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# CHAMELEONIC OR CONSISTENT? A MULTILEVEL INVESTIGATION OF EMOTIONAL LABOR VARIABILITY AND SELF-MONITORING

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**We introduce the concept of emotional labor variability, which captures individual differences in surface acting and deep acting fluctuations over time. In a multilevel study of 78 customer service employees who provided 522 matched daily surveys over a two-week period, employees who were more variable in their use of surface acting reported lower levels of job satisfaction and higher levels of work withdrawal. Self-monitoring was positively associated with both the level and variability of surface acting, and the effects of surface acting variability on job satisfaction and work withdrawal were weaker when self-monitoring was high. The results for deep acting were inconsistent. Overall, our results demonstrate how the concepts of surface acting variability and deep acting variability can extend theory and research on emotional labor as well as on self-monitoring.**

The regulation of affective display as an explicit or implicit requirement of work roles has been recognized for decades (Hochschild, 1979, 1983). Although there are a variety of *affective display rules* (see Ekman & Friesen, 1971) to which employees may be expected to adhere, including masking (e.g., a judge appears stoic) and differentiating (e.g., a bill collector expresses anger to a debtor) (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987; Sutton, 1991; Wharton & Erickson, 1993), integrative display rules, which encourage the expression of positive affect and the suppression of negative affect (Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989; see also Wharton & Erickson, 1993), have become increasingly widespread given the shift toward service-oriented economies (Mehring, 2006; Wharton, 1993).

The way in which employees conform to display rules via the management of their affective displays varies. Hochschild (1979, 1983) distinguished between two strategies of what she referred to as *emotional labor*: surface acting and deep acting. *Surface acting* entails individuals' modifying affective displays without attempting to alter underlying feelings. *Deep acting* entails modifying actual affective states to match desired displays (Grandey, 2000; Gross, 1998; Hochschild, 1979, 1983). Though the two strategies may ultimately achieve the same outcome—an affective display that conforms to dis-

play rules—the route through which this outcome is achieved differs.

Cross-sectional research examining differences in employees' average levels of emotional labor has shown that both surface acting and deep acting are generally harmful to employees, as those forms of emotional labor have been linked to outcomes such as emotional exhaustion and job dissatisfaction, though surface acting appears to be more harmful than deep acting (for meta-analyses, see Bono and Vey [2005] and Hülshager and Schewe [2011]). Recently, in line with calls to capture the dynamic nature of emotional labor (e.g., Beal, Trougakos, Weiss, & Green, 2006; Bono & Vey, 2005), research employing experience-sampling methodology has tracked employees' levels of emotional labor over time. This burgeoning literature has shown that when an employee engages in surface acting, she or he is more likely to experience negative outcomes such as negative affect, burnout, emotional exhaustion, job dissatisfaction, and withdrawal; however, when an employee engages in deep acting, she or he is more likely to experience beneficial outcomes such as positive affect, self-rated service performance, displays of enthusiasm, and greater work effort (Judge, Woolf, & Hurst, 2009; Scott & Barnes, 2011; Totterdell & Holman, 2003).

Together, the extant cross-sectional and longitudinal research studies demonstrate not only that individuals differ from one another in their average levels of emotional labor, but also that a given individual may differ in his or her specific level of emotional labor at any given point in time. However, this developing story has a missing piece. Specifically, individuals also may differ from one another in how variable they are over time in their engagement in emotional labor; some individuals may consistently engage in emotional labor (e.g., surface acting at a high level on a daily basis), while other individuals may engage in emotional labor more inconsistently (e.g., surface acting at a high level on some days and at a low level on others). Decades ago, Fiske (1961) noted that behavioral consistency is a characteristic on which individuals differ, and more recent work in the basic psychological literature has emphasized the importance of incorporating both average tendencies as well as variability into theory and research to paint a more complete picture of individual behavior (e.g., Eid & Diener, 1999; Fleeson, 2001, 2004; Kernis, Cornell, Sun, Berry, & Harlow, 1993; Mischel & Shoda, 1995, 1998).

With the above in mind, we developed this primary goal for our study: to extend theory and research on emotional labor by introducing the concept of *emotional labor variability*, which captures individual differences in variability versus stability in surface acting and deep acting over time. To achieve this goal, we first clarify the conceptual meaning of emotional labor variability. We then demonstrate the importance of emotional labor variability by examining its associations with two important work outcomes highlighted in extant theories of emotional labor: job satisfaction and work withdrawal (e.g., Grandey, 2000). Drawing from the psychological literature on habits (e.g., Ouellette & Wood, 1998) and related theories on automaticity and self-control (e.g., Bargh, 1994; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000), we hypothesize that employees who are more consistent in their daily use of surface acting and deep acting are more satisfied with their jobs and withdraw less than individuals who are more inconsistent in their use of these emotional labor strategies. In addition, in response to calls for research on the extent to which individual differences in personality influence emotional labor (Bono & Vey, 2005; Grandey, 2000), we integrate into our theorizing the personality trait *self-monitoring*, which captures the extent to which individuals monitor and control their expressive behaviors and self-presentations to cultivate desired public appearances (Gangestad & Snyder,

2000; Snyder, 1974). We hypothesize that self-monitoring plays a variety of roles in the above processes, relating not only to levels of variability and average tendencies in emotional labor, but also to the degree to which those levels of variability and average tendencies influence work outcomes.

Our multilevel investigation extends theory on emotional labor in a number of ways. First, the longitudinal study of emotional labor allows us to demonstrate how individual differences in variability versus consistency influence important work criteria, which has not been considered in previous theory or research. This is important, because, as we noted above, cross-sectional research examining individual differences in average levels of surface acting and deep acting has generally shown that these forms of emotional labor (especially surface acting) are taxing, influencing outcomes such as emotional exhaustion and job dissatisfaction (e.g., Bono & Vey, 2005). However, as we elaborate below, *consistent* use of emotional labor may not be so taxing. For two individuals with the same average level of emotional labor, the person who engages in emotional labor on a consistent basis should experience fewer adverse consequences than the person who engages in emotional labor more inconsistently. Second, examining how a personality trait (self-monitoring) influences dynamic patterns of surface acting and deep acting reveals the complex ways in which individual differences can affect the process of emotional labor. Together, these extensions increase the scope of theories of emotional labor (e.g., Grandey, 2000) and related theories of emotion regulation (e.g., Gross, 1998) and reveal how a deeper understanding of the process of emotional labor can be gained by considering parameters beyond the mean (Fleeson, 2001).

## DEFINING EMOTIONAL LABOR VARIABILITY

As noted above, the idea that there are individual differences in the variability versus constancy of behaviors, attitudes, and feelings is not new. For example, Murray noted that a person's range of variability is "an attribute of personality" (1938: 16), Fiske argued that variability represents a "dependable" individual difference (1961: 340), and Cattell (1973) stated that a tendency to fluctuate exists as a trait. Much of the literature on variability has focused on mood and emotion, indicating that people exhibit different patterns of affective fluctuation and that these patterns are relatively stable (e.g., Eid & Diener, 1999; Larsen, 1987; Wessman & Ricks, 1966).

However, Bem and Allen (1974) asserted that individuals may be variable or consistent in any domain. In line with this assertion, the study of variability has been extended to concepts including personality (Fleeson, 2001), interpersonal trust (Fleeson & Leicht, 2006), and self-esteem (e.g., Kernis et al., 1993; Kernis, Grannemann, & Mathis, 1991). As the rise in service-oriented economies has made the regulation of emotional display a critical aspect of work, we extend the study of variability to the domain of emotional labor to deepen understanding of this phenomenon.

Following Kernis and colleagues' (1991, 1993) definition of self-esteem stability, we define *emotional labor variability* as the magnitude of fluctuations in momentary levels of emotional labor (surface acting and deep acting). These fluctuations arise for various reasons (e.g., dispositional or situational, as will be discussed below) but are conceptually encompassed by the term "emotional labor variability." Some additional clarifications about the concept of emotional labor variability should be noted. First, emotional labor variability is a temporal phenomenon, meaning that, studying variability requires observing individuals over time (Larsen, 1987). Second, though discrete categories such as "variable" and "stable" may be used to describe individuals, emotional labor variability is conceptualized as a continuous dimension along which people may differ (cf. Kernis et al., 1993). Put differently, we expected to find that emotional labor variability varies across individuals. Third, we anticipated finding that surface acting variability and deep acting variability are relatively independent concepts, similarly to what has been shown in studies examining average tendencies in these behaviors (e.g., Grandey, 2003).

In addition, like other variability constructs in the literature (e.g., affect variability, self-esteem variability), emotional labor variability is likely a product of both personal and situational factors. Specifically, in accordance with the idea that variability represents a trait-like individual difference (e.g., Cattell, 1973; Fiske, 1961; Murray, 1938), individuals' levels of variability in surface acting and deep acting should be somewhat stable across situations and over time, with some individuals demonstrating variability and other individuals demonstrating stability, both on a regular basis. On this point, the literature on affect variability has shown that individuals possess different patterns of affective fluctuation, and these patterns are, in fact, relatively stable over time (e.g., Fleeson, 2001; Larsen, 1987; Penner, Shiffman, Paty, & Fritzsche, 1994). Indeed, the dispositional nature of affect variability

is directly acknowledged in Eysenck and Eysenck's (1985) personality theory, which stipulates that variability in the experience of emotions (especially negative emotions) is a hallmark of neuroticism (see also Eid & Diener, 1999). Along a similar vein, in the current investigation we examine the personality trait self-monitoring as a potential dispositional basis of emotional labor variability. We also examine the temporal stability of emotional labor variability to further determine if variability in surface acting and deep acting can be construed as individual differences (see Fleeson, 2001).

Although there is reason to suspect that emotional labor variability has a dispositional component, this does not rule out the relevance of the situation in which an individual is placed. For example, emotional labor variability should be higher in a customer service employee who encounters negative affect-eliciting events on one day (e.g., rude customers) but positive affect-eliciting events on the next day than it is in a customer service employee who only encounters positive affect-eliciting events on both days. Indeed, it may be the case that affect variability is an important driver of emotional labor variability, insofar as affective ups and downs prompt differential usage of emotional labor strategies. Consequently, an important component of our study is to demonstrate empirically that variability in surface acting and deep acting are not simply reflections of variability in affective states, but rather go over and above variability in affective states to explain unique variance in work outcomes.

Having described the concept of emotional labor variability, we now turn to our hypotheses concerning the effects of variability in surface acting and deep acting as well as the role of self-monitoring.

## HYPOTHESES

### Effects of Emotional Labor Variability

As discussed above, a central theme of our investigation is that individuals differ from one another in the extent to which they are variable or consistent in their use of surface acting and deep acting. An important question that naturally follows is, Which is better for individuals: consistency or variability? To address this question, we integrate theory on habits with the concept of emotional variability, arguing that it is ultimately more beneficial for individuals to be consistent in their use of both surface acting and deep acting.

According to Ouellette and Wood (1998), a habit refers to an individual's typical way of be-

having. With repeated action in similar contexts, behavior can be executed with minimal focal attention and control (e.g., Wood, Quinn, & Kashy, 2002), hence becoming automatic (Bargh, 1994). As Wood and colleagues noted, "Repetition of a behavior in a given setting promotes automaticity because the cognitive processing that initiates and controls the response comes to be performed quickly, in parallel with other activities, and with the allocation of minimal focal attention" (2002: 1282; see also Posner & Snyder, 1975). Indeed, over a century ago, James (1890) stressed the potential utility of habits for promoting such efficiencies.

The automaticity and efficiency with which habitual behaviors can be executed provide explanations for why individuals sometimes continue to engage in harmful behaviors (e.g., smoking). Such "bad habits" may be difficult to break not only because they produce short-term rewards, but also because their ease of execution is preferred to the greater energy expenditure that would be required to engage in alternative actions (Ouellette & Wood, 1998). Bad habits also may persist because of cognitive consistency biases (Festinger, 1957). To maintain uniformity between their beliefs and behaviors, individuals may infer that an act performed repeatedly was purposeful, which develops future intentions to engage in the act.

In contrast to habits, behaviors that are more novel or infrequently performed require greater self-control, deliberation, and attention, because individuals must continuously attend to new information and develop appropriate responses (Ouellette & Wood, 1998; Wood et al., 2002). According to Muraven and Baumeister (2000), acts of self-control operate much as does a muscle or strength, depleting inner resources and inducing subsequent self-control deficits until those resources have been replenished. Such deficits are not only cognitively distressing to individuals, but also result in a loss of endurance and task focus, harming performance (e.g., Beal, Weiss, Barros, & MacDermid, 2005; Hagger, Wood, Stiff, & Chatzisarantis, 2010; Muraven, Tice, & Baumeister, 1998). Accordingly, performance of controlled, nonhabitual behavior is more taxing to individuals than performance of automated, habitual behavior (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000).

Importantly, emotional labor is an action that depletes resources and induces subsequent self-control deficits (Muraven et al., 1998; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000), though it has been suggested that surface acting depletes resources to a greater extent than deep acting (e.g., Beal et al., 2005, 2006;

Goldberg & Grandey, 2007). However, it has been acknowledged in the literature that emotional labor can become routine and automatic (e.g., Ashforth & Fried, 1988; Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Pugh, 2002). For example, according to Ashforth and Humphrey, "One may develop habitual routines for surface acting and deep acting such that emotional labor becomes relatively effortless" (1993: 94). Specifically, through repetitive actions, emotional labor may evolve into *scripted* behavior (see Abelson, 1976; Schank & Abelson, 1977), so that entire sequences of surface acting and deep acting can be executed with minimal effort and attention and in parallel with other actions, hence reducing interference with work activities (Beal et al., 2005). In contrast, emotional labor that is performed on a nonroutine basis should require more conscious deliberation, taxing individuals and inducing self-control deficits (see Muraven & Baumeister, 2000; Ouellette & Wood, 1998).

It follows that, given two individuals with the same level of surface acting or deep acting, the individual for whom acting is more variable and erratic should consume more resources during an acting episode compared to the individual for whom acting is more routine and habitual. Resource consumption is associated with consequences such as lower levels of stamina, motivation, and task focus (Beal et al., 2005; Muraven et al., 1998; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). Withdrawing from work may serve as a temporary break or respite for employees suffering from such consequences, providing time to recover and replenish resources (e.g., Kuhnel, Sonnentag, & Westman, 2009; Sonnentag, 2003). Thus, employees who perform emotional labor on a nonroutine basis should withdraw from work more often than employees who perform emotional labor more habitually.

There also are reasons to suspect that attitudes will be impacted as well as behaviors such as work withdrawal. Research has shown that the performance of nonhabitual behavior is associated with feelings of lowered control, stress, and helplessness (Wood et al., 2002), which are dissatisfying to experience (e.g., Karasek, 1979; Sonnentag & Frese, 2003; Van der Doef & Maes, 1999). This suggests that employees who perform emotional labor on a nonroutine basis should also experience dissatisfaction with their jobs more often than employees who perform emotional labor more habitually.

Overall, given the above theory and research, we expect that engaging in both surface acting and deep acting inconsistently should be more taxing to employees than engaging in these forms of emotional labor consistently. However, given sugges-

tions in the literature that deep acting may consume fewer resources than surface acting (e.g., Goldberg & Grandey, 2007), we anticipate that the effects of surface acting variability may be more pronounced than the effects of deep acting variability, simply because, from a resource depletion standpoint, there may be more to gain from habitually engaging in surface acting than habitually engaging in deep acting.

*Hypothesis 1. Surface acting variability is negatively associated with job satisfaction (H1a) and positively associated with work withdrawal (H1b).*

*Hypothesis 2. Deep acting variability is negatively associated with job satisfaction (H2a) and positively associated with work withdrawal (H2b).*

### The Role of Self-Monitoring

As noted at the outset, an important aspect of our investigation is to consider the ways in which *self-monitoring*—an individual difference that has been directly implicated in theories of emotional labor (Grandey, 2000)—influences surface acting and deep acting. Individuals rated high in self-monitoring possess an acute awareness of situational cues stipulating which behaviors are appropriate versus inappropriate (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000; Snyder, 1974). As a result, they act as social chameleons, tailoring their self-presentations to meet the needs of a given situation. In contrast, individuals rated low in self-monitoring prefer to “be themselves,” showing less concern for the appropriateness of their behaviors and expressions. Accordingly, there is a close conceptual connection between emotional labor and self-monitoring (e.g., Grandey, 2000). We suggest that the extent to which an employee is high versus low in self-monitoring should impact emotional labor processes in a number of ways, including: (1) affecting both variability in, and average levels of, emotional labor, and (2) moderating the effects of emotional labor, both in terms of variability and average levels, on work outcomes. Although the primary focus of our study is on emotional labor variability, we consider the direct and moderating effects of self-monitoring on both average levels of emotional labor and emotional labor variability not only because there are theoretical reasons to expect self-monitoring to impact average levels, but also because there are few empirical investigations on the subject. In doing so, we are able to take a more comprehensive look at the role of self-monitoring in the emotional labor process.

**Main effects.** First, self-monitoring should be directly associated with how variable or consistent individuals are in their use of emotional labor over time: those that engage in high levels of self-monitoring—“high self-monitors”—should tend to display greater variability in their use of surface acting and deep acting than “low self-monitors.” By definition, high self-monitors are “chameleon-like” (Snyder, 1974: 527), shaping their behavior according to the demands of the situation. As Fleeson (2001) noted, variability in behavior is a response, in part, to relevant situational cues, which also vary in everyday behavior. Importantly, high self-monitors are more sensitive and responsive to situational cues (Snyder, 1974), suggesting a mechanism by which they are more variable in their behaviors than low self-monitors. In the context of emotional labor, this suggests that an employee high in self-monitoring will be more sensitive to cues calling for the use of emotional labor (e.g., a rude customer who elicits negative affect in the employee) than an employee low in self-monitoring.

In contrast, low self-monitors strive to be consistent across situations, and thus their behavior is more invariant (Snyder, 1974). As Mehra, Kilduff, and Brass noted, low self-monitors “insist on being themselves, no matter how incongruent their self-expression may be with the requirements of the social situation” (2001: 124). In line with these notions, a study by Harrison and Price (2003) showed that students low in self-monitoring displayed more consistency in absenteeism and lateness, whereas students high in self-monitoring showed considerable variability in those behaviors. Overall then, we expect that employees high in self-monitoring will fluctuate more in their daily use of surface acting and deep acting, while individuals low in self-monitoring will exhibit greater stability.

In addition, on a day-to-day basis, high self-monitors should tend to display higher average levels of both surface acting and deep acting than low self-monitors. In his seminal work on self-monitoring, Snyder (1974) argued that high self-monitors not only are more adept at expressing affective states not necessarily congruent with actual affective experience, but also are better able to intensify underlying affective states, suggesting linkages with surface acting and deep acting, respectively. Studies using student samples have provided some support for these linkages. Brotheridge and Lee (2002, 2003) and Diefendorff, Croyle, and Gosserand (2005) found that self-monitoring was positively associated with surface acting but unrelated to deep acting, and Bono and Vey (2007) reported that self-monitoring was positively associated with deep

acting but unrelated to surface acting. In their meta-analysis, Bono and Vey (2005) reported that self-monitoring correlated .26 and .10 with surface acting and deep acting, respectively. In all, there are both conceptual and empirical reasons to suspect that daily levels of both surface acting and deep acting will be greater for individuals high in self-monitoring than they will be for individuals low in self-monitoring.

*Hypothesis 3. Self-monitoring is positively associated with surface acting variability (H3a) and average levels of surface acting (H3b).*

*Hypothesis 4. Self-monitoring is positively associated with deep acting variability (H4a) and average levels of deep acting (H4b).*

**Moderating effects.** In addition to expecting the main effects described above, we have theoretical reasons to expect that self-monitoring will moderate the associations between surface acting, deep acting, and both job satisfaction and work withdrawal.

First, self-monitoring should influence the strength of the relationships between emotional labor variability and both job satisfaction and work withdrawal. Though we argued previously that variability in both surface acting and deep acting should be more taxing to individuals than consistency, individuals high in self-monitoring should find such variability less taxing, because, as social chameleons, they are accustomed to changing their attitudes, feelings, and behaviors to match situational demands (Snyder, 1974). In essence, responding to social cues and varying behaviors are routine and habitual for high self-monitors; thus, emotional labor variability should consume resources to a lesser extent for such individuals. In contrast, consistent behavior and “being oneself” is normative for low self-monitors. Indeed, Snyder and Cantor noted, “low self-monitoring individuals profess relatively great interest in behaving in ways that reflect, consistently and accurately, attributes of their self-conceptions” (1980: 223). Thus, low self-monitors should find emotional labor variability to be especially taxing, as the nonroutine behavior not only consumes more resources during execution, but it also goes against a self-concept of consistency. It thus follows that high self-monitors should be less affected by variability in both surface acting and deep acting than low self-monitors.

Second, self-monitoring should influence the strength of the daily relationships between emotional labor levels and both job satisfaction and work withdrawal. Grandey (2000) noted that be-

cause low self-monitors prefer to remain “true” to themselves, they should experience unease when attempting to change their feelings and expressions. In contrast, high self-monitors, who are comfortable with altering their behaviors to be congruent with situational demands, should be able to better handle instances in which their expressive behaviors are dissonant with their self-conceptions (Snyder & Cantor, 1980). Bono and Vey made a similar point when they argued that “because self-monitors are accustomed to regulating their emotions, it is likely that they will experience less stress when they face explicit organizational requirements to do so” (2007: 182). Moreover, it has been suggested that high self-monitors are better suited to cope with the emotional dissonance (Abraham, 1998) that occurs during bouts of surface acting as expressed emotions clash with inner feelings (Grandey, 2003; Hochschild, 1983), because they are accustomed to discrepancies between their public and private selves (Snyder, 1987).

High self-monitors should be more comfortable engaging in emotional labor and also may use it more effectively than low self-monitors. According to Côté’s (2005) social interaction model of emotion regulation, individuals engaging in emotional labor experience fewer negative outcomes when their actions are received favorably by others. Research has shown that individuals high in self-monitoring are skilled at social interactions (Furnham & Capon, 1983), as they use humor (Turner, 1980), pace conversations appropriately (Dabbs, Evans, Hopper, & Purvis, 1980), are active in conversations (Ickes & Barnes, 1977), and overall interact in an accommodative and affiliative fashion (Riggio, Friedman, & DiMatteo, 1981)—all of which suggests that customers will tend to react favorably to high self-monitors during emotional labor attempts.

Thus, if individuals high in self-monitoring not only are more comfortable engaging in emotional labor, but also are more likely to elicit favorable reactions from others, then it follows that the extent to which emotional labor influences work outcomes on a daily basis should differ for high and low self-monitors. Previous research examining emotional labor on a daily basis has revealed that surface acting is negatively associated with job satisfaction and positively associated with work withdrawal, whereas deep acting is not associated with these outcomes (Judge et al., 2009; Scott & Barnes, 2011). Thus, we constrain our predictions to surface acting, proposing that high self-monitors, relative to low self-monitors, should experience less job dissatisfaction and less work withdrawal on

days when the extent of their surface acting is above their normal level. However, given that moderation could occur in the absence of a main effect, we examine the moderating role of self-monitoring on the relationship between daily deep acting and both job satisfaction and work withdrawal on an exploratory basis. Overall then, we hypothesized the following moderating effects for self-monitoring:

*Hypothesis 5. Self-monitoring moderates the relationship between surface acting variability and job satisfaction and (H5a) deep acting variability and job satisfaction (H5b) in such a way that the relationships are weaker for high self-monitors than low self-monitors.*

*Hypothesis 6. Self-monitoring moderates the relationship between surface acting variability and work withdrawal and (H6a) deep acting variability and work withdrawal (H6b) in such a way that the relationships are weaker for high self-monitors than low self-monitors.*

*Hypothesis 7. Self-monitoring moderates the relationships between daily surface acting and job satisfaction and (H7a) daily surface acting and work withdrawal (H7b) in such a way that the relationships are weaker for high self-monitors than low self-monitors.*

## METHODS

### Sample

All participants in the study worked for a bus transit company in the northwestern United States.<sup>1</sup> The sample included 78 employees (44 males and 34 females), and the average age of participants was 52 years (s.d. = 7.91). In terms of ethnicity, participants self-identified as white/Caucasian (48 participants), African American (18 participants), Hispanic/Latino (3 participants), Asian/Pacific Islander (2 participants), American Indian or Alaskan Native (2 participants), and "other" (2 participants), and 3 participants did not report ethnicity.

<sup>1</sup> This company also served as the data collection site for the study by Scott and Barnes (2011). The data for the current study were collected by the research team in a subsequent investigation that took place approximately 17 months after the data for Scott and Barnes (2011) were collected. Of the 78 participants in the current study, 19 participated in the Scott and Barnes (2011) study. In the current study, there were no significant differences between the 19 overlapping participants and the remaining 59 new participants on the focal variables of interest.

The participants in the study all worked as bus captains. Bus captains are required to interact with customers who are boarding the bus and paying fare, and on some occasions the bus captains collect transfer tickets. Moreover, passengers often ask bus captains for information regarding bus routes, times, and transfers. Because of the frequent interactions that bus captains have with customers (passengers), the sample is appropriate for examining the implications of emotional labor for employee outcomes. Moreover, the focus on a single occupation should reduce concerns over job type as a potential confound, given that some jobs may inherently require greater fluctuation in emotional labor than others.

### Procedure

A manager of the transit company recruited employees to participate in the study, posting materials advertising it in common areas frequented by the employees and also distributing invitations to participate in the study directly to employees' mailboxes at the workplace. He emphasized that participation was completely voluntary. Those who participated were entered in a random drawing for 50 \$100 awards and a single iPod Touch.

To participate in the study, employees first completed a web-based survey assessing demographic variables and self-monitoring. A total of 81 completed the initial survey. The next stage of the study entailed completing two surveys each working day during a two-week period. This time frame is consistent with Reis and Wheeler's (1991) recommendation that two weeks of experience sampling provides researchers with a generalizable representation of employees' lives, and it is consistent with other interval-contingent diary studies in the management literature (e.g., Ilies, Wilson, & Wagner, 2009; Judge & Ilies, 2004). Each day, prior to beginning their shift, participants completed a web-based survey assessing momentary, baseline feelings of positive and negative affect. This survey was completed on a computer located at the transit company. Following the shift, each participant completed a different web-based survey on the same computer. The end-of-shift survey contained the measures of surface acting, deep acting, job satisfaction, and work withdrawal. Although our theory and hypotheses involving emotional labor variability largely revolve around relationships at the individual level, our longitudinal, experience-sampling approach was necessary to capture "true" variability in surface acting and deep acting, avoiding

judgmental biases that might influence ratings of variability obtained from a single instance of self-report (see Eid & Diener, 1999).

During the course of the diary study, the manager at the transit company placed daily reminders in the participants' work mailboxes. Three of the participants failed to take part in the daily survey portion of the study. From the remaining 78 participants, we obtained a total of 552 matched pre- and postshift surveys out of a possible 780, for a response rate of 70.8 percent.

## Measures

**Surface acting and deep acting.** We measured participants' daily engagement in surface acting and deep acting using the scales developed by Brotheridge and Lee (2002) and Grandey (2003). Following each shift, participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they had engaged in the behaviors listed (1 = "very slightly or not at all," to 5 = "very much"). Example statements from the five-item surface acting scale are "Today, I put on a "mask" in order to display the emotions I need to display for my job," and "Today, I faked a good mood." Example statements from the three-item deep acting scale are "Today, I worked hard to feel the emotions that I needed to show to others" and "Today, I tried to actually experience the emotions I must show." Coefficient alphas for these scales, averaged across the days of data collection, were .94 for surface acting and .93 for deep acting. Following previous research on variability constructs (e.g., Eid & Diener, 1999; Fleeson, 2001; Kernis et al., 1993), we operationalized emotional labor variability as each employee's standard deviations in both surface acting and deep acting scores over the two-week period.

**Job satisfaction.** We measured job satisfaction using the five-item version of the Brayfield and Rothe (1951) scale, which has been successfully adapted to daily contexts in previous experience-sampling investigations (e.g., Judge et al., 2006). At the conclusion of each shift, participants were asked to indicate they extent to which they agreed with each statement (1 = "strongly disagree," to 5 = "strongly agree"). Example statements are "Today, I have felt fairly well satisfied with my job" and "Today, I have found real enjoyment in my work." Coefficient alpha for this scale, averaged across the days of data collection, was .87.

**Work withdrawal.** Perceptions of work withdrawal were measured using four items from Lehman and Simpson's (1992) psychological withdrawal scale. Following each shift, participants indicated the extent to which they engaged in each

action (1 = "almost never," to 5 = "very often"). The items were as follows: "Thought about being absent," "Put less effort into the job than you should have," "Thought about leaving current job," and "Daydreamed." Coefficient alpha for this scale, averaged across the days of data collection, was .62.

**Self-monitoring.** Self-monitoring was measured with the eight positively worded items in the scale developed by Snyder and Gangestad (1986; see Allen, Weeks, & Moffitt (2005). Allen et al. (2005) reported a coefficient alpha of .75 for the shorter scale, which is similar to the coefficient alpha of .70 reported by Snyder and Gangestad (1986) for the longer, 18-item scale.<sup>2</sup> Example items are "I may deceive people by being friendly when I really dislike them" and "In different situations and with different people, I often act like very different persons" (1 = "strongly disagree," to 5, "strongly agree";  $\alpha = .84$ ).

**State positive and state negative affect.** To control for the possibility that any effects of emotional labor variability are due to variability in affective states (short-term emotional experiences), we also assessed state positive and state negative affect each day with the short form of Watson, Clark, and Tellegen's (1988) Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS); Mackinnon, Jorm, Christensen, Korten, Jacomb, and Rodgers (1999) provided evidence for construct validity of this scale. The short form of the PANAS consists of ten adjectives; the five adjectives comprising the positive affect scale are "inspired," "alert," "excited," "enthusiastic," and "determined," and the five adjectives comprising the negative affect scale are "afraid," "upset," "nervous," "scared," and "distressed." To capture baseline levels of affect, prior to each day's shift, participants indicated the extent to which they were experiencing each state (1 = "very slightly or not at all," to 5 = "very much"). Coefficient alphas for these scales, averaged across the days of data collection, were .91 for positive affect and .81 for negative affect. As with surface acting and deep acting, we computed variability scores by obtaining the standard deviation in employee's state positive and state negative affect across the two-week period (Eid & Diener, 1999).

## Analyses

To account for the multilevel nature of our data (days were nested within employees), we utilized

<sup>2</sup> In unpublished data obtained by the first author among 198 undergraduate students, the correlation between the shorter, 8-item self-monitoring scale and the full, 18-item scale was .81 ( $p < .05$ ).

hierarchical linear modeling (see Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002) to test our hypotheses. At level 1 were the repeated, daily observations of employees' surface acting, deep acting, job satisfaction, work withdrawal, positive affect, and negative affect. At level 2 were the single assessments of self-monitoring, variability in surface acting and deep acting (represented by each individual's standard deviation across the two-week period), and control variables (i.e., gender, age, and ethnicity). Thus, the level 1 variables may vary within individuals (e.g., an employee engages in surface acting more on some days and less on others), and the level 2 variables may vary between individuals (e.g., an employee exhibits greater variability in surface acting during the two-week period than another employee).

To test our hypotheses involving the effects of emotional labor variability on job satisfaction and work withdrawal (Hypotheses 1 and 2), we added the standard deviations of each employee's surface acting and deep acting over the two-week period as level 2 predictors of the intercept for each outcome. For the hypotheses involving the relationships between self-monitoring and variability in both surface acting (Hypothesis 3a) and deep acting (Hypothesis 4a), we computed the partial correlations between self-monitoring and each emotional labor variable, because both variables were at level 2. To test our hypotheses involving the relationships between self-monitoring and average levels of surface acting (Hypothesis 3b) and deep acting (Hypothesis 4b), self-monitoring was entered as a level 2 predictor of the intercept of each emotional labor variable. To test our interaction hypotheses involving the moderating role of self-monitoring on the relationships between emotional labor variability and both job satisfaction and work withdrawal (Hypotheses 5 and 6), we added product terms as level 2 predictors of the intercept for each outcome, with those product terms computed by first mean-centering each variable (i.e., self-monitoring, surface acting variability, deep acting variability) and then multiplying the centered variables (see Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). Finally, to test our cross-level interaction hypothesis involving the moderating role of self-monitoring on the daily relationships between surface acting and both job satisfaction and work withdrawal (Hypothesis 7), we added self-monitoring as a level 2 predictor of the intercept and slope of each level 1 relationship of interest (e.g., the daily relationship between surface acting and job satisfaction). As noted above, we also examined the moderating role of self-monitoring on the daily relationships between deep acting and both job satisfaction and work withdrawal.

Following the recommendations of Hoffmann, Griffin, and Gavin (2000), we centered all level 1 predictors at individuals' means, but the level 2 predictors (with the exceptions of gender and ethnicity, which were dichotomized) were grand-mean-centered. We also utilized several control variables. In addition to controlling for demographic characteristics (gender, age, and ethnicity), when examining the effects of surface acting variability and deep acting variability on job satisfaction and work withdrawal, we controlled for surface acting and deep acting at level 1 to test whether variability explained unique variance in these outcomes over and above daily levels. We also controlled for both mean and variability in state positive and state negative affect to reduce concerns over affect as a potential confound. Finally, because the bus drivers worked different shifts, we controlled for the time of day that the drivers began work by including the time that the prior-to-shift survey was completed as a level 1 predictor.

## RESULTS

### Emotional Labor Variability

Before discussing the results testing our hypotheses, we provide some initial evidence for the construct of emotional labor variability. First, we examined the amount of variance in surface acting and deep acting accounted for by person (between-individual variance) and day (within-individual variance). That analysis showed that person (day) accounted for 51.4 (48.6%) of the variance in surface acting and 56.1 (43.9%) of the variance in deep acting, which indicates that individuals did vary from day to day in their use of these emotional labor strategies. Next, following the analyses of Fleeson (2001), we (1) compared the average of each person's standard deviation in surface acting and deep acting to the overall standard deviation in the means of surface acting and deep acting over the two-week period to determine whether individuals differed from themselves over time as much as they differed from one another at the average level, and (2) computed stability coefficients for surface acting variability and deep acting variability by randomly splitting each person's two weeks of data into halves, computing each person's standard deviation for each half and correlating those standard deviations (we repeated this process four more times and then averaged the five correlations), to shed light on the extent to which emotional labor variability can be construed as a relatively stable individual difference. As points of comparison, we

also ran the above analyses for state positive and state negative affect, given that the extant literature has already provided evidence for the construct of affect variability (e.g., Fleeson, 2001).

Beginning with the first analysis, as shown in Table 1, the average of each person's standard deviation was .36 for surface acting and .58 for deep acting, and the overall standard deviation was .52 for surface acting and .80 for deep acting. For affective states, the average of each person's standard deviation was .51 for state positive affect and .12 for state negative affect, and the overall standard deviation was .82 for state positive affect and .35 for state negative affect. Although these findings suggest that people differ from one another in their average level of emotional labor more than they differ from themselves over time, they also suggest that the variability in a given person's emotional labor is just as high (if not slightly higher) than the variability in that person's affective states, which suggests that, like positive and negative affect, emotional labor can be viably studied in terms of variability.

In the second analysis, the average split-half correlation was .54 for surface acting and .45 for deep acting. For affective states, the average split-half correlation was .34 for state positive affect and .51 for state negative affect. These findings suggest that individuals exhibit some stability in their emotional labor variability: an individual who is variable (consistent) throughout one time period will tend to be variable (consistent) throughout another time period, and this level of stability is similar to the stability of affect variability. Thus, it appears that, like positive and negative affect (as well as other constructs such as personality (cf. Fleeson, 2001) and interpersonal trust (cf. Fleeson & Leight,

2006), variability in surface acting and deep acting can be construed as individual differences.

### Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Also shown in Table 1 are the means, standard deviations, and correlations among the focal variables, with variables assessed daily aggregated over the days of data collection. The correlation of surface acting variability ( $r = -.53, p < .05$ ) with job satisfaction and with work withdrawal ( $r = .40, p < .05$ ); interestingly, these correlations were comparable in magnitude to the correlations between the mean level of surface acting and those outcomes. In contrast, both mean and variability in deep acting were not significantly correlated with either job satisfaction or work withdrawal. Also of note are the correlations of surface acting variability with self-monitoring ( $r = .32, p < .05$ ) and state negative affect variability ( $r = .49, p < .05$ ), which suggests that surface acting variability is associated with both personal and situational factors (cf. Fleeson, 2001). In addition, surface acting variability and deep acting variability were not significantly correlated ( $r = .18$ ), which suggests that they are relatively independent concepts. Of final note are the correlations between mean and variability for each type of emotional labor. For surface acting, the correlation was .77 ( $p < .05$ ); for deep acting, the correlation was .51 ( $p < .05$ ). Although a positive correlation between mean and variability is to be expected given that an individual has to engage in emotional labor in order to create the potential for variability, the relatively high overlap (especially in the case of surface acting) may make it difficult to detect significant incremental effects of variability over and above average levels.

TABLE 1  
Descriptive Statistics of and Correlations among Focal Variables<sup>a</sup>

Variable	Mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Self-monitoring	2.14	0.78										
2. Surface acting (mean)	1.42	0.52	.17									
3. Deep acting (mean)	2.01	0.80	.04	.28*								
4. Surface acting (variability)	0.36	0.34	.32*	.77*	.26*							
5. Deep acting (variability)	0.58	0.35	.05	.10	.51*	.18						
6. Job satisfaction	3.75	0.57	-.11	-.50*	.02	-.53*	.06					
7. Work withdrawal	1.77	0.54	.10	.30*	.05	.40*	-.04	-.62*				
8. State positive affect (mean)	3.00	0.82	-.24*	-.32*	-.04	-.48*	.01	.52*	-.35*			
9. State negative affect (mean)	1.12	0.35	.09	.22	-.05	.33*	-.01	-.31*	.29*	-.16		
10. State positive affect (variability)	0.51	0.22	.10	-.03	-.06	.10	.06	-.14	.16	-.05	.24*	
11. State negative affect (variability)	0.12	0.18	.33*	.36*	-.03	.49*	-.04	-.38*	.43*	-.21	.73*	.24*

<sup>a</sup> Variables 2 through 11 were assessed daily and then aggregated to the individual level ( $n = 78$ ).

\*  $p < .05$

**Test of Hypotheses**

**Main effects.** Hypothesis 1 predicts that surface acting variability is negatively associated with job satisfaction (1a) and positively associated with work withdrawal (1b). Hypothesis 2 predicts that deep acting variability is negatively associated with job satisfaction (2a) and positively associated with work withdrawal (2b). The results of HLM regressions testing these hypotheses are shown in Tables 2 (for job satisfaction) and 3 (for work withdrawal). Table 2 reveals that surface acting variability was negatively associated with average daily levels of job satisfaction ( $b_{06} = -.66, p < .05$ ), and Table 3 reveals that surface acting variability was positively associated with average daily levels of work withdrawal ( $b_{06} = .45, p < .05$ ), fully supporting Hypothesis 1. In contrast, deep acting variability was not significantly associated with either job satisfaction ( $b_{07} = .14$ ) or work withdrawal ( $b_{07} = -.09$ ), failing to support Hypothesis 2. Overall, employees who were more stable in their daily use of surface acting experienced greater satisfaction with their jobs and were less likely to withdrawal from their work, and these results were observed controlling not only for employees' daily levels of emotional labor, but also their mean and variability in affective states.

Hypothesis 3 predicts that self-monitoring is positively associated with surface acting variability (H3a) and average levels of surface acting (H3b). Hypothesis 4 predicts that self-monitoring is positively associated with deep acting variability (H4a) and average levels of deep acting (H4b). First, partial correlations (controlling for gender, age, and ethnicity) showed that self-monitoring was positively associated with the standard deviation of surface acting ( $pr = .37, p < .05$ ) but not the standard deviation of deep acting ( $pr = .01$ ).<sup>3</sup> Second, an intercepts-as-outcomes model in HLM (also controlling for gender, age, and ethnicity) revealed that self-monitoring was positively associated with average levels of surface acting over the two-week period ( $b_{04} = .12, p < .05$ ) but not average levels of deep acting ( $b_{04} = -.01$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was fully supported, but Hypothesis 4 was not supported.

**Interactions.** Hypotheses 5 and 6 concern the moderating effect of self-monitoring on the relationships between surface acting variability, deep acting variability, and both job satisfaction and work withdrawal, whereas Hypothesis 7 concerns

<sup>3</sup> The zero-correlations were similar in terms of strength and significance.

**TABLE 2**  
Effects of Emotional Labor Variability on Daily Levels of Job Satisfaction<sup>a</sup>

Predictor	b	s.e.	t
Intercept ( $b_{00}$ )	3.75	.11	34.31*
<i>Level 2 predictors</i>			
Gender ( $b_{01}$ )	-.10	.11	-0.89
Age ( $b_{02}$ )	-.01	.01	-1.19
Ethnicity ( $b_{03}$ )	-.06	.11	0.59
Positive affect variability (start of work) ( $b_{04}$ )	-.08	.25	-0.31
Negative affect variability (start of work) ( $b_{05}$ )	-.42	.44	-0.96
Surface acting variability ( $b_{06}$ )	-.66	.17	-3.85*
Deep acting variability ( $b_{07}$ )	.14	.14	1.03
<i>Level 1 predictors</i>			
Time of day ( $b_{10}$ )	-.01	.01	-0.51
State positive affect (start of work) ( $b_{20}$ )	.06	.05	1.37
State negative affect (start of work) ( $b_{30}$ )	.05	.16	0.32
Surface acting ( $b_{40}$ )	-.51	.06	-8.71*
Deep acting ( $b_{50}$ )	.12	.03	4.21*

<sup>a</sup> All level 1 predictors were centered at individuals' means. All level 2 predictors were grand-mean-centered, with the exceptions of gender and ethnicity. Gender was coded 0 = "male," 1 = "female." Ethnicity was coded 0 = "Caucasian," 1 = "other." Values (b's) are unstandardized regression coefficients obtained in HLM (level 1  $n = 552$ ; level 2  $n = 78$ ).

\*  $p < .05$

**TABLE 3**  
Effects of Emotional Labor Variability on Daily Levels of Work Withdrawal<sup>a</sup>

Predictor	b	s.e.	t
Intercept ( $b_{00}$ )	1.78	.12	15.29*
<i>Level 2 predictors</i>			
Gender ( $b_{01}$ )	.01	.13	0.07
Age ( $b_{02}$ )	-.00	.01	-0.16
Ethnicity ( $b_{03}$ )	-.00	.11	0.04
Positive affect variability (start of work) ( $b_{04}$ )	.15	.25	0.61
Negative affect variability (start of work) ( $b_{05}$ )	.83	.44	1.91
Surface acting variability ( $b_{06}$ )	.45	.21	2.19*
Deep acting variability ( $b_{07}$ )	-.09	.14	-0.64
<i>Level 1 predictors</i>			
Time of day ( $b_{10}$ )	-.00	.01	-0.09
State positive affect (start of work) ( $b_{20}$ )	-.03	.03	-1.11
State negative affect (start of work) ( $b_{30}$ )	.13	.08	1.61
Surface acting ( $b_{40}$ )	.29	.04	7.02*
Deep acting ( $b_{50}$ )	-.03	.02	-1.38

<sup>a</sup> All level 1 predictors were centered at individuals' means. All level 2 predictors were grand-mean-centered, with the exceptions of gender and ethnicity. Gender was coded 0 = "male," 1 = "female." Ethnicity was coded 0 = "Caucasian," 1 = "other." Values (b's) are unstandardized regression coefficients obtained in HLM (level 1  $n = 552$ ; level 2  $n = 78$ ).

\*  $p < .05$

the cross-level moderating effect of self-monitoring on the daily relationships between surface acting and both job satisfaction and work withdrawal. Results of the HLM regressions testing these hypotheses are shown in Table 4 (for job satisfaction) and Table 5 (for work withdrawal).

Beginning with Hypothesis 5, as shown in the top panel of Table 4, the self-monitoring by surface acting variability product term was significantly associated with job satisfaction ( $b_{09} = .40, p < .05$ ). A plot of this interaction, displayed in Figure 1, reveals that the negative relationship between surface acting variability and job satisfaction was attenuated for high self-monitors. Put differently, high self-monitors were less affected by day-to-day fluctuations in surface acting than low self-monitors. In contrast, the self-monitoring by deep acting variability product term was not significantly asso-

ciated with job satisfaction ( $b_{10} = -.02$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 5 was partially supported.

For Hypothesis 6, as shown in the top panel of Table 5, the self-monitoring by surface acting variability product term ( $b_{09} = -.33, p < .05$ ) and the self-monitoring by deep acting variability product term ( $b_{10} = .43, p < .05$ ) were significantly associated with work withdrawal. Figure 2 shows that the positive relationship between surface acting variability and work withdrawal was weaker for high self-monitors than low self-monitors. Similarly to the results for job satisfaction, high self-monitors were less affected by day-to-day fluctuations in surface acting than low self-monitors. Contrary to our prediction, Figure 3 reveals a crossed interaction between deep acting variability and work withdrawal: the relationship was positive for high self-monitors and negative for low self-monitors. Thus, Hypothesis 6 was partially supported.

**TABLE 4**  
Moderating Effects of Self-Monitoring  
on the Relationships between Emotional  
Labor and Job Satisfaction<sup>a</sup>

Predictor	<i>b</i>	s.e.	<i>t</i>
Intercept ( $b_{00}$ )	3.70	.12	30.52*
<i>Level 2 predictors</i>			
Gender ( $b_{01}$ )	-.11	.13	-0.85
Age ( $b_{02}$ )	-.01	.01	-1.04
Ethnicity ( $b_{03}$ )	-.09	.11	0.83
Positive affect variability (start of work) ( $b_{04}$ )	-.08	.24	-0.35
Negative affect variability (start of work) ( $b_{05}$ )	-.60	.36	-1.66
Surface acting variability ( $b_{06}$ )	-.70	.18	-3.82*
Deep acting variability ( $b_{07}$ )	.14	.14	1.03
Self-monitoring ( $b_{08}$ )	-.04	-.07	-0.55
Self-monitoring $\times$ surface acting variability ( $b_{09}$ )	.40	.16	2.55*
Self-monitoring $\times$ deep acting variability ( $b_{10}$ )	-.02	.16	-0.12
<i>Level 1 predictors</i>			
Time of day ( $b_{10}$ )	-.01	.01	-1.22
State positive affect (start of work) ( $b_{20}$ )	.06	.04	1.36
State negative affect (start of work) ( $b_{30}$ )	.04	.17	0.23
Surface acting ( $b_{40}$ )	-.46	.06	-7.24*
Deep acting ( $b_{50}$ )	.12	.03	4.49*
<i>Cross-level predictors</i>			
Self-monitoring $\times$ surface acting ( $b_{41}$ )	-.10	.06	-1.73
Self-monitoring $\times$ deep acting ( $b_{51}$ )	.14	.04	3.68*

<sup>a</sup> All level 1 predictors were centered at individuals' means. All level 2 predictors were grand-mean-centered, with the exceptions of gender and ethnicity. Gender was coded 0 = "male," 1 = "female." Ethnicity was coded 0 = "Caucasian," 1 = "other." Values (*b*'s) are unstandardized regression coefficients obtained in HLM (level 1  $n = 552$ ; level 2  $n = 78$ ).

\*  $p < .05$

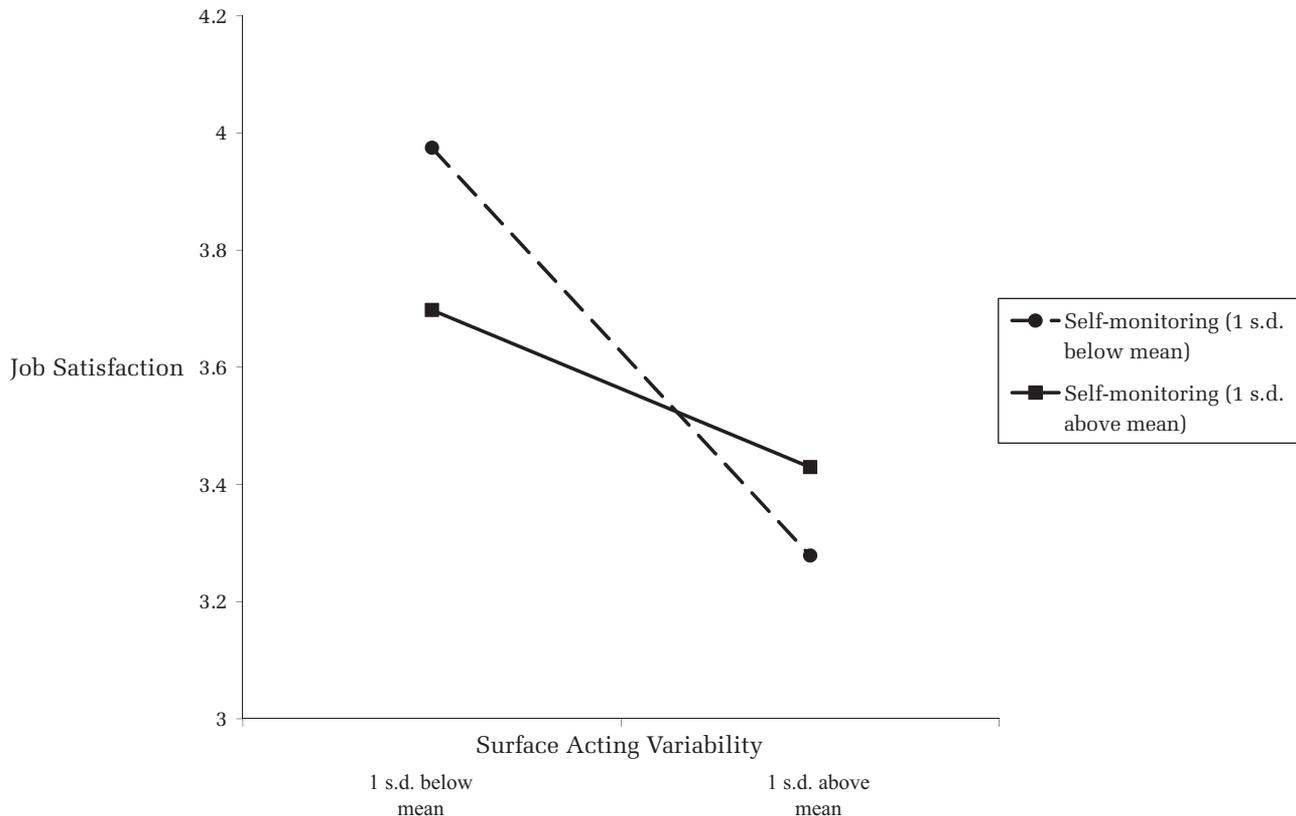
**TABLE 5**  
Moderating Effects of Self-Monitoring  
on the Relationships between Emotional  
Labor and Work Withdrawal<sup>a</sup>

Predictor	<i>b</i>	s.e.	<i>t</i>
Intercept ( $b_{00}$ )	1.79	.12	15.02*
<i>Level 2 predictors</i>			
Gender ( $b_{01}$ )	.01	.17	0.06
Age ( $b_{02}$ )	-.00	.01	-0.59
Ethnicity ( $b_{03}$ )	-.01	.11	0.05
Positive affect variability (start of work) ( $b_{04}$ )	.17	.23	0.72
Negative affect variability (start of work) ( $b_{05}$ )	1.07	.44	2.43*
Surface acting variability ( $b_{06}$ )	.35	.25	1.39
Deep acting variability ( $b_{07}$ )	.03	.14	.21
Self-monitoring ( $b_{08}$ )	-.03	.09	-0.28
Self-monitoring $\times$ surface acting variability ( $b_{09}$ )	-.33	.16	-2.10*
Self-monitoring $\times$ deep acting variability ( $b_{10}$ )	.43	.15	2.79*
<i>Level 1 predictors</i>			
Time of day ( $b_{10}$ )	-.00	.01	-0.14
State positive affect (start of work) ( $b_{20}$ )	-.04	.03	-1.24
State negative affect (start of work) ( $b_{30}$ )	.15	.08	1.85
Surface acting ( $b_{40}$ )	.29	.04	6.85*
Deep acting ( $b_{50}$ )	-.03	.02	-1.45
<i>Cross-level predictors</i>			
Self-monitoring $\times$ surface acting ( $b_{41}$ )	-.02	.03	-0.58
Self-monitoring $\times$ deep acting ( $b_{51}$ )	-.03	.03	-1.20

<sup>a</sup> All level 1 predictors were centered at individuals' means. All level 2 predictors were grand-mean-centered, with the exceptions of gender and ethnicity. Gender was coded 0 = "male," 1 = "female." Ethnicity was coded 0 = "Caucasian," 1 = "other." Values (*b*'s) are unstandardized regression coefficients obtained in HLM (level 1  $n = 552$ ; level 2  $n = 78$ ).

\*  $p < .05$

**FIGURE 1**  
**Level 2 Moderating Effect of Self-Monitoring on the Relationship between Surface Acting Variability and Job Satisfaction**



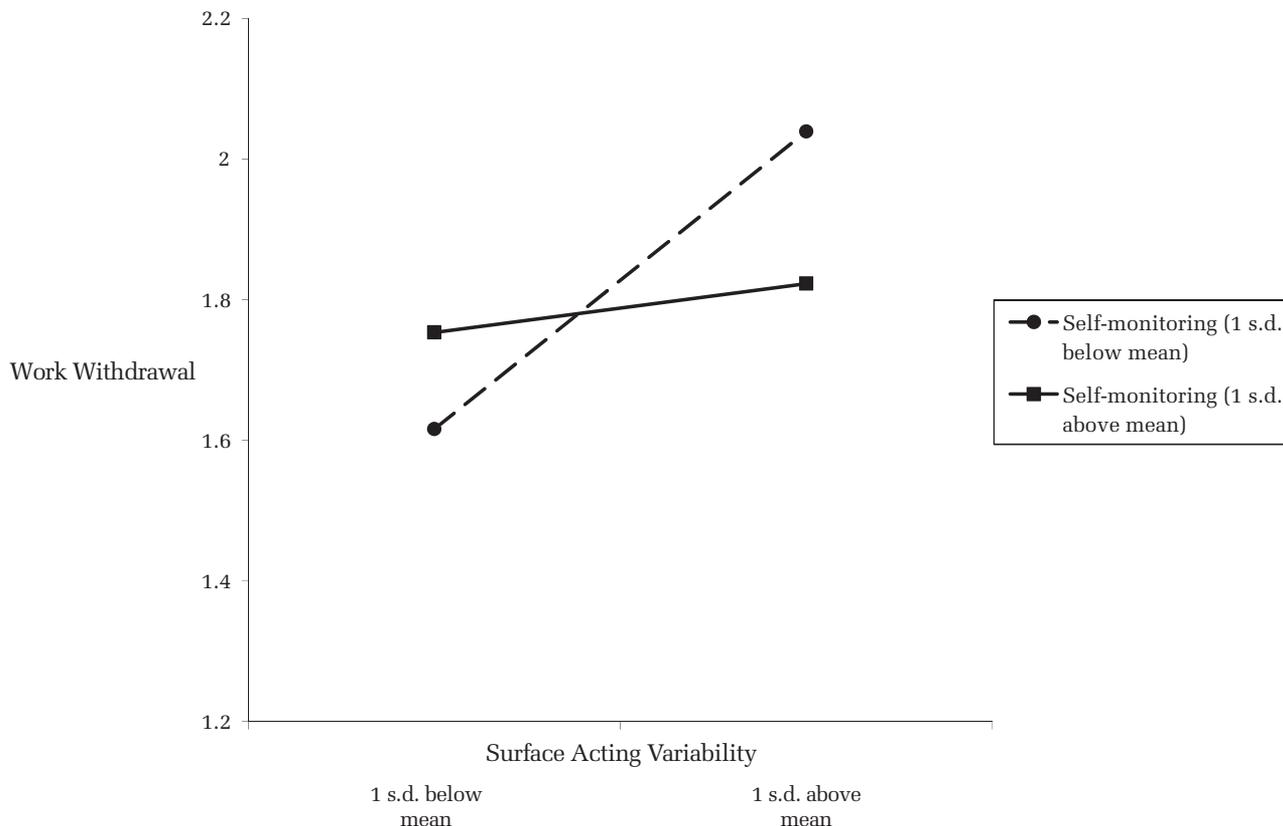
Results testing Hypothesis 7, shown on the bottom of Table 4 (H7a) and 5 (H7b), reveal that self-monitoring was not a significant predictor of the daily relationship between surface acting and job satisfaction ( $b_{41} = -.10$ ). As shown in the bottom of Table 5, self-monitoring also did not moderate the daily relationship between surface acting and work withdrawal ( $b_{41} = -.02$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 7 was not supported. Although not hypothesized, the bottom of Table 4 reveals that self-monitoring was significantly associated with the daily relationship between deep acting and job satisfaction ( $b_{51} = .14$ ,  $p < .05$ ). A plot of this interaction, displayed in Figure 4, reveals that the positive, daily relationship between deep acting and job satisfaction was stronger for high self-monitors than low self-monitors: although employees tended to benefit from daily deep acting (in terms of reporting higher job satisfaction; see bottom of Table 2), high self-monitors benefited more.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> We reestimated all of our HLM regressions controlling for day of week (represented by dummy codes for each day). Controlling for day of week did not alter the patterns of significance.

## DISCUSSION

Nearly three decades have passed since Hochschild (1983) introduced the term “emotional labor” to the scientific literature. Since that time, knowledge of two primary forms of emotional labor, surface acting and deep acting, has accumulated. Cross-sectional research has revealed that individuals differ in their average use of these emotional labor strategies, and these individual differences are associated with a number of important antecedents and consequences (for a meta-analysis see Bono and Vey [2005]). Although recent longitudinal investigations have revealed that daily fluctuations in surface acting and deep acting are a valid source of variability (e.g., Judge et al., 2009; Scott & Barnes, 2011), these studies have nonetheless utilized discrete reports of emotional labor from day-to-day, rather than considering the composition of these fluctuations over time. To address this void, and to further enhance theory and research on emotional labor, we introduced the concept of emotional labor variability, which captures individual differences in the magnitude of fluctuations

**FIGURE 2**  
**Level 2 Moderating Effect of Self-Monitoring on the Relationship between Surface Acting Variability and Work Withdrawal**



in momentary levels of surface acting and deep acting.

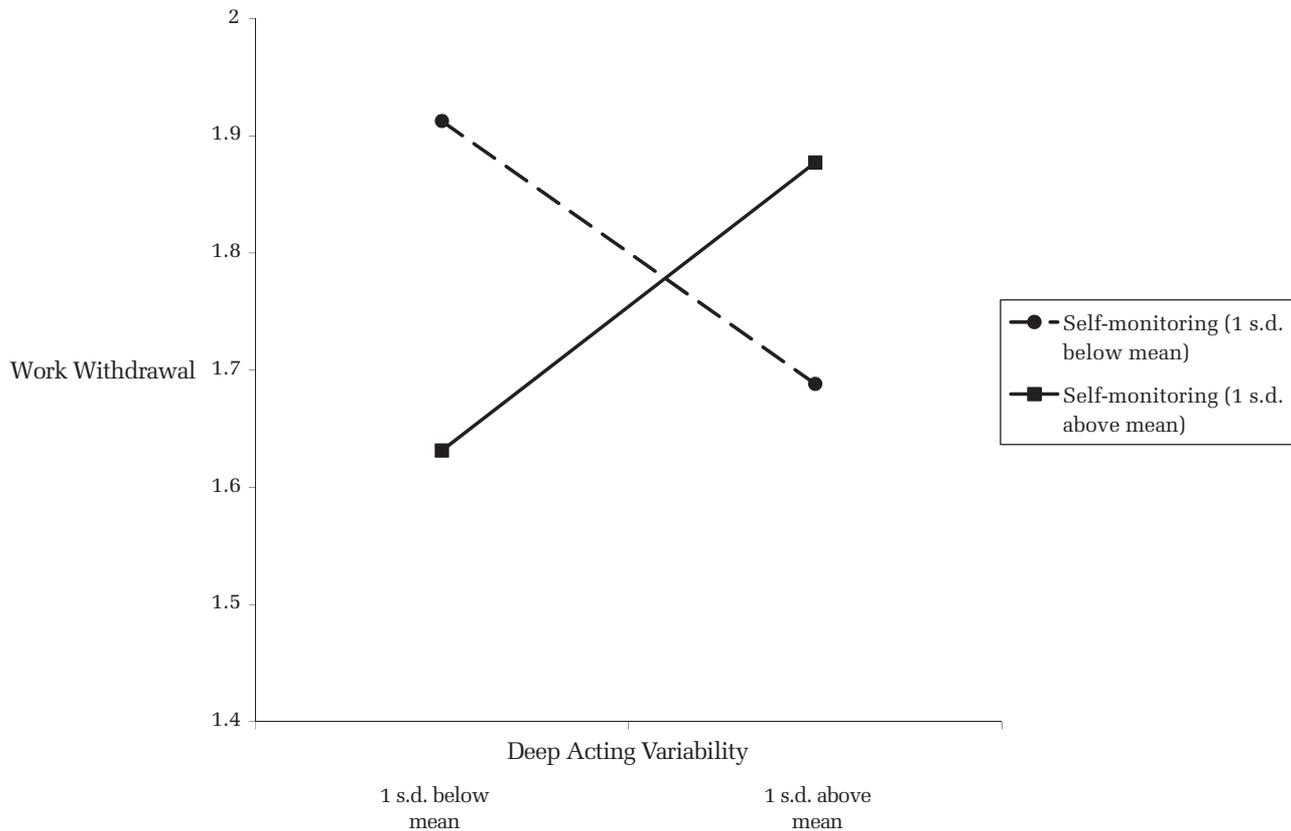
Our results showed that individuals exhibit variability in surface acting and deep acting, and this variability, does, in fact, vary across individuals. Indeed, variability in surface acting and deep acting were shown to be just as high as variability in positive and negative affective states, which have been used as a standard for comparison in other studies examining variability (Fleeson, 2001). Our results also showed that an individual's level of emotional labor variability demonstrated some stability over different periods of time, which supports early conceptualizations of variability as a reliable individual difference (Cattell, 1973; Fiske, 1961; Murray, 1938). The implication is that although people differ in how variable or consistent they are in their use of emotional labor, it appears that a given person's level of variability remains somewhat similar over time. To our knowledge, this possibility has not been acknowledged in extant theories of emotional labor.

In line with the notion that behaviors performed consistently, or habitually, consume fewer re-

sources and are less taxing to individuals (e.g., Ouellette & Wood, 1998), we found that employees who were consistent in their use of surface acting on a daily basis were more satisfied with their jobs and withdrew less from work than those who surface-acted more irregularly. This finding extends theory and research on emotional labor by demonstrating that the consistency with which an employee surface-acts explains unique variance in important work outcomes over and above his/her average level. Thus, both the level and variability of surface acting matter.

In contrast, variability in deep acting was not associated with either job satisfaction or work withdrawal. The lack of support in the current study for relationships involving deep acting variability parallels the general pattern in the emotional labor literature of inconsistent and ambiguous findings for deep acting levels. We had conjectured that deep acting, as a form of emotional labor, would deplete resources (though to a lesser extent than surface acting). However, it may be that deep acting is not taxing enough to impair work behaviors, and thus consistently engaging in it does not "buy" much in terms of resource preservation. It may also be that deep acting *increases*

**FIGURE 3**  
**Level 2 Moderating Effect of Self-Monitoring on the Relationship between Deep Acting Variability and Work Withdrawal**



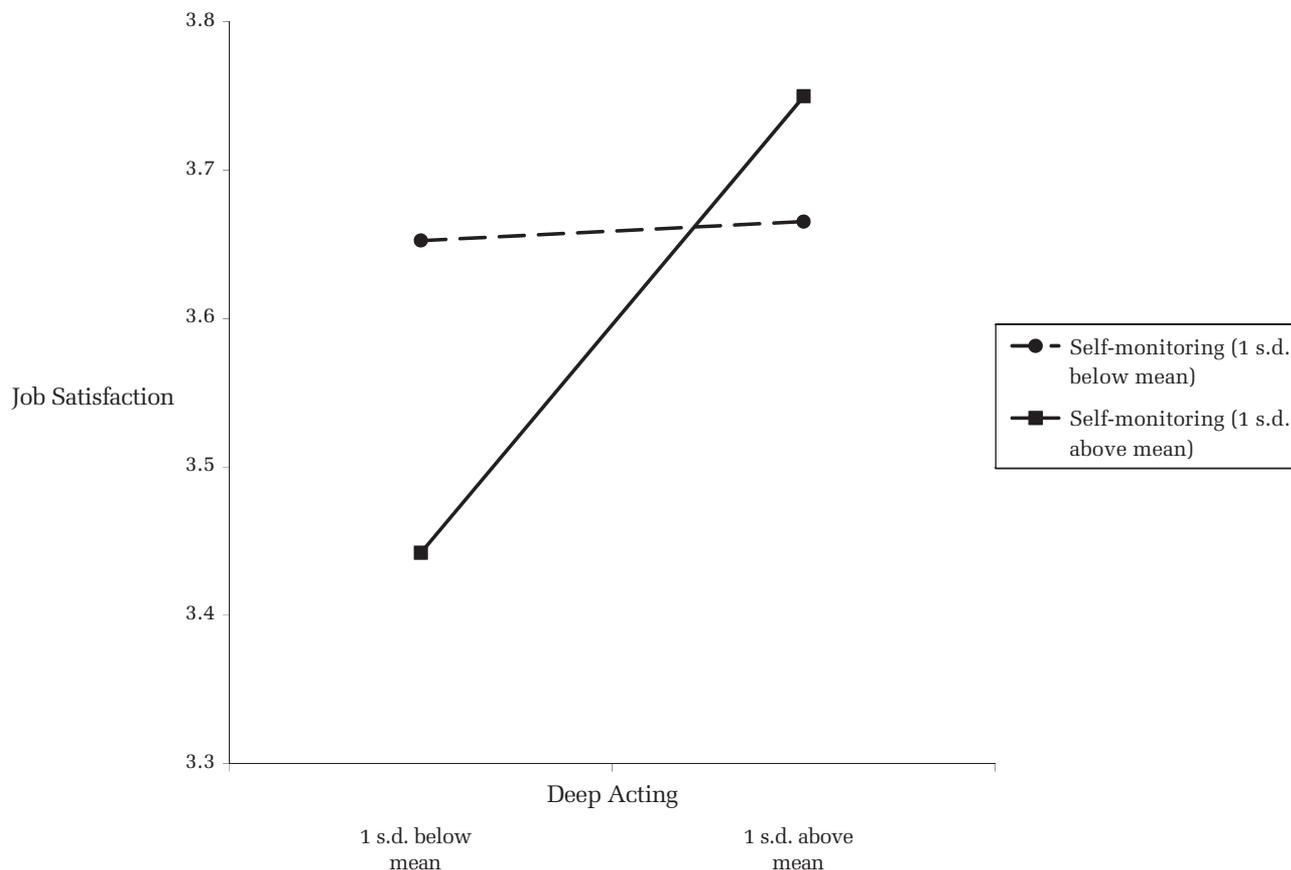
resources, at least in the short term (see also Goldberg & Grandey, 2007). After all, if a person is using deep acting to cultivate positive emotions, and a change in positive emotions actually occurs (Scott & Barnes, 2011), then the resultant feelings may build his or her personal resources (Fredrickson, 2001). Over time, however, discrete episodes of deep acting may eventually reach a “tipping point,” and the formerly beneficial behavior becomes harmful, blunting felt emotion and triggering feelings of self-alienation and inauthenticity (e.g., Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). The momentary resource “boost” generated by deep acting might explain some of the findings on the short-term benefits of deep acting that experience-sampling studies have revealed (Judge et al., 2009; Scott & Barnes, 2011; Totterdell & Holman, 2003), but the eventual feelings of self-alienation, inauthenticity, and the blunting of felt emotion might explain some of the findings on the long-term costs that cross-sectional research has revealed (e.g., Bono & Vey, 2005; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> An anonymous reviewer interestingly pointed out that the items measuring surface acting and deep act-

Our results also highlighted the complex role that self-monitoring plays in the emotional labor process. Conceptually, a natural bridge links self-monitoring and emotional labor. Our findings showed that this bridge was quite stable in some cases, particularly for the relationships involving self-monitoring and surface acting. High self-monitors were more likely than low self-monitors to surface-act daily, to exhibit variability in their use of surface acting over time, and to withstand the detrimental effects of variability in surface

ing might be picking up differences in motivation or engagement. Specifically, the surface acting items include words and phrases such as “faked,” “just pretended,” and “put on an act,” and the deep acting items include words and phrases such as “tried,” “made an effort,” and “worked hard” (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Grandey, 2003). Such differences may be an additional factor explaining links, in the short term, between surface acting and negative outcomes (e.g., exhaustion and withdrawal (Judge et al., 2009; Scott & Barnes, 2011) and between deep acting and positive outcomes (e.g., service performance and proactivity toward customers [Totterdell & Holman, 2003]).

**FIGURE 4**  
**Cross-Level Moderating Effect of Self-Monitoring on the Daily Relationship between Deep Acting and Job Satisfaction**



acting on both job dissatisfaction and work withdrawal. These findings illuminate that self-monitoring serves as both a dispositional basis of surface acting (mean and variability) as well as boundary condition of the variability effects of surface acting. That self-monitoring was a more relevant moderator of surface acting variability (as opposed to daily, mean levels of surface acting) only reinforces our primary assertion that emotional labor variability is an important concept to integrate into the literature. After all, self-monitoring is fundamentally about behavioral fluctuations, with high self-monitors being more comfortable with those fluctuations than low self-monitors (Snyder, 1974). Thus, it could be argued that the moderating role of self-monitoring should be more relevant to variability in emotional labor than to mean levels of emotional labor. Self-monitoring is an individual difference that is frequently highlighted in theories of emotional labor (e.g., Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Grandey, 2000; Morris & Feldman, 1996). Our results could add considerable nuance to these

theories by showing that self-monitoring is more pertinent to variability in emotional labor, which is a possibility not acknowledged by extant theories.

In contrast, the bridge between self-monitoring and deep acting was more unstable, as self-monitoring was not related to either average levels of deep acting or variability in deep acting, and it did not moderate the effects of deep acting variability on work outcomes in the anticipated directions. Indeed, the relationship between deep acting variability and work withdrawal was negative for low self-monitors. Again, although we can only speculate about these inconsistent findings, we wonder if low self-monitors perceive deep acting as emotionally laborious. That is, if low self-monitors strive to maintain a self-concept of being “true” to themselves, expressing emotion as they feel it, then actually cultivating desired emotions via deep acting may provide a way to support that self-concept. Consequently, variability in deep acting may not be taxing to low self-monitors, because once the desired emo-

tion is generated, such individuals perceive that any fluctuations are simply reflections of their “true” selves. In terms of daily effects, although not hypothesized, we found that the relationship between deep acting and job satisfaction was more positive for high self-monitors. This additional finding could be viewed as being consistent with our above discussion about the momentary “boosts” associated with deep acting, especially if high self-monitors use deep acting more effectively. Overall though, the findings here appear to be in line with research showing self-monitoring to be more relevant to surface acting than deep acting (Bono & Vey, 2005). Ultimately, future research is needed to shed further light on the relationship between self-monitoring and deep acting.

### Limitations and Strengths

This study has several limitations (as well as strengths) that should be acknowledged. First, all of our variables were self-reported, and although it could be argued that self-reports are the best source for information on variables such as daily engagement in emotional labor, job satisfaction, self-monitoring, and affective states, concerns about common method variance may arise. To guard against common method variance, we temporally separated many of our measures: self-monitoring was assessed two weeks prior to the daily survey portion of the study, and the measures of affect were separated in time each day from the remaining measures. In addition, by individually mean centering the data, we effectively controlled for person-level influences, thereby removing several sources of common method variance (e.g., response tendencies, trait affectivity). Perhaps more importantly, common method variance is unlikely to explain the relationships involving variability in surface acting, as well as the interactions involving self-monitoring, which comprise the core findings of our investigation.

Another notable feature of the study is that all of the participants were from a single organization and held the same type of job. A strength of this approach is that it rules out job-related differences that may confound relationships involving emotional labor variability, given that some jobs may produce more emotional labor ups and downs than others. However, a weakness of this approach is that it is unclear whether the effects observed in this study would be of the same magnitude in other organizations or occupations. In addition, relative to other occupations, the job of bus driver likely constrains opportunities to withdraw from work, and thus the relationships involving withdrawal

may be underestimated. The ability to detect significant relationships involving withdrawal may also have been hindered by the scale’s lower reliability relative to the other constructs that we measured.

Finally, our study is limited by the casual inferences that can be made as well as by its scope. For example, although we positioned surface acting and deep acting as antecedents of job satisfaction and work withdrawal, which is consistent with extant theory (e.g., Grandey, 2000), our data cannot establish causality, and we acknowledge that alternative causal orderings are possible. For example, it could also be argued that individuals who are dissatisfied with their jobs exhibit more affective ups and downs, which produce fluctuations in surface acting. In addition, although we utilized a resource depletion argument (e.g., Muraven & Baumeister, 2000) to justify the linkages between emotional labor variability and work outcomes, we did not assess resource depletion directly, and thus future research able to do so could shed light on this hypothesized mechanism. Future research also could expand the scope our model by examining other potential outcomes of emotional labor variability, such as emotional exhaustion, task performance, and, as we discuss below, unethical behavior.

### Practical Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

Despite the above limitations, our results have a number of implications for practice as well as future research. In terms of practice, many organizations, such as the one examined in this study, have integrative display rules that encourage the display of positive affect and discourage the display of negative affect (e.g., Wharton & Erickson, 1993). Given that experienced affect varies from day to day for many employees, emotional labor is often necessary to meet such integrative display rules. Our findings suggest that, if “the show must go on” (Grandey, 2003: 86), despite feelings to the contrary, then deep acting would generally be their desired strategy. However, if employees find trouble engaging in deep acting mechanisms such as cognitive reappraisal or situation selection (Gross, 1998) and instead choose to simply surface act by feigning a smile, our findings suggest that they would be better off implementing this choice consistently.

A second set of practical implications relates to self-monitoring. Turnley and Bolino (2001) suggested that because self-monitors are better at impression management, they would be better in

“boundary-spanning” roles such as dealing with customers. On the one hand, our results support their suggestion by showing that high self-monitors may also be better suited for customer service positions because they are more comfortable with using surface acting intermittently and recovering from it. On the other hand, our findings caution against relying solely on high self-monitors for customer service positions, as those individuals, when engaging in emotional labor, will tend to use the more taxing strategy of surface acting. Given that high self-monitors gravitate toward situations that provide clear prescriptions for appropriate and inappropriate behavior (Snyder & Gangestad, 1982), such individuals may naturally self-select into jobs with clearly specified integrative display rules.

The extent to which high self-monitors are better suited for customer service jobs that contain emotional labor requirements may depend on the longevity of a customer service relationship. Jenkins (1993) found that high self-monitors are more willing to terminate current relationships in favor of others, but low self-monitors, though initially reluctant to react, initiate relationships in ways that foster commitment and longevity. Thus, it may be that high self-monitors are a better fit for customer service jobs in which short-term relationships are the norm (e.g., coffee shop barista) and that low self-monitors are a better fit for customer service jobs in which commitment and longevity are more critical (e.g., supplier representative). It may also be that emotional labor variability is not as taxing in situations that require intermittent engagement in surface acting over a long time frame, because individuals are provided with recovery opportunities during times when emotional labor is not employed.

In terms of future research, we found that inconsistency in surface acting was associated with low job satisfaction and high work withdrawal. Future research should examine other outcomes of inconsistency in surface acting. For example, a large literature indicates the importance of self-control in determining a large variety of behavior (see Hagger et al. [2010] for a recent meta-analysis), including unethical behavior (Barnes, Schaubroeck, Huth, & Ghumman, 2011; Mead, Baumeister, Gino, Schweitzer, & Ariely, 2009). If nonhabitual surface acting is depleting and diminishes an individual’s ability engage in self-control, then it may be that inconsistency in surface acting is associated with the inability to suppress the temptation to engage in unethical behavior.

A final avenue for future research is how supervisors and peers view employees that are high ver-

sus low in emotional labor consistency. Previous research indicates that supervisors and peers can make negative attributions to people who are inconsistent in their behavior (Barnes & Morgeson, 2007; Fox & Bizman, 1995). It may be that a similar effect occurs with regard to emotional labor that is such that those who are inconsistent in their use of emotional labor are judged to be more unreliable and to have lower performance. If so, then this would represent an additional drawback of inconsistency. Overall, future research examining the above questions could shed further light on temporal processes in emotional labor and the influence of personality.

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