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**THE ROLE OF PROSOCIAL MOTIVES IN PREDICTING EMOTIONAL LABOR**

**STRATEGY AND SERVICE PERFORMANCE:**

**UNDERSTANDING THE ‘WHY’ AS WELL AS THE ‘HOW’**

A Thesis in

Psychology

by

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## ABSTRACT

Positive employee displays, or ‘service with a smile,’ predict customer satisfaction. Thus, it is important to understand how employees create such positive displays. One way of understanding how employees create positive displays is through the use of emotional labor, or emotion regulation done for a wage. Two strategies have been focused on in the literature; surface acting (SA), or expression modification, and deep acting (DA), or feeling modification. It is often found that DA relates positively to performance and SA has no relationship. Self Determination Theory and Relational Job Design theory are drawn on to posit that prosocial motives for work are an important individual difference to help increase the field’s understanding of when DA and SA are used and when they predict service performance. It was predicted that prosocial motives would be positively related to DA, and unrelated to SA (hypothesis 1). It was also predicted that while DA would mediate an indirect relationship between prosocial motives and rapport (hypothesis 2), prosocial motives would moderate the negative relationship between SA and rapport (hypothesis 3). Using a field sample of grocery store clerks to test the hypotheses, it was found that prosocial motives were positively related to DA and were negatively related to SA. DA was found to be unrelated to rapport, and thus did not mediate the relationship between prosocial motives and rapport. Prosocial motives did not have a main effect on rapport. Finally, support was found for an interaction between SA and prosocial motives when predicting rapport. When SA was high, performance was nearly the same, regardless of motives. However, when SA was low, those with high prosocial motives were found to be higher performers than those with low prosocial motives. The findings suggest that one must *either* engage in SA or be prosocially

motivated to perform well, but that there is no added benefit of having both. This supports the notion that researchers need to understand *why* as well as *how* employees behave at work to understand service performance.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

Service with a smile is expected in most organizations within the customer service industry. As Hochschild (1983) points out, “the emotional style of offering the service is part of the service itself” (p. 5). To this point, employee positive displays have been linked to customer reactions and perceptions of service quality (Mattila & Enz, 2002; Pugh, 2001; Tsai, 2001). One way that employees are able to provide service with a smile is through the use of emotional labor (EL) strategies. Service workers utilize EL strategies, or self management of feelings and emotional expressions, to wear the smile that is often called for by their customers and organizations. However, not all employees use the same strategies, and not all employees are equally effective in producing their smiles for ‘service with a smile.’

Within the EL literature, two key strategies have been the focus of research; surface acting (SA) and deep acting (DA) (Hochschild, 1983). The tactic of SA involves expression modification, whereas DA aims to modify internal feelings; the appropriate expression then follows from the corresponding feelings (Grandey, 2000). One employee may tend to use DA to try to feel pleasant so as to display a genuine smile to customers, while another may lean towards using SA to simply paste a fake smile on her face. Given that a recent meta-analysis found that DA is positively related to emotional performance and customer satisfaction and that SA is negatively related to these performance indicators (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011), it might be useful to be able to differentiate which employees will utilize which strategy. As such, EL research has aimed to understand how individual differences are

associated with each strategy (Bono & Vey, 2007, Chi, Grandey, Diamond, & Krimmel, 2011; Judge, Woolf, & Hurst, 2009). For example, individuals who are extraverted, agreeable, and conscientious are less likely to use SA as a strategy and more likely to use DA (Diefendorff, Croyle, & Gosserand, 2005). Even further, individual differences can help determine whether each EL strategy is related to performance; SA can lead to more extra-role service behavior and financial gain (tips from customers) *if* the employee using SA is extraverted (Chi et al., 2011). Therefore, individual differences *can* be used to differentially predict which strategy an employee will be likely to use and whether it will be effective.

While personality traits begin to get at why one EL strategy is chosen over another, more work-specific individual differences may be even more informational. Personality traits are broad and predict general tendencies, rather than specific behaviors (Hogan, Hogan & Roberts, 1996). It might be more useful to understand individual differences more specific to work, such as worker motives, for example. The reason why an employee is working is likely to impact the form of EL chosen and its effectiveness. Furthermore, though EL implies that emotions are part of job performance, very few studies have assessed the link between EL strategy and performance and those that have tend to be simulations or part time student samples (Bono & Vey, 2007; Goldberg & Grandey; 2007) or populations that are not typical customer service workers (Beal, Trougakos, Weiss, & Green, 2006; Grandey, 2003).

Thus, the aim of this research is to further understanding of how individual differences can be used to predict performance in conjunction with EL strategy. By examining the role of worker motives, empirical, and practical contributions to the EL literature will be made. First, I draw on self determination theory (Gagne & Deci, 2005) to

propose that prosocial motives for working help explain which strategy is used and whether or not EL is carried out effectively. Second, this study provides unique empirical evidence of the EL and performance link by using a field study of adult grocery store workers and supervisor-rated performance. Thus, this study will empirically expand the literature, which has generally focused on lab studies. Third, this research contributes in a practical sense by exploring how the reasons employees work are related to both EL strategy and service performance. Such motives can be enhanced through human resource practices (e.g. reward structure), thus this study also contributes to the application of psychology. Finally, directions for future research will be made.

### **Prosocial Motives**

Motives, or reasons, for working, vary amongst individuals (Ryan & Connell, 1989). Though to some degree people work to collect a paycheck, they may also work in the customer service field with the intent of helping others. One way of doing this is by engaging in EL, to appear friendly and courteous when interacting with customers. However, by definition EL is done for a wage (Hochschild, 1983), or, financial motives. Recently though, qualitative research has indicated that customer service employees have prosocial motives for working with others and managing emotions (Bolton & Boyd, 2003; Lewis, 2005). Individuals working for prosocial reasons expend effort to benefit other people (Batson, 1987) and see their work as a means to the end of benefitting others (Grant, 2008). Furthermore, service employees with prosocial motivation for working are “likely to invest considerable time and energy in their assigned work” (Grant, 2007, p. 404). This begs the question, does why one works impact how one works, or *how well* one works,?

The self-determination theory (SDT) framework proposes that indeed, not all motives are created equal. SDT outlines that motives can vary on a continuum of internalization, from entirely externally controlled motives to internally controlled, or autonomous motives (Gagne & Deci, 2005). External motives are outcome focused. They drive people towards desirable consequences (pay) and away from undesirable ones (punishment). Autonomous motives, on the other hand, stem from enjoyment for the task in and of itself. Motives can also fall in the middle, being neither completely regulated externally or autonomously. These middle ground motives are initially derived from external sources, but become internalized overtime. That is to say, a motive can come from an outside source (e.g., a supervisor, a parent) but become internalized, but not fully integrated as one's own (introjected) or, it *can* become integrated as one's own (identified; Ryan & Deci, 2000). As Ryan and Deci explain it, "internalization refers to people's 'taking in' a value or regulation, and integration refers to the further transformation of that regulation into their own so that, subsequently, it will emanate from their sense of self." (p. 71). Introjected motives may drive behavior through anticipated guilt or pride, whereas identified motives drive behavior due to a personal value of the goal or task (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

It has been argued that prosocial motivation is one such type of middle ground motive (Grant, 2008). Indeed, Gagne and Deci sound as though they are describing prosocial motivation when they give this example of identified regulation:

"If nurses strongly value their patients' comfort and health and understand the importance of doing their share of the unpleasant tasks for the patients' well-being, the nurses would feel relatively autonomous while performing such

tasks (e.g., bathing patients), even though the activities are not intrinsically interesting.” (p. 335)

As with bathing patients, EL might be a somewhat unpleasant task that prosocially motivated employees engage in, with the belief that it will help them fulfill their larger objective of helping others.

According to SDT, the more autonomous, or intrinsic, the motivation for working the more effective work performance, psychological well-being, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction (Gagne & Deci, 2005). It is argued that the reason more internalized motives have positive outcomes is that they are better at satisfying three psychological needs; competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Gagne & Deci, 2005). The satisfaction of these needs fosters well-being, particularly interest, excitement and confidence, which in turn serve as resources for performance, persistence and creativity (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Put in other words, work that satisfies these three needs fosters a more autonomous motivation, which in turn is related to positive outcomes (Gagne & Deci, 2005). Thus, SDT would support that prosocial motives for working are more desirable than extrinsic, or financial motives, due to its more autonomously regulated nature.

Prosocial motives, in particular, are of interest to the field of customer service for several reasons. Generally speaking, in an interpersonal work context, helping others is part of the job. In such a setting, it is clear how prosocial motives for working (i.e., motivation to help others) are likely to help one perform well on the job. More specifically, those moved to work in order to help others may be more likely to develop relationships with customers (Guttek, Bhappu, Liao-Troth, Cherry, & 1999) to satisfy their own relational needs (Gagne &

Deci, 2005). They also should experience less burnout and better well-being than employees who are less motivated by prosocial reasons (Sheldon, Ryan, Deci & Kasser, 2004) and burnout is negatively associated with service performance (Low, Cravens, Grant, & Moncrief, 2001).

Thus, prosocial motivation is thought to be important enough to performance that recent job design theory has sought to find ways to mold jobs to appeal *more* to employees' desire to help others (Grant, 2007). The theory of relational job design recognizes that individuals vary in the extent to which they are motivated to help others, but that the desire to do so can be increased by exposing employees to the individuals who benefit from their work (Grant, 2007). Especially relevant to service work, Grant notes that "the motivation to make a prosocial difference is an inherently relational phenomenon; interpersonal relationships both cultivate and result from the motivation to make a prosocial difference" (p. 394). Several studies have supported relational job design theory's proposition that appealing to employee's prosocial motives increases job performance, persistence, and citizenship behaviors (Grant, Campbell, Chen, Cottone, Lapedis, & Lee, 2007; Grant & Mayer, 2009; Grant & Sonnetag, 2010; Grant & Sumanth, 2009; see Grant, 2011 for a summary). *However*, a direct relationship between prosocial motivation and performance outcomes is usually not found. Rather, other factors must be considered such as intrinsic motivation (Grant, 2008), manager trustworthiness and task significance (Grant & Sumanth, 2009), or anticipation of helping and proactive behavior (Grant, Parker, & Collins, 2009). An additional factor that has yet to be considered is the way employees perform, or EL. I propose that employees who are prosocially motivated may use more effective EL strategies to develop relationships when

interacting with customers and that the presence of prosocial motives may enhance the effectiveness of other EL strategies.

### **How Does Prosocial Motivation Influence EL Strategy?**

As pointed out earlier, the definition of EL, or emotion regulation for a wage, implies financial motives are associated with EL. However, while customer service may be motivated in part by financial outcomes, they may also have more prosocial motives for choosing an occupation that places them so closely with the public. Consider that Rafaeli and Sutton (1987) posit that there are different reasons for following organizationally set forth display rules, or standards for appropriate expressions set forth by the organization (Diefendorff & Richards, 2003). “Good faith” emotion regulation occurs when “feeling rules are internalized” (p.32); the employee truly wants to help others and so manages emotions in a way that will enable that helping to occur most effectively. In contrast, employees may follow organizational display rules, in ‘bad faith.’ Here, employees may not believe that managing their emotions should be part of the job (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). “People who fake in bad faith have not internalized feeling rules, they are likely to be poor employees because they may comply with feeling rules only when monitored closely” (p. 32). Based on Rafaeli and Sutton’s (1987) definitions, employees with stronger prosocial motives are more likely to have a good faith approach to managing their emotions. Just as prosocial motives are internalized motives, the good faith approach to EL internalizes organizational expectations for emotion displays; both operate on the assumption of internalized values.

Beyond good faith and bad faith, EL strategies are often dichotomized into deep acting (DA) and surface acting (SA). Recall that employees who engage in DA aim to

experience the emotions they are required to express, while those who use SA wear the expression that is required of them, but don't attempt to *feel* the emotion internally. While Rafaeli and Sutton (1987) do not predict which EL strategy (deep acting or surface acting) will be more closely associated with the good faith or bad faith approach, it has been suggested that employees taking the bad faith approach are likely to use SA while the good faith approach is associated with DA (Grandey, 2000). Following Grandey's (2000) suggestion then, DA would be more closely related to prosocial motives than SA; it is the 'good faith' strategy. In another way of looking at it, employees who are prosocially motivated have a desire to help others and DA is a way to manage one's own feeling to better interact and develop relationships with the customer. Indeed, Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) suggest that DA will have a stronger positive association with identification with the values of the service role than SA. As previously mentioned, prosocial motives are more autonomous, and more likely to operate on an identified level than financial motives. Therefore, an employee high in prosocial motives should be more likely to use the strategy of DA.

In contrast, employees taking a 'bad faith' approach are externalized in their work motives. Such employees are more likely to paste on the smile (e.g., surface acting) to gain rewards (i.e., tips) or comply with rules to avoid punishment. However, I do not expect prosocial motives to be negatively related to SA. Employees low in prosocial motives *may* modify expressions (SA), but only if external pressures demand it (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1990), such as monitoring (Holman, Chissick, & Totterdell, 2002) and/or if offered rewards. Otherwise, employees may choose not to act or even express negative emotions. In contrast,



employees high in prosocial motives may modify expressions (SA) since showing felt emotions can go against the goal of helping others and results in lower self perceptions of performance (Beal et al., 2006).

Supporting this rationale, Ashforth and Humphrey indicate that as a strategy, “surface acting is consistent with either a strong or weak concern for one’s customers.” (1993, p. 93) As the literature seems to indicate that prosocially motivated employees may use SA only under certain conditions (i.e. moderators such as felt negative emotions), there is no clear reason for a *linear* relation between prosocial motives and SA. Thus, I predict that prosocial motives are positively associated with DA, and will not be associated with SA.

*Hypothesis 1:* Prosocial motives for work will be positively associated with deep acting with customers; no association is expected with surface acting.

### **How do Prosocial Motives and EL Together Influence Service Performance?**

After examining the manner in which motives predict *how* one works, I now move on to examine how prosocial motives explain how *well* one works. Recall that SDT would predict that prosocial motives for working, a moderately autonomous motive, would have a positive relationship with performance. Recent research supports the relationship, *but* there are often other conditions that must occur, such as the presence of task significance, for positive relationship to emerge (Grant, 2008; Grant, et al., 2009; Grant & Sumanth, 2009). I propose that EL strategy is one such factor that aids in explaining how prosocial motives are related to performance. First though, I would like to briefly explain what I mean by performance.

Organizational research that draws on SDT has examined job involvement, supervisor-rated overall performance (Breugh, 1985), effort, and goal attainment (Sheldon & Elliot, 1998), while other recent research on fundraisers has looked at number of calls made to donors and dollars earned (Grant, 2008; Grant & Sumanth, 2009) as well as overall supervisor-rated performance (Grant, et al., 2009). Even though prosocial motivation by definition is focused on helping others, these performance measures don't necessarily capture this. Placing several calls is different than building a relationship with customers. I believe a measure that captures the interpersonal nature of interactions between employees and customers is more appropriate than overall and objective measures for two reasons. First, SDT posits that motives help fulfill needs, one of which is relatedness (Gagne & Deci, 2005). If it's true that individuals have needs for being close to others, it seems quality, not quantity, of interpersonal interactions may be pertinent. Second, Grant (2008) himself writes, "The motivation to make a prosocial difference is a timely topic, given that the importance of relationships increasingly is being emphasized at work." (p. 392). Therefore, I believe interpersonal performance is an apt measure when discussing the impact of prosocial motives on performance.

Within the field of customer service, there is often emphasis on building long lasting service relationships with customers (Guttek, et al., 1999). The literature on building service relationships often includes both emotions and motives. Within the service field, sympathy and empathy have been positively associated with employee-customer relationships (see Gremler & Gwinner, 2000 for a review). The social psychology literature indicates that prosocial motives are linked to relationships (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003).

As relationships do not develop between all employees and customers (Guttek, et al., 1999), this study will explore the interpersonal performance dimension referred to as rapport. As Gremler and Gwinner (2000) point out, while rapport is expected in service relationships, it “may be established in a single service encounter between a customer and an employee who previously have never interacted.” (p. 99). Rapport consists of two parts: customer enjoyment of the interaction with a service provider, and a personal connection between customer and employee and has been linked to customer satisfaction, loyalty intent and word-of-mouth communication (Gremler & Gwinner, 2000). As my study is utilizing supervisor-ratings of performance, I will focus on the personal connection with customers aspect of rapport. While this has not typically been measured by supervisors in the past, rapport has many nonverbal components, such as a directed gaze between individuals, smiling, head nodding, body orientation and mirrored posture (Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990). These components can be reliably rated by outside observers (LaFrance, & Broadbent, 1976). Further, since supervisors observe employees across multiple interactions with customers, they are in a good position to infer the employee’s rapport with customers on average, while a customer can only report on how that employee acts with him/her.

### **Deep Acting**

Like prosocial motives, DA should be positively related to rapport based on theory and prior research. EL theory predicts that DA is related to rapport because the emotional expression produced by DA tends to be more genuine, or authentic, and is less emotionally depleting, or exhausting, to employees who tend to use this strategy due to the social gains from such a performance (Hülshelger et al., 2010). Authenticity matters to the customer;

inauthenticity undermines customer reactions to ‘service with a smile’, even when other aspects of performance are high (Grandey, Fisk Mattila, Jansen, & Sideman, 2005). Research shows authenticity is positively related to customer positive affect and employee-customer rapport (Hennig-Thurau, Groth, Paul, & Gremler, 2006) as well as customer satisfaction (Grandey et al., 2005). Depletion on the other hand, occurs when finite self regulation resources are drained (Baumeister, Vohs, & Tice, 2007). In lab studies, participants regulating emotional expressions show more signs of depletion than those not regulating expressions, resulting in lower cognitive performance (Richards & Gross, 1999). In regards to customer service, work simulations show that the regulation required to deal with a negative customer corresponds to lower self regulation performance on subsequent tasks (Zypher, Warren, Landis, & Thoresen, 2007). Therefore, relating these findings to the outcome of interest, rapport, if one is depleted by the self regulation that EL requires or an aggressive customer earlier in the day, rapport with subsequent customers might suffer.

EL research supports both of these theoretical assumptions; DA is positively associated with authenticity of emotional displays (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Groth, Hennig-Thurau, & Walsh, 2009) and is unrelated to depletion or exhaustion (Bono & Vey, 2005; Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Liu, Prati, Perrew & Ferris, 2008). Through these mechanisms DA should also be related to rapport; more genuine expressions may help build relationships with customers, and a less depleted employee may be able to focus more on building a personal connection. Prior research has linked DA to a similar performance outcome, affective delivery, or, the extent to which employees treat customers with courtesy and friendliness. Several individual studies have supported that DA is related to

affective delivery (Beal et al., 2006; Bono & Vey, 2007; Chi et al., 2011; Grandey, 2000; Totterdell & Holman, 2003). A recent meta-analysis confirms that DA is positively related to affective delivery, or emotional performance, and also indicates that it is positively associated with customer satisfaction (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). However, many of these studies are with students (Bono & Vey, 2007; Goldberg & Grandey, 2007), or depend on customer, coworker, or self ratings (Grandey, 2003; Groth et al., 2009; Totterdell & Holman, 2003), therefore it is important to expand the literature by examining supervisor ratings of rapport. One reason is that supervisors see employees act with many customers and may be able to better gauge how that employees perform on average, whereas customers generally only have one interaction to rate on.

Though I expect both prosocial motives and DA to be positively related to rapport, I do not believe their effects will be independent of one another. First, as reviewed above, prosocial motives often do not have a *direct* link to performance measures. Second, as motivation drives behavior, and DA is a behavioral strategy, I expect it to be a more proximal predictor of rapport. In other words, prosocial work motives explain *why* an employee works, but DA explains *how* employees go about working with employees, which should be more related to how *effective* they are at building rapport with customers. Therefore, while hypothesis 1 predicts that prosocial motives will be positively related to DA and I expect prosocial motives to also positively predict rapport, I believe that the effect is indirect and carried through by DA. Thus, it is predicted that there is an indirect relationship between prosocial motives and service performance through DA:

*Hypothesis 2:* Deep acting with customers mediates the indirect relationship between prosocial motives and employee-customer rapport.

## Surface Acting

In contrast to deep acting, employees who are surface acting are faking their emotional expressions, and thus SA is expected to be negatively related to authenticity. Moreover, SA as an effortful form of self-regulation is positively related to depletion states such as emotional exhaustion and burnout (Hülshager et al., 2010). Research supports both theoretical assumptions; SA is negatively related to perceived authenticity of displays (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002), and positively related to depletion (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Martinez-Inigo, Totterdell, Alcover, & Holman 2007; Seery & Corrigan, 2009). Given these two assumptions and sets of evidence, SA is typically assumed to result in lower service performance. That is, employees who are more depleted by their work and are less authentic in their interaction with customers receive lower performance ratings (Grandey, 2003).

A recent meta-analysis also supports a negative relationship between SA and affective delivery, or emotional performance, though this relationship is modest ( $\rho = -0.14$ ; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). This weak meta-analytic relationship is due to the fact that across a variety of performance measures the relationship is null (Goldberg & Grandey, 2007; Gosserand & Diefendorff, 2005; Groth et al., 2009; Hülshager et al 2010; Totterdell & Holman, 2003), or even positive. In fact, the relationship depends on the situation and individual differences for how well one is able to fake their emotional expressions (Beal et al., 2006; Bono & Vey, 2007). For example, Chi and colleagues (2011) find that SA positively predicts affective delivery and customer tipping behavior, an indicator of service effectiveness, but only for extroverts. For introverts, the relationship is negative. Thus, it may be that engaging in SA is

effective performance for *some* people who can do it well (appear less inauthentic), or who are less depleted by faking their expressions.

One reason that the relationship between SA and performance has been inconsistent is that the mechanisms through which it is thought to operate can be overridden. One way is through the depletion mechanism, though as discussed above, it may also be overridden by some employees who are better actors than others. The literature on depletion indicates that it can be overcome by humor, positive affect, cash incentives, implementation intentions (if...then plans) or even social goals such as wanting to help others (Baumeister et al., 2007; Muraven & Slessarava, 2003; Tice, Baumeister, Shmueli & Muraven, 2007). More specifically, research has examined the impact of prosocial incentives on the negative relationship between depletion of resources and self-regulation performance. In a lab study (Muraven & Slessarava, 2003), when participants were provided with the incentive that their self regulation can benefit others, they did not show the normal decline in self regulatory performance that is traditionally observed in the ego depletion literature.

I would expect to see a similar effect on the performance measure of rapport, for those employees who tend to use SA. In other words, prosocial motives may buffer against the depletion mechanism by which SA is negatively related to performance; prosocially motivated employees may override their impulse to conserve resources after exerting self-regulatory efforts, thus better maintaining their performance over time compared to those who lack this motive (Muraven, Shmueli, & Brukley, 2006).

When employees with low prosocial motives use SA, they may be less motivated to override the resource depletion from SA, thus resulting in not only inauthentic expressions

but also reduced persistence in helping others. In contrast, an employee using SA who has high prosocial motives may override depletion effects in order to help others. Therefore it is predicted that the relationship between SA and performance will depend on the moderating effect of prosocial motives.

*Hypothesis 3:* The relationship between surface acting and rapport is moderated by prosocial motives for work, such that prosocial motives will buffer the negative effect of surface acting on customer-employee rapport; when prosocial motives are high, the relationship between surface acting and rapport will be null; when prosocial motives are low, the relationship will be negative.

In summary, this study tests the predictions that prosocial motives positively predict DA but not SA (hypothesis 1) and that DA mediates the indirect relationship between prosocial motives and customer-employee rapport (hypothesis 2). It is further expected that prosocial motives will moderate the relationship between SA and customer-employee rapport, such that the relationship is positive when prosocial motives are high and null when they are low (hypothesis 3).



## Chapter 2

### METHODS

#### **Participants and Procedures**

Participants were grocery store employees ( $N = 214$ ) from 28 different store locations. Grocery store clerks are an apt sample as they have been shown to use emotional labor on a frequent basis in response to display demands from management (Rafaeli, 1989; Tolich, 1993)

The employee sample was 71.5% female, 55.6% white, and had an average age of 32 years ( $SD = 14$ ). The employees worked in a variety of positions including department clerk ( $N = 83$ ), cashier ( $N = 68$ ), bakery ( $N = 37$ ), or other positions ( $N = 26$ ). The data were collected by an external consulting firm as part of a concurrent validation study of a selection assessment that measures non-cognitive individual attributes to predict customer service behaviors. Employees completed scales measuring emotional labor strategies and work motives. Store supervisors ( $N = 52$ ) provided ratings of the employees' customer service behavior and effectiveness with customers. The supervisor sample was 59.0% female, 67.8% white, and had an average age of 46 years ( $SD = 11$ ). As multiple employees were rated by the same supervisor (on average, about 4 employees per supervisor), and multiple supervisors belonged to the same store (on average, about two supervisors per store), the data has a three-level nested structure (employees in supervisors in stores), which I recognize in my multi-level analytic approach.

It was communicated to all participants that the data were gathered for research, not administrative decision purposes. Therefore responses are less likely to be inflated from

social desirability biases or conflated with organizational politics (Longnecker, Sims, & Gioia, 1987). Participation in the study was voluntary and the data were collected online by a third party vendor. Identifying information was only provided to join the employee survey and supervisor-rated performance information, and participating organizations only received aggregated and summarized results of the study. Assuring respondent anonymity is an additional way to combat social desirability, as well as lenient and acquiescent response styles (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Additionally, prior to providing performance ratings, supervisors completed a computer-based training module to orient them to the rating process and educate them about ways to avoid common rating errors. Combined, the rater training and administrative purpose of the study suggests more accuracy, less bias, and more variance in the ratings (Levy & Williams, 2004). In addition, using a different rating source for measuring criterion (performance) and predictors (EL and motives) is one way to reduce common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

### **Measures**

See Appendix A for EL and motives items. Table 1 shows means, standard deviations and alpha coefficients for the measures discussed below.

**Emotional labor.** EL was measured using scales developed by Brotheridge and Lee (2002) and modified by Grandey (2003). These scales are commonly used in the literature (e.g. Bono & Vey; Groth et al, 2009; Hülshelger et al., 2010). A 7-point frequency scale (1 = never, 7 = always) was completed by employees to assess how often they suppressed and fake emotional expressions (SA, 4 items) and modified feelings (DA, 3 items). The SA scale

yielded a mean of 3.11 ( $SD = 1.35$ ) and the DA scale had a mean of 4.75 ( $SD = 1.48$ ). Both scales had a good reliability ((both scales,  $\alpha = 0.78$ ).

**Work motives.** Four items from Grant's (2008) adaption from Ryan and Connell's (1989) motivation scales were used. For prosocial motives, employees responded to four items that answered the question "Why are you motivated to do your work?" As an example, "Because I care about benefitting others through my work". In addition, four items that measured financial motives ("Because I need to support myself and my family") were also included as a control and avoid creating demand bias and to test for alternative predictors of EL. These were also measured on a 7-point scale. However, unlike the EL items, the motives items were anchored at agree and disagree (1 = disagree strongly, 7 = agree strongly). The use of different response anchors is an additional step to reduce common method variance of self-report data (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The prosocial motives scale had a mean of 5.80 ( $SD = 1.23$ ) and the financial motives scale was found to have a mean of 6.22 ( $SD = 1.15$ ). Both scales had good reliability (prosocial motives,  $\alpha = 0.89$ ; financial motives,  $\alpha = 0.91$ ).

**Employee-customer Rapport.** Supervisors completed service performance measures developed by a consulting firm as part of a validation study. For the purposes of this study, four performance ratings were used that captured my focus on rapport. Supervisors were asked to rate from 1 ("consistently fails to meet minimum job requirements in this performance area") to 5 ("consistently performs above and beyond desired standards in this performance area; frequently 'goes the extra mile'") how well the item described the target employee's performance. The items measured the ability of the employee to build

relationships, show concern, empathize with customers, and overall rapport effectiveness. The items yielded a mean of 3.64 ( $SD = 0.96$ ), and showed high reliability ( $\alpha = 0.94$ ).

**Demographics and control variables.** Both managers and employees reported their demographic information, such as age, gender, ethnicity, tenure, and job title. Gender was included as a control as it has been related to emotion regulation in previous studies (Grandey, Fisk & Steiner, 2005; Goldberg & Grandey, 2007). Employee ethnicity was also controlled for as it has been shown to impact performance scores (Roth, Huffcutt, & Bobko, 2003). Ethnicity was coded dichotomously as white or non-white. Further, as the ethnicity of the sample was fairly diverse, a dummy variable was created for whether or not employee ethnicity matched supervisor ethnicity, with code of 0 if ethnicity matched, and a code of 1 if employee and supervisor ethnicity did not match. To determine if ethnicity match had an impact on the outcome performance variables, a one-way ANOVA using rapport as an outcome and employee-supervisor ethnicity match as a factor yielded marginally significant differences ( $F = 2.65, p = 0.11$ ). Thus, ethnicity match was controlled for in subsequent analyses.

Tenure was also included because it is associated with increased performance ratings (Quiñones, Ford, & Teachout, 1995). Due to how the company coded employee tenure (i.e. a categorical variable that, rather than a linear input of number of months) and the distribution of tenure (71% of employees had worked in the company for more than one year), tenure was coded as a dichotomous variable (less than one year = 0, more than one year = 1).

As the employees in the sample had several different job titles, it was explored whether or not title should be controlled for in subsequent analyses. Though all of the

employees interact with customers, they may differ in the frequency of their interactions with customers (as indicated by job description information on O\*Net; O\*NET Online, 2010). In turn, the potential for difference in quantity of customer contact could influence both EL and service performance ratings and thus create spurious relationships. A one-way ANOVA was conducted using job title as a factor to determine if job title impacted ratings of rapport. It was found that employee job title was a marginally significant source of variance ( $F = 1.94, p < 0.10$ ). Post hoc least significant differences comparisons test indicates that department clerks had significantly lower scores than cashiers ( $p < 0.01$ ) and bakery clerks ( $p < 0.05$ ). No other differences between job titles were found. Additionally, job title was found to have no impact on SA ( $F = 0.47, p > 0.10$ ) or DA ( $F = 1.56, p > 0.10$ ). As a precaution, a dummy variable was created which controlled for the job title of department clerk in subsequent analyses (1= department clerk, 0=all other titles).

**Personality.** Since part of the aim of this paper is to explore individual difference predictors of EL and customer service performance beyond personality, efforts were taken to distinguish motives from personality. More specifically, agreeableness, which captures the tendency to be friendly, courteous, flexible, and tolerant (Barrick & Mount, 1991), is thought to be a more traitlike form of prosocial motives (Grant, 2008). In particular, the sub-dimension of agreeableness, altruism, may be related to prosocial motives. Altruism is a specific facet of the larger personality trait agreeableness and is meant to measure courtesy and consideration, as well as concern for others (Costa, McCrae, & Dye, 1991). As such, altruism was measured to help demonstrate the uniqueness of motives above and beyond personality and will thus be controlled for in subsequent analyses. Seven items were

available in the data set were measured on a 0 (strongly disagree) to 3 (strongly agree) scale. The items are proprietary, but as a sample, “you anticipate the needs of others at work.” The mean for the scale was 2.23 ( $SD = 0.41$ ) and had reasonable reliability ( $\alpha = 0.72$ ).

## Chapter 3

## RESULTS

**Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

The measurement model was tested using a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), which was conducted to show the self report employee measures are distinct from one another. This approach helps demonstrate that common method variance is not a substantial threat to the study (Conway & Lance, 2010). As measured, the self report items should form five scales: surface acting, deep acting, prosocial motives, financial motives, and altruism. I started with a one factor model where all items loaded onto one self-report construct. I tested this against a three factor model where EL items were grouped together, motive items were grouped together, and altruism was its own construct. Change in the chi-square statistic indicated that three factors better explained the data than one ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 225.42, \Delta df = 3, p < 0.01$ ). Similarly, the anticipated five factor model had better fit than the three factor model ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 774.18, \Delta df = 7, p < 0.01$ ), supporting the use of five distinct scales.

**Descriptive Statistics**

Table 1 shows the bivariate correlations among the study variables. A positive association was found between DA and prosocial motives ( $r = 0.36, p < 0.01$ ), consistent with hypothesis 1. In contrast to hypothesis 1, SA was negatively associated with prosocial motives ( $r = -0.22, p < 0.01$ ). DA and prosocial motives had a non-significant correlation with rapport. Since these bivariate correlations don't allow for the control of other variables, hypothesis 1 will be formally tested with additional analyses.

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Insert table 1 about here

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## Analytical Approach

According to Luke (2004), there are empirical, statistical and theoretical reasons to consider using Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) as an analytical approach. Statistically, data that has lower-level observations nested within higher levels is said to be hierarchical (Kreft & de Leeuw, 1998). Even if employees were assigned randomly to stores and supervisors, the hierarchical nature of the data still cannot be ignored. Goldstein puts it well:

Once groupings are established, even if their establishment is effectively random, they will tend to become differentiated, and this differentiation implies that the group and its members both influence and are influenced by the group membership. To ignore this relationship risks overlooking the importance of group effects, and may also render invalid many of the traditional statistical analysis techniques used for studying data relationships (1995, p. 12).

Thus, since employees were nested within supervisors, which were nested within store location, each respondent cannot be treated as an independent source of data, providing a statistical reason to use HLM in the analysis of the data. In other words, there is non-independence in the data (e.g., based on rating biases, resources, store climate) that needs to be accounted for in my analytic approach.

One recommended way to *empirically* determine if HLM is necessary is to calculate the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC), or the proportion of variance in the dependent measure that is accounted for by higher levels (Luke, 2004), in this case supervisors and stores. This method seeks to determine if each higher order level actually influences the first level variables of focus.



First, empty, or null, models were created to obtain estimates of level 1, 2, and 3 variance components ( $\sigma^2$ ). The variance components were then used to calculate the ICCs using a procedure outlined by Luke (2004). For level 2, the variance in performance attributed to supervisors is divided by the sum of level 2 (supervisor) and level 1 variance. A similar calculation was made for level 3 (stores). As can be seen in Table 2, 24.91% ( $\chi^2 = 47.93$ ,  $d.f. = 23$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) of the variance in employee-customer rapport could be attributed to supervisors (Level 2). Next the variance attributed to stores (Level 3) was considered. For rapport, 8.30% ( $\chi^2 = 36.17$ ,  $d.f. = 27$ ,  $p = 0.11$ ) of the variance was attributable to stores. As can be observed, the variance explained does not meet conventional standards of statistical significance and in addition, it has been recommended that at least 12% of the variance in the outcome of interest be attributed to an upper level to include said upper level in the model (James, 1982). Even though store level variance explains less than 12% of the variance in rapport, I chose to carry out my analyses in three-level HLM as planned to be conservative since the data are nested and some of the variance *can* be attributed to store membership, even if it is a small portion.

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Insert table 2 about here

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It should be briefly noted that hypothesis 1 does not make predictions regarding performance. As all of the variables in hypothesis 1 are at the employee level, it is not statistically necessary to use HLM to evaluate it; regression will be used instead. Adding further evidence to this choice, level 2 accounts for a mere 0.03% of DA variance and level 3

accounts for 0.04%. Additionally, 0.18% of SA variance is accounted for by level 2, and 0.03% is accounted for by level 3. Thus, multiple linear regression was used for testing hypothesis 1 and three-level HLM was used for hypotheses 2 and 3.

### **Hypothesis Testing**

**Hypothesis 1.** Hypothesis 1 predicted that prosocial motives would be positively related to DA, but unrelated to SA. The regression results can be seen in Table 3. Supporting the first portion of hypothesis 1, prosocial motives for work were significantly positively related to DA ( $B = 0.23, p < 0.01$ ) when controlling for gender, ethnicity, tenure, job title, altruism, and financial motives. In contrast to the second portion of hypothesis 1 (i.e., that no relationship was expected between SA and prosocial motives), the results show that after controlling for employee attributes and financial motives, prosocial motives had a significant negative relationship with SA ( $B = -0.31, p < 0.01$ ). Therefore, hypothesis 1 was only partially supported by the data.

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Insert table 3 about here

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**Hypothesis 2.** The positive relationship between prosocial motives and DA provides the initial evidence for hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 2 predicted that DA would mediate the indirect relationship between prosocial motives and performance. Testing indirect relationships requires showing that a relationship (*a*) exists between the predictor and the mediator, the mediator and the outcome (*b*), while a non-significant relationship (*c*) is expected between the predictor and the outcome (Mathieu & Taylor, 2006). See Figure 1.

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Insert figure 1 about here  
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As such, I first sought to determine the nature of the relationship between prosocial motives and DA. Recall that hypothesis 1 predicted and found support for this positive relationship. Because hypothesis 2 includes employee-customer rapport as an outcome, and therefore must be tested using HLM, I re-evaluated the effect of prosocial motives on DA in HLM. Similar to the multiple regression results, prosocial motives had a positive and statistically significant relationship to DA ( $\gamma = .23, p < 0.05$ ). Thus, there is support for the relationship between prosocial motives and DA.

Next, I used DA to predict employee-customer rapport. Using the control variables mentioned previously, as well as controlling for motives, it was determined that DA did not have a significantly positive relationship with employee-customer rapport ( $\gamma = 0.01, p = 0.82$ ). See Table 4. As the relationship was not significant, I could not support continuing to the next step, to determine if DA carries the relationship between prosocial motives and performance. Thus, hypothesis 2 was unsupported.

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Insert table 4 about here  
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**Hypothesis 3.** Hypothesis 3 predicted an interaction between prosocial motives and SA when predicting performance outcomes. To test this hypothesis, I first created a null model (no predictors) for each of the performance measures (model 0). Next I added my

control variables (job title, tenure, gender, ethnicity match, and altruism) as well as the EL measures and motives (model 1). Finally, I added the interaction term to the model (model 2), which was also allowed to vary by supervisor. For all variables, I allowed the level 1 intercept (average performance) to vary across supervisors and stores, while keeping the slopes (effect of study variables) fixed. This procedure follows Luke's (2004) recommendations for fitting a model when one believes that the outcome variable differs by level, but that the effects of individual level variables on said outcome do not. That is, due to the nature of the data, I do not expect the effect of DA on performance to differ by supervisor because DA is measured at the individual level (but see additional analyses). Finally, following Kreft, de Leeuw, and Aiken's (1995) recommendations, EL and motives measures were centered around the grand mean. The interaction of SA and prosocial motives was created using these centered variables, following Aiken and West's (1991) suggestion.

The results can be seen in Table 4. The interaction was found to be significant in predicting employee-customer rapport ( $\gamma = -0.09, p < 0.01$ ). Providing further support for model fit, or deviance, statistics show a better fit for model 2, which contains the interaction, than model 1 ( $\chi^2 = 6.78(1), p < 0.01$ ); a smaller deviance statistic indicates better model fit (Luke, 2004).

To determine the nature of the interaction, methods outlined by Preacher, Curran, and Bauer (2006) were used. First, the form of the interaction was plotted for employee-customer rapport. Hypothesis 3 predicted a null relationship between SA and employee-customer rapport for high prosocial motives and a negative relationship for low prosocial motives. However, as Figure 2 shows, when prosocial motives are 1 *SD* below the mean, SA does *not*

appear to have a negative relationship with performance, but rather the slope trends toward being positive. However, simple slopes analysis reveals that this relationship is not significant ( $Z = 0.48, p = 0.63$ ). More in accordance with hypothesis 3, the slope between SA and employee-customer rapport when prosocial motives is 1 *SD* above the mean is also null ( $Z = -0.27, p < 0.79$ ).

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Insert figure 2 about here

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**Additional Analyses.** I explored other possible interactions to establish that the significant interaction of SA and prosocial motives was not spurious. First, I explored the interaction of SA and financial motives to determine if SA interacts with motives in general, or just prosocial motives. The interaction was found to be nonsignificant ( $\gamma = -0.05, p = 0.31$ ). Next, I explored the interaction of DA and prosocial motives to determine if prosocial motives interacts with both EL strategies, instead of just SA. I found the interaction to also be nonsignificant ( $\gamma = -0.03, p = 0.45$ ). Finally, the interaction of altruism and SA was explored to rule out the notion that SA may just interact with a general tendency to help others. Again, the interaction was nonsignificant ( $\gamma = -0.06, p = 0.58$ ). Overall, the nonsignificance of the other interactions helps provide support for my focus on the interaction of SA and prosocial motives in predicting employee-customer rapport.

In summary, hypothesis 1 was partially supported; prosocial motives was positively related to DA as predicted, but was also negatively related to SA which did not support the hypothesis. Hypothesis 2 was unsupported as DA was unrelated to employee performance.

Finally, prosocial motives moderated the relationship between SA and performance. It was predicted that when prosocial motives were low, the relationship between SA and performance would be negative, but high prosocial motives would buffer the effect and make the relationship null. Instead, it was found that when prosocial motives were low, SA trended towards having a positive relationship with performance; high prosocial motives yielded the expected null relationship between SA and performance. Therefore, because the interaction was of a different form than expected, hypothesis 3 could not be supported.

Table 1

*Means (M), Standard Deviations (SD), and Correlations Between Study Variables*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. <i>Emp</i> gender	1.74	0.44										
2. <i>Emp</i> ethnicity	1.56	0.50	0.06									
3. <i>Emp</i> tenure	1.71	0.45	0.02	0.01								
4. <i>Emp</i> job title	0.39	0.49	-0.63**	-0.03	-0.02							
5. Altruism	2.23	0.41	0.10	-0.05	-0.20**	-0.07	<b>0.72</b>					
6. DA	4.75	1.48	0.08	-0.02	-0.09	-0.18**	0.34**	<b>0.78</b>				
7. SA	3.11	1.35	0.17*	-0.04	0.05	-0.08	-0.03	0.01	<b>0.78</b>			
8. Prosocial motives	5.80	1.23	0.11	0.01	-0.06	-0.18**	0.41**	0.36**	-0.22**	<b>0.89</b>		
9. Financial motives	6.22	1.15	0.02	0.07	-0.14*	-0.07	0.08	0.21**	-0.04	0.35**	<b>0.91</b>	
10. <i>Emp-cust</i> Rapport	3.64	0.96	0.14	0.15*	0.03	-0.17*	0.11	0.07	0.10	0.06	-0.09	<b>0.94</b>

Note.  $N = 214$ . Gender coded 1 = male, 2 = female. Ethnicity coded 1 = minority, 2 = white. Tenure coded 1 = less than 1 year, 2 = more than 1 year. Job title coded 1 = department clerk, 0 = all others. Altruism rated on a 0-3 scale. DA, SA, prosocial motives, and financial motives measured on a 1-7 scale. Rapport is rated on a 1-5 scale. Coefficient alpha reliabilities are on the diagonal in italicized bold.

\*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$

**Table 2**  
*Variance Components and ICCs for Employee-customer Rapport*

Level	Variance Component	<i>df</i>	$\chi^2$	ICC
Level 1: Employee	0.63			
Level 2: Supervisor	0.21	23	47.94**	24.91%
Level 3: Store	0.06	27	36.27	8.30%

*Note.* Employees ( $n = 208$ ), supervisors ( $n = 51$ ), store ( $n = 28$ ).

\*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$



**Table 3**  
*Regression Analysis Predicting Emotional Labor*

Variable	Deep Acting			Surface Acting		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\Delta R^2$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1: Controls			0.143 **			0.036
Gender	-0.22	0.28		0.57 **	0.27	
Ethnicity	-0.04	0.19		-0.13	0.18	
Tenure	0.03	0.11		0.11	0.11	
Job Title	-0.48 †	0.25		-0.05	0.24	
Altruism	0.91 **	0.26		0.27	0.25	
Step 2: Main effects			0.061 **			0.059 **
Prosocial Motives	0.23 **	0.09		-0.31 **	0.09	
Financial Motives	0.16 †	0.09		0.07	0.09	
Total $R^2$			0.204			0.095
Adjusted $R^2$			0.176			0.063

*Note.* *B* values are unstandardized coefficients. Gender coded 1 = male, 2 = female. Ethnicity coded 1 = minority, 2 = white. Tenure coded 1 = less than 1 year, 2 = more than 1 year. Job title coded 1 = department clerk, 0 = all others.

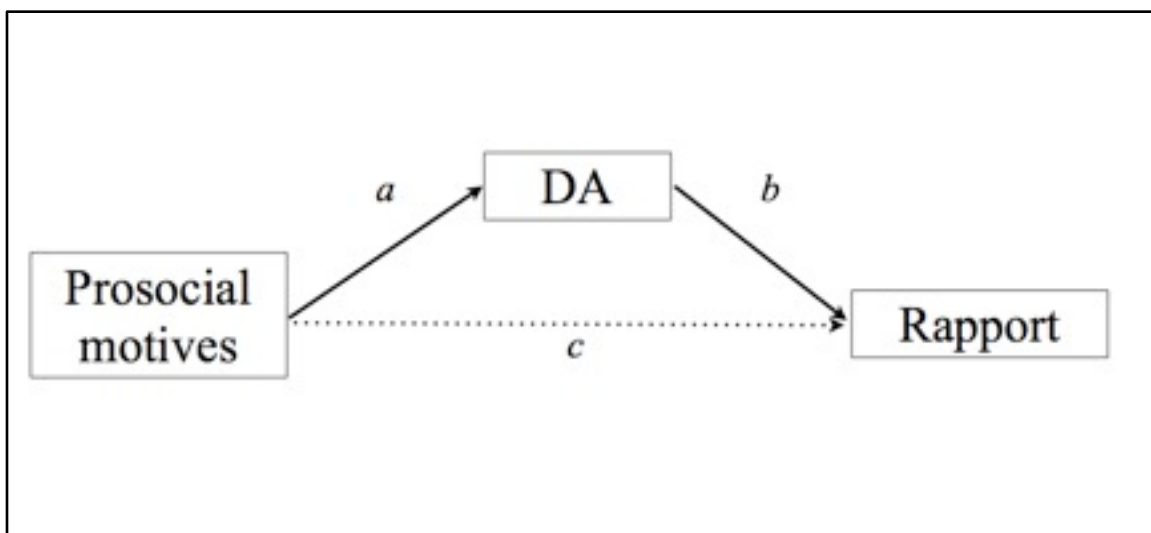
†  $p < .10$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

**Table 4**  
*HLM Results Predicting Supervisor-Rated Rapport with Customers*

Predictor	Model 0			Model 1			Model 2		
	Coeff.	SE	Δ Dev.	Coeff.	SE	Δ Dev.	Coeff.	SE	Δ Dev.
Intercept	3.65**	0.10		3.23**	0.49	-23.92**	3.09**	0.50	-6.85**
Emp gender				-0.03	0.17		0.03	0.18	
Emp ethnicity				0.26*	0.13		0.24†	0.14	
Ethnicity match				-0.17	0.21		-0.15	0.21	
Emp tenure				0.10	0.13		0.13	0.12	
Emp job title				-0.20	0.20		-0.19	0.20	
Altruism				0.15	0.19		0.10	0.19	
DA				0.01	0.04		0.00	0.04	
SA				0.05	0.05		0.03	0.04	
Prosocial motives				0.05	0.06		0.10	0.06	
Financial motives				-0.08	0.06		-0.10	0.06	
SA x Prosocial							-0.08**	0.03	
Overall deviance			542.01			518.07			511.22

*Note.* For employees,  $n = 203$ , supervisors  $n = 51$ , stores  $n = 28$ . Values are for fixed effects ( $\gamma$ ) with robust standard errors. Gender coded 1 = male, 2 = female. Ethnicity coded 1 = minority, 2 = white. Ethnicity match coded as 0 = employee and supervisor are same ethnicity, 1 = different ethnicity. Tenure coded 1 = less than 1 year, 2 = more than 1 year. Job title coded 1 = department clerk, 0 = all others.

†  $p < .10$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$



*Figure 1.* Diagram of hypothesis 2. Deep acting mediates the relationship between prosocial motives and rapport.

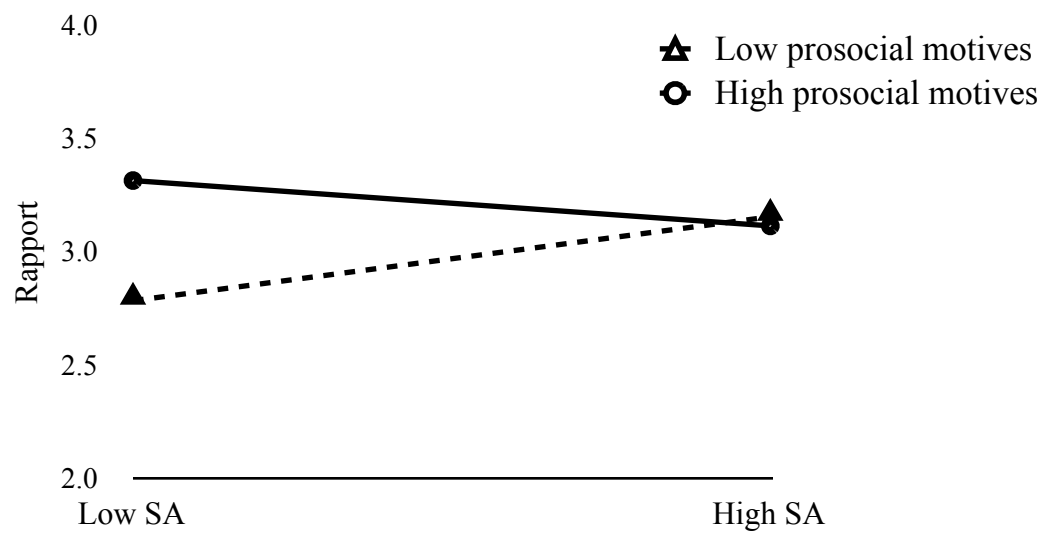


Figure 2. Prosocial motives as a moderator of the relationship between surface acting and rapport.

## Chapter 4

### DISCUSSION

The present study represents a first step in bringing together the research fields of emotional labor and prosocial motivation. The data provided quantitative evidence supporting past qualitative research (Bolton & Boyd, 2003; Lewis, 2005) demonstrating that EL may be engaged in for reasons other than financial motives (Hochschild, 1983). Supporting predictions made using a SDT (Gagne & Deci, 2005) approach to understanding motives, prosocial motives were positively related to DA beyond financial motives. However, in contrast to SDT, the fairly autonomous prosocial motivation was not related to the performance measure of employee-customer rapport. Relational job design (Grant, 2007) research usually does not find a direct relationship either (Grant, 2008; Grant, et al., 2009; Grant & Sumanth, 2009), and instead finds effects of prosocial motives on performance only when in conjunction with other variables. Accordingly, I predicted an indirect relationship through DA, but also failed to find support for this relationship. Finally, evidence for an interaction between SA and prosocial motives in predicting performance was found, demonstrating the importance of understanding both *how* and *why* when predicting service performance.

#### **Predicting Emotional Labor Strategy**

In support of the first hypothesis, prosocial motives for work were positively related to DA. This is one of the few quantitative studies to examine motives for working and EL. By definition, EL is emotion regulation for a wage. While I was not testing this specific assumption, I did find that financial motives were positively predictive of DA ( $r = 0.21, p < .$

01), but not SA ( $r = -0.04, p > .10$ ). This in itself is somewhat interesting, given that only one strategy of EL was related to financial motives, when in general, EL is supposed to be engaged in for a wage. While this finding is unexpected, it may be due in part to the fact that the grocery store employees do not work for tips. Perhaps in a food and beverage services setting where financial gain is more salient would financial motives be more predictive of SA.

Controlling for the expected effect of financial motives on EL, I expected that prosocial motives would be an additional factor in employees' choice of EL strategy. This prediction was in part inspired by recent qualitative efforts to explore reasons for engaging in EL (Bolton & Boyd, 2003; Lewis, 2005). It is also in accordance with SDT which outlines that more autonomously regulated motives, such as prosocial motivation, have more positive outcomes, such as performance, than externally regulated ones. Within the EL literature, DA is generally looked at as the better of the two strategies for enacting display rules; it is associated with less burnout and higher performance (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). SDT research has shown that more autonomous motives correspond to better well-being and performance than externally regulated motives. Thus, this study supports SDT in showing that prosocial motives positively predict the more desirable form of EL, DA, and do so beyond the effect of financial motives.

EL research by Rafaeli and Sutton (1987) discuss SA as a 'bad faith' method of enacting display rules; one that allows the employee to comply outwardly, but not inwardly. This would make it seem as though employees using SA may not be concerned with helping others at all, or in terms of SDT, would not have autonomous motives for working. However,

Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) predict that SA may stem from *either* a weak or a strong concern for customers. Thus, a negative relationship was not predicted between prosocial motives and SA because I expected that while individuals low in prosocial motives may be likely to use SA, occasionally those high in prosocial motives may have to use the strategy as it would be better than showing authentic negative emotions (Beal et al., 2006). Therefore, any relationship would be null as both high and low prosocially motivated individuals may use SA as an emotion regulation strategy.

My findings confirm that those low in prosocial motives do in fact engage in SA, but does not necessarily mean that individuals high in prosocial motives rarely SA. A scatterplot of the data reveals that while those low in prosocial motives do tend to use a high amount of SA, those high in prosocial motives use an average, not low, amount. Combined with the lack of relationship between financial motives and the negative relationship between prosocial motives and SA, this study might suggest that employees who use SA are not very motivated. Perhaps those who use it have been depleted of their motivational resources, or perhaps, it is a strategy that those already in a depletion state from other causes must resort to. More negatively, perhaps these employees are not motivated and engaged in the first place; they may choose not to use SA as a means to avoid being reprimanded by their supervisor.

Another explanation is that those low in prosocial motives engaged in relatively high amounts of SA because they were being monitored. In fact, supervisors reported observing their employees for an average of 17.5 hours ( $SD = 9.82$ ) a week. This corresponds to about half of the hours a full time employee is at work. This supports prior research that indicates

EL may be done when external pressures are high (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1990) or when employees are monitored (Holman et al., 2002).

### **Service Performance: Employee-customer Rapport**

This study explored the performance variable of employee-customer rapport. Rapport was included as an outcome in this study to extend prosocial motives and SDT research. To my knowledge, SDT researchers have not conducted research within the customer service realm where interacting with people is a key component of the job. While the relational job design theory literature often does use customer service samples, the performance measured tends to be objective (number of calls made to donors) and does not focus on the quality of interactions with customers as this study does. SDT research predicts that more autonomous motives, such as prosocial motives (as argued by this paper), have stronger positive links with performance outcomes (Gagne & Deci, 2005, Ryan & Connell, 1989). Relational job design research also predicts this, but commonly does not find a *direct* link between prosocial motives and performance measures (Grant, 2008; Grant, et al., 2009; Grant & Sumanth, 2009). Thus, it was hypothesized that prosocial motives would be indirectly related to rapport since they are both concerned with helping others and that DA would be a means for prosocially motivated individuals to build rapport with others; that is, DA would mediate the indirect relationship.

Even though prosocial motives are positively associated with DA, neither were related to supervisor-rated rapport with customers. This finding is somewhat less surprising for prosocial motives, since it is often found to predict performance only when moderators are considered (Grant, 2008; Grant, et al., 2009; Grant & Sumanth, 2009). What is more



surprising is that DA was not related to employee-customer rapport. Across several individual studies, DA has been positively linked to service performance (Beal et al., 2006; Bono & Vey, 2007; Grandey, 2003; Groth et al., 2009; Totterdell & Holman, 2003) and this relationship is also found in a meta-analysis of EL research (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). In fact, in that same meta-analysis it was stated that displaying genuine positive emotions created by DA “elicits favorable reactions from customers, helps establish a strong customer rapport and favors positive customer evaluations” (p. 367).

It may be that the performance measure used, employee-customer rapport, was not specific enough to EL; perhaps a measure of affective delivery, as has often been looked at in EL literature, would have proved to be related to the predictor variables. For example, my employee-customer rapport items measured empathy and the ability to build relationships with customers, while affective delivery items measure the degree to which the employee appears polite, friendly, and warm. While these are all components of rapport (Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990), perhaps they lend themselves to being predicted by EL more easily as they capture how well the employee is performing, not necessarily how effective that performance is in creating interpersonal relationships with employees.

Perhaps another reason for the null finding is that employee-customer rapport was rated by supervisors. As the above quote above points out, DA elicits positive reactions from *customers*, not necessarily supervisors. This is not the only study to find that EL measures are unrelated to supervisor-rated performance. Gosserand and Diefendorff (2005) also found a null relationship when they explore supervisor-rated affective delivery as an outcome. However, they found that positive affect is positively related to DA and to performance.

Additionally, Beal and colleagues (2006) have found that both DA and SA are related to supervisor-rated affective delivery when employees report high negative affectivity. Together, these studies suggest that affect maybe a key piece of information when understanding the relationship between EL strategy and performance. Unfortunately, I did not have a measure of affect to examine interactions between employee affect and strategy when predicting employee-customer rapport. I encourage future research to examine the relationship between these three variables.

An additional explanation for the lack of a relationship between DA and employee-customer rapport is that supervisors may not recognize this more authentic EL strategy when rating performance. Beal and colleagues (2006) suggest that this is because supervisors are more interested in employees displaying a positive expression than they are in the authenticity of the display. However, research has shown that grocery store supervisors do care about their employees being genuinely friendly with customers (Tolich, 1993); perhaps they are not always able to detect what is genuine or not. To my knowledge, there has not been research on supervisor detection of EL strategy. However, Groth and colleagues (2009) have found that customers can detect authenticity and that the correct detection of DA positively predicts perceived quality of service. This is another promising line of research that has the potential to help the field understand when EL strategy can be used to predict performance.

While DA, SA and prosocial motives were not found to directly predict employee-customer rapport, the interaction of prosocial motives and SA was a significant predictor of rapport. This interaction was predicted because past research has shown that the relationship

between SA and performance measures depends on individual differences in ability (Chi et al., 2011) or need (Beal et al., 2006), and that the relationship between prosocial motives and performance can also depend on other factors (Grant, 2008; Grant et al., 2009; Grant & Sumanth, 2009). Since SA tends to be an inauthentic (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002) and depleting (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Martinez-Inigo, et al., 2007; Seery & Corrigan, 2009) method of EL, it was predicted that SA would have a negative relationship with rapport, but that prosocial motives may serve as a resource to overcome depletion effects (Baumeister et al., 2007) and buffer the negative relationship.

However, it was found that high prosocial motives offered no performance increase for those who used SA. Instead, the effect trended (but the slope was nonsignificant) in the direction of SA being compensatory for low prosocial motives. Those who had low prosocial motives for working and did *not* engage in SA were rated lowest on rapport with customers. Those with high prosocial motives fared well in performance ratings, regardless of SA, while low prosocial motives weren't necessarily bad for performance, *if* the employee engaged in SA. This suggests that employees need to be either prosocially motivated or engage in SA to avoid low performance ratings. In this manner, SA may act as a sort of impression management, or efforts to create an image held by a target audience (Bozeman & Kacmar, 1997), to compensate for a lack of desire to help others. Impression management has been linked to higher performance ratings, compared to those who do not use such tactics at work (Wayne & Kacmar, 1991). Therefore, while the relationship was different than expected, it does not go against the notion that both how one works, EL, and why, motives, must be understood to predict performance. This is especially true if an employee is low in

one or the other. An employee who is low in SA may not necessarily be a low performer *if s/he* is prosocially motivated. Similarly, an employee low in prosocial motives may not be a low performer *if s/he* is engaging in SA.

That the effect is driven by the low end of SA helps facilitate understanding of what exactly low faking of emotional expressions means. For those low in prosocial motivation, infrequent SA may mean a lack of effort, revealing true ambivalent or negative emotions. As SA is meant to mask true emotions (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993), then low SA may mean that these true emotions leak out, *if* one lacks the motivation to hide them. On the other hand, for those who are highly motivated, low SA may simply mean that one does not *have* to fake emotions. In this case, employees may not experience emotional dissonance, or incongruence between felt and required emotions. The more emotional dissonance one experience, the more EL *s/he* reports using (Morris & Feldman, 1997). Perhaps an individual high in prosocial motives does not feel ambivalent or negatively because they have a desire to help others (Batson, 1987) and thus do not need to engage in SA.

### **Limitations and Strengths**

Efforts were taken to minimize weaknesses in the study, but not all limitations could be avoided. Not all employees were required to complete the survey. It follows then that the employees who completed the survey may differ in some way than those who did not. For example, the employees who chose to comply may be more agreeable than those who did not which would reduce the variability in the measures. The sample consisted of only grocery store employees. While customer service is part of their job, the type of service and interactions they have with employees is likely different than service employees in the

healthcare or restaurant fields. For example, the intimacy and duration of the interactions may be somewhat less than is seen in other areas of customer service (Price, Arnould, Tierney, 1995). Thus, EL may be somewhat less important for employee performance. In addition, the employees in this sample do not work for tips, which has been an outcome linked to EL in the past (Chi et al., 2011; Tidd & Lockard, 1978) and may affect whether EL is related to performance. As such, generalizability should be extended to other areas of customer service with caution especially in regards to the interaction of SA and prosocial motives. As the nature of this relationship was different than expected, it should be replicated in other research before being generalized to all service employees.

While there are several limitations in this study, it also has several merits. The first is the use of supervisor rated performance data. As mentioned earlier, prior research supports that customers can detect EL strategy (Groth et al., 2009), but no research has explored whether supervisors make this distinction when rating performance. In general, there is limited research within the field of EL that makes use of supervisor ratings of performance, with a few exceptions (Beal et al., 2006; Gosserand & Diefendorff, 2005). Otherwise, the ratings from customers, coworkers, the self, and even confederates in lab studies has been relied upon (Bono & Vey, 2007; Goldberg & Grandey, 2007; Grandey, 2003; Groth et al., 2009; Totterdell & Holman, 2003).

There are several reasons why using supervisors as raters is a strength of this study. First, the supervisors were trained to rate performance before the undertaking of data collection. Further, performance measures were collected for research purposes which can minimize the inflation seen with performance for evaluation measurement (Longnecker et al.,

19987). The use of an outside rater helps ensure that the predictors of performance in this study in are truly related to performance and not just an artifact of common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). In addition, supervisors spent on average 17.5 hours a week (SD = 9.82) with the employees they rated, giving supervisors opportunity to observe performance. Further, the sample was collected in the field, using adult employees, the majority of whom had over a year's experience in their current position. This addresses the concern that may exist as to the generalizability of lab research with student samples to adult work populations (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991).

### **Future Directions**

First and foremost, research findings should be replicated with other samples and raters. One recommendation would be using customers as raters of performance as it has been established that customer detection of EL strategies has implications for the customer's ratings of performance and return intentions (Groth et al., 2009). Longer term outcomes, such as customer loyalty, should also be researched. This study found that prosocial motivation did not predict employee rapport with customers; might it relate positively to customer intentions to return to the store? For example, prior research has found positive displays to be linked to longer term customer outcomes, such as willingness to return to the store or recommend the store, but not to immediate reactions, such as purchase intentions (Tsai, 2001). In addition, other employee outcomes should be considered; does having prosocial motives for working help customer service to be less stressful for employees? Might it make them more satisfied with their work, especially as contact with customers increases?

Furthermore, the mechanism for which prosocial motives moderate the effect of SA on performance should be explored. The literature suggests that SA is inauthentic and more depleting and therefore should have a negative relationship with performance (Hülshelger et al., 2010). However, this study did not find a negative relationship and the form of the interaction even suggests that for employees low in prosocial motives, SA can be a positive predictor of employee-customer rapport. Future research should use other variables to examine *when* SA can compensate for employee attributes such as low prosocial motives (found here, or negative affect; Beal et al., 2006).

I did not measure authenticity or burnout, but speculated that the reason prosocial motives may buffer the effect of SA on performance was that they would restore resources, or minimize resource loss. This did not seem to be the case as high prosocial motives added no performance benefit to those who tended to use SA. However, might these motives have a more buffering effect on burnout instead? The depletion literature would suggest so (Muraven & Slessareva, 2003).

### **Practical Implications**

In addition to expanding the academic literature, this study broadens the tools available to the practice of psychology. First, as it was found that prosocial motives were predictive of EL strategy, managers may wish to use prosocial motives measures a part of their personnel selection system. Recall that prosocial motives predicted the more desirable strategy of DA. However, because those who were low in prosocial motives were able to still maintain good levels of supervisor-rated rapport when using the EL strategy of SA, employees who are low in prosocial motives may just need training for using this strategy to

still be competent customer service personnel. I recommend training for SA with hesitance however as this strategy is often linked to health consequences such as stress and burnout (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Martinez-Inigo, et al., 2007; Seery & Corrigall, 2009).

This research also sheds light on motivation strategies for service managers. As I found that service employees are motivated by reasons other than financial ones, managers may try to emphasize the positive impact their employees can have on their customers. Making salient the positive impact that employees have on customers and clients has been shown to be an effective way to not only motivate employees, but help them feel more satisfied with their work (Grant, 2011). I feel more confident recommending this strategy since research has shown managers can increase employees prosocial motives (Grant, Campbell, Chen, Cottone, Lapedis & Lee, 2007) and I see this as being less detrimental to employee health (Grant & Campbell, 2007; Grant and Sonnentag, 2010) than training for SA.

## **Conclusion**

This expanded emotional labor research by demonstrating that emotional labor can be engaged in for reasons other than a wage. Prosocial motives positively predicted the strategy of deep acting and were negatively related to surface acting. Self determination theory and relational job design theories were used to predict that prosocial motives, an moderately autonomously regulated motive, would positively predict rapport, through the emotional labor strategy of deep acting. This finding was unsupported as deep acting did not positively predict rapport. In rapport with customers, it *was* found, however, that the predicted interaction of prosocial motives with surface acting was significant. Though the form of this



interaction was different than expected, it demonstrates the predicted importance of understanding both *how* and *why* when predicting service performance. Evidence supports that surface acting can be beneficial when performed by employees low in prosocial motives, who may lack the 'natural' emotions with customers.

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## Appendix

### *Items used for measuring emotional labor and motives*

*Deep acting - general (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Grandey, 2003; Grandey et al., 2004)*

How often do you do the following with customers during a typical work day?

Try to actually experience the emotions that I must show.

Make an effort to actually feel the emotions that I need to display toward others.

Work hard to feel the emotions that I need to show to others.

*Surface Acting - faking (Grandey, 2003)*

How often do you do the following with customers during a typical work day?

Fake a good mood with customers.

Just pretend to have the feelings I display with customers.

Hide my true feelings when interacting with customers.

Resist expressing my true feelings when interacting with customers.

*Prosocial Motives (Grant, 2008)*

Please rate the extent to which the following answer the question “Why are you motivated to work?”

Because I care about benefiting others through my work.

Because I want to help others through my work.

Because I want to have a positive impact on others.

Because it is important to me to do good for others through my work.

*Financial Motives (Grant, 2008)*

Please rate the extent to which the following answer the question “Why are you motivated to work?”

Because I need to earn money.

Because I need to pay my bills.

Because I need to support myself and my family.

Because I need the income.