

EMOTION HELPING BY MANAGERS: AN EMERGENT UNDERSTANDING OF DISCREPANT ROLE EXPECTATIONS AND OUTCOMES

GINKA TOEGEL
IMD, Lausanne

MARTIN KILDUFF
University College London

N. ANAND
IMD, Lausanne

Why do managers help employees with their negative emotions, and how do employees respond? We analyzed interview and network data from the head office of a recruiting agency. We found that managers active in the provision of emotion help thought of such help as over and above their managerial duties, whereas employees defined emotional support as managerial in-role behavior. Both parties accepted the necessity of controlling negative emotions for the good of the organization. But those being helped tended to perceive their helpers as doubly powerful figures, invested with both formal authority and parental authority, whereas the helpers saw themselves as reacting to situational contingencies to do favors for subordinates in need. Our results point to an emergent understanding of discrepant interpretations. Employees treat caring as part of the managers' role that requires no reciprocation, whereas managers see such help-giving as discretionary extra-role behavior that requires reciprocated commitment. Discrepant expectations concerning emotion helping leads to positive outcomes (e.g., managers being attributed leadership qualities by subordinates) but also negative outcomes (e.g., managers feeling disappointed at the lack of reciprocity). We contribute an emergent model of discrepant interpretations concerning emotion helping with implications for research on leadership, emotion management, and critical theory.

The provision of emotion help is the subject of continuing debate between labor and management concerning who should be in control of the process (Bacharach, Bamberger, & Sonnenstuhl, 1996: 481). Paralleling this controversy, there are widely differing views among researchers concerning management provision of emotional help to employees. Critical theorists argue that traditionally private aspects of life—such as emotions—should not be sub-

sumed under the managerial gaze (Bolton, 2005). But a variety of approaches derived from social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Lawler & Thye, 1999) suggest that the provision of emotion help is part of an exchange arrangement by which employees reciprocate increased commitment, performance, or personal favors. Thus, social exchange researchers concerned with employee-organizational relationships suggest that a caring attitude toward employees enhances employees' affective commitment to their organization (Tsui, Pearce, Porter, & Tripoli, 1997). Similarly, recent extensions to leader-member exchange (LMX) theory show that a supervisor who establishes a supportive relationship with key subordinates through the provision of emotional and other kinds of support generates organizational commitment on the part of the employees which, in turn, is expected to lead to in-role and extra-role increases in employee performance (Eisenberger et

We thank Peter Bamberger for his consistently helpful guidance throughout the review process, and three reviewers for their insightful comments. Prior versions of this article benefited from comments from Sally Maitlis and Hugh Willmott, to whom we extend heartfelt thanks. The article was also improved through presentations at the University of Alberta (2007), the Academy of Management meeting (2008), OTREG at the University of Cambridge (2010), and the organizational behavior reading group at the University of Cambridge (2010).

al., 2010). Further, supervisors who provide support to their subordinates can, according to LMX theory, expect their subordinates to reciprocate by doing favors for the supervisors (Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997).

Although the importance of social exchange in the context of emotion help and other forms of prosocial and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) between managers and subordinates is well established (Organ, 1988), questions concerning why and how managers engage in the process of helping subordinates with their negative emotions remain to be answered. The process of exchange does not adequately explain why supervisors would overcome the general human tendency of avoiding people perceived to be suffering from negative emotions (see the discussion in Hareli and Rafaeli [2008: 46]), given that such help is often taken for granted by recipients (George & Brief, 1992: 311), and given that supervisors who provide such help are reported to suffer detrimental personal and career consequences (Frost, 2003).

Our contribution is to build from case research toward an emergent model of discrepant interpretations concerning managerial emotion helping in organizations. We identify different types of emotion help and describe how discrepant views of emotion helping on the part of managers and subordinates contribute to outcomes both positive and negative. Drawing from a review of employee help-seeking research (Bamberger, 2009), we contribute to leadership research, research on emotion management, and a critical theory perspective to the developing literature that takes a more nuanced approach to OCB (Bergeron, 2007; Bolino, 1999; Spector & Fox, 2010; Van Dyne & Ellis, 2004).

Given competing demands on managers to control work activity and promote employee welfare, our data show that managers and subordinates disagreed as to whether managerial efforts to ameliorate employees' negative emotions represented discretionary good citizenship behavior or expected managerial role enactment (cf. Katz and Kahn [1966] on incompatible role expectations). This incongruence extended to the expectation of reciprocity, with subordinates seeing little or no obligation to reciprocate for emotion help received, whereas managers expected reciprocation in the form of subordinate commitment and personal loyalty. Representing the viewpoint of the managers, the CEO of the company we studied noted: "It is human nature, isn't it? When you do something for someone, you always kind of expect to be reciprocated."

If we go to the pub and I buy you a drink, it will sort of be expected that the next time around, you buy me one. It is in every element of our culture—except in the workplace. They [direct reports] don't see that."

Emotional expression is a constitutive aspect of exchange processes (Lawler & Thye, 1999: 239), but between a manager and a subordinate exchange processes are also overlaid with differences in role expectations. If a manager sees provision of help as extra-role behavior, the manager is likely to expect payback in the form of specific, personally provided help in the future, given the prevalence of reciprocity norms in social interaction (Cialdini, Vincent, Lewis, Catalan, Wheeler, & Darby, 1975). To the extent that employees feel themselves socially indebted to managers, they are likely to feel bound to the social system that provides them with emotion help. Thus, the provision of help by managers to employees suffering negative emotions can be seen as promoting dependency, particularly to the extent that there is likely to be ambiguity as to whether and when social indebtedness has been repaid (Gouldner, 1960: 175).

Indeed, employees are more likely to access help with emotional problems, to the extent that they perceive that there are *no* expectations concerning immediate and direct payback to specific managers (Bamberger, 2009: 76–77). Thus, the stage is set for managers to be disappointed by the absence of reciprocation by employees who have been helped. Employees in general tend to view supervisors as acting on behalf of the organization (Rousseau, 1989). According to recent extensions to LMX theory, when employees identify their supervisor with the organization, they are likely to "attribute favorable treatment by the supervisor to the organization and, as a result, feel obligated to the organization" (Eisenberger et al., 2010: 3). Thus, the supervisor is likely to feel disappointed if he or she is expecting personal reciprocity rather than a more generalized reciprocity toward the organization itself.

Emotion helping by managers is puzzling from a theoretical point of view, given that managers pay a price in terms of burnout and career stagnation for monitoring and helping employees deal with negative emotions (Frost, 2003). Emotion helping behaviors include talking, listening, and expressing concern or empathy for distressed individuals (Zellers & Perrewé, 2001), and these behaviors constitute part of a larger category of discretionary actions referred to as organizational citizenship behaviors (Organ, 1988, 1997). Through an analysis

of interview data from both managers and employees in a typical service organization, we develop a model of emotion helping in organizations that takes account of incongruence between managers and employees with respect to how emotion help is perceived and whether reciprocation is required for such emotion help.

EMOTION MANAGEMENT IN THE SERVICE SECTOR

In today's workplace, most jobs involve service encounters, so there has been renewed attention to the management of emotions in person-to-person encounters (e.g., Grandey, 2008) and the management of emotional attachments by employees to work groups (e.g., Lawler, Thye, & Yoon, 2009). Such has been the "heightened enthusiasm" on the part of practitioners and academics concerning the management of emotions that there has been a "near explosion of research" on the topic (Elfenbein, 2007: 316), and this has been paralleled by the provision of related leadership development and executive coaching courses (see Peltier [2010] for an overview of practitioner topics).

In the service sector, therefore, emotional labor—defined as "the process of regulating both feelings and expressions for the organizational goals" (Grandey, 2000: 97)—is a major part of what is monitored at work by employers who are in the business of selling good feelings to customers (Hochschild, 1983). Employees are expected to regulate their emotions, even when experiencing stress and exhaustion (Grandey, 2000, 2003). Indeed, "'service with a smile' is perceived as an in-role job requirement for those with frequent interpersonal contact" (Grandey, 2008: 247). Managers are called upon to be alert to signs that employees are suffering from negative emotions, and are asked to be prepared to "intervene effectively and preventively" (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002: 80). To the extent that work requires emotional labor, therefore, managers are likely to notice decrements in emotional tone on the part of employees. Managing subordinates' emotions is now considered "one of the main ways leaders influence performance" (Humphrey, 2002: 497) and is seen as particularly useful in times of shrinking budgets, when keeping customers satisfied can prove challenging (Bolton, 2005: 60).

The increase in scholarly attention toward emotion helping in the workplace suggests that this seldom-observed phenomenon may be more perva-

sive than once thought. One label for such helpers is "toxin handler," and the work that they do can be summarized as "responding compassionately to [colleagues experiencing emotional] pain in their organization" (Frost, 2003: 62). An empirical study of middle managers in an organization reported that a number of them "formed a group that attended to employees' emotional needs" (Huy, 2005: 310). A study of 48 senior managers in Chinese state-owned enterprises revealed that many of them used positive emotional experiences to help colleagues adapt and be more productive (Krone & Morgan, 2000).

Historically, it was trade unions that fostered a culture whereby members helped each other deal with problems, such as emotional distress, that affected individuals' well-being. The mutual-aid logic of unionism emphasized community, family, and caring, and provided a vocabulary for articulating grievances against employers (Bacharach, Bamberger, & Sonnenstuhl, 2001). As trade unionism in countries such as the US and the UK moved toward a logic of bureaucratized servicing of members through the negotiation of material gains, the old ethos of mutual aid has tended to decline, although there are signs of renewal in some industries (Bacharach et al., 2001). More generally, emotional problems in the workplace have tended to become issues for Human Resource departments to deal with through such innovations as employee assistance programs.

But HR departments cannot survey and control all the discrepant emotions emerging in the myriad of interactions taking place in modern service organizations. Nor can such departments anticipate and deal with the spillover of negative emotions into the workplace from crises in the home. Emotions are created and reproduced through interactions with other people, and these emotions are subject to only limited control by bureaucracy (Lawler et al., 2009: 9–10). Negative emotions, whether carried over from home or emerging in the workplace, threaten productivity (Latané & Arrowood, 1963) and can spread across the organization to affect other employees' cooperation and work performance (Barsade, 2002). Thus, in those organizations in which being upbeat is seen as a job requirement, there is likely to be active managerial scrutiny of employees' emotional states to prevent disruption of organizational performance.

Some managers may take on the onerous task of dealing with others' negative emotions and become martyrs to their own altruistic tendencies, often

suffering career problems in bureaucratic organizations ill-suited to emotional coping (Frost, 2003). From this “caring” perspective, managers intervene to help others solve their emotional problems out of a personal desire to ease the sufferings of colleagues rather than because intervention is mandated by the managerial role (e.g., Martin, Knopoff, & Beckman, 1998). Thus, emotion helping may be framed by managers as a “gift” rather than an obligatory aspect of the role (Bolton, 2005: 240).

OVERVIEW OF EMOTION HELPING

We used a case-based approach combined with intensive reading of relevant literature to investigate emotion helping in a recruiting agency. To structure our findings, we foreshadow here the theoretical directions and questions that emerged. In general, we found two different interpretations concerning why managers engage in emotion helping. Subordinates interpreted interventions by managers to ameliorate others’ emotional pain as in-role managerial behavior, given the potential for negative emotions to adversely affect productivity. In contrast, such interventions were often seen by the managers themselves as extra-role behavior, proceeding from intentions unrelated to managerial role demands.

Four questions guided our research into emotion helping. First, to what extent do managers actually incorporate the emotion-helping function in their repertoire of behaviors (cf. Toegel, Anand, & Kilduff, 2007)? A related aspect of this first question concerns whether some managers actively monitor the emotional expressions of employees and intervene when they notice that employees look upset. Or does the management of emotions require waiting for employees to request managerial help, given that the vast majority of helping-based interactions in organizations are initiated by someone seeking help (Bamberger, 2009: 50)? Second, what motivates managers to engage in the potentially unpleasant task of intervening in the management of others’ negative emotions?

A third issue concerns whether emotion helping is seen as in-role or extra-role behavior by those providing the care and those to whom it is provided (cf. Dyne & LePine, 1998). Do managers and employees differ concerning whether managers, as part of their jobs, are expected to engage in emotion management? Relatedly, does the acceptance of help for emotional problems require payback in the form of the expenditure of personal resources (cf.

Bamberger, 2009), and do managers and employees view this issue of reciprocity differently?

A fourth research question was prompted by our emergent finding that managers and subordinates differed as to whether emotion help could be considered extra-role behavior on the part of managers; and our finding that managers and subordinates also differed as to whether managerially provided emotion help should be reciprocated. This question involved investigating whether different types of emotion helping prompted different outcomes from discrepant interpretations on the part of managers and subordinates. Thus, we categorized different types of helping behaviors and examined how discrepant interpretations of the helping behaviors led to positive and negative outcomes.

Given that these interrelated questions have not been addressed in prior theory, we build from results toward an emergent process model of when, why, and how managers provide help with subordinates’ negative emotions, as well as surfacing both positive and negative outcomes from discrepant interpretations concerning emotion helping.

METHODS

Site

We studied the head office of a recruiting agency specializing in providing managerial staff for retail outlets such as grocery stores. The company was founded in 1988 by an entrepreneur who left his job at an executive placement agency. In contrast to its competitors, the company emphasized both efficiency of database management and effectiveness of relationship building with prospective jobseekers and the companies that hired them. Revenues had tripled during the most recent four-year period, while the number of full-time employees had doubled to 67 (38 women, 29 men). As the largest specialist retail recruitment agency in its market, the company received about 500 original résumés each week and was the largest classified advertiser in the urban area in which it was located. Employee turnover at the company was less than 5 percent a year, compared to an industry average of close to 40 percent.

We were fortunate in establishing strong, trusting relations with the members of this particular organization, and thereby achieved unusual access to thoughts and feelings concerning managerial helping interventions. Such access is a prerequisite for

case-based theory building (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

Procedure

Emotion helping across ranks. We collected social network data concerning who went to whom for emotion help to examine whether managers (relative to subordinates) were more active in the network. The data were collected as part of a larger study by means of a questionnaire sent through e-mail to all 67 employees. We assured respondents that their responses would be confidential, and we provided debriefing sessions following data collection. After two follow-up reminder e-mails, all 67 employees had responded concerning the network data reported here.

To construct the emotion-helping network, we collected information from respondents concerning who helped them deal with their negative emotions. On the questionnaire, respondents were asked to look down an alphabetical roster of employees and indicate the people who helped them deal with their negative emotions at work: "Please look down the alphabetical list of your fellow employees and place a check mark to indicate all the names of those people who you think help you when you need support in times of trouble to cope with your personal problems and your negative emotions."

To examine the extent to which lower-level employees tended to nominate those with higher levels of managerial responsibility as emotion helpers, we first used company records to categorize people into three categories (high, middle, low) based on their level of managerial responsibility. This categorization was checked and confirmed by the company's CEO for accuracy. Then we calculated, for each category, the extent of homophily; that is, the extent to which people nominated same-category others as those who helped manage and alleviate their emotional distress. Of particular interest are the adjusted homophily scores; that is, scores adjusted for the relative availability of people in different categories. What may appear as a tendency on the part of people of a certain category to nominate people of the same category may be attributable to the proportionately higher number of people of that category. Adjusted homophily scores can range from -1 (all nominations to those of a different category) to $+1$ (all nominations to those of the same category). (See Krackhardt [1990] for an

example of this procedure, and Gower and Legendre [1986] for complete details.)

Inductive qualitative study. In preparation for systematic guided questioning, we interviewed five employees (ranging from junior to senior, in terms of hierarchical levels) to learn about job tasks and the culture of the organization, shadowed a senior consultant for one workday to observe patterns of task-related and social interactions, observed a customer-handling skills training session for junior employees, and participated in many informal meetings and conversations across the organization.

Of the 21 employees who worked in a managerial capacity (including partners, senior consultants, assignment managers, and supervisory administrators), we interviewed 14 (6 men, 8 women). Some managers were unavailable for interviews, because they were involved in starting up a branch of the firm in another city. Two individuals in the top management level were interviewed on two different occasions, once to provide an overall picture or "grand tour" (cf. Spradley, 1979: 86–87) of the organization's business and its manner of functioning, and a second time to talk about emotion help. We also interviewed the CEO multiple times. Given the relatively large number of subordinates, we used data saturation as the trigger to stop further data collection (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). We found that by the time we interviewed the 16th employee, much of the information was repetitive. In all, we interviewed 30 (14 men, 16 women) employees, representing 45 percent of the headquarters' personnel.

Interviews lasted about an hour, on average, and followed a semistructured protocol (included in the Appendix). We used a mixture of descriptive and contrast questions (Spradley, 1979). We began with a descriptive question asking participants to tell us about a situation in which they experienced stress, anxiety, tension, or emotional pain, and then asked them to characterize the fellow employee or any other person who helped them through the experience (see the Appendix). We used contrast questions such as "Does everybody in the firm provide such help or only some people?" We used emerging themes from initial interviews to guide data collection in subsequent ones.

To uncover the expectations and motivations of organizational members requires a grounding in the organization's culture to produce a first-order analysis framed around the dominant themes expressed by the participants (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991: 435). A second-order commentary comes later, providing

a theoretical explanation of the themes that surfaced through interviews with employees and managers. To provide the more dispassionate view required by a second-order commentary, we followed prior work (e.g., Gioia, Thomas, Clark, & Chittipeddi, 1994) and employed two members of the research team to conduct interviews, and a third person to help provide a retrospective, more objective analysis of the data.

Analysis of interview data. Figures 1 and 2 show the progression of the first-order analysis leading to emergent themes concerning incongruent expectations (Figure 1) and reciprocity (Figure 2). We used NVivo software (Richards, 1999) to group together the different situations that our informants described when they needed emotion help, such as anxieties related to deadlines, fear of not meeting monthly targets, death or illness of a family member, or other domestic issues. We then assembled groupings that related to similar issues or relationships into broader aggregations of *informant sensemaking* (see the first column in Figures 1 and 2) and furnished these with an appropriate

informant-relevant label (e.g., first entry, first column in Figure 1: “emotion help is not in managers’ job description”). The next step was to compare the data from different interviewees and to develop a list of higher order *analytic dimensions* (Van Maanen, 1988), complete with descriptors that facilitate theoretical analysis (e.g., second column in Figure 1: “managers perceive emotion help to be extra-role behavior”). Finally, we used data displays (cf. Miles & Huberman, 1994) to create more general *emergent themes* (e.g., third column in Figure 1: “incongruence in the expectation of emotion help”), useful for building the emergent theoretical model.

In presenting the results below, we numbered our interviewees and provided information on their rank in the organization to clarify precisely where information was derived from. The quotes are labeled with the following categories: E-1 (employee 1); MM-1 (middle manager 1), and HLM-1 (high-level manager 1). Informants that were interviewed in our preparatory interviews are prefixed PI-1 (preparatory informant 1). We have provided an

FIGURE 1
Incongruent Expectations Concerning the Role of Emotion Help in Managerial Behavior

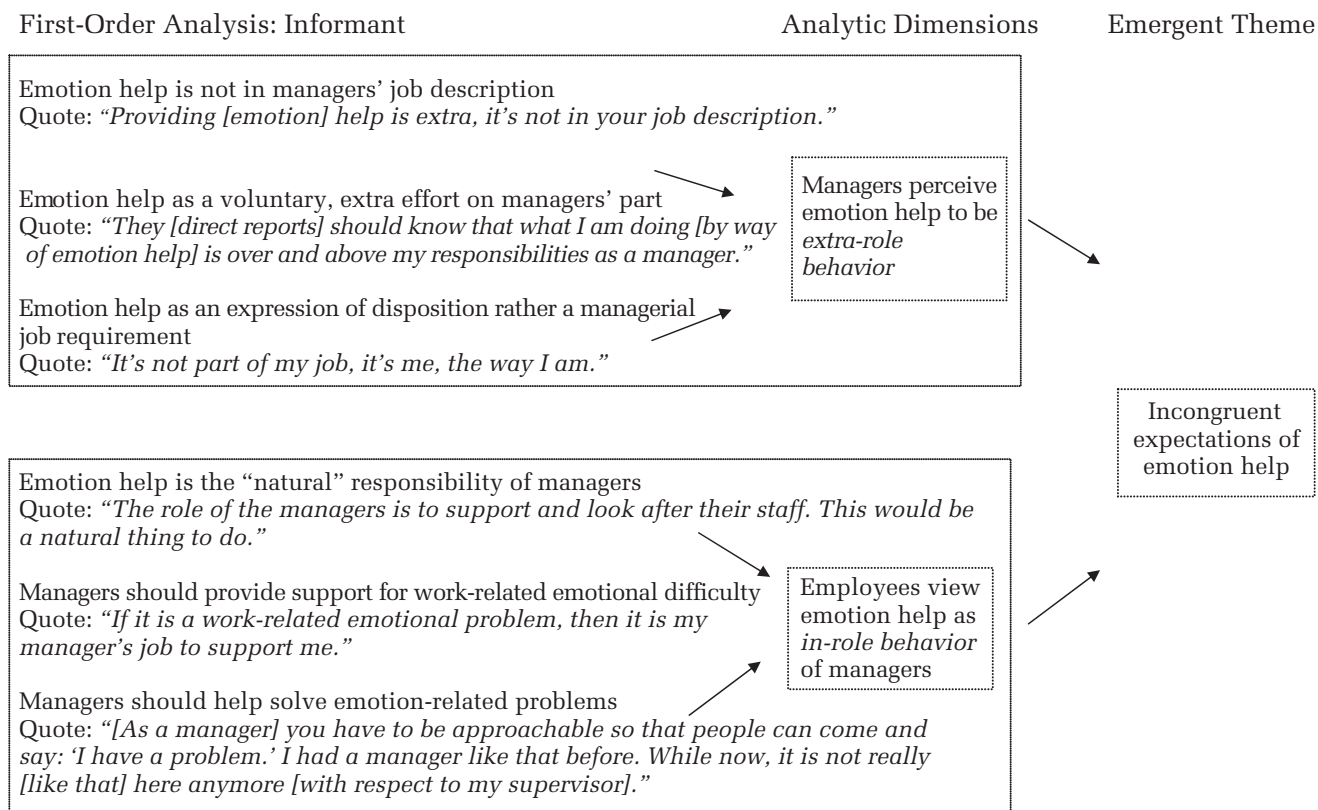
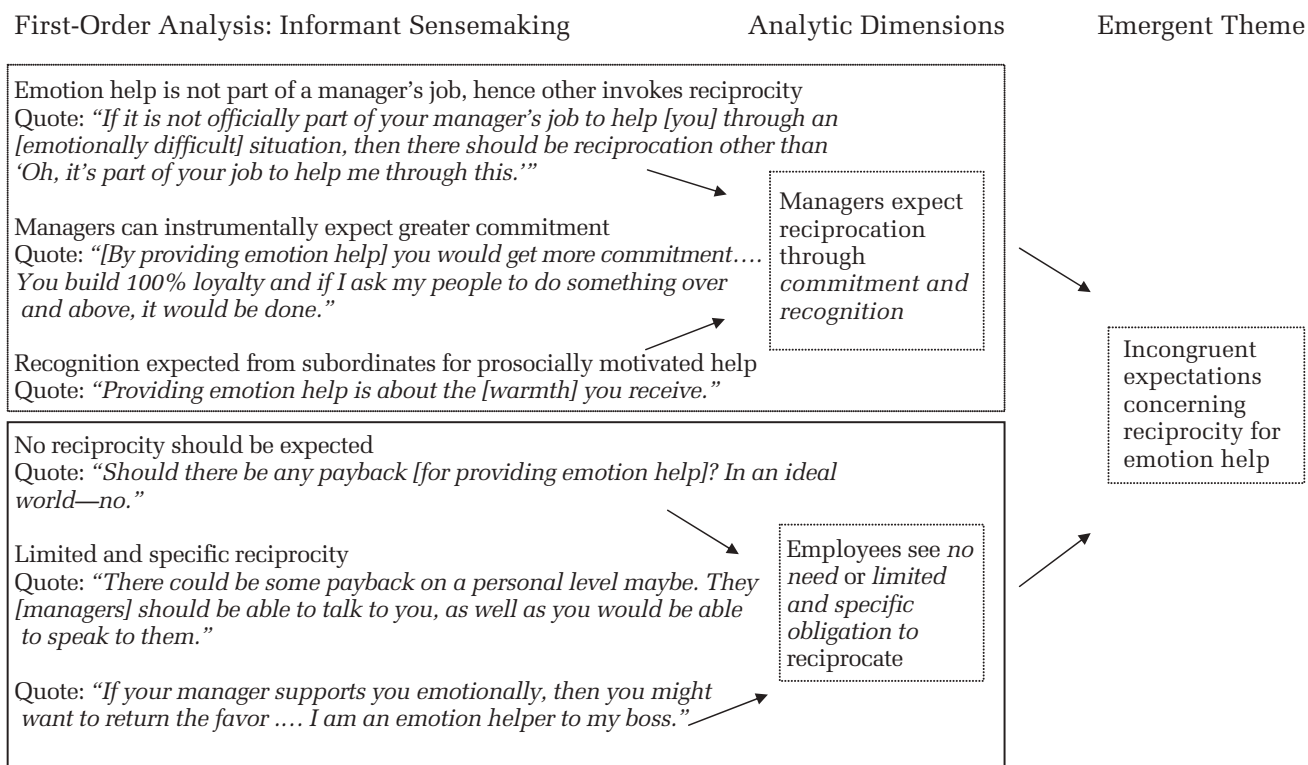


FIGURE 2
Incongruent Expectations Concerning Reciprocity for Emotion Help



extensive analysis of organizational culture, so as to situate the results in the context of a typical, albeit high-performing, service company.

RESULTS

Company Culture

The CEO recruited new employees through an assessment center that used occupational personality questionnaires, resulting in the hiring of "very like-minded and likeable" people (HLM-2). Job descriptions were detailed and precise. The head office staff (the focus of our study) worked in a series of town houses in a residential area of the city. All employees other than the CEO occupied desks in open-plan rooms in full view of colleagues, meaning that any behavior, including help-seeking behavior, was likely to be fully exposed to others. One of the managers commented concerning the visibility of workplace activity: "We all know exactly what each other is billing. It's very open, there are financial spreadsheets we all look at, we have access to. Nothing is hidden" (MM-1). The atmosphere was friendly and collegial, with one em-

ployee commenting as follows concerning social interaction: "A lot of friendships are formed, a lot of relationships are formed through the company as well in terms of people popping off and getting married" (E-14).

Recruitment consultants interacted mainly with three sets of people: work-team colleagues, clients (i.e., representatives of retailers seeking skilled workers), and job candidates. A junior consultant said that she had become "ruthless" at "seeing when I can help candidates and when I can't" (PI-1). A senior consultant reported that the most critical skill that she needed was "emotional intelligence and being able to read people" (MM-7) while interviewing them. Emotional regulation was also important—consultants were expected to present themselves as calm and composed while interacting with clients. The CEO reinforced these expectations in training seminars by recollecting an episode in which he "exchanged some fairly sharp words" with a client, and why losing control of his emotions in this way was detrimental to business. On the day of the work-shadowing, one senior consultant was observed spending about 20 minutes

repairing her make-up and grooming herself ahead of a luncheon meeting with a client, noting: "I've got to put my best face on" (HLM-6).

The CEO described himself as efficient, organized, and meticulous; this was borne out in our observations of him. He regarded his main achievement as bringing a systematic approach to recruiting involving measurement, control, and testing. In particular, a computer program tracked precisely how many interviews with potential job placement candidates each recruitment consultant achieved: "The computer will spit it out. Because everything they [the recruiters] do goes through the system." The company had no special assistance programs or chaplains to help employees with their emotional distress. During the first wave of interviews, we asked if there should be a formal role of emotion helper in the organization. Sixty percent of respondents disagreed. One of them commented, "If they [employees] can talk to whoever, it's better than having to go to one person" (E-3).

Internal promotion was carefully monitored in this organization. One of the employees reflected on the internal exams that measured promotability: "There is a very explicit documented process for the way of working. . . . There are four grades, A-D. . . . I'm due to take on a C grade exam next month. You have certain criteria which are in the terms and conditions which everyone is aware of. . . . The exam itself is a written exam and then is checked to see if you know what you are talking about" (PI-1). Another employee added, "There are a lot of internal courses. . . . All that time you are assessed and you have a weekly review meeting with your own mentor and you have monthly reviews with the divisional directors" (PI-2). Formal mentoring meetings focused on performance feedback and organizational problem solving rather than on social or emotional support. Indeed, the CEO described how such performance feedback could be used to deal with "trouble makers" who didn't "believe in the way we run the system":

We know we place roughly 10 or 11 percent of the people we interview. So do the math. Ten or 11 percent of 100 candidates interviewed is more than 10 or 11 percent of 50 candidates interviewed. It's about activity. It always has been, always will be. Get over it. When we go back to these trouble makers, they are the ones that want to interview less. They don't believe in the way we run the system. So they start telling others, "Don't do it the [company] way, do it this way." We have to crush them. . . . You can't win all hearts and minds. (CEO)

The CEO also commented on the importance of managing negative emotions in the workplace, as follows: "If you have negative feelings, if you got people working in a way that they don't like each other, in a sales environment it is fatal. Then they work to hurt each other. That means hurting each others' sales as well. . . . That needs managing very carefully."

Sources of Negative Emotion

Our informants reported that managers had helped them with a variety of negative emotional experiences encompassing both personal and professional realms of life. Approximately 70 percent of our respondents reported that they expected their managers to provide them with emotion help. Asked to give examples of cases in which they needed emotional support, interviewees recounted times when negative emotions were prompted by incidents outside of work such as "a negative situation with my husband" (MM-5) and times when negative emotions were prompted by work-related incidents such as "going through a promotion . . . [when] I had massive amount of client work" (MM-1). Respondents also mentioned job-related anxieties concerning deadlines, not meeting monthly targets, change of work roles, and difficult direct reports. Respondents reported that emotion helping was particularly evident on Mondays, at the time of monthly performance appraisals, and during the months of January and September, when work tended to build up. About half of the situations reported were related to personal issues. Respondents mentioned incidents such as illness and death of a family member, and one employee recalled: "Three months ago, I split with my boyfriend and it was horrendous. . . . I was just falling apart and it was awful. I couldn't concentrate at all" (E-6). Most employees were stressed at work as a result of both work-related problems and problems occurring outside the workplace. Only one interviewee said, "I don't deal with emotional issues at work" (HLM-7). Later in the interview, he mentioned that psychosomatic problems had driven him to seek outside counseling.

Research Question 1: Emotion Helping across the Ranks

Did managers incorporate emotion helping in their repertoire of behaviors? The results in Table 1 show that managers did indeed incorporate emo-

TABLE 1
Extent of Homophily in the Provision of Emotion Help
by Managerial Rank^a

Rank	<i>n</i>	Mean	s.d.
High level	8	.43 (.65)	.17
Middle level	13	.14 (.44)	.18
Low level	46	-.03 (.61)	.18

^a Mean values indicate the extent to which emotion helping behavior was received from people of the same rank, with positive scores indicating within-rank helping and negative scores indicating cross-rank helping. Bold values are adjusted to take account of the relative number of people in the rank, whereas values in parentheses are unadjusted. All means differ significantly from one another at $p < .05$.

tion helping into their repertoire of behaviors in this particular organization. (Note that every manager received at least one nomination as an emotion helper, with one manager receiving 29 nominations.) The values in Table 1 show, for each rank, the extent of homophily; that is, the extent to which people nominated same-rank others as those who helped manage and alleviate their emotional distress. The bolded values are homophily scores adjusted for the relative availability of people in different ranks.

Table 1 shows that those in the highest managerial rank tended to be helped by colleagues of the same rank (as shown by the positive adjusted homophily score of .43), whereas those in the lowest rank (who had no managerial responsibilities) tended to be helped by people from other ranks (as indicated by the negative score of $-.03$). People of middle managerial rank were similar to those of high rank in their likelihood to turn to those of the same rank for help with emotional problems, although the strength of this tendency was lower (adjusted homophily = .14). All of the means were significantly different from one another ($p < .05$). Whereas employees at the lowest level of managerial responsibility nominated managers at the highest level of responsibility 36 times as emotion helpers, there were only 2 nominations in the other direction (from the highest level to the lowest level).

There was, therefore, little crosscutting reciprocity with respect to emotion helping. One lower-level employee explained that managers tended to "expect reciprocity on a commitment level" (E-10) in return for providing emotion help, rather than expecting reciprocity in terms of ameliorating managers' negative emotions. One middle man-

ager stated that, "I hope my subordinates have said . . . to my boss that I have helped them" (MM-5). One of the few middle managers who did have a mutual helping relationship with his boss explained, "I would talk about personal issues with [him]. We had worked together for two years and we had developed a friendship relation" (MM-3). Thus, between middle and top managers, reciprocal emotion helping was possible because of an established friendship relation. However, the more usual situation was reflected in the comments of one of the top managers who stated that, "I don't think managers expect direct reports to provide emotional support to them" (HLM-7).

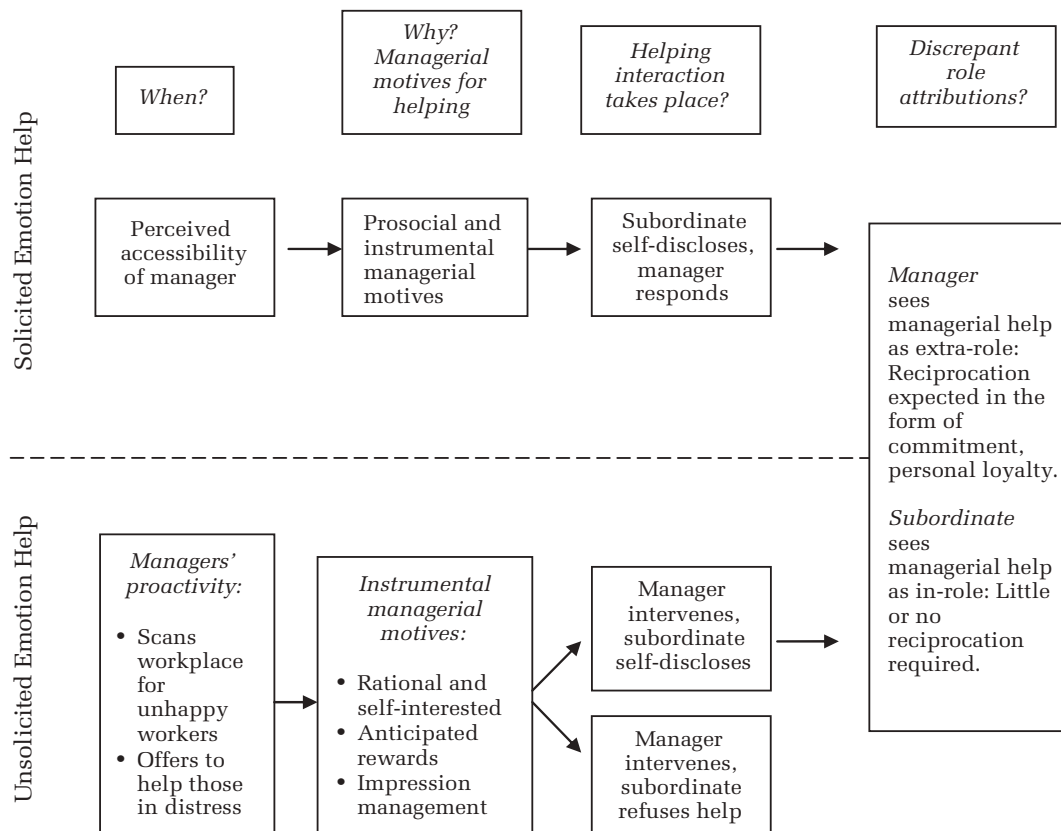
When was emotion help provided? Thus, in partial answer to our first research question, we found that 75 percent of lower-level employees and 71 percent of middle managers reported receiving emotion help by those higher in the hierarchy. A second aspect of the first research question concerned whether managers were actively involved in intervening to proffer help with others' emotional problems, or whether managers waited for employees to request help. To structure the remaining findings concerning managerial helping behavior, we summarize in Figure 3 the emergent process model. The dotted line across the first half of the model separates motives and behaviors relating to solicited and unsolicited emotion help.

Our data suggest that help was solicited by employees from those managers who appeared particularly accessible. As one subordinate stated: "The best thing [for managers] to do is to be approachable" (E-1). One manager, who emphasized that she tried to motivate her subordinates when they were feeling down, suggested that the subordinates weren't always in touch with their negative emotions, but that they approached her for clarification of what they were feeling: "without realizing it . . . they are frustrated" (MM-5).

Some employees were reluctant to reveal how problems were affecting their emotions at work. The interview data show that 7 of the 14 managers were proactive in overcoming this reluctance on the part of employees to solicit help with emotions. Thus, as Figure 3 summarizes, such managers actively scanned the workplace for signs of unhappy workers, as indicated by this manager:

I can very often pre-empt things. You can see that someone is not very happy or is a bit quiet and then approach them. It's not that everybody feels comfortable with coming to you. But it's just saying "Is there something wrong?" If they say "No," that's

FIGURE 3
Management Emotion Helping and Discrepant Role Attributions



fine; I have offered my support but they don't want it. But often people don't like to be needy. Especially if you are introverted, you like to keep your emotions to yourself. (MM-3)

Another manager explained that, "I generally go to people when I see they are distressed. I say, 'let's talk for a couple of minutes, let's have a cup of tea.' I try not to draw attention" (HLM-1). This view was echoed by a senior consultant, who stated: "Most people prefer to feel that their manager cares for them and has noticed that they are not themselves or things are not going quite right, and just to say, 'Are you OK?'" (E-10). The managers who were active in emotion helping seemed to have their antennae tuned to emotional distress among their subordinates and initiated interactions when they spotted such distress. One subordinate described the proactivity of managerial emotion helpers as follows: "They push you a little bit to speak about it: 'How are you? How are you feeling?' They ask why I am stressed, why I am upset, and listen to my moaning" (E-4).

Research Question 2: Why Did Managers Help with Employees' Negative Emotions?

Our second research question (mirrored in the second heading in Figure 3) concerns the motivations of managers for providing emotion help. Two basic motives of managers who acted as "emotion helpers" emerged from the study. First, there was a tendency among one set of managers to view the provision of emotion help in an instrumental manner. These managers thought that organizational and economic benefits would accrue from helping others cope with their negative emotions, because "the emotional side does affect the money, the sales, and the profits" and "if you provide emotional support, you'll get a return on that" (MM-3). According to one of the managers:

To a certain degree, there's self-interest there. I don't want that people leave, or I don't want them to be really low or down at work, because this will have negative impact on me. I like to have a very positive environment. I want people around me to be posi-

tive, and if people are very negative or down, it rubs off on everybody else. . . . (MM-5)

Another high-ranking manager commented: "I have to [provide emotion help], otherwise it [negative emotion] will spread like fire" (HLM-7).

Managers taking an instrumental view of emotion help expected their investment in the well-being of their subordinates to be reciprocated with commitment and recognition, as shown in Figure 2, which summarizes the emergent themes concerning reciprocity. A second and more prosocial motive for emotion help characterized managers who expressed "curiosity" about their colleagues. Such managers tended to make dispositional attributions about themselves; for example: "[Providing emotion help] is not part of my job, it's me, the way I am . . ." (MM-5). The same female manager commented that her motivation to help others through difficult emotions came from "being a little bit nosy." She liked to know "what is going on and to get involved." Another one made it clear, "It makes my job really interesting, because I have interest in people and this [type of interaction] stimulates me" (MM-4). As another manager stated, "You have to know what makes your employees tick, and it helps to know what happens in people's lives outside work, to understand how their mind works" (MM-3). Managers in the social motivation group tended to suggest that providing emotion support to others was an important skill that could be used in other areas of life. One remarked that it was good to practice such supportive behavior because this might help the struggle to cope with "negativity in general." One manager spoke about emotion help being in line with "the Christian spirit," and added, "It's the right thing to do" (HLM-1). To the extent that prosocial motives were mentioned by managers, these tended to be associated with cases in which employees solicited emotion help, as indicated in Figure 3.

Managers who expressed social rather than instrumental motives, however, also nurtured the calculative expectation that they would gain something back from the provision of emotion help—recognition of their efforts from subordinates. As one midranking manager noted:

When . . . I have helped them [and enabled them to] focus [on their task], and if they start achieving [their job goals], what delights me is the recognition: Recognition in the sense that they know that I helped them. They have probably said something to my boss [about the fact] that I helped them. And

although he [my boss] might not say anything to me like "Thank you for talking to that person," what I like about [it is] the recognition and warmth that you get from people. (MM-2)

The emergent themes in Figure 2 also show a discrepancy with respect to how employees viewed managerial reciprocity expectations. Employees tended to insist they were under little or no obligation to reciprocate managerial helping. We take up this incongruence between managerial and employee expectations next.

Research Question 3: Discrepant Role Expectations

As Figure 3 shows (under the heading "Helping interaction takes place?"), in some cases of managerial intervention, employees refused help, and therefore the process stopped. As in the example reported above, managers sometimes offered support but found that their subordinates didn't want it. In all other cases, the managers provided help, whether this was first solicited by employees or not.

Did managers consider emotion helping to be part of their required job duties? The answer to the first part of our third research question is that managers typically regarded such activity as discretionary and outside of their mandated roles, as the second column in Figure 1 shows. Help with negative emotions was not considered by the managers to be part of their job description but was seen as something "extra," as a "voluntary" effort arising from an underlying disposition rather than from an organizational requirement. As one manager explained concerning the tendency to provide emotion help on a discretionary basis: "My subordinates should not think that's what I'm there for. . . . People in other companies don't feel comfortable talking to their manager [about their emotions]" (MM-3).

Thus, in the words of one manager, subordinates "should know what I am doing [by way of providing emotion help] is over and above my responsibilities as a manager" (HLM-7). Managers perceived their emotion helping to be extra-role behavior. But this view differed from those of subordinates. As the bottom panel in Figure 1 shows, subordinates tended to see managerial interventions to provide emotion help as part of the "natural" responsibility of managers, particularly in the case of work-related emotional problems. Thus, employees viewed

emotion help as in-role behavior on the part of managers. For some employees, the expectation extended to help with emotion problems in the workplace that originated from difficulties outside of work, as the following quotation from one of the subordinates indicates:

I had a big problem at home. I was feeling very unsettled. I had bottled up my emotions. In this situation when you are looking for help it tends to be someone . . . you consider a friend. . . . Or someone who is quite senior, in a supervisory role, and it is their duty in a sense to ask everybody whether they are ok and how they are coping. That's their job, really. . . . They need to make sure that you are OK in general. This responsibility comes with their job. (E-4)

Subordinates' tendencies to see emotion help as expected *in-role behavior* on the part of managers was reinforced by the proactivity of some managers. Managers who actively sought out those in emotional distress rather than passively waiting to be asked for help might have created the impression that such emotion helping was an expected part of managerial job performance.

Subordinates generally expected their managers to help them cope with negative emotion. A junior consultant remarked that "Being a manager is not just about setting targets—it's about making sure that people achieve their highest potential. You can't do that without [providing] emotional support" (E-1). Most of the subordinates suggested they would "expect a sympathetic ear," because "the role of the manager is to support and look after his staff and [providing emotion help] would be a natural thing to do" (E-7). Some of the direct reports differentiated between personal and work-related problems, suggesting "If I have real problems at home, and they bring down my performance, it's not my manager's job to support me, but if they are work-related, then it is her job" (E-8).

Did the receipt of emotion help require reciprocity? Owing to differences in perceived role definitions, some subordinates felt either *no need* or *limited and specific obligation* to repay their managers for the emotion help they received (see summary of emergent themes in the bottom half of Figure 2). The former, "no obligation," view was justified by the argument that managers who helped subordinates with their negative emotions were amply repaid by the organization. For example, one subordinate argued as follows: "[The manager] gets his bonus as a result of the work of the

team. He benefits if the team is happy and is working well. That's where he gets his reward from" (E-5). Another subordinate commented: "They [managers] are helping themselves," because "the cost of not providing any sort of [emotional] support is greater than the cost of providing that support" (E-8). One of the low-ranking individuals reckoned, "It is less in the interest of the subordinate to help the manager, because if the team sales increase and the manager is happier, but my sales remain constant, it is a waste of my time to make sure that the manager is OK" (E-9).

A subordinate of the manager with the highest score in the emotion-helping network gave the following account: "I genuinely think that he [my manager] is a nice bloke. You don't get the idea that he is doing it [emotion helping] from a business perspective. He always gave me the impression that he was doing it purely to help me personally. The business result was as a result of the fact that he had helped me personally, wanting to make my life a bit easier. Genuinely, he is that sort of guy, it's his personality. A lot of people probably say that about him inside and outside the company" (MM-1). The respective manager, on the other hand, self-attributed a more instrumental motive: "It's in my interest to tackle this issue. I could benefit from it, because there could be something that could affect my team. I get bonuses for what we achieve" (HLM-1).

Some subordinates professed a *limited and specific obligation* view, expecting that the receipt of emotion help should be reciprocated in the same way. As one subordinate noted: "I am an emotional helper to my boss" (E-12). None of the subordinates interviewed mentioned owing commitment, loyalty, and extra productivity that some managers had expected of them. But to the extent that subordinates themselves approached managers for help, they tended to attribute prosocial motives to the managers.

Research Question 4: Patterns of Emotion Help and Outcomes from Discrepant Expectations

How was help provided? Managers exhibited a range of helping tactics. Based on classifying managerial activities from interview reports from those who were helped, Table 2 shows, for each of the managers people mentioned as active in providing help, whether or not each manager engaged in listening (representing 27% of the comments on how helped was provided); validating (36%); reframing

TABLE 2
Types of Emotion Help^a

Manager	Listening	Validating: Empathy and Ego-Strengthening	Reframing	Transforming	Advising
1	X				X
2	X				X
3	X	X	X	X	X
4	X	X	X		X
5	X				X
6	X	X			X
7	X	X	X		X
8	X		X		
9	X	X			
10	X	X	X		X
11	X				
12	X				X
13	X				
14	X				
Provision of emotion help ^b	27%	36%	18%	9%	10%

^a Only those managers indicated as providing emotional help to colleagues are included in this table. "X" indicates that a manager was reported as providing this type of emotion help to a colleague.

^b The percentage of comments relating to provision of emotion help.

(18%); transforming (9%); and advising (10%). Thus, to take the example of the single manager listed under the category "transforming through positivity," three different subordinates referred to this particular manager as providing this kind of help. There were eight other comments concerning this tactic, but they were not associated with any particular individual manager.

With respect to the first aspect of emotion help—listening—the interviews revealed that, irrespective of whether emotional problems could be traced to personal issues or work situations, all emotion helpers provided a "listening ear" to those troubled by negative emotions. As one subordinate said about her manager: "Basically, he just sits there and listens to you" (E-5). Another one described this emotion helping interaction as letting people "get the problem off the chest" (E-4). There were also indications that emotion helpers sometimes role-modeled self-disclosure and emotion awareness, as reported by this subordinate: "He opened himself and this allowed me to open myself more and let out a lot of this stuff that you usually don't talk about" (E-3).

As Table 2 indicates, just under half of the helpers helped validate employee emotions by providing an empathic environment that strengthened self-confidence. Such helpers were described by employees as "big-hearted" and as "creating warmth." The process of validation involved providing reassurance concerning how individuals

saw themselves. As the comment from one direct report suggests, "He gave me the confidence that I could cope" (MM-1).

Those in the grip of negative emotions were (as Table 2 shows) encouraged by some emotion helpers to "reframe" emotions through a process of reflection and the reorganization of experience in new narratives. Reframing was described (by the helpers) in terms of helping people to "step away from their problems" (E-2), to see "both sides of the story" (E-11), to see "the whole picture" (E-9), "to refocus" (E-3), and "to come back to rational thinking" (E-7). From the perspective of those suffering negative emotions, this emotion work was described as helping people "look at the problem from a third-party view" (E-4), "put everything in perspective" (E-9), and "see the wood from the trees" (HLM-2).

Emotion transformation is about changing negative emotions into positive ones. In total, 11 comments were made describing this tactic, but for 8 of these comments the name of the helper was not indicated. Three of the comments could be clearly attributed to HLM-1, because interviewees explicitly mentioned his name. A subordinate noted that HLM-1 was "quite humorous and funny" (E-3), another mentioned that, "we laugh and I feel much better" (E-5), and a third one commented that this emotion helper was able to "sell ideas in a positive way" (E-11). Finally, the majority of the managers in our sample engaged in providing advice to those

suffering from negative emotions. As one manager described this process: “I say don’t worry about that—this is what you can do” (MM-6).

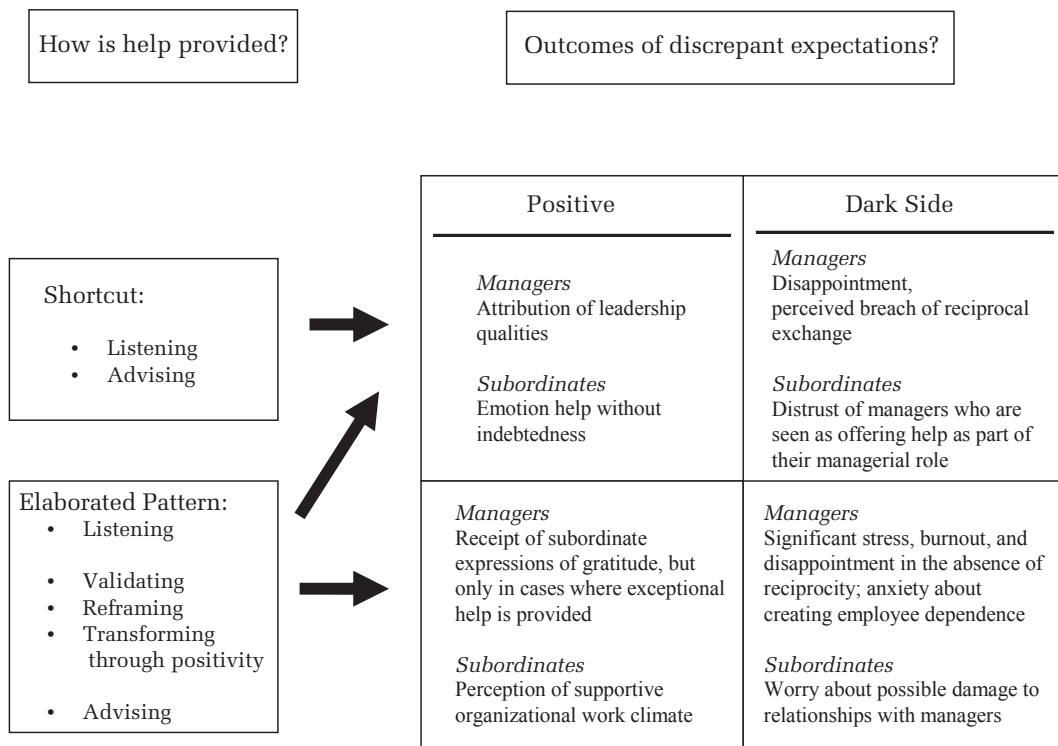
Emotion helping and outcomes of discrepant expectations. First, we should note that managers viewed their helping efforts as effective in preventing negative emotional contagion across teams, in promoting performance and sales, and in improving work atmosphere. We choose not to focus on these outcomes, given that they have been well established in prior research. In keeping with our fourth research question, we focused on outcomes of *discrepant expectations* between managers and subordinates with respect to roles and reciprocity.

Overall, two general patterns of emotion helping emerged from our data, as illustrated in Figure 4. The first, short-cut, pattern involved managers listening to subordinates and often providing advice. Listening and advice giving were universally regarded by subordinates as standard aspects of managers’ jobs, so the likelihood of discrepancies concerning expectations of reciprocity for such help was high. The second pattern of emotion helping followed a more elaborated route that involved not

just listening and advising, but also more extensive involvement that included one or more of the following: validating, reframing, and transforming. This elaborated pattern of managerial helping was likely to prompt feelings of gratitude on the part of those receiving help. Indeed, as Figure 4 shows, the short-cut and elaborated patterns were distinguished in that the elaborated pattern prompted outcomes that were in addition to those prompted by the short-cut pattern.

Figure 4 summarizes our finding that both patterns of emotion helping by managers related to a positive outcome for managers: attributions by subordinates of leadership qualities to managers. The expectation on the part of subordinates that managers should provide emotion help was related to the widely shared prototype of the emotion helper as “someone with experience and seniority” (E-4). One interviewee described emotion helpers as “more experienced and gregarious colleagues who are more wise about life in general” (E-2). One junior employee said about his manager, “I look up to him and see him more as a father figure” (E-3), whereas another employee commented concerning

FIGURE 4
Emergent Model of How Two Patterns of Managerial Helping Relate to Outcomes of Discrepant Expectations



her relationship with her manager: "She is very maternal" (E4). A positive outcome of the role discrepancy, then, for managers was that, because managerial emotion helping behaviors (whether short-cut or elaborated) were seen by subordinates as in-role, managers active in this role tended to be attributed qualities such as wisdom, and tended to be looked up to as inspiring figures.

For subordinates, granting wisdom and parental qualities to managers may have helped relieve subordinates from the necessity of repaying indebtedness in other ways. Further, employees who received the more elaborated set of helping behaviors regarded the overall organizational work climate as supportive because of the attention their personal problems received from managers. For example, one subordinate argued as follows: "It doesn't take genius to figure out that when you step into an office and everyone is happy, there has to be an emotional network in there. It's a very open, friendly company. You feel like you are part of one small company where everyone gets on. . . . [It] does build relationships, it's a very good thing" (E-14). Another subordinate commented: "If people are working in that kind of environment, they are probably much more likely to remain working in that environment" (E-9).

There was gratitude expressed to the emotion helper with the most elaborated pattern (HLM-1) for the extensive help he provided, but such expressions were exceptional. Thus, one of his subordinates noted: "I have fed it back to him on a couple of occasions, but for the other guys, I don't think I would make a conscious effort of thanking them for their support as such" (MM-1). Typically, managers and direct reports alike were aware that incongruent expectations and incongruent reciprocity caused disappointment. Managers who provided either the short-cut or the more elaborated pattern of helping tended to feel "let down and disappointed" (MM-3) at what they perceived to be breaches of expected reciprocity. For managers who provided only short-cut help, there was unhappiness at the perceived lack of gratitude. As one middle manager expressed it: "Managing people is a thankless job. I know how well thank you goes down, but you very rarely get it for yourself" (MM-3). One consequence of processing the negative emotions of others through the more elaborated pattern of helping was that "You do get stressed out and take it home with you. One is definitely suffering as a result of this" (MM-2). Managers providing such extensive help recognized that "they could be

relied upon too heavily" which could "take its toll on you" (HLM-2).

The following incident recounted by a manager illustrates the disappointment when subordinate reciprocation failed to materialize.

There was a member of staff who was going through problems outside work and I spent a lot of time with her to try and get her through it at work as well as give her emotional support. And when she was turning the corner, she said "I am leaving [the firm]," which was completely out of the blue to me. I must admit my initial reaction was "Oh, I feel really let down. I have put a lot of work into you as an individual on a personal basis." A couple of days later she said, "You don't seem very happy for me." I said, "I am happy for you, but I feel actually a bit let down and disappointed that you resigned." And it was only then that she realized, "Oh, I didn't think about that," because probably she thought it's my job. . . . Direct reports sometimes do not realize [that it is not part of my job]. Or take it for granted. They do think it is part of your job. (MM-3)

Continuing with the negative side of the ledger summarized in Figure 4, managers mentioned the tendency for employees in receipt of extensive emotion help (which was assumed by subordinates to be available as part of the managerial role) to become overly dependent. One manager joked that she had become "the agony aunt" (MM-5) for a couple of her direct reports. Subordinates were concerned about another potentially negative outcome: that opening up to a manager concerning emotional problems might damage them in the manager's eyes, leading to a lowering of the subordinate-manager relationship. Managers proffering help were seen by subordinates quite differently than the managers saw themselves: not as colleagues going beyond their expected roles but as bosses doing their jobs. This discrepancy in how emotion help was viewed contributed to a lack of trust. One of the employees, for example, explained that he was reluctant to approach his manager for any kind of emotion help because "I don't want him to think that I am weak" (E-6). Given these discrepant views, bringing negative feelings to the attention of supervisors was seen by subordinates as fraught with risk, as one middle manager understood: "Some people might think it's for weak people and they might get labeled by very narrow-minded managers as weak" (MM-2). A senior manager was concerned that emotion helping could lead to the impairment of relationships because of this destruction of trust: "Some people are

very suspicious, because . . . knowing these things [emotional issues] is going to be a benefit [for the emotion helper]" (HLM-6). There was, then, evidence that employees did not wholly trust managers to be recipients of personal information that might portray the employees as emotionally weak.

Summary of Results

Organizational members were under scrutiny not just from computer systems tracking the pace of work but also from each other, in terms of the monitoring of negative emotions related to both work and nonwork problems. Managers, as a group, tended to provide emotion help not only to each other but also to their subordinates. Managers were active in monitoring the emotions of subordinates and intervening to offer help. Managers' motivations were self-described as instrumental rather than altruistic. But managers active in the provision of emotion help tended to conceive of such help as extra-role behavior "over and above" their duties. Managers expected employees to reciprocate with commitment and personal loyalty. Subordinates on the other hand, defined emotional support as managerial in-role behavior and mostly resisted any obligations of reciprocation. As Figure 4 illustrates, discrepant role expectations contribute both positive and negative outcomes. Looking at the positive side of the ledger, discrepant expectations tend to result in managers being attributed leadership qualities by subordinates who assume emotion-helping managers are simply exceptional role models. These attributions help relieve subordinates of feelings of personal indebtedness for help received, and help create a supportive organizational climate in cases where subordinates receive elaborated help. On the negative side of the ledger, discrepant expectations are likely to leave managers feeling disappointed at the lack of reciprocity and (in the case of managers providing more elaborated help) feeling stressed from delivering emotion helping in the absence of reciprocity. Subordinates in turn worry about possible damage to their relationships with managers if they receive emotion help from those above them in the hierarchy. Subordinates also may develop dependence on heroic managers who provide the elaborated type of help but are perceived not to require reciprocation.

DISCUSSION

Our analysis proceeds from bases in both critical theory and work psychology to forge a new understanding of the micropolitics of organizational work. In particular, our study surfaces discrepant interpretations of managers' provision of emotion help. To date, research has focused on antecedents of good citizenship behavior (e.g., Bowler & Brass, 2006; Settoon & Mossholder, 2002; Spitzmuller, Van Dyne, & Ilies, 2008), with some research attention to the consequences for those providing such behavior. Thus, providers of OCBs achieve higher performance evaluations and greater managerial reward allocations (Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff, & Blume, 2009) but may suffer overload, stress, and work-family conflicts (Bolino & Turnley, 2005; Frost, 2003; Frost & Robinson, 1999). Research has neglected the possibility of incongruence between those providing such help and those receiving it, although we do know that supervisors and their subordinates differ concerning what is considered OCB on the part of subordinates (Morrison, 1994).

What is striking in our findings is that both parties—the employees and the managers—accepted the necessity of controlling negative emotions for the good of the organization, in line with the general, positive-psychology emphasis on positivity and compassionate social relationships (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003). In the open-plan offices, people easily monitored each other, and it was possible therefore for managers to notice if subordinates looked upset. The norms in this service culture seemed to permit managers to intervene without having to wait for subordinates to explicitly ask for help.

The discrepancy between employees and managers centers on the issue of whether such managerial help should be considered part and parcel of the managerial role. The employees indicated that managers were attributed parental powers and seen as beneficent and wise guardians, whose ministrations were expected as a matter of course by needy recipients. Managers did not report perceiving themselves as parental figures but indicated that they responded to situational demands—such as the sight of a suffering employee—by going beyond their expected managerial responsibilities. Particularly in the case of managers who frequently intervene to offer unsolicited help, good citizenship behavior is likely to be viewed as part of the individual's job and not as anything extra (Bergeron, 2007; Van Dyne, Cummings, & McLean Parks,

1995). Given that employees are typically unable to directly reciprocate by providing emotion help to managers, employees are likely to resist seeing emotion help as anything other than normal workplace interaction.

Thus, whereas those who were helped tended to perceive their helpers as doubly powerful figures—invested both with formal authority as managers and with the mantle of parental authority—the helpers saw themselves as opportunistically reacting to situational contingencies to do favors for subordinates in need. Exchange relationships suffer when one party fails to reciprocate (Cotterell, Eisenberger, & Speicher, 1992). In the case of emotion help, we found incongruence: managers expected reciprocity in terms of commitment and loyalty, but subordinates failed to recognize their obligation. Indeed, in the one case in which a manager went to considerable lengths to help a suffering subordinate manage her problems outside of work, the subordinate responded, once the problems were ameliorated, by promptly resigning. Employees simply failed to acknowledge their obligations to reciprocate the help provided by managers. Employees tended to interpret managers' interventions as self-interested, and saw the provision of emotion help as an expected part of the managerial role.

Our model suggests the paradox that helping behavior designed to ameliorate negative emotions may itself generate negative emotions on the part of managers waiting in vain for employees to repay their kindness with personal loyalty. Managers in these high emotional labor settings may expect employees to see their efforts as prosocial, organizational citizenship-type behaviors and expect employees to show gratitude. Employees, on their side, are likely to attribute managers' helping behaviors to the general culture of the organization rather than to reciprocate with loyalty to specific managers (Eisenberger et al., 2010). Disconfirmation of managers' expectations can result in a range of negative emotions such as anxiety, insecurity, and helplessness (Rimé, 2007: 473). From the employee perspective, the amelioration of negative emotions is likely to require much more than the empathic listening provided by the majority of managers: simply encouraging people to talk about their negative emotions has been shown to be "irrelevant to emotional recovery" (Rimé, 2007: 470).

Therefore, our emergent model suggests that incongruence—concerning how emotion help is viewed and whether reciprocation is required—

fuels negative (as well as positive) outcomes in organizations. For managers, negative outcomes include disappointment and increased stress, whereas for employees these include diminished trust in the supervisory process. According to our results, managers' justifications for helping subordinates are overwhelmingly instrumental: to facilitate sales growth and productivity. Managers appear to be intuitively aware of results from the emotion management literature showing that helping employees with their emotional needs tends to increase employee commitment and performance (e.g., Armeli, Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Lynch, 1998). Supportive work behaviors (such as encouragement for individuals who are down) generally enhance performance quality, customer satisfaction, and other measures of organizational effectiveness (see the review in Bacharach, Bamberger, and Vashdi [2005]). But if these supportive work behaviors themselves generate negative outcomes, then anticipated organizational benefits may fail to materialize.

Contribution to Theory and Research

Although leadership theory has long recognized differences in leadership behaviors (Bedeian & Hunt, 2006), it has neglected the possibility of incongruence between how leaders and followers view themselves. Thus, one contribution of our article is to emphasize the possibility of different attributions concerning the behaviors of those in command. From a leadership theory perspective, transformational leadership includes individualized consideration—attention to followers' feelings and needs (Avolio & Bass, 1995). Individually considerate leaders help subordinates deal with stress and other emotional problems in the workplace (Rafferty & Griffin, 2006). As summarized in Figure 4, employees, in insisting that emotion helping behaviors are part of the managerial role, may be attributing managers with effective leadership practice, in terms of transformational leadership behaviors (Ashkanasy & Tse, 2000). The managers may see themselves as engaging in purely transactional leadership, with their emotion helping behavior as something quite different—personal interventions. Ironically, managers may be denied personal reciprocity from grateful subordinates, because managers are seen as effective leaders rather than as colleagues going beyond the bounds of duty.

To the extent that discrepant expectations lead employees to see their managers as effective, considerate leaders, the employees are likely to respond with enthusiasm to managerial goal setting, thus enhancing work performance. According to one meta-analysis, leaders who provide subordinates with individualized consideration tend to be seen by subordinates as charismatic ($r = .85$; Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996). The pronouncements of such leaders are likely to be viewed as visionary, their encouragement is likely to incite extra effort, and their teams are likely to perform well (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003; Howell & Frost, 1989; Barling, Weber, & Kelloway, 1996). Our research helps to redress the “dearth of conceptual and empirical research on explaining the relationships between these new [charismatic and transformational] leadership theories and followers’ affective states” (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009: 430).

Discrepancies in role definitions are linked to individual and organizational outcomes. Incongruence in expectations can have pervasive negative effects on work behavior and on employees’ exit and loyalty behavior (Rousseau, 1995). Discrepant role expectations can also lead to supervisor-subordinate rating disagreements, with potential consequences for organizational effectiveness (Atwater, Ostroff, Yammarino, & Fleenor, 1998). Incongruent role descriptions and the resulting discrepant expectations can also influence the quality of leader-member exchange relationships as a result of perceived dissimilarity (cf. Gerstner & Day, 1997).

Our article contributes to critical theory concerning supervisory control over professionals’ emotions and behaviors. Prior work has emphasized that in professional firms, mentors and mentees control each other’s behaviors and emotions. Resistance to controlling behavior surfaces in antagonism to headquarters rather than to immediate supervisors (Covaleski, Dirsmith, Heian, & Samuel, 1998). Managers, in carrying out their work roles, confront an inherent and perhaps inescapable ambivalence, given the expectation that they will both monitor employee behavior and foster a supportive and developmental work atmosphere (Mintzberg, 1973). The dual expectation—to control work activity even to the extent of crushing troublemakers, and to manage negative emotions so that employees work together and like each other—has both benefits and drawbacks for managers and for employees that we explored in this research. Future research

can investigate whether, in circumstances where emotional labor is part of work performance, there is likely to be a managerial emphasis on tight control over behavior and emotions as well as an emphasis on happy, cohesive, family-like togetherness. Given a disciplinary organizational culture, employees are likely to resist seeing managerial control efforts as simply collegial helpfulness.

Our paper also contributes to the field of emotion management in organizations (see Bolton [2005] for a review). The emergent models in Figures 3 and 4 represent a new understanding of the process of managerial intervention including likely positive and negative outcomes of discrepant role expectations. Like many other work organizations, the one we investigated featured a culture of relatively intense control over workplace practices. Managers tended to be on the lookout for signs of emotional distress and were prepared to intervene, as necessary, in cases where upset individuals did not themselves request help.

Our data revealed two main “signatures” of emotion help provision: (a) a short-cut (listening and giving advice), and (b) an elaborated process that involved not just listening but also validating, reframing, or transforming. The short-cut was more likely to lead to discrepant expectations, in that employees were in no doubt that such listening and advising formed an integral aspect of managerial work, whereas in the mental accounting of managers (cf. Thaler, 1999), even listening to and advising concerning emotional problems were labeled extra-role behaviors.

There is a similarity between how managers acted in this organization and how peer counselors interact with coworkers in unionized organizations, where assistance is provided out of the sight of supervisors even to those troubled colleagues who have not asked for it (Bacharach et al., 2001: 114). The extension of managerial intervention to the personal aspects of people’s lives in the absence of any union-based resistance raises questions concerning the vulnerability of employees to management pressure. In situations where there are power differences between those helping and those being helped, patterns of reciprocity are likely to be distorted (Gouldner, 1960).

Future Research

Bureaucracy has developed to the point where human resource managers in large organizations try to anticipate and deal with many issues previously

regarded as private matters, such as improving employee morale (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939), providing Christmas gifts for employees' children (Baron, Dobbin, & Jennings, 1986), and eliminating employees' offensive body odor (De Botton, 2009). Future research can investigate what kinds of emotion helping on the part of the managers do, in fact, restore employees as productive organizational citizens and prevent emotional contamination of others in the organization, and whether there are unanticipated consequences of such interventions.

Our research surfaced five different types of emotion helping on offer to employees, and the typology matches some of the needs that prior research has identified as resulting from negative emotional experiences (Rimé, 2007: 474). A major exception is listening, which in itself does not turn out to be useful in helping people recover from negative emotions (Rimé, 2007: 471). Also missing from Table 2 is any sense that managers provide the kind of concrete help and assistance that prior research (summarized in Rimé, 2007) suggests can facilitate people moving beyond difficult personal situations. What is striking in Table 2 is the prevalence of behaviors that are relatively superficial: listening and giving advice. The behaviors that really make a difference in helping people recover their emotional balance—social validation, social support, reframing, recreation of meaning, and concrete help and assistance (Rimé, 2007)—are much less in evidence on the part of managers. Future research can investigate whether the provision of professional assistance programs to employees results in better outcomes for both employees and the company than the relatively amateurish help provided by intervening managers.

Even if minimal emotion helping does little to improve emotional well-being, this helping may bind employees to the organization by creating a culture in which emotion problems can be discussed (Martin et al., 1998), or by fostering employee indebtedness for favors received (cf. Gouldner, 1960). Future research could investigate whether, as prior work has suggested, "the compassionate workplace may be a factor in both attracting and retaining staff" (Frost, Dutton, Worline, & Wilson, 2000: 38). Particularly in the case of managerial help with negative emotions deriving from nonwork situations, employees may feel personally indebted and be less able to rationalize such help as an expected part of the managerial role.

The employees we investigated worked in open-plan spaces, in which asking for help constituted a

relatively difficult act, given that it was exposed to public view (cf. Bamberger, 2009: 67). Even people who work in private offices, such as professors, find that processing negative emotions at work exposes them to potentially negative repercussions. But privacy may enable private-office workers to seek assistance from colleagues and be less subject to potentially intrusive questioning from supervisors (Frost et al., 2000). We do know that people who work in open-plan (relative to private) offices tend to suffer from decreased satisfaction and motivation (Oldham & Brass, 1979) as well as increased emotional strain (see the review in Sutton and Rafaeli [1987]). Future research can explore whether the absence of walls and barriers enables social relations among employees (cf. Oldham & Brass, 1979: 267–268), thereby facilitating shared norms of resistance to expectations by managers concerning reciprocation for help provided.

To the extent that activist managers generally listen and empathize, but neither reciprocate self-disclosure nor actively intervene to solve emotional problems, they may seem to play the role of classical therapists (Goldstein & Goldberg, 2004), offering little about themselves but listening carefully to the concerns of their "patients." Managers, according to our data, seem to be viewed akin to parental figures whose duties include taking care of the emotional needs of their dependents. Future research can investigate whether the discrepancy between the expectations of managers and subordinates concerning emotion help may be related to what in the psychotherapy literature is known as "transference"—the process by which one person displaces onto an authority figure thoughts, feelings, or expectations that were originally directed toward important people of early childhood (Goldstein & Goldberg, 2004). Because of the likelihood of gross power differences and the potential for emotional and personal abuse, the maintenance of careful boundaries between medical practitioners and patients is a major consideration in emotional therapy (Williams & Swartz, 1998). To the extent that managers act as freelance therapists, this boundary takes on multiple dimensions, as it involves not only a therapist-patient relationship but also a manager-subordinate one. Employees with emotional problems are vulnerable to loss of self-esteem, especially to the extent that problems are deemed to be embarrassing or stigmatizing (Bamberger, 2009: 65). The potential for managers to exploit the vulnerability of emotionally distressed employees is always present, given the power dif-

ference, and given the dual nature of the managerial role as simultaneously supervisor and therapist.

Future research can also explore whether the pervasive differences between men and women with respect to emotional experiences (Simon & Nath, 2004) and emotional expressiveness (Thoits, 1989) affect emotion helping in organizations. Are women managers more likely to offer help, and are managers (of both sexes) more likely to offer help to female subordinates? Recent work demonstrates differences between men and women in how their emotional expressions are viewed by others, and suggests that for women, expressing sadness is more highly approved of than expressing anger (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008). Extending this research, based on our results, one could ask whether accepting help from managers might result in female employees (relative to male employees) losing status.

Organizational Implications

How might employees protect themselves from the expectations on the part of managers that they “owe” a personal debt to those who have helped them with their emotional problems? The opportunity to help managers with their emotional problems in return is likely to be unavailable, given status differences. Providing help, while refraining from requesting help, contributes to and reinforces the perception of high status (Flynn, Reagans, Amanatullah, & Ames, 2006). A positive psychology emphasis on the importance of emotion management and the altruism of caring managers must be balanced by recognition of the dangers inherent in employees relying on managers for emotion help (Fineman, 2006). Following the logic of Figure 3, employees could define emotion helping as part and parcel of managers’ jobs—defined in such a way, emotion help would require no extra discretionary response by employees. To the extent that employees interact with managers only in the context of the workplace, and to the extent that potential power and discretion is vested in the managerial role, employees can justify attributing managerial caring surveillance to the demands of the role rather than to the idiosyncrasies of the person (Turner, 1978), and thereby overcome the general tendency to attribute such distinctive behavior to individual dispositions (cf. Ross, 1977). By refusing to acknowledge a reciprocal obligation beyond the normal work contract, employees can interpret the ambiguous emotion helping script to

their own advantage and refuse to let the manager step beyond the professional boundaries of the workplace.

Given the potential problems resulting from discrepant role expectations, what should organizations do? Managers can be educated concerning the wide-ranging aspects of the managerial role (cf. Mintzberg, 1973), and made aware that helping others with emotional problems is likely to be seen by subordinates as part and parcel of managerial work within the context of the organization’s overall supportive climate (cf. Eisenberger et al., 2010). The good news for managers should also be communicated: employees are likely to ascribe helping behaviors on the part of managers to the quality of these managers’ leadership skills. At the same time, managers can be educated in the limits of their expertise when it comes to dealing with seriously upset subordinates.

It is important to note limitations to our approach that can be addressed in future research endeavors. Recent research has indicated that handling the difficult emotions of others can have negative individual outcomes such as frustration, burnout, illness, and failed personal and professional relationships (Frost, 2003; Kahn, 1993; Meyerson, 2000). As one of our informants noted, one consequence of processing the negative emotions of others is that “You do get stressed out and take it home with you. One is definitely suffering as a result of this.” Clearly, we need more research on how some of the downsides for managers of “toxin handling” (Frost & Robinson, 1999; Frost, 2003) can be mitigated. Further, we are not able in this research to trace either the positive or the negative outcomes of emotion helping interventions with respect to such aspects as customer satisfaction, on the one hand, or employee productivity, on the other. Thus, future research can investigate whether the claims made on behalf of emotion helping are validated by results in organization and in the marketplace.

Conclusion

Managers of organizations are empowered to control work processes in pursuit of productivity. Control involves monitoring, assessing, and disciplining (rewarding and punishing) employees (Edwards, 1979). Thus, managers have discretion to intervene in many aspects of employees’ work. But work in modern organizations encompasses not just physical labor but also (in the case of service organizations) emotional labor (Hochschild,

1983)—labor that involves the employment of emotions in the service of the organization. The control of emotional labor places managers in the position of having to monitor employees' appropriate emotions and possibly intervene when emotions seem inappropriate. In this article, we focused on managerial interventions to ameliorate employees' negative emotions. To the extent that these interventions represent efforts to control as well as to help, such interventions are likely to perpetuate incongruent perceptions and mixed outcomes.

REFERENCES

- Armeli, S., Eisenberger, R., Fasolo, P., & Lynch, P. 1998. Perceived organizational support and police performance: The moderating influence of socioemotional needs. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 83: 288–297.
- Ashkanasy, N. M., & Daus, C. S. 2002. Emotion in the workplace: The new challenge for managers. *Academy of Management Executive*, 16(1): 76–86.
- Ashkanasy, N. M., & Tse, B. 2000. Transformational leadership as management of emotion: A conceptual review. In N. Ashkanasy & C. Hartel & W. Zerbe (Eds.), *Emotions in the workplace: Research theory and practice*: 221–235. Westport, CT: Quorum.
- Atwater, L., Ostroff, C., Yammarino, F., & Fleenor, J. 1998. Self-other agreement: Does it really matter? *Personnel Psychology*, 51: 577–598.
- Avolio, B. J., & Bass, B. M. 1995. Individual consideration viewed at multiple levels of analysis: A multi-framework for examining the diffusion of transformational leadership. *Leadership Quarterly*, 6: 188–218.
- Avolio, B. J., Walumbwa, F. O., & Weber, T. J. 2009. Leadership: Current theories, research, and future directions. In S. T. Fiske, D. L. Schacter, & S. E. Taylor (Eds.), *Annual review of psychology*, vol. 60: 421–449. Palo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews.
- Bacharach, S., Bamberger, P., & Sonnenstuhl, W. J. 1996. The organizational transformation process: The micropolitics of dissonance reduction and the alignment of logics of action. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 41: 477–506.
- Bacharach, S., Bamberger, P., & Sonnenstuhl, W. 2001. *Mutual aid and union renewal: Cycles of logics of action*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Bacharach, S., Bamberger, P., & Vashdi, D. 2005. Diversity and homophily at work: Supportive relations among white and African-American peers. *Academy of Management Journal*, 48: 619–644.
- Bamberger, P. 2009. Employee help-seeking: Antecedents, consequences and new insights for future research. *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management*, 28: 49–98.
- Barling, J., Weber, T., & Kelloway, E. K. 1996. Effects of transformational leadership training on attitudinal and financial outcomes: A field experiment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81: 827–832.
- Baron, J., Dobbin, F., & Jennings, P. D. 1986. War and peace: The evolution of modern personnel administration in U.S. industry. *American Journal of Sociology*, 92: 350–383.
- Barsade, S. 2002. The ripple effect: Emotional contagion and its influence on group behavior. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 47: 644–675.
- Bass, B. M., Avolio, B. J., Jung, D. I., & Berson, Y. 2003. Predicting unit performance by assessing transformational and transactional leadership. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88: 207–218.
- Bedeian, A., & Hunt, J. 2006. Academic amnesia and vestigial assumptions of our forefathers. *Leadership Quarterly*, 17: 190–205.
- Bergeron, D. 2007. The paradox of organizational citizenship behavior: Good citizens at what cost? *Academy of Management Review*, 32: 1078–1095.
- Blau, P. 1964. *Exchange and power in social life*. New York: Wiley.
- Bolino, M. C. 1999. Citizenship and impression management: Good soldiers or good actors? *Academy of Management Review*, 24: 82–98.
- Bolino, M. C., & Turnley, W. H. 2005. The personal costs of citizenship behavior: The relationship between employee conscientiousness and role overload, job stress, and work-family conflict. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90: 740–748.
- Bolton, S. 2005. *Emotion management in the workplace*. London: Palgrave.
- Bowler, W. M., & Brass, D. J. 2006. Relational correlates of interpersonal citizenship behavior: A social network perspective. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91: 70–82.
- Brescoll, V. L., & Uhlmann, E. L. 2008. Can an angry woman get ahead? Status conferral, gender, and expression of emotion in the workplace. *Psychological Science*, 19: 268–275.
- Cameron, K., Dutton, J., & Quinn, R. (Eds.). 2003. *Positive organizational scholarship*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- Cialdini, R. B., Vincent, J. E., Lewis, S. K., Catalan, J., Wheeler, D., & Darby, B. L. 1975. Reciprocal concessions procedure for inducing compliance: The door-

- in-the-face technique. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 31: 206–215.
- Cotterell, N., Eisenberger, R., & Speicher, H. 1992. Inhibiting effects of reciprocation wariness on interpersonal relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 62: 658–668.
- Covaleski, M. A., Dirsmith, M. W., Heian, J. B., & Samuel, S. 1998. The calculated and the avowed: Techniques of discipline and struggles over identity in big six public accounting firms. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 43: 293–327.
- De Botton, A. 2009. *The pleasures and sorrows of work*. New York: Pantheon.
- Dyne, L. V., & LePine, J. A. 1998. Helping and voice extra-role behaviors: Evidence of construct and predictive validity. *Academy of Management Journal*, 41: 108–119.
- Edwards, R. 1979. *Contested terrain: The transformation of the workplace in the twentieth century*. New York: Basic.
- Eisenberger, R., Karagonlar, G., Stinglhamber, F., Neves, P., Becker, T., Gonzalez-Morales, M., & Steiger-Mueller, M. 2010. Leader-member exchange and affective organizational commitment: The contribution of supervisor's organizational embodiment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 95: 1085–1103.
- Eisenhardt, K., & Graebner, M. 2007. Theory building from cases: Opportunities and challenges. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50: 25–32.
- Elfenbein, H. A. 2007. Emotion in organizations. In J. P. Walsh & A. P. Brief (Eds.), *Academy of Management annals*, vol. 1: 315–386. New York: Erlbaum.
- Fineman, S. 2006. Accentuating the positive? *Academy of Management Review*, 31: 306–308.
- Flynn, F. J., Reagans, R. E., Amanatullah, E. T., & Ames, D. R. 2006. Helping one's way to the top: Self-monitors achieve status by helping others and knowing who helps whom. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 91: 1123–1137.
- Frost, P. 2003. *Toxic emotions at work: How compassionate managers handle pain and conflict*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Frost, P., Dutton, J., Worline, M., & Wilson, A. 2000. Narratives of compassion in organizations. In S. Fineman (Ed.), *Emotions in organizations*: 25–45. London: Sage.
- Frost, P., & Robinson, S. 1999. The toxic handler: Organizational hero and casualty. *Harvard Business Review*, 77(4): 96–106.
- George, J. M., & Brief, A. P. 1992. Feeling good—Doing good: A conceptual analysis of the mood at work-organizational spontaneity relationship. *Psychological Bulletin*, 112: 310–329.
- Gerstner, C., & Day, D. V. 1997. Meta-analytic review of leader-member exchange theory: Correlates and construct issues. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 82: 827–844.
- Gioia, D., & Chittipeddi, K. 1991. Sensemaking and sensegiving in strategic change initiation. *Strategic Management Journal*, 12: 433–448.
- Gioia, D., Thomas, J., Clark, S., & Chittipeddi, K. 1994. Symbolism and strategic change in academia: The dynamics of sensemaking and influence. *Organization Science*, 5: 363–383.
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. 1967. *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Goldstein, W. N., & Goldberg, S. T. 2004. *Using the transference in psychotherapy*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Gouldner, A. 1960. The norm of reciprocity: A preliminary statement. *American Sociological Review*, 25: 161–179.
- Gower, J. C., & Legendre, P. 1986. Metric and euclidean properties of dissimilarity coefficients. *Journal of Classification*, 3: 5–48.
- Grandey, A. A. 2000. Emotion regulation in the workplace: A new way to conceptualize emotional labor. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 5: 59–100.
- Grandey, A. 2003. When “the show must go on”: Surface acting and deep acting as determinants of emotional exhaustion and peer-rated service delivery. *Academy of Management Journal*, 46: 86–96.
- Grandey, A. 2008. Emotions at work: A review and research agenda. In C. Cooper & J. Barling (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational behavior*: 234–261. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hareli, S., & Rafaeli, A. 2008. Emotion cycles: On the social influence of emotion in organizations. In A. P. Brief & B. M. Staw (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior*, vol. 28: 35–59. Greenwich, CT: JAI.
- Hochschild, A. R. 1983. *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Howell, J. M., & Frost, P. J. 1989. A laboratory study of charismatic leadership. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 43: 243–269.
- Humphrey, R. 2002. The many faces of emotional leadership. *Leadership Quarterly*, 13: 493–504.

- Huy, Q. N. 2005. Emotion management to facilitate strategic change and innovation: How emotional balancing and emotional capability work together. In C. E. J. Hartel, W. J. Zerbe, & N. M. Ashkanasy (Eds.), *Emotions in organizational behavior*: 295–316. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Kahn, W. A. 1993. Caring for the caregivers: Patterns of organizational caregiving. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 38: 539–563.
- Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. 1966. *The social psychology of organizations*. New York: Wiley.
- Krackhardt, D. 1990. Assessing the political landscape: Structure, cognition, and power in organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 35: 342–369.
- Krone, K. J., & Morgan, J. M. 2000. Emotion metaphors in management: The Chinese experience. In S. Fineman (Ed.), *Emotion in organizations*: 83–100. London: Sage.
- Latané, B., & Arrowood, A. 1963. Emotional arousal and task performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 47: 324–327.
- Lawler, E., & Thye, S. 1999. Bringing emotion into social exchange theory. In K. S. Cook & J. Hagan (Eds.), *Annual review of sociology*, vol. 25: 217–244. Palo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews.
- Lawler, E., Thye, S., & Yoon, J. 2009. *Social commitments in a depersonalized world*. New York: Sage.
- Lowe, K. B., Kroeck, G. K., & Sivasubramaniam, N. 1996. Effectiveness correlates of transformational and transactional leadership: A meta-analytic review of the MLQ literature. *Leadership Quarterly*, 7: 385–425.
- Martin, J., Knopoff, K., & Beckman, C. 1998. An alternative to bureaucratic impersonality and emotional labor: Bounded emotionality at the body shop. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 43: 429–469.
- Meyerson, D. 2000. If emotions were honored: A cultural analysis. In S. Fineman (Ed.), *Emotion in organizations*: 167–183. London: Sage.
- Miles, M., & Huberman, A. 1994. *Qualitative data analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mintzberg, H. 1973. *The nature of managerial work*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Morrison, E. 1994. Role definitions and organizational citizenship behaviors: The importance of the employees' perspective. *Academy of Management Journal*, 37: 1543–1567.
- Oldham, G. R., & Brass, D. J. 1979. Employee reactions to an open-plan office: A naturally occurring quasi-experiment. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24: 267–284.
- Organ, D. W. 1988. *Organizational citizenship behavior: The good soldier syndrome*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Organ, D. W. 1997. Organizational citizenship behavior: It's construct clean-up time. *Human Performance*, 10: 85–97.
- Peltier, B. 2010. *The psychology of executive coaching: Theory and application*. New York: Routledge.
- Podsakoff, N. P., Whiting, S. W., Podsakoff, P. M., & Blume, B. D. 2009. Individual- and organizational-level consequences of organizational citizenship behaviors: A meta analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 94: 122–141.
- Rafferty, A. E., & Griffin, M. A. 2006. Refining definitions of individualized consideration: Distinguishing developmental leadership and supportive leadership. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 79: 37–61.
- Richards, L. 1999. *Using NVivo in qualitative research*. London: Sage.
- Rimé, B. 2007. Interpersonal emotion regulation. In J. J. Gross (Ed.), *Handbook of emotion regulation*: 466–485. New York: Guilford.
- Roethlisberger, F., & Dickson, W. 1939. *Management and the worker: An account of a research program conducted by the western electric company, Chicago*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Ross, L. 1977. The intuitive psychologist and his shortcomings: Distortions in the attribution process. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology*: 173–220. New York: Academic.
- Rousseau, D. 1989. Psychological and implied contracts in organizations. *Employee Rights and Responsibilities Journal*, 2: 121–139.
- Rousseau, D. 1995. *Psychological contracts in organizations: Understanding written and unwritten agreements*. London & New York: Sage.
- Settoon, R. P., & Mossholder, K. W. 2002. Relationship quality and relationship context as antecedents of person- and task-focused interpersonal citizenship behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87: 255–267.
- Simon, R., & Nath, L. 2004. Gender and emotion in the U.S.: Do men and women differ in self-reports of feelings and expressive behavior? *American Journal of Sociology*, 109: 1137–1176.
- Spector, P. E., & Fox, S. 2010. Theorizing about the deviant citizen: An attributional explanation of the interplay of organizational citizenship and counterproductive work behavior. *Human Resource Management Review*, 20: 132–143.

- Spitzmuller, M., Van Dyne, L., & Ilies, R. 2008. Organizational citizenship behavior: A critical review and extension of its nomological network. In C. Cooper & J. Barling (Eds.), *Handbook of organizational behavior*: 106–123. London: Sage.
- Spradley, J. 1979. *The ethnographic interview*. New York: Holt Rinehart & Winston.
- Sutton, R. I., & Rafaeli, A. 1987. Characteristics of work stations as potential occupational stressors. *Academy of Management Journal*, 30: 260–276.
- Thaler, R. 1999. Mental accounting matters. *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*, 12: 183–206.
- Thoits, P. A. 1989. The sociology of emotions. In W. R. Scott & J. Blake (Eds.), *Annual review of sociology*, vol. 15: 317–342. Palo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews.
- Toegel, G., Anand, N., & Kilduff, M. 2007. Emotion helpers: The role of high positive affectivity and high self-monitoring managers. *Personnel Psychology*, 60: 337–365.
- Tsui, A. S., Pearce, J. L., Porter, L. W., & Tripoli, A. M. 1997. Alternative approaches to the employee-organization relationship: Does investment in employees pay off? *Academy of Management Journal*, 40: 1089–1121.
- Turner, R. H. 1978. The role and the person. *American Journal of Sociology*, 84: 1–23.
- Van Dyne, L., Cummings, L. L., & McLean Parks, J. 1995. Extra-role behaviors: In pursuit of construct and definitional clarity. In L. L. Cummings & B. M. Staw (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior*: 215–285. Stamford, CT: JAI.
- Van Dyne, L., & Ellis, J. B. 2004. Job creep: A reactance theory perspective on organizational citizenship behavior as over-fulfillment of obligations. In J. A. M. Coyle-Shapiro, L. M. Shore, M. S. Taylor, & L. E. Tetrick (Eds.), *The employment relationship: Examining psychological and contextual perspectives*: 182–205. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Van Maanen, J. 1988. *Tales of the field: On writing ethnography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wayne, S., Shore, L., & Liden, R. 1997. Perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange: A social exchange perspective. *Academy of Management Journal*, 40: 82–111.
- Williams, J., & Swartz, M. 1998. Treatment boundaries in the case management relationship: A clinical case and discussion. *Community Mental Health Journal*, 34: 299–311.
- Zellars, K. L., & Perrewé, P. L. 2001. Affective personality and the content of emotional social support: Coping in organizations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86: 459–467.

APPENDIX

Interview Protocol

We try to understand how people use the support of others to cope with difficult emotions. I would ask you to think of a situation when you experienced stress, anxiety, tension or emotional pain and a colleague of yours helped you to cope with it.

- Could you please describe this situation?
- What kind of person was the emotion helper? Does everybody in the firm provide this kind of help or only some people?
- How did X provide the emotion help you needed? What made you feel better?
- Why do you think X provided the emotion help you needed?
- What were the personal benefits/costs involved for X?
- [If a manager is mentioned] Are managers expected to provide emotion help? Is emotion help part of their job? Do people “pay back” this help? In what form?
- Do you think of yourself as an emotion helper?



Ginka Toegel (Ginka.Toegel@imd.ch) is a professor of leadership at IMD, Lausanne. She received her Ph.D. in Psychology from Leipzig University and her Ph.D. in Management from London Business School. Her current research interests focus on emotion in organizations, control-related beliefs, and leadership effectiveness.

Martin Kilduff (m.kilduff@ucl.ac.uk) is professor of organizational behavior at University College London. He received his Ph.D. from Cornell University. His research interests include interpersonal networks, emotions, personality, and philosophy of science.

N. Anand (anand@imd.ch) is the Shell Professor of Global Leadership at IMD, Lausanne. He received his Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University. His research focuses on innovative organizational structures in professional firms, organizational field formation, and the use of social networks in managing emotions.

