

## Interactive effects of proactive personality and display rules on emotional labor in organizations

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### Abstract

Emotional labor is the management of emotional displays that happens in the context of a work role. Past research has shown that organizational display rules (standards for emotions that should be shown and hidden from customers) influence emotional labor, but little research has examined the individual differences that make employees more or less responsive to these display rules. The present study draws on concepts from the control theory model of emotional labor to address this limitation by examining the moderating role of proactive personality. Results indicate that proactive individuals are highly responsive to different types of display rules that prompt the use of different emotional labor strategies, highlighting the importance of how display expectations are framed for employees.

When interacting with customers, employees may need to modify their natural emotional responses to show emotions like enthusiasm and happiness, and hide emotions like irritation and boredom, in order to perform high-quality customer service (Frijda, 1993). This type of self-regulation is referred to as emotional labor, the management of emotional displays as part of a work role (Hochschild, 1983). Previous research has established that there are two key ways in which an employee can regulate and express the emotional displays that are desired by the organization: deep acting and surface acting. According to Grandey (2000), deep acting occurs when an actor attempts to modify inner feelings in order to match the organization's requirements for emotional display. Grandey described this strategy as "good-faith" emotional labor because the employee is actually trying to change his or her emotions to be consistent with those that the organization expects should be displayed. In contrast, surface acting occurs when an individual simulates organizationally desired emotional displays without changing the underlying emotions. Grandey described this type of acting as "bad-faith" emotional labor, and it elicits an experience of emotional dissonance, a tension between one's real and displayed emotions (Hochschild, 1983).

Research indicates that both forms of emotional labor can be effective and appropriate responses to customer interactions in which displays must be regulated (Côté, 2005). However, the use of deep acting is generally found to be most

beneficial for the employee and the organization relative to surface acting (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Grandey, 2000, 2003; Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011; Schaubroeck & Jones, 2000). For example, surface acting and the emotional dissonance it elicits have each been linked to emotional exhaustion (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Brotheridge & Lee, 2003; Morris & Feldman, 1996) and depression (Liu, Prati, Perrewé, & Ferris, 2008). On the other hand, deep acting is positively related to feelings of positivity, personal accomplishment, and personal efficacy at work (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Liu, Prati, Perrewé, & Brymer, 2010). These results indicate that when employees make an effort to feel the emotions they are required to display, they are more likely to feel as though they are in control of their own ability to succeed in their jobs. Moreover, deep acting is beneficial for the organization; the use of deep acting is related to better customer service ratings (Grandey, 2003; Groth, Hennig-Thurau, & Walsh, 2009) and indirectly related to lower turnover among service employees (Chau, Dahling, Levy, & Diefendorff, 2009). Therefore, identifying the individual differences and situational characteristics that result in deep acting is a particularly important direction for emotional labor research.

The main predictor of emotional labor examined in previous research is display rule perceptions, the degree to which employees perceive that displaying or hiding certain emotions is considered to be a part of their job (e.g., Diefendorff &

Richard, 2003; Goldberg & Grandey, 2007; Grandey, 2003). Although main effects of individual differences on emotional labor have received much research attention (e.g., Dahling & Johnson, 2013), we know very little about the individual differences that act as moderators and make employees more or less responsive to display rule perceptions (Allen, Pugh, Grandey, & Groth, 2010; Byrne, Morton, & Dahling, 2011; Gosserand & Diefendorff, 2005). Indeed, employees may be well aware of organizational display rules, yet choose not to self-regulate their emotional displays (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003). The purpose of this study is therefore to examine proactive personality (Bateman & Crant, 1993), a key moderator that may influence the relationship between display rule perceptions and emotional labor. Although proactive personality has not been studied in any emotional labor research prior to this study, proactive personality has been shown to outperform many other traits, such as the Big Five, in explaining variance in key performance criteria (Crant, 1995; Crant & Bateman, 2000). Most importantly, several studies have shown that proactive personality is important to job performance in service settings (Chen, 2011; Crant, 1995). In this study, we expect that employees with high proactive personality will be more responsive to the way that they construe display rules, resulting in the performance of different types of emotional labor strategies. This expectation is grounded in Diefendorff and Gosserand's (2003) control theory model of emotional labor, which we describe in the sections that follow.

## Literature review

### Control theory, emotional labor, and display rule perceptions

Control theory (Carver & Scheier, 1998) is a theory of self-regulation that has been successfully applied to understanding the emotional labor process in past research (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003). Control theory adopts a cybernetic perspective, meaning that self-regulation is thought to occur through feedback loops that govern the pursuit of goals. According to the theory, self-regulation begins with the adaptation of a goal or standard, which may originate inside or outside of the self. One's current behavior or status serves as an input, which is evaluated relative to the goal through a function described as the comparator. At the comparator function, information about current behavior is compared to the goal to evaluate whether or not successful progress is being made toward goal attainment. If the comparator signals that satisfactory progress toward the goal is being made, then no conscious attention needs to be dedicated to changing behavior and the monitoring process accordingly can fade out of conscious attention. However, if a discrepancy between one's behavior and the goal is detected, then conscious atten-

tion and resources must be dedicated to changing the behavior so that the goal can be attained. This new behavior, which is referred to as an output function, affects the external environment in ways that serve as a new input to be again evaluated relative to the goal. Continual self-regulatory adjustments will occur through repeated feedback loops of inputs and outputs until the goal is no longer threatened.

Diefendorff and Gosserand (2003) mapped constructs from the emotional labor literature on the basic control theory model to illustrate how this process guides the self-regulation of emotional displays at work. In their model, organizational display rules serve as the referent standards with which an employee's current emotional displays toward a customer (the input behavior) are compared. If a discrepancy is perceived (i.e., if displayed emotions are not consistent with the rules), then the employee needs to engage in effortful emotional labor through deep or surface acting (the output behavior) to positively impact the customer interaction and bring his or her performance into alignment with the organization's expectations.

Consistent with this theory, empirical research indicates that employees first have to perceive that the organization endorses certain emotional display rules before emotional labor will occur. Once these perceptions have occurred, the employee can choose which, if any, emotional labor strategy he or she will implement (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Grandey, 2003). Because much emotional labor happens in service settings, research on display rule perceptions has overwhelmingly focused on organizations in which display rules call for the display of integrative emotions (Wharton & Erickson, 1993). Integrative emotional displays are those that generate a sense of reassurance, satisfaction, and pleasure in customers, and consequently they involve a mixture of expressing positive emotions to customers (enthusiasm, warmth, delight) and suppressing the display of negative emotions (boredom, irritation, disgust; Schaubroeck & Jones, 2000). Employees' awareness of display rules to either express positive emotion or suppress negative emotion is extremely influential to their likelihood to act on these perceptions and engage in emotion regulation, an idea reflected in a multitude of emotional labor models (e.g., Grandey, 2000; Rafeli & Sutton, 1987).

While most research has examined overall integrative display rules, combining together demands to express positive and suppress negative (e.g., Allen et al., 2010; Diefendorff, Erickson, Grandey, & Dahling, 2011; Goldberg & Grandey, 2007), some other studies have suggested the importance of distinguishing between display rule perceptions to express positive emotions versus suppress negative emotions, and of examining the unique consequences of these types of display rules (Diefendorff & Richard, 2003; Diefendorff, Richard, & Croyle, 2006; Schaubroeck & Jones, 2000). Specifically, there has been some support in previous

research to suggest that perceiving integrative display rules as demands to express positive emotions versus demands to suppress emotions may result in the use of different emotional labor strategies. For example, Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) demonstrated that both types of display rules were positively correlated with both types of acting. However, their results also indicated that surface acting was more strongly related to demands to suppress negative emotion, whereas deep acting was more strongly related to demands to express positive emotions.

Congruent with the findings of Brotheridge and Grandey (2002), several more recent studies have also found that perceived display rules mandating the expression of positive emotions are more strongly associated with deep acting, whereas perceived display rules mandating the suppression of negative emotions are more strongly associated with surface acting (Austin, Dore, & O'Donovan, 2008; Cheung & Tang, 2009; Diefendorff, Croyle, & Gosserand, 2005; Kim, 2008). The uniform results of these studies are highly consistent with a control theory model of emotional labor, in which display rules serve as the referent goals or standards that people use to judge their behaviors (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003). According to both control theory and goal setting theory, relevant behavioral strategies are activated whenever a referent standard for behavior is made salient to a person (Carver & Scheier, 1998; Locke & Latham, 2002). Consequently, when display rules are construed as demands to express the desired positive emotions, employees should be predisposed to select approach-related strategies that involve movement toward these appropriate emotional states. Deep acting, which involves changing one's emotions to align with the desired display, is therefore the strategy that should be most likely to be utilized given expression-related standards. In contrast, when display rules are construed as demands to suppress undesired negative emotions, employees should be predisposed to select avoidance-related strategies that involve movement away from these in appropriate emotional states. Surface acting, which involves suppressing one's actual feelings to avoid the display of unacceptable emotions, should therefore be prompted when employees perceive suppression-related standards for behavior. Given that integrative display rules may be perceived as either type of demand by individual employees, it is not surprising that aggregate integrative display rules display nearly equal correlations with deep and surface acting in meta-analytic research (Mesmer-Magnus, DeChurch, & Wax, 2012).

Consistent with control theory and these recent trends in the emotional labor literature, we hypothesize an alignment between the perception of display rules to express positive emotions and the use of deep acting, and between the perception of display rules to suppress negative emotions and the use of surface acting.

*Hypothesis 1.* Perceptions of organizational display rules to express positive emotions will be positively related to the use of deep acting.

*Hypothesis 2.* Perceptions of organizational display rules to suppress negative emotions will be positively related to the use of surface acting.

However, the central purpose of this study is to expand on these findings by identifying individual differences that moderate these established relationships between display rules and emotional labor. Only two studies have previously considered this issue. First, Gosserand and Diefendorff (2005) found that commitment to display rules moderated the relationship between display rule perceptions and emotional labor strategies, with stronger relationships observed between display rules and emotional labor when commitment was high. Second, Allen et al. (2010) recently demonstrated that customer service orientation also moderates this relationship, with a weaker relationship between display rules and surface acting for those employees with high customer service orientation. Consistent with control theory, the authors of both of these studies argued that the observed effects were a function of the extent to which employees adopted organizational display rules as valid standards for behavior. Employees with high display rule commitment and high customer service orientation believe that following display rules is an important goal, and accordingly, they are more motivated to engage in emotional labor.

### **Goal-behavior discrepancies and proactive personality in emotional labor**

In contrast to the other research on this topic, we submit that the comparator function in control theory is another critical theoretical mechanism that can influence the relationship between display rules and emotional labor. Recall that the comparator process signals whether or not a discrepancy exists between a goal (i.e., organizational display rules) and one's behavior (i.e., emotional displays shown to customers; Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003). Specifically, responsiveness to perceived discrepancies is extremely important; employees who are sensitive and responsive to minor discrepancies between display rules and emotional displays will be motivated to engage in more emotional labor to bring their performance into alignment with organizational standards, whereas those employees who are less sensitive and responsive may require large discrepancies to be perceived before emotional labor occurs. This issue is particularly important for providing consistent, high-quality customer service and remaining attuned to customers' expectations for emotional displays.

Proactive personality is the individual difference that speaks most directly to this issue of discrepancy responsiveness. Proactive personality reflects the extent to which a person habitually takes action to respond to demands, to change his or her situation, and to persevere until such change occurs (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Fuller & Marler, 2009). Less proactive individuals tend to adapt to situations rather than react and attempt to change them (Crant & Bateman, 2000). Consistent with this idea, research has connected proactive personality to a number of important work outcomes. For example, Seibert, Kraimer, and Crant (2001) found that proactive personality was positively related to career success. It has also been linked to motivation to learn (Major, Turner, & Fletcher, 2006), job performance (Crant, 1995), and leadership (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Crant & Bateman, 2000). Importantly, Major et al. (2006) identified that the Big Five traits can only explain 26% of the variance in proactive personality, suggesting that proactive personality is discriminant from the Big Five. Thomas, Whitman, and Viswesveran (2010) confirmed these findings and also found proactive constructs to be discriminant from individual differences in work experience, age, and general mental ability.

There has been no previous research relating proactive personality to emotional labor. However, consistent with control theory, we expect that proactive personality will moderate the relationships between display rule perceptions and emotional labor. Specifically, highly proactive employees are more likely to respond with corrective action through emotional labor when their emotional displays are discrepant from display rules. In contrast, less proactive individuals are not responsive to discrepancies between emotional displays and display rules, and they are accordingly less likely to take the initiative to try to engage in emotional labor.

We therefore expect that the relationships between display rule perceptions and emotional labor strategies will be stronger when employees are high in proactive personality. Proactive employees who perceive display rules to express positive emotions will be particularly likely to engage in deep acting, whereas proactive employees who perceive display rules to suppress negative emotions will be particularly likely to engage in surface acting.

*Hypothesis 3.* Proactive personality will moderate the relationship between perceptions of display rules to express positive emotions and deep acting such that the relationship is stronger for highly proactive employees.

*Hypothesis 4.* Proactive personality will moderate the relationship between perceptions of display rules to suppress negative emotions and surface acting such that the relationship is stronger for highly proactive employees.

## Methods

### Participants

A sample of 120 employed participants was recruited from a small public college in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States for this study. The participants ranged in age from 18 to 38 with a mean age of 19.88. All respondents were required to be currently employed in a job involving face-to-face interaction with customers (i.e., customer service jobs). The sample was 86.2% female. With respect to race, the sample was 69.8% European American, 12.9% Asian, 6% Black or African American, and 6.1% of other racial groups. Additionally, 5.2% of participants chose not to report their race. The average participant worked 17 hours per week and the mean organizational tenure was 18.93 months. The majority of the participants were employed in the retail trade industry (26.7%), while the remaining participants held jobs in accommodation and food services (19.8%), educational services (15.5%), other services (11.2%), healthcare and social assistance (10.3%), arts and recreation (7.8%), wholesale trade (3.4%), administrative and support services (2.6%), and other industries (2.7%).

### Measures

#### *Display rule perceptions*

Display rule perceptions were measured using a scale developed by Schaubroeck and Jones (2000). The measure consisted of eight items, four of which correspond to demands for expression of positive emotions and four of which correspond to demands to suppress negative emotion ( $\alpha = .91$ ). All items started with "To be effective in my job, I must . . ." and participants were asked indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement and to respond on a 5-point Likert-type response scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). Sample items read, "I must act cheerful and sociable" and "I must suppress anger and contempt I may feel," respectively.

#### *Proactive personality*

Proactive personality was measured using a 17-item scale ( $\alpha = .92$ ) developed by Bateman and Crant (1993). Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements about their personality in general. Responses were assessed using a 7-point Likert-type response scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). A sample item reads "I am always looking for better ways to do things."

#### *Emotional labor*

The emotional labor strategies were measured using scales developed by Grandey (2003), consisting of three items for

surface acting ( $\alpha = .87$ ) and three items for deep acting ( $\alpha = .74$ ). Participants were asked to read and indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement and to respond on a 5-point Likert-type response scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). A sample surface acting item is, "I just pretend to have the emotions I need to display to a customer," and a sample deep acting item reads, "I work hard to feel the emotions that need to be showed to customers."

## Results

### Data treatment

A simple quality-control question was embedded in the survey that instructed participants to respond to a Likert-type question with a specific answer to make sure that all respondents were reading carefully ("For quality control purposes, mark this answer 'disagree'"). Four participants failed to answer this quality-control check correctly and were consequently dropped from the analysis, yielding a total sample size of 116 participants for hypothesis testing. Descriptive statistics and correlations for all study variables and demographics are included in Table 1.

### Common method variance (CMV)

Given that our data were collected in a self-report survey, we examined the potential impact of CMV using structural equation modeling prior to testing our hypotheses. We adopted an isolated methods factor technique for this analysis (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003; Widaman, 1985), which has been employed in a number of other studies (e.g., Fecteau, Dobbins, Russell, Ladd, & Kudisch, 1995; Keeping & Levy, 2000; Williams, Cote, & Buckley, 1989). This technique involves comparing the fit of two models: the *a priori* measurement model, and the *a priori* measurement model with an additional, uncorrelated methods factor on which all items are specified to cross-load. Further, the cross-loadings on the measurement model are all fixed to be equivalent based on the expectation that a common method should

have an equivalent effect on all items measured with the method. According to this technique, if a methods factor exists, the second model with the methods factor should display a significantly better fit to the data. Moreover, by squaring the factor loadings of a particular item on the trait and method factors, the amount of variance attributable to the trait and the method, respectively, can be estimated. Any remaining variance is attributable to unique error.

When comparing the fit of the hypothesized measurement model,  $\chi^2_{(424)} = 699.73$ ,  $p < .01$ , to the alternative measurement and methods model,  $\chi^2_{(422)} = 673.39$ ,  $p < .01$ , the alternative model does fit the data slightly better,  $\Delta\chi^2_{(2)} = 26.34$ ,  $p < .01$ . However, the item loadings on the methods factor were uniformly weak. On average, the method factor explained 12% of the variability in responses, whereas the trait factors explained an average of 50% of the variability. In comparison to another study of affective processes at work, Williams et al. (1989) found that approximately 50% of their variance was accounted for by traits, 27% by a common method, and 23% by unique variance in their analysis of the potential for method variance in their data. The results of our study therefore seem to have considerably less bias introduced by the common survey method relative to past research that has explored the impact of CMV in a similar context. Moreover, CMV is less of a threat when interpreting the results of interactions (Evans, 1985); there is no reason to expect that CMV would exhibit differential effects at high and low levels of proactive personality. Thus, there is little evidence to suggest that the common measurement method utilized in this study would unduly distort our results, and we consequently proceeded to hypothesis testing.

### Tests of hypotheses

We tested our hypotheses using moderated multiple regression (Aiken & West, 1991) as shown in Table 2. We first tested Hypotheses 1 and 3, which concerned deep acting. We regressed deep acting on the centered predictor variables (perceived display rules to express positive and proactive personality) in Step 1, and then added the interaction term in

**Table 1** Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

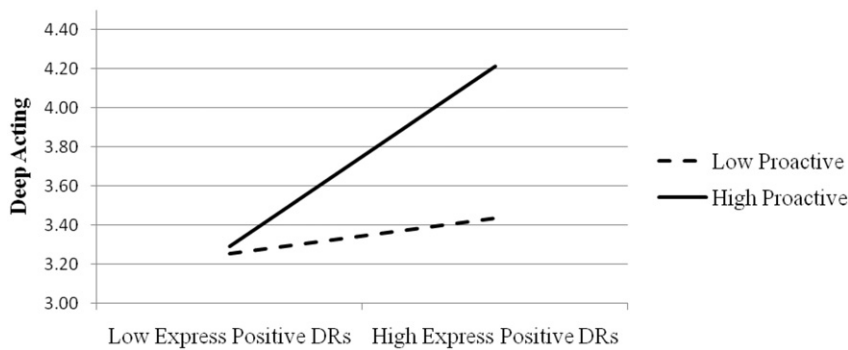
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age	19.88	2.09	—							
2. Gender	—	—	-.26**	—						
3. Tenure	18.04	15.31	.05	.01	—					
4. Display rules to express positive emotions	4.21	.74	-.07	.05	-.02	.89				
5. Display rules to suppress negative emotions	4.02	1.01	-.16	.02	-.03	.52**	.96			
6. Proactive personality	5.14	.81	-.03	-.05	-.01	.17	-.12	.92		
7. Deep acting	3.58	.87	-.13	.11	-.13	.34**	.29**	.29**	.74	
8. Surface acting	2.82	1.04	-.08	.09	.01	-.05	.36**	-.13	-.30**	.87

Note. Coefficient alpha for each scale is reported on the diagonal. \*\* $p < .01$ . \* $p < .05$ .

**Table 2** Moderated Multiple Regression Tests of Hypotheses

Predictor variables		Emotional labor strategies (DVs)			
		Deep acting		Surface acting	
Hypotheses 1 and 3		$\beta$	Step $\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	Step $\Delta R^2$
Step 1	Proactive personality	.23**	.17**		
	Express positive display rules	.32**			
Step 2	Interaction of proactive and express positive display rules	.20*	.04*		
Hypotheses 2 and 4					
Step 1	Proactive personality			-.09	.13**
	Suppress negative display rules			.27**	
Step 2	Interaction of proactive and suppress negative display rules			.23*	.05*

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



**Figure 1** Interaction of perceived display rules to express positive emotions with proactive personality on deep acting.

Step 2. As shown in the table, results indicate that perceived display rules to express positive emotions had a significant, positive effect on deep acting in support of Hypothesis 1. Proactive personality also had a significant, positive main effect on deep acting. Further, we found that the interaction added in Step 2 was statistically significant. We plotted this interaction in Figure 1, which shows that the relationship between perceived display rules to express positive emotions and deep acting was significant when proactive personality was high (simple slope  $t = 3.98, p < .01$ ), but not when proactive personality was low ( $t = .91, p = .36$ ), in support of Hypothesis 3.

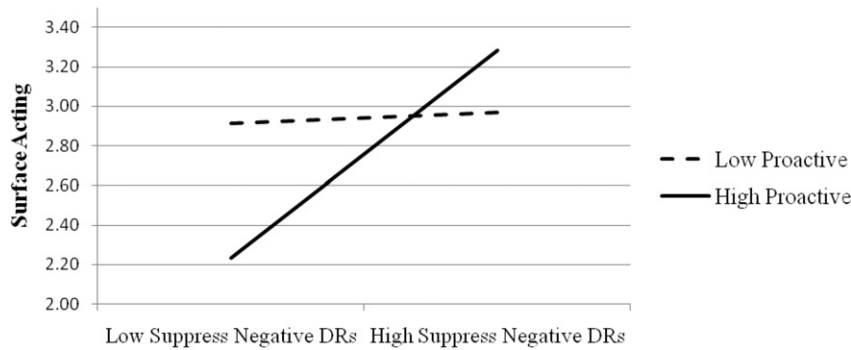
We then proceeded to test Hypotheses 2 and 4 concerning surface acting; these results are also reported in Table 2. We again used a two-step approach by adding the predictors in Step 1 and the interaction terms in Step 2. In support of Hypothesis 2, perceived display rules to suppress negative emotions had a significant, positive effect on surface acting. Proactive personality did not have a direct relationship with surface acting. Concerning the interaction added in Step 2, we found a statistically significant interaction between perceived display rules to suppress negative emotions and proactive personality on surface acting, which is illustrated in Figure 2. Tests of the simple slopes indicated that the relationship between perceived display rules to suppress negative emotions and surface acting was positive and significant when

proactive personality was high ( $t = 4.66, p < .01$ ), and nonsignificant when proactive personality was low ( $t = .22, p = .83$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 4 was also supported.

We also conducted some exploratory analyses based on the results observed in Table 1. Specifically, because we observed that perceived display rules to suppress negative emotions were positively related to deep acting, we tested if proactive personality and display rule perceptions interacted to influence opposing forms of emotional labor. Results showed that the interaction of perceived display rules to suppress negative emotions and proactive personality did not have a significant effect on deep acting ( $\beta = .14, p = .13$ ). Further, the interaction of perceived display rules to express positive emotions and proactive personality did not have a significant effect on surface acting ( $\beta = .01, p = .93$ ). Thus, it is clear that highly proactive employees respond to display rule perceptions only with the emotional labor strategy that is aligned with the way that the display rule is construed (i.e., deep acting with express positive, and surface acting with suppress negative).

## Discussion

The current study examined proactive personality as a moderator that strengthens the existing relationship between display rule perceptions and emotional labor strategies. As



**Figure 2** Interaction of perceived display rules to suppress negative emotions with proactive personality on surface acting.

such, we addressed a gap in emotional labor literature, which has focused only minimally on individual differences that may augment this relationship (Allen et al., 2010; Gosserand & Diefendorff, 2005). Our results are consistent with the control theory perspective on emotional labor (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003), which suggests that individual differences in responsiveness to goal-behavior discrepancies should be important for predicting emotional labor at work. This is the first emotional labor study to focus on testing this prediction of the emotional labor model of control theory, and the findings of this study advance our understanding of the conditions under which employees are most likely to respond to organizational display rule demands with effective emotional labor rather than display rule deviance.

As noted previously, deep acting is the emotional labor strategy that is associated with more favorable outcomes for the employee and the organization (e.g., greater personal accomplishment and customer service ratings; Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Groth et al., 2009). Consequently, it is noteworthy that proactive personality had positive direct and interactive effects on deep acting among customer service employees. This finding suggests that proactive personality could be integrated into organizational selection practices for customer-contact workers. Proactive personality is thought to be a stable individual difference (Bateman & Crant, 1993), so focusing on this trait when selecting service employees could enable organizations to maintain a workforce of employees who respond responsibly to customers with appropriate emotional labor. The value of proactive personality is particularly evident when our findings are taken in context with the large body of other studies that have linked proactivity to other desirable criteria, like motivation to learn and task performance (Crant, 1995; Major et al., 2006).

However, it is also noteworthy that proactive employees will engage in surface acting if they construe that organizational display rules call for the suppression of negative emotions. Because proactive employees are very sensitive to discrepancies between organizational standards and their

own behavior, our findings show that these individuals will adopt the less desirable strategy of surface acting in the interest of conforming closely to the perceived display rule. Consequently, an important implication of our study is that managers should think carefully about how they are framing emotional display expectations for their employees. Managers can bring about the same integrative emotional displays by stressing either the importance of expressing positive emotions or hiding negative emotions, but this seemingly minor choice of framing has important effects on the emotional labor strategies adopted by proactive employees.

Despite these interesting findings, our study does have several limitations to acknowledge. First, the sample was homogenous in nature; it was comprised of working college students and was predominately female. However, it must be noted that these trends are fairly consistent with the service industry in general, and similar samples have been reported in other studies of emotional labor (e.g., Grandey, 2003). Nevertheless, future research should confirm our findings with a more diverse sample.

A second potential limitation was our use of cross-sectional, self-report measures (Podsakoff et al., 2003). We utilized self-report because our constructs of interest were mainly perceptual in nature (e.g., display rule perceptions) or were behaviors that external observers might not have been able to accurately categorize (e.g., deep vs. surface acting strategies), and our examination of CMV suggests that our method did not distort the observed results. However, future research might expand on our findings by incorporating a peer or supervisor rating of the employee's proactive personality. Moreover, we note that the initial relationships we examined, between display rule perceptions and emotional labor strategies, are well established in previous research. For example, Mesmer-Magnus et al. (2012) documented 30 previous studies that have documented this relationship, with a meta-analytic correlation of .32 observed between display rules and emotional labor. Thus, we find it highly unlikely that the cross-sectional nature of the data poses a threat to the

validity of our findings given that reverse causality is quite unlikely for these constructs.

We also note that some research has focused on a third emotional labor strategy, expressing naturally felt emotions (Dahling & Perez, 2010; Diefendorff et al., 2005; Hennig-Thurau, Groth, Paul, & Gremler, 2006) that we did not examine. Expressing naturally felt emotions involves the authentic expression of emotions without any regulatory modifications. Our focus on emotion regulation in response to display rules led us to exclude this strategy from the present study, but expressing naturally felt emotions seems to result in favorable reactions from customers (e.g., Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006). Accordingly, future research should examine how individual differences and organizational display rules align in ways that enable employees to authentically express

what they are really feeling without performing emotional regulation.

In conclusion, our results concerning the moderating role of proactive personality in the emotional labor process has important implications for research and practice. Understanding the ways in which we can predict and strengthen an employee's likelihood to engage in effective emotional labor is a primary step needed to improve customer service and reduce the likelihood of customer service failures.

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