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Creating safer workplaces: assessing the determinants and role of safety climate

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Abstract

Problem: Although there has been considerable interest in safety climate, relatively little attention has been given to the factors that determine safety climate or to testing the hypothesized mediating role of safety climate with respect to safety-related outcomes.

Method: Questionnaire responses were obtained from 2,208 employees of a large national retail chain in 21 different locations. *Results:* After controlling for demographic variables, three factors: environmental conditions, safety-related policies and programs, and general organizational climate, accounted for 55% of the variance in perceived safety climate. Interestingly, organizational climate made a significant contribution to safety climate, even after controlling for the other more safety-relevant variables. Partial correlations showed that safety policies and programs had the largest observed correlation with safety climate, followed by two of the dimensions of organizational climate (communication and organizational support). Using Baron and Kenny's (J. Pers.

Soc. Psychol. 51 (1986) 1173) procedures, the principal effects of the various work situation factors on perceived safety at work were found to be direct rather than mediated by safety climate. Safety climate influenced perceived safety at work, but its role as a mediator was limited. *Impact on industry:* These results are discussed in terms of other recent findings on safety climate and the growing interest in understanding management and organizational factors in the context of workplace safety.



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Keywords

Safety climate; Organizational climate; Safety management; Safety performance; Safety attitudes

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