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UNTANGLING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISPLAYED EMOTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONAL SALES: THE CASE OF CONVENIENCE STORES

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It has been proposed that the emotions expressed by role occupants influence the behavior of others. We hypothesized a positive relationship between employees' display of pleasant emotions to customers and sales in retail stores and tested that relationship in a sample of 576 convenience stores. An unexpected negative relationship was observed. A subsequent qualitative study suggested that sales is an indicator of a store's pace, or the amount of time pressure on clerks and customers, and that pace leads to displayed emotions, with norms in busy settings supporting neutral displays and norms in slow settings supporting positive displays. Reanalysis of the quantitative data confirmed that clerks in rapidly paced stores with high sales and long lines were less likely to display positive feelings than clerks in slow-paced stores.

People want to be happy! Be happy and they will be glad they came to your store.

Loyal, regular customers are a source of steady sales for your store. Smile!! Service with a smile and a friendly attitude will keep them loyal and keep them coming back!

—From "Effective Customer Service Increases Sales,"
a training program used by a chain of convenience stores

Much theory and research has focused on the role of emotion in organizational life. Emotions are typically viewed as intrapsychic states caused by factors such as job characteristics (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), stress (Kahn, 1981), relationships with supervisors (Bass, 1982), or compensation (Lawler, 1981). Such studies most frequently have examined the determinants of job

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satisfaction, which Locke defined as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state” (1976: 1300).

Recent theoretical work, however, has emphasized that employees’ emotions are displayed as well as felt (Hochschild, 1979, 1983; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987, 1989). A variety of forces may explain variation in organizational members’ displayed emotions. Internal feelings certainly influence such behavior: satisfied employees may display genuine broad smiles and laughter during interactions with co-workers and customers; dissatisfied or tense employees may frown and groan during such transactions.

Yet there is an imperfect match between the emotions people feel and emotions they express on the job because employees are often expected to display emotions that are unrelated, or even in conflict, with their true feelings. Many organizations use practices, including recruitment and selection, socialization, and rewards and punishments, to assure that their members will conform to normative expectations, or “display rules” (Ekman, 1980: 87–88), that specify which emotions should be expressed and which should be hidden.

Organizations can support display rules by recruiting and selecting employees who are predisposed to express required emotions. Hochschild (1983) reported, for example, that Delta Airlines tries to select new flight attendants who will display good cheer to passengers and who have the emotional stamina to endure long, crowded flights without abandoning their smiles. Organizations may use socialization practices to teach display rules to newcomers. For example, a woman who supervises bill collectors reported that her subordinates learn—through both formal and informal means—to be pleasant to clients who are a month or two late on their Visa and MasterCard payments, to express firm disapproval to clients who are three or four months late, and to use nasty insults (e.g., “Why do you keep lying to me?”) when speaking with clients who are five or six months late (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1989).

Organizations may also use reward and punishment systems to maintain display rules once socialization has been completed. Many service organizations like airlines, telephone companies, department stores, and grocery stores monitor their employees to assure that they are conveying correct emotions to customers (Hochschild, 1983; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). Employees who display the wrong emotions may be punished, and those who convey the right emotions may be rewarded. Management may even invite customers to help enforce display rules. For example, a store in Hayward, California, offers customers a five-dollar reward if a clerk does not offer them a “friendly greeting” and a “cheerful smile.”

A primary reason that organizations develop and enforce display rules is that displayed emotions are thought to operate as “control moves.” Goffman (1969: 12) defined control moves as an individual’s strategic manipulation of expressions, including emotional expressions, to influence the behavior of others. Along those lines, the emotions displayed by employees in organizational settings can function as control moves that influence the behavior of clients and fellow organizational members (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987).

A modest body of evidence confirms that expressed negative, neutral, and positive emotions can serve as control moves for individuals. Police interrogators convey negative and esteem-degrading emotions to suspects in an effort to gain confessions (Arther & Caputo, 1959). In the same vein, the incomes of professional poker players depend heavily on their ability to display neutral emotion, regardless of their internal feelings (Hayano, 1982). Furthermore, field stimulations (Salancik, 1979) have suggested that smiling cocktail waitresses receive larger tips than unsmiling ones (Tidd & Lockhard, 1978) and that smiling nuns garner larger donations than glum nuns (Bradshaw, 1980).

Our contention is that displayed emotions are not only descriptors of individual employees; conveyed emotions can also be attributes of organizations. Specifically, we proposed that displayed pleasant emotions can act as control moves at the organizational level of analysis.

DISPLAYED EMOTIONS AS ORGANIZATIONAL ATTRIBUTES

Customers of service organizations often interact with only one or two boundary-spanning employees during a given visit (Bowen & Schneider, 1985; Shamir, 1980). Furthermore, the emotions encountered by customers are displayed by individual employees. Yet customers typically develop an overall image of the emotions that members of a given organization will display. Such overall images arise because stimuli generalization occurs. Indeed, stimuli generalization enables authors of guidebooks to publish overall judgments about the level of courtesy that can be expected at hotels and restaurants (e.g., Birnbaum, 1987; Unterman & Sesser, 1984). After patronizing a service organization, customers may develop opinions about the *emotional front* they expect to encounter.

Those opinions—whether based on slight or extensive experience with an organization—reflect a characteristic of the organization because customers do not usually expect to be served by the same employee during each visit. Customers may also discern differences in emotional fronts because organizations differ in norms about displayed emotions (Hochschild, 1983; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). Norms are attributes of social systems rather than of individuals (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

Writings intended for managerial audiences also imply that the emotional front is a meaningful organizational attribute. Indeed, some recent managerial folklore suggests that employees who display good cheer to customers can enhance sales and customer loyalty (Ash, 1984; Hochschild, 1983; Peters & Austin, 1985; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Richman, 1984). The emerging literature on customer service (Czepiel, Solomon, & Surprenant, 1985; Parasuraman, Zeithamal, & Berry, 1985) also implies that belief. Those writings suggest that, when all other factors are held equal, the display of positive emotions by employees can, in the aggregate, act as control moves that bring about gains for an organization. The implication is that to the extent each potential customer associates a positive emotional front with a

given organization, a larger proportion of the potential population will patronize that organization.

Theories of learning may explain why displaying warm feelings to customers can promote sales. Encountering employees who display warm, socially desirable feelings may be reinforcing for most people. Initial encounters with friendly employees may mark the start of an operant conditioning cycle (Skinner, 1953) in which the emotions displayed by employees are the reinforcers and patronizing the organization is the reinforced behavior. The probability that a given customer will visit an organization a second time is increased by employees' display of positive emotions. The organization's emotional front may also reinforce customer behavior indirectly through vicarious learning (Bandura, 1977). A customer may watch other customers encounter positive emotions or may visit a service organization after reading that its employees are nice, friendly, or polite.

Empirical support for this conceptual perspective was sought through study of a sample of 576 convenience stores. Specifically, we hypothesized that store sales would be greater to the extent that clerks displayed positive emotions during transactions with customers.

QUANTITATIVE AND DEDUCTIVE STUDY: METHODS

Research Context

These data were collected as part of an evaluation of employee courtesy in a large national chain of convenience stores. The corporation's human resources staff conducted this research as part of a chain-wide effort to enhance employee courtesy; top executives had decided that they could gain an advantage over their competitors by improving customer service in their stores. A primary reason that executives made this decision was that they had read *In Search of Excellence* and were swayed by Peters and Waterman's arguments that staying "close to the customer" (1982: 156) and having a "service obsession" (1982: 157) are characteristics of excellent firms.

During the year before these data were collected, the human resources staff had changed employee handbooks and the classroom training provided to new employees so that—rather than vaguely encouraging clerks to be friendly to customers—the training clerks received instructed them to greet, smile at, establish eye contact with, and say "thank you" to every customer. In addition, a variety of local and corporation-wide training programs were developed to teach store managers about how they could improve courtesy among their clerks. For example, the introduction to this article quotes a program entitled "Effective Customer Service Increases Sales" that included lectures, readings, role-plays, and group discussions to help managers improve the level of courtesy in their stores.

A variety of local and corporate-wide practices were used, both before and after the collection of the data, to reward clerks who acted friendly during transactions with customers. Clerks in most regions were informed that "mystery shoppers" would be used to observe levels of employee courtesy.

In some regions, clerks who were caught displaying the required good cheer to customers received a \$25 bonus. In other regions, clerks who were observed greeting, smiling, establishing eye contact, and saying "thank you" could win a new automobile instantly.

The corporation held a contest, costing over \$10 million, in which the owners of franchised stores and the managers of corporation-owned stores could qualify to enter a drawing for a million dollars if their clerks consistently offered good cheer to customers. The corporation also awarded large bonuses (over 25 percent of base salary) to regional managers when a high percentage of sales clerks in the stores they managed were observed greeting, smiling at, establishing eye contact with, and saying "thank you" to customers.

We had no influence over the design and implementation of this data gathering. The firm gave us the data because one of us had attended graduate school with the firm's director of field research. Other corporate executives were also interested in our findings because most of them believed that employee courtesy led to increased sales. They were curious to discover if quantitative evidence would support their beliefs. Small but significant relationships between displayed emotions and store sales could mean millions of dollars of sales for this national chain. For example, 2 percent increase in sales would increase corporate revenues by over \$100 million.

Sample

The sample comprised 576 of the convenience stores in this national chain. There are over 7,000 stores in the United States and Canada, 36 percent of which are franchised. The corporation owns the remainder. The typical store has 8 to 10 employees, with a range of 6 to 20 employees. The stores sell a wide range of items, including food, drinks, cigarettes, and magazines. The corporation uses a variety of rules and inducements to assure that there will be similarity in the products sold in each of these stores, but there is variation because people who manage the corporation's stores and people who own franchised stores have some authority to decide what products will be sold. The stores with greater sales tend to carry larger inventories. Yet, compared to supermarkets, these stores all carry tiny inventories because they have little storage space. Thus, they must be replenished frequently by suppliers.

A random sample of 576 urban stores was selected for the study. The stores selected were from all 18 divisions in the United States and Canada. The corporation defines divisions, which include between 300 and 600 stores, by geographical boundaries. The firm chose the four most heavily populated urban districts (35–40 stores) from each division for the research, for a total of 72 districts. Rural districts were excluded to reduce travel costs. Eight stores were randomly selected from each district, for a total of 576 stores. Thus, the sample is representative of the urban stores in this national chain.

The extent to which employees display positive emotions to customers can be considered a store, or organization, attribute, as we suggested earlier. Yet this attribute can only be observed in the behaviors of individual

employees. Thus, displayed emotions were measured by observers who coded clerks' behavior during transactions with customers. These observations were made during three months in 1984. Observers visited each of the 576 stores twice: once during the day shift and once during the swing shift. They visited 25 percent of the stores (144 stores) a third time during the night shift (11:00 p.m.–7:00 a.m.). A store visit could occur at any juncture in each eight-hour shift since observers also worked shifts that were approximately eight hours. The most efficient route of travel usually determined the order in which selected stores were visited.

Observers coded as many as 20 transactions between customers and clerks during each store visit, for a total of up to 60 transactions per store. The number of transactions coded during a visit ranged from 1 to 20 and was determined primarily by the number of customers in the store during the visit. The modal number of transactions coded at each visit was 8 and the mean was 9. The final sample included 11,805 clerk-customer transactions. A total of 1,319 clerks were observed; 44 percent were men, and about 75 percent of the customers were men.

Procedures

Observers acted as incognito participant observers (Webb, Campbell Schwartz, Sechrest, & Grove, 1981: 200). They were participant observers since they acted like typical customers. The firm notified store managers that mystery shoppers might be visiting their stores during the spring or summer of 1984 to observe employee courtesy, but managers received no specific information about the timing of the visits.

The firm's marketing information indicated that typical customers were working class men and, less often, women, 18 to 34 years old. Observers were selected accordingly and instructed how to dress. The firm did not hire observers especially for this task. Rather, members of the corporate staff, particularly of the human resources staff, who fit the profile of a typical customer were asked to spend one to four weeks working as observers. The people who gathered the data held a wide range of jobs in the corporation, including those of organizational development specialist, executive development specialist, director of field research, secretary, and marketing manager.

The corporation's director of field research trained the other corporate employees who volunteered to help gather the data. Before visiting stores included in the study, each volunteer observer visited some pretest stores with the director of field research. They coded clerks' behaviors and compared observations after each visit. The volunteers and the director discussed and clarified differences in coding until they agreed consistently.

Observers visited each store in pairs. They acted independently and did not communicate with each other while inside the store. Observations were noted on preformatted three-by-five-inch cards. Only one clerk, the operator of the primary cash register, was observed during each visit, even if more than one register was operating. Observers walked around the store for a few minutes and noted how well the store was stocked with merchandise. They

also noted whether the clerk was wearing a name tag and a smock and whether the smock was clean. Typically, the observers then walked to the magazine rack or coffee pots, which were usually close to the primary cash register. Observers usually coded clerks' behaviors toward customers from those vantage points. The observers then selected a small item like a candy bar and stood in line. They continued to note employees' behaviors toward customers while standing in line. Observers left the store after paying for their purchases.

The amount of time in each store varied from 4 to 12 minutes; the amount of time could not be predetermined because observers were instructed to stay in each store as long as possible. But they also had to avoid evoking suspicion. The visit was kept short if there were few customers in the store to prevent the clerk's becoming suspicious. Observers also noted if they felt that a clerk suspected that they were not ordinary customers. Clerks were thought suspicious in less than 3 percent of the observations; we excluded these observations from the analyses.

The firm's director of field research, an experienced organizational researcher who had responsibility for designing and implementing this study, established the interobserver reliability of this method. The director visited a sample of 274 stores and observed a clerk at each store. During each of those visits, one of seven other members of the data-gathering team accompanied the director. Interobserver reliability was assessed by comparing the research director's coding of clerks' emotional displays with the coding of the seven second observers. The correlations between the research director's coding and the second observers ranged from .94 to .67. The mean correlation was .82 and the median correlation was .85.

Predictor Variable: Display of Positive Emotion

The concept of displayed positive emotions is related to employee courtesy, an idea mentioned often in the literature on service organizations (Czepiel et al., 1985; Schneider, Parkington, & Buxton, 1980). The concept of courtesy, however, is broader than displayed positive emotion, since courtesy may also include working quickly, dressing neatly (Parasuraman et al., 1985), and doing favors for customers (Shamir, 1980). The display of positive emotion refers specifically to presenting a warm outward demeanor during transactions with customers.

The corporate researchers gathered evidence about two social amenities, greeting and thanking, and two forms of nonverbal behavior, smiling and establishing eye contact, that reflected the presentation of a warm outward demeanor. These four aspects of clerks' displayed positive emotion were observed at the transaction level of analysis and were operationally defined as follows. (1) Greeting: only "Hello," "how are you today," or another polite phrase at the outset of a transaction was considered to be a greeting. "Is that all for you?" and "Anything else?" were not coded as greetings. (2) Thanking: the word thank or a derivative had to be used. (3) Smiling: a smile was considered a noticeable upturn of the lips (Tidd & Lockard, 1978). (4) Eye

contact: a direct gaze by a clerk was coded as a sincere attempt at eye contact, regardless of whether a customer reciprocated.

The observers assigned a value of 1 if a behavior was displayed and a value of 0 if it was not displayed. Thus, each transaction was coded as to whether the clerk smiled at, greeted, thanked, and maintained eye contact with the customer. The data were aggregated to the store level of analysis to form an index of display of positive emotion as a store attribute.

For each store, a score was computed for each of the four emotional expressions by calculating the proportion of transactions in which the behaviors were displayed over the total number of transactions coded. For each store, the variable measuring the display of positive emotion was an index composed of the mean level of greeting, thanking, smiling, and eye contact observed in that store ($\alpha = .76$).

The aggregation of transaction-level data to an organizational level can be justified if the ratio of between-group variance to within-group variance is statistically significant. A significant ratio suggests that the aggregated variable is measuring an organizational-level construct (Rousseau, 1985). We performed an ANOVA with display of positive emotion as the dependent variable and store identifiers as the independent variable. The between-store variance was significantly greater than the within-store variance ($ms = .82$ and $.06$, respectively; $F_{576, 11,804} = 14.311$; $p < .01$).

Control Variables

This study sought to document the effects of a store's emotional front above and beyond the effects of other factors. Thus, it was important to control for the effects of other store attributes on store sales. Observers gathered data for five control variables: clerks' gender composition, customers' gender composition, clerks' image, store's stock level, and length of line. Data for three other control variables were obtained from company records: store ownership, supervision costs, and geographical region. We operationally defined those variables as follows. (1) Clerks' gender composition was defined as the proportion of a store's clerks who were women. Observers noted the gender of the clerk during each visit. In order to aggregate to the store level of analysis, we computed the proportion of women over the total number of clerks observed across all visits as an index of the store's gender composition. We used this measure to control for variation in displayed emotion due to gender (Deaux, 1985; Putnam & McCallister, 1980). (2) Customers' gender composition referred to the proportion of customers who were women. The observers noted the gender of the customer in each transaction. We aggregated those observations to the organizational level by computing the proportion of woman customers in each store over all the customers present during all observations in the store. This variable was introduced to help account for the different buying patterns of men and women (Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 1986). (3) Clerks' image was the degree to which clerks in a store maintained the dress code specified by corporate guidelines. This variable had three items: whether clerks wore a smock,

whether their smock was clean, and whether they wore a name tag. Ratings were on a 2-point scale with 1 = no and 2 = yes ($\alpha = .74$). This variable was used to help control for compliance with other corporate norms. (4) For store's stock level, three items were used to rate how well each store was stocked with merchandise. Observers used 5-point Likert scales to rate the extent to which the shelves, snack stands, and refrigerators were fully stocked ($\alpha = .81$). We controlled for this variable because high stock levels may promote strong sales regardless of displayed emotions. (5) For average line length, observers recorded the largest number of customers in line at the primary cash register during each store visit. Average line length reflects the mean number of people standing in line across all visits to a store. We controlled for this variable because stores with longer lines may sell more than others, regardless of displayed emotions. (6) Store ownership captured whether a store was franchised (coded 1) or corporation-owned (coded 0). The firm's executives have the authority to enforce policies about employee courtesy in corporate stores but can only encourage such practices in franchised stores. (7) Store supervision costs was the amount of money spent by the corporation on salaries, benefits, and training costs for the field supervisors who dealt directly with each store manager. This corporation provided us with standardized data about the number of dollars spent on each store for such supervision. A field supervisor typically oversees the operation of eight to ten stores, but such supervision costs varied considerably across stores in the sample. Variation occurred because regional, district, and division managers have some autonomy over how many stores each supervisor oversees, the amount such supervisors are paid, and how much training they receive. This variable was used to help control for the influence of quality of supervision on store sales. (8) Region reflected the corporation's grouping of stores into four geographical regions, each under the authority of a regional vice-president; the northeastern region was coded 1; the western, 2; the midwestern, 3; and the southern, 4. We used this variable to control for variability in administrative practices and for differences in regional norms about displayed emotion. The variable was dummy-coded so that it could be used in multiple regression analysis.

Criterion Variable: Total Store Sales

The criterion variable used in this study was total store sales during the same year that the observational data were gathered. Total store sales was the dollar value of sales for each store from all products sold during the 1984 calendar year, including grocery items, cigarettes, dispensed drinks, hot food, video games, oil, and gasoline. This measure was obtained from company records and was standardized among the stores included in the sample. We received standardized rather than raw data because executives preferred not to release that sensitive financial information. Standardization was accomplished by transforming total store sales into a new variable by assigning a value of 0 to the mean of each variable and a value of 1 to the standard deviation. The value for each store was the number of standard deviations that the store's sales deviated from the mean.

RESULTS OF THE QUANTITATIVE AND DEDUCTIVE STUDY

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of study variables. We performed multiple regression analyses to determine the relationship between the display of positive emotion and total store sales following a hierarchical procedure. The eight control variables were entered simultaneously into the first equation, which yielded a multiple *R* of .28 and an adjusted *R*-square of .06. The second regression equation included the eight control variables along with the index of displayed positive emotion. Total store sales was the criterion variable in both equations.

Table 2 reports results for the complete model. The control variables significantly related to total sales were store supervision costs, customers' gender composition, clerks' gender composition, and average line length. The second equation yielded a significant beta for the display of positive emotion, an *R* of .30, and an adjusted *R*-square of .07.

The statistically significant beta weight of the variable measuring display of positive emotion indicates a significant increment in *R*-square. That is, compared to the variance explained by the first equation, which included only control variables, the new variable included in the second equation contributed significantly to the variance explained (Cohen & Cohen, 1975). But the direction of the observed relationship contradicted our hypothesis: higher levels of displayed positive emotion were associated with lower levels of store sales. This finding was unexpected and confusing; it was also thought-provoking.

TABLE 1
Means, Standard Deviations,
and Intercorrelations of Quantitative Variables^a

Variables ^b	Means	Standard Deviations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Display of positive emotion	0.51	0.23								
2. Store ownership	0.36	0.48	-.06							
3. Stock level	3.26	0.59	.26	.23						
4. Customers' gender composition	0.19	0.13	-.04	.07	.08					
5. Clerks' gender composition	0.56	0.37	.13	-.11	-.07	-.08				
6. Clerks' image	0.74	0.34	.13	-.67	-.04	-.05	.10			
7. Supervision costs	0.00	1.00	-.01	.16	.00	-.00	.08	-.13		
8. Average line length	2.88	1.16	-.18	.04	.10	.28	-.00	-.02	.06	
9. Total sales	0.00	1.00	-.06	.00	.09	.10	.09	-.02	.13	.18

^a *n* = 576.

^b Store ownership was coded 0 for corporation-owned stores and 1 for franchised stores. Customers' gender composition is the proportion of woman customers. Clerks' gender composition is the proportion of woman clerks. Supervision costs and total sales were standardized for all stores included in the sample; thus, the mean is 0.00, and the standard deviation is 1.00.

TABLE 2
Beta Weights of Store Emotional Display and Control Variables
as Predictors of Total Store Sales^a

Variables ^b	Total Sales
Store ownership	-.10
Supervision costs	.13**
Stock level	.06
Customers' gender composition	.07†
Clerks' gender composition	.11**
Clerks' image	-.07
Average line length	.14**
Region 1	-.07
Region 2	.11
Region 3	.08
Display of positive emotion	-.10*
Multiple R	.30
Adjusted R-Square	.07**

^a $n = 576$.

^b Store ownership was coded 0 for corporation-owned stores and 1 for franchised stores. Customers' gender composition is the proportion of woman customers. Clerks' gender composition is the proportion of woman sales clerks. Region 1, region 2, and region 3 are dummy codes representing four regions.

† $p < .10$, two-tailed test.

* $p < .05$, two-tailed test.

** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

The modest positive relationship between line length and total store sales, along with the modest negative relationship between line length and the display of positive emotions (see Table 1), gave us a hint that by thinking about the differences between slow and busy settings we might be able untangle the relationship between displayed emotion and store sales. As a result, we gathered evidence about the differences between slow and busy settings as part of the qualitative research conducted to help understand why the quantitative evidence contradicted our central hypothesis.

THE QUALITATIVE AND INDUCTIVE STUDY

Scholarly knowledge is developed through alternating phases of induction and deduction. When empirical observations do not confirm a theory, investigators should embark on a new phase of theory building so that they can revise or reject the inadequate framework and replace it with a new framework (Merton, 1957; Wallace, 1971). As a result, our paper does not end with the usual discussion of quantitative findings. Instead, we conducted a qualitative and inductive study to help explain the unexpected negative relationship between the expression of positive emotion and store sales. The qualitative data provided rich information that helped us to view

the convenience stores in a different light and to develop new predictions that could be tested in a reanalysis of the quantitative data.

Qualitative Methods

The qualitative phase included case studies, a day spent working as a clerk, conversations with manager, a customer service workshop, and about 40 visits to different stores.

Case studies of four stores in Northern California were conducted. We used data on employee courtesy and store sales collected by the corporation to select cases that fit each of following four categories: (1) high sales and clerks who typically displayed positive emotions to customers, (2) high sales and clerks who typically did not display positive emotions, (3) low sales and clerks who typically displayed positive emotions, and (4) low sales and clerks who typically did not display positive emotions.

A pair of one-hour observations of transactions between clerks and customers were conducted in each of the four stores, one during a busy time and one during a slow time. Clerks working during each observation consented to participate in the study. An observer stood or sat near the cash register and took notes on predetermined topics, including customer demographics, line length, the number of customers in the store, customer behavior, and pressure from other tasks (e.g., stocking, cleaning, and dealing with vendors). The observers also had informal conversations with clerks about customer service.

A semistructured interview was conducted with the manager of each store. The interview contained 17 open-ended questions about the manager's prior experience; the selection, socialization, and reward systems used in the store; employee courtesy; and its influence on store sales. These questions appear in the Appendix. Interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes.

The qualitative study included a brief but instructive experience in which one of the authors spent a day working as a clerk in a store. About 30 minutes of training was provided, which included viewing a film on employee courtesy. This store had previously been rated as having low sales and frequent display of positive emotions.

We also had extensive in-person and telephone conversations with managers about the expression of emotion by store employees. At least 150 hours of conversations took place with corporate executives, customer service representatives, field supervisors, and store managers. These informal conversations focused on employee courtesy, especially the negative relationship we had observed between displayed positive emotion and sales. We also discussed interventions that could be used to enhance courtesy.

One of the authors attended a customer service workshop designed for franchisees and store managers. The two-hour program focused on methods for coaching and rewarding clerks in order to enhance their courtesy and satisfaction. It also provided an opportunity to hear managers discuss the role that expressed emotions play in the stores. Finally, the qualitative phase included approximately 40 visits to different stores located in three geo-

graphical regions. We made small purchases during those visits in order to observe clerks' displayed emotions.

The method of qualitative analysis used here draws on descriptions of how to generate theory by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Miles and Huberman (1984). This juncture in the research was primarily inductive since facts were gathered to help us generate new theory. Nonetheless, as Miles and Huberman suggested, the data gathering and the interpretations attached to the data were guided by our explicit prior assumptions. Specifically, since the quantitative results suggested the importance of a store's average line length, we gathered qualitative data about store pace. We also made initial conceptual speculations about the differences between slow and busy stores.

We had frequent conversations during and after the collection of the qualitative data to discuss how we should modify the theory in light of the evidence. We traveled back and forth between the qualitative evidence and our conceptual explanations about why a negative relationship had emerged between displayed positive emotions and sales. Collecting and analyzing the five new sources of data led us to refine our understanding of differences between busy and slow settings and the implications of store pace for displayed emotions.

THE REVISED PERSPECTIVE: BUSY AND SLOW TIMES AS CUES FOR EXPRESSED EMOTIONS

Customer: Can I please have a plastic bag for my merchandise?

Sales Clerk: Lady, we don't have time for your please and thank you. Can't you see how busy we are? Just say what you want.

—A transaction between one of the authors and a clerk in very busy store.

The qualitative evidence led us to conclude that the expression of positive emotion by clerks may not be a control move that influences the buying behavior of customers who visit these stores. The "service ideal"—the aspects of service that customers should expect to receive when they patronize an organization—portrayed in advertising and promotions for this national chain had historically emphasized speedy service and name-brand products rather than good cheer. Our conversations with executives also indicated that encounters with friendly clerks had only recently been included as part of the corporate marketing strategy.

Store managers throughout the corporation had received literature emphasizing the importance of offering smiles, greetings, eye contact, and thanks to customers only a few months before the quantitative data were gathered. Training programs for new employees had also recently been changed to include segments encouraging those behaviors. Further, some regional managers had implemented new customer service training programs like the one quoted at the outset of this article.

Yet the qualitative evidence that we encountered led us to question whether this new service ideal had been accepted. Managers and clerks

typically believed that outright rudeness drove away customers. But they often contended that friendliness and warmth were unnecessary because “our customers just want to get in and out quickly” and “our customers don’t care if the clerk is perky.”

Nonetheless, the qualitative evidence did help us untangle the relationship between expressed emotion and store sales. The data led us to propose that store sales reflect store pace, or the amount of time pressure on clerks and customers. It also led us to propose that store pace is a cause, rather than an effect, of expressive behavior in the convenience stores studied.

Qualitative comparisons of stores during slow and busy times suggested that store pace is a cue for norms about expressed emotions. We followed Bettenhausen and Murnighan’s (1985) view that norms are implicit agreements among members of a social system concerning which scripts they should and should not use to guide the behavior. Scripts are cognitive structures that specify “basic actions that can be executed in a range of possible manners and contexts” (Nisbett & Ross, 1980: 34). Scripts help people decide how to act in given situations.

Novel situations require participants to engage in considerable trial and error before they reach tacit agreement, or develop norms, about which scripts should guide actions (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985). But the settings examined in this research were not novel. The membership of these stores is in constant flux as customers come and go, but both customers and clerks have well-developed scripts because of their extensive experience with such settings. Corporate records indicate that the average clerk serves hundreds of customers each day. Customers also have extensive experience with such stores; the average customer visits three times a week. Moreover, customers have much related experience with other businesses designed for convenience, such as fast-food restaurants. As a result, the scripts that guide behavior in these transactions are enacted quickly and frequently.

Indeed, there is usually instant, tacit agreement between clerks and customers about which norms of emotional expression should guide their behavior in such stores. Store pace is a primary cue that determines which norms apply at a given moment. During busy times, both clerks and customers tacitly agree that the expression of pleasant emotions is not essential. Conversely, both clerks and customers tacitly expect that pleasant emotions should be expressed during slow times.

Norms During Busy Times: Customers as Objects for Rapid Processing

Data from the five sources summarized in Table 3 led us to conclude that a set of tacitly agreed upon, but well-defined, norms exist during busy times that encourage clerks in convenience stores to view customers as inputs for rapid processing. We also propose that those norms are reflected in differences at the store level of analysis because busy stores have a higher proportion of times during which clerks view customers—and customers view themselves—as inputs for rapid processing.

TABLE 3
Qualitative Evidence About the Influence of Store Pace on Displayed Emotions

Sources of Data	Evidence About Displayed Emotions in Stores During Busy Times	Evidence About Displayed Emotions in Stores During Slow Times
Four case studies	One store manager reported that clerks were less likely to be friendly during busy times. Customers are "more stressed and tense," as another store manager put it. Observers also noted that clerks tended to become less friendly during busy times. In both stores that were low on expressed positive emotion, there was a tendency to wait longer to open a second register than in the two stores that were high on the expression of positive emotion. Thus, during busy times, lines tended to be longer in the two "unfriendly" stores than in the two "friendly" stores.	The store managers reported that clerks were likely to be friendly during slow times; the observers noted that clerks tended to become more friendly during slow times. The observers also noted that extended conversations took place between clerks and regular customers during slow times, especially in the two "friendly" stores.
Day spent working as a clerk	The field notes reveal the following: [when the line of customers got long] "I never looked up at the customers. I never established eye contact. I never said thank you. I was breaking the rules, and I knew it. But I couldn't help it."	The field notes reveal the following: [during slow times] "There were regular customers. And my co-workers and I would often engage in brief, friendly banter, and sometimes even extended conversations, with these folks."
Conversations with managers	The negative relationship between positive emotion and performance was attributed to the "Manhattan effect," the notion that New Yorkers are less polite than people in other parts of the country because they are under greater time pressure.	There was widespread agreement that lack of courtesy should not be tolerated when it was slow because there are no excuses for such behavior.
Customer service workshop	A store manager remarked, "Customers who are in a long line don't care if we smile or not. They just want us to run like hell."	There was a general discussion about slow and busy stores. All agreed that it was easy to smile, greet, establish eye contact, and thank customers when it was slow, but being courteous was thought to be a challenge when it was busy.
Store visits	We noticed that clerks and customers tried to move as fast as possible when the store was busy. Everyone was less friendly. We also found that our own irritation from waiting in long lines was sometimes expressed to clerks.	We noticed that clerks tended to be more friendly when there were fewer customers in the store; customers and we ourselves also tended to be more friendly during slow times.

Isenberg (1981) reported a pilot study in which he found that people under time pressure expected themselves to be more task-oriented and less friendly. The pattern observed in the qualitative data was consistent with Isenberg's findings. When there were many customers in a store and lines were long, both clerks and customers usually tried to move as quickly as possible to speed transactions. We heard clerks apologize for moving slowly during busy times. We also heard customers apologize for making large purchases when a long line of customers was waiting behind them. Such apologies by clerks and customers were heard even if only two or three people were standing in line because these stores are so strongly oriented towards convenience.

Consistent with Isenberg's findings, data from the case studies indicated that both clerks and customers in the busiest of the four stores were the least likely to display positive emotions; this store had the highest proportion of busy times. Moreover, visits to all four stores during busy times revealed that employees were less likely to offer greetings, eye contact, smiles, and thanks to customers than they were during slow times. Indeed, as Table 3 reveals, all five data sources suggested that positive emotions were less likely to be expressed during busy times.

Two reasons may explain why such norms are in place during busy times. First, such norms help maintain efficiency. Katz and Kahn (1978) and Feldman (1984) proposed that norms are enforced when they express core values of an organization or group and clarify what is distinctive about a social system. Efficiency is a core value for these convenience stores. Advertisements for the chain emphasize how quickly customers can get in and out of the stores. Indeed, speed of service is perhaps the primary reason that customers visit these stores.

Greeting, smiling at, thanking, and establishing eye contact with customers take only a small amount of extra time. But displaying those simple behaviors can encourage customers to prolong a transaction. One experienced clerk who worked in a store that was often busy told us that he learned not to smile or establish eye contact with customers because "being friendly" often caused customers to start prolonged conversations that he did not have time to finish. We also observed that people waiting in line are less likely to become irritated at "no nonsense" clerks who focus only on moving customers along quickly. Courteous clerks may be able to process customers just as quickly as clerks who do not interact with customers, but they appear to be slower. In short, customers and clerks are not likely to exchange good cheer during busy times because such acts hamper objective and perceived efficiency.

Second, a busy pace can create stress. Several of the clerks we spoke with reported feeling tense when lines were long. Table 3 also quotes a store manager who reported that customers feel tense when lines are long. Overloaded clerks who are displaying their inner feelings—rather than trying to follow corporate display rules—are not likely to be smiling. Even the display of anger or irritation may be acceptable during busy times; it is clearly more

acceptable than it is during slow times. Expressing irritation toward people who hampered efficiency was found to be especially legitimate during busy times.

Indeed, we encountered some evidence that sanctions are applied to both clerks and customers who hamper efficiency during busy times. The following incident occurred during the day that one of us worked as a clerk: A customer initially requested only a hot dog and a soft drink. In the middle of his purchase, however, he decided to “grab a few things” including two Bic lighters, two toothbrushes, Ex-Lax, and aspirin; the three people waiting in line started glaring at this customer. To make things worse, the clerk did not have the skill to process this complicated order rapidly; he was also sanctioned. One impatient customer commented pointedly that “it is hard to get good help these days.”

Along similar lines, a customer service manager told us about a time when—even though there was a line of seven customers at the primary cash register—the second clerk continued an animated conversation with his friend rather than open a second cash register. Both the clerk operating the cash register and a regular customer who was in line reacted by taunting the chatty clerk.

Norms During Slow Times: Customers as Entertainment

Norms during slow times contrast strongly with those during busy times. As with busy times, a set of tacitly agreed upon, but well-defined, behavioral expectations can be identified for slow times. Isenberg's (1981) previously cited laboratory research suggests that people under low time pressure expect themselves to be less task-oriented and more friendly than those under high time pressure. Findings from the five sources of qualitative evidence summarized in Table 3 are consistent with those findings. Clerks were more likely to greet, smile at, establish eye contact with, and say “thank you” to customers during slow times. Customers were also more likely to be friendly. Moreover, the norms for expressive behavior during slow times are also reflected at the store level because slow stores have a high proportion of slow times.

We identified three primary reasons why norms in slow stores support the expression of positive emotion. First, pressure on clerks for speed and efficiency is low during slow times. Clerks can take the time to greet customers, establish eye contact, smile, and say “thanks” without suffering the negative consequences that occur during busy times. Indeed, as Table 3 indicates, managers believe that lack of courtesy should not be tolerated during slow times because there is no excuse for such behavior.

Second, our observations suggested that customers who enter stores during slow times have different expectations about what constitutes correct behavior. In contrast to scripts for busy times, scripts for slow times have more “scenes” (Nisbett & Ross, 1980: 34) that emphasize interpersonal exchanges and the display of positive and esteem-enhancing emotions. Customers who entered stores that had few other customers were more likely to offer

greetings and smiles to clerks. We also noticed this pattern in our own behavior when we visited stores.

Third, and perhaps more important, clerks in slow stores were often genuinely happy to see customers enter the store. They were most enthusiastic about seeing regular customers, but they acted happy even if it was someone they had never met. Recalling Roy's (1959) classic discussion of "banana time," our data indicated that informal social interaction with customers was an important means for introducing variety into a boring job. Clerks are especially friendly during slow times because they view customers as entertainment. Thus, the expression of positive emotions during slow times—and, in the aggregate, in stores that are usually slow—may be influenced more strongly by true feelings than by corporate display rules.

Field notes from the day one of us spent working as a clerk illustrate that point:

There weren't a lot of customers. I was bored with the jobs they were giving me. When no customers were around, I'd spend my time putting prices on things, putting cans on shelves, and doing thrilling jobs such as cleaning the nacho machine. I'd get excited when a customer walked into the store because talking to customers was the only vaguely interesting thing to do.

In short, norms for slow times encourage the expression of positive and esteem-enhancing emotions. But such expectations do not appear to stem from efforts by the formal organization to increase sales.

REANALYSIS OF THE QUANTITATIVE DATA: TESTING THE REVISED THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The revised theoretical perspective presented above provided considerable guidance for reanalysis of the quantitative data. A comparison of busy and slow times facilitated interpretation of the qualitative data. It appeared that stores with a high proportion of busy times were less likely to have a set of clerks who displayed positive emotions to customers and that stores with a low proportion of busy times were more likely to have a set of clerks who did display good cheer to customers. Stores could be placed on a continuum from rapidly to slowly paced. Thus, we proposed that clerks working in a store that was usually busy would be guided less frequently by norms supporting the display of positive emotions. We came to view store pace—time pressure placed on clerks and customers—as cause of displayed emotion. Thus, although the display of positive emotion was a predictor variable in the initial analysis of the quantitative data, our revised perspective suggested that it be used as the criterion variable.

The revised perspective also suggested that we use two indicators of store pace—store sales and line length—as the predictor variables. Compared to stores with low sales, stores with high sales have more customers, more vendors coming and going, more telephone calls, and more people playing video games. Thus, stores with high sales have a high proportion of busy times. Furthermore, busy stores usually have longer lines than slow stores.

Thus, average line length, one of the control variables used in the initial analysis, also indicates how much objective and subjective time pressure is usually placed on clerks and customers in a store.

Table 1 presents a modest positive relationship between sales and line length. But the small magnitude of that correlation, along with findings based on our observations of the stores, suggested that line length is a distinct indicator of store pace. High store sales may reflect large purchases rather than long lines. Moreover, stores with high sales place other demands on clerks that line length does not reflect, such as more frequent visits by vendors and more pressure to restock shelves.

In short, we proposed that stores with a high proportion of busy times would be less likely to have clerks who greeted, smiled at, established eye contact with, and said "thank you" to customers. Specifically, we expected that (1) store sales would be negatively related to the expression of positive emotion and (2) a store's average line length would be negatively related to the expression of positive emotion.

These expectations were tested in the same data set used for the first quantitative analyses; multiple regression analyses were again used in the sample of 576 stores. A hierarchical procedure similar to that used in the first quantitative analysis was employed. The first equation included seven control variables—ownership, supervision costs, stock level, customers' gender composition, clerks' gender composition, clerks' image, and region—as predictors of the display of positive emotion. This analysis yielded a multiple R of .40 and an adjusted R -square of .15 ($p < .001$). In the second equation, we added the predictor variables of line length and total store sales to the seven control variables used in the first equation. Table 4 presents the results of this equation; a multiple R of .44 and an adjusted R -square of .18 were obtained. Table 4 indicates that both store sales and average line length were significantly and negatively related to the display of positive emotion. The significant beta weights for both total store sales and average line length indicate that these variables make a significant contribution to the variance explained by the model. That is, the increment in R -square is statistically significant. These results support our revised perspective.¹

Several control variables were also significantly related to the display of positive emotion: store ownership, stock level, clerks' gender composition, and region. Clerks in corporation-owned stores presented positive emotions more often than clerks in franchised stores. This finding may occur because

¹ We also conducted additional analyses to rule out nonlinear relationships between total store sales and displayed emotion and between line length and displayed emotion. An argument based on activation theory (Scott, 1966) suggested that, if store pace was a stressor and decrement in displayed positive emotion was a form of on-the-job performance, there would be an inverted-U-shaped relationship between store pace and the display of positive emotion. We used multiple regression analyses with quadratic (X^2) terms of store sales and line length to explore that hypothesis (Cohen & Cohen, 1975). The squared variable did not bear a significant relationship to displayed emotion ($p < .10$) in either of the analyses. Thus, we found no support for a U-shaped or an inverted-U-shaped relationship between sales and displayed emotion or between line length and displayed emotion.

executives can enforce policies about emotional expression in corporate stores but can only encourage such behavior in franchised stores. Stock level was positively related to pleasant displays; both maintaining well-stocked shelves and displaying good cheer may reflect general adherence to corporate guidelines. The positive relationship between clerks' gender composition and expressed positive emotions is consistent with prior findings that women are more likely to smile and display warmth than men (Deaux, 1985). Finally, as Table 4 shows, two of the three dummy-coded region variables had significant beta weights. A comparison of means (Pedhauzer, 1982: 289) for the regions indicated that clerks in the West were the most likely to express positive emotions and clerks in the Northeast were the least likely to do so. The negative relationship shown in Table 4 between the two indicators of store pace and the expression of positive emotion are consistent with our revised perspective. A key underlying assertion of this perspective is that clerks are less likely to display positive emotions during busy times than during slow times.

Further evidence for this assertion was obtained by comparing clerks' behavior during busy and slow times. The line-length variable, which was gathered at the clerk level of analysis, is an indicator of store pace at a given

TABLE 4
Results of Regression Analysis of Store Pace
as a Predictor of Display of Positive Emotion^a

Variables ^b	Betas
Control variables	
Store ownership	-.14†
Supervision costs	.01
Stock level	.23**
Customers' gender composition	.04
Clerks' gender composition	.15**
Clerks' image	.06
Region 1	-.03
Region 2	.25*
Region 3	.12**
Store pace	
Total store sales	-.09*
Average line length	-.20**
Multiple R = .44	
Adjusted R-square = .18**	

^a $n = 576$.

^b Store ownership was coded 0 for corporation-owned stores and 1 for franchised stores. Customers' gender composition is the proportion of woman customers. Clerks' gender composition is the proportion of woman sales clerks. Region 1, region 2, and region 3 are dummy codes representing the four regions.

† $p < .10$, two-tailed test.

* $p < .05$, two-tailed test.

** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

time. If norms about expressed emotions were linked to pace in the convenience stores studied, we expected that, across the 1,319 clerks who were observed for this study, there would be a negative relationship between the length of the line a clerk faced and his or her display of positive emotions.

A hierarchical multiple regression procedure at the individual level of analysis confirmed that expectation. We introduced the relevant control variables into the first equation: clerks' gender composition, proportion of woman customers, clerks' image, and store's stock level during the observation. This analysis yielded an R of .27 and an adjusted R -square of .07. In the second equation, we added average line length as an additional predictor. Line length was significantly and negatively related to the display of positive emotion by clerks ($\beta = -.14$, $p < .001$, $n = 1,319$). The complete model yielded an R of .32 and an adjusted R -square of .10

These analyses did not, however, address the question of whether constant exposure to busy or slow times influences all transactions in a store regardless of whether a particular time happens to be slow or busy. If recurring pace does influence store norms about expressive behavior, the relationship between line length and the display of positive emotion is likely to be different in typically busy stores than in typically slow stores.

The qualitative evidence led us to expect that clerks in stores that are usually busy will be less sensitive to the number of customers standing in line than clerks in stores that are usually slow. During slow times in typically busy stores, clerks may be indifferent or even unhappy about seeing customers because they must use slow times to cope with other demands such as stocking shelves, dealing with vendors, and answering phone calls. But such distracting demands are lower in stores that are typically slow. During slow times in stores that are usually slow, clerks are more likely to offer good cheer because they are bored and need the entertainment provided by customers.

In addition, we proposed that clerks in stores that are usually slow are less likely to offer pleasant emotions during busy times than clerks in stores that are usually busy. Clerks in stores that are usually slow have less experience in coping with the pressure of busy times. Thus, clerks in stores that are usually slow may be more likely to feel and thus express neutral, or even negative, feelings when lines do get long.

Thus, we expected a stronger negative relationship between the line lengths faced by individual clerks and their display of positive emotion in stores that are usually slow than in stores that are usually busy. Store sales is an indicator of whether a store is typically busy or slow. The expected relationship implies a significant interaction effect at the individual level of analysis between the length of a line that clerks face and the level of total sales of the store in which they work. We expected that interaction to have a significant effect on the display of positive emotion by clerks. Thus, an additional regression equation was examined. In this equation, the interaction term (line length \times total sales) was included, in addition to the individual-level control variables—clerks' gender composition, customers' gender composition, clerks'

image, and store's stock level during the observation. As expected, the interaction term bore a significant relationship to displayed positive emotion ($\beta = -.07, p < .001$), and the equation yielded a multiple R of .29 and an adjusted R -square of .08, compared to a multiple R of .27 and an adjusted R -square of .07 obtained with the model including only the control variables.

Subgroup analyses were conducted in order to understand the pattern of this interaction. Specifically, we split the sample of 576 stores at the mean of store sales, classifying 326 stores as slow and 250 stores as busy. We then conducted multiple regression analyses within each subsample on the relationship between line length and the expression of positive emotion by individual clerks.

As with the other multiple regressions at the clerk level of analysis, we first introduced clerks' gender, customers' gender, clerks' image, and store's stock level as control variables. Line length was then introduced as the predictor variable. The display of positive emotion by clerks was the criterion variable. In slow stores, the relationship between line length and the display of positive emotions was negative and significant ($\beta = -.19, p < .001, n = 708$ clerks). In busy stores, that relationship was not nearly as strong and was only marginally significant ($\beta = -.06, p < .10, n = 611$ clerks). Those results affirm that there is a stronger negative relationship between line length and the display of positive emotion by individual clerks in typically slow stores than in typically busy stores. We repeated this analysis with the sample split at the median of store sales and observed the same pattern of results.

DISCUSSION

Our initial conceptual perspective focused on expressed positive emotions as control moves that influence the shopping behavior of customers. We hypothesized that stores in which employees were more likely to offer positive emotions to customers would have greater sales. But a quantitative study of 576 convenience stores revealed a negative relationship between displayed positive emotions and store sales.

Our revised perspective emphasized that store sales reflect store pace and that store pace is a cause, rather than an effect, of expressed emotions. We found some empirical support for the revised perspective. But our sample included only one variety of convenience stores; the service ideal associated with these stores has not traditionally included friendly service. Emotions expressed in organizations in which a different service ideal is present may act as control moves that influence sales. That is, a warm emotional front may promote sales when customers expect that it should and will be a central part of a firm's service. Examples of organizations where customers expect to receive good cheer from employees include Nordstrom's (Peters & Austin, 1985), Disneyworld (Tyler & Nathan, 1985), and Delta Airlines (Hochschild, 1983). Furthermore, expectations of fast service need not exclude warmth and friendliness; McDonald's is an example of a national chain in which the service ideal includes both rapid and friendly service.

The convenience stores studied are settings in which transactions between employees and customers are very brief. Expressed emotions may also be more powerful control moves during long transactions between employees and customers. When waiters serve customers in restaurants, for example, the interaction may last anywhere from 30 minutes to one and a half hours (Mars & Nicod, 1984), far longer than the 2 or 3 minutes that a typical customer spends in the stores we studied. There is more time during a long transaction for the customer to notice and react to the emotional behavior of an employee; thus, the operant conditioning cycle we discussed earlier is more likely to become established.

Our initial conceptual perspective had a far different focus than our revised perspective. The initial perspective emphasized control moves and corporate display rules. The revised perspective emphasized store pace, widely held norms for convenience settings, and employees' inner feelings. Nonetheless, some integration of those two perspectives on the expression of emotion in organizational life may have benefits for both organizational theory and managerial practice.

First, the qualitative evidence suggested that the concept of control moves might still be useful for understanding the convenience stores we studied but that future research might benefit from considering how expressed emotions influence variables other than sales volume. Evidence about busy times suggested that an emotionally neutral demeanor discouraged customers from initiating extended conversations. Presenting a neutral demeanor can act as a control move because it helps clerks influence the behavior of their customers and thus helps clerks provide fast service. Further, evidence about slow times suggested that pleasant displays can encourage customers to engage in conversations that are an important source of variety in a boring job. Thus, the display of good cheer during slow times may be a control move that promotes individual rather than organizational goals.

Second, organizational theorists have not extensively studied the emotions displayed by organizational members (Hochschild, 1983; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). One central question for this emerging area is the extent to which leaders can prescribe employees' expressive behavior. Our initial perspective emphasized emotions expressed on the job as the outcome of corporate practices. But our revised perspective emphasizes that, although corporate display rules do constrain displayed emotions, store norms and inner feelings can sometimes be a more powerful influence over such behavior.

One combination of the initial and revised perspectives has direct implications for managers who want to design jobs so that subordinates who work in busy settings will be pleasant towards customers. Organizational norms specifying the display of good cheer to customers may be easier to enforce if managers take steps to reduce the objective and subjective stress placed on employees and customers. For example, the introduction of a single line for multiple clerks may reduce the perceived pressure on both employees and customers in busy environments. The physical distance between clerks and

customers waiting in line may act as a buffer; clerks can offer polite and friendly service to the customer they are serving without risking sanctions from other customers. The single-line system with multiple clerks also reduces customer anxiety about having chosen the fastest clerk and discourages customers from focusing anger and irritation on any single clerk.

In closing, we would like to return to the methods used in this study. The observational methods used here are not widely employed in organizational research. Thus, questions may arise about whether it is ethical to secretly observe employees. Procedures used in the present research were, however, consistent with ethical guidelines on the conduct of nonreactive research and contrived observations (Salancik, 1979; Sechrest & Phillips, 1979; Webb et al., 1981). The American Psychological Association discourages "covert investigations in private places" (American Psychological Association, 1973: 13). The convenience stores used in the present research are, however, public places. Moreover, the corporation's use of incognito observers and our own use of that method during the qualitative phase were only partly covert. Although specific, informed consent was not obtained from each clerk observed, all clerks had been informed that encounters with mystery shoppers were part of the job: the corporate training program explained the use of mystery shoppers and the expected expressive behaviors. Furthermore, the names of individual clerks were not recorded in either the quantitative research conducted by the corporation or in our own qualitative research. Thus, in terms of a harms-benefit analysis, such data were not, and could not, be used to harm any individual clerk.

Finally, we learned much about the role of expressed emotion in organizational life from this research because it entailed two complete cycles of induction and deduction. Unfortunately, however, it is not normative in the organizational studies literature, nor in other scholarly areas, to report unsuccessful efforts at induction or deduction. Studies that find no significant relationships are usually not published. Moreover, we occasionally hear of studies in which the findings contradict initial hypotheses but that are written as if the unexpected results were predicted at the outset of the investigation. The tendency to report only successful predictions persists even though failed predictions offer important lessons about the research process and about organizational life (Mirvis & Berg, 1977). We hope that, in some small way, this research is a step toward changing those norms.

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APPENDIX

Guide for Semistructured Interviews with Store Managers

1. How long have you been the manager of this store?
2. Why did you become a store manager?
3. Have you worked at the cash register in this store? (Prompts: How frequently? In another store?)
4. What qualities do you look for in selecting employees?
5. What sort of training do employees get? (Prompts: From the store? From the corporation?)
6. How are employees rewarded? (Prompts: How much pay? Anything other than pay? From the corporation? From the store?)

7. Do employees act differently when the store is busy? When the store is not busy?
8. Do customers act differently when the store is busy? When the store is not busy?
9. What do difficult customers do to make the clerk's work difficult? Tell me about a time when a really difficult customer entered the store. What are examples of good management of such customers? What are examples of bad management of such customers?
10. Is there anything special you tell employees about handling difficult customers?
11. Do you think there is a relationship between sales and courtesy?
12. What do you think of the corporation's push for courtesy?
13. What things do you do as a store manager to affect employee courtesy?
14. Is there any special employee training that emphasizes courtesy?
15. What do you think influences how courteous employees are?
16. Have you ever fired anyone for being rude to a customer?
17. In closing, are there any other important issues that we should have mentioned, but have not?

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