UNVEILING THE INTERRELATEDNESS OF
EMOTION SHARING AND IDENTIFICATION WITH THE ORGANIZATION:
ORGANIZATIONAL ANTECEDENTS AND INTERPERSONAL CONSEQUENCES

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INTRODUCTION

Belonging to a work organization is one of the most important affiliations a person experiences, and can be more pervasive and important than other ascribed affiliations such as gender, ethnicity, or nationality (Hogg, 2000; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000). Likewise, we can certainly argue that organization performance depends on its members' identification. Identification has been shown to increase employees' support for the organization (Mael & Ashforth, 1992), in-role performance (James & Greenberg, 1989; van Knippenberg, 2000), and extra-role behaviors (Christ et al., 2003; Riketta & van Dick, 2005).

Over the past 60 years, scholars have investigated the processes of identification mainly through a cognitive lens. For example, Simon (1947) was one of the first to hypothesize that identification with the organization stems from members' comparisons between their goals and those of the organization. In Simon's view, identification eventually leads individuals to consider organization's goals as their own and act with the organization's best interests in mind.

Seen in this light, the seminal work of Tajfel, Billing, Bundy, and Flament (1971) is the first empirical attempt to analyze cognitive mechanisms of identification. By manipulating group membership in a laboratory setting, Tajfel and colleagues (1971) showed that the mere awareness of group affiliation is sufficient to enact in-group favoritism. Later, Tajfel (1978) elaborated upon these findings and defined social identity as "part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his or membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (p. 63).

In their social categorization theory (SCT), Turner and colleagues (1987) further investigated the role of categorization processes underlying membership awareness. Overall,

SCT explains the incorporation of collective interests into the self-concept through individuals' striving for self-consistency/continuity. That is, individuals come to see themselves as part of social groups when they perceive co-members as belonging to the same cognitive category (i.e., stereotype). This logic led Turner (1984) to hypothesize the existence of a "psychological group," which involves "a collection of people who share the same social identification or define themselves in terms of the same social category membership" (p. 530).

Working from this cognitive perspective, many scholars have incorporated ideas from SIT and SCT into the concept of organizational identification. For example, Ashforth and Mael (1989) adapted the idea of collective identity to the organizational context and defined it as ''a perceptual cognitive construct that is not necessarily associated with any specific behaviors or affective states''(p. 21). In the same vein, Dutton et al. (1994) described organizational identification as "the degree to which a member defines himself or herself by the same attributes that he or she believes define the organization" (p. 39). Likewise, Pratt defined identification as the congruence of individual and organizational values (Pratt, 1998).

While cognition remains an important dimension of collective identity (and a raison d'être for identification processes), other researchers posit that social identity is a multi-dimensional construct. The work of Ellemers, Kortekaas, and Ouwerkerk (1999) takes an important step in this direction. Starting with Tajfel's definition of social identity (1978), these scholars proposed three main components of social identity: a cognitive component (cognitive self-awareness of group membership), an affective/emotional component (involvement with the group or affective commitment), and an evaluative component (group self-esteem). In their

experiments, they then demonstrated that these components were empirically distinct and that affective involvement with the group was the primary driver of in-group favoritism.

Bergami and Bagozzi (2000) added to the conceptualization of multi-dimensional view of social identity and tested it in the field. Paralleling Ellemers et al.'s work, they found that organizational members identify with their organization in cognitive, evaluative, and affective ways. Further, they demonstrated that affective commitment and organizational-based self-esteem mediate the effect of cognitive identification on employees' citizenship behaviors (a form of in-group favoritism).

Although the aforementioned studies have made significant headway into the theorizing of organizational identification, they have not addressed the fact that identification with the organization depends on what transpires between an individual and the organization, which mainly consists of interpersonal encounters. Accordingly, mechanisms for identification may lie at the interpersonal level, wherein the content of social interactions (i.e., emotions) influences how organizational members perceive themselves as part of something bigger, that is the organization.

Departing from previous research, this study focuses on how organizations can increase identification by managing their members' emotions. Specifically, we purpose that is not so much how positive or negative emotions enhance organizational identification (Livingstone, Spears, Manstead, Bruder, & Shepherd, 2011), or how the convergence of emotions among organizational members leads to identification (Sandelands & St. Clair, 1993; Barsade, 2002) that benefit the organization and its members. Rather, we suggest that the mere sharing of

emotions among co-members changes the way in which they view themselves as part of the organization, which in turn leads to pro-social behaviors on the part of members.

From a theoretical standpoint, we attempt to shift the discussion on identification from a self-concept rationale, in which individuals identify with the organization because of their striving for self-enhancement or affiliation, to an interpersonal level, wherein emotion sharing influences identification. Specifically, we address three research questions that have not been previously considered: (1) Does emotion sharing reinforce the cognitive and affective dimensions of organizational identification? (2) What can organizations do to enhance emotion sharing among their members? and (3) Does emotion sharing influence in-group favoritism in a distinct way from cognitive and affective identification?

To answer these questions, we conducted a panel study over four waves among 255 nurses working in a public hospital. Specifically, we developed a measure of emotion sharing and explored the nomological network in which this construct is embedded using structural equation models. A cross-lagged panel model was used to test our first research question about the influence of emotion sharing on cognitive and affective identification with the organization. Then an extended structural model was tested to answer the two remaining research questions about organizational antecedents (i.e., perceived emotional support) and interpersonal consequences of emotion sharing (OCB-Is, interpersonal targeted citizenship behaviors, and CWB-Is, interpersonal targeted counterproductive behaviors). To address possible common method bias, we used supervisors' ratings as objective measures to assess interpersonal consequences of emotion sharing (i.e., OCB-Is and CWB-Is).

THE INFLUENCE OF EMOTION SHARING ON COGNITIVE AND AFFECTIVE

IDENTIFICATION WITH THE ORGANIZATION

Cultural norms in the western world, especially with regard to male-centric norms, proscribe against the expression of emotions in the workplace. A case in point is employees openly sharing their feelings with co-employees. Often researchers and practitioners have avoided consideration of employees' emotions, regarding them as a threat to organization functioning and assuming that emotional processes interfere with employee productivity.

Similarly, scholars involved in the study of social identity and organizational identification have not studied the role of emotions in the identification process, though such a role is implied in affective commitment. For example, Tajfel (1978) mentions the importance of the evaluative and emotional significance of group membership for the formation of social identities, and Ashforth and Mael (1989) define identification as a feeling of oneness with the organization. But, despite these acknowledgements, there has been little theorizing and empirical work examining how the interpersonal sharing of feelings reinforces membership awareness.

In many studies, emotions are hypothesized as affective responses (e.g., emotional involvement, commitment, attachment, joy, and love) to cognitive awareness of group membership (Ellemers et al., 1999; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000), rather than a dynamic part of the identification process per se. A rationalistic interpretation of Simon's work might relegate workplace emotions as a means to achieve the goals of the organization (Mumby & Putnam, 1992). Seen in this light, emotions are denaturized, and organization members are expected to display or suppress their feelings according to the situation that best fits organizational goals.

Recently, however, some scholars have started to recognize how the sharing of emotions performs a communicative role in promoting intersubjectivity, interrelatedness, and mutual understanding (a kind of bounded emotionality; Mumby & Putnam, 1992). By contrasting functional views of work relationships, research on bounded emotionality suggests that when organization members are free to express their work feelings, their cohesiveness increases.

In the light of these developments, this study focuses on emotion sharing in the organization. We define emotion sharing as the expression and mutual understanding of emotions between organizational members, which function to influence the maintenance of their collective identity and induce discretionary behaviors that benefit other co-members. In a sense, emotion sharing is similar to the concept of emotional contagion within social group (Hatfield, Cacioppo, and Raspon, 1993). But, although emotional contagion contains elements of emotion sharing (Barsade, 2002; Peters & Kashima, 2007), the two concepts differ in their psychological foundation. Whereas emotional contagion entails a process in which multiple individuals come to experience the same emotions through a cascading of feelings from one person to another in an automatic way, emotion sharing involves an effort to express one's own feelings and understand others' emotions as a personal decision, disposition, or orientation. The former is largely a bottom-up process, the latter primarily a top-down executive process.

Through self-examination and reflective processes, this emotional exchange should influence cognitive judgments regarding one's own identity in important ways. By engaging in emotion sharing, individuals increase their ability to understand the points of view of others (Huy, 1999). This reciprocal understanding should minimize in-group misunderstandings and cognitive differences by building a common perception of the organization's characteristics

(Dutton et al., 1994; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000), values (Pratt, 1998), and goals (Simon, 1947) among organization members. Because individuals often use their feelings to form judgment about their environment ("emotion-as-information"; Schwarz, 1990; Schwarz & Clore, 1988), emotion sharing should reinforce cognitive awareness of organizational membership through the creation of shared meanings (Weick, 1999). Therefore, we predict:

Hypothesis 1. Emotion sharing predicts change in cognitive identification with the organization over time. The greater the emotion sharing, the stronger the cognitive identification with the organization.

As emotion sharing sets in, organization members should be more likely to be receptive and to open themselves to others. Consistent with the literature on self-disclosure (Reis & Patrick, 1996), in the social sharing of emotion, a spiral of effects takes place. This process involves reciprocal stimulation of emotions that enhances affective bonds among people (Peters & Kashima, 2007). Mumby and Putnam describe this process as follow: "as individuals share emotional experiences, their initial sense of anonymity gives way to feelings of community through the development of mutual affection, cohesion, and coherence of purpose" (1992: 478).

In addition, because colleagues and supervisors are conceived as representatives of the organization, their actions will be perceived as the organization's actions, rather than merely attributed to personal motivations (Levinson, 1965). Therefore, the simple act of sharing emotions can be a powerful act, capable of shaping affective relationships between individuals

and increasing positive perceptions associated with the organization, and thereby eventually enhancing emotional involvement with it.

Hypothesis 2. Emotion sharing predicts change in affective identification with the organization over time. The greater the emotion sharing, the stronger the affective identification with the organization.

PERCEIVED EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AS ANTECEDENTS OF EMOTION SHARING

Organization members can exhibit childlike emotional needs when required to share their emotions with others. Similar to children requiring empathy and encouragement from their parents (Roberts & Strayer, 1996; Strayer & Roberts, 2004), employees may engage in emotion sharing if they perceive that the organization supports them (1) by attending to their emotional well-being and (2) by encouraging them to express their true feelings. One perspective that considers this type of emotional support involves the literature on emotional capability, which refers to an organization's ability to perceive and manage employees' emotions (see Huy, 1999; 2005). Building on the emotional capability literature, we suggest two dimensions of emotional support that should induce emotion sharing: empathy and authenticity.

Empathy and the Dynamic of Experiencing

Whereas the propensity to share one's own emotions is often a personal and stable trait of individuals, emotional disclosure among co-members may arise from perceptions of organizational empathy. Following Huy (1995; 2005), we define empathy as the organization's ability to understand and address its members' feelings. Perhaps the most direct way in which the

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organization shows empathy is through humanlike behaviors, such as a) attending to individuals'

emotional well-being, b) expressing caring and compassion about their feelings, and in general,

c) creating good feelings. As a reaction to these emotion-attending behaviors, organization

members feel understood, safe, and supported in sharing their emotions. Further, they develop

"the ability to accurately read the subtle social cues and signal given by others in order to

determine what emotions are being expressed and understanding the perspective of the other

individual" (Schmidt, 1997: 10). Summarizing, to the extent that individuals perceive an

organization's empathy, they will be more likely to open themselves to others and understand

others' feelings (Huy, 1999).

Authenticity and the Dynamic of Displaying Freedom

Authenticity refers to the organization's ability to facilitate the variety of emotions that

can be expressed and felt in the organization (Huy, 1999; Akgun, 2009). When individuals feel

free to express their emotions, they experience satisfaction and openness toward their

environment, which contributes to better interpersonal relationships. On the other hand, when

organizations constrain the expression of emotion to a narrow set of prescribed emotions, they

may induce negative emotional states that foster division and alienation among organizational

members (Mumbay & Putnam, 1992). In this sense, perceived organizational authenticity acts as

a facilitator for emotion sharing, as it provides an important way for people to feel safe in sharing

their feelings. To the extent that organization members perceive a climate or context that

encourages them to display their true feelings, the likelihood of emotion sharing should increase.

Taken together, these arguments suggest that perceived emotional support, in terms of empathy and authenticity, should increase the sharing of emotions among organization members. Therefore, we predict:

Hypothesis 3. Emotional support is positively related to emotion sharing. The greater the emotional support, the stronger the emotion sharing.

Emotional Support and Identification with the Organization

We expect that the more the organization is perceived as having humanlike traits (i.e., being caring and authentic), the more its identity should become salient and comparable to one's own values, characteristics, and goals. Employees who perceive high emotional support see themselves as valuable to the organization, and they are more likely to believe and feel that the organization is close or sympathetic to their goals. As a result, they are more likely to believe that the organization shares the same values as they do (Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail, 1994).

Further, according to reciprocity norms (Gouldner, 1960) and research on perceived organizational support (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Shore & Shore, 1995), when members believe that their organization cares about their emotional well-being and makes them feel safe, they will react with higher commitment to the organization (Vandenberghe, Bentein, & Stinglhamber, 2004). This rationale suggests that emotional support should influence both cognitive and affective aspects of identification with the organization. We thus predict,

Hypothesis 4. Emotional support is positively related to cognitive identification with the organization. The greater the emotional support, the stronger the cognitive identification with the organization.

Hypothesis 5. Emotional support is positively related to affective identification with the organization. The greater the emotional support, the stronger the affective identification with the organization.

INTERPERSONAL CONSEQUENCES OF EMOTION SHARING

Research on social identity and organizational identification has provided rich evidence of their impact on in-group favoritism. Starting with the work of Tajfel et al. (1971), many studies demonstrate how the mere cognitive awareness of group membership influences behaviors that benefit co-members. Likewise, from an affective perspective, Bergami and Bagozzi (2000) showed that affective commitment to the organization prompts altruistic behaviors toward co-workers. This result paralleled Ellemers et al.'s (1999) findings that affective commitment, as an important dimension of social identity, induces in-group favoritism. As a consequence, we can conclude that individuals who cognitively identify or are emotionally involved with their organization should display in-group favoritism by helping co-members and avoiding actions that may harm them.

Research in the organization literature shows that the interpersonal nature of in-group favoritism results in higher OCB-Is (Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983) and lower CWB-Is (Robinson & Bennet, 1995). OCB-Is consist of individual actions that are not explicitly recognized by the organization's reward system yet benefit organization members (Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983).

On the other hand, CWB-Is are actions against co-members' welfare that involve deviant (Bennett & Robinson, 2000), antisocial (Robinson & O'Leary-Kelly, 1998), uncivil (Andersson & Pearson, 1999), and socially undermining (Duffy, Ganster, Shaw, Johnson, & Pagon, 2006) behaviors.

Although OCB-Is and CWB-Is might be reasonable outcomes of personal identification with the organization, they may simply reflect the actual nature of workplace relationships. That is, since OCB-Is and CWB-Is are interpersonal behaviors, their motivational bases should reside in interactions with co-members. Given the interpersonal nature of emotion sharing, we expect emotion sharing to influence OCB-Is and CWB-Is more than cognitive identification, which is an interpersonal process based on group categorization mechanisms, or affective commitment, which resembles emotional involvement with the organization. In fact, according to field theory (Lewin 1943), emotion sharing should involve more proximal aspects of workplace relationships than identification with the organization as a whole. More proximal requisites and exigencies should be more salient than less proximal ones.

The emotion sharing process resembles the caregiver–child relationship (Rime, 2009). Individuals who share emotions learn about each other's emotional needs and thus are more prone to respond in a proper way to people (see the emotion-as-information perspective; Schwarz, 1990). For example, within the organization, an employee may react with prosocial behaviors if he or she detects co-worker's anxiety with work-related problems. By the same token, through emotion sharing, individuals learn which behaviors may hurt others' feelings, and thus avoid those actions. Consequently, we propose the following:

Hypothesis 6: The influence of emotion sharing on OCB-Is is stronger than the influence of cognitive and affective identification on OCB-Is.

Hypothesis 7: The influence of emotion sharing on CWB-Is is stronger than the influence of cognitive and affective identification on CWB-Is.

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

We surveyed 481 nurses in a public hospital using a panel design of four waves of data. Perceived emotional support (empathy and authenticity) were measured at Time 1, and emotion sharing and cognitive and affective identification at Time 2 and Time 3. A 6-week to 2-month interval occurred between the measurement waves. Interpersonal consequences of emotion sharing (OCB-Is and CWB-Is) were assessed through supervisors' rating taken at Time 4 about to 6 weeks after Time 3. A total of 255 nurses and their supervisors completed all substantive questions on the survey for the three waves of data, for a response rate of 53 percent. In the final sample, 234 nurses (91.8 percent) were women, and 20 (7.8 percent) men (one person failed to provide socio-demographic information); 216 nurses (84.7 percent) were Caucasian, whereas the remaining 39 nurses belonged to different ethnicities (African-American, Asian Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, and native American). Respondent ranged from 25 to 73 years of age (mean=45.41, s.d.=10.57), and had been employed by their organization on average 7.7 years (s.d. = 8.35) before receipt of the first questionnaire.

Measures

Emotion sharing. To measure the interpersonal nature of emotion sharing, we used three items assessing how much respondents share emotions with each of three organizational representatives: their supervisor, work group colleagues, and colleagues outside the work group. The items were introduced by the question: "How much sharing of personal thoughts, emotions, and feelings do you do with each of the following?" and were measured using a five-point scale ranging from "Very little" to "Very much", and "A moderate amount" as a midpoint.

Cognitive Identification. We used two items to measure cognitive identification with the organization, or the degree of alignment between an employee's personal identity and the identity of the organization. One item used a seven-point scale ranging from "No overlap at all" to "Very much overlap," with "A moderate overlap" in the middle. The second item showed the amount of overlap graphically by using circles with "No overlap," "Very small overlap," "Small overlap," "Moderate overlap," "Much overlap," and "Near complete overlap" as response alternatives (Bergami and Bagozzi, 2000).

Affective Identification. The emotional component of social identity (a sense of emotional involvement with the organization or affective commitment) was measured by two items based on research on organizational commitment (e.g., Allen & Meyer 1996; Bagozzi & Lee, 2002). The first item asked, "How bonded or attached do you feel to your organization, as a whole?" and was measured on a seven-point scale. "Not at all bonded: I have no positive feelings toward the organization" and "Bonded very much: I have very strong positive feelings toward the organization" were the endpoints; "I feel moderately bonded to the organization" was the midpoint. The second item asked, "How strongly do you like your organization?" We used a

seven-point scale ranging from "Not at all strong" to "Very strong", and "Moderately strong" as a midpoint.

Perceived Emotional Support. Perceived emotional support was measured in two senses: organizational empathy and organizational authenticity.

Empathy was measured with three items: "How would you evaluate the overall effectiveness of your organization, as a whole, in attending to the emotional well-being of employees ?", "How caring and compassionate has your organization, as a whole, been to attending to your feelings?", and "How effective is your organization, as a whole, in creating good feelings?" We used seven-point scales ranging from "Very ineffective" to "Very effective", and "Neither ineffective nor effective" as a midpoint, to measure reactions to each item.

Authenticity was measured with two items directly capturing to what extent that respondents felt that the organization made them feel safe and encouraged them to express their true feelings. The first item asked, "My organization helps employees to express their true feelings", and the second item asked, "People in this organization are encouraged to maintain their feelings while appreciating that others may feel differently". Both these items were measured on a seven-point scale. "Does not describe us at all" and "Describes us very well" were the endpoints; "Describes us moderately well" was the midpoint.

Methodologically, emotional support was operationalized as a second order factor. This choice was supported by an initial exploratory analysis and by the examination of the correlation matrix, which showed that the correlations between the measures of organizational empathy and authenticity were higher than other constructs, therefore indicating that they are two distinct

dimensions of emotional support. The results of a confirmatory factor analysis further confirmed our proposition of emotional support as a second-order factor.

Interpersonal Organizational Citizenship Behaviors. OCB-Is were measured using the 8-item organizational citizenship behavior scale used of Lee and Allen (2002). For each employee, supervisors rated how much they agreed or disagreed with the assertion that their subordinates performed each OCB-I using a five-point scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). The OCB-Is consisted of eight items. Sample items are "This employee gives up time to help others who have work or non-work problems", "Helps others who have been absent," and "Willingly give his/her time to help others who have work-related problems."

Interpersonal Counterproductive Workplace Behaviors. To measure the interpersonal dimension of counterproductive workplace behaviors we used items from the 8-item CWB scale (Robinson & O Leary-Kelly, 1998). Employees' supervisors rated how often their subordinates performed each CWB-I during the last year using a five-point scale (1=Very Infrequently, 3=Sometimes, and 5=Very Frequently). Sample of the six items used in our study are: "Said or did something to purposely hurt someone at work?", "Griped with coworkers?", "Criticized people at work?", and "Started an argument with someone at work?".

RESULTS

Means, standard deviations, and correlations among all the variables are shown in Table 1. All the models in the study (confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation models) were run using the LISREL 8.70 program (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1999).

We used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to evaluate the internal consistency and discriminant validity of variables included in our study. Specifically, we used the following fit indices to evaluate the tests of the CFA model: χ2-test, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Nonnormed Fit Index (NNFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and the Standardized Root Mean Squared Residual (SRMR). Satisfactory fits occur when the RMSEA $\leq$ .06,NNFI $\geq$ .95, CFI $\geq$ .95, and SRMR $\leq$ .08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Internal consistency. We used the composite reliability (ρ_ε) to measure internal consistency of measures, which is analogous to coefficient α (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Estimates of ρ_ε above 0.60 are considered supportive of internal consistency (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). The ρ_ε values for all constructs in the model are provided in the diagonal of Table 1.

The ρ_ε values for all constructs were significantly higher than the stipulated criteria, and therefore indicative of good internal consistency (ρ_ε range = .75 – .95). In addition, the results also indicate that there was a moderately high degree of stability (Heise, 1969) in emotion sharing, cognitive identification, and affective identification over a 2-month period. The stability coefficient for emotion sharing is .58, for cognitive identification is .60, and for affective identification, it is .53.

Discriminant validity. Discriminant validity of the latent variables was evaluated using CFA. Specifically, a confirmatory factor analysis model was built with all the variables used in the study (10 latent constructs and a total of 33 measures). Results showed that the model fit the data well. The goodness-of fit statistics for the model were as follows: the $x^2(443) = 854.01$, $p =$

.00, RMSEA = .059, NNFI = .97, CFI = .97, and SRMR = .053. The ϕ matrix (correlations between constructs, corrected for attenuation) is also provided in Table 1. As a test of discriminant validity, we checked whether the correlations among the latent constructs were significantly less than one (Table 1). Because none of the confidence intervals of the ϕ-values (+/− two standard errors) included the value of one, this test provides evidence of discriminant validity (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988).

Temporal Relationships Between Emotion sharing and Organizational Identification

We use a panel design to examine the interrelatedness of emotion sharing and identification with the organization over time. This type of design provides stronger evidence for the causal relationships between emotions sharing and organizational identification (i.e., cognitive and affective) than cross sectional studies where those variables are measured simultaneously (Finkel, 1995).

In particular, we used structural equation modeling to test this model (LISREL 8.70; Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1999). The structural cross-lagged model depicts the influence of Time 1 emotion sharing, cognitive identification, and affective identification on Time 2 emotion sharing, cognitive identification, and affective identification. As recommended by Finkel (1995), Time 1 latent variable variances were allowed to covary. Similarly, the error variances of the variables at Time 2 were allowed to covary. In addition, we allowed for autocorrelated error variances by freeing the error covariances of the same measures administered at both Time 1 and Time 2.

Evidence concerning the influence of emotion sharing on organizational identification is provided by a statistically significant path between Time 1 emotion sharing and Time 2 cognitive and affective identification. Because this path is controlled for Time 1 organizational

identification, such an effect is interpretable as a relationship between emotion sharing and

temporal change in cognitive and affective identification (Finkel, 1995). Nevertheless, we

examined the effect of Time 1 organizational identification on Time 2 emotion sharing, which,

controlling for Time 1 emotion sharing provides evidence of the influence of organizational

identification on emotion sharing. Figure 1 gives the estimated significant paths with

standardized coefficients.

Insert Figure 1 about here

As predicted in Hypotheses 1 and 2, emotion sharing was positively related to the

temporal change in cognitive identification ($\gamma = .18$, $p < .01$) and affective identification ($\gamma = .14$,

$p < .01$). In contrast, cognitive identification was not associated with the temporal change in

emotion sharing ($\gamma = .08$, $n.s.$), neither was affective identification ($\gamma = .09$, $n.s.$). Further, cognitive

identification was not associated with the temporal change in affective identification ($\gamma = .07$,

$n.s.$), and affective identification was not associated with the temporal change in cognitive

identification ($\gamma = .12$, $n.s.$). The model explains relatively high levels of variance for emotion

sharing ($\underline{R}^2 = .42$), cognitive identification ($\underline{R}^2 = .58$), and affective identification ($\underline{R}^2 = .63$).

Finally, we evaluated the cross-lagged structural model following Hu and Bentler's

(1999) recommendation. The overall model showed adequate fit to the data: the $x^2(55) = 107.86$,

$p = .00$, RMSEA = .058, NNFI = .98, CFI = .99, and SRMR = .062. In sum, consistent with

Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 that emotion sharing reinforces organizational identification;

emotion sharing was found to be positively related to the temporal change in cognitive and

affective identification. In contrast, the relationship between initial cognitive and affective

identification and the temporal change in emotion sharing was not statistically significant.

Organizational Antecedents and Interpersonal Consequences of Emotion Sharing

To test Hypotheses 3-6, we used an extended version of the cross-lagged model that

includes antecedents (measured before the variables in the cross-lagged model) and

consequences of emotion sharing (measured after the variables in the cross-lagged model).

Figure 2 summarizes the paths corresponding to the main effects of Hypotheses 3-6.

Insert Figure 2 about here

The findings in Figure 2 confirm all hypotheses. Emotional support at Time 1 relates

strongly with Time 2 emotion sharing (γ =.52, p<.001), Time 2 cognitive identification

(γ =.62, p<.001), and Time 2 affective identification with the organization (γ =.52, p<.001).

Likewise, Time 2 emotion sharing relates strongly with Time 3 cognitive identification

(γ =.20, p<.001) and Time 3 affective identification with the organization (γ =.17, p<.01). The

model explains relatively moderate levels of variance for Time 2 emotion sharing ($\underline{R}^2$ = .27),

Time 2 cognitive identification ($\underline{R}^2$ = .27), and Time 2 affective identification ($\underline{R}^2$ = .39). High

levels of variance were also found for Time 3 emotion sharing ($\underline{R}^2$ = .45), Time 3 cognitive

identification ($\underline{R}^2$ = .58), and Time 3 affective identification ($\underline{R}^2$ = .65)

The hypotheses concerning the dependence of the OCB-Is and CWB-Is on emotion

sharing were supported. OCB-Is depends on Time 3 emotion sharing (γ =.39, p<.001), while

Time 3 cognitive identification ($\gamma = -.07$, *n.s.*) and Time 3 affective identification ($\gamma = .08$, *n.s.*) did not significantly influence OCB-Is. Similarly, CWB-Is depends on Time 3 emotion sharing ($\gamma = -.19$, *p<.05*), while Time 3 cognitive identification ($\gamma = -.12$, *n.s.*) and Time 3 affective identification ($\gamma = .06$, *n.s.*) did not have any effect on CWB-Is. The model explains moderate amounts of variance for OCB-Is ($\underline{R}^2 = .16$) and CWB-Is ($\underline{R}^2 = .06$). The overall model showed adequate fit to the data: the $x^2(461) = 888.06$, $p = .00$, RMSEA = .059, NNFI = .97, CFI = .97, and SRMR = .058.

Although the path coefficients shown in Figure 2 are consistent with hypotheses, it is necessary to test for non-hypothesized paths for the sake of completeness and to rule out rival hypotheses. There are a total of 2 such clarifying hypotheses: the non-hypothesized direct paths from emotional support to the two types of in-group favoritism (i.e., OCB-Is and CWB-Is) A test of the direct effects from emotional support to OCB-Is and CWB-Is permits us to ascertain whether emotion sharing fully mediates the effects of emotional support on in-group favoritism. With respect to the path from emotional support to OCB-Is, the chi—square difference test was non-significant ($\chi_d^2(1) = 2.74, n.s.$). With regard to the path from emotional support to CWB-Is, the chi—square difference test was also non-significant ($\chi_d^2(1) = 3.78, n.s.$).

DISCUSSION

Our main objective was to conceptualize emotion sharing in the organization, develop and test a measure of it, explore its nomological network, and in doing so, provide evidence of the role of employees' emotions for identification processes and in-group favoritism. We focused on three research questions that have not been previously considered: (1) Does emotion sharing

reinforce the cognitive and affective dimensions of organizational identification? (2) What can organizations do to enhance emotion sharing among their members? and (3) Does emotion sharing influence in-group favoritism in a distinct way from cognitive and affective identification? By answering these questions this paper potentially challenges what organizational literature suggests about the interrelatedness of emotion sharing and identification with the organization.

Theoretical Implications

Whereas past research has focused primarily on cognitive and affective mechanisms of identification with the organization, our study investigated its emotional underpinnings. We posited that since identification with the organization depends on what transpires between an individual and the organization, which mainly consists of interpersonal relationships, mechanisms for identification should have a social-interactional foundation.

By investigating the interpersonal bases of identification, this paper aimed to shift the discussion from a self-concept rationale, in which individuals identify with the organization because of their striving for self-enhancement or affiliation, to an interpersonal level, wherein emotion sharing influences identification.

First and foremost, our findings show that emotion sharing reinforces both members' cognitive and affective connections to the organization, and not the opposite. With regard to cognitive awareness of organizational membership, the influence of emotion sharing on cognitive identification resembles what Aron and Aron's (1986) define as inclusion-of-the-other-in-the-self (IOS), a process whereby the perspectives and identities of close others (e.g., co-members) are perceived as belonging to oneself. In other words, emotion sharing induces

cognitive identification by expanding an individual's view of self, by which people perceive an overlap of characteristics with co-members, and eventually the organization (see Hypothesis 1).

Similarly, our findings show that emotion sharing increases individuals' involvement with the organization. In line with Mumby and Putnam (1992) and Peters and Kashima (2007), we posited that when individuals share emotions with other co-members, their initial sense of anonymity gives way to feelings of community (Rimé, 2009). Thus, since co-members are recognized as representatives of the organization (Levinson 1965), emotion sharing should induce attachment to the organization as a whole. Accordingly, the results of the cross-lagged model confirm the influence of emotion sharing on affective commitment - and not the opposite - (see Hypothesis 2), and challenge previous research conclusion that group members share emotions more when they possess similar trait affectivity (George, 1990) or are committed to the group (Totterdell et al., 1998).

In addition, the results of the cross-lagged panel model appear to challenge previous findings that cognitive awareness of membership influences affective commitment. In fact, our results do not replicate either the cross-sectional findings of Bergami and Bagozzi (2000) or the experimental results of Ellemers and colleagues (1999), indirectly suggesting that cognition and affection mutually influence each other during the identification process.

Another important result of this work is confirmation that an organization's ability to manage its members' emotions can enhance emotion sharing, cognitive identification, and affective commitment with the organization. This in itself is an important finding because it empirically validates the importance of emotional capabilities for organizations (Huy, 1999; 2005). Specifically, our finding demonstrate that individuals who perceive emotional support

from their organization, in terms of empathy and authenticity, will likely be more open to share their emotions with others (see Hypothesis 3). Organizations might not display emotional support constantly. But those actions perceived as emotionally supportive may transform the meaning of an organization to its members, eventually increasing their identification (see Hypotheses 4 and 5).

The final contribution of this study is to ascertain how emotion sharing prompts in-group favoritism in distinct way from cognitive and affective dimensions of identification with the organization. By comparing the interpersonal nature of emotion sharing to a more general disposition toward the whole organization, this paper demonstrates that emotion sharing can serve as a strong instigator of people's action on behalf of co-members.

Our findings show that emotion sharing increases OCB-Is and reduces CWB-Is, while neither cognitive identification nor affective commitment have any impact on these interpersonal behaviors (Hypotheses 6 and 7). Thus, these results challenge previous findings that cognitive awareness of group membership (Tajfel, 1971) and group commitment (Ellemers et al., 1999; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000) are the main predictors of in-group favoritism and shift the focus for future research to interpersonal factors.

Practical Implications

While many managers may see employees' emotions as a threat to organizational performance, yet organizations are repositories of shared emotions that eventually influence their functioning (Huy, 1999). For example, sharing positive emotions brings people closer and seems almost necessary for forming and maintaining every relationship. Similarly, having the

possibility to share negative feelings should relieve employees' emotional exhaustion and increase social support among individuals.

Nevertheless, we suggest that the mere content of emotions shared among employees (positive or negative) is not as important as how organizations deal with them. Organizations that curtail emotionality will also slower, or even block the identification process of their members. In contrast, by fostering the sharing of emotions, organizations can increase cohesion among their members, thereby inducing reciprocal help and decreasing deviant behaviors.

One way for organizations to foster emotion sharing is to exhibit empathy and authenticity. By engaging in practices that show empathy to employees, organizations can create a work environment that fosters mutual understanding, identification, and most importantly, facilitates cooperation among individuals. Organizations can demonstrate empathy through managers acting on their behalf to show they can feel what their subordinates feel and that they care about employees' emotional well-being.

One viable managerial intervention is implementing personal management interviews (PMIs). PMIs refer to regular private meetings that occur between a supervisor and each of her or his immediate subordinates (Boss, 1983). These meetings are usually held on a regular basis and normally last between thirty minutes and an hour. PMIs focus on specific goals, such as interpersonal issues, individual needs, feedback on job performance, and even personal concerns or problems (Cameron, 2008). Over the years, literature has demonstrated how PMIs provide supervisors with an opportunity to respond in an empathetic rather than a judgmental way to employees' emotional needs, thereby indirectly fostering perceptions of organizational empathy among organizational members.

Similarly, building a climate of transparency where employees freely express their true feelings should increase the sharing of emotions and identification with the organization. Given this, managers may want to consider implementing emotion management sessions where they encourage employees to verbalize their private feelings about the organization. In fact, as Huy (2002) describes in his qualitative study, in many of these sessions individuals start to realize how similar their emotions are, eventually getting more close to each other.

In summarizing, whereas decades of organizational literature have shown how functional norms improve organizational performance, this study demonstrates that a proper management of employees' emotions can increase intra-organizational functioning.

Limitations

Although the present study makes a number of significant contributions to the existing literature, its findings need to be viewed with some caution. In fact, it is important to note several potential limitations of this study. For instance, because we conducted a survey research, our results may be subject to common method biases. Two factors reduced such threats in the current study. First, we used supervisors' rating for the two dependent variables (i.e., OCB-Is and CWB-Is), which are usually more subject to social desirability bias. In addition, we adopted a four waves longitudinal design for our data collection that allowed us to investigate the nomological network in which emotion sharing is embedded. This type of longitudinal design provides stronger evidence for the causal relationships between constructs than cross sectional studies where variables are measured simultaneously (Finkel, 1995). Additionally, in testing a cross-lagged panel model we assessed the long-term effects of emotion sharing on cognitive and affective identification and ruled out the possibility of reverse-causation.

As another limitation of our research, 92 percent of our sample was constituted by women, which may represent a bias in view of dysempowerment theory and interpersonal sensitivity (Montgomery, Kane, & Vance, 2004). That is, the proclivity to share emotions may vary depending on gender, due to women's heightened sensitivity compared to that of men. Thus, future research should address this issue by specifically comparing causes and effects of emotion sharing for women and men.

Finally, regarding the generalizability of our findings, it is important to point out that our study was conducted in the public sector (i.e., a hospital). Thus, extending the same research questions to private companies and nontraditional workplaces would represent an interesting direction.

CONCLUSION

Substantial progress has been made toward understanding of antecedents and consequences of organizational identification over the past 40 years, with the development of a wide range of perspectives. Our focus on emotion sharing consolidates advances made by previous research and suggests an important social mechanism (i.e., the sharing of emotions) that shapes the relationship between individuals and their organization. As such, we are hopeful that the findings presented in this paper can lead to more research on how organizations can improve their functioning through an appropriate management of emotions.

REFERENCES

TABLE 1

Descriptive Statistics, Composite Reliabilities, and Correlations

	Mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Empathy *Time 1*	3.62	.73	.90									
2. Authenticity *Time 1*	3.15	.94	.69	.83								
3. Emotion Sharing *Time 2*	3.14	.95	.37	.47	.75							
4. Emotion Sharing *Time 3*	3.17	.97	.33	.48	.65	.79						
5. Cognitive Identification *Time 2*	4.09	1.34	.40	.48	.37	.34	.92					
6. Cognitive Identification *Time 3*	4.24	1.28	.41	.48	.45	.49	.73	.93				
7. Affective Identification *Time 2*	5.54	1.27	.46	.57	.36	.35	.67	.58	.95			
8. Affective Identification *Time 3*	5.64	1.22	.50	.62	.43	.53	.58	.74	.78	.94		
9. OCB-Is *Time 4*	4.22	.65	.12	.12	.26	.41	.13	.19	.27	.23	.93	
10. CWB-Is *Time 4*	1.70	.85	-.14	-.17	-.19	-.22	-.12	-.18	-.15	-.13	-.60	.93

FIGURE 1

The interrelatedness of emotion sharing and identification with the organization
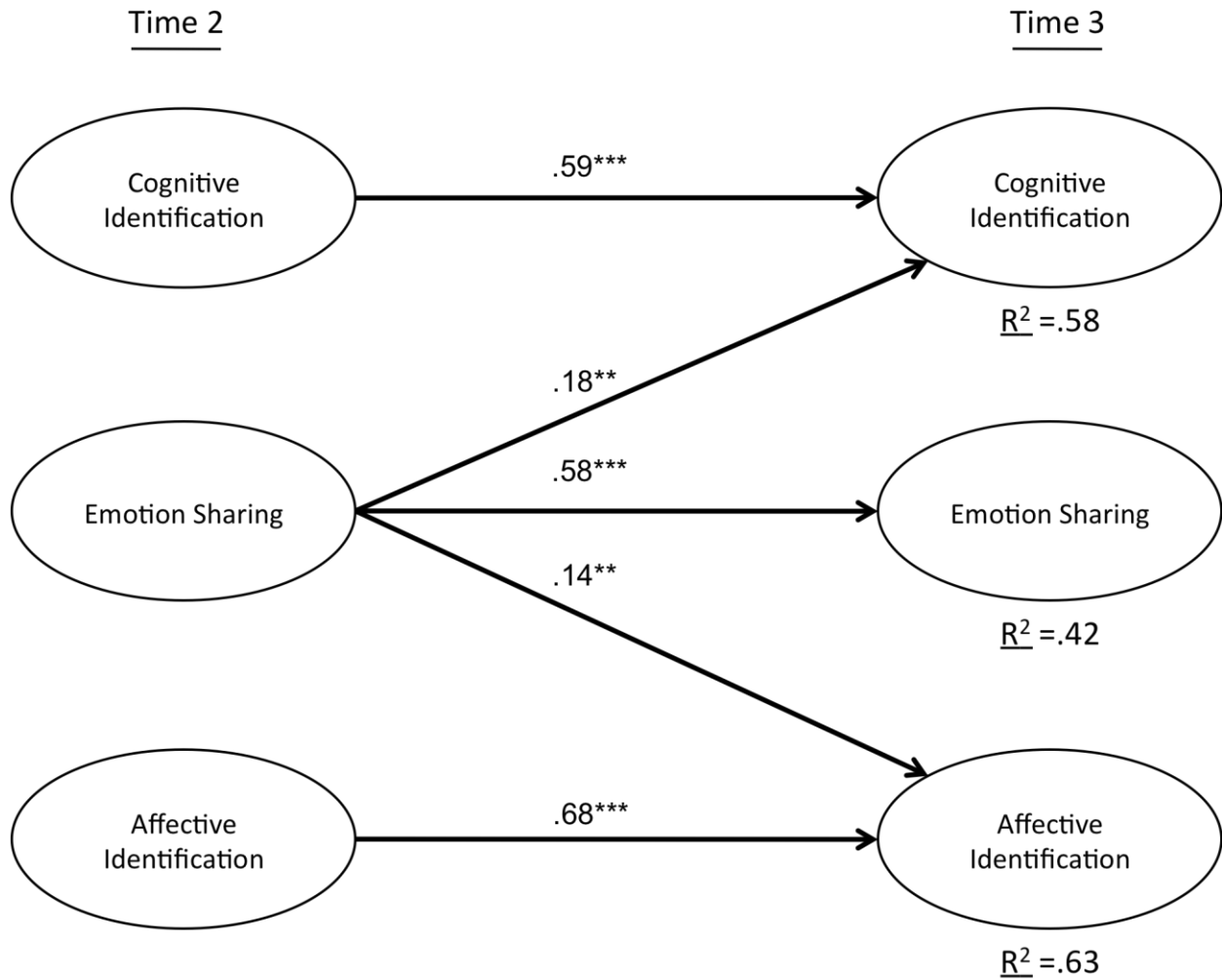
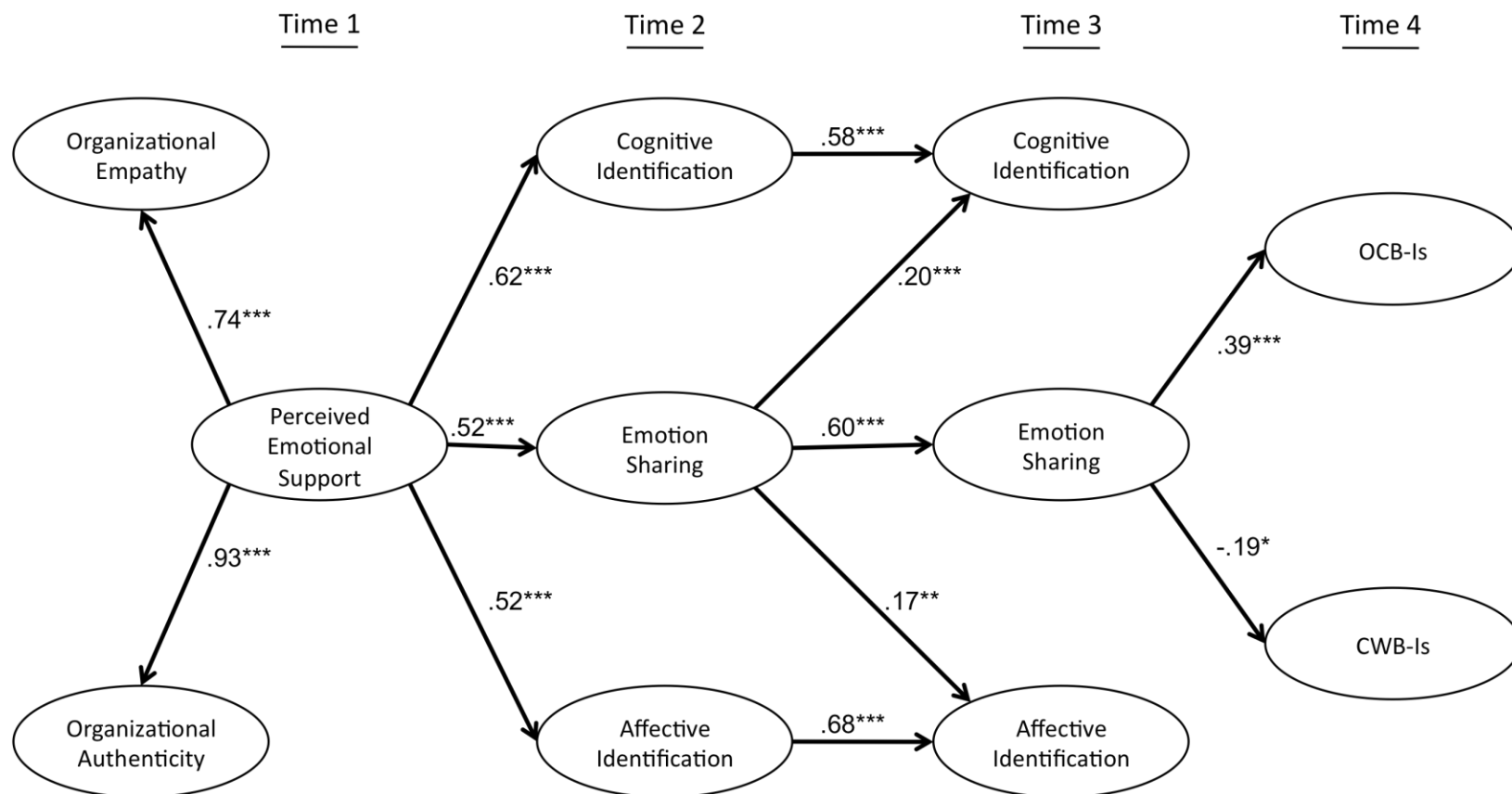Note: only significant paths are reported.

*p< .05, **p< .01, ***p<.001.

FIGURE 2

Organizational Antecedents and Interpersonal Consequences of Emotion Sharing

Note: only significant paths are reported.

*p< .05, **p< .01, ***p<.001.