

Antecedents of Emotional Display Rule Commitment

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This study examined the antecedents of commitment to emotional display rules for customer service employees in typical and incivility customer service interactions. Results showed that expectancy and valence were unique predictors of the commitment to display positive emotions to customers in typical customer interaction scenarios, whereas expectancy and motivational force (i.e., the product of expectancy and valence) were unique predictors of commitment in incivility interaction scenarios. Further, in both situations, agreeableness and reward structure were significant predictors of expectancy, valence, and motivational force and had indirect effects on display rule commitment. Finally, expectancy, valence, motivational force, and display rule commitment were lower in the incivility customer interaction condition compared to the typical interaction condition, suggesting that individuals had less motivation to display positive emotions when dealing with an uncivil customer.

Emotional labor refers to the regulation of one's feelings and emotional displays as part of the work role (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983). Central to emotional labor theory is the idea that organizations specify emotional display rules that dictate which emotions are appropriate and how those emotions should be expressed to others (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Cropanzano, Weiss, & Elias, 2004; Diefendorff, Richard, & Croyle, 2006; Grandey, 2000; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1990). Display rules can be defined as cognitive representations of social conventions about the emotions that should be displayed in particular situations (Ekman, 1973; Matsumoto, 1990). In customer service jobs, display rules are often formalized

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and used to constrain employee emotional displays to be a particular way—typically positive expressions directed toward customers (e.g., Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989). Emotional labor involves conforming to display rules, regardless of one's felt emotions, which may involve expressing what one naturally feels or using emotion regulation strategies to change one's feelings or displays (e.g., Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Grandey, 2003; Morris & Feldman, 1996).

Much of the research on emotional labor makes an implicit assumption that when individuals perceive emotional display rules, they will make efforts to display the corresponding emotions (e.g., Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). However, as pointed out by Diefendorff and Gosserand (2003), some employees may perceive display rules, realize that they are not displaying the appropriate emotion, but fail to put forth the effort needed to display the expected emotion. In essence, some individuals may lack the motivation or commitment to display organizationally desired emotions. Gosserand and Diefendorff (2005) demonstrated that commitment to display rules moderated the effect of display rules on behavior. The purpose of the investigation presented here was to examine the antecedents of display rule commitment. The following sections review past work on emotional display rules and present a study examining the antecedents of display rule commitment in a sample of customer service employees.

MOTIVATION AND THE DISPLAY OF EMOTIONS AT WORK

Customer service work is increasingly important to the U.S. economy (Gutek, Bhappu, Liao-Troth, & Cherry, 1999). Emotional displays have been identified as a key component of service delivery (Grandey, Fisk, Matilla, Jansen, & Sideman, 2005; Pugh, 2001). Emotional display rules are intended guide employee emotional displays in service interactions (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Cropanzano et al., 2004; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). Research has shown that display rules predict employee emotional displays, affective delivery, emotional labor strategy use, job attitudes, and well-being (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Diefendorff & Richard, 2003; Gosserand & Diefendorff, 2005; Schaubroeck & Jones, 2000).

Diefendorff and Gosserand (2003) conceptualized display rules as goals that employees strive for over time and across changing circumstances. Drawing from findings in the goal-setting literature (e.g., E. A. Locke & Latham, 1990), they proposed that individuals must be committed to display rules for the rules to impact behavior. Borrowing from Klein, Wesson, Hollenbeck, and Alge's (1999) definition of goal commitment, Gosserand and Diefendorff (2005) defined display rule commitment as "a person's intention to extend effort toward displaying organizationally-desired emotions, persist in displaying these emotions over time, and not abandon the display rules under difficult conditions" (p. 1257). They found that

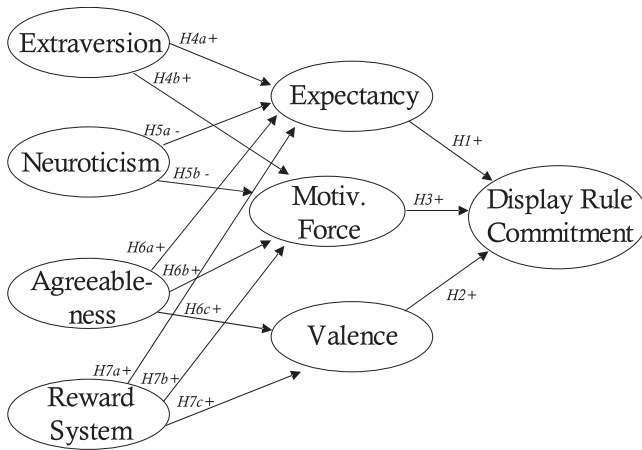


FIGURE 1 Schematic overview of the anticipated relationships among study variables. *Note.* motiv. = motivational.

commitment to display rules moderated the relations of emotional display rules with the emotion regulation strategies of surface acting (i.e., faking the desired emotion) and deep acting (i.e., actively changing one's felt emotions), as well as supervisor ratings of employee emotional displays. In each case, the relation of display rule perceptions with the dependent variable was strong and positive when commitment was high and weak when commitment was low. In other words, the presence of display rules was not enough to strongly influence individuals to engage in emotion regulation or display the appropriate emotions. Rather, individuals also had to be committed to following the display rules for those rules to influence behavior. Although these findings provide evidence that display rule commitment plays a role in the emotional labor process, they do not explain why some individuals are committed and others are not. In the next sections, we develop theory about display rule commitment antecedents, borrowing from Hollenbeck and Klein's (1987) expectancy theory model of goal commitment (see Figure 1).

AN EXPECTANCY THEORY MODEL OF THE ANTECEDENTS OF DISPLAY RULE COMMITMENT

Hollenbeck and Klein (1987) theorized that the decision to commit to a goal, or remain committed to a goal, is similar to the choice of which goal to pursue. As argued by Klein, Austin, and Cooper (in press), almost every theory of goal choice has relied on an expectancy-value formulation (Ajzen, 1985; Atkinson, 1964;

Bandura, 1997; Gollwitzer & Bayer, 1999; Klinger & Cox, 2004; E. A. Locke & Latham, 1990; Vroom, 1964), with higher levels of expectancy and value (i.e., valence) being associated with selection of a goal. Consistent with goal choice models, Hollenbeck and Klein theorized that expectancy and valence are the most proximal antecedents of goal commitment. Expectancy is the subjective probability that effort will lead to a certain level of performance and is a function of the ease with which a task can be performed (Van Eerde & Thierry, 1996). Valence is the anticipated satisfaction with reaching a level of performance and is a function of the positive and negative outcomes associated with performing (Van Eerde & Thierry, 1996). Several frameworks (e.g., Tubbs, Boehne, & Dahl, 1993; Vroom, 1964) have proposed that expectancy and valence combine in a multiplicative fashion to reflect individuals' overall motivation, or motivational force, for pursuing an activity. In a meta-analysis, Klein et al. (1999) found that each expectancy theory component predicted goal commitment with the mean weighted correlations corrected for goal commitment unreliability being .36 for expectancy, .29 for valence, and .33 for motivational force.

Adopting the ideas of Hollenbeck and Klein (1987), Diefendorff and Gosserand (2003) suggested that commitment to emotional display rules is a function of the valence and expectancy associated with displaying the emotion identified by the display rule. In this context, expectancy is the confidence that one can display a particular emotion, and valence is the anticipated satisfaction or value of displaying the emotion. Motivational force then is the overall motivation for displaying the emotion. Consistent with Klein et al. (1999), we anticipated that each of these variables would be positively related to display rule commitment.

- H1: Expectancy for displaying positive emotions is positively related to commitment to displaying positive emotions.
- H2: Valence for displaying positive emotions is positively related to commitment to displaying positive emotions.
- H3: Motivational force for displaying positive emotions is positively related to commitment to displaying positive emotions.

Antecedents of Expectancy, Valence, and Motivational Force

Hollenbeck and Klein (1987) theorized that situational and individual difference variables affect commitment through expectancy and valence judgments. Supporting this idea, Klein and Wright (1994) found that the relations of incentives and individual difference variables with goal commitment were mediated by expectancy and valence. We anticipated that expectancy judgments would be affected by variables impacting the ease with which employees can display the emotion, with greater ease leading to higher expectancy. Valence judgments should be

affected by variables impacting the intrinsic and extrinsic outcomes associated with displaying the emotion, with more positive outcomes leading to higher valence.

Individual differences. We anticipated that individuals who tend to feel a way that is consistent (inconsistent) with a display rule will find displaying the corresponding emotion to be easy (difficult). The Big 5 dimensions of extraversion and neuroticism have been linked to positive affectivity and negative affectivity, respectively (e.g., Diefendorff & Richard, 2003; George, 1996; Watson, 2000). Individuals high in extraversion experience positive emotions more often and individuals high in neuroticism experience negative emotions more often. Tan, Foo, Chong and Ng (2003) found that employees high in extraversion were more likely to display positive emotions in customer interactions, whereas individuals high in neuroticism were less likely to display positive emotions during such interactions. Abe and Izard (1999) found that infants high in extraversion or low in neuroticism were more likely to spontaneously display positive emotions than infants low in extraversion or high in neuroticism. These results suggest that extraversion and neuroticism relate to the natural tendency to express positive emotions. Thus, individuals high in extraversion or low in neuroticism may find displaying positive emotions to be relatively easy, and have higher expectancies for displaying positive emotions. We anticipated similar relations of extraversion and neuroticism with motivational force.

- H4: Extraversion is positively related to (a) expectancy judgments and (b) motivational force for displaying positive emotions.
- H5: Neuroticism is negatively related to (a) expectancy judgments and (b) motivational force for displaying positive emotions.

Agreeableness refers to differences in the desire to have positive relationships with others, with individuals high in agreeableness seeking positive relationships more than individuals low in agreeableness (Tobin, Graziano, Vanman, & Tassinary, 2000). This notion suggests that agreeable people may value displaying positive emotions to customers more than disagreeable people. In addition, such individuals may have high expectancies for displaying positive emotions because of their natural tendency to display such emotions and put forth effort to make interpersonal interactions pleasant. Consistent with these ideas, Abe and Izard (1999) found that infants high in agreeableness were more likely to express positive emotions, suggesting an innate tendency to do so. Also, Tobin et al. reported that when faced with negative situations, individuals high in agreeableness exerted more effort to regulate their emotions than individuals low in agreeableness. Similarly, Diefendorff, Croyle, and Gosserand (2005) found that agreeable individuals were more likely to deep act in attempts to display positive emotions, suggesting

they may be more likely to put forth effort to display such emotions. Based on these ideas, we expected agreeableness to have positive relations with valence and expectancy ratings, as well as with motivational force.

- H6: Agreeableness is positively related to (a) expectancy judgments (b) valence judgments, (c) and motivational force for displaying positive emotions.

Situational Antecedent: Reward Structure

Hollenbeck and Klein (1987) argued that the extent to which a behavior is rewarded and recognized should impact individuals' valence judgments for the behavior. They labeled this construct reward structure. Klein et al. (1999) found in their meta-analysis that incentives were positively related to goal commitment, and Wright (1992) reported that valence mediated the influence of incentives on goal commitment. Rafaeli and Sutton (1990) theorized that employee emotional displays can impact the money they earn. Illustrating this point, Tidd and Lockard (1978) found that customers who received broad smiles from a waitress gave larger tips than customers who received smaller smiles. Thus, we anticipated that reward structure would be positively associated with valence for displaying positive emotions.

We also expected reward structure to predict expectancy. When rewards are linked to behaviors, those behaviors receive more effort and attention (Gray & McNaughton, 2000). In the present context, linking rewards to emotional displays may lead individuals to allocate more resources to displaying the emotion and, as a result, make them more confident that they can display the emotion. In contrast, when emotional displays are not linked with rewards, individuals will not feel as compelled to display the emotion and, as a result, not report high expectancies. Thus, we anticipated that reward structure would be positively related to employees' valence and expectancy judgments as well as motivational force.

- H7: Reward structure is positively related to (a) expectancy judgments, (b) valence judgments, and (c) motivational force for displaying positive emotions.

THE ROLE OF CONTEXT: TYPICAL VERSUS INCIVILITY CUSTOMER INTERACTIONS

Although we anticipated that stable features of the situation (i.e., reward structure) and enduring dispositional tendencies (i.e., personality) would impact the motivation to conform to display rules, we also expected that specific situational demands

would impact this motivation. Our focus was on customer service interactions where display rules involve expressing positive emotions (Cropanzano et al., 2004; Wharton & Erickson, 1993). We anticipated that within the customer service role, display rule motivation may vary based on the customer interaction context. Indeed, prior work has demonstrated that contextual factors such as the number of customers in a checkout line, the presence of other employees, the presence of demanding customers, and customer gender all relate to service provider emotional displays (Tan et al., 2003; Pugh, 2001; Rafaeli, 1989; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1990; Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988).

Although there are many potential contextual influences, we focused on the quality of the customer interaction, distinguishing between typical and incivility interactions. Incivility events are situations in which others perform low-intensity behaviors that violate workplace norms of mutual respect (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Grandey & Brauburger, 2002). Research shows that customer service workers are likely to encounter rude or aggressive customers (Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001; Glomb, Steel, & Arvey, 2002; Harris & Reynolds, 2003) and that incivility events are the most common cause of anger for working students (Grandey, Tam, & Brauburger, 2002). Although incivility customer interactions are frequent enough to lead to emotional exhaustion (e.g., Grandey, Dickter, & Sin, 2004), the typical service interaction is free from such problems. Grandey et al. (2004) found that rude or hostile customers accounted for about 15% to 20% of call center employee interactions during the course of a day, and Totterdell and Holman (2003) found that unpleasant customers accounted for 8.9% of customer service employees' daily events.

We compared expectancy, valence, motivational force and display rule commitment in typical and incivility customer interaction scenarios. Our expectation was that expectancies would be lower in incivility interactions because displaying positive emotions would be more difficult and effortful. Rupp and Spencer (2006) found that workers who were treated unfairly by impolite and disrespectful customers found it more difficult to conform to emotional display rules. They suggested that such a situation may increase the likelihood of emotional dissonance (i.e., feeling an emotion that is different from what one is expressing), which could make displaying positive emotions difficult. In contrast, typical customer interactions should not be charged with negative emotions, and as such, employees may find it easier to display positive emotions and have higher expectancies for doing so.

An uncivil customer interaction also might decrease individuals' valence for displaying positive emotions. Although it may be argued that the value of displaying the emotion in relation to attaining work goals (e.g., selling a product) has not changed, the value of more intrinsic outcomes may be negatively affected by the rude customer. Smiling in a typical customer interaction, although not necessarily reflecting what one is feeling, may be seen by individuals as a reasonable thing to

do given the nature of service work. In contrast, smiling while being treated poorly by a customer may be seen as unreasonable because of the potential damage to one's sense of authenticity and self-worth (Ashforth & Tomiuk, 2000). As a result, the value of displaying positive emotions is expected to be lower when interacting with an uncivil customer, compared to a typical customer. Likewise, we anticipated that individuals' motivational force and commitment to displaying positive emotions to customers would be lower in the incivility condition.

H8: The customer context has main effects on (a) expectancy, (b) valence, (c) motivational force, and (d) display rule commitment, such that the means are lower in the incivility customer interaction compared to the typical customer interaction.

Although we anticipated that the means of these variables would differ between the two conditions, we did not anticipate that the rank order of individuals' responses would differ. As such, we did not hypothesize that any relations among study variables would differ across the conditions.

METHOD

Participants

Participants in this study were 249 employed students from a large, southern university who took part in the study in return for psychology extra course credit. Type of employment was restricted to customer service and sales positions where face-to-face customer contact and positive display rules are the norm (e.g., waitpersons, retail sales associates). Sixteen participants were excluded from the final sample because of outliers or large amounts of missing data. Two individuals were dropped because they described a negative situation in their typical customer interaction description (see the next section for details), suggesting the possibility that their display rule did not involve expressing positive emotions. Thus, the resulting final sample size was 231 employees. This sample had an average age of 20.5 years, and 74.3% of the sample was female. Participants worked an average of 22.3 hr per week and had been with their present organizations for an average of 20.6 months. Participants were employed in five primary occupations: retail sales (35.9%), customer service (26.4%), restaurant service (23.4%), fast-food service (10.4%), and teaching/child care (3.9%). Past work has considered these occupations to be high in demands to express positive emotions to customers (Hochschild, 1983). With the exception of teaching/child care, employees in these occupations typically have interactions with customers that could be considered service encounters (of short duration, limited prior history, little expectation of in-

teracting again) rather than service relationships (longer duration, possible prior history, expectation of interacting again; Gutek et al., 1999).

Typical and Incivility Customer Interaction Manipulation

Customer interaction context was a within-subjects factor with all participants receiving the typical customer interaction induction followed by the incivility customer interaction induction. To induce a typical customer interaction mindset, participants were asked to write down a detailed, step-by-step account of such an interaction, starting with the moment they first encounter a customer and stopping at the end of the interaction. Participants were encouraged to provide as much detail as possible in this description. The average number of steps included in these descriptions was 6.6, with the range being from 2 to 16 steps. Research shows that writing about situations improves the accuracy of recall (Gardiner, Passmore, Herriot, & Klee, 1977).

For the incivility interaction induction, participants were asked to think of the typical customer service interaction they described but to imagine that the customer with whom they are interacting is thoughtless and rude, making it difficult to work with that person. Such a situation is consistent with previous descriptions of incivility events (Grandey & Brauburger, 2002). Based on past research showing that working students often must deal with difficult customers (e.g., Cortina et al., 2001), we expected that this scenario would be realistic for participants. However, to determine whether such an interaction was likely for our sample, we asked participants to respond to the question "Is dealing with this type of customer likely to occur in your customer service work?" as a manipulation check on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*extremely unlikely*) to 5 (*extremely likely*).

Measures

Extraversion, neuroticism, and agreeableness. Saucier's (1994) measure of the Big 5 personality traits was used to assess extraversion, neuroticism, and agreeableness. This measure consists of eight adjectives for each dimension (scale reliabilities in our study ranged .72–.81), in which participants indicated the extent to which each adjective described them on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Reward structure. Eight items were written to assess perceptions of rewards, praise, and recognition tied to displaying positive emotions. Pilot data on 103 customer service employees suggested that two items be dropped, resulting in a six-item scale. These items formed one factor in the present study and had high internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = .83$). Sample items include "In my work, I am praised for expressing positive emotions to customers" and "Displaying positive

emotions to customers is rewarded in my job.” Participants responded to each item on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).¹

Expectancy, valence, and motivational force. Klein’s (1991) “single value” operationalization of expectancy and valence was used. In this approach, participants were asked to rate their expectancy and valence for three emotional display options: positive, neutral, and negative. However, only the ratings for positive displays were used to test hypotheses (we examine the ratings for neutral and negative displays for exploratory purposes). The use of different display options gives individuals a common frame-of-reference against which to evaluate their expectancy and valence for positive emotional displays.

Positive emotional display was defined for participants as “smiling and speaking in a pleasant tone.” This description is consistent with the operationalizations of Pugh (2001) and Tsai and Huang (2002). Morris and Feldman (1997) described neutral displays as being used to display dispassionate status; in other words, showing no expression involves displaying flat-affect without a positive or negative vocal tone. Consistent with this description, neutral emotional display was defined for participants as “showing neither positive nor negative emotion, speaking in a neutral tone.” Based on previous display rule work (e.g., Diefendorff et al., 2005; Schaubroeck & Jones, 2000), negative emotional display was defined for participants as “frowning, speaking in a frustrated or irritable tone.”

Expectancy was measured by having participants rate the probability out of 100, ranging from 0 (*no chance at all*) to 50 (*a fifty-fifty chance*) to 100 (*complete certainty*), that they could successfully display positive, neutral, or negative emotions during the customer service interaction they just described (similar to Klein, 1991). Valence was measured by asking participants to indicate their anticipated satisfaction with performing each emotional display using a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*very unsatisfied*) to 5 (*very satisfied*). That is, participants were asked how pleased they would be if they expressed positive, negative, or neutral emotions during the interaction they just described (typical or difficult). We chose the anticipated satisfaction operationalization because Tubbs, Boehne, and Paese (1991) found that it outperformed attractiveness and importance operationalizations across three studies. Participants completed ratings of expectancy and valence for both the typical and incivility customer interaction scenarios. Motivational force was calculated as the product of expectancy and valence ratings (see footnote 1).

Commitment to positive displays. Commitment was assessed with five items from a scale developed by Hollenbeck, Williams, and Klein (1989) that were recommended by Klein, Wesson, Hollenbeck, Wright, and DeShon (2001). We

¹The reward structure, expectancy, and valence measures are available on request from the first author.

modified the items so that the target of commitment was positive emotional displays. Sample items for this scale are “It’s hard to take displaying positive emotions seriously” and “Quite frankly, I don’t care if I display positive emotions or not.” Participants rated each item on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Reliability was $\alpha = .70$ in the typical interaction condition and $\alpha = .79$ in the incivility interaction condition. Gosserand and Diefendorff (2005) used a similarly modified version of this scale to measure display rule commitment in their study.

Procedure

Participants first completed the personality and reward structure measures. Next, participants received the “typical customer interaction” induction and completed the expectancy, valence, and commitment measures for that interaction. Participants then received the “incivility customer interaction” induction and completed the expectancy, valence, and commitment measures for that interaction. All participants received the typical interaction induction first and the incivility interaction induction second because (a) the typical interaction is most representative of customer service work (Grandey et al., 2004; Totterdell & Holman, 2003) and should provide a good context in which to evaluate typical motivation to display positive emotions, and (b) the typical interaction situation provides a reference point for evaluating the incivility interaction and a baseline against which to compare expectancy, valence, motivational force, and display rule commitment scores.

RESULTS

Manipulation Check

To examine whether the incivility scenario was realistic, we asked participants whether it was likely that they would encounter such a customer in their job. Results demonstrated that 86.5% of participants thought that dealing with this type of customer was at least somewhat likely in their job, whereas 13.5% thought it was unlikely. No differences in the study variables were observed between individuals who did versus did not think they were likely to encounter an uncivil customer at work. Thus, all individuals were included in subsequent analyses.

Antecedents of Display Rule Commitment

Means, standard deviations, internal consistency reliabilities, and intercorrelations of the study variables are presented in Table 1. Regression analyses were used to test H1 to H7. H1, H2, and H3 proposed that expectancy, valence, and motivational

TABLE 1
Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities and Intercorrelations
Among Study Variables

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Typical expectancy	91.18	9.35	—											
2. Typical valence	4.70	.53	.20**	—										
3. Typical motiv. force	429.63	70.88	.74***	.81***	—									
4. Typical commitment	4.38	.58	.35***	.30***	.41***	.70								
5. Incivility expectancy	69.07	20.83	.38***	.08	.28***	.38***	—							
6. Incivility valence	3.95	1.03	.23**	.11	.21**	.33***	.54***	—						
7. Incivility motiv. force	284.44	124.32	.36***	.10	.29***	.41***	.87***	.84***	—					
8. Incivility commitment	3.46	.91	.20**	.06	.16*	.51***	.65***	.42***	.63***	.79				
9. Agreeableness	4.23	.52	.28***	.27***	.35***	.34***	.29***	.21**	.30***	.19**	.79			
10. Extraversion	3.64	.67	.08	.20*	.17*	.19**	.17*	.23***	.23**	.19**	.18**	.81		
11. Neuroticism	2.67	.63	-.11	-.08	-.13*	-.14*	-.13	-.12	-.15*	-.19**	-.34***	-.13*	.72	
12. Reward structure	3.58	.95	.21**	.18**	.26***	.15*	.22***	.19**	.20**	.14*	.07	.16*	.03	.83

Note. motiv. = motivational.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

TABLE 2
 Hierarchical Regression Results: Predicting Display Rule Commitment
 in the Typical and Incivility Interaction Conditions

Step/Predictor	DV: Display Rule Commitment (Typical Interaction Condition)				DV: Display Rule Commitment (Incivility Interaction Condition)			
	At Step β	Final β	R^2	ΔR^2	At Step β	Final β	R^2	ΔR^2
1. Extraversion	.12 [†]	.08	.143	.143	.14*	.07	.088	.088
Neuroticism	-.02	-.02			-.14*	-.11*		
Agreeableness	.30***	.20**			.11	-.06		
Reward Structure	.11 [†]	.05			.11 [†]	.00		
2. Expectancy	.22**	.22**	.237	.094	.64***	.64***	.461	.373
Valence	.18**	.18**			.11	.11		
Motivational force	-.08	-.08			.11*	.11*		

Note. All R^2 values are unadjusted. DV = dependent variable.

[†] $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

force would be positively related to display rule commitment. We tested these hypotheses in a regression model controlling for the influence of personality and reward structure (see Table 2). Results for the typical condition revealed significant effects for expectancy and valence, supporting H1 and H2, and a nonsignificant effect for motivational force, failing to support H3. These variables accounted for 9.4% of the unique variability in display rule commitment. Regression results for the incivility condition revealed significant effects for expectancy and motivational force, but not valence, supporting H1 and H3 but not H2 (see Table 2). These variables accounted for 37.3% of the unique variance in display rule commitment. The significant motivational force result reflects an interaction between expectancy and valence. As shown in Figure 2, the positive relationship of expectancy with commitment was stronger when valence was high compared to when it was low.

Individual Difference and Situational Antecedents

H4 to H7 were tested with simultaneous regression analyses (see Table 3). For the typical interaction condition, H4a and 4b and H5a and 5b were not supported as extraversion and neuroticism did not significantly predict expectancy or motivational force. However, H6a through 6c and H7a through 7c were supported as agreeableness and reward structure were significant positive predictors of expectancy, valence, and motivational force. Although unanticipated, extraversion was a significant predictor of valence. These predictors accounted for 11.4% of the variance in valence, 11.5% of the variance in expectancy, and 18.4% of the variance in motivational force.

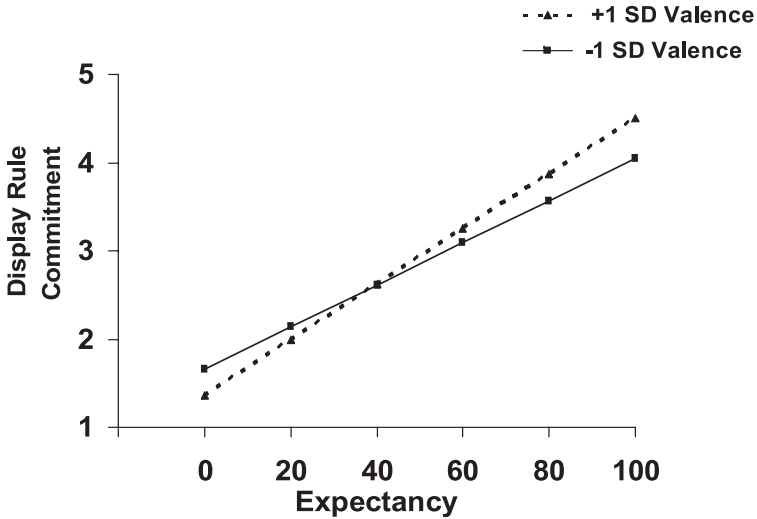


FIGURE 2 Moderating effect of valence on the relation between expectancy and display rule commitment in the incivility interaction condition. Regression lines are drawn at ± 1 standard deviation from the mean of valence.

In the incivility customer interaction condition, extraversion was a significant predictor of motivational force, but not expectancy (see Table 3), supporting H4b but not H4a. H5a and 5b were not supported as neuroticism was unrelated to expectancy and motivational force. H6a through 6c and H7a through 7c were supported as agreeableness and reward structure were significant predictors of expect-

TABLE 3
Regression Results: Predicting Expectancy, Valence, and Motivational Force in the Typical and Incivility Interaction Conditions

Predictor	Dependent Variables					
	Typical Interaction Condition			Incivility Interaction Condition		
	Valence β	Expectancy β	Motivational Force β	Valence β	Expectancy β	Motivational Force β
Extraversion	.13*	-.00	.08	.18**	.09	.15*
Neuroticism	.01	-.03	-.02	-.05	-.03	-.05
Agreeableness	.23**	.26***	.32***	.16*	.25***	.24***
Reward Structure	.15*	.19**	.22***	.15*	.19***	.16*
R ²	.114	.115	.184	.108	.136	.144

Note. All R² values are unadjusted.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

tancy, valence, and motivational force. Unexpectedly, extraversion was again a significant predictor of valence. Together, these predictors accounted for 10.8% of the variability in valence, 13.6% of the variability in expectancy, and 14.4% of the variability in motivational force.²

Tests of Mediation

Implicit in our theory (see Figure 1) is the idea that expectancy, valence, and motivational force mediate the effects of individual difference and situational variables on display rule commitment. We formally test this idea here. As can be seen in Table 2, reward structure and two out of three personality variables were at least marginally significant predictors of commitment in the typical and incivility conditions when entered as predictors prior to the expectancy theory constructs. However, with the inclusion of expectancy, valence and motivational force as predictors, only agreeableness remained significant in the typical condition and only neuroticism remained significant in the incivility condition. The Sobel test revealed that for the typical interaction condition, agreeableness also had an indirect effect on display rule commitment through valence ($\alpha\beta = .04, p < .05$) and expectancy ($\alpha\beta = .06, p < .05$). In addition, reward system had an indirect effect on commitment through expectancy ($\alpha\beta = .04, p < .05$). For the incivility condition, agreeableness ($\alpha\beta = .16, p < .001$) and reward system ($\alpha\beta = .12, p < .01$) had indirect effects on commitment through expectancy.

The Role of Context

H8a through 8d predicted that expectancy, valence, and commitment ratings for displaying positive emotions would be lower in the incivility interaction condition compared to the typical interaction condition. Paired samples *t* tests were conducted to test these hypotheses. All four hypotheses were supported with differ-

²In response to a reviewer comment, we examined interactions between reward structure and the personality variables. We did not find a pattern of significance so we did not report these results in the article. In addition, we examined whether the personality and reward structure variables predicted changes in expectancy, valence, motivational force and display rule commitment between the typical and incivility interaction conditions. To do this, we performed regression analyses where at Step 1, we entered the typical condition variable (e.g., expectancy) as a predictor of the same incivility condition variable (e.g., expectancy). This procedure essentially results in a dependent variable that is a change variable (e.g., change in expectancy). At Step 2, we entered extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, and reward structure to determine the extent to which these variables could predict changes in our expectancy theory variables. We found that the pattern of significance in these analyses was identical to the pattern of significance for the incivility interaction condition results in Tables 2 and 3. That is, these variables predicted differences in the motivation variables (e.g., expectancy, valence, motivational force, and commitment) in a way that was nearly identical to how they predicted these variables in the incivility interaction condition without partialling out the effects of the typical interaction condition.

ences observed for expectancy, $t(232) = 17.45, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .567$; valence, $t(232) = 10.38, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .317$; motivational force, $t(231) = 17.76, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .579$; and commitment, $t(231) = 17.73, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .580$. The means in Table 1 show that expectancy decreased by 24.3%, valence decreased by 15.7%, motivational force decreased by 33.7%, commitment decreased by 22.1%, in the incivility condition compared to the typical condition. Thus, employee motivation to display positive emotions was less when faced with an uncivil customer compared to a typical customer.

A secondary question that we explored was how expectancy, valence, and motivational force differed for positive, neutral, and negative emotional displays within and between the typical and incivility interaction conditions (see the means in Table 4). We performed 2 (typical condition vs. incivility condition) \times 3 (positive, neutral, negative emotional displays) repeated measures analyses of variance on expectancy, valence, and motivational force. For expectancy, this analysis produced significant main effects for emotional display, $F(2, 460) = 546.38, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .704$; and condition, $F(1, 230) = 37.86, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .141$; as well as a significant interaction, $F(2, 460) = 198.41, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .463$. The main effect for emotional display indicates that positive emotions had the highest expectancies across situations, followed by neutral and negative displays. The main effect for situation shows that expectancies were higher in the incivility condition compared to the typical condition, across emotions. The interaction indicates that the expectancy differences across emotional displays was smaller in the incivility condition compared to the typical condition (see Table 4).

Similar results were found for valence ratings, with significant main effects for emotional display, $F(2, 460) = 781.01, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .773$; and condition, $F(1, 230) = 74.48, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .245$; as well as a significant Situation \times Emotional Display interaction, $F(2, 460) = 151.17, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .397$. The pattern of means was the same as for expectancy (see Table 4), with difference in valence ratings across the displays being smaller in the incivility condition com-

TABLE 4
Mean Expectancy and Valence Values for Positive, Neutral, and Negative Emotional Displays by Condition

	<i>Positive Emotional Display</i>	<i>Neutral Emotional Display</i>	<i>Negative Emotional Display</i>
Typical interaction expectancy	91.18	33.03	18.85
Incivility interaction expectancy	69.07	52.06	36.62
Typical interaction valence	4.70	2.03	1.39
Incivility interaction valence	3.95	3.00	2.15
Typical interaction motivational force	429.63	73.33	30.63
Incivility interaction motivational force	284.44	169.57	91.23

pared to the typical condition. For motivational force, this analysis produced no main effect for condition, $F(1, 230) = 1.41$, *ns*; but a significant effect for emotional display, $F(2, 460) = 958.40$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .806$; as well as a significant interaction, $F(2, 460) = 287.82$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .556$. Again, the nature of this interaction shows that the motivational advantage of positive displays over the other emotional displays diminished but did not disappear in the incivility condition compared to the typical condition (see Table 4).

DISCUSSION

Display rule commitment has been shown to moderate the effects of display rule perceptions on employee emotion regulation and emotional displays (Gosserand & Diefendorff, 2005). Our study contributes to the emotional labor literature by examining factors influencing individuals' commitment to positive display rules in customer service interactions. The results support expectancy, valence, and motivational force as antecedents of display rule commitment and revealed that agreeableness and reward structure impact display rule commitment through expectancy theory variables. Further, the type of customer interaction affected employee motivation to conform to positive display rules, with all expectancy theory and commitment variables being higher in the typical customer interaction condition compared to the incivility condition. In typical customer service interactions, expectancy and valence contributed roughly equally to the prediction of display rule commitment, whereas motivational force did not add to prediction. However, in incivility customer interactions, expectancy was a stronger predictor and valence was not significant. Further, motivational force was a significant predictor in incivility interactions, revealing that expectancy had even stronger effects on commitment when valence was high, compared to when it was low.

The Influence of Individual Differences and Reward Structure

Agreeableness was positively associated with expectancy, valence, and motivational force in the typical and incivility interaction conditions. Further, agreeableness was directly and indirectly (through expectancy and valence) related to display rule commitment in the typical condition, and indirectly related to commitment in the incivility condition (through expectancy). These results suggest that individuals who tend to seek positive interpersonal relationships are likely to value displaying positive emotions to customers, feel more confident in doing so, and be more committed to doing so, even when interacting with a rude customer. Such effects may be attributable to the more compliant nature of agreeable individuals; that is, agreeable individuals may be more motivated to conform

to rules in general and display rules in particular. The results for agreeableness are consistent with recent research showing that this variable is a particularly good predictor of emotional labor variables (e.g., Diefendorff et al., 2005).

Reward structure, or the extent to which positive emotional displays were perceived to be rewarded and recognized, predicted expectancy, valence, and motivational force in the typical and incivility customer conditions. In addition, reward structure impacted display rule commitment through expectancy judgments in both conditions. Linking positive displays to compensation and praise may make the display more valuable and also increase employee confidence by enabling them to better focus their effort and attention on the expected display. As such, their confidence for displaying the positive emotion should increase, leading to greater display rule commitment. Although these findings are suggestive, more work is needed to better understand the role of compensation and other human resource practices on emotional labor process and display rule commitment.

The lack of relations of extraversion and neuroticism with expectancy in the typical and incivility interaction conditions was surprising. Although individuals high in extraversion or low in neuroticism tend to display more positive emotions (Tan et al., 2003), they do not seem to be more confident that they can display positive emotions. This finding may be attributable to the use of imagined customer scenarios. Perhaps when faced with an actual customer context, the natural propensity to display positive emotions would have more motivational value than in an imagined context. However, we did find that neuroticism was directly related to display rule commitment in the incivility interaction condition and that extraversion was positively related to valence in both customer interaction conditions. Thus, individuals who tended to feel negative emotions more often were less committed to positive display rules when the customer was uncivil. Further, individuals who tended to experience positive emotions more often placed greater value on displaying positive emotions to customers. Although these results are suggestive, more work is needed to clarify the links between dispositional affect variables and display rule motivation.

The Importance of Context

Our findings for context suggest that the motivation to display positive emotions is affected by transaction-defining cues of situations (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1990). Expectancy, valence, motivational force, and display rule commitment were significantly lower in the incivility interaction condition compared to the typical interaction condition. Expectancy theory (e.g., Vroom, 1964) proposes that the action with the highest motivational force represents the goal that individuals will pursue. In the typical customer interaction condition, positive emotional displays had the highest motivational force for 100% of employees. This idea is consistent with our belief that the sample of service workers had fairly similar emotional display re-

quirements. However, in the incivility interaction condition, the advantage of positive emotional displays over neutral and negative emotional displays diminished, although they still had the highest motivational force for 70.6% of employees. But in this situation, neutral and negative emotional displays had the highest motivational force for 19.4% and 10.0% of employees, respectively. Thus, when employees encounter a situation in which they may experience negative emotions (i.e., uncivil customer), nearly 30% of individuals appeared to have emotional display rules other than “express positive emotions.” Consistent with Diefendorff and Gosserand’s (2003) control theory model of emotional labor, these individuals may have abandoned the positive display rule in favor of an “express nothing” or “display negative emotions” display rule. Indeed, changing display rules in this fashion may be more appropriate than blindly conforming to a positive display rule. Rafaeli and Sutton (1990) noted that “an irate customer may view good cheer as evidence of sarcasm and grow further aggravated. Perhaps adopting a neutral, rather than a positive or negative demeanor is a better way to get the jump over irate customers” (pp. 634–635). The idea that display rules vary based on specific contextual features has recently been demonstrated by Matsumoto, Yoo, Hirayama, and Petrova (2005).

Practical Implications

Our results have practical implications for managing employee emotional displays in service work. First, display rule commitment depends on whether employees (a) feel that they can be successful in displaying positive emotions toward customers and (b) value doing so. To facilitate these beliefs, managers can develop interventions aimed at increasing employee expectancy and valence beliefs. Expectancy may be increased by teaching individuals emotion regulation strategies (e.g., Gross, 1998) or modifying the work environment so as to reduce the occurrence of negative customer interactions (e.g., changing policies, products, or other organizational factors that upset customers). Both of these changes will make displaying positive emotions easier and make it more likely that individuals will commit to doing so in typical and incivility customer interactions. Valence may be increased by introducing recognition programs for displaying emotions. Deci and Ryan (2000) argued that the extent to which individuals internalize a behavior influences their desire to perform the behavior and their well-being. As such, another way to increase valence perceptions may be to enable individuals to personalize the display rule (i.e., display positive emotions in their own way) so that they identify with it and conform to it in their preferred style of interpersonal interaction.

Second, managers may clarify the emotional display expectations they have for customer service interactions. There is broad consensus in the emotional labor literature that customer service employees are expected to display positive emotions (e.g., Cropanzano et al., 2004). However, the variability in expectancy and valence

ratings, especially in the incivility interaction condition, suggests that positive emotional display rules may not be universal. Although it is probably the case that negative emotional displays are never acceptable in customer interactions, neutral displays may actually be preferred in difficult customer encounters (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1990). If this is the case, it may benefit employees and the organization if such expectations were explicit. Such clarity would result in more consistent emotional displays and less potential ambiguity over what should be expressed.

Limitations and Future Research

There are several limitations of this study. First, with the exception of the customer context manipulation, the data in this study are correlational, preventing causal inferences. However, theory supports the ordering of the variables in this study, as expectancy and valence have been proposed as the most proximal antecedents of commitment in other research domains (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003; Hollenbeck & Klein, 1987). In addition, personality variables and reward structure are unlikely to be the result of expectancy or valence judgments.

Another limitation of this study is the use of self-report measures in an artificial setting. Although there is some threat of percept–percept inflation biasing the relations in an upward fashion, we believe that the current methodology is most appropriate for our research questions. That is, other sources of data (e.g., supervisor ratings of employee commitment to display rules) did not seem suitable and may have introduced more problems than they would have solved. Having people imagine customer service interactions in a lab setting may decrease the ability to generalize our results to actual customer service situations. However, our use of currently employed customer service workers along with the guided imagery technique should have enhanced the realism for participants. Nonetheless, our results may have been different if actual emotional displays in real customer interactions would have been assessed.

Future research should explore additional antecedents of expectancy, valence, motivational force, and display rule commitment. For instance, one's skill or experience in using emotion regulation techniques (Gross, 1998) may positively impact expectancy beliefs. Role identification (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993), job involvement, or occupational commitment might relate to valence beliefs. Future research might also consider examining commitment to more narrow forms of emotional display rules. For instance, individuals could be asked to rate their motivation for expressing discrete positive emotions (e.g., enthusiasm vs. happiness) or fake versus genuine positive emotions.

In sum, the results of our study shed further light on the role of motivation in emotional labor by examining influences on the commitment to conform to emotional display rules.

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