

State or Trait: Effects of Positive Mood on Prosocial Behaviors at Work

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Positive mood at work (as an affective state) was hypothesized to be significantly and positively associated with the performance of both extrarole and role-prescribed prosocial organizational behaviors. Moreover, positive mood was hypothesized to have effects on prosocial behavior above and beyond the effects of fairness cognitions. Conversely, positive mood as a trait (i.e., positive affectivity) was expected to be unrelated to either form of prosocial behavior. Finally, the form of role-prescribed prosocial behavior investigated, customer-service behavior or helpful behavior directed at customers, was hypothesized to be positively associated with sales performance. These hypotheses were tested with a sample of 221 salespeople. All of the hypotheses were supported. Implications of these results and directions for future research are discussed.

In recent years, there has been increasing recognition of the importance of prosocial behaviors at work. Prosocial behaviors are helping behaviors; they are performed to benefit or help another individual (Krebs, 1982). Some prosocial behaviors are actually a part of one's role prescriptions (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986); in this case, the prosocial behavior in question is one dimension of job performance. For example, a component of performance for many positions in the expanding service sector is customer-service behavior, or helpful behaviors directed at customers. Other prosocial behaviors are extrarole; individuals may not be formally required to perform them and they may not be acknowledged by the organization's reward system (Organ, 1988a). For example, an individual might not be required to help a co-worker with a job-related problem. Yet, this and other forms of extrarole helping behavior do occur at work. *Extrarole prosocial behaviors are also very important for organizational effectiveness because organizations cannot specify, in advance, all the behaviors necessary for the organization to achieve its goals. Indeed, the spontaneous performance of extrarole prosocial behaviors is essential for a functioning organization (Katz, 1964).*

In attempts to identify the causes of prosocial behaviors at work, attention has been focused, in part, on job satisfaction as a likely antecedent (e.g., Bateman & Organ, 1983; Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983). Why have researchers expected satisfaction to be related to prosocial behavior? At least two distinct rationales for the satisfaction-prosocial-behavior relationship have been offered. One explanation comes from the extensive literature in social psychology, which suggests that when people are in a positive mood, they are more likely to be helpful (e.g., Aderman, 1972; Cunningham, Steinberg, & Grev, 1980; Isen, Clark, &

Schwartz, 1976; Isen & Levin, 1972; Levin & Isen, 1975; Rosenhan, Salovey, & Hargis, 1981). Organizational researchers, assuming that job satisfaction is an indicator of positive mood at work, hypothesized and found that job satisfaction was significantly related to prosocial behaviors in work contexts (e.g., Bateman & Organ, 1983; Motowidlo, 1984; Smith et al., 1983). This suggests that one reason satisfaction may be associated with prosocial behavior is that it partially reflects positive mood at work, and positive mood fosters prosocial behaviors. Thus, prosocial behaviors may be somewhat spontaneous gestures of helping prompted by current mood state.

An alternative explanation for this relationship stems, in part, from the finding that job-satisfaction measures contain considerable cognitive content (Brief & Roberson, 1989). More specifically, Organ (1988a) argued that job-satisfaction measures tap, in part, fairness cognitions, and it is these fairness cognitions that are associated with the performance of certain types of prosocial behaviors (i.e., those that are extrarole). When workers think they are being unfairly treated, one way for them to restore equity is to cut back on discretionary behaviors (Organ, 1988b). Conversely, when individuals think they are being treated fairly by an organization, rather than purely viewing their relationship with the organization as one of economic exchange (e.g., only positive behaviors that will be rewarded are performed), they may come to view their relationship as entailing social exchange (Organ, 1988b). Social-exchange relationships are characterized by diffuse obligations based on reciprocal trust, whereas economic exchange is limited to more precise terms and contractual obligations (Blau, 1964). Thus, when workers think they are being fairly treated by an organization, they may come to see the relationship as one of social exchange. As long as these feelings of trust and fairness are maintained, the individual will not be concerned about compensation for extrarole behaviors (Organ & Konovsky, 1989) because he or she is confident of fair treatment by the organization. Hence, Organ considered fairness cognitions to be the driving force behind relationships between job satisfaction and extrarole prosocial behaviors.

Organ and Konovsky (1989) investigated these two explana-

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tions for the satisfaction–prosocial-behavior relationship in a study that was focused on the affective and cognitive determinants of extrarole prosocial behavior (which they labelled altruism). They found that, although job and pay cognitions accounted for significant proportions of the variance in altruism over and above that accounted for by mood, mood did not account for significant variance over and above cognitions. Organ and Konovsky concluded that altruistic behaviors are deliberate and are controlled and determined by cognitions. The cognitions Organ and his colleagues suggest are important in this regard are cognitions of fairness (e.g., Organ, 1988a, 1988b, 1989).

Hence, one might conclude that researchers should focus on fairness cognitions as precursors to prosocial behaviors (or at least prosocial behaviors that are extrarole) and pay less attention to the effects of positive mood at work. Such a conclusion seems premature, at least for certain classes of prosocial behavior. For prosocial behaviors that are performed with the intent to benefit or help the individual(s) they are directed at, positive mood at work may be a significant antecedent having effects over and above those of fairness cognitions. This is not meant to imply that fairness cognitions are unimportant; indeed, perceptions of fairness are very important, as Organ (1988a) and others have noted (e.g., Folger & Konovsky, 1989). Rather, this article is intended to demonstrate the importance of positive mood *per se* for prosocial behavior. In terms of the behaviors Organ defined as organizational citizenship, the subset of citizenship behaviors that were hypothesized to be influenced by positive mood were those defined by Organ as altruism; these behaviors entail “helping a specific other person with a work-related problem” (Organ & Konovsky, 1989, p. 160). Thus, I hypothesized that positive moods would foster both role-prescribed helping behaviors and extrarole helping behaviors. The rationale for these hypotheses is described below, and a potential explanation of Organ and Konovsky’s (1989) seemingly contradictory results is provided.

Positive Mood–Prosocial Behavior Relationship

As mentioned above, a substantial body of literature in social psychology has found that positive moods foster prosocial behavior in a variety of settings (e.g., Rosenhan et al., 1981). I hypothesized that positive moods influence prosocial behaviors in organizational settings as well; these spontaneous gestures of help may not be as controlled and deliberate as one might imagine based on the foregoing discussion. For example, if a worker asks a co-worker for help with a problem, the co-worker might not pause to think about whether or not the organization treated him or her fairly; even if the co-worker is being unfairly treated, why should he or she be less helpful to someone who is probably in the same boat? As another example, if a customer needs help locating an item, will a salesperson fail to help the customer because the salesperson sees his or her relationship with the organization as purely instrumental? Even if the salesperson does think he or she is being unfairly treated, once again, these unfairness cognitions may not be evoked by the presence of a needy customer, especially since that customer is not responsible for the salesperson’s circumstances. Again, this is not meant to imply that fairness is unimportant.

Rather, it is suggested here that many prosocial behaviors in organizations may be somewhat spontaneous gestures resulting from a person’s current mood state.

Why do positive moods foster prosocial behaviors? Carlson, Charlin, and Miller (1988) discussed several theoretical rationales for this relationship that have received some degree of empirical support. The simplest explanation may be that positive moods cause people to perceive stimuli in a more positive light (e.g., Bower, 1981; Carson & Adams, 1980; D. M. Clark & Teasdale, 1985; Forgas, Bower, & Krantz, 1984; Isen, Shalke, Clark, & Karp, 1978; Teasdale & Fogarty, 1979) and to be more attracted to others (e.g., Bell, 1978; Gouaux, 1971; Mehrabian & Russell, 1975). Thus, workers in positive moods are more likely to look favorably on co-workers, customers, and other potential recipients of help as well as on opportunities for helping. They are also more likely to have an enhanced social outlook (Carlson et al., 1988). All of these factors should contribute to more prosocial behavior. In addition, it has been suggested that people in good moods are more helpful because being helpful is self-reinforcing or enables them to maintain or prolong their positive mood (M. S. Clark & Isen, 1982; Isen et al., 1978). Consistent with this line of reasoning, past research has demonstrated that people strive to maintain positive moods (M. S. Clark & Isen, 1982).

State or Trait Positive Mood

Given the relative robustness of the positive-mood–prosocial-behavior relationship in the social psychological literature (Carlson et al., 1988), I hypothesized that positive moods in work contexts also would result in more prosocial behavior. However, how can one account for Organ and Konovsky’s (1989) results, which suggest that positive moods are not that important for altruistic behaviors? One explanation is that Organ and Konovsky may have measured positive mood as a trait rather than a state. That is, Organ and Konovsky measured mood by asking respondents to describe their typical mood at work during the preceding 6 months. Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988) indicated that when mood ratings of relatively long time periods (e.g., past few months or past year) are taken, the ratings exhibit sufficient stability to be used as trait measures of mood. As Watson and Pennebaker (1989) indicated, positive mood can be measured as a state or as a trait; the trait represents stable individual differences in the level of positive mood generally experienced, whereas the state captures how a person feels at given points in time. Thus, state positive mood refers to moods that are experienced in the short run and fluctuate over time, whereas trait positive mood refers to stable individual differences in positive affect levels (Watson & Pennebaker, 1989).

Positive mood as a trait is often referred to in the literature as positive affectivity (e.g., George, 1989; Tellegen, 1982, 1985; Watson, Clark, & Carey, 1988; Watson & Pennebaker, 1989). Individuals high on positive affectivity tend to experience more positive affect across situations than do individuals low on positive affectivity (e.g., Tellegen, 1982, 1985; Watson & Pennebaker, 1989). Thus, Organ and Konovsky (1989) may have been measuring affective disposition (i.e., positive mood as a trait) rather than positive mood as a state. Moreover, previously reported

relationships between positive mood and helping behavior, as well as the theoretical rationales for these relationships, have been focused on positive mood as a state, not a trait. Although affective disposition (i.e., positive affectivity) has an impact on positive mood states at work (George, 1989), moods are also influenced by situational factors and the interaction between the person and the situation. Once again, it is the mood state *per se* that affects prosocial responding rather than the more general tendency to experience the mood state. Positive affectivity may not be a significant predictor of prosocial behavior because individuals high on positive affectivity may not experience positive moods at work (because of situational factors and their interaction with personality). Likewise, individuals low on positive affectivity may still experience positive moods at work because the situation is favorable.

This study was designed to shed light on these issues by exploring the effect of positive mood states and positive mood as a trait on prosocial behaviors. I expected that positive mood as a state would be significantly associated with the occurrence of both role-prescribed and extrarole prosocial behavior, whereas positive mood as a trait (i.e., positive affectivity) would not be significantly related to these behaviors. Moreover, I hypothesized that positive mood as a state would have effects on prosocial behavior above and beyond the effects of fairness cognitions.

Finally, because the form of role-prescribed prosocial behavior investigated was customer-service behavior, or helpful behavior directed at customers, I hypothesized that this form of prosocial behavior would be positively associated with sales performance. Salespeople displaying high levels of this form of prosocial behavior are very helpful to customers. For example, they may help customers locate items, inform them of the features of merchandise, assist them in making decisions, and answer questions. These kinds of behaviors may result in higher sales performance because they may increase the probability that customers will find items that fulfill their needs and that customers will enjoy their shopping experience.

This hypothesized relationship is implicit in much of the writings on the importance of customer service in the popular and academic press (e.g., Buzzell & Gale, 1987; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985, 1988). However, there are few empirical studies assessing this relationship (e.g., George & Bettenhausen, 1990). Even so, one would not expect this relationship to be especially strong. As George and Bettenhausen (1990) pointed out, many of the benefits of customer service are reaped over time and across employees. For example, even if a salesperson is extremely helpful, customers still may not make a purchase for a variety of reasons. Yet those customers may be more inclined to think favorably about their shopping experience, return to the store in the future, and engage in word of mouth advertising. If they do return to the store and make a purchase, a different salesperson may help them on the return visit; this sale will not be reflected in the original salesperson's performance. Nonetheless, I still expected that customer service would be positively associated with sales performance because of its effects on sales at the initial point of contact between an individual salesperson and a customer. The only qualification was that this relationship would not be particularly strong, for the reasons described.

In summary the specific hypotheses guiding the study were as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Positive mood at work (as an affective state) is significantly and positively related to the performance of both extrarole prosocial organizational behavior and role-prescribed prosocial organizational behavior.

Hypothesis 2: Positive mood at work (as an affective state) accounts for significant proportions of the variance in both extrarole prosocial behavior and role-prescribed prosocial behavior above and beyond that accounted for by fairness cognitions.

Hypothesis 3: The form of role-prescribed prosocial behavior investigated, customer-service behavior, is positively associated with sales performance.

In addition, consistent with the state-trait distinction discussed previously, as well as with Organ and Konovsky's (1989) results, two additional findings were anticipated. Positive mood as a trait (i.e., positive affectivity) was not expected to be significantly associated with either form of prosocial organizational behavior. Likewise, positive affectivity was not expected to account for significant proportions of the variance in either form of prosocial behavior above and beyond that accounted for by fairness cognitions.

Method

The data for this research came from a sample of salespeople working for a large retailer specializing in clothing and household goods in the southwestern United States. All of the salespeople had the same job title. Questionnaires were distributed to the salespeople at work along with a postage-paid return envelope. The salespeople were instructed to return their completed questionnaires to the researcher in the postage-paid envelope. The salespeople were guaranteed confidentiality, and participation was voluntary.

The supervisors of the salespeople were asked to complete a rating form for each salesperson they supervised who was included in the study. The rating forms included measures of extrarole and role-prescribed prosocial behaviors (described later). The rating forms were distributed to the supervisors at work, along with a postage-paid envelope with which to return the forms directly to the researcher. Supervisor participation was voluntary, and confidentiality was guaranteed. Sales performance data was collected from company records.

Five hundred and sixty-five questionnaires were distributed, and 221 completed questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 39%. Thirty-three supervisors were given rating forms, and 26 supervisors returned completed forms (for all of their subordinates included in the study), yielding a 79% response rate for the supervisors. Because of missing data, the sample sizes for analyses ranged from 169 to 221. Eighty-four percent of the sample was female. Education ranged from less than a high school diploma to more than a masters degree, with 49% of the sample having attended some college or technical school. Forty-four percent of the respondents were married.

Measures

Positive mood. Positive mood as an affective state was measured by the Positive Affect subscale of the Job Affect Scale (JAS; Brief, Burke, George, Robinson, & Webster, 1988). This scale contains 10 items, each of which was identified by Watson and Tellegen (1985) as a pure marker of high or low positive mood on the basis of factor analyses of studies of self-reported mood. Brief et al. (1988) originally indicated that the responses to the high and low (reversed-scored) markers of positive mood

should be summed to yield an overall positive mood score. However, subsequent work by Burke, Brief, George, Roberson, and Webster (1989) suggests that it is more appropriate to measure positive mood as descriptively unipolar rather than bipolar. Burke et al.'s (1989) conclusions are based on confirmatory factor analyses of the JAS in three different samples. Congruent with their recommendation, the high positive mood items were summed to arrive at a positive mood score. These items were *active, strong, excited, enthusiastic, peppy, and elated*. For each item, the salespeople were asked to describe how they felt at work during the past week on a 5-point scale ranging from *very slightly or not at all* (1) to *very much* (5). The internal consistency reliability (Cronbach, 1951) for the measure of positive mood was .87.

Fairness cognitions. Fairness cognitions were measured with four scales. The first scale, *supervisor fairness*, measured the extent to which the salespeople felt that they were fairly treated by their immediate supervisors. Three items made up the scale. A sample item is "My immediate supervisor is generally fair in his or her dealings with me." The salespeople were instructed to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The internal consistency reliability (Cronbach, 1951) of the scale was .86.

The second scale, *store management fairness*, measured the extent to which the salespeople felt that they were fairly treated by store management. Three items made up the scale. A sample item is "Store management can be counted on to treat salespeople fairly." The salespeople indicated the extent to which they disagreed or agreed with each item on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The internal consistency reliability (Cronbach, 1951) of the scale was .89.

The third scale, *distributive justice*, tapped the extent to which the salespeople thought rewards were related to performance inputs (Price & Mueller, 1986). Distributive justice was measured with Price and Mueller's (1986) Distributive Justice Index. Six items make up the scale. The salespeople were instructed that for each of the items, fairness means the extent to which a person's contributions to the store is related to rewards received. A sample item is "To what extent are you fairly rewarded for work that you have done well?" Responses were on a 5-point scale ranging from *rewards are very fairly distributed* (1) to *rewards are not distributed at all fairly* (5). The internal consistency reliability (Cronbach, 1951) of the measure of distributive justice was .94.

The fourth indicator of fairness cognitions, *pay cognitions*, was measured with the pay comparisons scale developed by Scholl, Cooper, and McKenna (1987). The scale asked the salespeople to compare their pay with seven specified sources of comparison. Seven items constitute the scale. A sample item is "Compared to others doing the same job as me in [store name] with similar education, seniority, experience, and effort, I earn about: ____." Responses were on a 9-point scale ranging from *40% less* (-4) to *40% more* (4). The salespeople also had the option of checking *I don't know* or *There is no comparison*. Following Scholl et al., these responses received a score of 0. Although Scholl et al. used each item of the scale separately in their analyses, Organ and Konovsky (1989), using a modified version of the scale, summed responses to the items to arrive at an overall score that they labeled pay cognitions. In the current study, scores on the seven items of the scale were summed to arrive at an overall score reflecting how the salespeople compared their pay to different sources of comparison. The internal consistency reliability (Cronbach, 1951) of the scale was .86.

Positive affectivity. Positive affectivity (i.e., positive mood as a trait) was measured with the Positive Emotionality scale (PEM) from the Multidimensional Personality Questionnaire (Tellegen, 1982). The PEM comprises 11 items that refer to ways an individual might describe him or herself; the salespeople were asked to indicate the extent to which the statement was true or false for them personally. Sample items are "Most days I have moments of real fun or joy" and "It is easy

for me to become enthusiastic about things I am doing." Responses to the PEM were scored in the following manner: Items that the respondents indicated were true for them personally received a score of 1, whereas items marked false received a score of 0. The final positive affectivity score was then calculated by summing responses to the 11 items.

The PEM scale has been shown to have acceptable internal consistency and test-retest reliabilities (e.g., Watson & Pennebaker, 1989) and demonstrates good convergent and discriminate validity in relation to other variables (e.g., Watson, 1988; Watson et al., 1988). For example, Watson and Pennebaker (1989) reported a 12-week test-retest reliability of .77 for the PEM. Overall, the PEM scale comes highly recommended as a measure of positive affectivity or trait positive mood (Watson & Pennebaker, 1989). In the current study, the internal consistency reliability (Cronbach, 1951) of the PEM was .80.

Prosocial behavior. Two forms of prosocial behavior were investigated. The first form, extrarole prosocial behavior, was measured with a slightly modified version of the altruism subscale of Smith et al.'s (1983) Organizational Citizenship Behavior measure (hereinafter referred to as the altruism scale). The items of the scale "suggest helping a specific other person with a work-related problem" (Organ & Konovsky, 1989, p. 160); Smith et al. (1983) defined this form of organizational citizenship behavior as being extrarole. The altruism scale originally contained seven items; however, one of these items ("attends functions not required but that help company image") was not relevant to the current sample and was therefore deleted. Thus, altruism was measured with the remaining six items of the scale; in a few cases, the wording of the items was slightly changed to make them more relevant or understandable to the current sample. For each item, the supervisors were asked to indicate how characteristic the behavior was of the salesperson they were rating on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all characteristic*) to 5 (*very characteristic*). In completing the rating forms, the supervisors were instructed to think of behaviors they actually observed each salesperson perform. Sample items are "assists me with my duties" and "helps others when their work load increases." The internal consistency reliability (Cronbach, 1951) of the altruism scale was .91.

Because the sample was composed of salespeople, the second form of prosocial behavior investigated, role-prescribed prosocial behavior, was defined as customer-service behavior, or prosocial behavior directed at customers. Customer service was measured with a 15-item scale. Each item of the scale reflected a prosocial (or helpful) behavior a salesperson might display in relation to a customer. A sample item is "informs a customer of the important features of an item." The supervisors were asked to indicate how characteristic each of these behaviors were of the salesperson they were rating on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all characteristic*) to 5 (*very characteristic*). The internal consistency reliability (Cronbach, 1951) of the customer-service measure was .95.

Sales performance. Sales data was collected for the month following collection of the questionnaires and rating forms. The measure of sales performance was average sales per hour, standardized within departments. Sales per hour were standardized within departments because departments differed in overall volume and the price of goods sold. Supervisors did not know what sales performance would be when they were completing the rating forms.

Results

Table 1 contains means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations for the study variables. Hypothesis 1 was supported by the zero-order correlations presented in Table 1. More specifically, the correlation between positive mood and altruism ($r =$

.24, $p \leq .01$) and the correlation between positive mood and customer service ($r = .26, p \leq .01$) were both positive and statistically significant.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that positive mood at work would account for significant proportions of the variance in extrarole and role-prescribed prosocial behavior, over and above the effects of fairness cognitions. These hypotheses were tested with hierarchical regression (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). The order of entry of the mood and fairness cognitions terms was varied to test their relative abilities to predict unique variance in altruism and customer service. This procedure has been referred to as a usefulness analysis (Darlington, 1968); essentially what is being tested is "a predictor's (or set of predictors') contribution to unique variance in a criterion beyond another predictor's contribution" (Organ & Konovsky, 1989, p. 161). This analysis was conducted in two ways. First, positive mood and each of the cognitions measures were regressed separately (varying order of entry into the regression equation) on altruism and customer service to determine the unique variance accounted for by positive mood over and above each cognition measure. In support of Hypothesis 2, positive mood at work accounted for significant proportions of the variance in both altruism and customer service over and above the variance accounted for by each of the fairness cognitions. For altruism, the additional variance explained by positive mood above and beyond fairness cognitions ranged from .05 ($p \leq .01$) to .06 ($p \leq .01$). For customer service, the proportions of unique variance accounted for by positive mood ranged from .04 ($p \leq .01$) to .06 ($p \leq .01$).

The second manner in which Hypothesis 2 was tested involved the same sort of analysis with the fairness cognitions variables entered into the equations as a set. Results of these analyses are presented in Table 2. As indicated in Table 2, positive mood explained significant proportions of unique variance in both altruism and customer service after the effects of the four fairness cognitions measures were partialled out. In equations already containing the four cognitions measures, positive mood accounted for a .04 ($p \leq .01$) change in R^2 for altruism and a .03 ($p \leq .05$) change in R^2 for customer service. The standardized beta weights for the equations containing supervisor fairness, store management fairness, distributive justice, pay cognitions, and positive mood are also presented in Table 2. Consistent with Hypothesis 2, the beta weight for positive

mood was statistically significant in both equations; when altruism was the dependent variable, the beta for positive mood was .22 ($p \leq .01$), whereas the positive mood beta was .17 ($p \leq .05$) when customer service was the dependent variable. In summary, results of these analyses lend support to Hypothesis 2.

Finally, Hypothesis 3 predicted that customer-service behavior would be significantly and positively associated with sales performance. As indicated in Table 1, the correlation between customer service and sales was .20, which was statistically significant at the .01 level, supporting Hypothesis 3.

Finally, it also was expected that positive affectivity would not be significantly associated with either form of prosocial behavior and also would not account for significant proportions of the variance in prosocial behaviors above and beyond that accounted for by fairness cognitions. These expectations were generally confirmed. More specifically, as indicated in Table 1, the correlations between positive affectivity and both altruism and customer service were nonsignificant. Moreover, when each of the fairness cognitions measures were entered separately into a regression equation, positive affectivity did not account for statistically significant proportions of the variance in altruism or customer service above and beyond that accounted for by any of the cognitions measures. When the cognitions variables were entered into the regression equations as a set, once again positive affectivity did not account for significant proportions of the variance in altruism or customer service above and beyond that accounted for by fairness cognitions, as indicated in Table 3. In addition, in the regression equations containing supervisor fairness, store management fairness, distributive justice, pay cognitions, and positive affectivity, the beta weights for positive affectivity were nonsignificant both when altruism was the dependent variable and when customer service was the dependent variable.

Discussion

The results of this study suggest that positive mood at work does foster prosocial organizational behaviors. Individuals who experienced positive moods at work were more likely to engage in both role-prescribed (i.e., customer service) and extrarole (i.e., altruism) forms of prosocial behavior. Put simply, individuals in

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, Cronbach Alphas, and Intercorrelations Among Study Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Positive mood	19.22	5.37	(.87)								
2. Supervisor fairness	16.15	4.29	.13*	(.86)							
3. Store management fairness	12.13	5.06	.34**	.33**	(.89)						
4. Distributive justice	17.76	5.79	.33**	.39**	.58**	(.94)					
5. Pay cognitions	-5.52	8.22	.13*	.13*	.33**	.51**	(.86)				
6. Positive affectivity	8.73	2.46	.40**	-.12*	.01	-.06	-.11	(.80)			
7. Altruism	21.12	5.30	.24**	.16*	.08	.07	-.04	.10	(.91)		
8. Customer service	60.55	8.73	.26**	.08	.21**	.18**	.08	.02	.53**	(.95)	
9. Sales	—	—	.10	-.03	.05	.01	.06	.00	-.11	.20**	—

Note. Coefficient alphas are in parentheses on the diagonal.
* $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$.

Table 2
Alternative Hierarchical Regressions of Prosocial Behavior on Cognitions Scales (Entered as a Set) and Positive Mood

Variables entered	Altruism	Customer service
Cognitions first, then positive mood		
Step 1: Supervisor fairness, store management fairness, distributive justice, and pay cognitions		
R^2	.03	.05
Step 2: Positive mood		
R^2	.07*	.08*
Positive mood beyond cognitions		
ΔR^2	.04**	.03*
Positive mood first, then cognitions		
Step 1: Positive mood		
R^2	.04**	.05**
Step 2: Supervisor fairness, store management fairness, distributive justice, and pay cognitions		
R^2	.07*	.08*
Cognitions beyond positive mood		
ΔR^2	.02	.02
Standardized betas		
Supervisor fairness	.13	-.02
Store management fairness	.02	.13
Distributive justice	-.06	.07
Pay cognitions	-.08	-.01
Positive mood	.22**	.17*

Note. Discrepancies in some R^2 values across analyses are due to rounding.

* $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$.

positive moods were more likely to be helpful, regardless of whether the helpful behavior in question was part of their job responsibilities or was above and beyond the call of duty. This finding is consistent with an extensive body of literature in social psychology which has found that positive mood promotes helping behavior (e.g., Rosenhan et al., 1981).

Hence, as Smith et al. (1983) suggested, one reason job satisfaction has been found to be related to prosocial behavior may be because it taps, in part, positive mood at work. The fact that positive mood had significant effects on prosocial behavior over and above the effects of fairness cognitions suggests that positive mood is important for understanding the etiology of these behaviors. In the future, researchers should focus on the mechanisms by which positive moods influence prosocial behavior. For example, are individuals in positive moods at work more helpful because they view potential recipients of help more positively, because they look on opportunities for helping more favorably, or because they view helping behavior as a way to maintain their positive moods (Carlson et al., 1988)?

These results were found for positive mood as an affective state. Individuals' affective dispositions in the form of the personality trait referred to as positive affectivity were not found to be associated with either form of prosocial behavior. Thus, although positive affectivity influences positive moods at work

(George, 1989), it is the positive mood per se that is important for understanding prosocial behavior. Hence, one reason Organ and Konovsky (1989) concluded that positive mood was relatively unimportant for altruistic behaviors may be that they indexed positive mood as a trait rather than as a state. The work of Watson et al. (1988) is consistent with this interpretation.

To the extent that prosocial behaviors are relatively spontaneous gestures of helping fostered by positive mood states, researchers should investigate positive mood states to understand prosocial behaviors, rather than positive affectivity, which is a trait. Positive mood as a trait (i.e., positive affectivity) is important, but it is important primarily for understanding the etiology of positive mood states and other affective reactions. As mentioned previously, mood states are determined by both personality and the situation. Although the trait affects the state, behaviors fostered by the state may not be related to the trait because of the influences of situational factors and the person-situation interaction on the state. Consistent with this reasoning, George (1989) hypothesized and found that, although trait positive mood was significantly and positively related to state positive mood, the state was significantly associated with subsequent absence whereas the trait was not. Likewise, in the current study, although trait positive mood (i.e., positive affectivity) was a significant determinant of state positive mood, it was the state that was associated with prosocial behavior, not the trait.

Table 3
Alternative Hierarchical Regressions of Prosocial Behavior on Cognitions Scales (Entered as a Set) and Positive Affectivity

Variables entered	Altruism	Customer service
Cognitions first, then positive affectivity		
Step 1: Supervisor fairness, store management fairness, distributive justice, and pay cognitions		
R^2	.03	.05
Step 2: Positive affectivity		
R^2	.03	.05
Positive affectivity beyond cognitions		
ΔR^2	.00	.00
Positive affectivity first, then cognitions		
Step 1: Positive affectivity		
R^2	.00	.00
Step 2: Supervisor fairness, store management fairness, distributive justice, and pay cognitions		
R^2	.03	.05
Cognitions beyond positive affectivity		
ΔR^2	.03	.05
Standardized betas		
Supervisor fairness	.14	-.02
Store management fairness	.07	.16
Distributive justice	-.01	.09
Pay cognitions	-.06	.01
Positive affectivity	.07	.02

Note. Discrepancies in some R^2 values across analyses are due to rounding.

This study was focused on positive moods, but one might wonder what effects negative moods have on prosocial organizational behaviors. For example, George (1990) hypothesized and found that consistent negative affect within groups (or the negative affective tone of a group) was associated with lower levels of prosocial behavior being performed by the group as a whole. However, the implications of negative mood states for prosocial behavior at the individual level of analysis are unclear and ambiguous (M. S. Clark & Isen, 1982). For example, negative mood has been found to increase helpfulness (e.g., Carlsmith & Gross, 1969; Cialdini, Darby, & Vincent, 1973; Donnerstein, Donnerstein, & Munger, 1975), decrease helpfulness (e.g., Moore, Underwood, & Rosenhan, 1973; Underwood et al., 1977), and be unrelated to helpfulness (e.g., Harris & Siebal, 1975; Holloway, Tucker, & Hornstein, 1977). A variety of explanations have been offered for these seemingly confusing results, which are reviewed by Carlson and Miller (1987). Because, over time, negative moods are relatively independent of positive moods (Diener & Emmons, 1984; Meyer & Shack, 1989; Watson & Pennebaker, 1989; Watson et al., 1988; Watson & Tellegen, 1985; Zevon & Tellegen, 1982), the causal mechanisms underlying the negative-mood–helping relationship are probably different from those underlying the positive-mood–helping relationship.

Given the importance of positive mood for understanding prosocial behavior, researchers should focus on the causes of positive mood at work. As discussed previously, positive affectivity has been found to be positively related to positive mood at work (e.g., George, 1989). This also was found in the current study. Thus, individuals who are dispositionally prone to positive emotions tend to experience more positive moods at work. However, a variety of situational factors probably affect the extent to which an individual experiences positive moods at work. For example, characteristics of one's primary work group (George & Brief, 1990), the extent to which one's job entails social interaction, the physical surroundings at work, and recent life events may be significant determinants of positive moods at work. For instance, social interaction has been found to be positively associated with positive mood (Bradburn, 1969; Bradburn & Caplovitz, 1965; Harding, 1982; Headey, Holstrom, & Wearing, 1985; Zautra, 1983) and unrelated to negative mood (L. A. Clark & Watson, 1988). As L. A. Clark and Watson (1988) pointed out, positive mood and social interaction may be reciprocally related. In trying to understand how situational factors affect mood at work, it may be important to collect multiple ratings of mood at different times during the day and week. For example, with the experience-sampling method (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989), workers could be electronically paged at random times and instructed to complete self-reports of their current mood state, activity, and the presence or absence of situational factors hypothesized to influence mood.

In addition, as hypothesized, customer-service behavior was positively associated with sales performance. Thus, whereas many of the benefits of customer service accrue across employees and over time (George & Bettenhausen, 1990), the extent to which an individual engages in these behaviors may affect his or her individual sales performance. Naturally, one would expect the relationship between customer service in the aggregate (e.g.,

at department or store levels of analysis) and aggregate sales performance to be stronger than the comparable relationship at the individual level of analysis because the benefits of customer service occur both in the short and long term (George & Bettenhausen, 1990). For example, if a given salesperson is very helpful to a customer, the customer still might not make a purchase. However, the customer may be more inclined to return to the store in the future and make a purchase, though not necessarily from the original helpful salesperson.

This study is not without limitations. For example, because of the nonexperimental nature of the data, the direction of causality cannot be unambiguously determined. In fact, it may be the case that, over time, positive mood and prosocial behavior are reciprocally related. That is, being in a positive mood makes one more helpful, and the act of helping contributes to the experience of positive moods. Alternatively, the provision of customer service and its resultant effect on sales might itself put salespeople in a positive mood; the positive mood then might feed back to affect subsequent levels of customer service. Finally, it also may be the case that salespeople in good moods generally tend to receive higher ratings from their supervisors regardless of their actual performance (even though the supervisors are instructed to think of actual behaviors they observe each salesperson perform) (Smither, Collins, & Buda, 1989). Nonetheless, some examples come to mind that may partially mitigate this concern. For instance, some workers may spend excessive amounts of time in animated conversation with their co-workers. Although these workers may report being in a good mood at work, their supervisors may be less likely to rate them as high in customer service (to the extent that their socializing detracts from job performance). More generally, additional research is needed to assess the psychometric properties of the prosocial behavior measures as well as to explore the relationship between positive mood and helping as it unfolds over time.

These and other limitations notwithstanding, the results of this study suggest that positive mood is important for understanding the occurrence of prosocial organizational behaviors. Future research should focus on the causal mechanisms underlying this relationship as well as on the determinants of positive mood at work. Moreover, given the magnitude of the observed correlations, it is clear that other factors besides positive mood influence prosocial behavior, and these too are important avenues for future research.

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