Team climate, climate strength and team performance. A longitudinal study

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We tested the hypothesis that the relationship between team climate and team performance is moderated by climate strength. The study sample was composed of 155 bank branches, and a two-wave panel design was implemented. We measured four team climate facets (support, innovation, goal achievement and enabling formalization). We obtained two subjective indicators of team performance (ratings provided by team members and by team managers) and a financial indicator of team performance. Seven out of the 12 interaction effects tested were statistically significant and showed the expected sign. When financial team performance was the criterion, only the interaction term was significant. This suggests that only strong climates are related to financial team performance over time.

Climate is a classic area of research in organizational psychology whose roots can be found in the study by Lewin, Lippitt and White (1939) on social climates. Nowadays, a recent topic in climate research that is beginning to catch the attention of scholars is climate strength. Climate strength is the degree of within-unit agreement of employees’ climate perceptions. Research on climate strength is contributing to improving our understanding of the relationship between organizational units’ climates and their outcomes. However, research on climate strength is still scarce, and new studies on the topic are needed (Dawson, González-Romá, Davis & West, 2008; James et al., 2008; Schneider, Salvaggio, & Subirats, 2002). The purpose of our study is to determine whether the relationship between team climate (that is, team perceptions shared by team members) and three criteria (team performance as assessed by team members and team managers, and financial team outcomes) is moderated by climate strength. From a theoretical perspective, these kinds of studies are important because they contribute to ascertaining the boundary conditions under which the relationship between team

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