

Equal Opportunity Climate Strength as a Moderator of Climate-Outcome Relationships

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Introduction

- ❖ The concept of climate, as it has been studied in organizational settings, has been considered as both an individual-level (psychological climate) and group-level (organizational climate) construct (Dickson, Resick, & Hanges, 2006)
- ❖ This multi-level focus has led to a growing body of literature aimed at investigating issues surrounding within-group variability in individual climate perceptions (e.g., Dickson et al., 2006; Schneider, Salvaggio, & Subirats, 2002).
- ❖ One variable of import that has been the focus of several such investigations is *climate strength*, which has been defined as the degree to which individuals within a group share similar climate perceptions (Dickson et al., 2006; Schneider et al., 2002).
- ❖ While climate strength has been investigated as a moderator of relationships between several specific forms of climate (e.g., innovation climate, justice climate) and relevant outcome variables (e.g., satisfaction, commitment, burnout, etc.), several distinct manifestations of climate remain uninvestigated.
- ❖ The current study set out to focus on climate strength for perceptions of *equal opportunity climate* (Dansby & Landis, 1991) in a sample of US Navy units.
- ❖ While EO climate has been linked to outcome variables such as commitment and satisfaction at the individual-level, these relationships have yet to be investigated thoroughly at the unit-level.
- ❖ The following hypotheses were tested:
 - ❖ H1: After considering control variables, unit-level perceptions of EO climate will be positively related to unit-level organizational commitment and job satisfaction.
 - ❖ H2: EO climate strength will moderate the relationship between EO climate and the outcome variables of unit-level organizational commitment and job satisfaction such that when EO climate strength increases, the relationship between EO climate and the outcome variables will also increase.

Method

- ❖ Participants
 - ❖ 42,936 military and civilian personnel from 290 US Navy units.
 - ❖ 56% white, 89% male, and most were 20 – 25 years of age.
- ❖ Measures
 - ❖ EO Climate and Outcome Variables – The Defense Equal Opportunity Climate Survey (DEOCS).
 - ❖ Climate Strength – Within-group standard deviation (SD) for the EO climate scale.
- ❖ Procedure
 - ❖ The DEOCS is deployed per commander request.
 - ❖ All data were aggregated to the unit-level, and the r_{wg} , ICC(1), and ICC(2) statistics were used to evaluate the appropriateness of this aggregation.
 - ❖ Values representing the percentage of minority representation and female representation, as well as unit size, were calculated and used as control variables in the regression analyses.

Results

- ❖ r_{wg} and ICC values were acceptable, with an average r_{wg} across EO climate, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment scales equal to .68, ICC(1) equal to .08, and ICC(2) equal to .90.
- ❖ Hypothesis Tests
 - ❖ H1 was supported – after controlling for the effects of unit size, minority representation, and female representation, unit-level EO climate was positively related to unit-level satisfaction ($r = .29, p < .01$) and commitment ($r = .24, p < .01$).
 - ❖ H2 was also supported – climate strength moderated the relationship between unit-level EO climate and job satisfaction/commitment (Table 3).

Results (continued)

Table 3.
Moderated Regression Analyses Predicting Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction

	Org. Commitment		Job Satisfaction	
	B	R ²	B	R ²
Step 1 Control Variables		.16		.11
Step 2 EO Climate	.15*	.20	.25**	.18
Step 3 EO Climate Strength	.07	.21	.00	.18
Step 4 EO Climate x EO Climate Strength	.14**	.23	.15**	.20

Note. * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$

Figure 1.
Plotted Interaction Effects for Climate Strength as a Moderator of EO Climate – Commitment Relationship

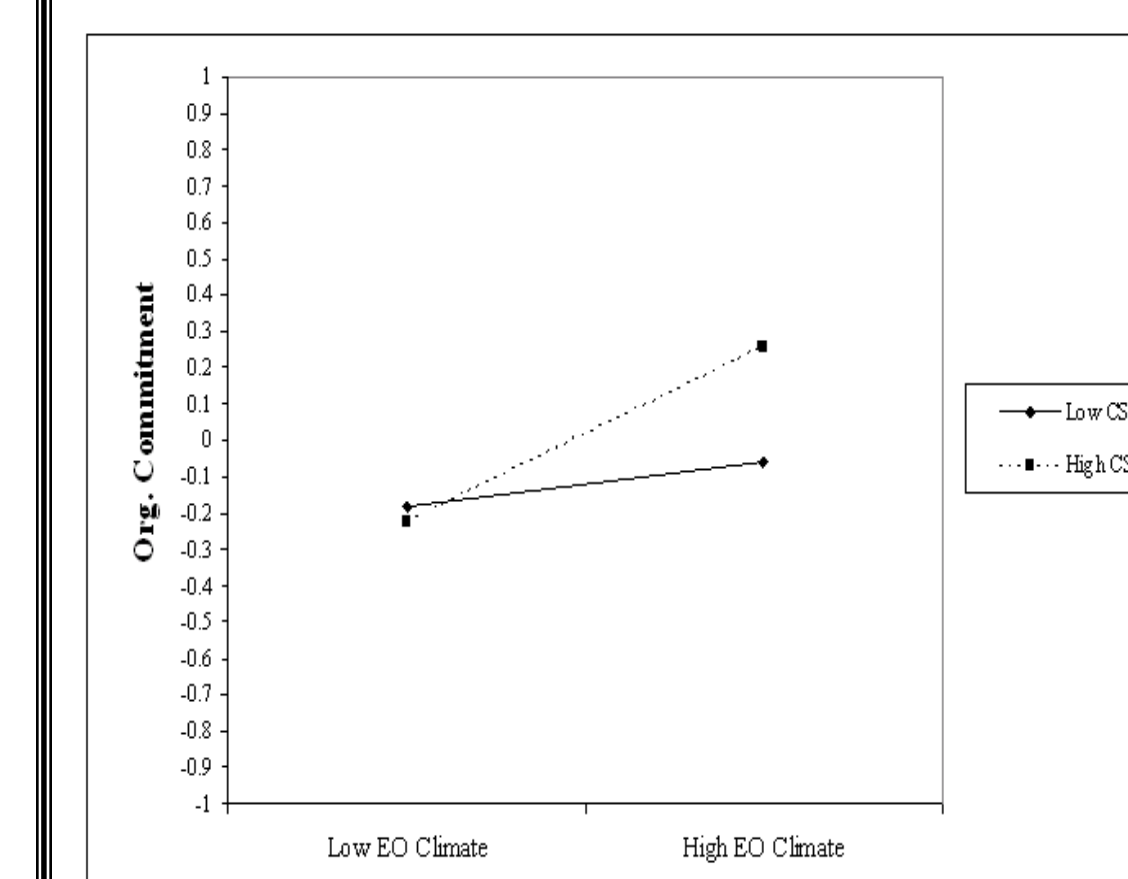
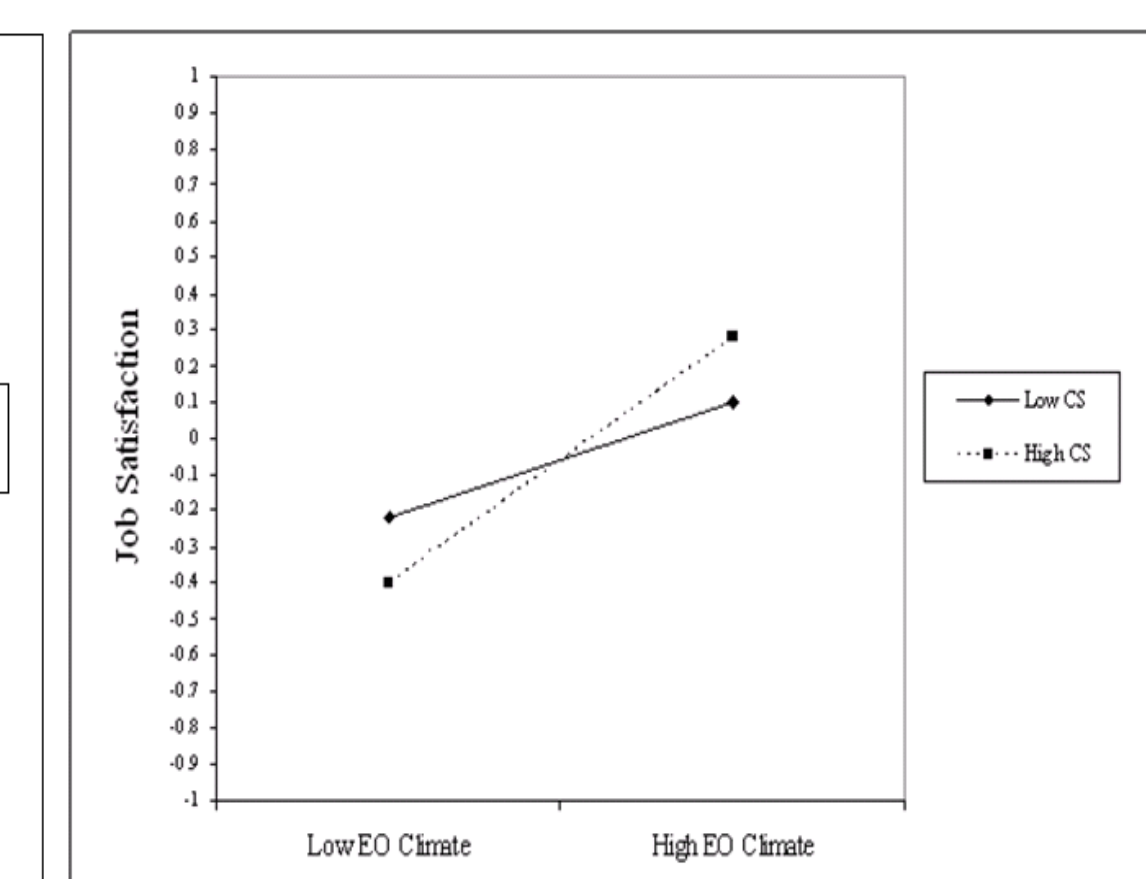


Figure 2.
Plotted Interaction Effects for Climate Strength as a Moderator of EO Climate – Job Satisfaction Relationship



Discussion

- ❖ The current study extended findings linking EO climate perceptions to relevant attitudinal variables by examining these relationships at the military unit level of analysis.
- ❖ In addition, climate strength was identified as a relevant variable to be considered within the context of EO climate investigations in that the variable was shown to moderate relationships between EO climate and the attitudinal variables of job satisfaction and organizational commitment.
- ❖ One primary implication of these findings is that organizations seeking to assess and change organizational climate must consider not only whether employee perceptions of that climate are positive or negative, but also the degree to which those perceptions are shared by members of the organization.

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