Article

Happy but Deviant: How Does Positive Affect Disrupt Social Sustainability?

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Abstract: Despite extensive research on the role of negative affect (NA) in causing interpersonal deviance, the role of positive affect (PA) remains unclear. Responding to the call for more nuanced research on the interpersonal effects of PA, this study explores the neglected facet of PA, the agentic rather than communal aspect, in predicting interpersonal deviance. Drawing upon regulatory focus theory and social labeling theory, we explore how PA predicts interpersonal deviance. We further propose that this relationship will be mediated by social risk-taking and moderated by task interdependence. Multi-source field data provide support for the hypothesis that PA is positively related to interpersonal deviance, which is mediated by social risk-taking. In addition, the relationship is significant only in the condition of high task interdependence that activates the agentic aspect of PA. This study concludes that the beneficial effects of PA are not universal, and that PA at work may have unintended negative consequences, such as interpersonal deviance. Implications for theory and research are discussed.

Keywords: positive affect; social risk-taking; interpersonal deviance; task interdependence

1. Introduction

By promoting a supportive and positive work environment that meets the social and psychological needs of employees, organizations can enhance the overall health, well-being, and viability of their workforce, thereby ensuring the long-term sustainability of their business [1,2]. In particular, favorable working relationships among employees are a crucial aspect of social sustainability in the workplace, as they promote open communication, collaboration, and mutual respect, which are essential for creating a positive work environment [3]. However, interpersonal deviance, such as verbal abuse and gossiping about coworkers, tends to destroy the social rubric at the workplace and threaten the wellbeing of the targeted individuals or victims [4]. This type of workplace deviance directed at others incurs severe costs to organizations by impairing the work climate and employee performance [5,6]. In an effort to understand the causes of interpersonal deviance and reduce its harms, previous studies have examined various antecedents, such as the Big Five factors [7], motivational traits [8], Machiavellianism [1], and affective experiences [8]. With respect to interpersonal deviance, affect research has typically focused on negative affect (NA) (e.g., [9,10]), assuming that positive affect (PA) is associated with prosocial behavior but not or negatively associated with interpersonal deviance [11,12]. The present research challenges this prevailing assumption and explores a dark side of PA in interpersonal settings.

Affect research has predominantly highlighted the benefits of PA, particularly in social and relational domains [8]. For example, in the field of positive psychology, PA is associated with prosocial behavior [12,13] because generous and broad mindsets arising from PA prioritize the needs of others over their own and value "getting along" over "getting ahead" [14]. In this line of research, the communal aspect of PA has been unitarily focused on, disregarding that PA has multiple facets. Specifically, PA comprises dual aspects, i.e., communal

and agentic aspects [15], and the latter is also relevant to interpersonal behaviors [16]. Unfortunately, the literature has overlooked the agentic aspect, which should be considered for a comprehensive understanding of PA.

An agentic nature refers to the feeling of being in control of one's actions and their consequences [17]. An agentic person is urged to exert their influence on others and reveal qualities such as assertiveness and excitement-seeking [18]. Prior studies have mostly examined the communal aspect of PA in interpersonal contexts and, thus, are heavily tilted toward positive, affiliative outcomes. Responding to the call for more nuanced research on PA (e.g., [19]), we explore under what conditions the agentic aspect of PA may be expressed, thus leading to unexpected dysfunctional interpersonal behavior. Accordingly, this study poses the following questions: When does PA lead to interpersonal deviance, and why? To resolve these questions, we explore a mediating process through which PA leads to interpersonal deviance and a contextual factor that affects the strength and direction of the effects of PA. Specifically, the present study tests if social risk-taking mediates the relationship between PA and interpersonal deviance and if task interdependence operates as a trait-activating cue that galvanizes the agentic aspect of PA. In summary, Figure 1 presents the research model of this study.
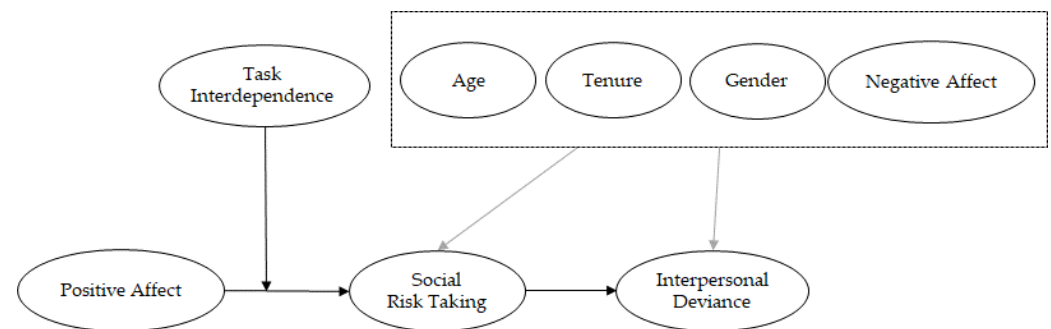

Figure 1. Theoretical framework.

The current work advances the literature in several meaningful ways. First, challenging the prevailing beliefs regarding PA, it examines potential negative consequences of PA on interpersonal relationships. Developing a balanced view of PA based on its two facets is crucial in that PA can be an unexpected source of social dominance and deviance. Second, this study presents a theoretical account of a plausible mechanism through which PA may lead to interpersonal deviance. Understanding the mediating mechanisms through which PA may increase interpersonal deviance advances in the literature and inform recommendations for regulating and expressing PA in a constructive way. Finally, the current theoretical model further proposes a boundary condition (i.e., task interdependence) that accentuates the agentic function of PA, leading to social risk-taking and interpersonal deviance. Understanding the boundary condition of the relationship between PA and interpersonal deviance can help provide a more nuanced understanding and offer new insights into the operation of PA.

2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

2.1. Positive Affect and Interpersonal Deviance

Workplace deviance is defined as voluntary behavior in which employees either lack the motivation to conform to and/or become motivated to violate normative expectations in the social context [5,20]. Such behavior is classified along two dimensions: interpersonal and organizational. Interpersonal deviance is directed toward others and violates workplace norms for mutual respect and harms targeted individuals and the organization [21]. In the context of affect research, NA, such as frustration and anger, is often implicated as the cause of aggression and interpersonal deviance. However, recent research in psychol-

ogy and neuroscience has suggested that PA may play an important role in explaining aggressive behavior as well [22].

To explore this function of PA, we draw on regulatory focus theory [23] and the biopsychological theory of personality [24]. According to regulatory focus theory, there are two motivational foci—promotion and prevention. Promotion focus refers to a person's tendency to pursue gains, whereas prevention focus is a person's tendency to avoid loss [25]. This perspective overlaps with Gray's biopsychological theory of personality, which suggests two brain-based systems shaping a person's behavior and decision-making: a behavioral activation system (BAS) and a behavioral inhibition system (BIS). BIS bespeaks fear of failure and inhibits behaviors in response to punishments or threats, and thus is associated with avoidance motivation. By contrast, BAS is involved in activating behaviors in response to rewards or incentives, and thus is associated with approach motivation [26]. Affect researchers showed that PA corresponds to promotion focus and BAS (approach motivation), whereas NA reflects prevention focus and BIS (avoidance motivation) [27,28].

Studies on the motivational underpinnings of deviance have indicated the possibility that PA, particularly its agentic aspect, increases interpersonal deviance [4]. BAS is associated with impulsivity and stimulation-seeking, which increase the arousal level and trigger more deviant actions that can satisfy sensation-seeking desire [22,29]. Thus, as a manifestation of BAS, PA is mostly associated with reward-seeking and the dopaminergic system, which underlies approach motivation and behavior [30]. For example, [8] showed that PA interacts with perspective-taking to lead to moral disengagement and incivility. The cognitive flexibility and approach orientation elicited by PA (cf. broaden-and-build theory, [31]) deactivate moral self-regulation and amplify the expression of one's trait and personal motivation [32]. Accordingly, individuals high in PA and low in perspective-taking tend to freely express their self-serving mindset and morally disengage, thereby exhibiting uncivil behavior [8]. Hence, the agentic aspect of PA is likely to increase interpersonal deviance in social interactions. This rationale leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1. *PA is positively related to interpersonal deviance.*

2.2. Social Risk-Taking as a Mediating Mechanism

Risk-taking refers to behavior that leads to potential danger while providing the opportunity to obtain a reward [33]. Social risk-taking represents risk-taking in a social context, where the risky decisions of an actor also influence the payoff for another individual [34]. As a manifestation of promotion focus and BAS, PA enhances a sense of agency and active pursuit of goals, rewards, and stimulation [11], which may encourage risk-taking in the social domain.

PA can promote social risk-taking. Individuals high in PA tend to overestimate the likelihood of positive future consequences of their actions [35] and are likely to be socially intrepid and dominant [16]. For example, individuals high in PA are prone to making assertive and impolite requests compared to those with neutral or NA [36]. The language of requests requires speakers to strike a delicate balance between their levels of politeness and directness, because they need to achieve their goal while maintaining an appropriate face given the risks of rejection or being offensive [36]. Individuals high in PA tend to use a more direct and less polite request strategy because they underestimate the likelihood of being rejected or offensive. By contrast, individuals high in NA tend to adopt a more cautious, polite request strategy because they fear being rejected and losing face. Similarly, extraversion, which is often used as a proxy for PA [16,37], is significantly related to social types of risks (e.g., [38,39]). Drawing upon previous studies on promotion focus, BAS, and extroversion, we submit the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2. *PA is positively related to social risk-taking.*

Deviance is a social construct, meaning that it is defined by society and can vary from one society to another. In some societies, certain behaviors may be considered deviant, while they may be considered normal in others [40]. According to social labeling theory [41], behaviors are "deviant" only when society labels them as such [42]. Thus, the label of deviance can occur even if a person's behavior is not truly intended to be deviant. The labeling of someone as deviant is often based on societal values, biases, and power dynamics in a way that is unfair or unsupported by objective facts and evidence. When an individual is labeled as deviant, it can have a considerable impact on how they are perceived and treated by others in society [21]. In other words, it is not the act itself that constitutes deviance, but rather the way in which it is perceived and responded to by others. For example, even though an employee's intention may be to give an honest, straightforward opinion in the office, their colleagues and supervisor may perceive their feedback as offensive and deviant behavior.

Social risk-taking can be often perceived as rude in workplace interactions. According to face theory, people are not only motivated to protect their own social images or "face" in interpersonal exchanges but also obligated, via expectations of politeness, to protect others' face by ensuring that they do not embarrass their interaction partners [43,44]. However, social risk-takers may not filter their thoughts and comments in the name of frankness. The problem is that what the social risk-taker considers candor may actually hurt their colleagues. For example, common conceptualizations of politeness in social interactions have traditionally framed politeness and honesty as incompatible, posing civility and candor as tradeoffs that help communicators maintain face [45,46]. For these reasons, social risk-takers are likely to impinge on others' personal rights and/or face, which can generate the labeling of social deviance by others. Thus, we propose that individuals with high PA may commit interpersonal deviance because they tend to take social risks when interacting with others. This argument leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3. *Social risk-taking mediates the relationship between PA and interpersonal deviance.*

2.3. Task Interdependence as a Moderator of the Positive Affect–Social Risk-Taking Relationship

Task interdependence refers to "each group member's perception of the extent to which he or she needed to interact with other group members when working on task" [47,48]. A highly interdependent task environment may increase the levels of cooperation demands, role conflicts, and workloads while diminishing role clarity and control over jobs [47,49,50]. As goal achievement and rewards are based on the combined contributions of members toward a group task in high task-interdependence situations, individuals become more observant of others' performance and act in a socially defensive manner to avoid falling victim to members who free ride on others' effort [47,51]. Under this circumstance, individuals can even become socially dominant to push others to strive harder when they observe others shirking responsibilities.

Task interdependence may operate as a trait-activating cue that makes the agentic aspect of PA salient in shaping interpersonal behaviors. On the basis of promotion focus and BAS, which motivate active pursuit of rewards [25,26], the agentic aspect of PA urges people to seek out the resources they need to thrive [30,52]. This function of PA may become more salient and strongly directed toward others under high task-interdependence situations that force individuals to rely on others to achieve goals. In this sense, task interdependence operates as a positive contingency for the social risk-taking of individuals with high PA who actively pursue incentives with greater sensitivity to rewards and opportunities, as indicated by their tendencies of promotion focus and BAS [53]. Those with high PA tend to view risk-related gains optimistically by underestimating the threat or cost incurred by the risk [54], such that they do not mind taking social risks when there are potential gains [55]. Therefore, we expect that the positive effect of PA on social risk-taking is amplified in high task-interdependence situations. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4. *Task interdependence positively moderates the relationship between PA and social risk-taking such that PA is more positively related to social risk-taking when task interdependence is high than when low.*

2.4. Mediation Moderated by Task Interdependence

We further propose a moderated mediation hypothesis by combining Hypotheses 3 and 4. As task interdependence amplifies the positive association between PA and social risk-taking, this task environment may positively moderate the indirect effect of PA on interpersonal deviance through social risk-taking. Under a high task-interdependence condition, individuals with high PA tend to be primed with goal achievement through collective efforts and become willing to take social risks, aiming to achieve their own goals by influencing other members on the team. Unintendedly, their risk-taking behavior may be considered rude or even aggressive in workplace interactions, as they do not mind making assertive and less polite requests, causing their interaction partners to lose face [36]. We propose the following moderated mediation hypothesis:

Hypothesis 5. *Task interdependence positively moderates the indirect effect of PA on interpersonal deviance through social risk-taking such that the indirect effect is more positive when task interdependence is high than when low.*

3. Methods

3.1. Research Setting, Participants, and Procedures

We collected data from four Korean companies, representing different industries, namely, semiconductor equipment manufacturing, flat panel display equipment manufacturing, vacuum technology, and marine and fire insurance. The participants were from a diverse range of departments and functions, including sales, human resource management, finance, research and development, production, and quality control. Due to endorsement by the top management of these companies, 97% (66 out of 68) of the supervisor surveys were returned, and 78% (359 out of 459) of the employee surveys were returned. Excluding questionnaires with missing information and those that did not match supervisor ratings, the final analysis sample consisted of 293 employees from 66 work teams, and the final response rate was 64%. The education levels of the participating employees were divided as follows: high school (10.9%), two-year college degree (41%), bachelor's degree (41.3%), and graduate degree (5.1%). Their job positions were grouped as associate (21.8%), senior associate (21.2%), assistant manager (28.3%), department manager (24.6%), and deputy general manager or higher (4.1%). The average organizational tenure was 4.63 years (SD = 3.70) with an average age of 33.03 years (SD = 5.13), with 12.6% being women. The average organizational tenure of the supervisors was 10.22 years (SD = 5.84) with an average age of 41.19 years (SD = 4.18), with 3% being women. The education levels of the supervisors were divided as follows: high school (13.4%), two-year college degree (28.4%), bachelor's degree (44.8%), and graduate degree (11.9%). Their job positions were grouped into department manager (26.2%) and deputy general manager or higher (72.3%).

3.2. Measures

Data were collected from two sources to reduce concerns related to common method bias [56]. Employees completed a questionnaire in which they reported PA, social risk-taking, task interdependence, and their demographic information. Supervisors completed a separate survey in which they evaluated the interpersonal deviance of each of the participating employees. All variables were assessed using multi-item scales with acceptable reliability coefficients. For all items, the response format was a six-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree).

PA. To test the effect of PA hypothesized in the current model, we measured trait PA, which represents a stable and consistent affective disposition indicating a person's tendency to react to various situations in a positive manner [11]. We adopted a 10-item measure

(α = 0.91) of PA from the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; [57]). The participants reported their general PA by rating the following items: "In general, I feel (1) interested, (2) excited, (3) strong, (4) enthusiastic, (5) proud, (6) inspired, (7) determined, (8) attentive, (9) active, and (10) alert".

Social risk-taking. By adopting items from [58], we used a three-item scale (α = 0.79) to measure the social risk-taking intention of members. The items included "How much do you feel comfortable about the following behaviors: (a) Admitting that your tastes are different from those of your colleagues, (b) Disagreeing with your supervisor on a major issue, and (c) Defending an unpopular issue that you believe in at a social occasion".

Task interdependence. To assess task interdependence, we used four items (α = 0.85) developed by [59], which included (a) "I frequently must coordinate my efforts with others", (b) "Jobs performed by team members are related to one another", (c) "For the team to perform well members must communicate well", and (d) "To achieve high performance, it is important to rely on each other".

Interpersonal deviance. The 19-item index of deviance from [5] included two subscales, namely, interpersonal deviance and organizational deviance, which comprised seven and twelve items, respectively. We adopted the first subscale to assess interpersonal deviance. Specifically, supervisors rated each participating employees' interpersonal deviance using the following five items (α = 0.95): (a) "This team member made fun of someone at work", (b) "This team member said something hurtful to someone at work", (c) "This team member cursed at someone at work", (d) "This team member acted rudely toward someone at work", and (e) "This team member publicly embarrassed someone at work". Two items from the original scale ("This team member made an ethnic, religious, or racial remark at work" and "This team member played a mean prank on someone at work.") were excluded because they were not appropriate in the context of Korean work culture.

Control variables. In our analysis, we considered the demographic information of the participants, including age, gender, and tenure, because these personal characteristics could potentially confound the results of the study [60,61]. In addition, we controlled for the effect of NA in hypothesis testing so that the results would reveal the distinct effect of PA after taking into account the effect of NA. NA was reported by the participants who rated a 10-item measure (α = 0.92) from PANAS [28], which included the following items: "In general, I feel (1) distressed, (2) upset, (3) guilty, (4) scared, (5) hostile, (6) irritable, (7) ashamed, (8) nervous, (9) jittery, and (10) afraid".

4. Results

4.1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

To provide evidence for the distinctness of the study variables, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed using maximum likelihood estimation. Results confirmed the four-factor structure of the variables being studied. The fit of the four-factor model (χ^2 (df = 146) = 398.51, $p < 0.001$, CFI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.08) was better than any alternative factor models. For example, the CFA of a three-factor model in which PA and social risk-taking were loaded onto a single factor produced a significantly worse fit (χ^2 (df = 149) = 555.39, $p < 0.001$, CFI = 0.89, RMSEA = 0.10; chi-square difference test: $\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf = 3) = 156.88, $p < 0.001$).

The descriptive statistics and correlations among all study and control variables are presented in Table 1. Among the control variables, age is positively associated with social risk-taking and interpersonal deviance, whereas NA is negatively related to social risk-taking and task interdependence. As hypothesized, PA is positively related to social risk-taking and interpersonal deviance.

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and correlations: individual level ($n = 293$).

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age	33.03	5.13								
2. Tenure	4.64	3.70	0.47 **							
3. Gender	0.13	0.33	−0.28 **	−0.05						
4. Negative Affect	2.57	0.87	−0.02	0.04	0.11					
5. Positive Affect	3.86	0.80	0.10	−0.07	−0.01	−0.36 **				
6. Social Risk-Taking	3.96	0.79	0.15 *	0.05	0.02	−0.25 **	0.29 **			
7. Task Interdependence	4.66	0.48	0.07	0.01	−0.03	−0.12 *	0.08	0.26 **		
8. Interpersonal Deviance	2.03	0.88	0.16 **	−0.06	−0.06	−0.02	0.22 **	0.26 **	0.11	

Note. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$.

4.2. Hypothesis Testing

The present theoretical propositions were tested using the PROCESS macro [62]. The results are presented in Table 2. Among the control variables included, age shows a significant positive relationship with interpersonal deviance ($b = 0.03$, $p < 0.01$). Hypothesis 1 suggests a direct, positive effect of PA on interpersonal deviance. As expected, the analysis indicates that PA exerts a significant positive effect on interpersonal deviance ($b = 0.24$, $p < 0.01$), confirming Hypothesis 1. Our analysis also confirms Hypothesis 2, that is, PA is positively related to social risk-taking ($b = 0.25$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 2. Results of main and moderation effects.

Variable	Social Risk-Taking		Interpersonal Deviance	
	b	*se*	*b*	*se*
Intercept	3.56 ***	0.36	−0.15	0.51
Controls				
Age	0.02 +	0.01	0.03 **	0.01
Tenure	0.00	0.00	−0.00 *	0.00
Gender	0.16	0.15	−0.08	0.18
Negative affect	−0.10 +	0.06	0.13 +	0.07
Mediator				
Social risk-taking			0.24 **	0.08
Independent variable				
Positive affect	0.25 ***	0.07	0.24 **	0.08
Moderator				
Task interdependence	0.33 ***	0.10		
Interaction				
Task interdependence × Positive affect	0.29 *	0.11		

Note. + $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Hypothesis 3 posits the mediating role of social risk-taking in the relationship between PA and interpersonal deviance. The results in Table 2 showed that social risk-taking is a positive predictor of interpersonal deviance ($b = 0.24$, $p < 0.01$). Moreover, the indirect effect of PA on interpersonal deviance through social risk-taking is significant ($b = 0.07$, 95% confidence interval (CI) [0.01; 0.17] based on 10,000 bootstrapped samples). Thus, Hypothesis 3 is supported.

Hypothesis 4 proposes that task interdependence positively moderates the relationship between PA and social risk-taking. As shown in Table 2, the interaction between PA and task interdependence is significant ($b = 0.29$, $p < 0.05$), supporting Hypothesis 4. We further probed the significance of the interaction by comparing the slopes associated with high and low task-interdependence conditions. Consistent with our expectation, Figure 2 shows that PA is positively related to social risk-taking under high task interdependence ($b = 0.38$, $p < 0.05$) but not significantly related to social risk-taking intention under low task interdependence ($b = 0.01$, ns.).
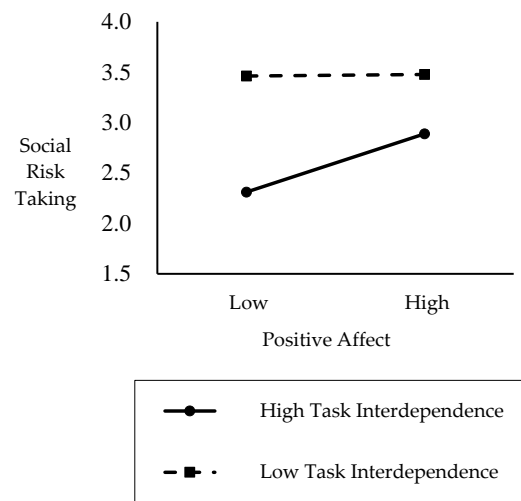
Figure 2. Moderation by task interdependence.

Hypothesis 5 suggests that the conditional indirect effects of PA on interpersonal deviance through social risk-taking vary depending on the level of task interdependence. To test this hypothesis, we used the PROCESS macro based on a bootstrapping procedure [62], which allowed us to test the entire moderated mediation model in a single analysis, rather than testing each part of the model separately. High and low levels of the moderator were operationalized at one standard deviation above and below the mean. Table 3 reports that the conditional indirect effect for PA on interpersonal deviance is significant when task interdependence is high ($b = 0.09$, 95% CI [0.03; 0.20]) but not significant when task interdependence is low ($b = 0.03$, 95% CI [−0.01; 0.11]). The indirect effects of PA on interpersonal deviance through social risk-taking significantly differ across high versus low levels of task interdependence, supporting Hypothesis 5.

Table 3. Moderated indirect effects of positive affect on interpersonal deviance.

Independent Variable	Mediator	Dependent Variable	Moderator Level	Effect	Boot SE	95% Bias-Corrected CI	
Positive Affect	Social Risk-Taking	Interpersonal Deviance	Task Interdependence				
			Low	0.0256	0.0305	(−0.0142	0.1101)
			Medium	0.0587	0.0506	(0.0140	0.1364)
			High	0.0918	0.0419	(0.0282	0.2002)

In addition to primary analysis using the PROCESS macro, we conducted a complementary analysis using structural equation modelling (SEM) to validate the relationships between the study variables further. The hypothesized structural model exhibited a decent fit to the data: χ^2 ($df = 116$) = 363.65, $p < 0.001$, CFI = 0.92, RMSEA = 0.09. SEM results with standardized structural coefficients are shown in Figure 3.
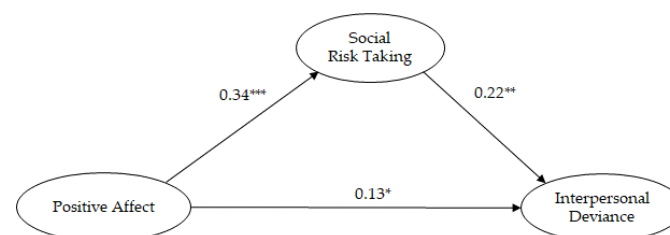

Figure 3. Results of Structural Equation Modeling. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

5. Discussion

5.1. Implications for Theory and Research

This study contributes to the literature on interpersonal deviance. Complementing prior research that has mostly explored the relationship between NA and deviance, the present study moves the literature forward by examining the effect of PA. We theorize and empirically demonstrate that a positive association may exist between PA and deviant behavior and that this link may be mediated by an individual's tendency towards social risk-taking. The results confirm that when members are high in PA, they are likely to engage in interpersonally deviant behaviors because they tend to take social risks.

Our analysis also reveals that the strength of the relationship between PA and interpersonal deviance depends on the level of task interdependence. The current findings indicate that highly interdependent tasks can trigger the agentic aspect of PA (feelings of energy, confidence, and control) rather than its affiliative aspect (feelings of warmth, sociability, and affection), which in turn may increase the likelihood of taking social risks and engaging in interpersonal deviance. By contrast, when task interdependence is low, such effects of PA on risk-taking and deviance are not significant. The current findings highlight the importance of investigating the potential influence of contextual contingencies and boundary conditions that shape whether people with high PA are more or less likely to take social risks and engage in interpersonal deviance. This study offers new theoretical insight by shedding light on why and when individuals with high PA may exhibit dysfunctional interpersonal behavior, as recognized by others in organizational settings. Through such efforts, researchers can gain a better understanding of the social emergence of interpersonal deviance and how it may be prevented in work organizations.

The findings of the current analysis also have important practical implications for managers seeking to reduce interpersonal deviance in the workplace. One way to address the detrimental interactions among employees is to adjust the task environment in ways that channel the goal orientation of employees towards a constructive direction. When task interdependence is high and thus one's goal achievement depends on others, employees with high PA are more likely to engage in deviant behaviors, as they are willing to take social risks to pursue their goals given their tendency towards promotion focus and BAS [16,36]. By contrast, when task interdependence is low, employees may feel comfortable with the situation and pursue harmonious interpersonal relations for social approval [14], thereby engaging in less social risk-taking and exhibiting less deviant behaviors. Managers may redesign the task procedures and workflows to match the psychological needs of employees and diminish the likelihood of interpersonal deviance among them.

Second, managers may identify other ways to reduce interpersonal deviance in the workplace. Because interpersonal deviance damages the working environment and diminishes productivity via the psychological damage it causes, practicing managers are urged to intervene and minimize such dysfunctional interpersonal behaviors [63]. Considering the challenges associated with task interdependence [47,49,50], managers may improve the task environment by addressing potential threats in task interdependence such as role clarity, workloads, and role conflicts. These efforts can help reduce the negative effects of high task interdependence and promote a positive interpersonal climate. Finally, managers may systematically intervene to minimize interpersonal deviance and create work contexts that are conducive to social sustainability in an organization [63]. Such managerial interventions may involve providing clear guidelines for acceptable behavior, encouraging open communication and conflict resolution, and supporting employees with training to help them handle challenging situations effectively. Our analysis showed the tendency of employees with positive affectivity to commit social deviance when they become overly comfortable with interpersonal interactions. Accordingly, managers should set clear norms and expectations, particularly in directing the behaviors of highly passionate and oftentimes self-engrossed employees toward a desirable and constructive direction. In this regard, managers can take steps to model appropriate behavior and hold employees accountable for their actions. By setting a positive example and enforcing consequences for deviant

behavior, managers can create a culture of respect and cooperation within the organization. Overall, managers must take a proactive approach to addressing interpersonal deviance and creating a positive and supportive work environment.

5.2. Study Limitations

The findings of this study should be interpreted with caution considering the following potential limitations. First, the current data were collected at a single point in time, so we could not ascertain the causal direction between the study variables based on current cross-sectional data. For example, if individuals with high PA perceive that they have been labeled as deviant, they may experience negative social consequences, such as social stigma or exclusion [42]. Consequently, they may take social risks in an attempt to address situations that they perceive as unfair. Therefore, our analysis does not offer a clear inference on whether negative evaluation and attitude cause social risk-taking or the other way around. To determine the direction of causality and further explore alternative theoretical possibilities, further studies should collect data over multiple time points using a longitudinal study design or conduct experiments.

Second, the data for our study were collected from Korean organizations, so the cultural values of Korea may have affected the patterns of results. For example, certain cultural values, such as collectivism (a focus on group harmony) or high power distance (a respect for authority), may affect relationships among colleagues and with supervisors in Korean organizations. To increase confidence in the external validity, the current findings should be replicated in different samples or cultural settings.

Third, we used an other-reported measure of interpersonal deviance, in line with our use of the social labeling theory of deviance [42] and to avoid the problems in common method variance [64]. In addition to the theoretical adequacy based on social labeling theory, deviance may be better captured by a non-self-report measure because individuals are unwilling to disclose deviant behaviors on a self-report owing to ego-protective and ego-enhancing biases [20]. Nevertheless, examining whether there is a difference in self-reported versus other-reported acts of workplace deviance in their nomological network, including antecedents and consequences, will be intriguing.

Several directions for further research efforts can be proposed to enrich our understanding of interpersonal deviance in organizations. The present study makes important contributions by identifying PA as a predictor of interpersonal deviance and its associated intervening mechanism and a boundary condition of the relationship. Notwithstanding, the dynamics involved in each construct in the current theoretical model may be more complex that we theorized and tested. Further studies may identify additional moderating contingencies in the domains of relational qualities or organizational contexts that may operate simultaneously to modify the relationship between PA and interpersonal deviance. For example, other individual and organizational factors, such as personality, leadership style, and organizational culture, may also play a role as contingencies. In addition, alternative mediating processes, such as emotional exhaustion, underlying the relationship should be considered. Future research should elaborate on these additional complexities and continue to build on and refine our understanding of the emergence of deviant behaviors in work organizations.

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