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Vasquez, C.A., Holman, D. and Martin, R. (2026) Interpersonal emotion regulation and team effectiveness: a multilevel mediation and a team variation model. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 99 (2). e70129. ISSN: 0963-1798

<https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.70129>

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Interpersonal emotion regulation and team effectiveness: A multilevel mediation and a team variation model

Cristian A. Vasquez¹  | David Holman² | Robin Martin² 

¹Sheffield University Management School, The University of Sheffield, Sheffield, UK

²Alliance Manchester Business School, The University of Manchester, Manchester, UK

Correspondence

Cristian Vasquez, Sheffield University Management School, The University of Sheffield, Conduit Road, S10 1FL Sheffield, UK.
Email: c.vasquez@sheffield.ac.uk

Funding information

Fondo Nacional de Desarrollo Científico y Tecnológico

Abstract

This study examines how team interpersonal emotion regulation (IER) shapes teamwork processes and outcomes. Although the influence of IER in dyadic relationships is well established, its understanding as a collective team-level phenomenon remains unexplored. We propose that teams develop shared regulatory practices comprising antecedent-focused strategies (addressing emotion causes) and response-focused strategies (managing emotional expressions) and that these differentially influence performance via team relationship conflict. Drawing on multisource data from 697 teams of a Latin American financial organization, we find that antecedent-focused IER reduces relationship conflict and enhances leader-rated performance, while response-focused strategies increase conflict without consistent performance effects. Alignment in regulatory perceptions within teams further shapes the conflict-reducing effects of antecedent-focused IER. Our findings extend emotion regulation theory beyond individual and dyadic levels by demonstrating IER as a collective team-level phenomenon and highlight the strategic importance of cultivating both regulatory strategy type and shared understanding of emotional regulation practices in teams.

KEYWORDS

diversity, interpersonal emotion regulation, relationship conflict, team performance, teamwork

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Practitioner points

- Team emotion regulation behaviours are crucial for performance, with shared regulatory practices reducing relationship conflict and improving team outcomes. Organizations should prioritize developing collective emotional management practices.
- The consistency of emotion regulation perceptions across team members matters significantly. Teams with uniform understanding of regulatory behaviours show stronger performance benefits, suggesting the need for alignment in emotional management approaches.
- Shared understanding of how emotions are collectively managed in a team matters as much as the practices themselves: inconsistent views among members weaken conflict-reducing benefits even when overall regulation levels are similar. Leaders can build this alignment through team charters and structured reflections that make regulatory commitments explicit. For example, agreeing to address the causes of a colleague's stress rather than encouraging them to mask it.
- Regular monitoring of team emotion regulation patterns and relationship conflict levels enables targeted interventions, particularly important for teams operating in high-stress environments or requiring intensive collaboration.

Teams constitute fundamental building blocks of contemporary organizations, with their effectiveness depending significantly on members' emotional dynamics and interpersonal relationships (Barsade & Gibson, 2012). Team members continuously shape each other's emotional experiences through daily interactions, using humour to lighten tension, reframing problems or offering encouragement (Barsade et al., 2000; Campo et al., 2016). These behaviours constitute interpersonal emotion regulation (IER; Niven, 2017), the deliberate process of influencing others' emotions. Whether and how teams collectively engage in such regulation has important implications: effective peer regulation can sustain cohesion and prevent conflict, while misaligned or counterproductive regulatory dynamics can fracture relationships and erode performance (Reeck & Onuklu, 2022; Vasquez et al., 2025). Previous research demonstrates that leader IER can significantly influence team outcomes (Little et al., 2016; Madrid et al., 2019; Vasquez et al., 2020), but how team members collectively engage in IER among themselves and how these dynamics influence team effectiveness remains largely unexplored.

Despite the established importance of IER in workplace relationships (Troth et al., 2018) and team effectiveness frameworks (Marks et al., 2001), research has predominantly conceptualized regulatory processes at individual or dyadic levels (Gross, 2015) or within the leadership context (Madrid et al., 2025). However, teams represent a qualitatively different context where lateral peer relationships and shared team identity create distinct conditions for collective regulatory processes (Vasquez et al., 2025). A critical question is not simply whether teams regulate emotions, but *how* collective regulation among peers operates through different mechanisms, and how variations in these collective patterns influence team outcomes.

Studying team IER as a collective phenomenon means attending to two complementary facets that together provide a complete picture. The first concerns strategy type, captured in the overall prevalence of regulatory practices within the team. Adapting Gross's (2015) process model to the team context, we distinguish antecedent-focused IER strategies, which address the causes of emotions, from response-focused IER strategies, which target emotional expressions. At the team level, this reflects a shared tendency to rely on one approach or the other, with distinct relational implications for how members experience and respond to one another. The second facet concerns alignment: whether team members share a common understanding of these practices or diverge in how they enact them. Together, these facets capture both what teams tend to do and how consistently those practices are shared, such that the same overall pattern of practice may yield different outcomes depending on the degree of alignment within the team.

To examine how collective emotion regulation operates in teams, we investigate: (1) whether team antecedent-focused and response-focused IER strategies differentially relate to team relationship conflict; (2) to what extent team relationship conflict mediates the association between team IER and team performance; and (3) how within-team configurations in members' shared perceptions of regulatory practices moderate these relationships. To address these questions, we propose a comprehensive multilevel model (Figure 1). We draw on extensions of the Emotions-as-Social-Information (EASI) framework (Madrid et al., 2019; van Kleef, 2009) to explain how antecedent-focused and response-focused IER strategies differentially affect team performance through relationship conflict, and on configuration perspectives to examine how within-team variation in regulatory perceptions moderates these effects (DeRue et al., 2010; Loignon et al., 2019). Using data from 697 teams, we employ multilevel structural equation modelling (MSEM) to test mediation relationships and latent profile analysis (LPA) to identify distinct within-team configurations of regulatory perceptions.

Our research makes four contributions. First, we extend emotion regulation theory (Gross, 2015; Reeck et al., 2016) to the team level by demonstrating that IER operates as a collective, strategy-based process with observable implications for team functioning. This cross-level extension positions IER not only as an individual or dyadic phenomenon but as a shared regulatory practice shaped by lateral relationships and team norms, allowing us to unpack Marks et al.'s (2001) broad affect management

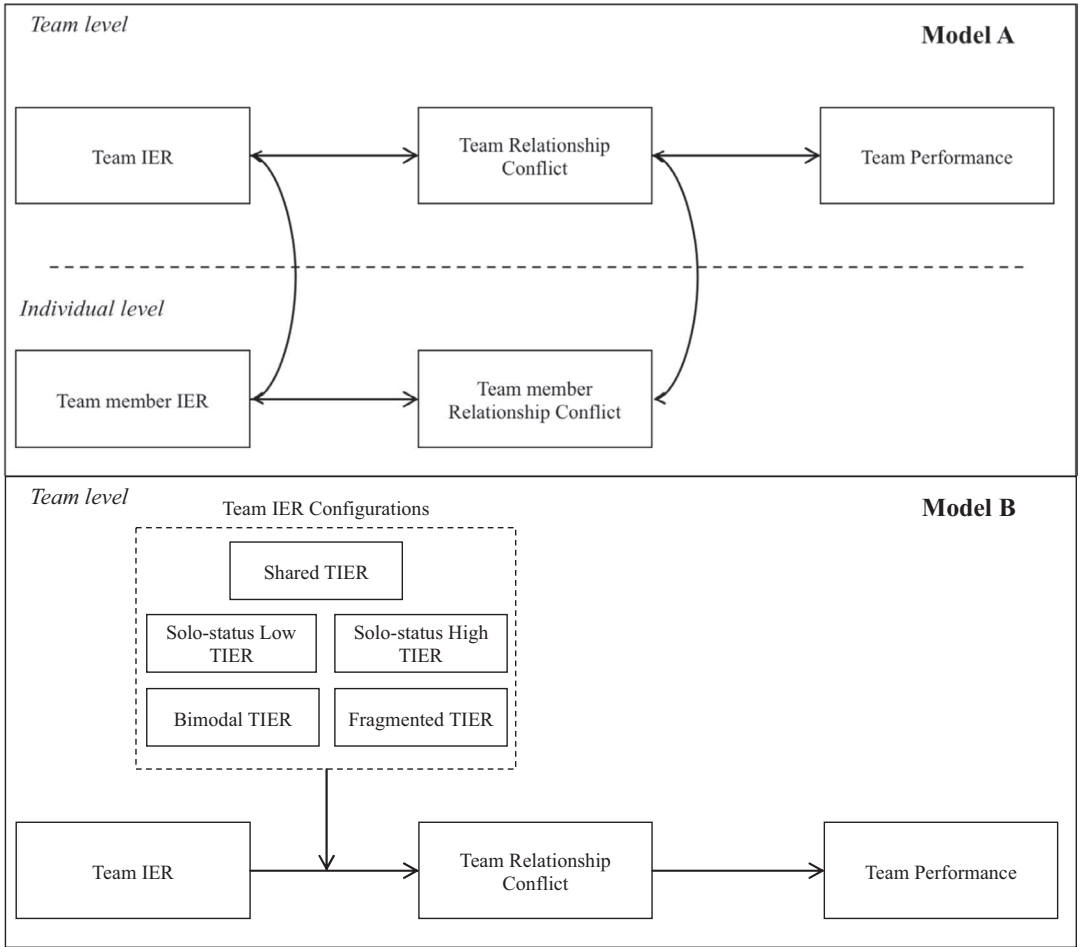


FIGURE 1 Theoretical models of the study. Model A: multilevel mediation model. Model B: moderated mediation model.

construct into its underlying regulatory processes. Second, we reveal an asymmetric pattern in how antecedent- and response-focused IER strategies shape relationship conflict and team performance, demonstrating that the effectiveness of collective emotion regulation depends critically on strategy type. In doing so, we advance IER theory and contribute a novel regulatory mechanism to the conflict management literature. Third, we demonstrate that within-team configurational patterns serve as a meaningful boundary condition on these strategy effects, extending configuration theory (DeRue et al., 2010; Loignon et al., 2019) to collective emotion regulation and providing a more precise analytical treatment of collective processes than traditional aggregation approaches (Chan, 1998; Martin et al., 2018). Finally, we offer actionable guidance for developing team-level emotion regulation capabilities through multilevel interventions targeting both strategy use and shared regulatory understanding across leaders and team members.

THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT AND HYPOTHESES

Team interpersonal emotion regulation

IER refers to the process through which individuals deliberately influence others' emotional states (Niven, 2017), including making others laugh during tense situations, listening to colleagues' problems or providing advice to help them feel better. In organizational contexts, IER research has evolved along two trajectories: peer-to-peer workplace interactions where coworkers regulate colleagues' emotions (Troth et al., 2018), and leadership influence processes examining how managers shape team members' emotional states (Little et al., 2016; Naughton et al., 2024; Vasquez et al., 2020). Teamwork scholars have also examined related processes under labels such as *team affect management* (Marks et al., 2001; Mathieu et al., 2019), yet these streams have not been formally integrated. While emerging qualitative evidence suggests that teams do engage in collective emotion regulatory practices (Campo et al., 2016; Kazemitabar et al., 2024), systematic investigation of team-level IER in workplace settings remains limited and a precise conceptualization of team-level IER has yet to be offered.

We define Team IER as members' collective efforts to influence each other's emotional states within team contexts. Drawing from Gross's (1998, 2015) process model, team members may employ *antecedent-focused IER strategies* that shape emotional experiences before they fully develop (e.g. using humour to prevent stress, adjusting workloads, reframing problems) and *response-focused IER strategies* that modify emotional expressions after they emerge (e.g. encouraging emotional suppression during social interactions). Consistent with a referent-shift composition model (Chan, 1998), Team IER is conceptualized at the team level as shared perceptions of how members collectively engage in these regulatory behaviours (e.g. 'in this team, members try to modify situations that cause negative emotions in colleagues'), rather than individuals' personal experiences of being regulated.

We propose that these collective processes of managing emotions will emerge in teams for three reasons (Vasquez et al., 2025). First, social learning processes enable team members to observe and reinforce effective emotion regulation strategies, creating convergent behavioural patterns (Wright et al., 2024). Second, reciprocal emotion regulation interactions establish team-wide norms of mutual emotional care with emotional challenges becoming communally owned (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Lyons et al., 1998). Finally, as members identify with the team, they internalize collective regulatory practices as 'how we as a team handle emotions together' (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Importantly, this conceptualization captures the extent to which emotion regulation behaviours are characteristic of the team as a whole, rather than individuals' own actions or dyadic exchanges. Team IER can, therefore, be understood as a shared team property (Marks et al., 2001; Mathieu et al., 2008), reflecting convergent views of collective regulatory practices.

Furthermore, our conceptualization explicitly distinguishes Team IER from related constructs. Unlike coworker support (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008) or team-member exchange (Seers et al., 1995),

which capture the quality or availability of supportive relationships, Team IER refers specifically to intentional attempts to influence others' emotional states during interactions. It also differs from team emotional intelligence, which reflects capabilities rather than enacted regulatory behaviours (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005; Chang et al., 2012). While related to team affect management (Marks et al., 2001), Team IER focuses more narrowly on deliberate interpersonal regulation of discrete emotional states, distinguishing between antecedent- and response-focused strategies.

Team IER and team relationship conflict

Team conflict has been defined as the process resulting from perceived incompatibilities and disagreements among team members (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008). Although scholars have identified multiple types of conflict in teams (e.g. task, relationship and process conflict), we focus specifically on relationship conflict due to its significant emotional component (Yang & Mossholder, 2004) and its consistently negative impact on team functioning (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Team relationship conflict is characterized by interpersonal friction, frustration, and personality clashes between team members (Rispens, 2014), making it particularly relevant to examining the influence of emotion regulation processes.

We propose that team antecedent-focused and response-focused IER strategies have opposing effects on relationship conflict because they communicate fundamentally different relational signals. Specifically, van Kleef's (2009) EASI theory asserts that emotional behaviours convey information about a person's goals and attitudes, and that others use this information to make inferences and attributions about the person's intentions towards them. Based on this, Madrid et al. (2019) and Niven et al. (2019) argue that individual IER acts serve similar communicative functions, with antecedent IER signalling benevolent concern for the recipient, whereas response-focused strategies signal a lack of concern or interest. Accordingly, because team antecedent-focused IER strategies involve a collective effort to deal with the cause of team members' negative emotions, they signal a team-wide care and support for others' well-being. In contrast, response-focused IER strategies, which target emotional expression rather than underlying causes, tend to communicate indifference towards others' feelings.

Over time, repeated regulatory exchanges accumulate into stable interpersonal cycles that shape how teams respond when interpersonal tensions arise (Horowitz et al., 2006; Locke & Sadler, 2007). Antecedent-focused regulatory exchanges foster patterns of mutual engagement and care, in which emotional challenges are treated as shared problems (Lyons et al., 1998). For instance, when team members consistently help one another reframe situations, use humour to shift perspective or direct attention towards more constructive aspects of a problem, they reduce the likelihood that negative interpretations take hold, preventing tensions from escalating into relationship conflict and fostering more open engagement around emerging disagreements.

Response-focused exchanges, by contrast, tend to generate cycles of defensiveness and withdrawal. For instance, when team members regularly discourage the expression of negative emotions, ask others to 'stay positive', or minimize emotional reactions, these behaviours can be experienced as invalidating, increasing emotional reactivity and leaving underlying issues unaddressed (Shenk & Fruzzetti, 2011). Over time, this undermines shared ownership of problems and allows tensions to accumulate, making conflict more likely and more difficult to resolve.

Empirical evidence supports these theoretical mechanisms. In leadership contexts, Little et al. (2016) found that problem-focused strategies (analogous to antecedent-focused IER) were positively related to relationship quality through benevolent attributions, whereas emotion-focused strategies (analogous to response-focused IER) undermined it through attributions of apathy. Similarly, Madrid et al. (2019) showed that affect-improving leader IER was positively associated with team positive affective tone while affect-worsening IER increased team negative affective tone, highlighting the affective pathway through which IER shapes team relational dynamics. Research on team emotion further shows that addressing emotion causes improves conflict management (Jiang et al., 2013; Liu & Liu, 2013).

Additionally, response-focused strategies may place greater cognitive demands on team members (Gross, 2015), potentially limiting their capacity for constructive conflict resolution.

We note that response-focused strategies may serve prosocial functions in specific instances, for example, a one-off suggestion to ‘keep calm for now’ might be contextually appropriate. However, our argument concerns collective perception as a prevalent team pattern: teams in which antecedent-focused IER predominates are likely to develop shared patterns of relational care and trust that suppress conflict, whereas teams characterized by response-focused IER are more likely to develop climates of emotional invalidation that generate it. It is at this collective level that our hypotheses operate. Based on these converging theoretical mechanisms and empirical evidence, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1. Team antecedent-focused IER will be negatively related to team relationship conflict.

Hypothesis 2. Team response-focused IER will be positively related to team relationship conflict.

Team IER, team conflict and team performance

Effective team performance requires both task accomplishment and emotional coordination (Barsade & Gibson, 2012; Marks et al., 2001). Team performance, defined as the extent to which a team accomplishes its goals and produces required outputs (Bell, 2007), depends on multiple factors. However, relationship conflict consistently undermines team effectiveness (de Wit et al., 2012) by disrupting social integration and information processing, as members divert energy towards managing interpersonal tensions rather than task completion (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003).

We propose that team IER strategies indirectly influence team performance through their effects on relationship conflict. This mediation rests on the well-established finding that relationship conflict depletes the cognitive and emotional resources teams need for effective task coordination (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; de Wit et al., 2012), consistent with conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 2011). When interpersonal tensions are low, teams can focus their collective resources on task coordination and goal accomplishment. When conflict is high, these same resources are consumed by managing interpersonal friction (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003).

Empirical evidence supports this across multiple contexts. At the dyadic level, Little et al. (2016) demonstrated that leader IER strategies influence follower performance through enhanced relationship quality, with problem-focused strategies showing positive effects and emotion-focused strategies showing negative effects. This pattern extends to team contexts: leader IER shapes team innovation (Madrid et al., 2019) and follower effectiveness (Vasquez et al., 2020) through relational mechanisms. Qualitative evidence from sports teams (Campo et al., 2016; Tamminen & Crocker, 2013) and student project teams (Kazemitabar et al., 2024) shows that collective emotion regulation enhances team functioning through improved interpersonal dynamics. In organizational settings, team emotional capabilities enhance performance through improved trust, collaboration and interpersonal tension management (Barczak et al., 2010; Jiang et al., 2013).

Building on the mechanisms established in the previous section, team antecedent-focused IER strategies are expected to enhance performance indirectly by reducing relationship conflict. By treating emotional challenges as shared team problems, these strategies preserve the cognitive and emotional resources teams need for effective task coordination and goal accomplishment (Hobfoll, 2011), with Reeck and Onuklu (2022) providing direct evidence that antecedent-focused IER enhances outcome quality by improving relational dynamics. Conversely, team response-focused IER strategies are expected to impair performance through two reinforcing pathways: by increasing relationship conflict, which diverts collective resources towards managing interpersonal friction, and by directly depleting the cognitive resources required for both emotional control and task execution (Gross, 2015). Richards

et al. (2003) found that suppression-focused regulation reduced social functioning and increased physiological arousal, confirming this dual burden on performance. Based on these theoretical mechanisms and empirical evidence, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 3. Team relationship conflict will mediate the positive relationship between team antecedent-focused IER strategies and team performance.

Hypothesis 4. Team relationship conflict will mediate the negative relationship between team response-focused IER strategies and team performance.

Moderating role of team IER configurations

Having established how team IER operates at the team-mean level, we now ask whether the way in which IER is distributed across team members shapes those effects. Team members may vary in their perceptions of others' IER behaviours (Harrison & Klein, 2007), and examining the shape of these distributions, rather than simply their dispersion, reveals how social categorizations manifest in regulatory patterns, for example, whether teams split into subgroups, are dominated by a majority, or show more fragmented patterns (DeRue et al., 2010; Loignon et al., 2019). Drawing from DeRue et al.'s (2010) theoretical framework, we introduce the concept of *Team IER configurations*, defined as the patterns of heterogeneity in members' perceptions of team IER. These configurations represent distinct social realities that emerge through team members' collective sensemaking of emotion regulation within the team (Weick et al., 2005).

As illustrated in Figure 2, we identify four prototypical configurations. *Shared configurations* (Figure 2a) reflect strong social identification, characterized by uniform agreement across all team members, indicating well-integrated regulatory norms. *Minority belief configurations* (Figure 2b) emerge when social comparison processes create distinct outlier perspectives, manifesting as *solo-status low* or *solo-status high*, depending on whether outlier members perceive higher or lower regulation levels relative to the majority. *Bimodal configurations* (Figure 2c) represent social faultlines (Lau & Murnighan, 2005), where team members form opposing subgroups creating a polarized team environment. Finally, *fragmented configurations* (Figure 2d) indicate weak social integration, with progressively varied individual perceptions suggesting limited collective understanding of regulation practices and an absence of shared mental models.

Team IER configurations, team conflict and team performance

We propose that team IER configurations shape the relationship between team IER and subsequent conflict, with downstream implications for team performance. When team members share a common vision of regulatory practices, they develop a unified social identity centred around mutual emotional support (Kelly, 1993), strengthening team IER's conflict-reducing effects by fostering coordinated emotional management (Lewis, 2011). Research consistently supports this logic: uneven distributions impair team performance (De Jong & Dirks, 2012), aligned team perceptions enhance communication and reduce conflict (González-Romá & Hernández, 2014) and convergence in regulatory approaches has been linked to lower emotional exhaustion and higher job satisfaction and performance (Becker & Cropanzano, 2015). Loignon et al.'s (2019) pattern-based approach further supports examining these distributional effects by showing that different configurations of team conflict, cohesion and satisfaction are associated with future collaboration intentions. Conversely, non-uniform configurations may weaken team effects on outcomes through social categorization processes. When subgroups form around differing perceptions of regulatory behaviours, intergroup bias can emerge, threatening team identity (Hogg & Terry, 2000) and increasing relationship conflict (Jehn et al., 2007). This effect may

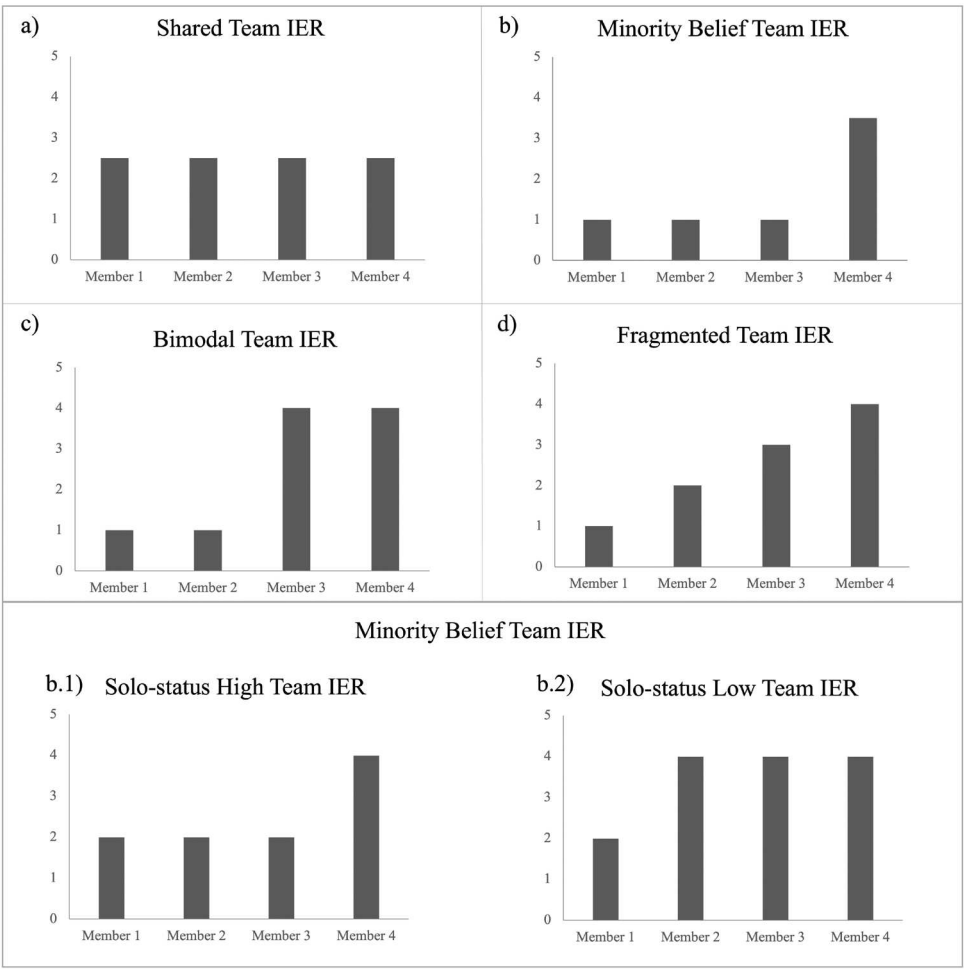


FIGURE 2 Team interpersonal emotion regulation (IER) configurations: (a) Shared configuration shows uniform agreement across members; (b) minority belief configuration depicts one member (Member 4) with distinctly higher perception; (c) bimodal configuration illustrates two opposing subgroups (Members 1–2 vs. Members 3–4); and (d) fragmented configuration demonstrates gradual variation with no clear pattern of agreement.

be strongest in bimodal configurations, where rival subgroups hold opposing views of team reality—dynamics that not only exacerbate conflict but also impair the coordination necessary for effective performance (Carton & Cummings, 2012). As such, shared configurations may strengthen the indirect path from team IER to performance via reduced conflict, whereas non-uniform configurations may undermine the social integration needed for collective performance (de Wit et al., 2012; Jehn et al., 2007) and weaken this indirect path.

Our moderation analysis focuses specifically on team antecedent-focused IER strategies as these are theoretically most sensitive to configurational variation. Because antecedent-focused strategies involve proactively shaping the emotional context *before* responses occur, their effectiveness depends heavily on shared team understanding; members must interpret and enact regulatory cues in a coordinated way for these strategies to succeed. This makes antecedent-focused IER particularly well suited for testing whether configurational alignment amplifies or attenuates the relationship between constructive emotion management and team outcomes. Formally:

Hypothesis 5. Team IER configurations moderate the indirect effect of team antecedent-focused IER on team performance via team relationship conflict, such that the positive indirect effect is stronger for teams with a shared configuration than for teams with heterogeneous configurations (solo-status low, solo-status high, bimodal and fragmented).

METHODS

Sample and procedure

We conducted the present study in a multinational Latin American financial organization with employees working in administrative, sales and operational teams. Upon receiving approval from the human resource directors, a link to the online questionnaire was distributed to employees via the company's intranet. Participants were provided with information about the study's purpose and procedures on the first page of the questionnaire and indicated their informed consent before proceeding with the survey. To reduce common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2012), we employed a two-source data collection strategy: team members reported on team processes, while team leaders rated team performance 2 weeks later. Research demonstrates that conflict is dynamic and can vary meaningfully over short periods within teams (Goncalo et al., 2010; Jehn & Mannix, 2001), suggesting that a 2-week separation is sufficient to capture meaningful variation in team dynamics. All measures were translated from English to Spanish following Brislin's (1970) back-translation procedure.

From an initial pool of 9195 respondents in 1423 teams, we received responses from 7135 team members (77.60%) and 1196 leaders (84.05%). After matching team member and leader responses and excluding teams with intra-team response rates below 60% (Timmerman, 2005), our final sample comprised 4659 employees in 697 teams. Teams averaged 9.05 members ($SD = 4.76$, range = 3–20). Team members were 58% female with a mean age of 34 years ($SD = 8.87$) and average job tenure of 13 years ($SD = 7.01$). Participants represented administrative (37.1%), technical (9.0%), professional (39.5%) and managerial/executive (14.4%) positions.

Measures

Team interpersonal emotion regulation

We measured this construct using 12 items adapted from the Interpersonal Emotion Management Scale (Little et al., 2012), modified to reference team context rather than leaders. Participants reported the frequency with which team members engage in various strategies when a teammate experiences negative emotions, using a five-point scale (1 = 'Never/Almost never' to 5 = 'Very Frequently'). We included items representing antecedent-focused IER strategies: situation modification (e.g. 'team members try to modify the characteristics of a situation that is causing negative emotions in a colleague'), attentional deployment (e.g. 'team members distract their colleague's attention from the issue causing them negative emotions') and cognitive change (e.g. 'team members give them advice to try to make them feel better'). In addition, one sub-dimension represents *response-focused IER strategies*: Response modulation (e.g. 'team members suggest to their colleagues that they do not express negative emotions').

Team IER configurations

We operationalized this construct by creating categories based on team members' IER scores. Following DeRue et al. (2010), we used the four distribution moments (mean, SD, skewness and kurtosis) to identify patterns. We employed two complementary techniques: LPA to identify

non-uniform distributions (solo-status low, solo-status high, bimodal and fragmented) following Seo et al. (2017), and the rWG approach to identify shared (uniform) configurations that LPA cannot detect (details below).

Team relationship conflict

Team leaders rated their teams using three items from Jehn's (1994) relationship conflict subscale (e.g. 'There is friction among members') on a five-point scale (1 = 'Strongly disagree' to 5 = 'Strongly agree').

Leader-rated team performance

Team leaders rated their teams using three items from Kirkman and Rosen's (1999) team productivity subscale (e.g. 'The team completes its tasks on time') on a five-point scale (1 = 'Strongly disagree' to 5 = 'Strongly agree').

Control variables

We controlled for team members' interaction frequency (single item: 'How many times do you interact with your team colleagues?' 1 = 'Almost never' to 5 = 'Every day') and team size. These variables were included on the assumption that team constructs might be more sensitive and have stronger effects if members frequently interact with each other and because a larger number of team members might lead to reduced opportunities for social interactions and increase team heterogeneity (Aubé et al., 2011).

Data analysis strategy

Multilevel mediation model

Our analysis strategy involved three steps. We employed multilevel analysis rather than traditional aggregation because this approach appropriately accounts for the nested data structure (individuals within teams) while simultaneously preserving both within-team and between-team variance (Klein & Kozlowski, 2000). Unlike aggregation approaches that collapse individual scores into team means (thereby discarding within-team variance information), multilevel modelling retains individual-level data and partitions variance into within-team components (reflecting individual differences in perceptions) and between-team components (reflecting true team-level differences). This provides more accurate parameter estimates and standard errors while reducing the risk of ecological fallacies (Bliese et al., 2020; Preacher et al., 2010).

This multilevel approach is particularly appropriate for team constructs like team IER and team conflict, which are theorized to operate at the team level through emergent processes while originating from individual perceptions. As established in our theoretical framework, Team IER emerges as a shared team-level phenomenon through convergent mechanisms including social learning processes whereby team members observe and adopt similar regulatory strategies (Wright et al., 2024), social exchange processes creating reciprocal patterns of mutual emotional care (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), communal ownership where emotional challenges become jointly addressed (Lyons et al., 1998), and shared identity processes whereby members internalize collective regulatory practices (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Vasquez et al., 2025). However, these emergence processes do not eliminate individual variation in perceptions; rather, they create team-level patterns while individuals retain unique perspectives shaped by their specific experiences and positions within the team. Multilevel modelling captures both dynamics

simultaneously: the between-team variance reflects the emerged team-level construct, while within-team variance reflects legitimate individual differences in perceiving team regulatory practices.

To establish that sufficient between-team variance existed to justify examining team-level relationships, we assessed inter-rater reliability (IRR) using intra-class correlation (ICC) indices and inter-rater agreement (IRA) using *r*WG and Average Deviation (AD) indices (Biemann et al., 2012; Lebreton & Senter, 2008). As reported in the Results section, ICC values exceeded the .10 threshold (Bliese et al., 2007) and *r*WG values indicated moderate to high agreement, demonstrating that sufficient team-level variance existed alongside individual-level variance.

Second, we conducted Multilevel Confirmatory Factor Analyses (MCFAs) using standard fit indices (CFI and TLI >.95, RMSEA <.05, SRMR <.08; Hooper et al., 2008). We tested a seven-factor model with team antecedent-focused IER strategies as a second-order latent factor (comprising situation modification, attentional deployment, and cognitive change), response-focused IER strategies, team relationship conflict (each modelled at both Level 1 and Level 2), and team performance (Level 2 only).

Third, we used MSEM to test relationships across levels of analysis, following Preacher et al.'s (2010) recommendations. We positioned team IER as the predictor in our two-level mediation model (levels 1 and 2), team relationship conflict as the mediator (levels 1 and 2), and team performance as the outcome (level 2). Level 1 represents within-team variance (individual members' perceptions of team regulatory practices and conflict within the same team), while Level 2 represents between-team variance (differences in average regulatory practices and conflict across teams). Team performance was modelled only at Level 2 because it was measured as a single leader rating per team, with no within-team variance to model. We estimated indirect effects using the Monte Carlo method with 20,000 replications (Preacher & Selig, 2012). All multilevel analyses were conducted using Mplus 8.4 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2019).

Team IER configurations: Moderated mediation model

For the configuration analyses, we included only teams with complete responses from all members ($N=309$ teams, 100% response rate; average team size = 5.67, $SD=3.30$). Complete-team data are essential for configuration analysis because the addition or removal of even one member can fundamentally alter the observed distribution pattern, and incomplete teams might introduce systematic bias if non-respondents differ from respondents (Rogelberg et al., 2003).

We employed two complementary techniques to identify configuration patterns. First, we used LPA to identify non-uniform distributions based on the four distribution moments (mean, SD , skewness, and kurtosis) of team members' antecedent-focused IER scores. Following established procedures (Marsh et al., 2009; Seo et al., 2017), we estimated models from 2-profile through 7-profile solutions and evaluated each using multiple criteria: (1) theoretical interpretability and distinctiveness of profiles, (2) statistical fit indices (AIC, BIC, SABIC), (3) entropy (>.80 indicates good classification; Muthén, 2004), and (4) Bootstrap Likelihood Ratio Test (BLRT; significant values favour the k -profile over $k-1$ -profile model; significant across all profile solutions).

Second, because LPA cannot detect uniform configurations where all members hold identical perceptions, we complemented it with the *r*WG approach. Following Lebreton and Senter (2008) null distribution comparisons, teams were classified as shared if *r*WG values exceeded .70 across all five theoretical null distributions (slightly skewed, heavily skewed, normal, uniform, and bimodal), indicating high within-team agreement that refutes all comparison distributions (DeRue et al., 2010; Li & Liao, 2014). LPA was conducted using Mplus 8.4 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2019).

Analytical approach for configuration hypotheses

After identifying configurations, we employed aggregation rather than multilevel modelling due to the analytical complexity introduced by the categorical configuration moderator and the reduced sample of complete teams. Unlike continuous IER variables, configurations represent discrete categories

TABLE 1 Intraclass correlation coefficient, average deviation and rWG indices.

Variable	ICC (1)	ICC (2)	AD	Range AD	rWG	Range rWG
Team situation modification IER strategies	.12	.53	.70	[.00, 1.67]	.64	[.00, 1.00]
Team attentional deployment IER strategies	.12	.53	.68	[.00, 1.58]	.66	[.00, 1.00]
Team cognitive change IER strategies	.11	.52	.64	[.00, 1.56]	.70	[.00, 1.00]
Team response modulation IER strategies	.10	.73	.85	[.00, 1.78]	.48	[.00, 1.00]
Team relationship conflict	.24	.73	.63	[.00, 1.56]	.71	[.00, 1.00]

Note: $N = 4659$ employees, 697 teams. Values of average deviation $< .80$ and $rWG > .70$ are indicative of good agreement. Team antecedent-focused IER strategies (team situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change). Team response-focused IER strategies (Team response modulation).

requiring complex cross-level interactions in a multilevel framework. Therefore, we aggregated individual scores to the team level based on IRR and IRA analyses and tested hypotheses using path analysis with observed variables. Variables were grand-centred to reduce multicollinearity (Aiken & West, 1991; Hofmann & Gavin, 1998).

Team IER configurations were dummy coded ($n-1$ codes) with the shared configuration as reference. Following Hayes and Montoya (2017), we estimated four models: Models 1–2 showing direct effects on team relationship conflict, and Models 3–4 showing how the predictor's effect differs between configurations. We calculated indirect effects for moderated mediation models using 95% confidence intervals with 1000 bootstraps (Edwards & Lambert, 2007). Analyses were conducted using the PROCESS macro version 3.5 (Hayes, 2013) for SPSS.

RESULTS

Team IER: Multilevel mediation model

Before testing our hypotheses, we verified that sufficient team-level variance existed in our key constructs. As shown in Table 1, IRR and agreement analyses demonstrated that ratings of all team-level variables were dependent on team membership. ICC values exceeded the .10 threshold (Bliese et al., 2007), and rWG and AD values indicated moderate to high agreement in team members' ratings of Team IER (antecedent- and response-focused strategies) and relationship conflict, demonstrating that team members within the same team generally shared similar perceptions of their team's regulatory practices while still retaining individual-level variation captured in our multilevel models. These findings support examination of these constructs at the team level.

Next, we conducted confirmatory factor analysis to assess the discriminant validity of our measures. A seven-factor model comprising a second-order factor of team antecedent-focused IER strategies (situation modification, attentional deployment, and cognitive change), team response-focused IER strategies, team relationship conflict (each at both Level 1 and 2), and team performance (Level 2) showed excellent fit: $\chi^2 (309) = 1573.60$, CFI = .98, TLI = .98, RMSEA = .03, SRMR_within = .02, SRMR_between = .06. This model was significantly better than an alternative four-factor solution in which all antecedent-focused IER strategies loaded onto a single factor: $\chi^2 (297) = 8469.07$, CFI = .89, TLI = .88, RMSEA = .08, SRMR_within = .08, SRMR_between = .18, $\Delta\chi^2 (12) = 6895.47$, $p < .01$. Table 2 presents descriptive statistics and correlations for all study variables.

Table 3 presents the MSEM results for our hypothesized relationships at the between-team level. Hypothesis 1 predicted that team antecedent-focused IER strategies would be negatively related to team

TABLE 2 Correlation matrix.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Team performance	4.09	.64	(.97)	-.32*	.20*	.22*	.24*	-.03
2. Team relationship conflict	2.12	.94	—	(.91)	-.56*	-.58*	-.58*	.07
3. Team situation modification IER strategies	3.42	.99	—	-.44*	(.92)	.82*	.81*	.16*
4. Team attentional deployment IER strategies	3.66	.98	—	-.48*	.73*	(.93)	.87*	.20*
5. Team cognitive change IER strategies	3.64	.93	—	-.46*	.71*	.80*	(.94)	.23*
6. Team response modulation IER strategies	2.74	1.15	—	.01	.20*	.22*	.26*	(.92)

Note: Numbers in parenthesis indicate reliability of scales. Values below and above the diagonal represent individual- and team-level correlations, respectively. $N = 4659$ employees, 697 teams. Team antecedent-focused IER strategies (team situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change). Team response-focused IER strategies (Team response modulation).

* $p < .01$.

TABLE 3 Multilevel structural equation modelling for team antecedent- and response-focused strategies, team conflict and team performance.

Variable	Team relationship conflict		Team performance	
	Within	Between	Within	Between
Control				
Team size	—	.20 (.04)**	—	-.09 (.05)
Member interaction frequency	.04 (.01)**	.01 (.00)**		.03 (.10)
Direct effect				
Team antecedent-focused IER strategies	-.55 (.02)**	-.76 (.05)**	—	.15 (.13)
Team response-focused IER strategies	.06 (.02)**	.02 (.01)**	—	.06 (.08)
Team relationship conflict				-.32 (.12)*
R^2 model				.22 (.05)**
Indirect effect				
Team antecedent-focused IER strategies				.38 (.15)*
Team response-focused IER strategies				-.01 (.01)*
Indirect effect (Monte Carlo = 20,000) [CI 95%]				
Team antecedent-focused IER strategies				[.10, .61]*
Team response-focused IER strategies				[-.02, .00]

Note: $N = 4659$ employees, 697 teams.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

relationship conflict. The results showed a significant negative relationship ($\gamma = -.76, p < .01$),¹ supporting Hypothesis 1 and indicating that high levels of team antecedent-focused strategies are associated with low levels of team relationship conflict. Hypothesis 2 predicted that team response-focused IER strategies would be positively related to team relationship conflict. The results showed a significant positive relationship ($\gamma = .02, p < .01$), supporting Hypothesis 2 and indicating that high levels of team response-focused strategies are associated with elevated team relationship conflict.

¹As Hypotheses 1 and 2 are about team-level effects, only between levels are reported.

TABLE 4 Fit indices for latent profile analyses (LPA).

LPA models	AIC	BIC	SABIC	Entropy	LL
1-Profile					
2-Profile	5092.088	5150.368	5109.093	.548	−2591.924
3-Profile	4874.702	4955.398	4898.248	.84	−2533.044
4-Profile	4811.716	4914.828	4841.803	.791	−2419.351
5-Profile	4761.256	4886.783	4797.883	.821	−2382.858
6-Profile	4715.844	4863.786	4759.011	.803	−2352.628
7-Profile	4666.451	4836.809	4716.159	.812	−2315.727

Note: Bold values indicate the selected profile solution.

Abbreviations: AIC, Akaike information criterion; BIC, Bayesian information criterion; BLRT, Bootstrap likelihood ratio test, a parametric LRT test that adopts resampling methods; Entropy, probability of membership for each group; LL, log-likelihood; SABIC, sample-size adjusted BIC.

TABLE 5 Classification probabilities for the most likely latent class membership.

Profile	<i>n</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Profile 1—Bimodal	23	.87	.072	0	0	.059
Profile 2—Solo-status low	62	.015	.878	0	0	.071
Profile 3—Solo-status high	78	0	0	.945	.055	0
Profile 4—Fragmented A	190	.029	.099	.016	.855	.001
Profile 5—Fragmented B	344	0	.082	0	0	.918

Note: *N* = 697 teams, *n* represent the number of teams in each category. Posterior probabilities are the probability that a group belongs to the assigned profile. The average posterior probabilities (bold values) are associated with the profiles to which groups were assigned.

Regarding the mediating role of relationship conflict, Hypothesis 3 proposed that team relationship conflict would mediate the relationship between team antecedent-focused IER strategies and team performance. The results revealed a significant positive indirect effect ($\gamma = .38, p < .05$, Monte Carlo 95% CI [.10, .61]), supporting Hypothesis 3 and confirming that antecedent-focused strategies enhance team performance through their effect on reducing relationship conflict. For Hypothesis 4, which predicted that team relationship conflict would mediate the relationship between team response-focused IER strategies and team performance, the results showed a negative indirect effect ($\gamma = -.01, p < .05$). However, the Monte Carlo confidence interval included zero (95% CI [−.02, .00]), indicating that the indirect effect was not robust. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 was not supported, suggesting that the increase in conflict from response-focused strategies did not consistently translate into performance effects.

Team IER configurations: Moderated mediation model

Identification of team IER configurations

Using the subsample of 309 complete teams, LPA model comparison revealed that the 5-configuration solution provided the most parsimonious fit aligned with our theoretical framework. While fit indices supported 5-, 6-, and 7-configuration models, the 5-configuration solution demonstrated high average posterior probabilities (.87–.95), indicating well-defined and distinctive profiles (Morin et al., 2016; see Tables 4 and 5).

The LPA identified four non-uniform configurations: Solo-status high (one member perceives substantially higher IER than others), solo-status low (one member perceives substantially lower IER), bimodal (two distinct subgroups with opposing perceptions), and two fragmented subtypes (see Table 6). Both fragmented subtypes reflect diffuse within-team disagreement but differ in their distributional

TABLE 6 Descriptive statistics for five interpersonal emotion regulation (IER) antecedent-focused configurations.

Profile	<i>n</i>	Mean	SD	Skw	Kur
Profile 1—Bimodal	23	3.62	.547	−.08	−4.29
Profile 2—Solo-status low	62	3.60	.733	−1.75	3.76
Profile 3—Solo-status high	78	3.68	.547	1.38	2.29
Profile 4—Fragmented A	190	3.52	.844	−1.01	1.04
Profile 5—Fragmented B	343	3.56	.742	−.03	−.81

Note: *N* = 697, *n* represents the number of teams in each category. Mean = corresponds to average values of team IER. Abbreviations: Kur, Kurtosis; SD, standard deviation; Skw, Skewness.

TABLE 7 Teams classified as shared team interpersonal emotion regulation (IER) configuration post rWG approach.

	<i>N</i> previous	<i>N</i> after	%	Cu. %	Team ID
Shared	1	19	2.73%	2.73%	—
Solo-status low	62	57	8.18%	10.90%	e.g. 0403
Solo-status high	78	71	10.19%	21.09%	e.g. 0378
Bimodal	23	22	3.16%	24.25%	e.g. 0467
Fragmented A	190	190	27.26%	51.51%	—
Fragmented B	343	338	48.49%	100.00%	e.g. 0278

Visualization of teams classified as shared team IER



Note: *N* = 697. *N* previous and *N* after = the number of teams previous to and after the rWG procedure was conducted, respectively. % = percentage of teams of each category. Cu. % = Cumulative percentage of each category. Team ID represents the codes of teams in the sample.

form: Fragmented A shows a pattern similar to solo-status low, with most members clustering at high values and one or more outliers at the low end (negative skewness, positive kurtosis), while Fragmented B shows a pattern similar to bimodal but less polarized, with perceptions distributed across multiple positions without a dominant subgroup (skewness near zero, negative kurtosis). Additionally, the rWG approach identified 19 teams (6%) with a shared configuration characterized by uniform high agreement across all null distributions (Table 7).

Table 8 provides representative team examples for each configuration at varying diversity levels. These patterns reveal important heterogeneity in how teams collectively perceive their regulatory practices. The predominance of Fragmented B (44% of teams) suggests that many teams lack cohesive shared understanding, with members perceiving distinctly different levels of antecedent-focused regulation. In contrast, only 6% of teams exhibited true consensus (shared configuration), highlighting how rare uniform agreement is even in complete teams. The emergence of two fragmented subtypes demonstrates that fragmentation itself takes different forms with potentially different implications for team functioning.

Hypothesis testing for moderation and moderated mediation

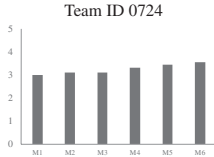
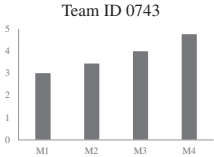
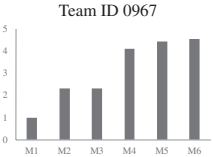
Table 9 presents descriptive statistics and correlations for the configuration subsample. Hypothesis 5 predicted that team IER configurations would moderate the indirect effect of team antecedent-focused IER on team performance via relationship conflict, such that the positive indirect effect would be stronger for teams with a shared configuration than for teams with heterogeneous configurations. We

TABLE 8 Magnitude of team interpersonal emotion regulation (IER) configuration and visual representation at low, medium, and high variation values.

	Low variation				Medium variation				High variation			
	Mean	SD	Skw	Kur	Mean	SD	Skw	Kur	Mean	SD	Skw	Kur
Solo-status low	3.07	.24	2.25	5.36	3.93	.62	1.80	3.49	2.76	1.28	.93	2.21
Solo-status high	3.71	.32	−1.75	3.90	3.44	.77	−1.94	3.99	3.59	1.17	−2.39	6.01
Bimodal	3.86	.23	.20	−4.86	3.50	.52	0	−5.55	3.17	1.68	−.09	−5.44
Fragmented A	3.69	.34	−1.14	.76	3.53	.71	−1.14	.33	3.49	1.36	−1.05	1.77
Fragmented B	3.26	.22	.25	−1.83	3.81	.77	.53	−.63	3.13	1.45	−.45	−1.61

Solo-status low (<i>N</i> = 62)	Team ID 0462	Team ID 0518	Team ID 0923
	Team ID 0369	Team ID 0128	Team ID 0009
Bimodal (<i>N</i> = 23)	Team ID 1006	Team ID 0458	Team ID 0170
Fragmented A (<i>N</i> = 190)	Team ID 0804	Team ID 0177	Team ID 0434

TABLE 8 (Continued)

	Low variation				Medium variation				High variation			
	Mean	SD	Skw	Kur	Mean	SD	Skw	Kur	Mean	SD	Skw	Kur
Fragmented B (N = 344)												

Note: N = 697, N represents the number of teams in each category. Mean = corresponds to average values of team IER.
Abbreviations: Kur, Kurtosis; SD, standard deviation; Skw, Skewness.

TABLE 9 Correlation matrix team interpersonal emotion regulation (IER) configuration study.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Team performance	4.11	.61	—									
2. Team relationship conflict	1.99	.62	−.35**	—								
3. Team IER	3.57	.50	.23**	−.62**	—							
4. Team IER variation (SD)	.86	.30	.01	.05	−.24**	—						
5. Shared team IER ^a	.03	.18	−.09	−.01	.01	−.41**	—					
6. Solo-status low team IER ^a	.07	.26	.02	−.03	.03	−.04	−.05	—				
7. Solo-status high team IER ^a	.11	.31	.05	.11	−.06	−.13*	−.06	−.10	—			
8. Bimodal team IER ^a	.04	.19	−.04	.06	.03	−.13*	−.04	−.05	−.07	—		
9. Fragmented A team IER ^a	.31	.46	−.09	.07	−.13*	.31**	−.12*	−.19**	−.23**	−.13*	—	
10. Fragmented B team IER ^a	.44	.50	.10	−.13*	.13*	.01	−.16**	−.25**	−.31**	−.17**	−.60**	—

Note: $N = 309$.

Abbreviation: Team IER, team antecedent-focused IER strategies.

^aDummy codes of team IER configurations.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

TABLE 10 SEM Results of the mediated moderation effect.

Variables	Model 1 B (SE)	Model 2 B (SE)	Team relationship conflict						Team performance
			Model 3a shared	Model 3b SS low	Model 3c SS high	Model 3d bimodal	Model 3e Fragm. A	Model 3f Fragm. B	Model 4 shared
	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)
Intercept	5.01** (.23)	4.81** (.25)	5.83** (.61)	4.61** (1.45)	5.34** (.49)	3.24** (2.39)	5.03** (.35)	4.45** (.02)	8.01* (3.65)
Team size	.03** (.01)	.03** (.01)	.03** (.01)	.03** (.01)	.03** (.01)	.03** (.01)	.03** (.01)	.03** (.01)	.02 (.01)
Within team IER variation (SD)	-.26** (.09)	-.28* (.11)	-.24* (.11)	-.24* (.11)	-.24* (.11)	-.24* (.11)	-.24* (.11)	-.24* (.11)	-.2 (.15)
Independent variable									
Team IER	-.83** (.06)	-.82** (.06)	-1.11** (.17)	-.73 (.4)	-.89** (.13)	-.28 (.65)	-.84** (.1)	-.70** (.09)	-.77 (.93)
Team IER conf. dummy variables									
Shared TIER		<i>Referent</i>	<i>Referent</i>	1.23 (1.57)	.49 (.77)	2.60 (2.47)	.80 (.70)	1.39* (.69)	<i>Referent</i>
SS low TIER		.16 (.19)	-1.23 (1.57)	<i>Referent</i>	-.73 (1.51)	1.37 (2.78)	-.42 (1.48)	.16 (1.47)	-1.25 (4.17)
SS high TIER		.30 (.18)	-.49 (.77)	.73 (1.51)	<i>Referent</i>	2.10 (2.42)	.31 (.57)	.90 (.56)	.29 (3.75)
Bimodal TIER		.41 (.21)	-2.60 (2.47)	-1.37 (2.78)	-2.10 (2.42)	<i>Referent</i>	-1.79 (2.40)	-1.21 (2.39)	-1.14 (4.77)
Fragmented A		.19 (.18)	-.80 (.70)	.42 (1.48)	-.31 (.57)	1.79 (2.40)	<i>Referent</i>	.59 (.46)	-.37 (3.71)
Fragmented B		.11 (.17)	-1.39* (.69)	-.16 (1.47)	-.90 (.56)	1.21 (2.39)	-.59 (.46)	<i>Referent</i>	-.65 (3.69)
Interactions terms									
TIER × shared			<i>Referent</i>	-.38 (.43)	-.21 (.21)	-.82 (.67)	-.27 (.19)	-.41* (.18)	<i>Referent</i>
TIER × SS low			.38 (.43)	<i>Referent</i>	.16 (.42)	-.44 (.76)	.11 (.41)	-.41 (.65)	.41 (1.07)
TIER × SS high			.21 (.22)	-.16 (.42)	<i>Referent</i>	-.61 (.66)	-.06 (.16)	-.03 (.41)	.03 (.95)
TIER × Bimodal			.82 (.67)	.44 (.76)	.61 (.66)	<i>Referent</i>	.55 (.66)	.41 (.65)	.42 (1.25)
TIER × Fragam. A			.27 (.19)	-.11 (.41)	.06 (.16)	-.55 (.66)	<i>Referent</i>	-.14 (.13)	.17 (.94)
TIER × Fragam. B			.41* (.19)	.03 (.41)	.19 (.16)	-.41 (.65)	.14 (.13)	<i>Referent</i>	.24 (.93)

(Continues)

TABLE 10 (Continued)

Variables	Model 1 B (SE)	Model 2 B (SE)	Team relationship conflict						Team performance
			Model 3a shared B (SE)	Model 3b SS low B (SE)	Model 3c SS high B (SE)	Model 3d bimodal B (SE)	Model 3e Fragm. A B (SE)	Model 3f Fragm. B B (SE)	Model 4 shared B (SE)
Mediator variable									
Team conflict									-.33** (.1)
R ²			.44	.44		.44	.44	.44	.23

Note: N = 309 teams (only 100% response rate). Team IER (TIER) = Team IER = Team antecedent-focused IER strategies; Shared TIER = shared team IER; SS low TIER = Solo-status low team IER; SS high TIER = Solo-status high team IER; Bimodal TIER = Bimodal team IER. Shared IER configuration is reference category for Models 2 and 3; Bimodal is reference category for Model 4. Unstandardized estimates.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

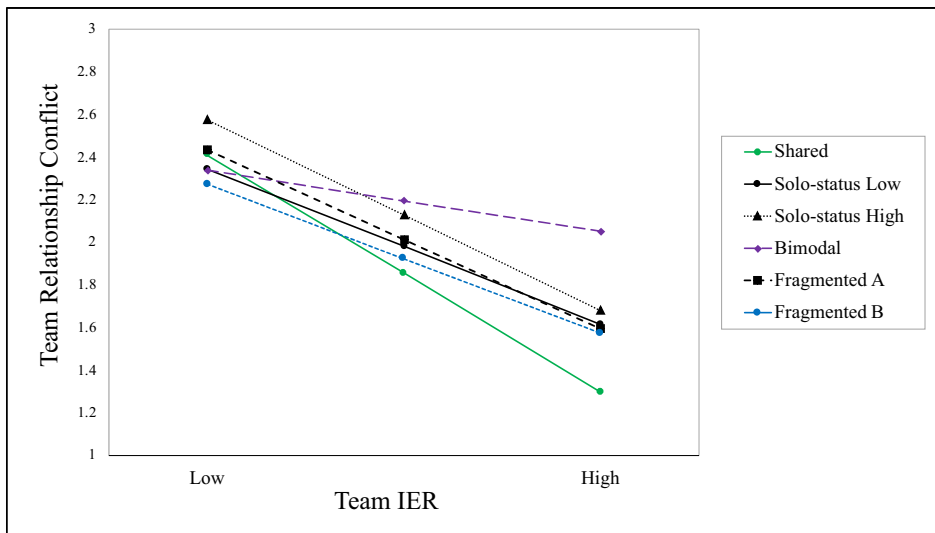


FIGURE 3 Interaction effect of team interpersonal emotion regulation (IER) and team IER configurations on team relationship conflict.

tested this hypothesis through a series of models examining both the moderation of the first stage and the complete indirect pathway.

Models 1 and 2 in Table 10 show the direct effects of team IER and team IER configurations on relationship conflict, respectively. As expected, team antecedent-focused IER was negatively related to relationship conflict ($b = -.83, p < .01$). Model 2 shows that the main effect of team IER configurations (with shared configuration as the reference group) did not significantly differ across configurations.

Model 3 in Table 10 tests the interaction between team antecedent-focused IER and team IER configurations on relationship conflict (first-stage moderation). The effect of team IER on relationship conflict in the shared configuration was significant ($b = -1.11, p < .01$). However, only the interaction between team IER and the Fragmented B configuration differed significantly from the shared configuration ($b = -1.39, p < .05$). Figure 3 illustrates these relationships, showing that the negative relationship between team IER and relationship conflict was strongest for the shared configuration ($b = -1.10, p < .05$).

Model 4 in Table 10 confirms that relationship conflict was negatively related to team performance ($b = -.33, p < .01$), establishing the second stage of our hypothesized pathway. To test the complete moderated mediation effect, we conducted difference tests of the conditional indirect effects following Edwards and Lambert's (2007) recommendations using 1000 bootstrap samples. As shown in Table 11, while the indirect effect was significant in the shared configuration, it did not differ significantly from the indirect effects in the heterogeneous configurations.

Taken together, these results do not support Hypothesis 5: although the indirect effect was significant within the shared configuration, it did not differ significantly from the indirect effects in heterogeneous configurations. However, an exploratory examination of the first stage of the indirect pathway reveals an interesting pattern: shared configurations showed stronger conflict-reducing effects of antecedent-focused IER compared specifically to Fragmented B configurations, suggesting that alignment in regulatory perceptions shapes the IER-conflict relationship even when this does not translate into significant differences in the complete indirect pathway to performance. We return to the theoretical implications of this pattern in the discussion.

TABLE 11 Moderated mediation test results for indirect effects of team interpersonal emotion regulation (IER) variation on team performance.

Indirect effect of team IER variation on team performance (via team relationship conflict)	Estimate	95% CIs
Indirect effects for each Team IER configuration		
Shared team IER configuration	.34	[.119, .638]
Bimodal team IER configuration	.41	[−.183, .910]
Solo-status low team IER configuration	.39	[−.047, .821]
Solo-status high team IER configuration	.35	[.012, .798]
Fragmented A team IER configuration	.36	[.069, .795]
Fragmented B team IER configuration	.40	[.110, .804]
Differences		
Shared—Bimodal TIER configuration	−.07	[.302, −.272]
Shared—Solo-status low TIER configuration	−.05	[.166, −.183]
Shared—Solo-status high TIER configuration	−.01	[.107, −.160]
Shared—Fragmented A TIER configuration	−.02	[.050, −.157]
Shared—Fragmented B TIER configuration	−.06	[.009, −.166]

Note: $N = 309$. Bias-corrected confidence intervals (CIs) using 1000 bootstrap samples following procedures for moderated mediation outlined by Edwards and Lambert (2007). One-tailed test.

DISCUSSION

The present findings offer among the first large-scale quantitative evidence that teams regulate emotions collectively and that this collective regulation has meaningful consequences for how teams function. Three sets of results stand out. First, team IER strategies had opposing effects on relationship conflict: antecedent-focused strategies significantly reduced conflict, while response-focused strategies increased it. Second, these conflict effects translated differently into team performance: the antecedent-focused IER pathway to performance via conflict was fully supported, while the analogous response-focused mediation was not. Third, within-team IER configurations qualified the first stage of the conflict pathway, shaping how team IER translated into relationship conflict. These findings advance emotion regulation theory and team effectiveness models by demonstrating how IER behaviours operate collectively at the team level, revealing both the mechanisms through which collective regulatory practices shape team outcomes and the boundary conditions that qualify these effects.

Theoretical implications

Team IER as a collective, strategy-based regulation process

Our findings extend emotion regulation theory (Gross, 2015; Reeck et al., 2016) by showing that the differential effects of antecedent- versus response-focused strategies observed at individual and dyadic levels (Gross & John, 2003; Little et al., 2016; Reeck & Onuklu, 2022) extend to the collective team level. This cross-level consistency points to a degree of generalizability, while also highlighting that team-level regulation involves distinct social dynamics shaped by lateral relationships and shared regulatory norms. In doing so, we position IER not only as an individual or dyadic process but also as a collective team phenomenon with observable performance implications.

We further offer a more fine-grained account of how team members collectively regulate each other's emotions. This complements, but is distinct from, related constructs such as coworker support,

team-member exchange and team emotional intelligence by focusing on the deliberate use of interpersonal regulation strategies. In contrast to perspectives centred on general helping, relationship quality or emotional capabilities, our approach captures how team members actively shape each other's emotional states through specific strategies. This allows us to extend Marks et al.'s (2001) conceptualization of *team affect management* by unpacking it into its underlying regulatory processes. Rather than a broad, undifferentiated category, affect management emerges as a strategy-based process whose consequences depend on the types of strategies used and how consistently they are enacted across team members.

Team IER strategies and relationship conflict

Teams characterized by a higher prevalence of antecedent-focused regulatory practices, such as situation modification, attentional deployment and cognitive reframing, reported significantly lower levels of relationship conflict. One key mechanism lies in how these strategies reframe emotional challenges as shared concerns rather than interpersonal disagreements. By enacting the communal ownership principle (Lyons et al., 1998), antecedent-focused IER shifts the interpretation of negative emotions away from individual blame and towards collective problem-solving. This shared framing strengthens reciprocal support norms (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) and reduces the likelihood that tensions escalate into relationship conflict.

Our findings also extend the application of the EASI framework (van Kleef, 2009) to IER. While EASI conceptualizes emotional expressions as signals that shape others' inferences about intentions, recent work suggests that IER strategies serve a similar communicative function (Madrid et al., 2019). Our results show that this logic operates at the collective level. Antecedent-focused IER strategies signal benevolent concern by addressing the causes of others' negative emotions, whereas response-focused strategies are more likely to signal indifference by focusing on emotional expression rather than underlying issues. When enacted across team members, these signals accumulate into a shared relational climate that shapes how intentions are interpreted. In this way, team IER influences relationship conflict not only by regulating emotions but also by shaping the interpersonal meanings that team members attach to each other's behaviour.

In contrast, team response-focused IER strategies were associated with higher levels of relationship conflict, operating through two interconnected mechanisms. First, drawing on the authenticity principle (Caza et al., 2015; Côté, 2005), these strategies may be perceived as inauthentic: modulating emotional expressions without addressing underlying causes can be interpreted as strategic impression management rather than genuine concern, triggering unfavourable relational inferences (van Kleef, 2009). Second, response-focused strategies undermine communal ownership (Lyons et al., 1998) by positioning emotions as individual problems to be suppressed rather than shared challenges to be collectively addressed, violating the social exchange norms (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) that teams develop through antecedent-focused regulation.

Taken together, these contrasting effects highlight that the relational consequences of team IER depend critically on the type of strategy enacted. Whether team members address the roots of negative emotions or merely modulate their expression determines not only how emotions are experienced but also how intentions are read and whether relational trust is built or eroded.

The asymmetric performance implications of antecedent- and response-focused IER

The most robust finding of this study concerns the full mediation of antecedent-focused IER on team performance through relationship conflict. By reducing relationship conflict—as discussed above—antecedent-focused strategies preserve the cognitive and emotional resources teams need for effective task accomplishment. These findings contribute to the conflict management literature (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; de Wit et al., 2012) by identifying a concrete regulatory pathway through which teams

can mitigate relationship conflict. By intervening early in the emotion-generative process, antecedent-focused strategies limit the escalation of negative emotions and preserve cognitive and emotional resources for task accomplishment. While prior research has established the detrimental effects of relationship conflict, our results highlight team IER as a distinct, strategy-based mechanism through which such conflict can be managed. In this way, we move beyond broad capability-based perspectives, such as team emotional intelligence (Jordan & Troth, 2004), by showing how specific regulatory behaviours translate into lower conflict and improved performance.

In contrast, findings for team response-focused IER strategies reveal a more complex pattern. Although these strategies were associated with higher relationship conflict, the effect size was small and the indirect effect on team performance via conflict was not supported. This suggests that, unlike antecedent-focused strategies, the consequences of response-focused IER are more contingent and may not translate straightforwardly into performance outcomes.

One explanation is that teams may buffer the performance implications of conflict through structural or task-related features. For example, clear role definitions or strong task routines may allow teams to maintain coordination even when interpersonal tensions are elevated (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). At the same time, the effects of response-focused strategies likely depend on how they are interpreted. Drawing on Niven's (2016) framework, the impact likely depends on perceived intentions. When perceived as prosocially motivated (genuinely helping colleagues manage overwhelming emotions; Grant, 2008), response-focused strategies might preserve collaborative motivation despite increasing conflict. When perceived as egocentric (suppressing others' emotions for personal comfort), they would exacerbate both conflict and performance consequences (Vasquez et al., 2021). Our focus on behavioural strategies without assessing motives may obscure these motivational pathways.

Finally, response-focused strategies may operate through competing pathways. While they can increase relationship conflict, they may also serve short-term functional purposes in contexts that require emotional containment, such as high-stakes or time-pressured situations (Thiel et al., 2015). As such, team response-focused IER likely encompasses both functional and dysfunctional instances, whose opposing effects may partially offset one another, contributing to the non-significant indirect effect observed.

The role of within-team configuration patterns

Our examination of team IER configurations advances understanding of collective emotion regulation processes by demonstrating that the pattern of agreement among members shapes regulatory effectiveness (DeRue et al., 2010; Loignon et al., 2019; Martin et al., 2018). It is important to note that while shared configurations strengthened the relationship between antecedent-focused IER and conflict at the first stage of the indirect pathway, these differences did not translate into significant differences in the complete indirect effect to team performance. We treat this first-stage moderation as a finding that points to an important boundary condition: shared regulatory perceptions amplify the conflict-reducing effects of antecedent-focused IER, even when this amplification does not produce detectable performance differences in our sample.

Configuration theory argues that the distribution of attributes across team members, not merely the central tendency, shapes team dynamics and outcomes (DeRue et al., 2010; Loignon et al., 2019). Our findings suggest that this principle applies directly to IER: the same average level of regulatory engagement can manifest in very different team structures, with correspondingly different relational implications. Fragmented configurations, in which regulatory effort is unequally distributed, may create within-team subgroup dynamics analogous to social faultlines (Jehn et al., 2007; Lau & Murnighan, 2005): when some members actively regulate their emotions interpersonally and others do not, this asymmetry may generate perceptions of differential investment or normative conflict about how emotional expression should be managed.

That configurational patterns did not predict team effectiveness through the conflict pathway is nonetheless theoretically informative. Configuration patterns may influence team processes and outcomes through pathways beyond relationship conflict, including norms around emotional expression

(Barsade & Gibson, 2012), the distribution of regulatory effort across members (Vasquez et al., 2025) and whether collective regulation is experienced as a shared or individualized responsibility. The communal ownership principle (Lyons et al., 1998) suggests that, when regulatory effort is unevenly distributed, those carrying the larger share may experience strain that affects their performance in ways not fully captured by conflict measures.

Practical implications

Our findings offer actionable guidance for organizational stakeholders seeking to enhance team effectiveness through IER. For HR professionals, leaders and managers, targeted training interventions should build antecedent-focused IER capabilities in team members through differential strategy effects, skill-building exercises teaching techniques like collaborative problem reframing and workload redistribution (Salas et al., 2008). Periodic assessments using validated team process measures (Mathieu et al., 2019) should track both strategy use and within-team consensus, enabling interventions when fragmented configurations emerge. Team charters specifying anticipated emotional challenges, committed antecedent-focused strategies (e.g. ‘We will redistribute work when someone is overwhelmed’) and accountability mechanisms help establish shared regulatory norms (Mathieu & Rapp, 2009).

For multilevel interventions targeting team leaders and members, organizations should recognize that effective emotion regulation requires coordinated efforts across hierarchical levels (Martin et al., 2016). At the leader level, managers should model antecedent-focused regulation through social learning processes (Bandura & Walters, 1977; Lacerenza et al., 2018; Madrid et al., 2019) by addressing emotion causes through collaborative problem-solving rather than encouraging suppression. When teams over-rely on response-focused patterns, leaders should redirect attention to causes while fostering psychological safety by validating experiences (Edmondson, 1999; Frazier et al., 2017). At the member level, peers should shift from response-focused to antecedent-focused support by inquiring about underlying causes, collaboratively problem-solving or helping reframe situations rather than offering reassurance or encouraging suppression (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2015). These leader and member practices mutually reinforce each other: leaders legitimize cause-focused regulation through modelling, while peer-to-peer practices create the distributed regulatory patterns that sustain team-level norms.

Potential limitations and future directions

Research strengths

This study offers several strengths. First, our multisource data collection, including leader ratings of team performance and employee ratings of team processes, minimizes common method concerns. Second, our extensive sample of complete teams and large sample size enables robust testing of configuration effects. Third, our multilevel analysis appropriately addresses the nested nature of team phenomena while testing cross-level relationships. Finally, our configurational approach to team IER provides methodological innovation in examining team processes.

Limitations and future directions

Despite these strengths, several limitations point to important future research directions. First, our cross-sectional design raises questions about causal direction and temporal dynamics that warrant longitudinal investigation. Although we collected multisource data at two time points to reduce common method bias regarding the outcome variable (Podsakoff et al., 2012), alternative causal paths remain plausible. In particular, while we adopt standard mediation terminology in stating

Hypotheses 3 and 4, the indirect effects reported should be interpreted as statistical associations consistent with the proposed pathways rather than as evidence of causal mediation. In addition, team performance was assessed using leader ratings, which help mitigate common method bias but may reflect evaluative biases and may not capture all dimensions of team effectiveness; access to objective metrics was not feasible given the proprietary nature of performance data in the participating organization. Future research could complement leader ratings with objective indicators such as sales figures, error rates or productivity records. Team effectiveness models suggest reciprocal relationships between interpersonal processes and emergent states (Marks et al., 2001), indicating potential bidirectional influences between team IER and conflict patterns. The 2-week separation, while practically determined, provides a reasonable temporal window given evidence that conflict varies meaningfully over short periods within teams (Goncalo et al., 2010; Jehn & Mannix, 2001). Future research should employ longitudinal designs to examine how team IER and conflict patterns co-evolve over time, revealing whether regulatory behaviours predict subsequent conflict levels, whether conflict shapes regulatory strategy selection, or whether reciprocal influences operate simultaneously. Such designs could also investigate how regulatory patterns stabilize or shift across different team development phases.

Second, our measurement approach relies on referent shift aggregation, where individual members report on team-level regulatory practices. While appropriate for capturing shared perceptions of collective behaviour (Chan, 1998; Klein & Kozlowski, 2000), it does not fully capture the emergent, dynamic quality of collective regulation that our theory describes. Future research could employ experience sampling, round-robin designs or social network analysis to map how regulatory behaviours flow through team networks (Pollack & Matous, 2019), how subgroups form around regulatory approaches and whether central actors in emotion regulation networks have disproportionate influence on team outcomes.

Additionally, our operationalization of response-focused strategies primarily captures suppression-related behaviours, which represent only one form of response modulation (Gross, 2015). More recent work suggests a broader range of interpersonal regulation strategies (MacCann et al., 2025), which are not captured in the present measure. Future research should examine whether a more comprehensive operationalization of response-focused strategies yields different patterns of effects at the team level.

Third, our findings from a Latin American financial organization raise important questions about cultural and industry boundary conditions that need to be examined in different contexts. Research on cultural differences in emotion regulation (Butler et al., 2007) and team dynamics (Gibson & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2001) suggests potential variation across contexts. Furthermore, the financial services sector presents specific emotional demands, including intense client-facing interactions, sales-target pressure and organizational instability (Sahi et al., 2022), which may influence both the frequency and effectiveness of team IER strategies. Future cross-cultural and cross-industry research should examine whether our findings hold across diverse contexts, investigating how cultural values (e.g. individualism–collectivism, power distance) and industry characteristics (e.g. emotional labour requirements in health-care, manufacturing, creative industries) moderate team IER's effectiveness. Such research could reveal whether certain regulatory strategies are more or less effective in specific cultural or industry contexts and whether different team types develop distinct regulatory practices.

Fourth, our focus on behavioural strategies highlights important boundary conditions for understanding team-level emotion regulation effectiveness. Individuals' motives may shape both regulatory behaviours and how they are interpreted within teams (Niven, 2016; Vasquez et al., 2021), and regulatory effectiveness more broadly is likely to vary as a function of situational demands and individual differences (Kobylińska & Kusev, 2019). The type of negative emotion being regulated may also matter, as different emotions carry distinct interpersonal consequences (Rivers et al., 2007). Future research should, therefore, adopt a more context-sensitive perspective, examining how motives, individual characteristics (e.g. emotional stability, action orientation, expressive flexibility), the specific emotions targeted, and task characteristics, including high-stakes or client-facing settings, jointly shape the effects of team-level IER. Such studies could help explain why response-focused strategies increased conflict

without consistent performance effects, as individual and contextual factors may moderate these relationships in ways the current study was unable to examine.

Fifth, our focus on negative emotion regulation strategies, while theoretically justified, raises questions about whether regulating other emotional states serves important team functions. Evidence from sports teams (Campo et al., 2016) suggests regulating positive emotions (e.g. overconfidence) or maintaining certain negative states can be functional in specific contexts. Future research should investigate how teams collectively regulate positive emotions, whether maintaining certain emotional states (e.g. controlled anxiety before high-stakes tasks) benefits performance and how the balance between positive and negative emotion regulation shapes team dynamics.

Sixth, our study's scope, while revealing important team IER effects on conflict and performance, suggests that additional mediating mechanisms warrant investigation. Research on psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999) suggests that team IER might enhance psychological safety and trust. Studies of team climate (González-Romá & Hernández, 2014) indicate potential effects on team emotional climate and cohesion. Future research should examine team IER's impact on these additional processes, potentially revealing multiple pathways through which regulation influences team effectiveness and providing a more complete picture of how collective emotion regulation shapes team dynamics.

A final limitation concerns our configurational analysis. The shared configuration represented only 6% of teams, reflecting the strict criteria used to identify uniform agreement and limiting statistical power for some comparisons. Future research could explore more flexible operationalization of shared configurations or focus on heterogeneous patterns while treating agreement through conventional indices. In addition, our analysis focused only on antecedent-focused IER, and future research should examine whether similar or distinct configuration patterns emerge for response-focused strategies. The distinction between Fragmented A and Fragmented B subtypes also requires further theoretical development and replication. Importantly, these constraints apply specifically to the configurational analysis and do not affect the main multilevel mediation findings.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this research advances understanding of team emotion regulation by demonstrating how collective regulatory processes shape team dynamics and effectiveness. Our findings reveal that team antecedent-focused IER significantly reduces relationship conflict and enhances performance, while response-focused strategies may have opposite effects. Importantly, these relationships are strongest when team members share consistent perceptions of regulatory practices. These insights extend both emotion regulation and team effectiveness literatures while providing organizations with evidence-based approaches for enhancing team functioning through strategic collective emotion management. Our research offers both theoretical foundations and practical guidance for leveraging team emotion regulation as a strategic capability, contributing to broader efforts to create work environments that support both human flourishing and organizational effectiveness in an era of rapid workplace transformation.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Cristian Vasquez: Conceptualization; investigation; funding acquisition; writing – original draft; methodology; writing – review and editing; formal analysis; data curation; project administration. **David Holman:** Conceptualization; investigation; methodology; writing – original draft; writing – review and editing; supervision. **Robin Martin:** Conceptualization; investigation; writing – original draft; writing – review and editing; supervision.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

ORCID

Cristian A. Vasquez  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8144-0854>

Robin Martin  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6267-9061>

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How to cite this article: Vasquez, C. A., Holman, D., & Martin, R. (2026). Interpersonal emotion regulation and team effectiveness: A multilevel mediation and a team variation model. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 99, e70129. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.70129>