BUSY STORES AND DEMANDING CUSTOMERS: HOW DO THEY AFFECT THE DISPLAY OF POSITIVE EMOTION?

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This study replicates and extends our prior research on expressed emotions. We propose that the levels of a store's busyness and customer demand influence the emotions service employees express during transactions with customers. The busyness surrounding a transaction and the level of demand the transaction places on an employee are cues that provoke inner feelings and provide information about which emotions the employee can best use to gain control over the transaction. We tested three hypotheses reflecting this conceptual perspective using structured observations of 194 transactions between cashiers and customers in five supermarkets. Findings support the hypotheses that busyness is negatively related to cashiers' displayed positive emotion and that customer demand is positively related to displayed positive emotion. Findings do not support the hypothesis that the positive relationship between demand and positive emotion is weaker in busy stores than in slow stores.

An emerging literature examines the emotions expressed in organizational life. Norms about emotional expressions by role occupants, or "display rules" (Ekman, 1973), are perhaps the most frequently discussed determinants of the feelings organization members express (e.g., Hochschild, 1983; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987; Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989). Hochschild reported, for example, that flight attendants are expected to be pleasant to passengers but bill collectors are expected to be nasty to debtors. Rafaeli and Sutton (1987) extended Hochschild's work and developed a framework specifying how organizations and occupations select, socialize, and reward employees to help assure that they will display normative emotions.

An emphasis on norms about emotional expression is a useful point of

We wish to thank Robin Sand for helping us gather these data and Esther Wagner for helping us analyze them. We also wish to thank two anonymous reviewers and Marina Park for their comments on this article.
departure, but it overlooks many of the more ephemeral determinants of displayed emotions (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1989). Norms provide ground rules for transactions between role occupants and target persons, the people with whom they interact. But cues associated with a transaction can further shape the emotions displayed during it, and such cues thus may explain variance between transactions. These “transaction-defining cues” (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1989) may come from either the setting or the target person. Cues from the setting are transient aspects of the context in which a transaction occurs, including the time of day or year, the temperature, and the interpersonal context. For example, crowded settings produce anxiety and antagonism toward others, apparently because people suffer from cognitive overload and have trouble predicting and controlling such settings (Fiske & Taylor, 1984).

Cues from target persons include gender, age, and apparent social status. A role occupant may also recall past transactions with a given target person, notice subtleties of the target person’s behavior before a transaction begins, and make additional judgments about the target person as the transaction unfolds. Taken together, these bits of information may invoke a service employee’s implicit personality theories (Bruner & Tagiuri, 1954) about which emotions are best displayed to a particular kind of person. Qualitative evidence that such cues shape displayed feelings has appeared in writings on employees of Disneyland (Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989), police officers (Van Maanen, 1978), cocktail waitresses (Spradley & Mann, 1975), and waiters (Mars & Nicod, 1984). Quantitative data are sparse, but Goodsell (1976) found that postal clerks were more courteous to customers who appeared to be of high rather than low status. And Rafaeli (1989a) found that both man and woman clerks were more likely to display positive emotion to male customers.

The present study provides further evidence about the effects of cues from settings and target persons on emotions expressed on the job. We replicated and extended our prior research (Rafaeli, 1989a,b; Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988) by examining store busyness, a cue from the setting, and customer demand, a cue from target persons, as predictors of displayed positive emotion in 194 transactions between cashiers and customers in five Israeli supermarkets. We defined busyness as the extent to which a store was rapidly paced and crowded with customers. Customer demand was the extent to which a transaction required a prolonged and complex response from a cashier. Our prior work suggested that busyness and demand provide information to employees about which expressed emotions are best for gaining control over customers (Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988). Employees try to maintain control, or “get the jump” (Whyte, 1946: 65), during service transactions so they can use work methods that they or their employers believe to be best rather than the methods customers prefer (Rafaeli, 1989b).

Busyness and demand also provoke feelings of stress that verbal and nonverbal behavior may in turn reflect. Human beings can express emotions that clash with their inner feelings and may do so in response to display
rules (Gordon, 1981; Hochschild, 1983). Nonetheless, our prior research suggested that, regardless of display rules, service employees' inner feelings often strongly influenced their expressed emotions. This perspective is consistent with experimental research indicating that there is a strong link between felt and expressed emotions (Ekman, Friesen, & Ancoli, 1980) and that people typically leak their inner feelings when trying to express emotions that are incongruent with those feelings (Ekman, 1985). Furthermore, even when strong display rules are present, most work roles allow employees considerable discretion over their expressed emotions (Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989). Indeed, employees in most work roles are allowed enough leeway to display emotions that are shaped by their inner feelings.

In an earlier study, we used theory about the combined pressures of getting the jump on customers and inner feelings to untangle quantitative findings that clerks in busy convenience stores—those with high sales and long lines—were less likely to display good cheer to customers than clerks in slow stores (Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988). Qualitative data from that study suggested that the display of good cheer during slow times and the absence of such a display during busy times helped clerks retain control over customers. During slow times, loss of control occurred because customers sometimes became irate when a clerk, who apparently had little to do, didn't take a few seconds to be friendly. In contrast, during busy times, expressing positive emotion was risky because it encouraged customers to prolong transactions, which made other customers waiting in line cranky.

These data also suggested that displaying good cheer during slow times and not doing so during busy times reflected clerks' inner feelings. Customers were a welcomed source of entertainment during slow times and thus provoked warm feelings. In contrast, clerks were tense during busy times, apparently due to the cognitive overload evoked by the crowded setting and the stress of serving customers who were irritated from navigating the busy store and from waiting in line.

The inverse relationship between store busyness and expressed positive emotion observed in our earlier study of convenience stores has not, however, been examined with other data. The first aim of the present study was therefore to replicate our earlier findings. Thus,

Hypothesis 1: Store busyness will be negatively related to the degree to which cashiers display positive emotion when interacting with customers.

Customer demand is the second transaction-defining cue we examined. A demanding customer is one who requires a prolonged and complex response from service employees. Such customers are not necessarily rude or unpleasant. Rafaeli's (1989b) fieldwork indicated that cashiers often expressed greater positive emotion to such customers because it helped them gain control over the long and complex transactions. The notion that good cheer is one of the means that service employees use to win the subtle battle for control over demanding customers was first described by Whyte in his
classic research on restaurants (1946). More recent ethnographic studies of waiters (Mars & Nicod, 1984) and milkmen (Bigus, 1972) have also supported this idea.

Thus, qualitative work has suggested that expressed positive emotions are tools of interpersonal influence that can help service employees win struggles for control with their customers. Positive emotions may have this impact because warm people are more likeable than cold people (Asch, 1946; Schneider, Hastorf, & Ellsworth, 1979) and because people are more easily influenced by someone they like rather than dislike (Cialdini, 1984: 183–202). The expression of good cheer may also enhance service employees’ control because the behaviors composing displayed positive emotion, like smiling and making eye contact, provoke compliance in others. For example, research has shown that smiling cocktail waitresses earned larger tips than unsmiling waitresses (Tidd & Lockard, 1978). And pedestrians who were gazed at were more likely to accept a pamphlet from a researcher than those not gazed at (Kleinke & Singer, 1979).

Service workers will, we contend, use these tools of social influence less with customers who aren’t demanding because there is less risk of losing control over a person who makes a small purchase, asks few questions, and requests no favors. And if control is lost, the episode won’t last long. In contrast, a cashier who loses control over a demanding customer may be deluged with more questions and requests, prolonging the loss of control. Thus, given the stronger incentives that exist for maintaining control over demanding transactions, we propose:

Hypothesis 2: Customer demand will be positively related to the display of positive emotion by cashiers during transactions with customers.

Finally, store busyness and customer demand may also have interactive effects. The meaning of a demanding transaction to a service employee may vary depending on whether it occurs in a busy or a slow store. During slow times, a long and complex transaction can provide entertainment for a service employee. Thus, when a store is slow, displaying positive emotion as a means of obtaining control is consistent with an employee’s inner feelings. When the setting is busy, however, demanding customers may provoke irritation rather than pleasant feelings. Service employees may experience conflict between the desire to use displayed positive emotion as a tool of social influence during each demanding transaction and the irritation provoked within them by trying to rapidly process customers who make large purchases or ask a lot of questions. Feelings of irritation may begin to compete with—or dominate—efforts to display good cheer in order to get the jump.

Hypothesis 3: The positive relationship between customer demand and displayed positive emotion will be stronger to the extent the transaction takes place in a slow rather than a busy store.
METHODS

Research Setting

Data were collected in a supermarket chain in Jerusalem, Israel, as a sequel to a qualitative and inductive study of cashiers the first author conducted in this chain (Rafaeli, 1989b). Her fieldwork entailed working part-time (18 hours a week) as a cashier for three months in one of the stores included in this study, conducting 30 interviews with cashiers and 30 interviews with customers, and making and recording unstructured observations.

The operation of supermarkets in Israel and in the United States is similar. The stores studied have a large assortment of products, multiple brands, a large physical scale, and a large sales volume. A distinction is that customer service is not as well developed in Israel as it is in other Western countries. Customers and cashiers often argue; and rudeness is common. Corporate guidelines for cashiers do not mention a requirement to smile or act friendly (cf. Rafaeli, 1989b). Nonetheless, Israeli stores provide a useful setting in which to study displayed positive emotion. First, there is some normative pressure for good cheer. Managers told Rafaeli that they expected cashiers to be courteous, and cashiers were aware of such expectations. Second, the findings from Rafaeli’s fieldwork led us to assume that cashiers in this chain used good cheer to gain control over demanding customers. The present study enabled us to test a hypothesis derived from that assumption. Third, these stores offer an opportunity to document the inverse relationship between busyness and positive emotion in a setting in which display rules do not support good cheer as strongly as they do in American service organizations. It could be argued that employees in settings with weaker display rules are typically neutral or indifferent to customers, regardless of store pace. But if we observed this negative relationship here, we could make a stronger argument for the generality of that finding.

Data and Procedures

The data were 194 transactions between customers and 22 female cashiers in five stores. Between 2 and 12 transactions were observed for each cashier, with a mean of 9 and a mode of 10. Observation times were evenly dispersed among Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Store visits were varied systematically so that observations were made during mornings, afternoons, and evenings.

Corporate management consented to this study as part of Rafaeli’s (1989b) research on cashiers. The stores’ managers and employees agreed to take part in a study that would include unobtrusive observations. They were informed that their identities would be kept confidential and that the data would be used only for research purchases. Making covert observations in a public place is generally viewed as ethical because the subjects are aware that others can observe their behavior (Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, Sechrest,
& Grove, 1981). Observing people in public places becomes ethically questionable when doing so harms or embarrasses subjects or when their anonymity cannot be protected—none of which were risks in this study.

The procedures are based on observational methods developed in prior research (Rafaeli, 1989a; Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988). Two stages were used to refine this method for the current study and to train an observer who would not be biased by the research questions considered in this study. In the first stage, two observers—the first author and another woman—visited stores together. Each independently rated the same transactions on each variable. They then discussed differences in ratings to try to resolve them. In the second stage, the observers independently rated 42 transactions. Spearman correlations between these two sets of ratings ranged from .73 to .88 for ratings of cashier and customer behavior and from .94 to 1.00 for more objective variables, such as the length of the longest line observed.

The trained observer gathered the data reported here in the winter and spring of 1986. Data were recorded on preformatted cards. The observer first acted as if she were shopping for a few minutes. She then moved near the cashier at the extreme right of the store, stood unobtrusively at the corner of the checkout area, and recorded information about cashiers and their customers. She moved to observe the next cashier to the left after 12 customers or 5 minutes, whichever came first, and repeated this cycle for one to three additional cashiers. The observer left the store after 10 or 15 minutes to avoid provoking suspicion.

The observer was not informed of the research questions examined here to avoid biasing the data. She was told that the aim of the study was to replicate an earlier study (Rafaeli, 1989a) of the relationships between displayed emotions and cashier gender, customer gender, and cashiers’ wearing a uniform. The other variables assessed were described as necessary for methodological control. When the observer was debriefed and told the true research questions after the data gathering was complete, she said she had not suspected that she had been misled.

**Predictor Variables**

This study examined two predictor variables: store busyness and customer demand. The scale measuring store busyness consisted of three items assessed by the observer: (1) the number of cash registers operating, (2) the number of people in all lines, and (3) the number of people in the longest line. The observer counted all people standing in line, even if they were obviously not customers (e.g., spouses or children). Cronbach’s alpha for this index was .92.

The index measuring customer demand included four items (α = .69): (1) the size of a customer’s purchase (small, medium, or large), (2) the degree to which the customer placed task-related demands on the cashier (e.g., asking about prices or for an especially large bag), (3) the degree to which the customer asked the cashier to perform special chores (e.g., asking for small change or for help holding a crying child), and (4) a global judgment of
customer demand—the overall pressure for attention the customer placed on the clerk through the combination of the first three items and other pressures for attention, including talking a lot, telling jokes, and making comments about the cashier’s work.

Dependent Variables

Dependent variables were observations of two aspects of displayed positive emotion. The first index, the mechanics of displayed positive emotion, is based on our prior studies (Rafaeli, 1989a; Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988). This index was originally composed of four behaviors: greeting, eye contact, smiling, and saying thank you. We deleted the greeting variable from the index used here, however, because this behavior did not occur in 99.5 percent of the cases observed. Thus, three items composed this index (α = .63):

1. Eye contact indicated the number of times a cashier attempted to establish eye contact with a customer during a transaction. It was defined as a direct gaze by the cashier at the customer, regardless of the customer’s response. The observer recorded a 0 if no eye contact was attempted (61 percent of the cases), a 1 if there was a single attempt, and a 2 if there were two or more attempts.

2. Smiling, as Tidd and Lockard (1976) suggested, was defined as a noticeable uptwist of the lips. A 0 was recorded if no smiling was observed (74 percent of the cases), a 1 if there was a single smile, and a 2 if there were two or more smiles.

3. Thanking indicated whether or not the cashier offered a polite verbal comment indicating a transaction had ended. The observer assigned a rating of 1 if “thank you” (“toda” in Hebrew), any of its derivatives, or any other form of separation comment (e.g., “have a nice weekend” or “happy holidays”) was spoken. Thanking was evident in 18.0 percent of the cases.

Although this index has proven useful in earlier quantitative research, our qualitative research (Rafaeli, 1989b; Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988) and review papers (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987, 1989) suggested that it did not capture many nuances of expressed emotions. In particular, we observed transactions in which service employees mechanically smiled, established eye contact, and said thank you but did not otherwise respond to the fact that customers were human beings. We even observed transactions in which employees displayed these components of good cheer yet were generally insulting throughout the conversation.

Furthermore, these three simple behaviors do not reflect other means through which a cashier can promote a friendly two-way interaction with customers. To illustrate, one cashier told Rafaeli that she sometimes sang to customers as a way of being friendly (Rafaeli, 1989b). Customers also told Rafaeli that they hoped for a cashier who attended to their needs rather than a cashier who performed predetermined acts. Finally, Rafaeli’s qualitative work in these stores indicated that some cashiers did not engage in any human contact with their customers and concentrated only on processing
groceries. Focusing no attention on a customer indicates a lack of displayed positive affect that goes beyond simple absence of eye contact, smiling, and thanking.

These examples suggest that the extent to which a service employee attempts to promote—or discourage—friendly interaction with a customer may be somewhat independent of the extent to which he or she offers smiles, eye contact, and thanks. As a result, we developed an index that reflects a cashier's interactive display of positive emotion during a transaction with a customer. This index has two items (α = .81):

(1) Pleasantness was the degree to which a cashier manifested a generally positive attitude, or the extent to which her behavior toward a customer encouraged friendly interaction. This item was measured with a three-point scale on which 0 indicated the cashier acted generally unpleasant during a transaction (i.e., was consistently impatient, crabby, or annoyed), 1 indicated that the cashier was somewhat pleasant, and 2 indicated that the cashier was very pleasant. The observer rated cashiers as unpleasant in 56 percent of the transactions.

(2) Attending indicated whether or not a cashier ignored a customer. A value of 0 was assigned if the cashier processed the items but ignored the customer (e.g., by punching prices and codes without communicating with the customer). A value of 1 was assigned if the cashier attended to the customer, which occurred in 58 percent of transactions.

We conducted a factor analysis consisting of principal components analysis with a varimax rotation to help determine if these two sets of items measured distinct aspects of displayed positive emotion. Table 1 presents the results of this factor analysis, which indicates the presence of two distinct factors, the mechanics of displayed positive emotion and the interactive display of positive emotion.

Control Variables

The aim of this study was to document the effects of store busyness and customer demand and their interaction on the two indicators of displayed

| TABLE 1 |
| Factor Analysis of Items Measuring Expressed Positive Emotion$^a$ |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors and Items</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics of displayed positive emotion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye contact</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smiling</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanking</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive display of positive emotion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasantness</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a N = 194.$
positive emotion, above and beyond the effects of other factors. Thus, we identified and measured eight variables that could influence these relationships. The following eight variables were based on data gathered by the observer: (1) Time of day, indicating the hour that an observation was made, was coded on a 24-hour clock. We controlled for time of day because different types of customers may shop at different times, stores may be more crowded at some times than at others, and different cashier shifts may have different display rules. (2) We controlled for customer gender (coded 0 for men and 1 for women, who were 69 percent of the customers) because prior research has suggested that male customers encounter positive emotion more often than female customers (Rafaeli, 1989a). (3) Customer status was based on assessments of customers' styles of dress, accessories, haircuts, and (for women) makeup. These overall judgments of the customers' apparent social status were coded 1 for low, 2 for medium, and 3 for high. We controlled for status because service employees may be more courteous to high-status customers than to low-status ones (Goode, 1976). (4) The observer estimated customer age, with 30 years or less coded 1, 30 to 50 years coded 2, and over 50 years coded 3. (5) Cashier uniform was a rating of whether a cashier was wearing a smock and a name tag. No smock and no tag was coded 0, only a smock or only a name tag was coded 1, and wearing both a smock and name tag was coded 2. We controlled for this variable because Rafaeli's (1989a) research suggested that clerks who followed corporate norms about wearing uniforms were more likely to display good cheer. (6) A cashier's talking to other people indicated whether the cashier talked to any person other than the customer during the transaction. Talking to no other person was coded 0, talking to one other person was coded 1, and talking to two others was coded 2. No transaction was observed in which conversations with more than two others occurred. When talking to others, a cashier's displayed emotions may reflect reactions to the other person rather to the customer served. (7) The presence of another cashier indicated if there were other cashiers working next to the observed cashier. The code was 0 if the cash register on neither side of the observed was in use, 1 if one of the registers was in use, and 2 if both were in use. We controlled for this variable because cashiers may hold and try to enforce a distinct set of norms about the emotions one another display. These informal expectations are likely to be especially influential when cashiers work in close proximity. (8) Store identifiers, four dummy-coded variables representing the five stores, controlled for differences between stores such as management practices, norms about courtesy, busyness, and customer demand.

RESULTS

Table 2 presents the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among all the variables examined in this study, except for the interaction term, store busyness by customer demand, and the dummy-coded store identifiers.
TABLE 2
Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations Among Study Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mechanics of displayed positive</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<td>emotion</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Interactive display of positive</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>emotion</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Store busyness</td>
<td>13.58</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Customer demand</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Time of day</td>
<td>11.85</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.11</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Customer gender</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Customer status</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Customer age</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Cashier's uniform</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.15</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Cashier's talking to others</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Presence of another cashier</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) N = 194. All correlations above r = .14 are significant at p < .05, two-tailed test.
TABLE 3
Predictors of Displayed Positive Emotion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mechanics of Displayed Positive Emotion</th>
<th>Interactive Display of Positive Emotion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time of day</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer gender</td>
<td>-.17**</td>
<td>.12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer status</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer age</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cashier's uniform</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td>.29**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cashier's talking to others</td>
<td>.09†</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of another cashier</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store 1</td>
<td>-.35**</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store 2</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store 3</td>
<td>-.16*</td>
<td>-.11†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store 4</td>
<td>-.22**</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store busyness</td>
<td>-.27***</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer demand</td>
<td>.37***</td>
<td>.41***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple R</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>.21***</td>
<td>.24***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* N = 194.
† p < .10, two-tailed test
* p < .05, two-tailed test
** p < .01, two-tailed test
*** p < .001, two-tailed test

The hypotheses were tested with a hierarchical multiple regression procedure. First, we entered the eight control variables as predictors in two equations, one for each dependent variable. The control variables were marginally related to the mechanics of displayed positive emotion (adjusted $R^2 = .03$, p < .10) and significantly related to the interactive display of positive emotion (adjusted $R^2 = .06$, p < .05). The results indicate that cashiers who wore uniforms were more likely to display both aspects of positive emotion. Moreover, customer gender, a cashier’s talking to others, and the store in which an observation took place predicted the mechanics of displayed positive emotion.

Next, a pair of regression equations was used to test Hypotheses 1 and 2, with the eight control variables, store busyness, and customer demand used as predictors of both measures of displayed positive emotion. As Table 3 indicates, store busyness was negatively related to both the mechanics of displayed positive emotion and the interactive display of positive emotion, as Hypothesis 1 predicts. Table 3 also indicates that we found positive relationships between customer demand and both the mechanics of displayed positive emotion and the interactive display of positive emotion, providing strong support for Hypothesis 2. The statistically significant beta weights for store busyness and customer demand indicate that the increment in $R^2$ that occurred between these equations and those including only the control variables was significant (Cohen & Cohen, 1975).
Hypothesis 3, predicting a weaker positive relationship between customer demand and displayed positive emotion in busy stores than in slow stores, was tested with moderated regression analysis. For each of the two dependent variables, we entered the interaction term, customer demand by store busyness, into an equation along with the ten predictor variables shown in Table 3 (the eight control variables, customer demand, and store busyness). Findings did not support Hypothesis 3. The beta weight of the interaction term was not statistically significant in the equation predicting the mechanics of displayed positive emotion ($\beta = -.05$, n.s.) or in the equation predicting the interactive display of positive emotion ($\beta = -.19$, n.s.). The overall equations for both mechanics (adjusted $R^2 = .21$, $p < .001$) and interactive display (adjusted $R^2 = .24$, $p < .001$) remained significant.

This moderated analysis generally supported the first two hypotheses. As with the equations presented in Table 3, store busyness was negatively related to mechanics of displayed positive emotion ($\beta = -.23$, $p < .05$) and customer demand was positively related to both mechanics ($\beta = .41$, $p < .001$) and the interactive display of positive emotion ($\beta = .53$, $p < .001$). But in contrast to the equations presented in Table 3, the relationship between store busyness and the interactive display of positive emotion was no longer significant ($\beta = -.05$, n.s.), apparently because of multicollinearity between the interaction term and store busyness. Taken together, the results of the hierarchical regression procedure support Hypotheses 1 and 2 but not Hypothesis 3. These findings suggest that the regression equations portrayed in Table 3 best summarize the data collected in this study.

**DISCUSSION**

This study provides additional evidence that service employees are less likely to display good cheer during busy times than during slow times. Findings also confirm that cashiers display more positive emotion when customers are demanding. We found no support, however, for our prediction that the positive relationship between customer demand and good cheer is weaker when a transaction takes place in a busy store.

This study suggests useful directions for future research. First, we now have evidence from two quantitative studies that employees in busy stores are less likely to convey positive emotion to customers than are employees in slow stores. Additional research is needed to discover if this pattern is evident in other settings. Second, our assertion that expressed positive emotion helps service employees maintain control over demanding customers is a plausible explanation for the findings pertinent to Hypothesis 2. Further research is needed to test this assertion directly and to uncover the virtues and hazards of expressed positive emotions as tools of interpersonal influence. For example, is acting pleasant still the best way for a service employee to get the jump when a customer is not just demanding, but openly hostile to the employee? An irate customer may view good cheer as evidence of
sarcasm and grow further aggravated. Perhaps adopting a neutral, rather than a positive or negative, demeanor is a better way to get the jump over irate customers.

Third and finally, we begin this article by suggesting that research on expressed emotion in organizations has begun to shift its emphasis from explaining similarities in expressed emotions within roles to explaining differences. But the present study suggests that research on similarities in the emotions expressed by members of the same occupation continues to be a promising path. Much consistency was evident in the ground rules used by the cashiers we studied: they were typically unpleasant. Cashiers offered no greetings in 99.5 percent of the transactions observed, established no eye contact in 61 percent, did not smile during 74 percent, expressed no thanks in 82 percent, were judged to be unpleasant in 56 percent, and did not attend to customers in 42 percent. The data presented here suggest that there is much similarity in the emotions expressed within work roles, similarities that will not be noticed if researchers focus only on explaining variance in such behavior.

The consistent lack of positive emotion observed here does not, for the most part, seem due to organizational or occupational display rules. Instead, these findings suggest to us that societal display rules explain most of this lack of good cheer. Comparing our experiences in service organizations in Israel to experiences in the United States suggests that societal display rules provide much stronger support for expressed positive emotion in the latter. Unfortunately, poor service is typical in Israeli stores. This difference was made explicit in the following transaction that Rafaeli observed during her participant observation in Israel:

Customer: “In America, all the cashiers smile.”
Cashier: “So go to America. What do you want from me?” [1989: 263]

We are not aware of any systematic research that has attempted to untangle the effects of cultural and organizational display rules on the emotions organization members display. Yet this anecdote—along with the quantitative data from the present research—strongly hints that carrying out cross-cultural research on members of service organizations may explain both similarities and differences in displayed emotions.

REFERENCES


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