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The Differential Effect of Management & Union Responses to Each Other on Employee Attitudes: A Scenario-Based Experimental Approach

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CVIR Model of Union Impact

- ▶ monopoly versus voice face (Freeman & Medoff, 1984)
 - Conflicting empirical results and black-box approach (Addison & Belfield, 2004)
- ▶ key proposition: which face would prevail depends on management and union's responses to each other
 - Subsequent empirical research has virtually ignored this proposition (Bryson, Charlwood and Forth, 2006)



Previous Research

- ▶ Co-operative labor relations climates
 - Positive impact on both union & org outcomes such as dual commitment (Deery, Iverson & colleagues, 1999; 2005; Katz, Kochan & colleagues, 1983; 1985)
 - Antecedents include sharing information, integrative bargaining approach, procedural justice (Deery & Iverson, 2005)
 - Employees face less role conflict in cooperative labour relations environments (Angle & Perry, 1986)
- ▶ Union loyalty and org commitment share few common antecedents (Barling, Wade & Fullagar, 1990)



Limitations of Previous Research

- ▶ Climate research has not been properly reconciled with CVIR model (Pohler, 2010)
- ▶ Has not examined differential effect of management and union's responses to each other as moderating outcomes
- ▶ Difficult to assess independent effects of management and union responses in field studies (interrelated)
- ▶ Single-organization studies have little variation in measures (e.g., employee perception of climate)
- ▶ Difficult to find willing negative samples



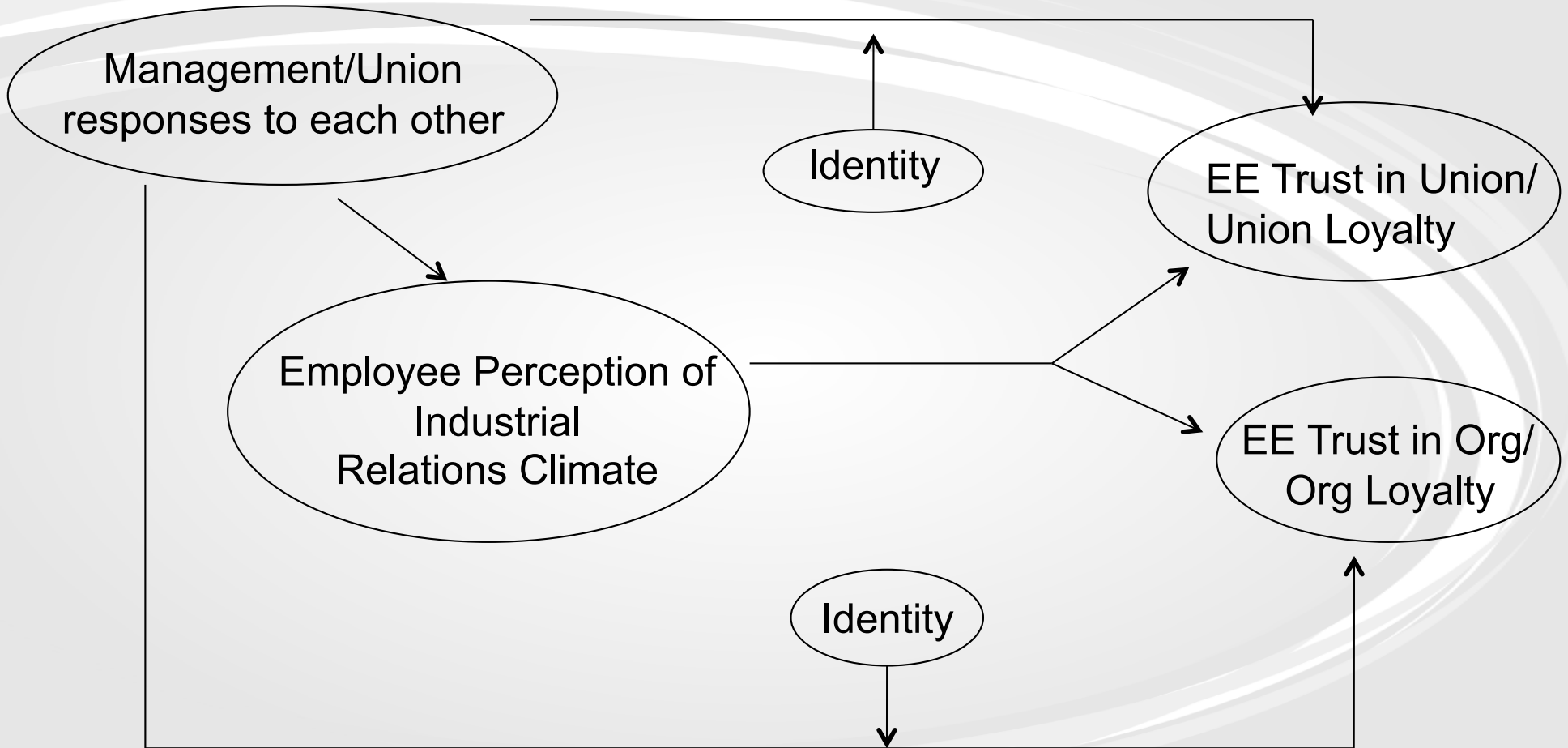
Management's Response

- ▶ recent dissertation research theoretically elaborates upon and empirically tests the moderating effect of management's response on union impact
 - draws upon the appropriateness framework as applied to decision-making in social dilemmas (March, 1994; Weber, Kopelman & Messick, 2004)
 - Environmental cues, identity, rules (norms of reciprocity)
 - the union responds to signals from management about whether to engage in cooperative or competitive behaviour (Pohler, 2010)
 - theoretically develops, but does not empirically address, identity issues or rules of engagement



Research Question

How are individual attitudes toward the union and organization affected when management and/or the union engage in cooperative or competitive behaviour?





Methodology

- ▶ online scenario-based experimental approach
- ▶ Four conditions (between-subjects design)
 - mgmt cooperative/union cooperative
 - mgmt cooperative/union competitive
 - mgmt competitive/union cooperative
 - mgmt competitive/union competitive



Samples

- ▶ pilot tested with University of Alberta MBA students (N=20)
- ▶ members of the Alberta Teacher's Association (N=60)
- ▶ management students at the University of Lethbridge (N=130)
- ▶ members of the ATA report significantly higher belief in unionism (e.g., identify with the union)



Results

- ▶ Management/union responses to each other interact to explain perceptions of industrial relations climate
- ▶ Perceptions of industrial relations climate partially mediate the relationship between management/union responses to each other and employee attitudes
- ▶ Cooperative management (union) responses were positively related to trust in management (union) and loyalty to the organization (union)

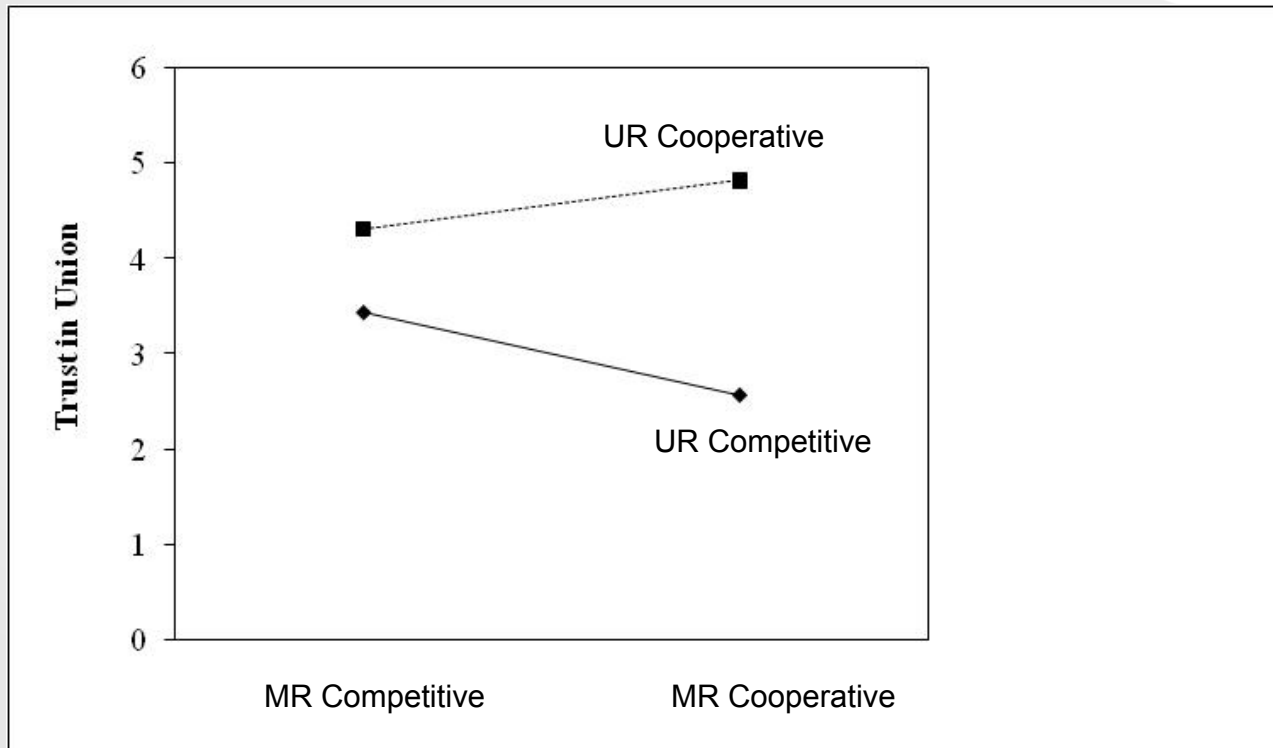


However.....

- ▶ In the management student sample, the interaction between management/union responses to each other was only significant for attitudes toward the union AND
- ▶ In the ATA sample, the interaction between management/union responses to each other was only significant for attitudes toward the organization

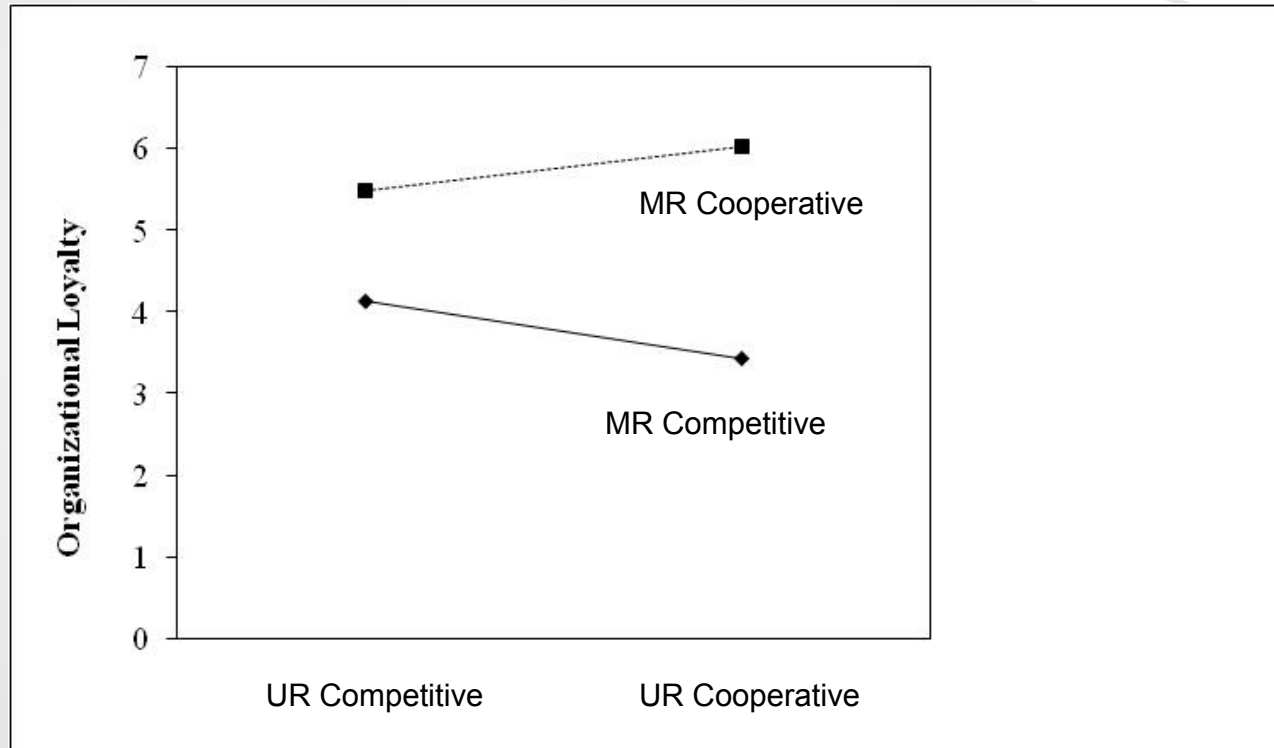


Results – U of L





Results - ATA





Conclusions

- ▶ With few exceptions (Bryson et al., 2006; Pohler, 2010), a paucity of research has explicitly examined management and union's responses to each other
- ▶ Industrial relations climate research does not address the differential effect of management and union's responses to each other, or take into account identity factors
 - e.g., cooperative climate related to increase in both loyalty to union and organization (Angle & Perry, 1986; Deery, Iverson & colleagues)



Limitations & Future Research

- ▶ Internal vs. external validity
- ▶ Collect more data for the union sample
- ▶ Slight differences in scenarios between samples
 - Realism (ATA context)
- ▶ Manipulations grounded in prior theory and research
- ▶ Eventual replication of experiment in field
- ▶ Future research should not examine union impact without concurrently examining management/union responses to each other



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Questions?