



# Waking Up on the Wrong Side of the Desk: Sources of Employee Affective Reactions and the Effect on Work Performance

Nancy Rothbard  
University of Pennsylvania  
Wharton School

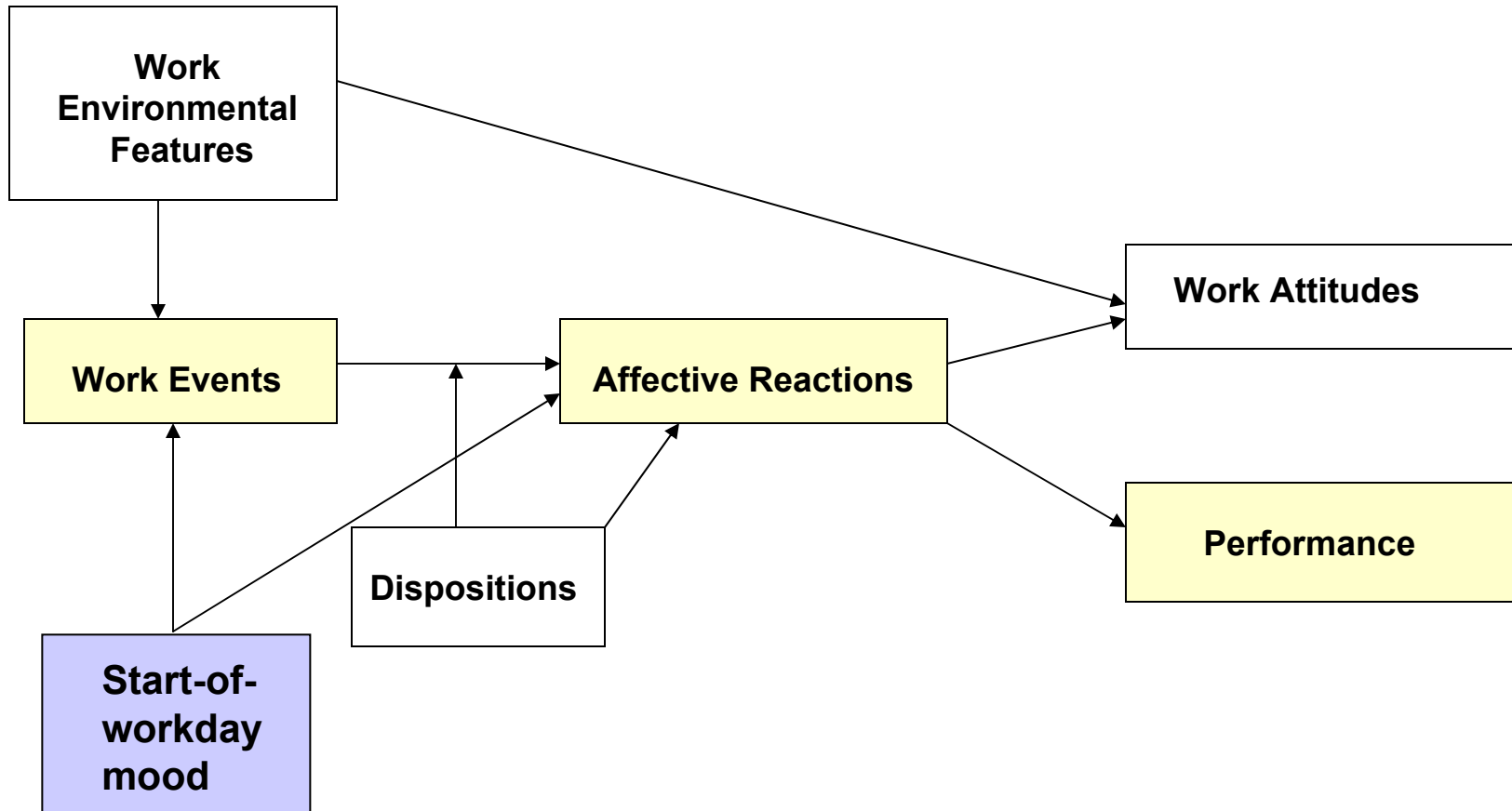
Steffanie Wilk  
Ohio State University  
Fisher College of Business

# Research Questions

- Sources of Affective Reactions
  - Work Events: Do work events influence affective reactions?
  - Start-of-day mood: Does how you start each day matter?
- Performance Consequences
  - How does affect during the work day influence daily performance behaviors?

# Affective Events Theory

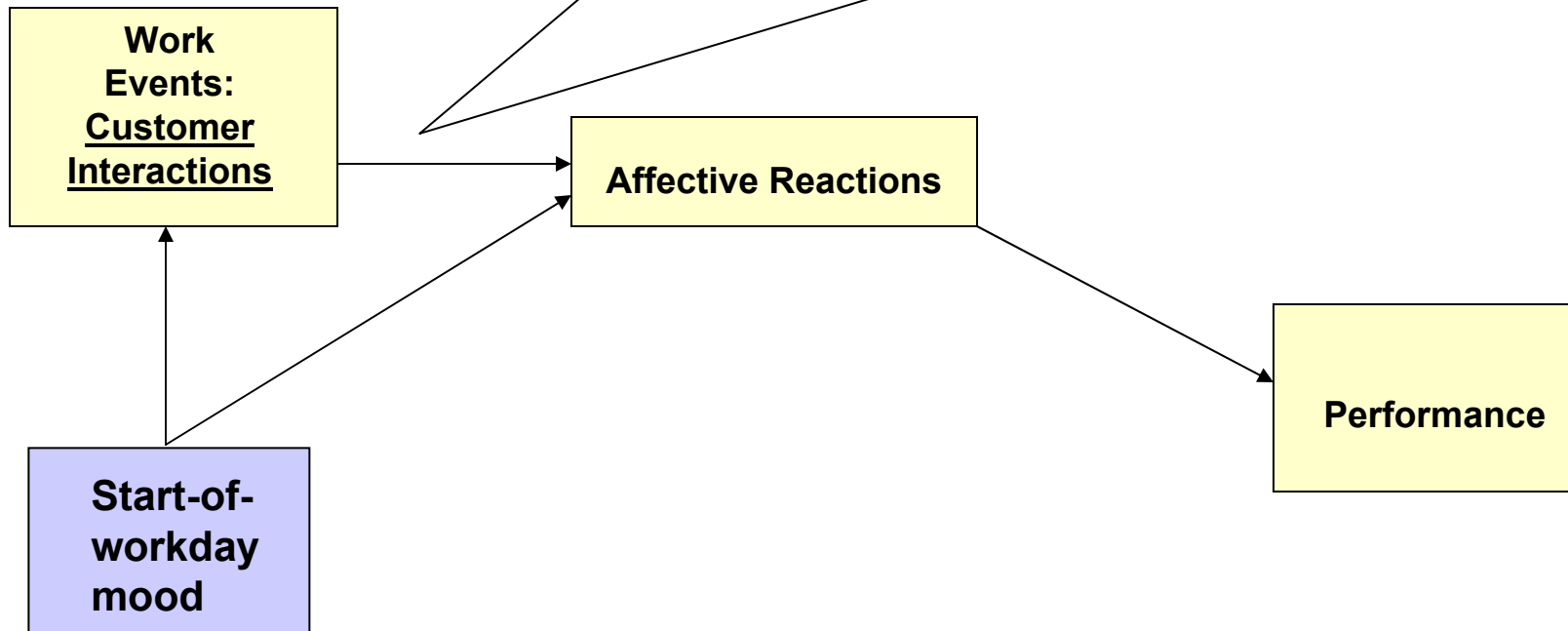
## Weiss & Cropanzano (1996)



# Work Events and Affective Reactions

Cognitive appraisal of the event;  
Does it facilitate my goals? (Henkel & Hinsz, 2004)

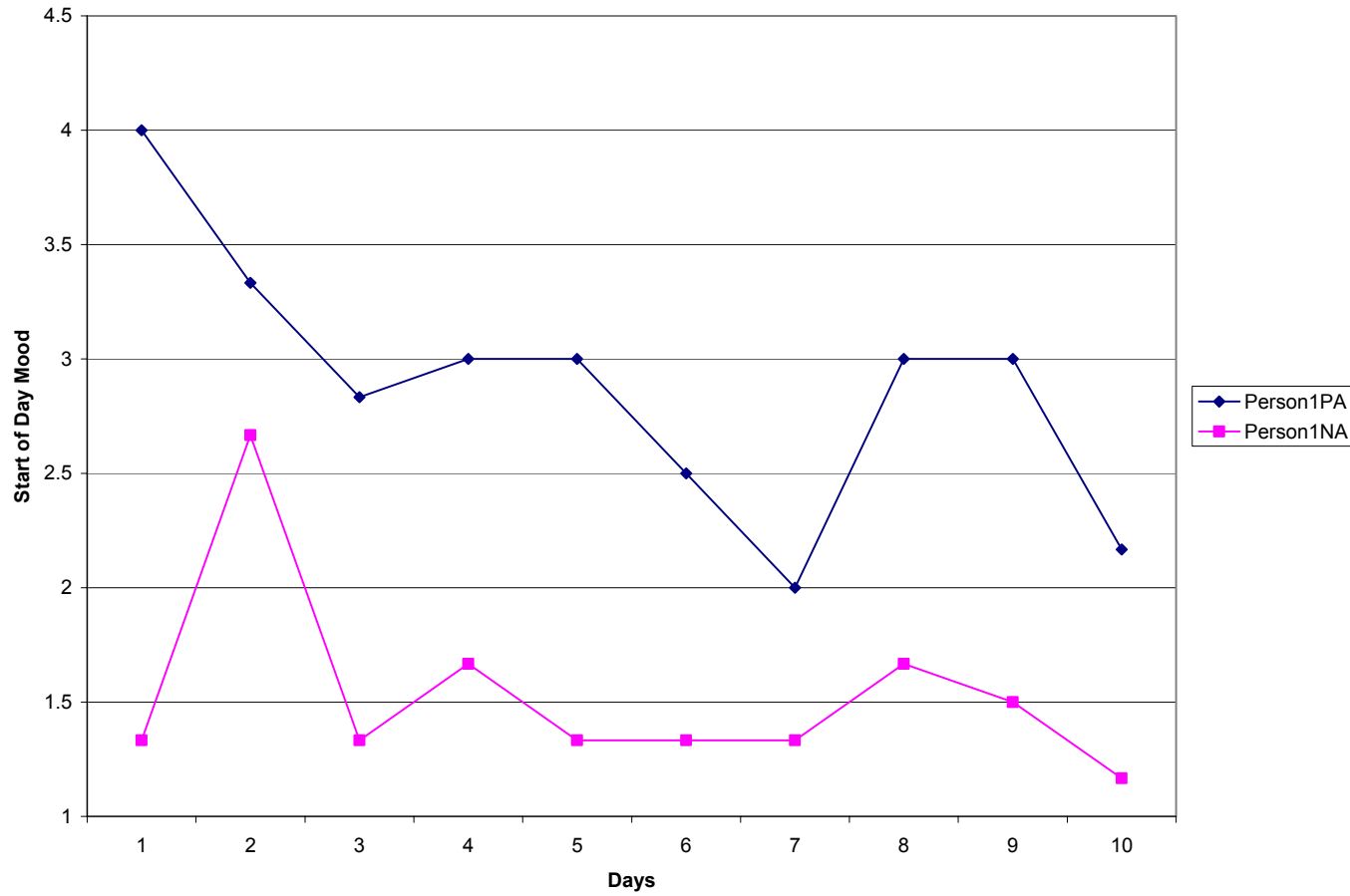
H1: Perceived positive (negative) customer affect is positively related to positive (negative) affective reactions.



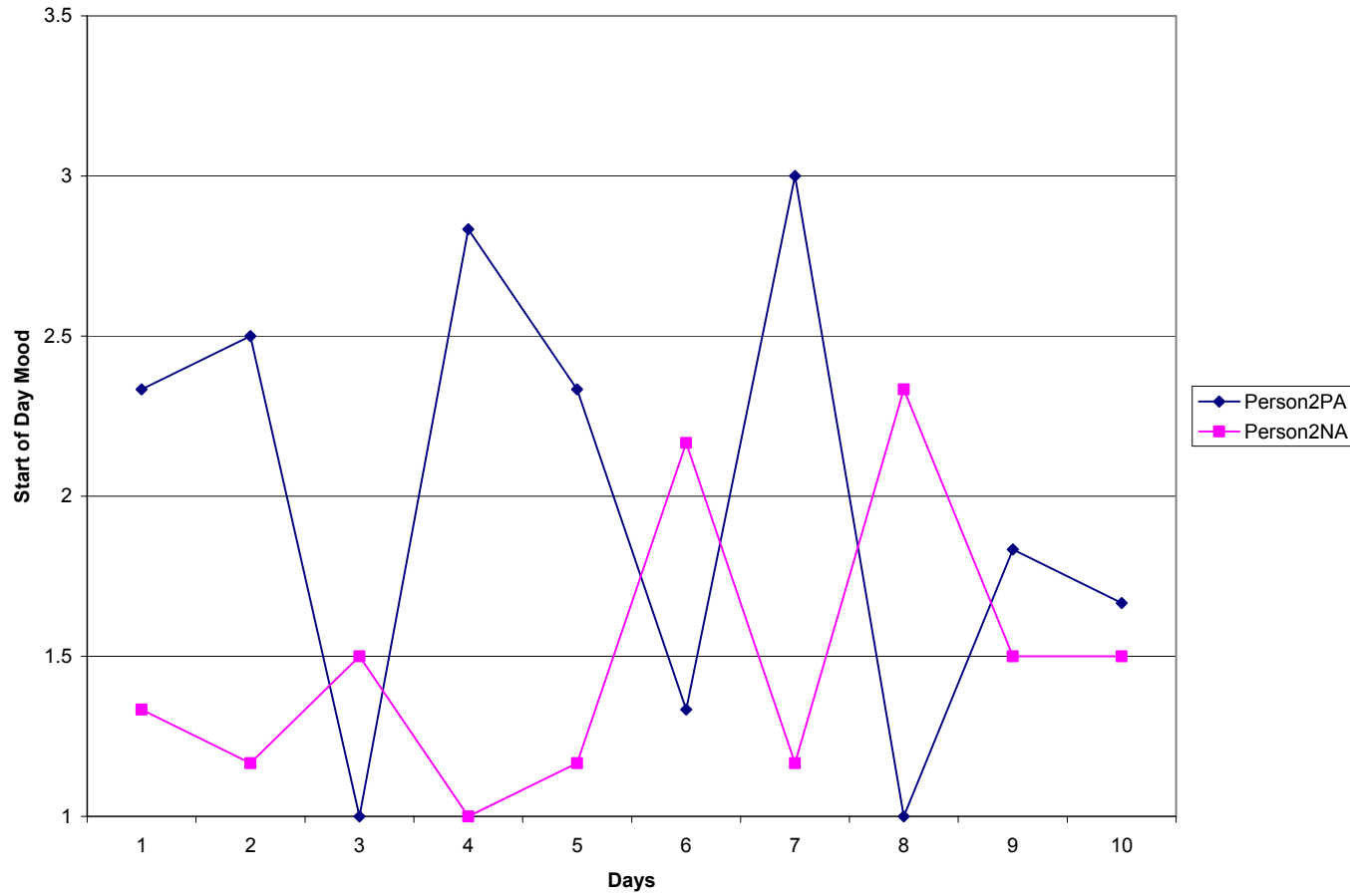
# Start-of-workday Mood

- Mood important source of affect & may influence affective responses to events
- Mood differs from an affective response to an event & from disposition
  - Not associated with a particular stimulus & entails a general response to environment (Tellegen, 1985)
- Variance in Start of Workday Mood
  - Non-work affective events & experiences: Family mood affects work mood (Williams & Alliger, 1994) & work engagement (Rothbard 2001)
  - Transitional Experiences: Role transitions (Ashforth, et al., 2000), Commute (Kulik, 2003)
  - Physiological experiences: Sleep, Somatic health or illness

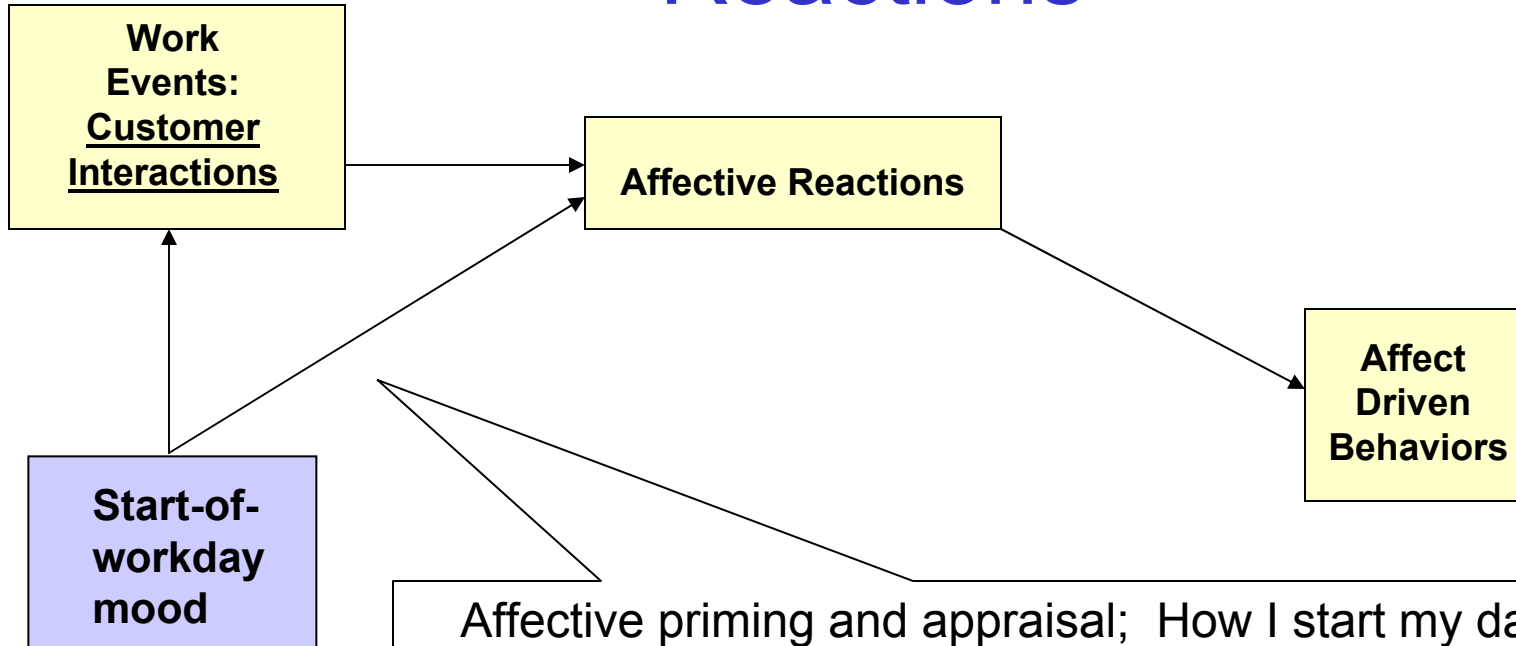
# Example: Within Person Variance in Start of Day Mood – Person #1



# Example: Within Person Variance in Start of Day Mood – Person #2



# Start of Workday Mood and Affective Reactions

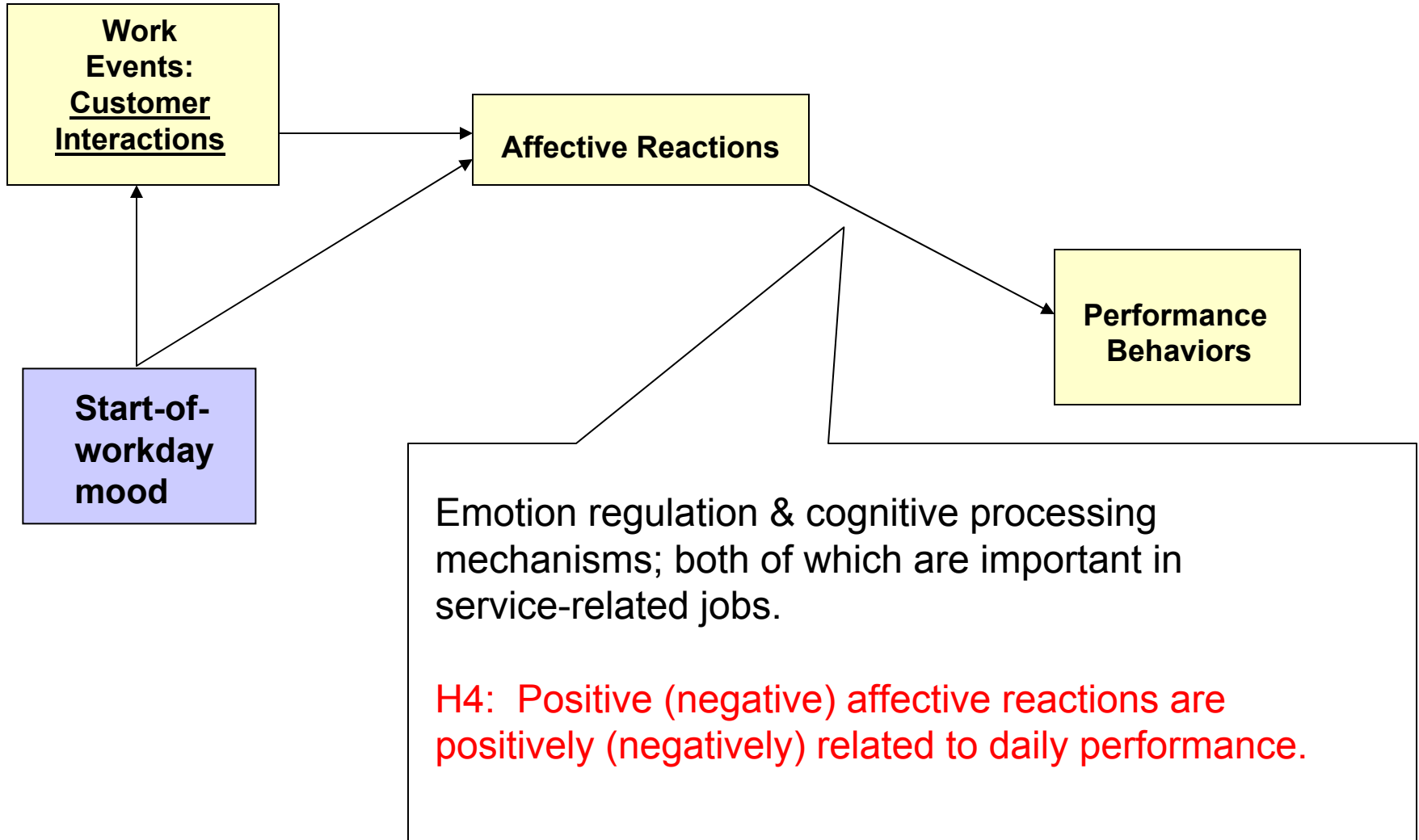


Affective priming and appraisal; How I start my day will influence how I see work events and how I react to them (Bower, 1981; Forgas et al, 1994)

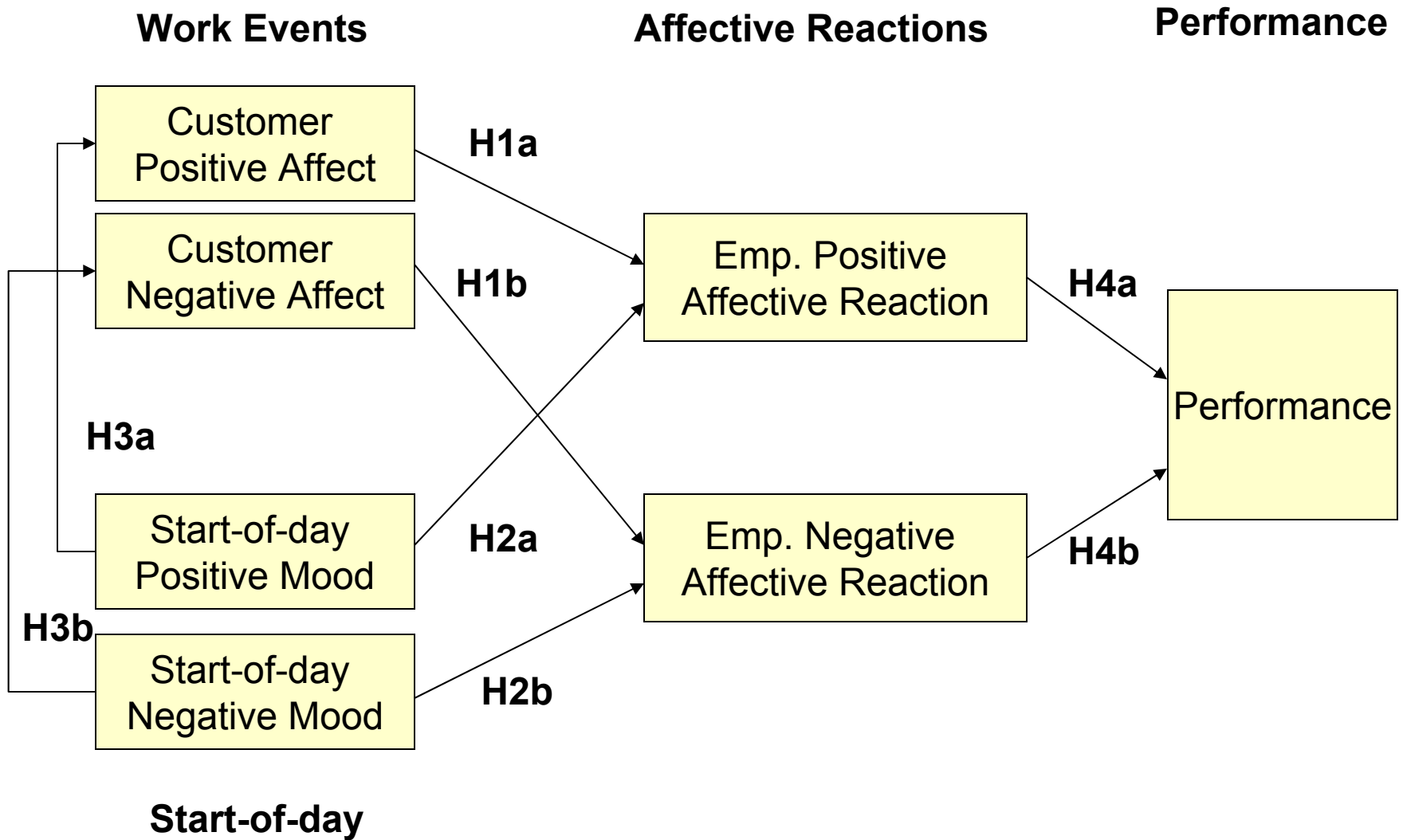
H2: Positive (negative) start-of-day mood is related to positive (negative) affective reactions.

H3: Positive (negative) start-of-day mood is related to positive (negative) perceptions of customers.

# Affective Reactions to Events



# Overview



# Sample

- Large insurance company
  - Customer Service Reps (CSRs)
  - 2 call center sites: Eastern & Western U.S.
- The CSR Job: The Front Line
  - First notice of loss
  - Status inquiries
    - Encouraged to resolve as many inquiries as possible before routing to an adjuster or manager
  - Callers: insured, agent, third party (e.g., auto body shop personnel), other party claimant
  - Wide variety of emotions from customers
    - Anger, fear, pleasantness

# Collection of daily data

Start of Day:  
Your Mood



Reaction to Call:  
Your Affect, Customer Affect



A CSR's Day

Archival:  
Daily  
Performance



# Mood Measures

- Start-of-Workday Mood
  - Taken from the affective circumplex (Watson & Tellegen, 1985)
  - **Positive**: excited, pleased, enthusiastic, happy, energetic (alpha = .91)
  - **Negative**: nervous, upset, irritable, frustrated (alpha = .76)
- Perceived Customer Affect
  - Modified list of adjectives, based on field work and context
  - **Positive**: Calm, cheerful, friendly (alpha = .80)
  - **Negative**: Upset, rude, frustrated, insulting (alpha = .75)
- Affective Reaction to Events
  - Taken from affective circumplex as above
  - **Positive**: (alpha = .92)
  - **Negative**: (alpha = .77)

# Performance Measures

## Daily Performance (archival)

- % time available or answering calls
  - average = 89%
- # of transfers
  - average = 2
  - calls randomly assigned
  - more transfers are considered costly to organization
- Calls/hour (handle time)
  - avg. = 7, total calls per day/avg = 56

# Hierarchical Linear Modeling

- Levels determined by the unit of the dependent variable
  - H1, H2, & H3: Affective reactions as dependent variable
    - 3 level models (Event, Day, Person)
  - H4: Daily performance as dependent variable
    - 2 level models (Day, Person)
- Time varying independent variables are person-mean centered (Hoffman & Gavin, 1998)
  - Person mean represents between-person variation
    - Person Means: how is the person on average?
  - Person-centered variables represent within-person variation
    - Is the person higher or lower than they are on average?

# Effects of Start-of-Workday Mood & Customer Affect on Positive Affective Reactions

DV	Positive Affective Reactions
Controls: Tenure, Location	Yes
Customer Positive Affect <b>(H1a)</b>	
Person Mean (Between Person)	0.17
Person-Centered (Within Person)	0.18***
Start-of-Workday Positive Mood <b>(H2a)</b>	
Person Mean (Between Person)	1.07***
Person-Centered (Within Person)	0.31***
N (event-person)	170
Chi-Square	42.61***

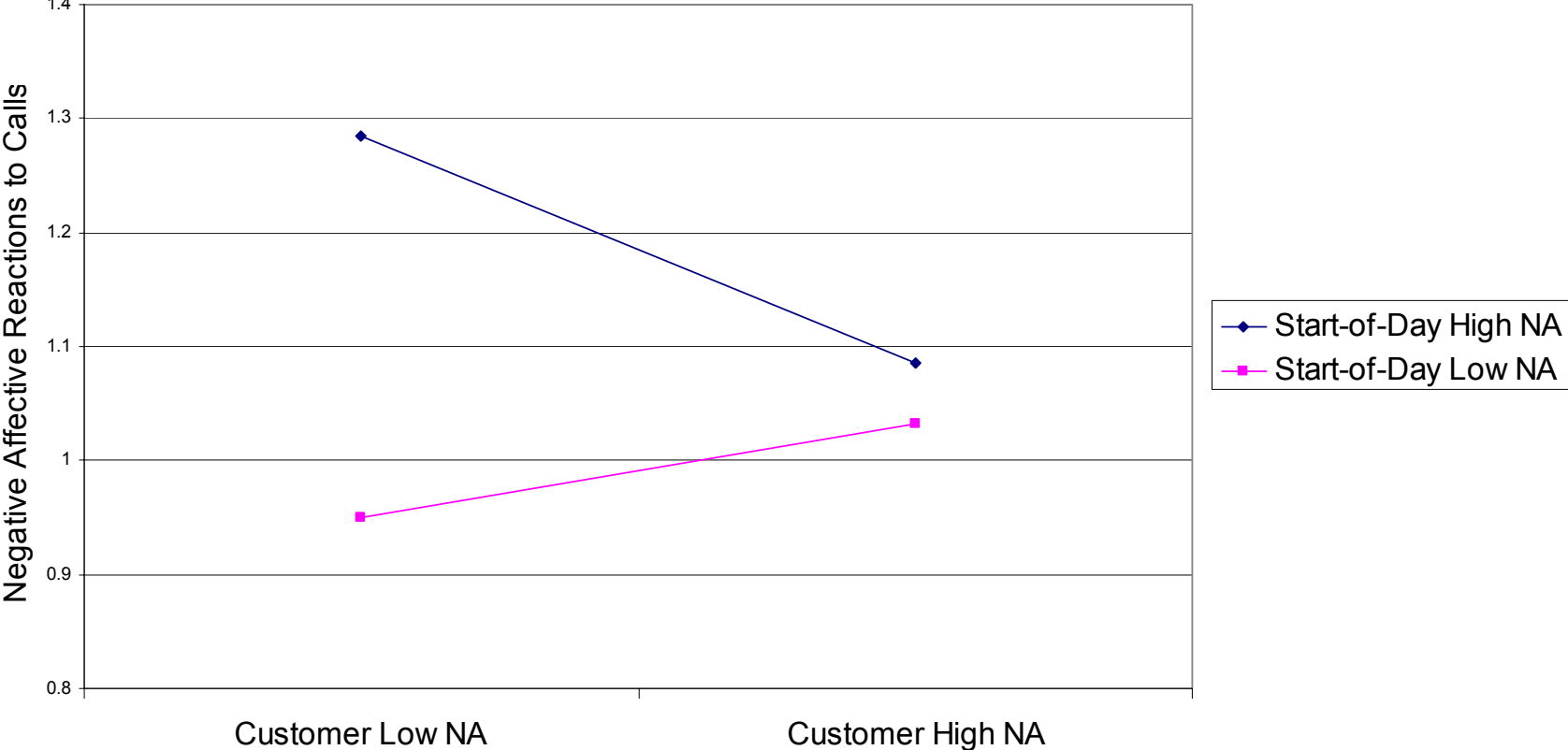
# Effects of Start-of-Workday Mood & Customer Affect on Negative Affective Reactions

DV	Negative Affective Reactions
Controls: Tenure, Location	Yes
Customer Negative Affect <b>(H1b)</b>	
Person Mean (Between Person)	0.40 <sup>†</sup>
Person-Centered (Within Person)	-0.06 <sup>*</sup>
Start-of-Workday Negative Mood <b>(H2b)</b>	
Person Mean (Between Person)	0.21
Person-Centered (Within Person)	0.13 <sup>*</sup>
N (event-person)	135
Chi-Square	65.61 <sup>***</sup>

# Exploratory Analysis: Interaction of Start-of-Day Negative Mood and Perceived Customer Negative Mood

	Negative Affective Reactions
Controls: Tenure, Location	Yes
<b>Customer Negative Affect (H1b)</b>	
Person Mean (Between Person)	0.40 <sup>†</sup>
Person-Centered (Within Person)	0.43 <sup>**</sup>
<b>Start-of-Workday Negative Mood (H2b)</b>	
Person Mean (Between Person)	0.21
Person-Centered (Within Person)	0.13 <sup>*</sup>
<b>Interaction</b>	
Start-of-workday Negative Mood (Between Person) X Customer Negative Affect (Within Person)	- <b>0.38<sup>***</sup></b>
N (event-person)	135
Chi-Square	64.95 <sup>***</sup>

# Interaction: Misery Loves Company



# Effects of Start-of-Workday Mood on Perceptions of Customer Affect

DV	Customer Positive Affect	Customer Negative Affect
Controls: Tenure, Location	Yes	Yes
Start-of-workday Positive Mood (H3a)		
Person Mean (Between Person)	0.38*	0.35 †
Person-Centered (Within Person)	0.49**	-0.08
Start-of-workday Negative Mood (H3b)		
Person Mean (Between Person)	0.09	0.93**
Person-Centered (Within Person)	-0.00	0.42*
N (event-person)	137	134
Chi-Square	6.65*	11.33**

# Results: Performance Outcomes

DV	% of time available to customer	Transfers	CPH
Controls: Tenure, Location	Yes	Yes + total # of calls	Yes
Positive Affective Reactions (H4a)			
Person Mean (Between Person)	0.92	<b>-1.03*</b>	-0.38
Person-Centered (Within Person)	0.31	-0.68	-0.01
Negative Affective Reactions (H4b)			
Person Mean (Between Person)	2.58	<b>4.16*</b>	<b>-6.11**</b>
Person-Centered (Within Person)	<b>-2.84*</b>	-1.66	-0.77
N (day-person)	117	117	117
Chi-Square	47.93***	8.47**	28.00***

# Summary of Findings

- Work Affective Events: Perceptions of Customer Affect
  - Perceived customer positive affect predicts positive affective reactions during the day
  - Customer negative affect has less straightforward results
    - Misery love company interaction between start-of-day mood and customer negative affect
- Start-of-workday mood
  - Start-of-workday positive and negative mood predict positive and negative affective reactions during the day respectively
- Performance outcomes
  - Negative affective reactions were the primary drivers here
  - Possibly because emotion regulation is the primary relevant mechanism in this setting given the nature of the work

# Implications

- Waking up on the right or wrong side of the desk
  - May cast a positive glow or dark shadow influencing one's affective reactions later in the day
  - Start-of-workday mood is changeable & we can detect effects of fluctuations in moods (within-person variation)
- Affective reactions are important in organizations
  - In this context negative affective reactions in particular had an effect on performance

# Contributions

- Test an understudied aspect of Affective Events Theory
  - Relationship between affective reactions and performance behaviors
  - Find evidence that affective reactions at work are related to performance outcomes
- Extend Affective Events Theory to highlight the importance of start-of-workday mood
  - Start-of-workday has substantial & consistent effect
  - Waking up on the right or wrong side of the desk can have persistent effects that influence affect in the workplace
- Interestingly, negative work affective events did not relate to employee affective reactions as expected