CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the results of the study will be discussed in relation to the research questions posed in Chapter 1. Finally, the limitations of the present study will be highlighted and possible contributions from this study towards organizational behaviour will be discussed and recommendations for future research will be made.

5.2 Research Question One

"What is the relationship between emotional intelligence, team member exchange, goal orientation and team climate?" The relationships between these variables are interpreted from the correlation Tables 4.15 and 4.16 in the previous chapter.

All the constructs reflect adequate to strong internal correlations among their respective factors, the only weak exception being TMX Exchange with TMX Cohesiveness (.1735).

If a coefficient value range of between .25 and .80 is regarded of intermediate value as suggested by Bailey (1982), only team member exchange has a significant relationship of moderate strength with team climate. When the interrelationship of the four constructs is ignored, (fd1 to fd4), then the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient matrix in Table 4.15 is further proof that only Team Member Exchange has a moderate to reasonable correlation with Team Climate.

If the two factors of the strongest correlations (TMX Meetings with TCI-Vision:0.539 and TMX Meetings with TCI Support for Innovation:0.536) are analysed in relation to their individual questionnaire questions, it becomes clear that the relationship supports the results discussed above. The relationship Team Member Exchange (TMX Factor 1: Meeting) with Team Climate (TCI Factor 1: Vision) is based on responses to the following questions:

Team Member Exchange "Factor 1 – Meetings"
"Our team meetings are good for expressing my ideas";
"Our team meetings are valuable participation opportunities";
"Our meetings are practical ways of keeping oneself informed", and
"Our team meetings resolve tension and conflicts in our team".

These questions should be seen in relation to questions in the factor Team Climate "Factor 1 - Vision":

"We have a we-are-together attitude in the team";
"We all influence each other";
"People in the team feel understood and accepted by each other";
"Everyone's view is listened to, even if it is in a minority";
"There are real attempts to share information throughout the team", and
"The team members keep regular contact with each other".

The second relationship worth mentioning is the correlation between TMX Factor 1: Meetings and TCI Factor 3: Support for Innovation (F9 in the correlation matrix). This relationship links responses on questions like:

Team Member Exchange "Factor 1 – Meetings"
"Our team meetings are good for expressing my ideas";
"Our team meetings are valuable participation opportunities";
"Our meetings are practical ways of keeping oneself informed", and
"Our team meetings resolve tension and conflicts in our team".

These questions are correlated with the following questions from Team Climate, Factor 3: Support for Innovation:

"Assistance in developing new ideas is available within the team";
"The team is open and responsive to change";
"People in this team are always searching for fresh, new ways of looking at problems";
"In this team we take the time needed to develop new ideas";
"Members of the team cooperate in order to help develop and apply new ides", and
"We share information in the team rather than keeping it to ourselves".

These correlations strengthen the notion that a team meeting is a vehicle to influence perceptions of the team members, which is the focus of the study. However, this deduction is only based on the existence of a correlation relationship between factors and cannot be used as an indication of causality (Kline, 1998).

It was surprising that emotional intelligence does not have a stronger correlation with the other variables. The correlation between emotional intelligence and team member exchange is very weak except for the slightly better, but still weak, correlation with team member exchange factor, "Cohesiveness" (.304). Understanding each other and the ability to influence

other people's emotions are two abilities that should support the cohesiveness factor of team climate well.

It was therefore expected from theory and empirical results that emotional intelligence would have more and stronger correlations with the other constructs, especially with team member exchange, which was not the case. These results urged the researcher to develop a path analysis with only emotional intelligence as independent variable and team climate as dependent variable. This resulted in a very good model that corresponds well with the theory. With reference to Figure 4.6 the causal relationship between emotional intelligence and team climate, the factor “support for innovation” is the strongest with a value of 0.9223 and the relation with the factor “vision”, is the weakest but still strong with a value of 0.7319. The causal link to the factor “support for innovation” can be motivated because of the influencing nature of emotional intelligence. The relationship with the factor “task orientation” and “participative safety” can easily be motivated on grounds of some of the questions included in these two factors:

“My colleagues and I monitor each other in order to maintain a higher standard of work”;
Members of the team do build on each other’s ideas in order to achieve the best possible outcome”;
“We all influence each other”;
“People in the team feel understood and accepted by each other”;
The team members interact frequently with each other”.

The results support the key aspects of the factor that individuals with emotional intelligence abilities will understand, control and influence their own and the emotions of their fellow team members and therefore confirm the conceptual research model’s guidelines that emotional intelligence predicts team climate. This deduction is however made outside the context of the rest of the original model and is made with caution.

It was also expected that goal orientation would reflect a correlation at least between Learning (GO) and Support for Innovation (TCI) as indicated by theory, but the result did not realize. The goal orientation factor “performance” is the only goal orientation factor, of which its non-correlation with any of the other factors is congruent with theory. In accordance with theory, “a performance orientation might be less beneficial for innovative behaviors on the job.” (Janssen & van Yperen, 2004: 370). This is because individuals with a performance goal orientation experience a situation that require innovative action as threatening as it implies a risk which potentially will require them to display weakness.

It is difficult to explain the fact that there are no correlation between a learning goal orientation and any of the factors of team climate. When referring to the final selected model 3 (Figure

4.4), each team climate factor indicates a disturbance coefficient of 1.00, which suggests that other influencing factors exist, which play a mediating role on the factor, but that they are not accounted for in the model. This may refer to the influence that learning goal orientation has on team climate, but cannot be reflected due to the complexity of the model.

5.3 Research Question Two

The second question to guide the research was “What is the predictability of emotional intelligence, team member exchange, goal orientation on team climate as outcome variable?”

According to the causal path analysis results (Figure 4.4. Path analysis model 3), emotional intelligence moderately contributes to the prediction of team climate with coefficients of 0.3373 to team climate (Vision) and a weaker 0.2623 to team climate (Task orientation), respectively. These causal relationships have not been studied before as far as could be established. However, the role that emotional intelligence has in predicting team climate and specifically the factor “Task orientation”, can cautiously be related to Bar-on’s empirical evidence that there is significant correlation between emotional intelligence and occupational performance (Bar-on, 2003). This is further supported by Goleman’s view that the social competence of emotional intelligence enhances the individual’s skill for collaboration and cooperation. Emotional intelligence further creates group synergy in pursuing collective goals (Goleman, 1998) in the team context, as the factor “Task orientation” in team climate of innovation suggests it should. The causal relationship result between emotional intelligence and team climate does not contribute to the influencing of team members idea as much as was anticipated when the research conceptual model (Figure 1.1) was developed. Perhaps the suggested intervening role of team member exchange between emotional intelligence and team climate should have been highlighted and researched more.

The finding that team member exchange (TMX) does not contribute to the prediction of all four factors of team climate index (TCI), as was anticipated, is surprising. The TMX factor “Meeting” does predict TCI "Vision" moderately (0.2186). However, it reflects a negative causal relation with TCI-Task orientation (-0.1079). The results suggest that TMX "Exchange" contributes strongly (1.0167) towards the causal relation with TCI-Vision and even stronger towards TCI "Participation Safety" (1.5128), and (1.455) to Support for Innovation and finally (1.2304) in relation with TCI "Task orientation". This relation is of importance as it confirms the focus of the study that perception within the team can be influenced and that team member exchange acts as interacting vehicle. The factor TCI "Participation safety" represents this we-are-together attitude, which is achieved by real attempts to share information and – more importantly – understanding and influencing each other in team context (Anderson & West, 1994; Ford & Seers, 2006; Mason, 2006). This causal relationship is (not surprisingly) also the strongest of them all.

The factor TMX "Cohesiveness" has no causal relationship with any of the factors of team climate of innovation, as the results are statistically insignificant. Of the three TMX factors, only TMX exchange, contributes significantly towards team climate of innovation. This factor represents a willingness to interact with fellow team members and recognizes reciprocal interaction (Seers 1998).

The relationship between goal orientation (GO) and TCI can be reported in two ways. Firstly, the coefficient with which the GO factor “Learning” predicts the TCI factor “Support for Innovation” is very weak (0.0537), with an equally weak prediction of TCI “Task orientation” (0.078). This result is not in congruence with the theoretical prediction. A learning orientation supports the development of new ideas in a team. Team members’ urge to share resources and their support of each other’s ideas for change, and their enthusiasm to keep each other informed, should be predicted by a goal orientation of learning (Button *et al*. 1996). However, the results do not support this assumption and no realistic reason can be offered for it. Secondly, the prediction of TCI "Task orientation" by the performance goal orientation is also statistically insignificant (0.0762). However, as the results reflect, a performance orientated predisposition would normally not be associated with seeking new ideas and an eagerness to investigate possibilities of change and be open to share with the rest of the team (Tuckey, Bruwer & Williamson, 2002). Someone with a predominantly performance goal orientation would normally not be considered an influencing factor in changing perceptions of fellow team members, and therefore this relation is in congruence with the theory. However in comparison with goal orientation's first factor “Learning”, this result may be by chance.

5.4 Research question three

“Is there a combination of EI, TMX, GO that predicts team climate of innovation better than one alone and if so, what is the best combination?”

In retrospect, this question was already answered by the results of questions one and two. The results unfortunately only reiterated that the best combination is that of model three. Refer to Figure 4.4. Path Analysis Model 3, and its Goodness of fit result. This result suggests that the combination of TMX-Exchange with weak support of Emotional Intelligence predicts team climate the best of the available options.

5.5 Research question four

This question requires an answer on the significance of the relation between team member exchange and team climate alone. In order to answer this question, another model was developed to reflect this relationship only. Refer to Figure 4.5 Path Analysis TMX and TCI as

well as its goodness of fit in Table 4.20. All five goodness of fit indices reflect a good fit to the data. This result strongly confirms the finding that TMX-Exchange is the only one of the three TMX factors with any causal relationship with team climate of innovation. This finding can be linked to the results that Drach-Zahavy and Somech (2001) obtained when they studied the role of team processes and structures in understanding team innovation. Their results indicated that heterogeneity, as structure influence, is important in understanding team innovation. However, they found that team interaction processes outweighed heterogeneity in predicting team innovation. The current study does not focus on team innovation as such but rather on the perception of team climate. Yet, with great caution, the resemblance of the results can be compared in that interaction processes seem to be of great importance in predicting team climate.

The TMX factor "Meetings" has no causal relationship with any of the four TCI factors. In fact, "Meeting" has four strong negative links with TCI. This means that on its own, "Meetings" does not contribute in any way to predicting team climate. No other study's results contradict this finding as far as could be established. TMX "Meeting", on the other hand, has a strong internal predictive relation with TMX "Exchange (0.7974). This relation seems to suggest that an atmosphere can be created in a team meeting within which team members may feel free to share information with fellow team members and that exchange may take place freely. The meeting is therefore the place where reciprocal exchange takes place and where, through interaction, members assist and give each other feedback on behaviour, where perceptions are influenced and where new ideas are offered as solution to problems in order to achieve team goals (Cole *et al*., 2002; Drach-Zahavy & Somech, 2001). Seers *et al*., (2001) support this finding with their result that team members develop the ability to influence others through interactions in their exchange relationships.

TMX "Exchange" further has a predictive relation with the last TMX factor, "Cohesiveness". Cole *et al*., (2002) emphasized their view that exchange is not a substitute for cohesiveness in the team, but exchange is rather the facilitating factor to enable cohesiveness. There is conclusive empirical evidence that team member exchange is positively linked to cohesiveness, which supports this finding (Ford & Seers, 2006; Seers, Petty & Cashman, 1995; Seers, Ford, Wilkerson & Moormann, 2001).

According to the results, TMX-"Exchange" strongly (0.7660) predicts TCI-"Vision". Vision further has a disturbance coefficient of 0.669, meaning that is has other unnamed causal factors with a significant influence on it. Vision represents the notion that the team's objectives are clearly defined, shared and valued among the team members and the extent to which the objectives are achievable (Anderson & West, 1994). The result that "Vision" is strongly predicted by "exchange" is confirmed by existing empirical results. Shared agreement among team members on aspects like team objectives are achieved through common

language and frequent interaction, which is experienced as joint learning (Klein, Conn, Smith & Sorra, 2001; Loo, 2002; Mathisen, Einarsen, Jorstad & Bronnick, 2004). The interaction through feedback and discussion, which are key components of exchange, bring commitment under team members to achieve the team's set objectives (Drach-Zahavy & Somech, 2001). It can therefore be concluded that the strong prediction of TCI-"Vision" by TMX-"Exchange" is supported by existing empirical results.

The second factor of team Climate Index –"Participation safety" is also strongly predicted by TMX-"Exchange (1.253). It is actually the strongest causal relation between exchange and the four factors of TCI. Participation safety implies a team environment which is non-threatening and in which team members can participate in the decision-making processes and mutually share new ideas without the fear of being ignored or overruled. It is theoretically sound to assume that frequent interaction with team processes encouraging reciprocal exchange should have a safe participative environment. Seers *et al*. (1995) found that team member exchange reinforces the role identity of its members, which reflects meaningfulness of the team in its members' eyes. Teams with a high level of exchange between its members normally use currencies of exchange like contribution to team activities, loyalty, affect and professional respect, which could all be linked to a safe participation environment (Cole *et al*. 2002). The fact that TMX-"Exchange" has a direct link to TMX-"Cohesiveness" as discussed above, further supports participative safety inside a team. Pirola-Merlo, Härtel, Mann and Hirst (2002) believe that a safe participative environment can also be described as a team environment with a strong affective component. Cole *et al*. (2002) support this view and express it as exchange inside the team without the expectation of reciprocity, which is given as unsolicited support.

The causal link of TMX-"Exchange" with the third factor of TCI-"Support for Innovation" is equally strong (1.146). This relationship means that any exchange within the team strongly influences their innovative environment. Therefore, the higher the level of exchange inside the team, the higher the level of innovation support will be. Loo (2002) describes support for innovation as the way that a team evaluates, accepts or rejects the introduction of new and improved ways of doing things. Although the particular model does not indicate an internal causal relationship between the four factors of the Team Climate Index construct, it should be assumed that the factors could not be considered in isolation. When considering an atmosphere of support for innovation inside a team, the way the team allows safe participation and the way the team deals with their objectives are integrally part of the way it will consider the introduction of new ideas in its processes and procedures.

There is enough empirical evidence to strengthen the causal relationship between "exchange" and "support for innovation". Mathisen *et al*. (2004) list some factors present in an innovative team as a commitment to challenging objectives, appropriate feedback processes in the

team, a non-threatening environment, high risk taking and a leniency to permit errors. Although they did not research the relation between exchange and innovation as such, Drach-Zahavy and Somech (2001) see exchange of information inside a team as a vehicle to more complete and accurate specifications of needs and to articulate expectations more realistically, which in their opinion are two important factors in any innovation process. Dunegan, Thierney and Duchon (1992) long ago found that interaction in the work group significantly predicts employee perception of climate factors, which, to their interpretation, foster innovative activities.

Already covered in the discussion was the relationship between “Exchange" and “Vision” in creating a willingness in the team to set challenging objectives as well as the relationship between “Exchange” and “Participation safety” in creating a non-threatening environment to accommodate all team members' views and opinions about team activities and specifically introducing new ideas and new ways of achieving team objectives. The result indicated a strong positive causal relation between TMX-“Exchange” and Team Climate Index (TCI)-“Support for Innovation” and is therefore in agreement with other empirical results.

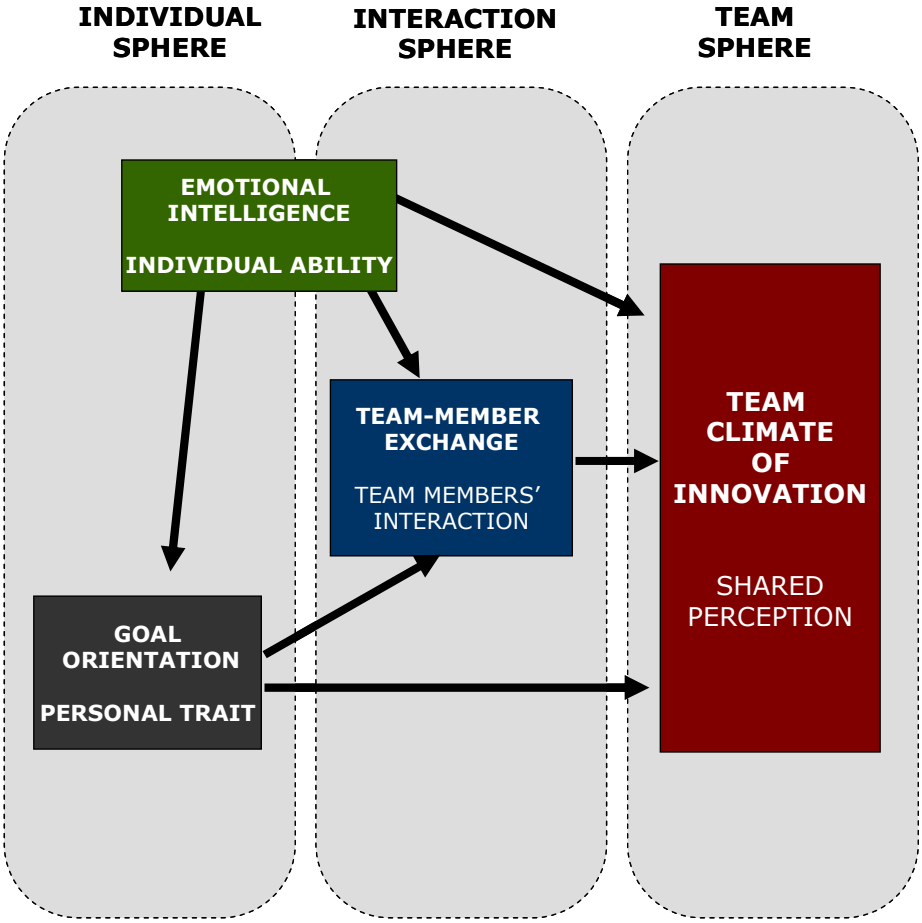
The last relation, between TMX-“Exchange” and TCI-“Task orientation”, is very strong, with a coefficient of 1.084. Task orientation further has a disturbance factor of 0.5075, indicating other unnamed factors that have a causal influence on it. Task orientation reflects team members’ approach to their task. It reflects processes within the team that team members implement to monitor their performance with a view to maintaining a high standard. This evaluative process asks critical questions to ensure high quality outputs but also to identify weaknesses in their production processes. A high level of task orientation should also link to a high level of synergy inside the team.
The results reflect that TMX-“Exchange” predicts TCI-“Task Orientation”. The more team members exchange opinions, information, new ideas, or suggestions on possible change in work procedures, the more team members will critically challenge their work processes and the more they will try to eliminate any weaknesses that might negatively impact on quality output. This result is in congruence with earlier empirical results. Loo (2002) found that teams with positive interpersonal relations among team members (exchange) also have team members who are enthusiastic about their projects (attitude towards their task) and an expectation of quality work (drive for quality output). Loewen and Loo (2004) found that team climate is enhanced when team members interact and when they are committed to achieving positive team outcomes and when there is qualitative reflection about team processes. One can therefore conclude that TMX-Exchange shows a statistically significant prediction of TCI-Task orientation and that this result is supported by existing results. It further means that team member exchange as an independent variable significantly predicts team climate as dependent variable.

5.6 Research question five

The last research objective was set to build a Structural Equation Model to predict team climate. The discussion in paragraph 4.9 described the reasons why a structural equation model could not be developed. Instead, a Path Analysis Model was built to try and answer the research questions. It was decided that the third model, Figure 4.4, be accepted as the model that best predicted team climate.

The initial research conceptual model was developed with the idea that there are individual activities that are present in the individual sphere. It was proposed that these individual orientated activities, like emotional intelligence and goal orientation, influenced TMX in the interaction sphere, which then acted as mediating factor towards team climate. The model further reflected that emotional intelligence and goal orientation influence team climate directly as a shared perception without the mediating influence of TMX. The initial conceptual model is again included here as Figure 5.1 to indicate the guideline thoughts for the research.

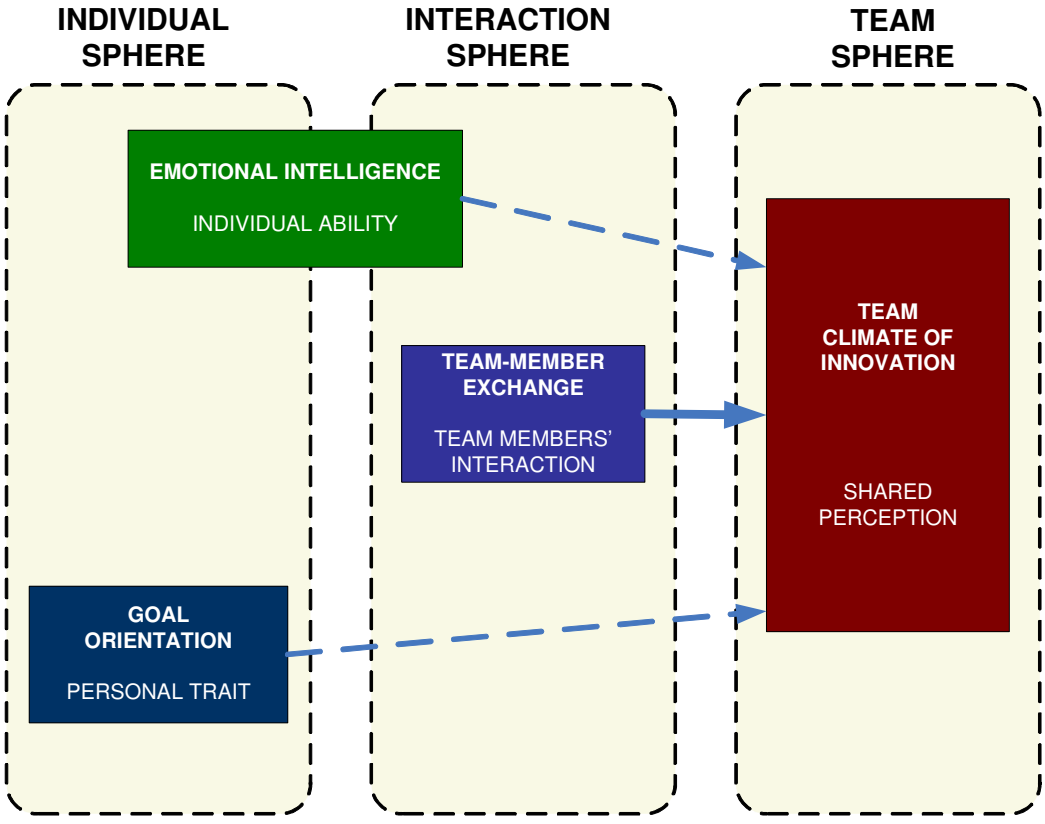
Figure 5.1: Initial conceptual model



The results of the study unfortunately did not support the assumptions of this proposed model. The model that was eventually accepted, Figure 4.4, indicate that TMX does not play the mediating role that it was initially proposed to do. The direct links from the individual sphere to the team sphere are unfortunately too weak to base any generalisations on and can therefore not be taken as predicting factors.

It is perhaps of value to illustrate this result in a high level model that can be compared with the initial conceptual model. It should be remembered that this new proposed model is based on the interpretation of the current results, but owing to the reasons discussed it could not be processed into a structural equation model. This new model is therefore again speculative although less so than the initial one. This model now reflects a strong prediction relation from TMX on team climate and a very weak link from emotional intelligence and goal orientation on team climate. The assumption that exchange is influenced by emotional intelligence and goal orientation cannot be supported by the results and is as such reflected in the model.

Figure 5. 2: New proposed model



Statistically no valid reason can be offered why goal orientation and emotional intelligence have no direct influence on team climate. However it makes sense if the two variables in the

individual sphere (refer to different spheres in the conceptual model), emotional intelligence and goal orientation, are rather linked to team member exchange only. Individual attributes will probably not be able to influence team sphere ability without the mediating influence of the interaction sphere. This aspect was tested in a separate model, but the results were not promising and were therefore not included in this study. The lack of a strong correlation between the two individual sphere variables and team member exchange further strengthened the decision not to include this proposed model in this study.
In spite of this difficulty, the overall objectives set in chapter one were achieved. It was confirmed that team member exchange predicts team climate. This will lead to a shared perception, which will influence behaviour.

It was indicated that there is no prediction relation between goal orientation and team climate. An assumption can be made that the influence of goal orientation will probably only realizes with-in the interaction phase. This could unfortunately not be confirmed.

The importance of a cohesive team within a healthy team climate for organizational success was reiterated.

5.7 Limitations of the present study

A possible limitation of the present study is the fact that the sample was too small to support significant statistical results. Although a sample size of 190 is not considered small, the conceptual research model was perhaps too ambitious to test against such a sample size.

The questionnaire provided to the respondents was perhaps too long. The questionnaire consisted of four different scales and together with the seven biographical questions, the respondents were required to complete 112 questions. Apart from the covering letter, the respondents had no other instructions to complete the questionnaire.

Secondly, the effect of poor sample selection was underestimated. The pressure of finding a large enough sample overshadowed the non-negotiable prerequisite to find a sample that represented the intended population.

Contrary to the theoretical framework for emotional intelligence and the expected results, emotional intelligence only had a weak relationship with team climate. The expected strong relationship with team member exchange did not materialize. Although a very weak correlation exists between emotional intelligence and team member exchange, a far stronger relationship was anticipated. This result may be due to the specific emotional intelligence measure of Schutte *et al*. (1998) that was used. This specific instrument is based on a single factor, and the confirmatory factor analysis confirmed this one factor structure. Perhaps

another emotional intelligence measure with a more prominent and discriminating factor structure would have resulted in a better correlation with team member exchange and team climate, although this conclusion is purely speculative.

5.8 Contributions of the present study

The main contribution of this study towards Organizational Behaviour is the confirmation of the relationship between team member exchange and team climate. The results confirmed exchange in the team as an influencing force on team climate perceptions.

The team member exchange (TMX) construct is a relatively old construct (Seers, 1989) and yet not much research has been done on TMX since then. Apart from Seers as well as Cole *et al*. (2001), only a few other research efforts on TMX can be quoted, of which Seers (1989), Seers *et al*. (1995), Seers *et al*. (2001), Cole *et al*. (2002) and Ford & Seers (2006) are the most important contributions. Research over the past 40 years on the leadership role have changed from a leader-member relationship towards a team-based, team member relationship where the consensus seeking process or with-in agreement was the focus of information exchange inside a team. This fact was confirmed by the current study.

TMX was initially constructed to define the individual team member perception of his role within the team (Seers, 1989). Ford and Seers (2006) changed the focus of the construct when they found that TMX partially predicts within agreement on climate. The Team Climate Index (TCI) was developed by Anderson and West (1994) as a measure to indicate team members' perception of the climate of innovation they work in. Anderson and West (1994) identified the factors for TCI as vision, participative safety, support for innovation and task orientation. The results of the current study significantly indicate that TMX as exchange process within teams strongly influences the perception of team members on the climate of innovation within their team as measured by the TCI instrument.

The results further emphatically illustrate that the team members' individual goal orientation does not influence their participation in the team exchange as initially anticipated. There was a weak correlation between the factor "meeting" of TMX and "learning" of goal orientation. This was too weak to be included in the path analysis. This correlation, however, highlights an important and surprising contribution in as far as it can be concluded that team member exchange processes within team meetings will guide individuals' willingness to participate in the exchange process rather than the individual's dispositional goal orientation.

Emtional intelligence was included in the initial conceptual model due to the theoretical possibility of it influencing behaviour. This assumption is based on the emotional intelligent ability to understand own and others emotions and to control own and influence others

emotions. The assumption then was that if you could through emotional intelligence influence others emotions, their perception and therefore a shared perception could also be influenced.. However, there is no specific empirical evidence available to base this assumption on. The inclusion of emotional intelligence into the initial model was at first based on common sense that if one has the ability to understand and influence others emotions, it should be reasonable to accept that someone's perception may also be influenced. The model based on the correlations (Figure 4.1) did not support this view. However, this model was built on the view that team member exchange should be an intervening factor between emotional intelligence and team climate. When this argument was removed and a model was formed by only considering the influence of emotional intelligence on team climate (Figure 4.6) the "common sense" assumption was confirmed. This result could unfortunately not be included as the final results was only based on the strong relationships that was based on the correlation results. The emotional intelligence team member exchange and team climate for innovation correlation was very weak and therefore not considered. Emotional intelligence can thus play a role in the influence process of team climate, but to test this will need another frame of reverence.

5.9 Possible significance for organizations and teams.

Based on the confirmed result that team member exchange predicts a shared perception among team members and that this constitutes a climate perception, the following may be of significance to organizations and teams in particular:

A healthy team climate can be identified by a shared perception on the different team climates (climate of safety, climate of organizational support, climate of innovation etc.), which means a higher consensus basis in the team. Team members build on each other's ideas during their regular meetings to benefit the team alone. No individual agenda is tolerated. This opens the opportunity that team members are clear about the mutually agreed goals, and team members understand their team goals better. The vision for the team is shared among the team members and it is aligned with the vision of the rest of the organization. Team members are prepared to question the status quo of the work standard and there is agreement for continuous improvement through innovative thinking. Each member is aware that his or her perception influences others' perception and this is exploited for the good of the team.

The shared perception with-in the team is of particular benefit during change management interventions. The change process can be done faster with sustainable results. There is no need for a period to persuade members of the necessity to change. This need was already identified with-in the team and all members' perception about this was influenced to the benefit of the team. There will be a mutually agreed "we-are-together" feeling in the team.

If a teams' climate is negative, the exchange and influence process with-in the team is not effective. This will probably be evident during team meetings if they are held at all, and there will not be any participation safety during these meetings. Team members will not value each other's opinion. There will not be a shared vision and the team will not challenge any tasks or standard. New appointees will not feel welcome or understood in the team and the voiced opinions will not be in support of the team or organization.

Teams should be sensitized about the potential of a shared perceptions and if need be, trained to exploit the value of well structured meetings where full participation is encouraged and where emotional intelligence abilities are fully used. This means that members will control their own emotions, they are able to understand others emotions or will make use of the opportunity to learn how to do this. They will importantly also influence each other's emotions and perceptions for the good of the team.

What does this all mean to an organization? There are numerous team building theories and team development instruments available to organizations to ensure that teams operate efficiently. There are ideal team role combinations and ideas how to enhance leadership skills. However, selecting team members onto the team who are able to influence the climate of the team will make a difference on the team's outcomes. Based on the ideal characteristics of a team with a healthy shared perception as described above and the essence of the different items of the three factors of the Team Member Exchange Quality (Seers, 1989) taken into account, the characteristics of an team member who can influence the climate of the team can be listed as follows:

- A willingness to complete a task originally assigned to someone else and a willingness and flexibility to switch jobs with other team members;
- A willingness to volunteer to do extra work to help others in the team;
- An ability to suggest better work methods;
- An ability to communicate well with team members and who will be easy to communicate to and have the ability to express his/her ideas effectively;
- A person who can be trusted and who are able to reciprocate trust
- Who is not someone who prefers to work on his/her own, but who has a preference to work within a team;

Team members with the above mentioned characteristics would help enhance a team climate in contrast to members of a work group where a coordinator or work group leader coordinates individual contributions and where members are not contributing to the cohesiveness or shared perceptions of a team. The assemblage of a team should therefore be thought through carefully with the above-mentioned characteristics in mind.

A second result that should interest organizations is the strong causal link of TMX "Exchange" with the third factor of TCI namely "Support for innovation". This means that the character

which is represented by the cluster of items identified as 'Exchange" has a strong influence on the character of the cluster of items representing "support for innovation". The exchange characteristics are the same as listed above (flexible to switch jobs with team members, suggest better work methods, volunteer to do extra work for others, willing to finish work assigned to others) and it was proven that these characteristics also influence the factor of TCI, identified as "support for innovation". Exchange behaviour will therefore positively influence behaviour that supports innovation (actions like assistance in developing new ideas, team is open and responsive to change, new and fresh ways of looking at problems, team take time to develop new ideas, people in the team cooperate to help develop and apply new ideas, members provide and share resources, members provide practical support for new ideas). Exchange behaviour will now influence team climate and as such also the willingness to support innovative behaviour.

Lastly organizations should take notice of the strong influence that the same exchange factor has over the TCI factor "Task orientation". This factor reflects processes within the team that team members implement to monitor their performance with a view to maintain a high standard.

Organizations should therefore identify team members who meet the ideal exchange characteristics as indicated above, knowing that through their behaviour they will strongly influence the team's shared perception and therefore team climate, they will positively influence behaviour that supports innovation and they will influence task orientation as an effort to maintain or enhance a high working standard.

5.10 Recommendations for future research

It was established with statistically significant results that team member exchange has a causal relationship with team climate, which means that team member exchange contribute to a shared perception among team members. This result confirmed only part of the conceptual research model. The expected contribution of emotional intelligence towards team climate did not realize. No acceptable justification for this fact can be offered. The Emotional Intelligence Scale that was used in the study has only one factor with 33 items loading onto the one factor. This scale produced excellent result in certain studies, but it was also criticized for the single factor structure. This study may be repeated to confirm that emotional intelligence indeed does not play the prominent role in the prediction of team climate that was anticipated. It may also result in a conclusion that the role of emotional intelligence is over-estimated and that the results of this study will then be confirmed.

Goal orientation was also included in the conceptual research model as an individual goal orientation predisposition that will influence team member exchange and also team climate as

such. The expectation was that a learning goal orientation would significantly predict team climate and particularly the factor “support for innovation”. The fact that this did not realize was surprising. This result should be research again as it did not correlate with goal orientation theory.

The research results indicated that apart from the exchange factor’s (TMX) strong relation with TCI-“Vision”, some other factors are also influencing vision (refer to the disturbance coefficient of 0.669). Although no clear proof of this exists through this study, the influence of either emotional intelligence or goal orientation on “vision” may shed some light on this apparent influence. The answer to this relationship may be of significance to organizations as teams with an aligned vision are more productive and efficient.

It may also be of value to test the influence of emotional intelligence and goal orientation on team member exchange as mediating variable and not directly on team climate as was done in this study. Referring to the Conceptual Research Model (Figure 1.1) the influence of individual sphere variables on the interaction sphere instead of directly onto the team sphere may be the solution for the lack of relationships between emotional intelligence, goal orientation and team climate.