HOW TO TRIGGER EMPLOYEES' PROACTIVITY IN COMPETITIVE CLIMATES? A TEST OF COMPETING HYPOTHESES

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Abstract

How to trigger employees' proactivity in competitive climate?
A test of competing hypothesis

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Employees' proactive behaviors are increasingly important for organizational development and they are highly influenced by the employees' working atmosphere, such as its level of competitiveness. However, the implications of competitive climates for employees' proactive behaviors remain unclear to date. This study aims to examine whether employees will engage in more or less proactive behaviors in a competitive working environment. To add more nuance to this investigation, I (a) differentiate the outcome of employees' proactive behavior as self-eneficial (e.g., self-development) or organizational-beneficial; and (b) explore whether the relationship between competitive climates and proactive behavior is moderated by individual (learning goal orientation) and organizational factors (procedural justice). The results of this research show that competitive climates can indeed increase employees' proactivity, for the benefit of both the organization and the individuals themselves. As expected, employees with high perceptions of procedural justice engaged in more organizational beneficial proactivity under high competitive climate, instead of more proactive behaviors targeting their own development. Contrary to expectations, the results indicate that employees with a high learning goal orientation become less motivated to engage in proactive behavior aimed at both the organization and themselves under competitive climates compared to employees with a low learning orientation. These results and their implications are discussed to encourage more research as well as supportive organizational practices for increased proactivity.

Keywords: proactivity; competitive climate; learning goal orientation (LGO); Procedural Justice.

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Introduction

The fast-changing global economy places unique pressures on organizations to perform at their highest potential today. To thrive in this uncertain economic environment, organizations are increasingly expecting their employees to be proactive in capturing opportunities and predicting and preventing potential problems (Grant & Ashford, 2008; Kim, Hornung, & Rousseau, 2011; Parker, Bindl, & Strauss, 2010), instead of only reacting once problems occur or when they are told to do so. For example, a management consultant is being proactive when she initiates a meeting with her clients to seek feedback regarding how to improve her future performance with them. This kind of proactive behavior may not only benefit the employee's personal career path but also improve the image and reputation of the company. One way for organizations to encourage employees' to be proactive is to implement competitive climates (i.e., competitive climates can increase motivation and effectiveness; see Bothner, Kang, & Stuart, 2007; Fletcher, Major, & Davis, 2008; Kulik, O'Fallon, & Salimath, 2008). A competitive climate is "the degree to which employees perceive organizational rewards to be contingent on comparisons of their performance against that of their peers" (Brown, Cron, & Slocum, 1998, p.89). There are many advocates for fostering competition among employees. Crowley (2004) indicates that like athletes, individuals will do their best when they are in competition; competition may help employees to focus on their tasks in ways that increase their performance (Fletcher et al., 2008). In addition, research by Downey, Hellriegel, and Slocum (1975) provide evidence for how competitive environments may trigger individuals' perceived uncertainty about their working environment that requires them to act proactively to deal with such uncertainty. This literature suggests that employees' proactive behaviors will indeed increase in competitive climates as they seek to be creative in outperforming their peers and reduce any uncertainties that they face.

However, there are also critics of competitive climates who point out that competition can instead be unhealthy (Johnson & Johnson, 1989; Kohn, 1992; Stanne, Johnson, & Johnson, 1999). Research has found that competitive climates can trigger destructive

outcomes such as lower productivity and achievement, more negative relationships, and lower psychological health (Kohn, 1992; Kohn, 1993). That is, the fear of poor evaluations and being punished by managers can inhibit employees to be effective on the job (Arnold, Flaherty, Voss, & Mowen, 2009). As alluded to above, competition can increase individual's perceived uncertainty, which Beehr (1998) and Tetric and Larocco (1987) argue heightens employees' experienced stress. This contrasting set of literature, in turn, suggests that employees' proactive behaviors would decrease in competitive climates as employees lose the motivation and ability to go beyond their work tasks to "make things happen".

Based on these inconsistent findings in the literature, the implications of competitive climates for employees' proactive behaviors remain unclear. The goal of this research is, therefore, to investigate how, and under what circumstances, competitive climates in organizations will influence their employees' proactivity. I draw from Parker et al.'s (2010) model of proactive motivation to develop my hypotheses. Since the above two perspectives offer competing predictions about the impact of competitive climates for proactive behaviors, I develop competing hypotheses to let the data shed light on which perspective holds. To offer further nuance into this relationship between competitive climates and proactivity, I also make the distinction between different types of proactive behaviors, namely proactive behaviors that primarily benefit the individual (self) versus proactive behaviors that primarily benefit the organization (others). This distinction may help to further explain the inconsistencies in the current literature by recognizing that employees may become more or less likely to support themselves versus their broader organization under competitive threats. Lastly, this research will take into account both individual (i.e., learning goal orientation; Button, Mathieu, & Zajac, 1996) and organizational (i.e., procedural justice; Alexander & Ruderman, 1987) factors that are likely to enhance the relationship between competitive climate and employees' proactivity in desirable ways. This is particularly important in light of the mixed support for the main effect of competitive climates on proactive behaviors. That is, depending on whether competitive climates have a positive or negative main effect on employees' proactive behaviors, these individual and contextual moderators can help to

explain how organizations can make this relationship either more positive or less negative. Overall, this research aims to shed light on the ways that organizations can promote proactivity in their employees because or perhaps despite their competitive climates.

This research offers several contributions to the literature. In particular, it sheds more light on the antecedents of the proactive behavior of employees by focusing on contextual drivers of such important behaviors. This study also helps us better understand how competitive climates relate to employees' different types of proactive behavior in constructive or destructive ways. Through understanding whether individuals' will perform more proactive behavior for the sake of themselves or their organization, managers will be better equipped to encourage not just one or the other, but both types of proactive behaviors. Moreover, the incorporation of procedural justice and learning goal orientation as moderators give organizations guidelines about how to encourage employees to react more rather than less proactively under competitive climates.

Literature Review

Proactivity

According to Parker et al. (2010), proactivity involves making things happen, predicting and preventing problems, as well as capturing opportunities. Bindl and Parker (2009) have conceptualized proactivity as a goal process through which individuals try to use changes to bring about a different future. Such changes include goal generation (envision a different future and plan to change) and goal striving (determine processes to bring about changes and the reflections and consequences of these actions). Parker, Williams, and Turner (2006) have listed three significant elements to define proactivity: future-focus, change-orientation, and self-initiation. They explain future-focus as actions that tend to anticipate problems or targets for long-term opportunities. They interpret change-orientation as not just passively reacting to the situation, but as trying to prepare for changing the situation to obtain a different future. Moreover, they indicate that self-initiation entails employees voluntarily seeking out a proactive goal without explicitly being instructed to do so by their supervisors.

Proactive behaviors can look very different in organizations. Parker and Collins (2010)

have defined three overarching types of proactive behaviors: proactive person-environment fit behavior, proactive work behavior, and proactive strategic behavior. Proactive person-environment fit behavior refers to employees proactively trying to accommodate to the environment by changing themselves or the conditions for gaining greater compatibility between their own attributes and the organizational climate. This behavior contains predominantly self-focused activities such as feedback inquiry, feedback monitoring, job change negotiation, and career initiative. In contrast, proactive work behaviors are when employees proactively seek to change and improve the internal organizational environment through activities such as taking charge, voice, individual innovation, and problem prevention. Lastly, proactive strategic behaviors are employees' proactive behaviors that improve the fitness between their organization and its wider environment. Building on this, Griffin, Neal, and Parker (2007) point out that there are three types of proactive work behavior: enhancing one's individual tasks, improving individual's tasks as a team member, and advancing one's tasks as an organizational member. Similarly, Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, and Bachrach (2000) explained that team member proactivity is focusing on altering the situation of the team and the pattern in which the team works, while organization member proactivity represents personal behavior that alters the organization's work pattern. They also interpret that organization member proactivity is focusing on not just groups or department but also the whole organization and it goes beyond organizational citizenship behaviors.

In light of the above-reviewed literature, proactive behavior has shown to be an important element that can lead to the success of both individuals and organizations today (e.g., Bindl & Parker, 2010). Griffin et al. (2007) point out that proactivity is especially critical in complex and uncertain work circumstances as it encourages individuals to deal with several situations in advance and to act on their own initiative without leader's request. Extensive research has accordingly been conducted on what encourages employees to be proactive. Grant and Ashford (2008, p.9) suggest, "the key criterion for identifying proactive behavior is not whether it is in-role or extra-role, but rather whether the employee anticipates, plans for, and attempts to create a future outcome that has an impact on the self or

environment." As such, Lepine and Van Dyne (1998) consider proactive behavior to be shaped by personalities as they are not defined by a specific given job description and do not link with formal organizational reward or punishment system. Bateman and Crant (1993) have pointed out that a proactive person is someone who has a "relatively stable behavioral tendency" to cause changes in the environment. Therefore, they consider that proactive personality is an important determinant of proactive behavior. However, there are other drivers that can trigger proactive behavior beyond proactive personality (Crant, 2000; Frese and Fay, 2001; Grant and Ashford, 2008; Parker and Collins, 2010). Crant (2000) proposes that motivational states, such as role breadth self-efficacy, and contextual factors, such as management support and organizational culture, can directly influence proactive behaviors. To build on this, Parker et al. (2006) have modeled several antecedents of proactive behavior at work to illustrate how individual differences (proactive personality) and the perceived work environment (job autonomy, co-worker trust) can generate proactive cognitive-motivational states (role-breadth self-efficacy, flexible role orientation) that foster individual's proactive work behavior. They suggest that individuals who define their role flexibly and have longer-term ownership goals that go beyond their current job are more likely to be proactive. In addition, self-assessment about whether one is capable to engage in a range of relevant activities (role breadth self-efficacy) will also support whether an individual decides to engage in the proactive behavior. In summary, proactive behaviors are driven by many different individual and environmental factors that are important for organizations to keep in mind if they want to promote more proactivity.

One additional approach that organizations can use to trigger proactive behaviors is to implement competitive practices. Competitive climates generate many uncertainties to both individuals' work conditions and their opportunities for development and rewards, which require employees to act proactively to deal with these uncertainties. To date, however, there is a lack of knowledge about whether competitive climates indeed have this desired effect. I turn next to a discussion of the impact of competitive climates for employees' behaviors and motivation in general, followed by its role for proactivity more specifically.

Competitive climate

Competitive climate has been a widespread topic among organizational researchers. Brown et al. (1998) point out that a competitive climate exists when employees' rewards are based on comparisons of their performance with their peers. Tjosvold, Johnson, Johnson, and Sun (2003) argue that when a condition is competitively structured, people's goal achievement is negatively related with each other. They claim that when one achieves one's goal, the others who are competitively related with that individual will lose their chance to achieve their goals. In other words, competitive climates are a characteristic of the environment in which employees compete against one another for scarce resources (Arnold et al., 2009). Organizations may vary in the level of competitiveness of the work climate, and employees may vary in their perceptions of the competitive climate (Brown et al., 1998). As a result, competition is often studied as individual perceptions of competitiveness as in this paper (competitive psychological climate), but this topic can also be studied at the team level as the perceptions shared among workgroup members (competitive workgroup climate; Fletcher et al., 2008).

Many authors have researched the influence of competitive climate on individual behaviors (Kulik, O'Fallon, and Salimath, 2008; Bothner, Kang, and Stuart, 2007) and personal attitudes (Flecher, Major, and Davis, 2008). Based on these studies, competition can be viewed in two distinct ways (Fletcher et al. 2008): Advocates believe that competition encourages individuals to try their best (Crowley, 2004), while critics consider competition as unhealthy (Kohn, 1992). Similarly, Tjosvold et al. (2003) argue that competition may cause destructive or constructive outcomes. They point out that constructive competition occurs when competition is viewed positively as an enjoyable experience that can raise achievement attempts, more positive interpersonal relationships, and more psychological health and prosperity. More specifically, they claim that those who believe that competition can increase their task effectiveness would experience more positive feelings during the competition. In a similar vein, Fletcher et al. (2008) suggest that many people like to compete with others and that competition may help them focus on tasks that can increase their performance. Kulik et

al. (2008) used General Equilibrium (GE) to interpret the importance of competition. They argue that the closer the industry conditions are to a perfect competition, the more efficacies and less unethical the industry environment would be. Furthermore, Iso-Ahola and Hat-field (1986) and Sherif (1978) conceive that competition may teach individuals to handle a competitive society and provide methods to gain approval in such a setting. These will increase individuals' effort to obtain more positive interpersonal relationship, greater psychological health, and prosperity.

In contrast, destructive outcomes of competitive climates are consequences such as lower productivity and achievement, more negative relationships, and lower psychological health (Kohn, 1992; Kohn, 1993). For example, Deci and Ryan (1985) explain that when individuals are forced to compete for financial motivators, this may trigger negative feelings of being controlled. Biddle (2013) point out that in a competitive climate, individuals will perceive that if their performance cannot go beyond the expectations, they may have a high possibility to be punished. Arnold et al. (2009) considered that in a competitive climate, the fear of poor evaluations and being punished by managers would, in turn, inhibit employees to be effective on the job. Fletcher et al. (2008) also point out that individuals may feel stressed when they perceive the environment as competitive as competition can cause uncertainty. Based on Beehr (1998) and Tetric and Larocco's (1987) discussion, under a competitive situation, even when an individual has a high level of performance, he or she may not "win". They suggest the uncertainty caused by a competitive situation can, therefore, trigger stress experiences.

Based on this literature, the implications of competitive climates for employees' behaviors, motivations, and well-being remain unclear. For the purposes of this paper, therefore, competitive climates may not have just positive effects on employees' proactive behaviors as per organizational goals, but also negative effects. I am not aware of any studies that have explicitly investigated the relationship between competitive climates and proactivity to date, but I believe that this is an important dilemma to address in light of the increased need for proactive behaviors and the increased use of competitive climates both in

today's organizations. I turn to a discussion about the underlying mechanisms for how these variables relate to one another next.

Competitive climates as a trigger for proactive behaviors

Organizations tend to promote competitive climates to encourage employees to be proactive – and competitive climates increase uncertainty that requires proactive behaviors from employees – yet research has not yet illustrated whether competitive climates indeed have this desired effect. To address this gap and to increase our knowledge about contextual antecedents of proactive behaviors more broadly, I draw from Parker et al.'s model of proactive motivation (Parker et al., 2010). This model illustrates how employees become more proactive in response to three motivational states: "can do", "reason to", and "energize to". That is, employees need to have the confidence to engage in proactive behaviors ("can do"), they need to feel compelled to do so ("reason to"), and they need to feel positive about reaching their proactive goals ("energized to").

This motivational model of proactivity can help to predict why employees will react more or less proactively in competitive climates. Importantly, individuals have to consider how they can outperform one another in competitive work climates, which gives them "reason to" act proactively. If they do not outperform their peers, they will not receive rewards such as promotions, pay, and status. Competitive climates should accordingly trigger employees' desire to find ways to do so through proactive behaviors. However, it is not clear whether these climates provide employees with the confidence to become more proactive ("can do"). Competitive climates only offer extrinsic motivation and do not necessarily make employees feel intrinsically motivated to engage in proactive behavior, which can instead demotivate employees to engage in the proactive behaviors. Similarly, the research reviewed above suggests that competitive climates may or may not "energize" employees to behave proactively. That is, Parker and colleagues' motivational model illustrates how employees' positive affective states need to be activated to energize their engagement in proactive behaviors (2010). They point out that if employees' positive emotions are triggered by the competition and the chance to receive a more satisfactory evaluation (Adler, Skov, &

Salvemini, 1985), they will become more proactive. Otherwise, if employees' negative emotions are stimulated due to the uncertainty and stress surrounding the competition (Hobfull, 1989), they will become less proactive.

Based on these opposing arguments, I offer competing hypotheses for the impact of competitive climates on proactive behaviors. That is, I expect that competitive climates can have both a positive and a negative effect on employees' proactivity. To offer further nuance into this relationship, I separate proactive behaviors into two types in line with the literature on different types of proactive behaviors above. On the one hand, I look at proactive behaviors that primarily benefit the individual (i.e., proactive person-environment fit behavior such as career initiative whereby employees promote their career actively instead of passively in response to a given job situation; Seiber et al., 2001). On the other hand, I also examine proactive behaviors that primarily benefit the organization (i.e., a proactive work behavior that includes constructive efforts of employees to enable functional change of an organization in respect to the work executed processes; Morrison & Phelps, 1999). For the purposes of clarification, I refer to these different sets of proactive behaviors as "employees' individual proactive behaviors" versus "employees' organizational proactive behaviors" in my hypotheses below.

It is possible that individuals' proactive behaviors would focus more on self-development instead of assisting organization's procedural changes under competitive threats. According to Griffin, Neal, and Parker (2007), proactivity includes activities that are based on self-starting goals or self-initiation that tend to adjust working conditions or procedures. However, this kind of self-initiation behavior or self-starting goal may or may not turn into organizational proactivity. Organizational proactivity is behaviors that can change the organizational work way instead of just a group or a department. Thus, individuals may engage in individual proactive behaviors that only change their own working condition or procedures rather than organizational proactive behavior that can influence on the whole organization under competitive climate. I include this distinction of proactive behaviors in my hypotheses to offer more insights into the exact role of competitive climates

for proactivity.

Hypothesis 1a: Competitive climates will positively influence employees' individual proactive behaviors.

Hypothesis 1b: Competitive climates will positively influence employees' organizational proactive behaviors.

Hypothesis 2a: Competitive climates will negatively influence employees' individual proactive behaviors.

Hypothesis 2b: Competitive climates will negatively influence employees' organizational proactive behaviors.

Having made the case for a main effect of competitive climates on proactivity, it is important to point out that proactive behavior is constructed through the combination of personal and situational forces (Griffin et al., 2010) that drive individuals' "reason to", "can do", and "energize to" motives for proactivity (Parker et al., 2010). Therefore, both individual and organizational factors can influence how proactive employees are under competitive climates. In this study, I consider two moderators of this relationship: learning goal orientation and procedural justice to help further clarify the role of competitive climates for employees' proactivity.

Moderators

Individual's learning goal orientation

Brown et al. (1998) have studied the effects of workplace competition and discovered that personal traits can influence the individual's response towards competition. In Fletcher et al.'s (2008) work, they similarly conclude that person-environment fit can affect the outcomes of competition. They consider reactions to competition to be a function of the interaction between individual trait competitiveness and competitive climate, where they found that the influence of competitive climate was more negative for people that are low in trait competitiveness. In this research I include the individual trait of learning goal orientation as a moderator that can give individuals "reason to", "can do", and "energize to" motivations to act proactively under competitive climates.

Button et al. (1996) state that learning goal orientation is a relatively steady dispositional trait that people have and engage with in their relationships with others. They regard learning goal orientation as a mastery-oriented response pattern that encourages employees in "seeking challenging tasks and maintaining effective striving under difficult conditions (p.26)". Bempechat et al. (1991) indicate that individuals' learning goal orientations affect their interpretations and reactions in achievement contexts. Learning-goal-orientated individuals are encouraged by competence development and tend to select stimulating tasks that motivate learning (Dweck, 1986). In Wood and Bandura's (1989) research, they indicate that learning-goal-oriented individuals address a task to understand new things or to strengthen their competence level. They consider competence as an accumulated skill that can improve continually through obtaining knowledge and consummating abilities. Printrich (2000) emphasizes that learning goals are related to adaptive outcomes such as that contained higher efficacy levels, task value, interest, positive affect, effort and persistence, learning strategies, and better performance. Based on these articles, learning goal oriented individuals are full of passion towards learning and taking on challenges.

Based on Parker et al.'s (2010) model of motivation, individuals are likely to behave proactively when they considered themselves capable to face a challenge or change proactively within their set of circumstances ("can do" motivation). This motivation is likely to stem from individuals' learning goal orientation, which has shown to positively affect individual's proactive behavior (Parker & Collins, 2010). As described above, learning-goal-oriented persons are motivated by personal ability development and select challenging tasks that encourage such learning (Dweck, 1986). This learning orientation increases employees' efficacy about how to proactively tackle their situation ("can do"). Sujan et al. (1994) further suggest that people with a strong learning orientation tend to consider proactive behavior as worthwhile and less risky (Dweck, 1986), they perceive challenging conditions such as competition as an opportunity for self-development and they also assemble higher goals in these challenging situations. This mindset further promotes employees' proactive behaviors under competitive climates as it gives them "reason to" do so, and it is also likely to promote

a positive affective response to competition as they enjoy challenges and learning opportunities ("energized to"). Several articles have considered learning goal orientation as a predictor of proactive behavior, but they have not tested its moderating effect on proactive behavior under competitive working environments. Thus, I propose that high learning-goal-oriented individuals will show more willingness to behave proactively under a competitive climate due to the motivational reasons outlined above. In contrast, individuals with lower levels of learning goal orientation will be less inclined to be proactive as they see it as riskier and not worthy of their time in the face of competition.

Hypothesis 3a: High learning-goal-oriented individuals will engage in more individual proactive behaviors in competitive climates than individuals with low levels of learning goal orientation

Hypothesis 3b: High learning-goal-orientation individuals will engage in more organizational proactive behaviors in competitive climates than individuals with low levels of learning goal orientation.

Procedural justice

I also take into consideration the moderating impact of context in my model in the form of justice perceptions. Johnson and Johnson (1987,1989) claim that competition will be more constructive when the winning regulations and criteria are unambiguous and fairly enforced. If individuals perceive that the regulations and criteria for the competition are fair, they will be more satisfied (Kabanoff, 1991). Clemmer and Schneider (1996) summarized three dimensions of perceived justice: distributive, procedural, and interactional. Distributive justice considers perceived outcome fairness, and interactional justice considers individuals' experience of interpersonal treatment during the process of resolving a conflict. Alexander and Ruderman (1987) point out that procedural justice, in contrast, involves the fairness of the rules and procedures of the distribution of rewards. Leventhal et al. (1980) argue that fair procedures are conformable, impartial and unbiased, representing all parties' benefits, and are supported by high-fidelity information and on ethical standards. Based on this, Lind and Tyler (1988) conclude that procedural justice has a specific strong influence on attitudes

about organizations or authorities. Konovsky (1987, 1989) found that procedural justice can anticipate organizational commitment and explain more variance for organizational commitment and trust relationships with supervisors than distributive justice can. Goodwin and Ross (1992) claim that fair procedures can also encourage different parties to engage in the decision making process. In Blodgett et al.'s (1997) research, they found that higher procedural justice could compensate for lower levels of distributive justice.

This literature suggests that procedural justice can make employees feel more positively about their situation, which should give them increased motivation to engage in proactive ways as per Parker's model of motivation ("energized to"). Indeed, Naumann and Bennett (2000) indicate that when employees believe that others treat them fairly, they will show more willingness to engage in proactive extra-role behaviors. Walumbwa et al. (2010) similarly found that procedural justice climate (i.e., fairness of the rules and procedures; Konovsky, 1987; 1989) encourages employees to engage in more organizational citizenship behavior, which is another form of proactive behavior. Procedural justice is considered as an important driver of cooperative behaviors of the employees (Konovsky, 2000; Tyler, 2000), including proactive behavior (Crawshaw, van Dick, & Brodbeck, 2012). According to Crawshaw et al. (2012), procedural justice was significantly and positively related to individual proactive behavior. Building on this, research done by Hongwei He, Weichun Zhu, and Xiaoming Zheng in 2013 has shown that procedural justice can encourage employee engagement, which is a significant predictor of employee's in-role job performance and extra-role performance (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011; Ho, Wong, & Lee, 2011; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010).

Based on this background, it is clear that procedural justice can encourage proactive behaviors both directly and indirectly. There is also empirical support for procedural justice's role as a moderator in making employees react more positively to their context (see meta-analysis; Brockner & Wisenfeld, 1996). Accordingly, I expect individuals' perception of the procedural justice of their organization to moderate the relationship between their competitive climate and proactive work behavior; it will either enhance a positive effect or

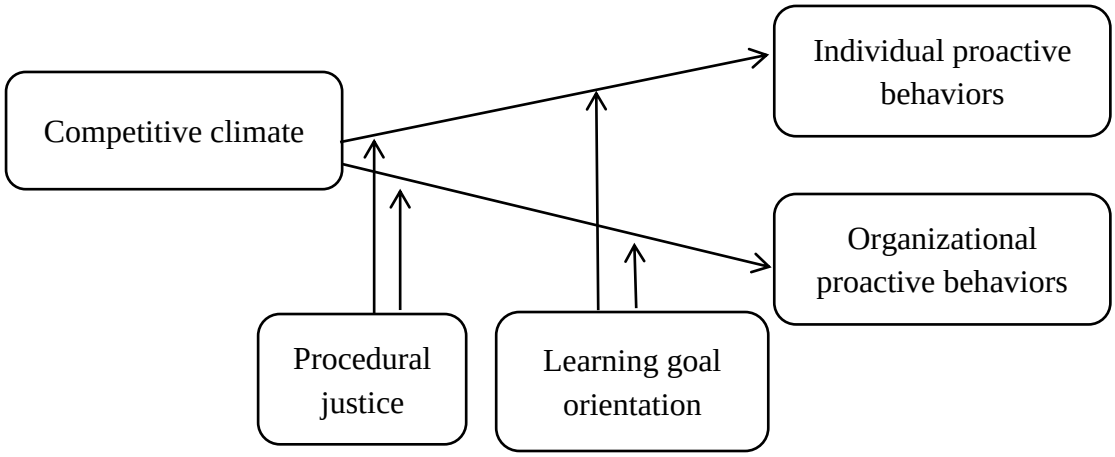
reduce a negative effect. In other words, individuals' perceived procedural justice would lead to more proactive work behavior in competitive climates.

Hypothesis 4a: Individuals' perception of the procedural justice of their organization will moderate the relationship between competitive climate and proactive work behavior, such that individuals with higher levels of procedural justice perceptions are more likely to engage in individual proactive behaviors than those with lower levels of procedural justice perceptions.

Hypothesis 4b: Individuals' perception of the procedural justice of their organization will moderate the relationship between competitive climate and proactive work behavior, such that individuals with higher levels of procedural justice perceptions are more likely to engage in organizational proactive behaviors than those with lower levels of procedural justice perceptions.

In summary, my model will shed light on the ways in which competitive climates influence employees' proactive behaviors (targeting themselves versus their organizations), both as a main effect and as a function of an individual (learning goal orientation) and a contextual factor (procedural justice).

Framework



Methodology

Procedure

To recruit participants for this research, I formed a partnership with an online participant panel, Qualtrics Panels (www.qualtrics.com). Since the focus of this research is on competitive climates and their effect on employees' proactive behaviors, it was critical to gain access to a cross-organizational sample of employees from different organizations and industries (to ensure enough variance in competitive climates and procedural justice in particular). It was also important to ensure complete anonymity of participants to avoid the potential social desirability effect of appearing more proactive than one is. Qualtrics Panels were able to meet these requirements by recruiting participants from a wide array of organizations while maintaining anonymity. Participants who were full-time employees (working 40 hours or more a week) and over 18 years of age were recruited and asked to respond to an online survey about their workplace and work behaviors through Qualtrics. The survey was designed to take no more than 20 minutes and included questions about all the core variables in the proposed theoretical framework as described below. The participants received US$5.50 as a token of appreciation for responding to the survey.

Participants

There were 240 participants who participated in this research from the Qualtrics Panel. Of these, I excluded 35 for careless responding (i.e., participants missed obvious screen out questions and/or took an unreasonably fast time to finish the survey). The final sample included 205 respondents. In general, 102 participants were male (49.8%), and 103 participants were female (50.2%). Participants' ages ranged around 18-24 (3.9%), 25-30 (20.5%), 31-35 (18%), 36-40 (15.6%), 41-45 (11.2%), 46-50 (9.3%), 51-55 (7.3%), 56-60 (6.3%), 61-65 (4.9%), and over 66 years old (2.9%). The job tenure for the participants was 1-5 years (41%), 6-10 years (24.4%), and 11-15 years (14.1%). The work experience of the participants was 1-5 years (11.7%), 6-10 years (18.5%), 11-15 years (18.5%), 16-20 years (17.1%), 21-25 years (11.2%), 26-30 years (8.3%), and over 30 years (14.6%). Most participants were from industries like Healthcare (18%), Professional/ Scientific/ Technical

services (17.1%), Manufacturing (13.7%), Educational services (12.2%), and Wholesale/ retail trade (10.7%). In terms of education, the majority of participants had a Bachelor's degree (36.6%), followed by a Master's degree (17.1%), some college or university, but no degree (15.6%), and High school diploma or equivalent (14.1%). Most of the employees' companies had over 500 employees (37.5%), followed by 51-150 employees (18%), 151-250 employees (13.2%), less than 50 employees (12.7%), and 351-500 employees (11.2%), and 251-350 employees (7.3%).

Measures

Competitive climate

Fletcher and Nusbaum's (2009) competitive climate measure was used for this research. All items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale with "1" representing "Strongly disagree" and "5" indicating "Strongly agree". This measure consists of 20 items across five distinct dimensions: competition for tangible rewards, nontangible rewards, recognition, status, and competition influenced by coworkers. These 20 positively worded items were survived from a factor analysis of the scale to reduce overall survey length. Sample questions include "I receive higher pay when I perform better than my coworkers", "My accomplishments are only recognized if they are better than those of my coworkers", and "My status at work depends on my performance relative to others". The Cronbach's alpha was 0.965.

Proactive work behavior

I used career initiative and taking charge behaviors to test proactivity targeting both the individual and his/her organization, respectively. All items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale with "1" representing "Never" and "5" indicating "Always". Six items of career initiative developed by Tharenou and Terry (1998) were used to measure proactive behavior that targets the focal participant. Questions like "I have sought feedback on my job performance", "I have discussed my career prospects with someone with more experience in the department/organization" and "I have engaged in career path planning" were asked. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.883.

To test proactive behavior that benefits the broader organization, 10 items of taking charge developed by Morrison and Phelps (1999) were used. All items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale with "1" representing "Never" and "5" indicating "Always". Sample questions include "How frequently do you try to adopt improved procedures for doing your job?" "How frequently do you try to make constructive suggestions for improving how things operate within the organization?" and "How frequently do you try to bring about improved procedures for the work unit or department?". The Cronbach's alpha was 0.933.

Learning goal orientation

Button et al.'s (1996) 10 item scale was used in order to measure learning goal orientation. All items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale with "1" representing "Strongly disagree" and "5" indicating "Strongly agree". Sample questions include "The opportunity to do challenging work is important to me", "I prefer to work on tasks that force me to learn new things" and "I do my best when I'm working on a fairly difficult task". The Cronbach's alpha was 0.863.

Procedural justice

Procedural justice was measured with a 7-item scale developed by Colquitt (2001). All items were measured with the following 5-point Likert scale with "1" representing "Strongly disagree" and "5" representing "Strongly agree". Participants were asked questions such as "For the following items, think about the procedures used to arrive at rewards in your organization. With regards to those procedures, to what extent…" "Have you been able to express your views and feelings during those procedures?" "Have those procedures been applied consistently?" and "Have those procedures been free of bias?" (as some sample items). The Cronbach's alpha was 0.941.

Control variables

We controlled for several variables that have empirical and theoretical support for their influence on proactivity. Based on previous research on proactive behaviors (George & Zhou, 2007; Perry-Smith, 2006; Shalley, Gilson, & Blum, 2000; Gong, Cheung, Wang, and Huang, 2012), it is common practice to control for employee age, education, and job tenure.

According to Strauss, Griffin, and Parker (2012), age is a possible confound because of the differences of future-oriented motivation between different ages. Hüttges and Fay (2015) explained that gender stereotypes can have a negative impact on women's motivation to lead. Therefore, gender can be another potential confound as the beliefs in different gender roles may de-motivate female employees to act proactively. We also controlled for work experience as Grant (1995) suggested that work experience can enhance job performance, including proactive behaviors (Rowe, 1988). Moreover, we controlled for the size of the organization as Whitely, Dougherty, and Dreher (1991) suggest that organization size can influence the number of resources that are allocated to employees. In other words, the size of the company can influence the amount of learning or training resources that employees can obtain, which in turn may encourage or hinder employees' proactive behavior. In addition, we controlled for affective commitment, satisfaction, and trait competitiveness for the participants for the following reasons. According to Thomas, Whitman, and Viswesvaran (2010), employees' affective organizational commitment and satisfaction are positively correlated with proactivity. Thus, controlling for these two variables will help with better explaining the model in terms of how competitively climates affect proactivity above and beyond these other factors. Lastly, we controlled for trait competitiveness of the employees because Fletcher, Major, and Davis (2008) have assessed the relationship between trait competitiveness and competitive climate and found that the effect of competitive climate was more negative for individuals with lower trait competitiveness.

Gender was self-reported by the participants with "1" indicates "male", and "2" represents "female".

Age was self-reported by the participants and represented by ranges, such as "1" indicating "18-24", "2" representing "25-30", "3" representing "31-35", "4" representing "36-40", "5" representing "41-45", "6" representing "46-50", "7" representing "51-55", "8" representing "56-60", "9" representing "61-65", and "10" representing "66 plus".

Work experience was self-reported by the participants to the following question "How many years of work experience do you have". Answer options were "1" representing "less

than 1 year", "2" representing "1-5 years", "3" representing "6-10 years", "4" indicating "11-15 years", "5" representing "16-20 years", "6" representing "21-25 years", "7" indicating "26-30 years", and "8" indicating "over 30 years".

Company size was also self-reported by the participants to the question: "How many employees are there in your company" with answers ranging from "1" representing "less than 50 employees", "2" indicating "51-150" employees, "3" indicating "151-250 employees", "4" representing "251-350 employees", "5" representing "351-500 employees" and "6" representing "over 500 employees".

Affective commitment was measured with 4 items derived from Allen and Meyer (1990). All items were measured with a 5-point Likert-type scale with "1" representing "Strongly disagree" and "5" indicating "Strongly agree". The questions were as follows: "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with my current employer", "My current employer has a great deal of personal meaning for me", "I *do not* feel a strong sense of 'belonging' to my current employer (reversed)", and "I *do not* feel like 'part of the family' at my current employer (reversed)". The Cronbach's alpha was 0.811.

Job satisfaction was measured with a 3-item subscale derived from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire conducted by Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, and Klesh (1983). The questions were "All in all, I am satisfied with my job", "In general, I don't like my job" (reversed), and "In general, I like working here". The Cronbach's alpha was 0.843.

Trait competitiveness was measured with 8-items developed by Griffin-Pierson (1990). All items were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale with "1" representing "Strongly disagree" and "5" indicating "Strongly agree". Questions such as "I do not feel that winning is important in both work and games" (reversed), "I have always liked to be the first one finished with a test", and "I always wanted an A because that meant that I did better than others" were asked. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.813.

Analytical Strategy

For all the analyses in this study, I used the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2016).

More specifically, I used PROCESS model 2, which assesses main effects and moderation effects of multiple moderators simultaneously. I ran all the analyses with age, gender, work experience, company size, affective commitment, job satisfaction, and trait competitiveness as covariates (as explained above). PROCESS uses a bootstrapping procedure to test the significance of the direct and indirect effects. Bootstrap re-samples to provide an approximation of the sampling distribution of the statistic of interest (Cohen & Abedallah, 2015). When zero falls within the 95 percent confidence interval for the bootstrap samples, this indicates a lack of significance. In the data analysis process, 95 percent confidence intervals were used and 5000 bootstrap samples were run.

Results

Means, standard deviations, correlations among variables, and internal consistencies for all variables are presented in **Table 1.**

Table 1
Means, standard deviations, correlations among variables and internal consistencies.

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. **Competitive Climate**	2.72	0.99											
2. **Individual Proactivity**	3.26	0.96	0.43**										
3. **Organizational Proactivity**	3.24	0.88	0.39**	0.70**									
4. **Learning Goal Orientation**	4.03	0.53	0.15*	0.43**	0.46**								
5. **Procedural Justice**	3.41	0.95	0.36**	0.40**	0.40**	0.39**							
6. **Age**	4.48	2.36	-0.13	-0.20**	-0.13	-0.07	-0.08						
7. **Gender**	1.50	0.50	-0.07	-0.02	-0.13	-0.02	-0.08	-0.17*					
8. **Work experience**	4.81	1.93	-0.16*	-0.23**	-0.07	-0.08	-0.12	0.84**	-0.24**				
9. **Company size**	3.99	1.91	-0.04	0.03	-0.12	-0.07	0.02	0.07	-0.03	0.09			
10. **Commitment**	3.454	0.99	0.11	0.23**	0.23**	0.34**	0.45**	0.00	-0.01	0.02	-0.08		
11. **Satisfaction**	3.839	0.94	0.10	0.18**	0.15*	0.29**	0.45**	0.05	-0.08	0.01	-0.08	0.74**	
12. **Trait competitiveness**	3.129	0.76	0.48**	0.29**	0.26**	0.22**	0.23**	-0.18**	-0.10	-0.15*	0.10	0.12	0.08

Note. Control variables: Gender, 1 = male, 2 = female, Age, Work experience, Company size, Commitment, Satisfaction, and Trait Competitiveness; *p<=.05 **p<=.01 N=205.

Hypothesis testing

I offered competing hypotheses for the impact of competitive climates on proactive behaviors targeting the individual and the organization (Hypotheses 1 and 2). As shown in **Table 2**, I found that competitive climate has a positive relationship with employees' individual proactivity and organizational proactivity. According to the output of my PROCESS model 2, there is a positive relationship between competitive climate and individual proactivity (β = 0.840, p =0.048) and between competitive climate and organizational proactivity (β = 0.977, p = 0.011). The results illustrate that competitive climates will trigger more proactive behaviors in employees. These results are consistent with Hypothesis 1a and 1b; Hypotheses 2a and 2b were not supported as they predicted a negative effect of competitive climate on proactivity.

Turning to the hypothesized moderation effects of learning goal orientation and procedural justice on individually targeted proactivity next (Hypotheses 3a and 4a), I found that learning goal orientation has a negative moderating impact on the relationship between competitive climate and individual proactivity (β = -0.185, p = 0.087). This relationship was only marginally significant but indicates a lack of support for Hypothesis 3a as it appears it is employees with low learning goal orientation that respond the most positively to competitive climates (see Figure 1). I will discuss this unexpected finding in more detail in the discussion session. I found no significant interaction with procedural justice towards the relationship between competitive climate and individual proactivity(β = 0.060, p = 0.300). Hence, Hypothesis 4a was not supported.

For the hypothesized moderation effects of learning goal orientation and procedural justice on organizationally targeted proactivity (Hypotheses 3b and 4b), I found that both learning goal orientation and procedural justice have a significant impact on the relationship between competitive climate and organizational proactivity. Again, the moderating effect of learning goal orientation is negative (β = -0.270, p = 0.006; see Figure 2), which runs in the opposite way to my expectations and thus exhibits a lack of support for Hypothesis 3b. In other words, individuals with a high learning goal orientation show less organizational

proactivity behaviors in highly competitive climates than in low competitiveness climate. The moderating effect of procedural justice is positive in influencing the relationship between competitive climate and organizational proactivity (β = 0.104 with the p = 0.047; see Figure 3). This result supports Hypothesis 4b such that employees respond more positively to competitive climates when they perceive higher levels of procedural justice.

For organizational proactivity, the model explained 40.6% (R-squared = 0.406) and for the individual proactivity, the model explained 37.7% (R-squared = 0.377) while controlling for gender, age, work experience, company size, affective commitment, job satisfaction, and trait competitiveness.

Table 2

Moderation test for Competitive Climate, Individual Proactivity, Organizational Proactivity, Procedural Justice and Learning Goal Orientation (Testing Simultaneously)

	Outcome: Individual Proactivity		Outcome: Organizational Proactivity	
	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE
Constant	-1.582	1.322	-1.815	1.196
Age	-0.005	0.043	-0.073†	0.039
Gender	-0.053	0.115	-0.180†	0.104
Work Experience	-0.073	0.054	0.076	0.049
Company Size	0.041	0.029	-0.045†	0.027
Commitment	0.088	0.086	0.075	0.078
Satisfaction	-0.067	0.089	-0.117	0.081
Trait Competitiveness	0.032	0.087	0.034	0.079
Competitive Climate	0.840*	0.422	0.977**	0.382
Learning Goal Orientation	1.040**	0.3072	1.269***	0.278
Procedural Justice	-0.005	0.1592	-0.069	0.144
R-squared (whole model)	0.377***		0.406***	
F (whole model)	9.673		10.923	
Moderate effect of Learning Goal Orientation	-0.185†	0.108	-0.270**	0.097
Change of R-squared	0.010		0.024	
F	2.964		7.691	
Moderate effect of Procedural Justice	0.060	0.057	0.104*	0.052
Change of R-squared	0.0035		0.012	
F	1.0817		3.992	

Notes: N=400, †p<.10 *p<=.05 **p<=.01 ***p<=.001

The plotted interactions are based on the unstandardized constant b-weight value,

interaction b-weight value, main effect b-weight value, moderator b-weighted value, mean of main effect and moderator and standard deviation of the main effect and moderator (as per Aiken and West's (1991) recommendations).

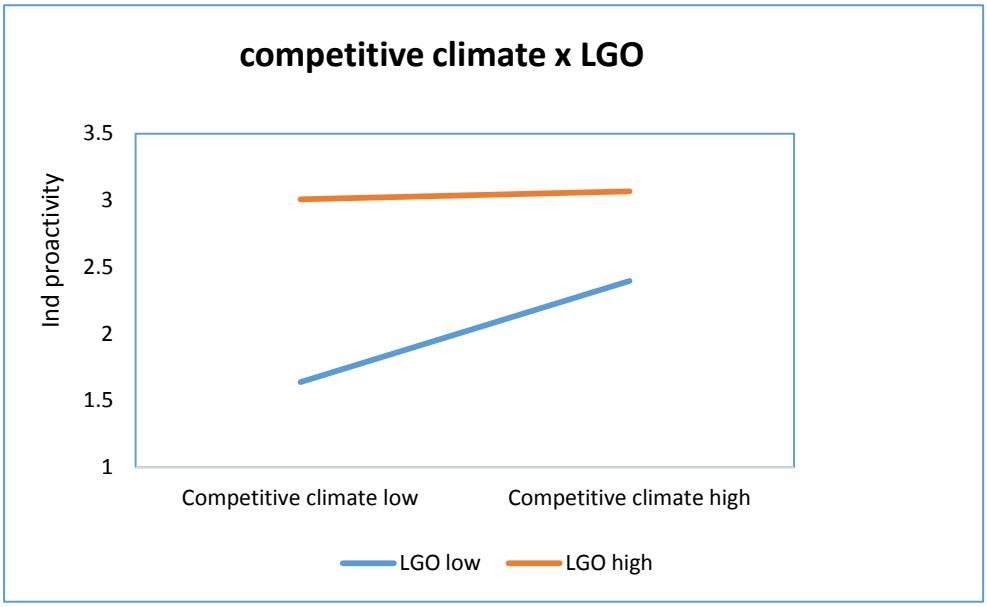


Figure 1. Moderating effect of learning goal orientation (LGO) on the relationship between competitive climate and individual proactivity.

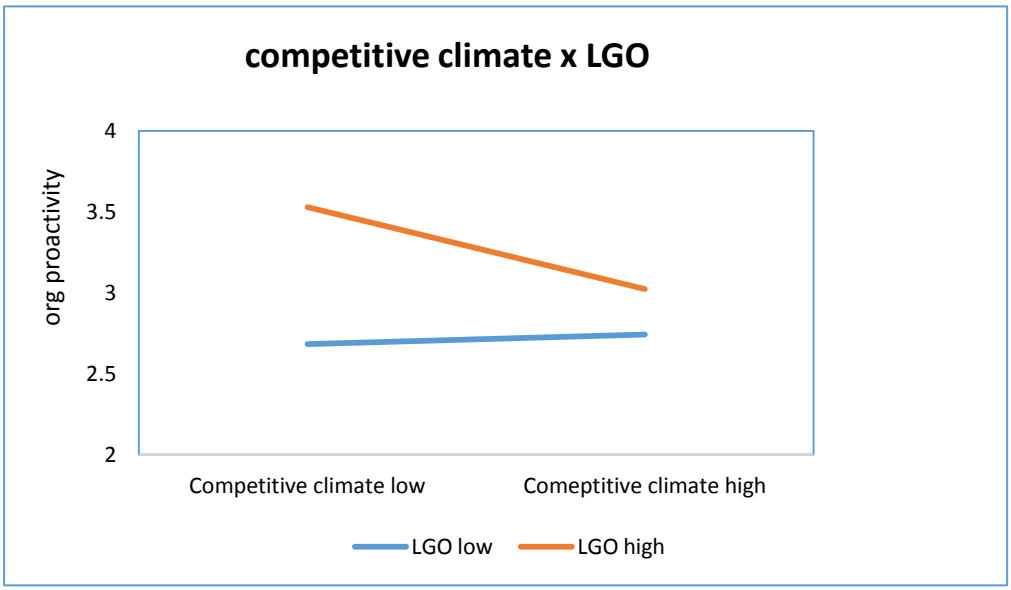


Figure 2. Moderating effect of learning goal orientation (LGO) on the relationship between competitive climate and organizational proactivity

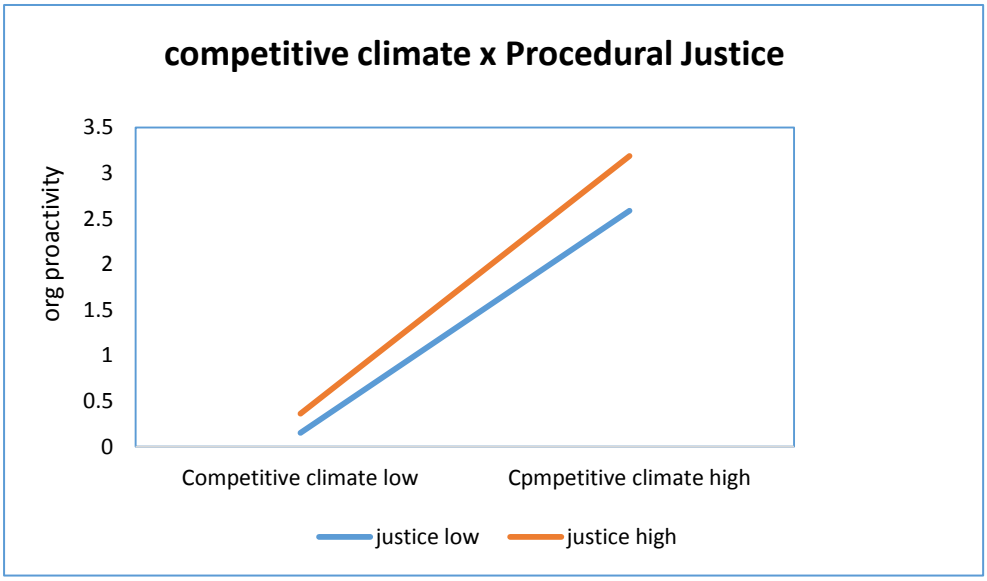
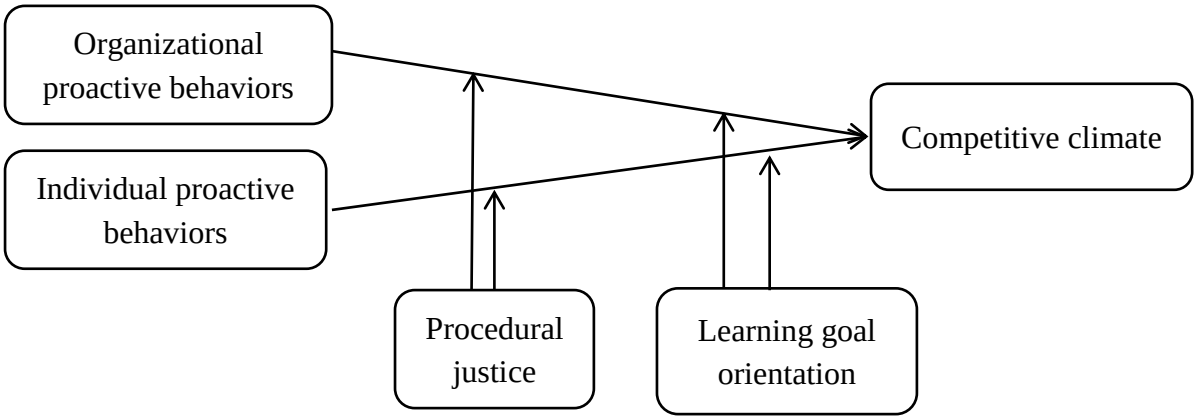


Figure 3. Moderating effect of procedural justice on the relationship between competitive climate and organizational proactivity

Supplementary analysis

In order to bolster confidence in my results and to rule out the potential for reverse causation, I ran a reverse model in PROCESS with the same control variables. The results show no support for the possible existence of reverse causation such that employees' proactive behavior was not a predictor of their perception of a competitive climate, nor did learning goal orientation and procedural justice moderate this path. In short, this analysis reduces concerns about the potential for reverse causation in this study. More specifically, there is no significant relationship between organizational proactive behaviors and competitive climate (β= 0.216, p = 0.645), or between individual proactive behaviors and competitive climate (β= -0.033, p = 0.940). The moderating effect of procedural justice is also not significantly supported by the relationship between organizational proactive behaviors and competitive climate (β= 0.090, p = 0.156) or for the relationship between, individual proactive behaviors and competitive climate (β= 0.061, p = 0.390). Similarly, learning goal orientation is not a significant moderator of the relationship between organizational proactive behaviors and competitive climate (β= -0.055, p = 0.652) or for the relationship between individual proactive behaviors and competitive climate (β= 0.034, p = 0.786).

The framework of the reverse model was shown below:



Discussion

The present study aimed to enhance our understanding of the impact of competitive climates by investigating how, and under what circumstances, competitive climates in organizations influence their employees' proactivity. To address current inconsistent findings in the literature about the impact of competitive climate on employees, I examined employees' proactivity that focuses on both organizational contributions and individual benefits. In doing so, I sought to establish whether employees will exhibit more proactive behaviors that will benefit the organization or themselves in the face of competitive contexts. This study also adds further insight into employees' proactive behaviors by exploring how these important behaviors are influenced by both individual (learning goal orientation) and organizational (procedural justice) factors in competitive climates.

Overall, the results of my competing hypotheses test suggest that employees generally become more rather than less proactive in competitive climates. That is, when employees perceive competitive pressures to perform, they will engage in more proactive behaviors. However, these results need to be carefully interpreted in light of the hypothesized moderators. For the moderating effect of learning goal orientation, I hypothesized that this effect would be positive. Based on Parker et al.'s (2010) model of motivation, the individual trait of learning goal orientation can give individuals "reason to"(individuals perceive competition as an opportunity for self-development), "can do" (individuals consider

themselves as capable to face a challenge or make change proactively), and "energize to" (individuals are motivated to respond positively towards the competitive climate) motivations to act proactively under competitively climates. However, the result of my data analysis indicated a negative moderating effect of learning goal orientation on the relationship between competitive climate and employees' organizational as well as individual proactivity. That is, employees with a high learning goal orientation are less likely to respond more proactively to high competitive climate than employees with a low learning goal orientation.

I interpret this unexpected result based on intrinsic motivation theory (White, 1959). Wolters, Shirley, and Pintrich (1996) conducted a study on students with the result showing that learning-goal-oriented students have more adaptive motivational beliefs that intrinsically motivate them for school work. Learning goal oriented individuals are thus depicted as having high intrinsic motivation towards learning and seeking out competency tasks, which is the reason for why employees are willing to behave proactively (Parker, Bindl, and Strauss, 2010). When faced with extrinsic motivators, however, this intrinsic motivation may fade. That is, it is possible that the intrinsic motivation of employees with a high learning goal orientation is diminished by the external pressures in a competitive climate. According to Reeve and Deci (1996) and Ryan and Deci (2000), competitive pressures will reduce the intrinsic motivation of individuals, where employees who experience the pressure of competition may interpret it as a controller of their behavior (see cognitive evaluation theory; Deci and Ryan, 1985). Employees must feel satisfaction from both a sense of autonomy and an internal perceived locus of causality to be intrinsically motivated (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Stated differently, to encourage employees' intrinsic motivation, individuals must not only have self-efficacy in the behavior (competency in the behavior), but also perceive it to be self-determined for maintaining or enhancing their intrinsic motivation (sense of autonomy). Thus, for the higher learning oriented individuals (high intrinsic motivation for seeking out challenging tasks and learning opportunities), competitive climates can diminish their sense of autonomy. This feeling of being controlled will undermine these employees' intrinsic motivation towards proactive behaviors under high competitive climates compared with those

under low competitive climates. This negative effect was the strongest for employees' organizational proactivity (i.e., it was reduced under competitive climates), while employees' individual proactivity remained unchanged.

For low learning goal-oriented employees (low intrinsic motivation for seeking out challenging tasks and learning opportunities), they are more likely to be motivated by extrinsic motivation such that they will become more proactive when there are organizational pressures in place rather than for the instrumental value of engaging in such behaviors (Ryan and Decik, 2000). These employees will, therefore, engage in more proactive behaviors under high competitive climate due to their perceptions that such behaviors will satisfy an external requirement or gain an externally reward contingency, such as extra financial reward or promotion (external perceived locus of causality; deCharms, 1968). This increase in proactive behaviors under competitive climates was particularly likely for employees' individual proactivity (i.e., it was increased), whereas employees' organizational proactivity was unchanged. In short, while individuals with a high learning goal orientation always engage in more proactivity than employees with a low learning goal orientation do, this difference is drastically reduced under competitive climates.

For procedural justice, I also hypothesized a positive moderating effect based on the literature review that suggests procedural justice can encourage employees' positive affect about their situation that will trigger their willingness to engage in more proactive extra-role behaviors (Naumann & Bennett, 2000; see link to "energize to" motivation as per Parker et al., 2010). When individuals perceive that the regulations and criteria for the competitive working climate are fair, they will also be more satisfied with their situation, which encourages them to engage in more proactive behaviors. The results of my study support the hypothesis for procedural justice's positive moderating effect on the relationship between competitive climate and employees' organizational proactivity. The more the employees perceived the procedures and processes of the organization to be fair, the more likely they are to perform more organizational proactive behaviors in competitive climates. In contrast, the moderation effect of procedural justice for individual proactivity was not significantly

supported by the result. While high perceived procedural justice makes employees consider the organization as "deserving" of their proactive contributions that benefit the organization in return, this type of justice perception does not influence their motivation for their own proactivity such as the engagement in self-development. This finding also highlights the importance of distinguishing between different types of proactivity.

Theoretical and Managerial Implication

Theoretically, I developed my thesis model based on Parker et al.'s (2010) model of motivation that suggests individuals need "reason to", "can do", and "energize to" motivations to act proactively under competitive climates. The results of this study largely support this model in that competitive climates give employees these motivations to be more proactive, especially if they have a low learning goal orientation and perceive their organization to be procedurally fair. As hypothesized, high procedural justice encourages employees to engage in more organizational proactive behaviors under competitive climates by making them feel more positively about their situation (i.e., more "energized to" motivation). However, this effect did not hold for individual proactive behaviors. As described above, it is possible that employees are more motivated to be proactive toward the organization in competitive climates that are procedurally fair as they view the organization as "deserving" their contribution and proactive behaviors. Procedural justice did not influence their self-development motivation for proactivity as justice is about the organization and not the individual employee. While my model predicted learning goal orientation to positively influence employees proactive behaviors in competitive climates by increasing their "can do" and "energize to" motivations, the results of this study indicate that the opposite effect seems to hold. That is, highly learning goal oriented individuals do not respond with more organizational and individual proactivity behaviors under competitive climate as they consider the competitive climate as a control over their behavior, which in turn reduces their intrinsic motivation to behave proactively. That is, under competitive climate, instead of energizing individuals with a high learning goal orientation to behave proactively, the environment is diminishing their motivation to do so as they do not feel

positive about reaching their proactive goals (especially for organizational proactivity).

By distinguishing between employees' proactive behaviors that target the organization versus themselves, this study helps to expand our understanding of the impact of competitive climates on employees' proactive behaviors. In particular, this research illustrates the importance of being clear about what types of proactive behaviors are most desirable and relevant in each research setting for clearer results as contextual and individual factors may influence these types of behaviors in different ways.

Practically, these findings suggest that competitive climates can encourage employees to be more proactive, but it may not always have this positive effect. The organization should make sure that their procedures are perceived as fair by the employees because high perceived procedural justice will trigger more proactive work behaviors that profit the organization. Also, competitive climates should be implemented carefully with high learning goal orientated employees as they will contribute less organizational proactive behavior under high competitive climate as their intrinsic motivation is hampered. Having said that, it is also important to point out that competitive climates may trigger proactivity behavior while at the same time foster negative interpersonal behaviors. Salin (2003) has argued that under a competitive climate, workplace bullying can be a competitive strategy for the individual perpetrator. Therefore, employees might be aggressive toward each other under competitive climates that may not necessarily hinder employees' proactive behavior but can have other unintended negative effects such as lower job satisfaction and harmed interpersonal relationships.

Limitation and Future Reseach

In interpreting the findings of this research, there are some limitations of this study that need to be considered. First, we used cross-sectional data for testing the model that can reduce the inference of a causal relationship as it is hard to interpret whether high competitive work climate will increase employees' proactivity or highly proactive employees are actually seeking out competitive work climates. However, I have conducted a supplementary analysis based on the reverse model to test the possible existence of reverse causation and the results

show no support for a reverse relationship. Therefore, concerns about reverse causation in this study have been reduced in the supplementary analysis. I still recommend future researchers to conduct both quantitative and qualitative studies such as experiments that can increase confidence in causality as well as interviews that can collect more information about participants' perception for acting proactively under competitive climates. Moreover, it would be interesting to look at other types of organizational helping behaviors, such as organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs), to test the influence of competitive climate on additional kinds of proactive behaviors.

Second, the data were single-source and self-report. I conducted the data collection through Qualtrics which have participants that come from different industries and with diverse working backgrounds. Self-reports of cognitive and motivational states are quite appropriate as the questions are asking about individuals' perception about their work climate and their self-motivation for behaving proactively. However, it is still possible that self-bias may have threatened the result because participants may rate their response based on the social desirability instead of telling the truth even though they knew the process of data collection was completely anonymous. It is impossible for the researchers to know whether the respondents will be able to make the same behavior as they indicated. It is necessary for future research to conduct a multisource research for obtaining data from supervisors and coworkers to increase the accuracy of the data collection. However, future researchers should be cautious in the usage of observer ratings as Parker et al., (2006) claimed that evaluating employee proactivity through multi-sources, such as supervisor's and coworker's evaluation, has other disadvantages, such as egocentric bias (supervisors consider their subordinates are all proactive) and observational bias (employees may behave more proactively when they are being observed). Moreover, Frese, Fay, Hilburger, Leng, and Tag (1997) argued that proactive behavior may contain questioning and challenging behaviors that are not always welcomed by the supervisors or coworkers and they can, therefore, assess those behaviors more negatively.

Third, this sample of North American employees offers insights in line with western and individualism cultures instead of multicultural samples. Therefore, we are not clear about whether the result of this study will also be applicable to other Eastern or collectivist cultures. According to the research of Aycan, Kanungo, Mendonca, Yu, Deller, Stahl, and Kurshid, (2000), they point out that the socio-cultural environment will influence the internal organizational work culture, as well as the human resource practices within the organization. Their result shows that countries with large power distance and paternalism, such as Russia and China, are indeed predicted with less likelihood of employee proactivity. The employees under this kind of large power distance and paternalism culture tend to follow the requirements instead of looking for self-development opportunities or other organizational-beneficial proactive behaviors. Similarly, Shavitt and Cho (2016) have conducted research on the distinction between individualism and collectivism cultures introduced by Triandis and his colleagues (1995, 1998). They separated cultural differences into four types: vertical-individualist, horizontal-individualist, vertical-collectivist, and horizontal-collectivist. They explained that under vertical-collectivist societies (Korea, Japan, and India), people value their in-group goals over personal goals, and emphasize on obeying authorities for fulfilling duties and obligations. Employees under this cultural background are less likely to behave proactively and voice their own thoughts because following the rule is considered as showing respect to the supervisors or their predecessors. Future research should use Eastern culture based samples for testing whether employees in all cultures will actually show more proactive work behaviors under competitive climates. In addition, future research in this domain should also research differences among different generations in Eastern cultures. Based on Ralston, Egri, Stewart, Terpstra, and Kaicheng (1999), they found that the new generation group (< 41years old) scored higher on individualism than the current (41-51 years old) and older (> 51 years old) generation groups. Based on this finding, I believe that the result between different generations toward acting proactively under competitive climate will be different. The younger generation may be willing to behave more proactively than the current and older generation in general, and in Eastern cultures in particular.

Moreover, the role of leaders will also play a significant part in influencing employees' proactivity in competitive climates. Erkutlu (2012) emphasizes that shared leadership will improve team proactive behavior, extraverted leadership will instead reduce employees' proactivity (Grant, Gino, and Hofmann, 2011), and transformational leadership will actually encourage more employee proactive work behaviors (Strauss, Griffin, and Rafferty, 2009). Future research can test whether these kinds of leadership effects will have the same impact towards employees' proactivity under competitive climates.

Conclusion

It is widely accepted that competitive working climates are a way for companies to select and maintain the most capable employees in today's highly competitive global business environment. However, it is important to understand how competitive climates influence employees' proactive behaviors and how this relationship is moderated by individual and organizational factors. The results of this study show that competitive climates can indeed increase employees' organizational and individual proactivity, and this effect is especially likely for employees with low levels of learning goal orientation and for employees who perceive their organization to be procedurally fair. Overall, these results suggest that organizations should implement competitive climates carefully as this kind of high-pressure working environment may hinder employees' capability to contribute to the organization or their own development depending on their learning motivation as well as the procedural justice of their organization.

Appendix

All items were measured with a 5 Likert scale with "1" represents "strongly disagree" and "5" represents "strongly agree".

Competitive Climate

1. My coworkers and I are compensated (i.e., pay, bonuses) based on our performance relative to others.
2. I receive higher pay when I perform better than my coworkers.
3. I am offered incentives (e.g., higher pay, bonuses, time off) to perform better than my coworkers.
4. I am given rewards (e.g., bonuses, gifts, vacation time) for performing better than my coworkers.
5. The amount of freedom and personal discretion I get is based on performing better than my coworkers.
6. The best performers are offered additional working opportunities that are not available to all employees (e.g., assignments, responsibilities, scheduling).
7. Having freedom and personal discretion at work is based on performing better than others.
8. Assignments (e.g., choice of tasks, flexible scheduling) are based on performance relative to others.
9. I am acknowledged for my accomplishments only when I outperform my coworkers.
10. My coworkers and I are acknowledged for our accomplishments only when we outperform each other.
11. My accomplishments are only recognized if they are better than those of my coworkers.
12. Good performance is only recognized when it is better than some one else's performance.
13. My status at work depends on my performance relative to others.
14. I am only able to obtain high status if I outperform my coworkers.
15. My standing is based on my performance relative to others.
16. Rank and privilege are based on outperforming others.
17. My coworkers are very competitive individuals.
18. My coworkers work hard to outperform each other.
19. My coworkers are constantly competing with one another.
20. Everyone at work wants to win by outperforming their coworkers.

All items were measured with 5 Likert scale with "1" represents "Never" and "5" represents "Always".

Proactive Behavior

Organizational proactive behavior

1. How frequently do you try to adopt improved procedures for doing your job?
2. How frequently do you try to change how your job is executed in order to be more effective？
3. How frequently do you try to bring about improved procedures for the work unit or

department ?

4. How frequently do you try to institute new work methods that are more effective for the company ?
5. How frequently do you try to change organizational rules or policies that are non-productive or counterproductive ?
6. How frequently do you try to makes constructive suggestions for improving how things operate within the organization ?
7. How frequently do you try to correct a faulty procedure or practice?
8. How frequently do you try to eliminate redundant or unnecessary procedures?
9. How frequently do you try to implement solutions to pressing organizational problems?
10. How frequently do you try to introduce new structures, technologies, or approaches to improve efficiency ?

Individual proactive behavior

1. I have sought feedback on my job performance.
2. I have discussed my career prospects with someone with more experience in the department/organization.
3. I have engaged in career path planning.
4. I have updated my skills in order to be more competitive for promotion.
5. I have discussed my aspiration with a senior person in the department/organization.
6. I have volunteered for activities other than my day-to-day work tasks, such as working parties and selection panels.

All items were measured with a 5 Likert scale with "1" represents "strongly disagree" and "5" represents "strongly agree".

Learning Goal Orientation

1. The opportunity to do challenging work is important to me.
2. When I fail to complete a difficult task, I plan to try harder the next time I work on it.
3. I prefer to work on tasks that force me to learn new things.
4. The opportunity to learn new things is important to me.
5. I do my best when I'm working on a fairly difficult task.
6. I try hard to improve on my past performance.
7. The opportunity to extend the range of my abilities is important to me.
8. When I have difficulty solving a problem, I enjoy trying different approaches to see which one will work.
9. On most jobs, people can pretty much accomplish whatever they set out to accomplish.
10. Your performance on most tasks or jobs increases with the amount of effort you put into them.

All items were measured with a 5 Likert scale with "1" represents "To no extent" and "5" represents "To a great extent".

Procedural Justice

The following items refer to the procedures used to arrive at your (outcome). To what extent:

1. Have you been able to express your views and feelings during those procedures?
2. Have you had influence over the (outcome) arrived at by those procedures?
3. Have those procedures been applied consistently?
4. Have those procedures been free of bias?
5. Have those procedures been based on accurate information?
6. Have you been able to appeal the (outcome) arrived at by those procedures?
7. Have those procedures upheld ethical and moral standards?

All items were measured with a 5 Likert scale with "1" represents "strongly disagree" and "5" represents "strongly agree".

Proactive Personality

1. I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life.
2. Wherever I have been, 1 have been a powerful force for constructive change.
3. Nothing is more exciting than seeing my ideas turn into reality.
4. If I see something I don't like, I fix it.
5. No matter what the odds, if I believe in something I will make it happen.
6. I love being a champion for my ideas, even against others' opposition.
7. I excel at identifying opportunities.
8. I am always looking for better ways to do things.
9. If I believe in an idea, no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen.
10. I can spot a good opportunity long before others can.

Control Variables

All items were measured with a 5 Likert scale with "1" represents "strongly disagree" and "5" represents "strongly agree".

Job Commitment and Satisfaction

1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with my current employer.
2. I do not feel a strong sense of "belonging" to my current employer.
3. My current employer has a great deal of personal meaning for me.
4. I do not feel like "part of the family" at my current employer.
5. I feel proud to work for my current employer.
6. All in all, I am satisfied with my job.
7. In general, I don't like my job.
8. In general, I like working here.

Trait Competitiveness

1. I perform better when I am competing against someone rather than when I am the only

one striving for a goal.

2. I do not feel that winning is important in both work and games
3. When I win an award or game it means that I am the best compared to everyone else that was playing. It is only fair that the best person win.
4. In school, I always liked to be the first one finished with a test.
5. I have always wanted to be better than others.
6. When nominated for an award, I focus on how much better or worse the other candidates' qualifications are as compared to mine.
7. I always wanted an A because that meant that I did better than others.
8. Because it is important that a winner is decided, I do not like to leave a game unfinished.

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