereby, purposefully motivating an individual’s achievement behavior (Roberts, 2001). In relation to context, the motivational climate involves the perceived criteria for success and failure in the work environment (Černe et al., 2014), and is thereby based on contextual conditions that organizations can influence. In alignment with this, we propose that to investigate the perceived motivational climate and its influence on employee turnover intention may serve as advantageous to the literature on turnover intention. Additionally, we suggest that the motivational climate may mediate the relationship between leader GOP and employee turnover intention.

The intended contribution of our study is twofold, respectively to the literature of turnover intention and AGT. First, the present study contributes to the literature concerning antecedents of turnover intention, were the focus is on the impact of leader's display of goal orientation and motivational climate on developing employee turnover intentions. The current study adds to the literature on antecedents of turnover intention, as leader GOP represents a somewhat neglected leader attribute (Hendricks & Payne, 2007), that might extend the understanding of leaders' role in employee turnover deliberations. Additionally, the motivational climate represents a way to align two important determinants (i.e., motivation and context) of employees’ intentions to leave the organization that have not yet been sufficiently addressed by prior research. This is important because the two factors serve as a way for organizations and leaders to deliberately address and manage employees' willingness to stay or leave.

Second, the current study extends and contributes to AGT as it investigates leader goal orientation in relation to its influence on perceived motivational climate and an employee outcome (i.e., turnover intention). This is important as we need to understand more utterly the way in which leaders define success, provide cues in achievement settings, and thus have implications for climate
perceptions and employee behavioral intentions. Further, the study contributes beyond existing research as it applies a multiple goal orientation perspective (Pastor et al., 2007), and thereby offering a conceptual clarification and insight regarding leaders' goal orientation not covered by prior research (Dragoni & Kuenzi, 2012). This more comprehensive investigation provides an account for the full dimensionality of leaders’ goal orientation, and enables us to determine the unique influence associated with each leader GOP, on employee outcomes (e.g., turnover intention). In turn, leaders will not be forced to an either mastery or performance goal orientation categorization, providing a more realistic application. In sum, the present study will in the following explore the potential of these proposed factors and their role in employee turnover intention.

Theory and Hypotheses

Turnover Intention

Turnover is a relevant topic of interest for organizations, and has been given much attention due to its many unfavorable consequences in work settings (Zimmerman, 2008). Turnover intention can be defined as a conscious and deliberate willingness to leave an organization (Tett & Meyer, 1993), and is found to be a strong predictor of actual turnover (e.g., Abrams, Ando & Hinkle, 1998). High turnover is associated with a series of negative organizational outcomes, caused by the loss of human- and social capital, and could involve losing crucial competence and abilities that is hard to replace (Hausknecht and Trevor, 2011). When employees leave an organization, it often disrupts organizational operations and collective functions, and causes insufficient newcomer socialization and low-level training, as it takes time for new employees to obtain adequate levels of performance (Hausknecht and Trevor, 2011). In addition, recruiting and training new employees is both costly and time consuming (Mondy and Mondy, 2014). In light of the detrimental implications of turnover and turnover intentions, it is of great value for organizations to be aware of its antecedents and how to sufficiently manage these, in order to retain their workforce (Hancock et al., 2013).

Various scholars have emphasized the role of motivation in developing employee turnover intentions (e.g., Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2010; Gillet, Gagne, Sauvagé & Fouguerseau, 2013; Kuvaas, Buch, Gagné, Dysvik & Forest 2016; Lin & Chang, 2005; Richer, Blanchard & Vallerand, 2002). For example, Mitchell
and colleagues found that motivational sources influenced turnover intentions above organizational commitment and job satisfaction (2001). Motivation can refer to the process in which causes level of effort allocated to, persistence in, and initiation of behavior (Kanfer, 1990). Maertz and Griffeth (2004) suggest that its link to turnover can be understood by motivation initiating engagement in the mental processes of turnover considerations, and the actual physical behavior of leaving the organization.

Further, is has been suggested that the organizational context and leaders may affect how employees feel about their job, and in turn, whether or not they develop intentions to leave or stay (Allen et al., 2010; Spell, Eby & Vandenberg, 2014). Such work related surroundings may be interpreted as triggers to engagement in the mental processes of turnover deliberations. Much research has been conducted in terms of the relevance of contextual variables, for example organizational support, climate perceptions, pay distribution and diversity (for review, see Holtom et al., 2008). The quality of leader-member exchange relationships and organizational support are two factors that have received firm empirical support with regards to their impact on employee turnover, and turnover intentions (e.g., Allen, Shore & Griffeth, 2003; Gerstner & Day, 1997; Griffeth et al., 2000). In general terms, these findings indicate that when employees experience support from the organization, which could involve support in the shape of offering inducements (Allen et al., 2003), and/or the strength and content of the relationship with their leader is of mutual high quality (Clarke & Mahadi, 2017), employees will have stronger tendency to stay with the organization.

In sum, both motivational and environmental facilitators have separately shown to affect turnover intentions. However, an alignment of the two as provided by AGT, has not yet been sufficiently addressed by prior research. The understanding of why employees stay or leave may therefore be increased through research on achievement-motivational triggers facilitated both directly from the leader and employees' perceived climate.

**Achievement Goal Theory**

Achievement goal theory (AGT), developed by Nicholls (1984, 1989) emphasizes that people engage differently in achievement behavior (Buch, Nerstad, Aandstad & Säfvenbom, 2016). The theory has been under the scope of research for many years already, because of its implications for both personal and environmental
determinants of achievement behavior. Achievement behavior is in general directed on demonstrating high ability, rather than low ability (Nicholls, 1984). In a work setting, it is a concern for individuals to experience that they have competence enough to meet the challenges at hand. They will therefore attempt on interpreting the criteria of success in the work specific context, and evaluate whether they have the ability to achieve the organizational goals, which in turn affects their motivation (Roberts, 2001). AGT is therefore useful when seeking to find out why and how employees are motivated and exert effort at work, and what causes behavioral intentions (i.e. turnover intentions).

**Leader Goal Orientation Profile**
In alignment with the AGT framework, the leader’s goal orientation defines in what way each leader gives meaning to an achievement setting, and how they in turn will react and approach these situations (Roberts, 2012). AGT distinguishes between mastery goal orientation and performance goal orientation. Mastery oriented individuals are recognized as to pursue learning, self-development and treat ability as self-referential, meaning that they feel successful when they through mastery advance their own ability (Nicholls, 1989). Performance orientated individuals are more competitive, and their ability and success is to a larger degree other-referenced, meaning that they feel successful when their performance is superior to others (Nicholls, 1989).

In recent years, considerable debate has existed concerning the dichotomous division of goal orientation (DeShon & Gillespie, 2005). Dissimilar to AGT, Elliot (1999) have argued it would be more appropriate to use a model were performance goal orientation is further divided into performance-approach and performance-avoidance. In this division, performance-approach accounts for behavior that is categorized as attainment of normative competence, while the performance-avoidance goals accounts for behavior that is categorized as avoidance of incompetence (Elliot & Church, 1997). Additionally, Elliot (1999) has suggested a similar division of mastery goal orientation. As a counterargument, Nerstad and colleagues emphasize that in this kind of conceptualization of goal orientation, the "goals are assumed to be manifestations of needs" (2013b, p. 124). Nicholls (1984, 1989) original approach differs from that of Elliot's (1999), as it takes a social-cognitive approach on how people define success and how to achieve it. When speaking of goal achievement in
traditional AGT (Nicholls, 1984, 1989), it is not seen as a way of fulfilling needs, but the goals themselves are viewed as the critical determinants of achievement cognition (Nerstad et al, 2013b). Nicholls (1989) also argues that the two concepts of mastery and performance orientation is sufficient, as the items which assess the strivings to avoid are loaded on the same factors as the items which assess demonstration of ability. In line with this argumentation, we apply the traditional view of AGT, applying the mastery and performance division as the two main domains of goal orientation and motivational climate.

Furthermore, an individual’s preference for mastery and performance goals are in general assumed to be predisposed in an individual (Roberts and Treasure, 2012). However, goal orientations can be subjected to change when an individual receives information of how to better their performance, and therefore should not be treated as traits or needs, but rather as dynamic cognitive schemas (Roberts, 2012). Still, both in theory and in research, findings indicate that goal orientations are relatively stable over time (Payne, Youngcourt & Beaubien, 2007).

In addition, an important aspect of Nicholls' (1984, 1989) AGT is the assumption of orthogonality in goal orientation. This means that mastery and performance goal orientations are independent of each other, and that individuals can simultaneously pursue different levels of mastery and performance goals. When goal orientations are conceptualized as multidimensional, profiles become suitable (DeShon & Gillespie, 2005). The multiple goal orientation perspective has received increasing attention within the organizational literature (Pastor et al., 2007), and several scholars have found support for the existence of four profiles (e.g., Fortunato & Goldblatt, 2006; Inglés et al., 2015; Kunst & Woerkom, 2017; Nerstad, 2012). With the assumption of orthogonality, and in alignment with previous studies, we suggest that four different leader goal orientation profiles (GOPs) exist: (1) high mastery/low performance GOP; (2) low mastery/high performance GOP; (3) high mastery/high performance GOP; and (4) low mastery/low performance GOP.

**Leader Goal Orientation Profile and Employee Turnover Intention**

The leader is found to have an important influence on a wide range of organizational- and employee outcomes, such as job satisfaction, performance, creativity, and intrinsic motivation (for review, see Hiller, DeChurch, Murase &
Doty, 2011). More specifically, links between particular leadership behaviors and employee turnover intention have been supported (Griffeth et al., 2000). For instance, the quality of the leader-member exchange relationships has been found to have significant negative relationships with employee’s willingness to quit (e.g., Graen, Liden & Hoel, 1982; Harris, Wheeler, Kacmar, 2009). Further, the relationship an employee has with his or her immediate manager, plays a critical role in many turnover decisions (Allen et al., 2010). Additionally, leader’s goal orientation may be an important, however neglected leader trait, with implications for leader effectiveness, and thereby employees (Hendricks & Payne, 2007).

Since the early days of achievement goal theory research, mastery and performance goals have been evaluated against each other, in order to find which one yields most beneficial effects for achievement situations (Poortvliet & Darnon, 2010). In general terms, mastery goal orientation is found to be associated with adaptive outcomes, whereas performance goal orientation is linked to more maladaptive outcomes (Roberts, 2012). For example, Porter and colleagues (2016) found that a leader learning orientation positively influenced team task commitment, while a leader performance orientation had a negative effect. In light of such findings, it has been argued in favor of promoting mastery goals, while simultaneously reducing the presence of performance goals (DeShon and Gillespie, 2005). Arguably, leaders with a high mastery/low performance GOP aligns well with these guidelines, whereas leaders with a low master/high performance GOP serve as contradictory to these recommendations. Following this line of reasoning, a low mastery/high performance leader GOP is assumed to be positively related to employee turnover intention, and a high mastery/low performance is thought to negatively influence employee turnover intention.

However, this one-sided endorsement of mastery goals may not serve well with real organizational settings, where the salience of performance goals may be necessary and even inevitable, in order for the organization to reach their goals (Poortvliet & Darnon, 2010). In addition, scholars have emphasized that general findings regarding mastery and performance goals often are equivocal (DeShon & Gillespie, 2005), and that the inconsistencies do especially concern performance goals and its consequences (Payne et al., 2007). A balance of both mastery and performance goal orientations might be most adaptive in work settings (Button, Mathieu, & Zajac, 1996). This has also been supported by research conducted in terms of a multiple goal perspective, which indicates there are potential benefits
of a dual focus on mastery and performance (e.g., Chen & Mathieu, 2008; Kozlowski & Bell, 2006). In light of this, leaders that display both a high degree of mastery and performance goals (i.e., high mastery/high performance GOP) may serve as a ‘favorable’ leader GOP, that is negatively related to employee turnover intention.

Lastly, leaders displaying low levels of both mastery and performance goals may arguably be similar to more laissez-faire leadership behaviors, which involves no attempt to motivate or recognize employees' needs (Skogstad, Einarsen, Torsheim, Aasland & Hetland, 2007). Such leadership style is indicated to have a destructive influence on employee outcomes (e.g., Skogstad et al., 2007). In this way, leaders with a low mastery/low performance GOP serve as a ‘disadvantageous’ leader GOP, which is thought to be positively related to employee turnover intention.

In sum, we argue that leaders’ goal orientation profile may have a direct influence on employee turnover intentions, and that the various profiles will differently have an impact on turnover intentions. We hypothesize the following:

**Hypothesis 1a)** A high mastery/low performance leader GOP, and a high mastery/high performance leader GOP is negatively related to employee turnover intention more so than the other leader GOPs.

**Hypothesis 1b)** A low mastery/high performance leader GOP, and a low mastery/low performance leader GOP is positively related to employee turnover intention more so than the other leader GOPs.

**The Perceived Motivational Climate and Employee Turnover Intention**

The motivational climate, as defined in AGT, indicates to an employee what is needed to succeed at work, and therefore has the potential to influence the individual in a cognitive, affective and behavioral matter (Nerstad et al., 2013b). Based on this assumption, researchers have investigated the influence of motivational climate in search of finding the most beneficial aspects of work environments, and thus how it will affect individual outcomes. The relevance of motivation, is described as the process in which individuals develop meaningful personal goals and these goals function by energizing their actions in achievement
settings, such as in their workplace (Roberts, 2001). The situation and context is thought to be important contributors to how the motivational process unfolds, although the personal goals are inherent in the person and derive from individual perceptions (Ames, 1992b, Nicholls 1984). The perceived motivational climate has therefore been defined as the perception of the success and failure communicated through the policies, practices and procedures in the work environment (Nerstad, Roberts & Richardsen, 2013a).

Two types of motivational climates are found to be present in achievement situations, a mastery climate and a performance climate (Ames, 1992). A mastery climate is associated with criteria for success that are focused on progress, learning, mastering skills, and evaluation is self-referenced (Ames, 1984). This means that individuals are viewed as competent when making progress in their skills related to work, put effort into it and enter cooperative relationships with co-workers (Harwood, Spray, Keegan, 2008). A performance climate, however, emphasize competition as a focus in achievement, and the criteria of success is therefore, more other-referenced (Nicholls, 1979; Ntoumanis & Biddle, 1999). In a performance climate, employees are encouraged to outperform others, and they may be seen as successful only when they have performed better in comparison to their co-workers (Ames, 1984).

Several studies have found empirical support for the direct association between the motivational climate and individual outcomes (e.g., Lemyre, Hall and Roberts, 2008; Reinboth and Duda, 2004). Within the field of sports, a perceived mastery climate is consistently associated with adaptive motivational outcomes (i.e., intrinsic motivation, perceived competence, self-esteem), whereas a perceived performance climate has been related to more maladaptive outcomes (i.e., negative affect, antisocial moral attitudes, extrinsic motivation) (Harwood et al., 2015). Research within the context of work has found that a perceived mastery climate is associated with work engagement, higher levels of trust among the employees, and a reduction of employee incivility over time (Birkeland & Nerstad, 2016; Černe et al., 2014; Nerstad et al., 2013b). Perceiving a mastery climate has also shown to influence the negative relationship between knowledge hiding and creativity, influence social exchange patterns by facilitating more constructive exchange relationships among the employees, and to increase innovative behavior (Černe et al., 2017; Černe et al., 2014). On the other hand, a perceived performance climate has been associated with several unfavorable
scenarios, such as lower levels of creativity and knowledge hiding (Černe et al., 2014).

In relation to turnover intention, Nerstad and colleagues (2013a) found a strong link between the perceived motivational climate and turnover intention, where mastery climate was associated with lower turnover intentions. They argued that individuals with a mastery orientation would continue their work relationship because of the contextual benefits of being in a mastery climate, as it may improve the general quality of their work life (Nerstad et al., 2013a). On the other hand, findings from sports research has shown that athletes in a performance climate have an increased tendency to quit (Sarrazin, Vallerand, Guillet, Pelletier, & Cury, 2002), which could be interpreted as similar to an employee leaving their job.

In sum, the motivational climate reflects a motivational and contextual conditioned construct, which further influences an individual's motivation by giving meaning to behavior, and guiding decisions for which goals to adopt, and purposefully motivating an individual's achievement behavior (Roberts, 2001). In alignment with this, a perceived mastery climate corresponds to employees’ perceived opportunities for learning, cooperation and development, whereas a perceived performance climate is linked the salience of extrinsic rewards, normative evaluation and internal competition (Dragoni, 2005). On the basis of these perceptions, the motivational climate has the potential to trigger engagement in the mental processes of turnover deliberations. Further this may affect how employees feel about and evaluate their current job, and in turn, whether or not they develop intentions to quit or stay. Therefore, we suggest that the perceived motivational climate is an important determinant for employee turnover intention. We hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 2a) Perceived mastery climate is negatively related to employee turnover intention.

Hypothesis 2b) Perceived performance climate is positively related to employee turnover intention.
**Leader Goal Orientation Profile as an Antecedent of the Motivational Climate**

Employees’ direct supervisor have been suggested as a key agent of the organization through which employees form their expectations of supported and rewarded behaviors (Nerstad, 2012). The leader is theorized to be the main architect of the motivational climate in context of achievement behaviors (Ames, 1992; Dragoni, 2005). Further, leaders have the potential to affect employees’ perceptions through a social learning process (Bandura, 1986). They are therefore assumed to model the behavior they deem suitable by expressing direct and indirect feedback regarding employees’ ability to meet desired expectations, and further rewarding the ones who demonstrate preferred behaviors (Bandura, 1986). In such a way, leaders may convey and embed their achievement preferences to employees through interactions such as role modeling, evaluation and feedback, and reinforcement of these achievement preferences (Dragoni, 2005). Therefore, many researchers support the assumption that the leader is an important contributor in shaping the work climate (e.g., Dragoni, 2005; Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009; Nerstad, 2012; Roberts, 2012).

While interacting with employees, it is indicated that leaders displaying mastery goals will have a tendency to encourage taking on new and challenging tasks, to place emphasis on self-improvement and learning from previous mistakes, and to deliver constructive feedback in a developmental manner (Cannon & Edmondson, 2001; Edmondson, 1996). In alignment with this, research suggest that leaders’ might facilitate activities that specifically targets learning and growth among their employees, such as offering employees opportunities to participate in developmental behaviors (Maurer & Tarulli, 1994; Noe & Wilk, 1993), and propel employees to employ newly learned skills at work (Ford, Quinones, Sego, & Sorra, 1992). Therefore, a high mastery/low performance leader GOP is assumed to contribute to how employees come to perceive a climate that values and anticipates learning.

Leaders displaying performance goals will have a tendency to appraise employees’ performance in relation to others, encourage employees to outperform colleagues and demonstrate success, and provide extrinsic rewards for such successes (Dragoni, 2005). In accordance with this, it assumed that employees will perceive that demonstration of ability and outperforming others is valued.
(Dragoni, 2005). Therefore, a low mastery/high performance leader GOP is likely to foster a performance climate.

When leaders display high levels of both mastery and performance goals (i.e., high mastery/high performance GOP), they value continuous development and improvement efforts, while they simultaneously expect and reward rivalry, and demonstration of ability. As such, a high mastery/high performance leader GOP may be assumed to be positively related to both an employee’s perceived mastery and performance climate. When leaders display low levels of both mastery and performance goals (i.e., low mastery/low performance GOP), employees generally may experience an absence motivational cues from the leader, as there is overall a smaller degree of encouragement to learn and develop and neither an encouragement to compete with colleagues and to demonstrate success (Ames, 1992b). Therefore, a low mastery/low performance leader GOP is thought to be negatively related to an employee’s perceived mastery and performance climate.

In sum, we propose that the four, presented leader goal orientation profiles influence the way in which employees learn and take on what is accepted and valued in the specific context, and further create similar perceptions of the motivational climate. On the basis of AGT we expect the following:

Hypothesis 3a) A high mastery/high performance leader GOP and a high mastery/low performance leader GOP is positively related to a perceived mastery climate more so than the other leader GOPs.

Hypothesis 3b) A high mastery/high performance leader GOP and a low mastery/high performance leader GOP is positively related to a perceived performance climate more so than the other leader GOPs.

The Mediating Role of the Perceived Motivational Climate

Several scholars have suggested that various leadership behaviors may affect organizational- and individual level outcomes indirectly through work-related climates (Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009). Among other, it has been found support for a mediation relationship with regards to the intervening role of creative climate between leadership in support of innovation, and innovation
(Isaksen & Akkermans, 2011), and the indirect influence of ethical climate between ethical leadership and turnover intention (Demirtas & Akdogan, 2015). Further, and more specifically, Dragoni and Kuenzi (2012) investigated whether leader’s goal orientation indirectly affects performance perceptions through the shared achievement goal adopted within the unit. They found a general support for their hypothesized model (Dragoni & Kuenzi, 2012), however, to the best of our knowledge only a limited number of studies have explored similar mediation conditions in relation to leader goal orientation.

In the present study, it is argued that the perceived motivational climate influences employee turnover intention, were perceiving a mastery climate relates negatively to turnover intention, and perceiving a performance climate relates positively. Furthermore, the leader is suggested to have the potential to influence employees perceived motivation climate on the basis of their GOP, creating similar perceptions of the motivational climate. Building upon this argumentation, the current study further explores how the leader’s GOP may also have an indirect influence on employee turnover intention, through employees perceived motivational climate, as illustrated in Figure 1. The negative influence of leaders with a high mastery/low performance GOP and leaders with a high mastery/high performance GOP on employee turnover intention, is assumed to be mediated by the perceived motivational climate. Arguably, the leaders’ emphasis on mastery goals (i.e., learning and development) will foster a perceived mastery climate. Perceiving a climate that provides opportunities for learning and development, may further reduce employees’ willingness to quit. Similarly, the positive influence of leaders with a low mastery/high performance GOP and leaders with a low mastery/low performance GOP on employee turnover intention is assumed to be mediated by the perceived motivational climate. Leaders lack of emphasis on mastery and performance goals, or leaders lack of emphasis on mastery goals accompanied with a great concern for performance goals may provide general absence of motivational cues, or only one-sided cues concerned with normative ability and competition. Such perceptions are further assumed to increase employees’ intentions to leave the organization. In alignment with this, we suggest the following:
Hypothesis 4a) The negative relationship between (a) a high mastery/low performance leader GOP; (b) a high mastery/high performance leader GOP, and employee turnover intention is mediated by the perceived motivational climate (mastery and performance climate).

Hypothesis 4b) The positive relationship between (a) a low mastery/high performance leader GOP; (b) a low mastery/low performance leader GOP, and employee turnover intention is mediated by the perceived motivational climate (mastery and performance climate).

Figure 1. Leader’s GOP as an antecedent of employees’ perceived mastery and performance climate, further influencing employee turnover intention.

Method

Sample and Procedure

The data was collected from two large organizations from the private sector, a knowledge firm and a banking and insurance firm. The questionnaire was electronically distributed (Confirmit), and in sum it resulted in a total number of 832 responses. On the basis of our gathered results, 105 leaders were identified as suitable for conducting analyses. This gave a total of 340 employees, whom each had reported their affiliation to one of the leaders. Among the employees, there were 47.1% females and 52.9% males. The age spanned from 24-67 years, with the average of 44 years. The education level among the employees is distributed in the following way: 0.6% have 9 years primary or lower secondary school; 5%
have been 1-2 years in high school; 12.4% have 3 years in high school; 17.1%
have completed 1-2 years higher education; 32.6% have completed 3-4 years
higher education; and 32.4% have at least 5-6 years of higher education. The
average years of experience among the employees were 21.3, and they were
relatively evenly distributed among the different work domains within the
organizations. Furthermore 98% of the employees was in a permanent work
relationship, while 1.2% was temporarily employed. The pay level was distributed
in the following way: 10% earn less than NOK 400 000; 14.1% earn between 400
000-450 000; 12.6% earn between NOK 450 000-500 000; and 63.2% earn above
NOK 500 000.

Among the leaders, there were 65.7% males, and 34.3% females, the age
spanned from 33- 65 years, with an average of 47. The education level among the
leaders is distributed in the following way: 1.9% have 1-2 years of high school;
7.6% have 3 years of high school; 7.6% have 1-2 years of higher education,
24.8% have 3-4 years of higher education, and 58.1% have 5-6 years of higher
education. Furthermore, the average number of years of experience were 22.7, and
all of the leaders were employed permanently. Regarding pay level, 1% earn
approximately NOK 450,000-500,000, while the remaining 99% of the leaders
earn above NOK 500,000. Lastly, the area of work domain was relatively evenly
distributed among the leaders.

**Measurement Tools**

*Perceived motivational climate.* The perceived motivational climate (i.e.,
mastery and performance climate) was measured by the 14-item questionnaire
Motivational Climate at Work Questionnaire (MCWQ), developed by Nerstad,
Roberts and Richardsen (2013b) (α = .79 for mastery, and α = .84 for performance
climate). The scale consists of eight items in relation to the performance climate,
and six items in relation to mastery climate, and the response scale ranged from 1
(strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Examples of items are "In my
department/work group, it is important to achieve better than others" and "In my
department/work group, each individual's learning and development is
emphasized".

*Goal orientation profile.* Leader’s GOP (i.e., mastery and performance)
was measured by the Work Domain Goal-Orientation Scale validated by
Vandewalle (1997), adapted for Norwegian speakers by Dysvik and Kuvaas
The items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Five of the items measured mastery orientation (e.g., “I enjoy challenging and difficult tasks where I’ll learn new skills”), while four of the items measured performance orientation (e.g., “I am concerned with showing that I can perform better than my co-workers”).

**Turnover intention.** Turnover intention was measured by a five-item scale developed by Kuvaas (2008) (e.g., “I often think about quitting my present job”). The items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

**Control variables.** The questionnaire included several items to control for the possibility of false relationships caused by sociodemographic differences in predictor and outcome variables, as significant differences have been found for gender, education, work experience and employment status, in research conducted in relation to turnover intentions and actual turnover (Griffeth et al., 2000; Holtom et al., 2008). We therefore controlled for the listed demographic variables in all analyses; gender (1 = female, 2 = male); age (in years); education (type of education); work experience (in years); employment status (full time, temporary, other); area of work (e.g., research and development, production); leadership responsibility (yes/no); and pay level (different categories from below NOK 200 000 to above NOK 500 000).

**Statistical Analyses**

After the completion of the survey, the results were analyzed in several stages with the use of SPSS 24 and Stata 15. A confirmatory factor analysis was first performed by using Stata. Thereafter, descriptive statistics were analyzed, which among other concerned examining reliability and bivariate correlations. Cluster analysis was used to identify leader GOPs. To test our hypotheses, we performed analysis of variance and hierarchical regression analyses.
Results

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

To examine the psychometric properties of the scales applied in the study, all of the latent variables were specified via confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and an assessment of the model fit was conducted (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The variables were specified as latent constructs, composed by their related scale items. An assessment of the model was done on the basis of various fit indices recommended by Hu and Bentler (1998): the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA), the standardized root mean squared residual (SRMR), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), and the comparative fit index (CFI). A model fit is good if the RMSEA is .08 or lower, the SRMR is .08 or lower, and the TLI and CFI are .95 or higher (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hu & Bentler, 1999). A number of CFAs were conducted, including a five-factor model (turnover intention, leader mastery goal orientation, leader performance goal orientation, mastery climate and performance climate), and four alternative models (i.e., 4-factor, 3-factor, 2-factor and 1-factor model). The results of CFAs are presented in Table 1. The $\chi^2$ value, the degrees of freedom, the CFI, the TLI, the RMSEA and the SRMR is provided for each model. As can be seen the hypothesized five-factor model produced the best fit statistics, and fits the data better than the four alternative models. The expected five-factor solution (turnover intention, leader mastery goal orientation, leader performance goal orientation, mastery climate and performance climate) indicated an acceptable degree of fit with the data ($\chi^2[316] = 679.91$, $p < .001$, CFI = .97, TLI = .97, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .02). In sum, the results indicated that the psychometric properties of the measurement scales were generally acceptable.
Table 1.
Summary of Confirmatory Factor Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesized model (5-factor)</th>
<th>χ²</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>TLI</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
<th>SRMR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4-factor model</td>
<td>2509.81</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-factor model</td>
<td>4403.56</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-factor model</td>
<td>11178.74</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-factor model</td>
<td>27867.85</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 408. χ² = chi-square; DF = degrees of freedom; p = level of significance; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; RMSEA = root mean squared error of approximation; SRMR = standardized root mean squared residual.

Descriptive Statistics

Means, standard deviations, bivariate correlations and Cronbach’s alpha for all multiple item scales are reported in Table 2 and 3. Cronbach’s alpha for all scales demonstrated acceptable reliability estimates, with the lowest Cronbach’s alpha being 0.70, and the highest 0.90. To identify possible multicollinearity conditions, the correlation matrix was examined, which shows that there are no high correlations among the variables. None of the independent variables correlated above the critical value 0.70 (Meyers, Gamst, & Guarino, 2006). In addition, the variance inflation factor (VIF) only showed scores that were well below 10 (the highest VIF value was 2.46) (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 1998). Thus, the analyses show no indication of collinearity.
### Table 2.
**Means, Standard Deviations, Cronbach’s Alpha Values and Intercorrelations of Employees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gender</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>44.23</td>
<td>9.51</td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Education</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td></td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Years of experience</td>
<td>21.23</td>
<td>9.05</td>
<td></td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.94**</td>
<td>-.48**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Position</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.12*</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Pay level</td>
<td>6.22</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>.11*</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Work domain</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td></td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.24**</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-.15**</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Managerial responsibility</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.14**</td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td>.15**</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Mastery climate</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>(.84)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Performance climate</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>-.11*</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.12*</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.11*</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.13*</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>(.84)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Turnover intention</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
<td>.13*</td>
<td>-.20**</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.32**</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>(.90)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = 340. Cronbach’s alpha in parenthesis.  *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001*

### Table 3.
**Means, Standard Deviations, Cronbach’s Alpha Values and Intercorrelations of Leaders**

| Variable                  | M   | SD  | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. Gender                 | 1.66| .48 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 2. Age                    | 46.89| 7.30| .07 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 3. Education              | 5.29| 1.03| .23*| -.31**|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 4. Years of experience    | 22.69| 8.00| .00 | .94**| -.44**|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 5. Pay level              | 6.99| .10 | .14 | .07 | .03 | .16 |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 6. Work domain            | 4.11| 2.06| .07 | -.06 | -.09 | -.03 | .10 |     |     |     |     |     |
| 7. Mastery goal orientation| 4.36| .43 | .04 | -.31**| .28**| -.30**| -.05 | -.11 | (.70)|     |     |     |
| 8. Performance goal orientation| 3.45| .71 | -.12| -.00 | -.00 | .02 | -.08 | -.13 | .04 | (.76)|     |     |
| 9. Turnover intention     | 2.28| 1.04| .11 | -.20*| .12 | -.17 | .06 | .07 | .07 | -.08 | (.90)|     |

*Note. N = 105. Cronbach’s alpha in parenthesis.  *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001*
Cluster Analysis

Cluster analysis was applied in order to generate leaders’ GOP’s. This is a statistical technique that identifies “clusters” of observations that have similar values on given variables (Pastor et al., 2007). In such a way heterogeneity within the same GOP is minimized, whereas heterogeneity between the GOP’s are maximized (Pastor et al., 2007). Cluster analysis was performed in two steps, as recommended by Hair and colleagues (1998), and it entails using a combination of hierarchical and nonhierarchical clustering methods. The first step, hierarchical agglomeration clustering, is the process of which each object initially is its own cluster, and in the following steps, the two most similar objects are formed into a new aggregate cluster (Fortunato & Goldblatt, 2006). When this process is repeated, this consequently constitutes the establishment of a single cluster (Fortunato & Goldblatt, 2006). In order to perform the hierarchical clustering analysis Ward’s hierarchical method was applied in combination with squared Euclidean distances (Hair et al., 1998). The second step, nonhierarchical or k-means procedure, involves ascribing objects a predetermined number of clusters. In light of this, whereas hierarchical clustering can be understood as a way of of acquiring the ideal number of clusters, nonhierarchical k-means clustering represents a method for further refining the initial cluster solution through an iterative process, and can additionally provide a verification of the results from the hierarchical analysis (Gore, 2000).

On the basis of the agglomeration schedules and dendograms, we further tested a three-cluster and four-cluster solution with the k-means analysis. Both the three-cluster and four-cluster solution fulfilled the convergence criterion before reaching 10 iterations, however, due to number of leaders in each cluster, we argue that for the current study the most appropriate solution is three profiles (clusters). These leader profiles are: moderate mastery/moderate performance GOP ($M_M=4.15$, $SD_M=.41$, $M_P=3.29$ $SD_P=.26$, $n=54$); high mastery/high performance GOP ($M_M=4.59$, $SD_M=.33$, $M_P=4.08$ $SD_P=.37$, $n=39$); and a high mastery/low performance GOP ($M_M=4.53$, $SD_M=.37$, $M_P=2.08$ $SD_P=.61$, $n=12$), as shown in Table 4. These results differentiate somewhat from our predictions and previous studies conducted on goal orientation profiles (e.g., Nerstad, 2012). More specifically, this concerns a low mastery/high performance GOP, and low
mastery/low performance GOP. Therefore, we were not able to test the hypotheses developed in relation to these profiles.

Table 4.
Clusters of Leader Goal Orientation Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster 1</th>
<th>Cluster 2</th>
<th>Cluster 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderate mastery / moderate performance</td>
<td>High mastery / high performance</td>
<td>High mastery / low performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n = 54)</td>
<td>(n = 39)</td>
<td>(n = 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery orientation</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance orientation</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 105.

In order to test multiple comparisons between the three clusters an analysis of variance (ANOVA) with Tukey post hoc test was performed (Pallant, 2013). Tukey post hoc test showed that all clusters were significantly different on mastery and performance goal orientation, with the exception of cluster 2 and 3 not being significantly different in relation to mastery orientation, as they both are labeled ‘high mastery’.

Testing of Hypotheses

In Hypothesis 1 we argued that leader GOP influences employee turnover intention, and further in Hypothesis 2, we posited that the perceived motivational climate (i.e. mastery and performance) would influence employee turnover intention. In order to test the hypotheses, we performed a hierarchical regression analysis (see Table 5). This involved conducting regression analysis with all of the relevant predictor variables (i.e., mastery climate, performance climate, high mastery/high performance LGOP and high mastery/low performance LGOP) and its influence on employee turnover intention. Table 5 shows the results from the regression analysis. Interestingly, with regards to Hypothesis 1, both leaders with a high mastery/high performance GOP (b = .12, p < .05) and leaders with a high mastery/low performance GOP (b = .17, p < .01) have a significantly more positive influence on employee turnover intention compared to leaders with a moderate mastery/moderate performance GOP. With regards to hypothesis 2, the results supported that both a perceived performance and mastery climate significantly influenced turnover intention. As predicted in the hypothesis,
perceiving a mastery climate was found to have significant negative influence on turnover intention ($b = -0.35, p < .001$). Whereas, perceiving a performance climate had a significant positive association with turnover intention ($b = 0.12, p < .05$).

Table 5.
*All Relevant Predictor Variables and their Influence on Employee Turnover Intention*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Turnover intention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>$-3.75^{***}(0.32)$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery climate</td>
<td>$-0.35^{***}(0.07)$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance climate</td>
<td>$0.12^{*}(0.08)$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High mastery / high performance LGOP</td>
<td>$0.12^{*}(0.13)$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High mastery / low performance LGOP</td>
<td>$0.17^{**}(0.18)$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model $F$</td>
<td>$14.56^{*}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>$0.15^{***}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta R^2$</td>
<td>$0.15^{***}$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: N = 340. Standardized coefficient estimates. Standard errors in parenthesis. Independent variable is categorical, three cluster group, where cluster group 1 is the reference variable (C1 = 0, C2 = 1, C3 = 1). C1: Moderate mastery LGOP and moderate performance LGOP; C2: High mastery LGOP and high performance LGOP; and C3: High mastery LGOP and low performance LGOP. LGOP = Leader goal orientation profile.

In Hypothesis 3, we argued that the various leader’s GOP would differently influence the employees perceived motivational climate. In order to test this hypothesis hierarchical regression analysis was applied. When the independent variable is categorical, it is recommended to create dummy variables in order to perform the regression analysis (Field, 2013). Further, this involves that the results from the different leader GOPs should be interpreted in relation to each other. As the largest cluster was represented by the moderate mastery/moderate performance group ($n_L = 54$, $n_S = 182$) this was made the reference category, in which the other groups were compared. Table 6 shows the results of two separate regression models, were the computed standardized coefficient estimates for the two leader GOPs should be understood in comparison with the reference leader GOP.
Table 6.
Leader Goal Orientation Profile and its Influence on Employees’ Perceived Mastery and Performance Climate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Mastery climate (Model 1)</th>
<th>Performance climate (Model 2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>3.67*** (.06)</td>
<td>2.37*** (.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High mastery/high performance LGOP</td>
<td>.05 (.09)</td>
<td>-.02 (.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High mastery/low performance LGOP</td>
<td>.14* (.13)</td>
<td>-.03 (.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model F</td>
<td>3.02*</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.02*</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta R^2$</td>
<td>.02*</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 340. Standardized coefficients estimates. Independent variable is categorical, were cluster group 1 is the reference variable (C1 = 0, C2 = 1, C3 = 1). Cluster group 1: moderate mastery and moderate performance LGOP; cluster group 2: high mastery and high performance LGOP; and cluster group 3: high mastery and low performance LGOP. LGOP = Leader goal orientation profile. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

In relation to model 1 (see Table 7), the analysis shows that leaders with a high mastery/low performance GOP (b = .14, p < .05) have a significantly more positive influence on employees’ perceived mastery climate compared to leaders with a moderate mastery/moderate performance GOP. However, leaders with a high mastery/high performance GOP did not have a significantly different influence on employees’ perceived mastery climate compared to the reference category. It should also be noted that $R^2$ was small for model 1. No significant results were found for model 2, concerning performance climate, providing limited support for hypothesis 3.

In hypothesis 4, we posited that the perceived motivational climates (i.e., mastery and performance) mediates the relationship between leader GOP and employee’ turnover intention. In order to test the hypotheses, the analyses were conducted in two steps. The first step involved conducting regression analysis with all of the relevant predictor variables (i.e., mastery climate, performance climate, high mastery/high performance LGOP and high mastery/low performance LGOP) and its influence on employee turnover intention. Table 5 shows the results from the regression analysis. The second step, involved testing whether the perceived motivational climate mediates the influence of leader GOP on employee turnover intention. In order to test for mediation, we used PROCESS analysis developed by Hayes as recommended by Field (2013). One of the advantages with the PROCESS analysis is that it includes bootstrapping, a nonparametric resampling procedure, which releases the assumption of normality on the sampling
distribution (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). The method involves computing 95% confidence intervals (CIs) around indirect results; mediation is indicated by CIs that do not contain zero (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). Table 7 shows the unstandardized coefficient estimates from the mediation analysis.

Table 7.
Results from Mediation Analysis

| High mastery / high performance LGOP → MC → Turnover intention | -.0234 CI [−.12, .08] |
| High mastery / high performance LGOP → PC → Turnover intention | -.005 CI [−.05, .02] |
| High mastery / low performance LGOP → MC → Turnover intention | -.16* CI [−.30, −.05] |
| High mastery / low performance LGOP → PC → Turnover intention | -.01 CI [−.08, .03] |

Note. N = 340. Unstandardized coefficient estimates. LGOP = Leader goal orientation profile. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

The results gave a CI range from -.30 to -.05 with regards to the indirect influence of mastery climate on leaders having a high mastery/low performance GOP and employee turnover intention. These findings indicate (when zero is not included in the 95% CI), that the mediated influence is indeed significantly different from zero ($p < .05$, two-tailed; 5000 bootstrap resamples), meaning that the negative influence of leaders’ high mastery/low performance GOP on employee turnover intention is mediated by a perceived mastery climate. However, this was the only significant result that was found for the indirect influence of perceived motivational climate, providing limited support for Hypothesis 4.

**Supplementary Analysis**

In the supplementary analysis, it was explored whether there may exist a ‘discrepancy’ between the leader’s GOP, and their employees' perceived motivational climate, and whether or not there is a significant difference on the size of the discrepancy when differentiated on the basis of the leader GOP’s. The purpose was to investigate whether leaders with a moderate mastery/moderate performance GOP, for instance, correspond or deviates to the way in which their employees perceive the motivational climate, to a smaller or larger degree than the other leader GOP’s. In order to test these multiple comparisons between the leaders GOP’s, an ANOVA was performed. The results indicated that (see Table 8) there is a significant difference on the size on the ‘discrepancy’ between
leaders’ GOP and employees perceived motivation climate when differentiated based on leaders’ GOP ($F_{(2, 102)}=21.875, \ p = .000, \ \eta^2 = .30$). Leaders with a high mastery/high performance GOP ($M = 2.83, \ SD = 1.15$) have a significantly higher discrepancy compared to the other two leader GOPs. The next highest discrepancy was indicated for leaders with a moderate mastery/moderate performance GOP ($M= 1.67, \ SD = .75$), and lastly the lowest discrepancy was indicated for leaders with a high mastery/low performance GOP ($M = 1.35, \ SD = .71$).

Table 8.
Means and Standard Deviations of Reported Discrepancy When Differentiated Based Leader’s GOP, and the Eta Square Value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Moderate mastery / moderate performance LGOP</th>
<th>High mastery / high performance LGOP</th>
<th>High mastery / low performance LGOP</th>
<th>$F_{(2, 102)}$</th>
<th>(\eta^2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discrepancy</td>
<td>1.67 .75</td>
<td>2.83 1.15</td>
<td>1.35 .71</td>
<td>21.875</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = 105. LGOP = leader goal orientation profile. Discrepancy = the absolute reported size of discrepancy between employees perceived motivational climate and leader’s GOP.*

**General Discussion**

We draw on AGT (Nicholls, 1984, 1989), to argue that leader GOP and the perceived motivational climate (i.e., mastery and performance) affects employee turnover intention. In addition, we propose that the leader’s GOP may serve as a relevant antecedent of the perceived motivational climate, and that the motivational climate functions as a mediator between leader GOP and employee turnover intention. There was an interesting finding regarding leader GOP and turnover intention, which revealed that leaders with a high mastery/high performance GOP and leaders with a high mastery/low performance GOP indicated a stronger, *positive* influence on employee turnover intentions than leaders with a moderate mastery/moderate GOP. Further, the results indicated that perceiving a mastery climate holds the strongest negative relationship with turnover intention, whereas perceiving a performance climate has a significant positive influence on turnover intention. A more comprehensive disclosure of these findings will be provided throughout the discussion.
**Theoretical Implications**

In light of the present findings, the study’s contributions are twofold, respectively by adding to the literature concerning turnover intention and to AGT.

First, the current study contributes to the literature on antecedents of turnover intention, both in terms of the direct influence of leader GOP and the role of motivational climate. In relation to the influence of leader GOP, the current study found support for that various leader GOPs differently influence employees’ willingness to leave. Interestingly, however, the results indicated that leaders with a high mastery/high performance, and a high mastery/low performance GOP had a stronger, *positive* influence on employee turnover intentions than leaders with a moderate mastery/moderate performance GOP. As such, leaders that place a greater emphasis on achievement goals, have employees with a generally stronger willingness to quit, compared to leaders that place less emphasis on achievement goals. This means that when leaders define success based on learning, development, effort and cooperation, while at the same time based on demonstrating ability and outperforming colleagues, this may generate increased willingness to quit among the employees. However, this also applies for the leaders who are highly concerned with mastery goals and less concerned with performance goals, as such having a more one-sided focus on securing employees’ growth and positive social interactions. Surprisingly, leaders who place less emphasis both in terms of mastery and performance goals, and thereby demonstrating less concern for learning and development, as well as smaller focus on extrinsic rewards and normative performance, have employees with the lowest willingness to leave the organization.

These results are both surprising and novel, and indicates that the development of employee turnover intention may be more complex than first presumed. It points to that turnover intention may also be a result of what is traditionally within AGT considered to be ‘positive’ leader features, such as having a leader that places a great emphasis on achievement goals (both in terms of mastery- and performance goals). However, these findings emphasize that there are potential benefits to a moderate focus on mastery and performance goals from the leader, suggesting that there may exist an appropriate balance with regards to leader goal orientation. Furthermore, the results may also be considered in relation to the need for reinterpreting how both positive and negative factors may
contribute to employees’ willingness to quit. Many scholars have had a one-sided focus on linking turnover intention to ‘negative’ states or attitudes, such as lack of commitment and lack of job satisfaction (Hancock et al., 2013). In light of these findings, we suggest that it may be too simple to assume that turnover intention is exclusively provoked by negative aspects in work-related settings. This is not to undermine the negative sides linked to turnover intention, because they are indeed important. However, it calls upon the need for unveiling the complexity of turnover intention, and understanding its many triggers, as for instance leader GOP.

Similarly, Semmer and colleagues (2014) have advocated a perspective for both “push” and “pulls” motivations for quitting (Semmer, Elfering, Baillod, Berset, & Beehr, 2014). Here it is assumed that turnover can be triggered both by push-factors, which are more negative reasons for quitting (e.g., low satisfaction and commitment), and pull-factors, which are more positive reasons for leaving (e.g., job opportunities and unexpected offers). However, pull factors are not necessarily only related to job offers, but may also reflect a desire to try something new; to seek new challenges and to expand one’s skills, knowledge and abilities (Semmer et al., 2014). Building upon this notion, Lin and Chang (2005) found learning orientation (which could be interpreted as a ‘pull-mechanism’) to be a strong explanatory factor in promotion, turnover and retention. In light of these findings it was interpreted that learning-oriented employees were inclined to perceive promotion as a new context for learning, and their intention to quit would increase if the organization was unable to provide them with opportunities for promotion, or failed to challenge them with novel and inspiring tasks.

Transferring similar argumentation to the current findings, we suggest that leaders with a high mastery/high performance GOP might generally engage their employees in challenging activities; inspire them to learn; and propel them to outperform their colleagues, more so than the moderate mastery/moderate performance goal oriented leaders do. Following this line of reasoning, their employees may have overcome more challenging tasks compared to employees of the moderate/moderate oriented leaders, and in turn, this may facilitate an increased need for opportunities for growth and learning, as well as a higher drive for outperforming competing candidates. In a line with Lin and Chang’s (2005) argumentation, when the current position or organization is incapable of providing the employees with a chance for promotion, nor challenge them with new and
inspiring tasks the intention to leave the organization may increase. In such a way, turnover intention reflects a measure of the employees’ need for growth and continuous development both in terms of outperforming one’s own past performance, as well as others.

Alternatively, the results may be interpreted through the expectation that leaders with a high mastery/high performance GOP may put more pressure and require higher work demands for their subordinates, than leaders with a moderate mastery/moderate performance GOP. This interpretation could be supported through research on work related stress and strain as antecedents of turnover. For example, research has indicated that job demands have unique main effects on turnover intention (Houkes, Janssen, De Jonge & Bakker, 2003). Other models of job stress have suggested that job demands (e.g., role stress) and job resources (e.g., social support) are important predictors of strain outcomes, such as burnout and turnover intention (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). High demands facilitated by a leader with high mastery/high performance GOP might generate dissatisfaction and work stress, and thus lead to increased turnover intention among their employees. In such a way, leaders with a high mastery/high performance GOP may put more pressure on employees than leaders with a moderate mastery/moderate performance GOP, which could explain why the leaders with the latter GOP had employees with the lowest turnover intention.

With regards to the role of motivational climate, the results indicate that a perceived mastery climate has a significant negative relationship with employees’ turnover intention, and a perceived performance climate has a small positive influence on employees’ intention to leave. These findings, were in alignment with our predictions, and they suggest that employees who perceive a climate that emphasizes learning, cooperation and development, and mastery of new skills, are less likely to have intentions to quit. Whereas, employees that perceive a climate that places weight on effectiveness, extrinsic rewards and outperforming one’s colleagues, are more likely to have a willingness to leave. As such, these results correspond to the existing literature which indicates mastery climate to consistently be positively associated with adaptive outcomes (e.g., feelings of autonomy, and perceived competence and relatedness), and performance climate demonstrating smaller, negative associations with adaptive outcomes (e.g., feelings of autonomy and positive affect) (Harwood et al., 2015)
Dysvik and Kuvaas (2010) investigated the interplay of employee mastery orientation and intrinsic motivation and its relation to turnover intention, and concluded that turnover intention may be less dependent on trait-like dispositions and more influenced by contextual factors related to the employee’s perception of need fulfilment. In this way, they suggest that employees’ willingness to quit may rather be related to whether the employees perceive a work environment that fulfills their needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness. These three psychological needs are interpreted as psychological resources that energize, direct and maintain personal behavior (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Autonomy refers to an individual’s experience of freedom and self-endorsement (DeCharms, 1968), competence refers to an individual’s judgment of own abilities to produce desired results (White, 1959), and relatedness refers to the degree to which an individual feel connected to others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). A fulfillment of these needs, thereby, are assumed to directly enhance psychological and physical well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2008). On the basis of the empirical support for mastery climate’s positive association with feelings of autonomy, perceived competence and relatedness (Harwood et al., 2015), we suggest that a perceived mastery climate may be a source to employee need fulfillment, and thus, explain its negative link to turnover intention.

Second, the current study extends and contributes to the AGT literature, and the multiple goal orientation perspective. We found support for the existence of three different leader GOPs, that is moderate mastery/moderate performance GOP, high mastery/high performance GOP, and high mastery/low performance GOP, which further had different implications for employee turnover intention. In light of the support for profiles, it is argued that to frame individuals to pursue either mastery or performance directed goals in research can be too simplistic, as individuals are found to simultaneously report higher and lower levels of both mastery and performance goals. Additionally, we also argue that to apply such restrictions opens for the possibility that nuances or in-depth understanding of the concept may get lost. The current approach may therefore be more exhaustive and provides an account for the full dimensionality of leaders’ goal orientation, and is enabling us to establish the unique influence associated with each leader GOP. By applying profiles, the leaders are not forced to an either mastery or performance goal orientation categorization, which yields a more realistic application.
Furthermore, with regards to leaders’ GOP serving as a relevant antecedent of the perceived motivational climate, we only found support for that leaders with a high mastery/low performance GOP significantly influence a perceived mastery climate. Likewise, a mastery climate was merely found to mediate the relationship between leaders’ GOP and turnover intention, when the leaders’ had a high mastery/low performance GOP. This could be interpreted in a way that only when leaders place a great emphasis on learning, growth and cooperation, while simultaneously limiting their concern with performance criteria, their employees perceive a mastery climate, which further reduces their intention to leave the organization. These findings indicate that there may be other more influential factors which affect employees perceived motivational climate. In relation to work climate, numerous antecedent factors have been found to be influential, for example policies, HR-practices, and firm newness and size (for review, see Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009).

In the supplementary analyses, we explored whether there may exist a discrepancy between the GOP held by the leader, and their employees’ perceived motivational climate. The results indicated that the leader GOPs differentiated on varying levels from employees perceived motivational climate. As such, leaders having a high mastery and high performance GOP were the ones who differentiated the most from their employees reports on perceived motivational climate. Hence, employees’ motivational climate perceptions were not in accordance with their leaders’ display of mastery and performance goals. These findings may be interpreted in light of a congruence perspective, which is concerned with how mismatches or matches between leader’s goals and employees’ goals can produce different outcomes (Porter et al., 2016). This perspective draw attention to that even though a unit’s (e.g., team’s or organization’s) goals often reflect those of its leader, this is not always the case (Colbert, Kristof-Brown, Bradley, & Barrick, 2008; Vancouver, Millsap, & Peters, 1994). For instance, it has been highlighted that teams are frequently faced with conflicting goals, in the shape of task versus relationship focus or cooperation versus competition (Peterson & Behfar, 2005). Similarly, individuals may experience motivational ‘pull and push’ from several social agents, which may draw people in different directions, and produce conflicting goals (Harwood et al., 2015. In addition, employees own goal orientation may also interact with the perceived motivational climate, meaning that individuals will have a stronger
tendency to recognize motivational cues that aligns with their own goal preferences (Buch et al., 2016). In support of such an interaction, Newton and Duda (1999) found that individuals with a high mastery orientation showed a stronger positive relationship with a perceived mastery climate, compared to individuals with a low mastery orientation. As a whole all of these different sources may contribute to the overall perceived motivational climate.

Drawing on a congruence perspective, we suggest that when ‘discrepancy’ exists between the employees’ perceived motivational climate and the GOP demonstrated by their leader, this ‘incongruence’ may have a further influence on employee turnover intention. The implications of congruence or incongruence among the goals of the leader and his or her subordinates have been emphasized by several scholars (e.g., Colbert, et al., 2008; Porter et al., 2016; Vancouver et al., 1994). Among other, Vancouver and Schmitt (1991) found that an employee’s experience of goal congruence with colleagues and leader was related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment and negatively to turnover intention. The largest discrepancy in the present study was found in relation to the leaders with a high mastery/high performance GOP. Explanatory, the leader’s GOP may not be in accordance with the reality perceived by their employees. The leaders may encourage their employees to take upon new and challenging tasks in way that does not align well with the employees' perceived possibilities offered in their current position, hence, employees feel restricted by other relevant contextual factors, such as structure, policies or other co-workers (Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009). This interpretation aligns well with Dysvik and Kuvaas’ (2010) suggestion regarding need fulfillment and turnover intention. It could be that the organization is no longer able to provide employees with sufficient opportunities to learn and grow, or that their performance is not fairly rewarded, and therefore their intention to quit increases (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2010). Still, the results from the supplementary analyses should be interpreted with caution, as the study was not designed to investigate congruence or incongruence, and future research on match or mismatch between leader’s goal orientation and employees’ perceptions of motivational climate is warranted.
Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The current study compromises several strengths, such as the multisource nature of the sample, as responses were gathered from both leaders and employees. Still, the study should be interpreted in light of several potential limitations.

First, a potential limitation concerns the cross-sectional nature of the study, as the data was collected at only one point in time, we cannot make firm causal conclusions (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Among other, this means that we cannot be certain whether the leader’s GOP shapes the motivational climate, or whether it is the other way around. Accordingly, experimental and/or longitudinal studies are required to make such causal inferences (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

Second, the reliance on self-reported questionnaire data raises concern regarding common method variance (CMV) (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). However, it should be noted there exist a lack of unanimity regarding the nature of method variance, its endurance, its influence on observed relations among variables, and the most efficient ways in which to deal with the issue (Spector & Brannick, 2010). In addition, in a meta-analysis conducted by Lance, Dawson, Birkelbach and Hoffman (2010), they concluded that method variance may not be as big a problem as sometimes presumed. Still, a principal component analysis was performed as recommended by Podsakoff and colleagues (2003), and it generated eight factors of 1 or more, and an explained variance of the factors ranging from 20.3% (factor 1) to 3.9% (factor 8). Also, the questionnaire was designed in accordance with common recommendations to hinder CMV (Podsakoff, et al., 2003). In sum, this support that the results were not influenced by CMV (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Podsakoff & Organ, 1986).

With regard to the testing of the hypotheses, a third potential limitation, concerns applying hierarchical linear regression analysis were the independent variable is categorical. This approach involves an application of coding methods (Alkharusi, 2012), and in the present study dummy coding was applied. Regression analysis with dummy variables may introduce certain interpretational issues, as it differentiates from the way in which one interprets the output of a regression analysis with a continuous independent variable. With dummy variables, the results should be understood in terms of its difference from the reference category (Alkharusi, 2012), meaning that it tells us something about the relative difference from its comparable variable, not a separate, concrete influence.
on dependent variable, which could be interpreted in isolation from others. Still, this is considered to be a verified method to apply in regression analysis (Field, 2013). However, one should be mindful of this when interpreting the results.

Fourth, as we did not find the leaders GOP to influence employees perceived motivational climate, with the exception of leaders having a high mastery/low performance GOP, future research could benefit from exploring the interplay from numerous sources in shaping employees perceived motivational climate (Harwood et al., 2015). For example, researchers could investigate how colleagues or reward systems may interplay with leaders’ GOP in shaping employees’ perceived motivational climate. Arguably this would have theory-building implications, as it provides a more comprehensive model regarding how different types of goals (e.g., mastery and performance) from various sources may interplay to influence employees (Porter et al., 2016).

An additional and fruitful direction for future research, could be to examine leader GOP and its influence on employees perceived motivational climate in conjunction with leader-member exchange relationships. Previously, Janssen and Van Yperen (2004) have investigated whether employee goal orientation influence how employees develop and maintain social exchanges with their leaders. However, we suggest to explore whether leaders might practice, and signal different goal orientation patterns to their employees on the basis of the quality of their exchange relationship. In such a way, creating a more ‘individual’ perception of motivational climate among its employees.

A fifth potential limitation concerns the lack of focus with regards to the possible orthogonal nature of motivational climates. The descriptive analyses showed no significant correlation between mastery and performance climate which indicates that the two can exist simultaneously. The coexistence of motivational climates has been supported by other studies (e.g., Ommundsen & Roberts, 1999; Škerlavaj, Dysvik, Černe, Nerstad & Su, 2014). In the present study, however, it would have been overly complex to test for profiles both in terms of leaders’ goal orientation and motivational climate. Even though, the focus of the present study was not orthogonality in relation to motivational climate, it would be beneficial for future studies to draw attention to this.

Sixth, we recognize that there are additional important factors that may affect employees’ turnover intentions, such as job alternatives, and other job satisfaction that have been found to influence turnover (e.g., Trevor, 2001). A
perceived mastery climate indicated to have a relatively strong influence on employee turnover intention, but the other hypothesized predictor variables in the model, however, did not show equivalent results, and the overall explanatory strength of the model was limited ($R^2 = .15, p < .001$). Further research could investigate how other factors (e.g., organizational support or job commitment) may mitigate or strengthen the relationship between motivational climate and turnover intention, and/or to evaluate the overall strength of motivational climate compared to other relevant predictor variables.

Seventh, we recognize that only including one outcome variable (i.e., turnover intention) in the study, may represent a potential limitation. A more complete picture may have been provided if two or more outcome variables would have been accounted for. Scholars have for instance suggested a curvilinear relationship between turnover and employee performance, where it is assumed that low and high achievers are more likely to leave compared to adequate performers (e.g., Jackofsky, 1984; Trevor, Gerhart, & Boudreau, 1997). Several studies have found support for a curvilinear relationship regarding performance and turnover (e.g., Salamin & Hom, 2005; Trevor et al., 1997). In light of this, it would be interesting to explore whether leaders that display high levels of both mastery and performance goals, facilitate ‘high achievers’, and thereby, increase their employees’ willingness to leave. As such, we invite future research to investigate whether the relationship between leader GOP and turnover intention is mediated by employee performance. Furthermore, the current study does not control for actual turnover among its respondents. However, turnover intention is found to be one of the strongest predictors of actual turnover (Griffeth et al., 2000), indicating that turnover intention represents an appropriate alternative for actual turnover (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2010). Still, future research is advised to control for actual turnover in conjunction with turnover intention.

**Practical Implications**
The topic of employee turnover remains an important issue for management scholars and practitioners (Allen et al., 2010), as it has substantial and meaningful implications for organizations (Park et al., 2016). Therefore, continued attention to why employees leave and how to manage employee turnover is still relevant for organizations (Hancock et al., 2013).
The first practical implication of the present study concerns that the varied leader GOPs differently influence employees’ willingness to quit. The findings support that managers can affect their employees’ intention to leave through their emphasis on achievement goals, however, surprisingly, not in the way we predicted. The study indicated that the leader GOPs considered to be more favorable (i.e., high mastery/high performance and high mastery/low performance), contribute more positively to employee turnover intention, than the less favorable leader GOP (i.e., moderate mastery/moderate performance). In light of this, organizations should be aware of not only ‘pull’ factors (e.g., low satisfaction and commitment), but also ‘push’ (positive) factors as contributors to the development of employee turnover intention (Semmer et al., 2014). For example, a leader with a pronounced one-sided focus on mastery goals, influencing an increased desire for learning and development among their employees, may thereby facilitate employees that continuously seek new and challenging opportunities, within, but also outside the organization (Lin & Chang, 2005). In sum, leaders may send influential messages to their employees about their motivational focus through the way they respond, approach and understand challenging situations (Dragoni & Kuenzi, 2012). Therefore, leaders should be aware of their own GOP, and evaluate whether their emphasis on mastery and performance goals are appropriate. Simultaneously, managers should consider whether other influential contextual factors correspond to leaders’ display of goal orientation. For example, if there are structures or practices that prohibit employees’ opportunities for learning and development.

The second practical implication of the current study concerns endorsement of a mastery climate. The findings of the study support a mastery climate as a suitable work environment in order to retain employees. As such, organizations are advised to stimulate a mastery climate, which involves an emphasis on self-improvement, skill-development, cooperation, effort and progress (Ames, 1984; Ames, 1992a; Ames & Ames, 1984). However, specifically managing the creation of mastery climate has not been sufficiently addressed by the organizational literature, and it lacks richness to provide clear guidance of how to generate such a climate (DeShon & Gillespie, 2005). Yet, a perceived mastery climate has in the domains of education and sports been accomplished by: (1) the facilitation of feedback that is self-referenced rather than other-referenced; (2) providing diverse and meaningful work tasks; (3) inviting
employees to participate in decision making; (4) giving the employees authority for strategy related to own tasks; and (5) recognizing of certain behaviors as when employees share ideas, makes an effort, learn from mistakes and are creative (Ames, 1992a, 1992b; Roberts, 2012). Similarly, we therefore suggest that these interventions could be applied in work settings, to facilitate a perceived mastery climate.

Lastly, an important practical implication of this study concerns that leaders may hold multiple achievement goals within an organization. The study supports the existence of three different leader GOPs, meaning that leaders may simultaneously display mastery and performance goals. Previous research, which has conceptualized individuals as either pursuing mastery or performance goals, have generally found mastery goals to be associated with beneficial outcomes, whereas performance goals are associated with more maladaptive outcomes (DeShon & Gillespie, 2005). Thereby, researchers have advised managers to hire mastery oriented individuals, in terms of the advantages such individuals would contribute to the organization, because they are presumed to perform better, adapt better to change, and are less likely to experience strain outcomes in their work (e.g., Janssen & Van Yperen, 2004; VandeWalle, Brown, Cron & Slocum Jr, 1999; Payne et al., 2007). However, in light of the present findings, and others who have found support for the multiple goal orientation perspective (e.g., Vansteenkiste, Sierens, Soenens, Luyckx & Lens, 2009), such an approach in the selection process might not account for the full dimensionality of individuals’ goal orientation, and may therefore not be entirely correct. As such, in order to provide a more accurate account of reality, managers are advised to consider the full spectrum of individuals’ GOP in selection processes, and in other relevant organizational programs.

**Conclusion**

The current study sheds light to multiple triggers in the development of employee turnover intention, were not only negative, but also positive facilitators may increase employee turnover intention (i.e., push and pull factors). Leader goal orientation profiles that traditionally may have been considered to be less favorable within AGT, indicated the lowest relationship with employees’ willingness to quit. Suggesting that there may exist potential benefits to a moderate focus on mastery and performance goals from the leader. Whereas,
leaders that highly encourage experimentation, to seek new challenges and to self-develop, while simultaneously highly promote competition and demonstration of ability, seem to facilitate higher turnover intentions among their employees. This also concerns leaders with a more one-sided display of mastery goals. However, organizations have the potential to mitigate this process by facilitating a mastery climate. Additionally, it is advised to be mindful of providing employees with sufficient opportunities for growth and development, in a way that aligns with the leaders' display of mastery and performance goals.
References


Appendix A: Preliminary Thesis Report

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- An Investigation of Leader Goal Orientation Profile as an Antecedent of the Perceived Motivational Climates, and its Link to Employee Ability and Turnover Intention -

Preliminary Thesis Report

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Summary

This study examines whether the leader’s goal orientation profile serve as a relevant antecedent of employees perceived motivational climates (i.e., mastery and performance climates), as defined by achievement goal theory (AGT), and in turn influences employee perceived ability and turnover intention. The current study contributes to research on goal orientation profiles, and provides increased understanding of how leaders may shape the motivational climates. The study contributes to and complement previous research on AGT, while also providing practical recommendations that may be more applicable for real organizational settings.

In our preliminary thesis report we start of by introducing our research topic, highlighting the main contributions of our study and a visual model of our assumed relationships. Secondly, we present our theoretical framework, which includes argumentation for why we have chosen the achievement goal theory as described by Ames (1992a, 1992b) and Nicholls (1984, 1989). Furthermore, we present theoretical and empirical argumentation for our developed hypotheses. Lastly, we briefly highlight central parts of the method, and plan for thesis progression.
An Investigation of Leader Goal Orientation Profile as an Antecedent of the Perceived Motivational Climates, and its Link to Employee Ability and Turnover Intention

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in how organizational context influence the employees of an organization (Kuenzi and Schminke, 2009). The growing popularity is due to the critical role organizational context plays in shaping the salience and meaning of organizational events for the employees (ibid). Within the area of organizational context, and in light of the achievement goal framework (AGT) we find the construct of motivational climate, which refers to “an individual’s perception of the extent achievement criteria of success and failure in the environment” (Ames, 1992a, 1992b; Nicholls, 1989). The motivational theory, AGT, is beneficial in many ways, however an important point is that it considers the motivational climate to be an important aspect of the motivational process in predicting behavior in achievement situations (Nerstad, 2012). It has been found that motivational climates cause adaptive behaviors, such as intrinsic motivation, positive affect and better performance, in addition to maladaptive behaviors, such as performance anxiety, cheating, giving up when failing among individuals (e.g., Lau and Nie, 2008; Ntoumanis and Biddle, 1999; Papaioannou, Marsh and Theodorakis, 2004). In addition, Nerstad (2012) found motivational climate to be important in relation to employee motivation, well-being, performance and turnover intention. These findings, indicate that the motivational climate may serve as an important predictor for a wide range of employee related outcomes. Grounded in the achievement goal theory (AGT), the current study investigates the link between motivational climates (i.e. mastery and performance) and employee ability and turnover intention, where the perceived motivational climates are assumed to be shaped by the leader’s goal orientation profile (i.e. mastery and performance). In light of this, the following model is developed in order to illustrate the hypothesized relationships.
Figure 1: Leader’s goal orientation profile as an antecedent of employees perceived levels of mastery and performance climate, further influencing turnover intention and employee perceived ability.

One of the primary contributions of this study, is the investigation of the coexistence of goal orientations and motivational climates. The assumption of orthogonality is central in AGT (Nicholls, 1984, 1989) and has been supported by sport and exercise literature (Roberts, 2012). However, a limited number of studies have investigated this within the context of real organizational settings. Nerstad (2012) note that organizational research could gain from examining goal orientation profiles and the coexistence of climates. Clarifying the relationship between the constructs in empirical research could be highly beneficial, as it could unveil how employees interpret and react to the working environments’ criteria for success and failure more accurately (ibid). Additionally, in many organizations the prevalence of performance climate is inevitable, and thus creating a high mastery climate accompanied by low performance or an absence of performance climate, as many researchers recommend (e.g., Nerstad, Roberts, & Richardsen, 2013), may not be realistic (Nerstad, 2012). In light of this, the current study may provide implications for how a high mastery climate can serve as a positive ‘buffer’ for the necessary performance criteria. In sum, this study may contribute to extended empirical support and increased understanding of the orthogonal nature of goal orientations and motivational climate in organizational settings.

In addition to exploring the orthogonal nature of these central constructs, the current study investigates a potentially important antecedent of motivational climates. As noted by Nerstad (2012), generally, the research on antecedents of
work climates are still at its infancy, and further investigation is important both in terms of theory and practice. Furthermore, the leader has frequently been hypothesized to be an important contributor in shaping the work climate (Dragoni, 2005; Kuenzi and Schminke, 2009; Nerstad, 2012; Roberts, 2012), however, a limited number of studies has actually tested for this relationship (Nerstad, 2012). To the best of our knowledge, Dragoni’s (2005) study, which tested leader achievement pattern orientation as an antecedent of work group climate, is the only study conducted in an organizational setting in relation to this matter. Consequently, the current study has both theoretical and practical implications. With regards to the theoretical implications, this study contributes to increased understanding how the leader’s goal orientation may shape the employees’ development of shared perceptions of the motivational climate. With regards to practice, the study provides insight into how organizations may facilitate effective work environments, thus enhancing employee related outcomes.

Theoretical Framework

This thesis is rooted in the traditional Achievement Goal Theory (AGT) developed by John G. Nicholls (1984, 1989) and Carol Ames (1992a, 1992b). Other scholars have also contributed to the configuration of the theory, such as Carole Dweck and Martin Maehr, however we have chosen to focus on the perspectives by Nicholls and Ames, as this theory emphasizes the context as playing an important role in employees motivational processes, and hence achievement behavior (Nerstad et al., 2013). Furthermore, AGT has contributed extensively to the understanding of achievement striving in organizations (Nerstad, 2012). In the next paragraphs we will present the main theoretical underpinnings of our study, as provided by AGT, and explain the constructs of goal orientation and motivational climates.

Achievement Goal Theory

When speaking of achievement goals, one normally refer to situation in a context where achievements of different kinds are acknowledged, and thereby an individual will seek to achieve the completion of certain goals (Roberts, 2001). Through the attempt of reaching these goals, people also tend to strive for the demonstration of success, or avoiding to demonstrate incompetence (Nicholls,
1989). These goals will define in what way each individual will give meaning to an achievement setting, and how they in turn will react and approach these situations (Roberts, 2012). Nicholls explain that people differ in their conceptions of competence, therefore they also behave differently in these settings. In the present theory, there is a division between the focus of developing competence, and demonstrating competence. In developing competence, the individual acknowledge mastering and development as a success in itself, and may not differentiate between ability and effort. Hence, when an individual is performance oriented, they tend to refer success or failure as to what degree their performance meet or exceeds the performance of others (ibid). In relation to work, behaviors of employees that are recognized as undifferentiated conceptions of ability are conceptualized as mastery involvement, and as performance involvement when the achievement behaviors are recognized as differentiated (Nerstad et al., 2013).

**Goal Orientations**

The inclination toward being either mastery or performance oriented is in AGT theory called goal orientation, and has been defined as "a disposition toward developing or demonstrating ability in achievement situations" (Nerstad et al., 2013:122). Many researchers treat goal orientation as a stable factor, but experimental research also show that one may be temporarily influenced to behave in a different way depending on the context which they are in (Dragoni, 2005). Following this argumentation, individuals are found to change their way of behaving in achievement settings through the perceived criteria for success in a specific context (e.g. the workplace). The sum of what they perceive is called the *motivational climate*. Nicholls explain how the motivational climate and individual dispositions may work together or separately to shape the motivated states of demonstrated by employees in achievement settings (Nicholls, 1989). Through research on state of involvement in work settings, employees are found to demonstrate behaviors of both mastery and performance involvement dependent upon their perception of the situational cues in the time of event, and with the combination of their dispositional goal orientation tendencies (Among others Roberts, 2001). The state of involvement can therefore be viewed as dynamic, and may change based on how the individual perceives the environmental requests and requirements in achievement settings.
Considerable debate have existed concerning the dichotomous division of the goal orientations. In contrast to traditional AGT, Elliot and colleagues have argued it would be more appropriate to use a trichromatic model, hence that performance orientation should be further divided into performance-approach and performance-avoidance (Elliot, 1999). Additionally, Elliot also have suggested a similar division for the mastery orientation. In this division performance-approach accounts for behavior that is categorized as attainment of normative competence, while the performance-avoidance goals accounts for behavior that is categorized as avoidance of incompetence. As a counterargument, Nerstad et al. emphasize that in this kind of conceptualization of goal orientation, the "goals are assumed to be manifestations of needs" (2013:124). Nicholls original approach differs from that of Elliot's, as it takes a social-cognitive approach on how people defines success and how to achieve it. When speaking of goal achievement in the traditional AGT, it is not seen as a way of fulfilling needs, but the goals themselves are viewed as the critical determinants of achievement cognition (ibid). Nicholls also argue that the two concepts of mastery and performance orientation is sufficient, in line with research indicating that "items assessing strivings to demonstrate superior ability and strivings to avoid the demonstration of inferior ability loaded on the same factor" (Retelsdorf et al., 2010:31). In line with this argumentation, we apply the traditional view of achievement goal theory, only using the mastery and performance division as the two main domains of goal orientations and climates.

**Motivational Climates**

Many affirm that to investigate climate as a factor is critical in studying motivation (Ntoumanis & Biddle, 1999). As described, from a situated perspective of AGT individuals are assumed to be influenced by the situation and context they are in (Ames, 1992a). The perceived motivational climate is rooted in traditional achievement goal theory (AGT), and refers to the "employees' perception of the extant criteria of success or failure in that specific work context" (Nerstad et al., 2013:2232). Also for the climate, it is distinguished between the performance and mastery criteria. A mastery climate refers to "work structures where the individual perceives that demonstrated effort, sharing, and cooperation
are valued and the emphasis is on learning and mastery of skills", and performance climate refer to "work structures where the individual perceives that demonstrated superiority and favorable normative comparisons are made" (Nerstad et al., 2013:2233). Described by Ames (1992a), the demonstration of ability and comparisons in a performance climate may result in that employees tend to seek easy tasks, and giving up when they face difficulties. In turn, mastery climate is suggested to promote more development and effort into tasks of work. The climate in a workplace indicates to an employee what is needed to succeed at work, and it therefore has the potential to influence the individual in a cognitive, affective and behavioral matter (Nerstad et al., 2013).

Studies have demonstrated that the two types of motivational climates may have quite different effects on employees, thereby also allowing for an effect on the organization (Nerstad et al. 2013). A recent finding implicates that performance climate has the potential to temper the symptoms of burnout, which represents exhaustion, ill-health and strain (Smith, Gustafsson & Hassmén, 2010). Yet, the personal goal orientation of an employee can affect in how they perceive the information conveyed, and thereby how the climate effects their well-being over time. However, if a performance oriented individual is found in a performance climate, there is a great risk they at some point will experience dysfunctional cognitions which can result in burnout. Dweck and Legett (1988) emphasize that a mastery climate may buffer these effects, although it is dependent upon the strength of the climate. In 2011, Nerstad, Richardsen and Roberts conducted a longitudinal study where they found that the motivational climate predicted burnout and work engagement to a larger degree than the individuals goal orientation. These results point to the crucial role of the motivational climate on employee related outcomes, and the importance of contextual factors in the facilitating of a healthy and engaged workforce.

**Argumentation for Hypotheses**

**Goal Orientation and Motivational Climate Orthogonality**

According to the achievement goal framework, as defined by Ames (1992a, 1992b) and Nicholls (1989), goal orientations are orthogonal, meaning that they are independent of each other, and that individuals can simultaneously have a high
or low mastery and performance orientation. This simply means that the goal orientations can coexist, creating a ‘goal orientation profile’, rather than the individual having one dominant goal orientation (e.g., mastery goal orientation). In addition to the assumption of goal orientations coexisting, we argue that this applies for the perceived motivational climates as well, meaning that different levels of mastery and performance climate is perceived simultaneously by the employees.

The multiple goal orientation perspective has received empirical support from the sports and education field (Roberts, 2012), however research on goal orientation profiles within organizational research is very limited (Nerstad, 2012). Furthermore, the organizational psychology field lacks consensus regarding which type of achievement goals that should be emphasized in organizational settings in order to produce desired outcomes (DeShon and Gillespie, 2005; Payne et al., 2007). Many researchers argue in favor of a mastery goal orientation, which has shown to be associated with a wide range of positive individual outcomes, such as work performance (Nerstad et al., 2013). In accordance with this, performance orientation is often associated with more negative individual outcomes, such as undermining intrinsic motivation (ibid). However, there are inconsistencies regarding performance orientations and its consequences, such as found between performance orientation and specific self-efficacy (Payne et al., 2007). DeShon and Gillespie make the important note that “the simplistic assumption that mastery orientation is good and performance orientation is bad is being challenged by a multiple orientations perspective in which a combination or profile of mastery and performance orientation results in desirable behavior and outcomes” (2005:1102). This indicates a support for a multiple orientations perspective, and that further understanding is necessary.

Furthermore, when conceptualizing and measuring goal orientations as orthogonal, findings from sports and education research has shown that having both high mastery and high performance orientation is the profile that has the most adaptive motivational profile (Roberts, 2012). If having a high mastery and a high performance orientation profile predicts performance better compared to other profiles, this may imply that facilitating a climate with high levels of both mastery and performance could produce positive employee outcomes. This has
important practical implications, as exclusively facilitating mastery criteria may be in conflict with real organizational settings (Nerstad, 2012). The application of a high mastery and high performance climate, rather than only promoting a mastery climate, may be more realistic in real organizational settings – as it has been emphasized that organizations cannot be successful unless employees contend the performance standards (DeShon and Gillespie, 2005).

In light of these equivocal results, and the empirical support from sports and education research regarding the multiple goal orientation perspective, we argue that conceptualizing and measuring leader’s goal orientation and motivational climate as orthogonal may be highly beneficial in order to increase our understanding of achievement goals and additionally provide a more realistic applicability for organizations. Consistent with Nerstad’s (2012) findings, we argue that the leader can hold four different goal orientations, which are: high mastery/high performance, high mastery/low performance, low mastery/moderate performance and lastly low mastery/low performance. Regarding the mastery climates, we argue that the employees can perceive different levels of mastery and performance climate simultaneously as reported in (Nerstad, 2012).

The Motivational Climates and its Influence on Employee Outcomes

The achievement goal framework theorizes that the motivational climate plays an important role in predicting individuals’ behavior in achievement situations. As described previously, the motivational climate represents perceived cues provided by the environment of what constitutes success and failure in achievement settings (Nerstad et al., 2013). Mastery and performance climates constitutes different criteria for success and failure, and thus differently influence cognitive, affective and behavioral outcomes (ibid). Furthermore, several studies have found empirical support for the direct association between the motivational climate and various individual outcomes (Nerstad, 2012), such as performance and perceptions of well-being and ill-health (Lemyre, Hall and Roberts, 2008; Reinboth and Duda, 2004). Typically, it has been found that individuals will perform better and perceive higher levels of well-being in a mastery climate than in a performance climate (Nerstad et al., 2013). Investigating the influence of motivational climate
in organizational settings, Nerstad (2012) found a strong link to employee motivation, well-being, and performance.

Additionally, Nerstad (2012) found a strong link between the perceived motivational climate and turnover intention, where mastery climate was associated with lower turnover intentions. Turnover intention refers to “the intent to leave the organization” (2012:34) and has several important implications for organizations (Nerstad). Such implications can be related to losing valuable workforce, and then having to recruit and train new employees (Mondy and Mondy, 2014). Additionally, having a high turnover is associated with a series of negative organizational outcomes, such as reduced profitability and productivity (Zimmerman, 2008). Arguably, organizations may benefit from having lower levels of turnover intention among their workforce.

Hypothesis 1) The perceived motivational climates (i.e. mastery and performance) will influence the employees' perceived ability and turnover intention.

Research on goal orientation profiles has shown that the combination of high mastery/high performance and high mastery/low performance have the most adaptive motivational profiles (e.g., Fox, Goudas, Biddle, Duda & Armstrong, 1994; Hodge & Petlichkoff, 2000; Pensgaard & Roberts, 2002; Roberts, Treasure & Kavussanu, 1996; Smith Balaguer, & Duda, 2006). Furthermore, Nerstad (2012) found that participants with a high mastery/high performance profile were the “high achievers” in relation to work performance. Additionally, Nerstad found that these participants reported higher levels of both mastery and performance climate compared to other participants. In light of these findings, we argue that it is possible for employees to perceive different levels of mastery and performance climate simultaneously, and that this will differently influence employee outcomes. In accordance with research on goal orientation profiles and their relation to individual outcomes, high levels of perceived mastery and performance climate, and high levels of mastery climate and low levels of performance climate will have the strongest relation to positive employee outcomes compared to other perceived levels of motivational climates. We therefore hypothesize:
Hypothesis 1a) Perceiving high levels of mastery and high levels of performance climate or a high mastery/low performance is associated with a higher employee perceived ability compared to other perceived levels of mastery and performance climate.

Hypothesis 1b) Perceiving high levels of mastery and high levels of performance climate or a high mastery/low performance is associated with a lower turnover intention compared to other perceived levels of mastery and performance climate.

The Leader’s Goal Orientation Profile as an Antecedent of the Motivational Climates

Several researchers support the assumption that the leader is an important contributor in shaping the work climate (e.g., Dragoni, 2005; Kuenzi and Schminke, 2009; Nerstad, 2012; Roberts, 2012). Furthermore, Ames (1992a) advocated that the leader is the main architect of the motivational climate – as leaders play a crucial role in providing cues on the criteria for success and failure in organizational settings. Leaders communicate and provide feedback regarding the subordinates’ performance, which further influences their perceptions of valued achievement goals, and hence the perceived motivational climates (Nerstad et al., 2013). As a part of this process, it is reasonable to assume that the leader’s own goal orientation profile will influence which achievement goals are emphasized or valued as important. This is in accordance with Dragoni (2005), which argues that the leader’s achievement priority will be expressed through the leaders’ behavior, and consequently shape the employees’ perceptions of work climate. A leader having a low mastery/high performance profile, may arrange competitions among the employees, have the employees’ performance be measured in relation to others, and in general encourage them to outperform colleagues, and in such a ways shape the perception of a high performance climate. Leaders’ having a high mastery/high performance profile may place emphasis on learning and development, mastery of new skills and cooperation, while simultaneously encourage employees to be at the top of their game and to outperform their colleagues, creating the perception of a high mastery and high performance climate. On the basis of this we suggest that:
Hypothesis 2) Leader's goal orientation profile will shape the perceived motivational climates.

To elaborate, this means that leaders having a goal orientation profile high mastery/high performance will be linked to high levels of perceived mastery and high levels of perceived performance climate and so forth.

Method

Description of Participants and Procedure
The data was collected from a private knowledge organization, consisting of a total number of 1145 employees. The questionnaire was electronically distributed (Confirmit) to 798 employees, which resulted in a total number of 348 responses, hence, response rate at approximately 44 percent. The sample consisted of approximately 87 (25 %) respondents reporting having leadership responsibility within the organization. Furthermore, the number of males and females were relatively evenly distributed, with approximately 49 % females and 51 % males.

Measurement Tools

Perceived motivational climates. The perceived motivational climates (mastery and performance climate) was measured by the 14-item questionnaire Motivational Climate at Work Questionnaire (MCWQ), developed by Nerstad, Roberts and Richardsen (2013) ($\alpha = .79$ for mastery and $\alpha = .84$ for performance climate). The scale consists of eight items in relation to the performance climate, and six items in relation to mastery climate, and the response scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Examples of items are "In my department/work group, it is important to achieve better than others" and "In my department/work group, each individual's learning and development is emphasized".

Goal orientation profile. Leader’s goal orientation profile (i.e., mastery and performance) was measured by the Work Domain Goal-Orientation Scale validated by Vandewalle (1997), adapted for Norwegian speakers by Dysvik and...
The items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Five of the items measured mastery orientation (“e.g., “I enjoy challenging and difficult tasks where I’ll learn new skills”), while four of the items measured performance orientation (e.g., “I am concerned with showing that I can perform better than my co-workers”).

**Turnover intention.** Turnover intention was measured by a five-item scale developed by Kuvaas (2008) (e.g., “I often think about quitting my present job”). The items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

**Perceived ability.** Perceived ability was measured by a six-item scale (e.g., “I believe I am pretty good at doing my job”), on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Additionally, there was one item concerning perceived ability in relation to others (i.e., “How would you evaluate your own competency in relation to your colleagues’ competency within your department/work group?”). The respondents could answer on a scale ranging from 1 (very low competency) to 5 (very high competency).

**Control variables.** The questionnaire included sociodemographic items, such as gender (1 = female, 2 = male), age (in years), education (type of education), work experience (in years), employment status (full time, temporary, other), area of work (e.g., research and development, production), leadership responsibility (yes/no), income before tax.

**Plan for Analyses of the Data**

First and foremost, we plan on the doing basic aspects of the data analysis, e.g., sorting and structuring the data, descriptive statistics, establishing possible outliers. In order to establish the leader goal orientation profiles, we plan to conduct a latent profile analysis (LPA), which is a statistical technique that has the aim of uncovering hidden groups in observed data (Oberski, 2016). Pastor, Barron, Miller and Davis (2007) conducted a LPA of college student’s achievement goal orientation, and found several benefits by applying this technique. Furthermore, we need to establish the appropriate statistical tools for
investigating the assumed relationships. This includes investigating the direct relationship between the motivational climates and the employee outcomes, investigating whether there is a link between leader goal orientation profile and perceived motivational climate, and additionally whether the motivational climate will mediate the effect of leader goal orientation profile on the employee outcomes. Additional relevant analyses will also be conducted, such as controlling for other variables.

**Plan for Thesis Progress**

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