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October 27, 2009

Kevin Mossholder
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Dear Professor Mossholder,

The reviews of your manuscript submitted to Academy of Management Review "HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTICES AND HELPING IN ORGANIZATIONS: A RELATIONAL PERSPECTIVE" (AMR 09-0402) are now complete. The reviewers and I believe that your examination of the relationship between different HR systems and helping behaviors is an intriguing topic. As noted by reviewer 1, "*The paper is thorough, very well written, and systematically addresses the HR characteristics and important linkages within each of the different relational climates. I found that the emphasis on relationships that promote helping behaviors was refreshing and the authors offer important insights*."

Along with the generally positive reaction toward your topic and theoretical approach, however, all of us have significant concerns regarding the theoretical rigor of your manuscript as well as your ultimate contribution to the literature. Despite our concerns about whether these issues can be overcome with a revision, I am **inviting you to revise and resubmit your manuscript for further consideration by *AMR.*** You will see from the comments below, a substantial revision will be required in order to succeed and you have your work cut out for you to overcome these issues. Given these concerns, I view this as a risky revision.

In my opinion, you have received three conscientiously prepared reviews. The reviewers have given you many specific comments and suggestions that you can read at your own leisure. In this letter, I focus mainly on the principal issues that will need to be addressed in order for your revision to be successful.

1. **Nature/Extent of contribution**. When considering manuscripts for publication in AMR one of the key requirements is that the paper must make a clear theoretical contribution to the literature. After reading the paper several times and considering the reviewers comments in detail, I think it is fair to say that we believe there is the potential for your manuscript to make an important contribution to the literature. At the same time, however, we do have several concerns regarding the specific nature of that contribution. A good part of these concerns are actually spelled out in the next section regarding your theoretical model but I think it is worth taking a moment to emphasize the importance of this issue. For example, reviewer 3

(Comment 10) provides an excellent point regarding a concern of your manuscript. S/he writes, "*I believe my fundamental confusion can be linked to this statement in beginning the Discussion section: "identifying three sets of strategic HR practices, a relational climate supported by each particular set, and the form of helping behavior expected to emerge in each climate" (p. 24). This statement suggests that the HR practices/systems need to "align" with (i.e., are supported by) a particular climate and that this will result in the form (and what does "form" mean?) of helping behavior. I do not see these elements and their relationships stated here as consistent with your actual propositions. I also don't see this general argument as being consistently presented throughout the manuscript. I really believe this can be (and needs to be) clarified and the writing/arguments tightened throughout in regards to how these constructs relate."*

In addition to this commentary, there are some general questions that you might want to consider as you revise your manuscript. For example, are you suggesting that HR predicts relational climates or that each HR system is associated with a particular relational climate or that each HR system needs to be aligned with the proper relational climate to impact helping behaviors. As you will see in my comments below, I have additional concerns about the fundamental logic of your theoretical model. Moving forward, it is important that you are able to articulate and develop a clear contribution to the literature. We believe that you have some very interesting ideas here, but this concern must be addressed for a successful revision.

2. **Model specification and construct conceptualization**. Beyond the contribution of your manuscript, the reviewers and I also have a number of concerns regarding the constructs and structure of your model and the development of your arguments. I discuss these below.

Definitions

One of my first concerns that I would like to discuss rests on the definition / treatment of some of the key constructs in your framework.

Helping. The reviewers and I had a number of concerns with your treatment of helping. For example, reviewer 2 (Comment 2) writes, "*I'd like to see 'helping' better defined and established within one or more literatures. You mention that it has been investigated under various guises, but then do not ever define or explain these different guises. In this vein, the dimensions on Table 2 were not explained. Why these, and not others? And how do these relate to various helping behaviors? As I understand it, these capture the characteristics of helping behavior, but this isn't explained much, and it certainly isn't defined early in the manuscript. Do these dimensions relate to different types of helping, such as prosocial behavior and OCB? Are they all of equal value to the organization*?" This reviewer adds in comment 3, "*…on p.10 you noted that in compliance-based climates "helping is less likely to emerge unless it is rewarded." This suggests the model will eventually address general or overall level of helping. However, as I understand it, the model addresses characteristics of helping rather than level of helping. Please consider how you might address this discrepancy. Can you add a general or overall level of helping to what is now Table 2? Perhaps moving from low to high? If you do not expect helping to differ in amount but instead only in kind, then please edit the paper carefully to remove language that implies such a hypothesis is forthcoming.*" Reviewer 3 (Comment 1) raises a similar point and writes, "*I would like to see a clear definition of "helping behavior" early on in the manuscript. You cite the literature on OCBs, but it is unclear if you are equating OCBs and helping behavior. Related, it is not completely clear who the helping behavior is directed toward, though the targets as those at "similar hierarchical status" is briefly noted at the top of page 5 in discussing authority ranking*."

In addition to the definition of helping, one suggestion that has been made is that it might be beneficial to move your discussion of helping to earlier in the manuscript. Specifically, reviewer 2 (comment 2) suggests that you might discuss table 2 prior to your discussion of the HR climates. I think this is an interesting and potentially helpful suggestion and would help provide clarity regarding the focus of your

contribution. This is not to suggest that you must do this, rather, it is to reinforce the notion that there is some confusion with some of your key constructs and clearly articulating the different behaviors would provide clarity to draw upon for your discussion of HR and its relationships with these behaviors.

Relational Climates. Reviewer 2 (Comment 4) also raised some concerns about your definitions of the three relational climates. As this reviewer notes, "*The three relational climates are explained starting on p.5, but they are never defined separately (that is, a general definition is provided, and then each is described in detail without a formal definition). I think the reader would find it useful to have a 1-2 sentence definition of each climate. As it reads now, the climates are defined in terms that come awfully close to the helping characteristics in Table 2. For example, in equality matching climates, it was noted that relationships are based on the idea that, "matching the others' contributions over time is a cardinal principle." If that's a cardinal principle, then it is hardly surprising that reciprocity is the motivation for exchange, and equality is the justice norm. Thus, the relationship between relational climate and helping behavior characteristics appears in this draft to be a definitional/logical one rather than a causal one. One way to address this concern is to define relational climate in more abstract terms, giving a general definition rather than listing detailed characteristics that overlap with Table 2*."

Reviewer 3 (Comment 8) raised a potentially even greater concern and noted that "*It seems that the HR structures are being somewhat defined by the relational climates. I noticed this to a great extent in the discussion of collaborative-based HR practices but also for the commitment-based. This may stem from an unclear conceptualization of the HR systems (comment 7) but it also goes back to my question in comment 4 regarding the link between HR systems and relational climates (alignment vs. HR facilitating climates for helping?) I just worry about whether HR systems are being confounded with relational climates for helping; the descriptions of the HR systems seem to greatly reflect the nature of the helping*." In your revision it is imperative that you ensure that your key constructs have clear conceptual distinction.

***HR Systems*.** In your arguments you suggest that collaborative HR systems are an intermediate structure between compliance and commitment based HR approaches. This is an interesting point. At first glance, this is certainly plausible but, upon further reflection, I'm not sure it is this simple. This is a point noted by the reviewers. For example, reviewer 2 (Comment 9) writes, "*I do not understand why collaboration-based practices are a middle ground between compliance and commitment-based HR practices. Even if this is described in Lepak & Snell, please provide an explanation here*." Reviewer 3 (Comment 8) raises a similar point and writes, "*I believe you need to offer a clear conceptualization of this HR system beyond being "intermediate" or a mix of the other two in order to then pose arguments for the link to a specific relational climate (e.g., equality matching) vs. the other forms of relational climates*."

Related, you note that compliance and commitment are at opposite ends of a continuum. This is an interesting question and one that has been presented in different ways in the strategic HRM literature. Why do you posit that they are opposite ends of a single continuum? Is it possible to have practices that strive to encourage commitment while also encouraging compliance – it might not be likely but does scoring high on one scale require scoring low on the other?

Where are you getting your practices for your arguments? It seems as though you are drawing on a lot of different studies to support your points but, I am wondering, if all these studies focus on a clear set of practices within a particular HR system. For example, you suggest that "<u>the close relationships experienced</u> [in commitment HR systems] <u>bring instrumental and expressive benefits</u>." This is certainly plausible but how this is limited to a commitment approach and not applicable to a collaborative approach. You also note that "<u>work design within a commitment-based HR context features greater interdependence and involvement than in compliance- or even collaborative-based structures</u>." This is certainly plausible but I could make a counter point that it would be the same between collaborative and commitment.

Perhaps more to the point, do you really need to differentiate specific practices for a particular HR system? The point of the HR systems is that their combination of practices drives their effect (i.e.,

commitment, collaboration) rather than a single practice. In other words, interdependence could be equally high on both and that would not detract from your point, though it might require revising your arguments some. Conceptually, what is included in your HR systems should be grounded in well established theory. Right now, I'm not so sure that there is a coherent logic as to what practices are considered commitment, collaborative, or compliance and why they are only in one and not another.

Related, with the introduction of multiple HR systems, I have a couple of additional questions that I would like to raise.

- Are these mutually exclusive?
- Is the system in use reflective of a single HR system or of bits and pieces of others? Your discussion of these systems is very much implying that a single coherent system is in place that reflects the system you discuss. How realistic is this and, that the system in place would reflect one of these three? Or, is it more logical that the more a system resembles some ideal type – the more strongly they will predict the helping behaviors?
- In a single organization, different groups are managed differently. If two people are managed differently (exposed to different HR systems), what impact does that have on helping within the organization? Does it matter or are you really focused solely on how one person is oriented toward helping – rather than the helping exchange? For example, your equality matching climate implies that we are familiar with each other's needs. But, if you are managed via a compliance oriented HR systems, and I am managed under a collaborative, this balance is thrown off. I might be aware of your situation but you would not be of mine (or not care). So, does this imply that you are model only applies to people sharing an HR system?

Adopting a broader perspective, a significant concern I have with these systems is that I'm not sure where their boundaries lie and why they are where they are.

Propositions

I think you have raised some interesting connections between HR systems and helping behaviors. However, I think the theoretical logic of these connections can be stronger. For example, in proposition 3a you suggest that with commitment HR practices helping behaviors will be motivated by pro-social values and affective bonds. This certainly seems reasonable but the question I would ask is: why. In the preceding section you discussed how commitment HR systems relate to team support, willingness to help, etc. But you haven't made a connection to a particular type of helping behavior. The question then is why particular motivations for helping would vary across HR systems. In your manuscript, these connections between your HR systems and particular motivations for helping (ie. compliance and self-interest), the standards for judgment (ie compliance and norms of equity), or perceptions of risk (ie. compliance and insufficient return on invested behavior) are quite interesting but my concern is that that the theoretical rigor of why these propositions are being offered is not as compelling as it needs to be.

The reviewers also keyed into some concerns about the general logic of your arguments. For example, reviewer 3 (Comment 4) writes, "*I am confused by the statement that "when helping exchanges are aligned with the appropriate relational climates…" (pp. 7-8). This seems to suggest that the type of helping behavior and HR practices are independent and thus should be "aligned" (matched) for positive outcomes. Yet, isn't the argument that HR practices influence the helping behavior and the characteristic of the behavior? So, I'm quite confused by the discussion regarding alignment. I would encourage you to be more careful in discussing "correspondence" between HR practices and relational climates vs. helping behavior influenced by or emerging from HR practices. I assume the latter is your argument, but this is not clear and there is quite a bit of inconsistency throughout the paper. This is the overarching idea of your paper, so how these constructs (i.e., HR systems, relational systems, helping behaviors) relate to one another*

needs to be made very clear." As noted above, as you revise your manuscript I think it would be very helpful to be very clear about the specific nature of the relationships underlying your logic.

Reviewer 3 (comment 6) also raises an important point about the degree of clarity /confusion caused by the introduction of risk, trust, and identity. I think this reviewer is raising an important point about the amount of information underlying your arguments. For example, I agree with this reviewer that "*the relevance of these constructs is not well integrated. I simply wasn't expecting the focus of the proposed relationship to be on trust, identity, and risk. The paper is framed around HR practices and helping behavior, but introducing the notion of trust, risk, and identity seemed at first a bit "off track." I believe I understand, but the approach is a bit confusing to follow as you are linking systems of HR practices to elements of relational climates (e.g., trust), but also discuss specific HR practices and broad relational climates (e.g., market pricing) – these latter variables are not directly incorporated in your propositions but are in large part the basis for the arguments/propositions*." This reviewer makes some excellent comments regarding the structure of your propositions in comment 6 that I encourage you to visit carefully.

"No Helping Behavior." Both reviewers 2 and 3 raised some questions about predicting no helping behavior. For example, reviewer 3 (comment 3) writes, "*I believe it would be helpful to discuss the role of HR in facilitating "no" helping behavior. That is, the emphasis in your arguments is on differing HR systems facilitating a range of helping climates, but what would likely be the HR system that is likely to hinder helping behavior (e.g., no HR?)? Could it be that a compliance-based HR system is unlikely to stimulate helping behavior but if there is helping, then it would be market-pricing based? Though this notion seems in contrast to your argument on page 11. I'm just wondering when helping behavior is unlikely and the role of HR practices in such a situation*." Related, reviewer 2 (Comment 7) writes, "*It would seem that some HR policies and management behavior interfere with relationship development, or at least foster competitive rather than cooperative relationships (for example, ranking of employees and limiting bonuses to top employees). Not having a negative relationship climate in this model seems to miss an opportunity to identify how HR can inhibit relationship development and helping. Again, such a radical addition is not necessary but could be used an opportunity to describe why some HR practices have negative side-effects*."

Finally, I encourage you to consider revising your propositions. As they stand now, they only make sense with the sentence leading up to the propositions. As noted by Reviewer 2 (Comment 12), "*I would modify the hypotheses to include the HR bundle involved. This would allow others to quote the hypotheses directly. It would also help reader skim without confusion*."

3) Incorporating Relevant and Recent Literature. The reviewers also provided some excellent suggestions for additional research that you might consider. For example, Reviewer 1 (comment 4) notes that "*Kabanoff's (1991) discussion of equality, equity, and need would fit nicely with your work and … Pfeffer and Langton's (1993) article on the effects of pay dispersion might be relevant*." Reviewer 3 raised an additional point that I think is more critical to consider. S/he noted in comment 2), "*How are your arguments similar or distinct from arguments surrounding psychological contracts? While I am not necessarily questioning your theoretical framework, I was surprised to see that the psych contract literature was not incorporated given the relevant to relational exchanges of focus here*." I realize that you already reference a wide ranging literature but I share this reviewer's concerns about the relationship between your ideas and psychological contracts. I think at a minimum, incorporating this literature would provide additional theoretical logic to your arguments.

4) Future Directions. Looking across the reviewers and my own sentiments regarding your manuscript, our advice for moving forward is to consider doing more with less. As noted by reviewer 3 (Comment 6) suggests you might be better served be doing more with less. S/he writes, "*you are incorporating quite a lot of different and rich constructs such as trust, risk, and identity, yet this seems a bit "off track" from the*

general focus on HR systems and helping behavior. There is certainly a rich literature on trust development, for example, and I'm not sure you can do this literature justice in this paper. Would it make sense to perhaps focus in a bit and drop the propositions for trust and identity (for example)?" While this is only a suggestion and I encourage you to pursue the avenue you believe best to clearly portray compelling arguments, this reviewer is correct that you are covering a lot of material in your manuscript. You can certainly retain all of it but you might consider the potential benefits of greater depth on these arguments.

Reiterating my comments in point 1, I strongly encourage you to focus on a clearer theoretical contribution. For example, the paper is set up as focusing on HR systems and helping behaviors, yet, your propositions focus on risk, identity, trust, etc. What is the essence of the arguments you want to make? Currently, it seems as though you have several different potential foci and providing clarity to the contribution of your manuscript to the literature would be very helpful and instrumental for a successful revision.

Viewed in combination, you can see that the reviewers and I have a number of concerns that we believe you need to address. I recognize that successfully addressing the reviewers' concerns will require a great deal of effort and a moderate amount of risk. However, I do encourage you to try to address our concerns, as we all like the basic idea of what you are trying to do.

Resubmission Instructions. Assuming that you indeed decide to revise your manuscript, please log into http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/amr and enter your Author Center, where you will find your manuscript title listed under "Manuscripts with Decisions." Under "Actions," click on "Create a Revision." Your manuscript number will have been modified to denote a revision. You will be unable to make your revisions on the originally submitted version of the manuscript. Instead, revise your manuscript using a word processing program and save it on your computer. Once the revised manuscript is prepared, you can upload it and submit it through your Author Center. *IMPORTANT: Your original files are available to you when you upload your revised manuscript. Please delete any redundant files before completing the submission.*

As you revise your manuscript, please consider each reviewer comment carefully, since even relatively minor comments can sometimes trigger large improvements in a manuscript. In revising your manuscript, please carefully consider each reviewer comment and pay particular attention to the points mentioned below in this decision letter. We ask that you deal with all issues raised by the reviewers and the action editor while revising your manuscript and that you provide point-by-point responses to explain how you have done so. We believe that having you explicitly respond to all the issues raised by the reviewers and action editor puts you in the best possible position to achieve a favorable outcome. However, *concisely* explaining the actions you have taken is desirable in that such explanations save reviewers' time while ensuring that your responses highlight the actions you have taken to deal with their concerns. The type of responses we are requesting from you means that extended discussions of tangential issues should be avoided as should reproductions of large blocks of text from the paper within the responses document. While not imposing a page limit for the responses, it's a good rule of thumb that the responses should not be longer than the manuscript ☺! To this end, if the same point is raised by the action editor and/or one or more reviewers, you should provide a detailed response only once and then refer the other readers (i.e., the action editor and/or the reviewers) to the initial response you provided regarding a particular (and commonly-shared) issue or concern. *Please note that the responses to reviewers' document should appear at the end of the revised manuscript beginning on a separate page*.

Because we are trying to facilitate timely revision of manuscripts submitted to AMR, please upload your revised manuscript within 4 months of today or contact me in advance to negotiate an alternative deadline.

Thank you for submitting to *AMR* and best of luck with the revisions!

Warm regards,

David Lepak
Associate Editor
Academy of Management Review

Comments from Reviewer 1:

The authors propose to develop linkages between HR practices and forms of helping behavior. Their assumptions are many, but two in particular are noteworthy: (a) that appropriate HR practices can help influence the nature of the relationships and character of helping within organizations, and (b) that these relationships influence employee behaviors and establish social capital as a source of competitive advantage.

In terms of comments I have only a few.

1. The paper is thorough, very well written, and systematically addresses the HR characteristics and important linkages within each of the different relational climates. I found that the emphasis on relationships that promote helping behaviors was refreshing and the authors offer important insights. The authors actually make more linkages that are explicitly stated. For instance, the relational emphasis brings together not only many aspects of HR but also many important organizational behavior issues. I particularly appreciated the section on page 28 addressing when some practices might be counterproductive. I can sincerely say that this is one of the better papers I have had the pleasure of reviewing.

2. As I was read the paper for the second time, I could not help but wonder why you did not also make some links between the relational climates on the one hand, and organizational competitive strategies (e.g., Barney, or Porter) on the other. Some of climates are vertically congruent (or incongruent) with a cost leadership strategy. Some climates are congruent (or incongruent) with product or service differentiation strategy. You might close the loop with organizational strategy.

3. I would like the author(s) to place in the paper a caveat or two that effective systems in and of themselves do not guarantee success in terms of helping behavior. You touch on this lightly on page 28, but I would like the point made explicit. As Frost (2003) described, for example, a toxic leader can screw it up.

4. Although your literature review is impressive, I think that Kabanoff's (1991) discussion of equality, equity, and need would fit nicely with your work and should be cited. Moreover, I thought that Pfeffer and Langton's (1993) article on the effects of pay dispersion might be relevant.

5. There are places in the paper that would benefit from concrete examples to make your points more clear. For instance, what industries or business context might exemplify the climates that you describe? Alternatively, you might denote situations where these climates might succeed or fail. For instance, would a widely dispersed global company find it difficult to achieve communal sharing?

6. Given your understanding into these systems, what counsel might you offer researchers who might consider empirically testing some of your propositions?

7. The paper contains the word "may" I would estimate between 20-30 times. The word "may" has to do with granting permission, and does not make sense in the way you use it. Please substitute alternatives words such as "can" or "will" or "might." This point is worth noting because it distracted me and I know distracts other writers.

Comments from Reviewer 2:

This paper describes a theory describing the relationship among HR bundles and relational climates and between relational climates and characteristics of helping behavior. The theory seems a natural extension of prior models on HR bundles, applied to a unique and important criterion domain. The paper is easy to follow because it is logically structured. My suggestions for improvement:

1) The language used in the introduction seems loose to me. For example, you note that helping behavior is a robust predictor of performance (paraphrase from second and third sentences) and "has become more important in light of movement toward greater employee involvement, interactive work structures, and the development of social capital within organizations." It seems to me that helping behavior is not more important because of social capital, but is enabled by it. I think the argument here should focus on the nature of work, which has become increasingly complex and thus requires people to work together. The phrase, "as helping behavior involves an agentic process though which individual positively affect others…" also held little appeal for me. It seems overly wordy and stuffy. I found most of the rest of the paper well-written but this first paragraph was rough.

2) I'd like to see 'helping' better defined and established within one or more literatures. You mention that it has been investigated under various guises, but then do not ever define or explain these different guises. In this vein, the dimensions on Table 2 were not explained. Why these, and not others? And how do these relate to various helping behaviors? As I understand it, these capture the characteristics of helping behavior, but this isn't explained much, and it certainly isn't defined early in the manuscript. Do these dimensions relate to different types of helping, such as prosocial behavior and OCB? Are they all of equal value to the organization? It seems to me that the ultimate implications of different relational climates are explained only in terms of these dimensions without any connection to more typical DV's used in organizational research.

3) Related to this point, on p.10 you noted that in compliance-based climates "helping is less likely to emerge unless it is rewarded." This suggests the model will eventually address general or overall level of helping. However, as I understand it, the model addresses characteristics of helping rather than level of helping. Please consider how you might address this discrepancy. Can you add a general or overall level of helping to what is now Table 2? Perhaps moving from low to high? If you do not expect helping to differ in amount but instead only in kind, then please edit the paper carefully to remove language that implies such a hypothesis is forthcoming.

4) The three relational climates are explained starting on p.5, but they are never defined separately (that is, a general definition is provided, and then each is described in detail without a formal definition). I think the reader would find it useful to have a 1-2 sentence definition of each climate. As it reads now, the climates are defined in terms that come awfully close to the helping characteristics in Table 2. For example, in equality matching climates, it was noted that relationships are based on the idea that, "matching the others' contributions over time is a cardinal principle." If that's a cardinal principle, then it is hardly surprising that reciprocity is the motivation for exchange, and equality is the justice norm. Thus, the relationship between relational climate and helping behavior characteristics appears in this draft to be a definitional/logical one rather than a causal one. One way to address this concern is to define relational climate in more abstract terms, giving a general definition rather than listing detailed characteristics that overlap with Table 2.

5) Table 2 seems misplaced to me. I'd like to see more detail on helping behavior and relational climates before HR systems are described. So as suggested in my point #2 above, I think this table should come earlier. This is perhaps my general preference for starting theory development with the DV in mind. Such a radical re-ordering might not be necessary but you might consider it.

6) On p.3, you note that "Becker and Huselid argue for research on differentiating among practices toward specific employees." I do not think your theory addresses that, as it does not differentiate between core and non-core workforce, or between employees serving different roles. Therefore, I think you should delete this sentence.

7) The language used on p. 3 raises a question for me: "relational climates refer to employee perceptions and appraisal of policies, practices, and behaviors that foster and support interpersonal relationships and exchanges among employees." This assumes that all relational climates support relationships. It would seem that some HR policies and management behavior interfere with relationship development, or at least foster competitive rather than cooperative relationships (for example, ranking of employees and limiting bonuses to top employees). Not having a negative relationship climate in this model seems to miss an opportunity to identify how HR can inhibit relationship development and helping. Again, such a radical addition is not necessary but could be used an opportunity to describe why some HR practices have negative side-effects.

8) The language on p. 6 also raises question for me: "HR practice bundles can be viewed as coherent social structures." HR practice bundles are not social structures; they are policies and procedures that influence social structure. I think this is just a concern over wording but please clarify whether you see these as structures or as influencing structures.

9) I do not understand why collaboration-based practices are a middle ground between compliance and commitment-based HR practices. Even if this is described in Lepak & Snell, please provide an explanation here. This is an important issue to address on p.7.

10) On p.10 you introduce the idea of "unsuccessful helping attempts." I think this language is confusing because it introduces the idea that helping may have good or bad outcomes, and this outside the scope of the theory (as I understand it). I think the same point can be by simply discussing when people will request and provide help (and set aside whether that helping will be successful or unsuccessful).

11) When you discuss the effects of training on social climates, you might consider reading Brown and Van Buren (2007), who address how training can influence social relationships (see citation in Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009, Annual Review of Psychology).

12) I would modify the hypotheses to include the HR bundle involved. This would allow others to quote the hypotheses directly. It would also help reader skim without confusion.

13) On p.26 you note that you "portrayed helping behavior… that can increase organizations' flexibility to meet competitive demands." I don't think that benefit of helping behavior was really emphasized in the introduction. I would suggest either beefing up that part of the introduction, or adding some material on flexibility in the discussion prior to making this claim.

14) In the discussion the following idea is introduced: "managers should consider the form of helping behavior that is most congruent with particular strategic objectives." This seems to be a critical idea. So critical in fact, that it should probably be introduced earlier, and probably not be introduced in the middle of a paragraph halfway through the discussion. I'd like to see this idea described in a standalone section in the discussion.

Comments from Reviewer 3:

This research examines the link between HR practices, relational climates, and employee helping behavior. I found this to be a generally well-written and very interesting paper. I believe that it holds a lot of potential but also believe there are aspects in need of significant clarification and/or further explanation.

1. I would like to see a clear definition of "helping behavior" early on in the manuscript. You cite the literature on OCBs, but it is unclear if you are equating OCBs and helping behavior. Related, it is not completely clear who the helping behavior is directed toward, though the targets as those at "similar hierarchical status" is briefly noted at the top of page 5 in discussing authority ranking.

2. How are your arguments similar or distinct from arguments surrounding psychological contracts? While I am not necessarily questioning your theoretical framework, I was surprised to see that the psych contract literature was not incorporated given the relevant to relational exchanges of focus here.

3. I believe it would be helpful to discuss the role of HR in facilitating "no" helping behavior. That is, the emphasis in your arguments is on differing HR systems facilitating a range of helping climates, but what would likely be the HR system that is likely to hinder helping behavior (e.g., no HR?)? Could it be that a compliance-based HR system is unlikely to stimulate helping behavior but if there is helping, then it would be market-pricing based? Though this notion seems in contrast to your argument on page 11. I'm just wondering when helping behavior is unlikely and the role of HR practices in such a situation.

4. On the other hand, I am confused by the statement that "when helping exchanges are aligned with the appropriate relational climates…" (pp. 7-8). This seems to suggest that the type of helping behavior and HR practices are independent and thus should be "aligned" (matched) for positive outcomes. Yet, isn't the argument that HR practices influence the helping behavior and the characteristic of the behavior? So, I'm quite confused by the discussion regarding alignment. I would encourage you to be more careful in discussing "correspondence" between HR practices and relational climates vs. helping behavior influenced by or emerging from HR practices. I assume the latter is your argument, but this is not clear and there is quite a bit of inconsistency throughout the paper. This is the overarching idea of your paper, so how these constructs (i.e., HR systems, relational systems, helping behaviors) relate to one another needs to be made very clear.

5. There seems to be a lot of important caveats and explanations in the paragraph immediately before the section on Compliance-Based HR… (p.8); yet I was not sure what you are trying to emphasize here. You mention variance across climates, trust being relevant, and identity orientation but none of these ideas are fully developed.

6. I'm struggling a bit with the propositions offered and in particular those related to risk, trust, and identity. This also relates to comment 5 above – the relevance of these constructs is not well integrated. I simply wasn't expecting the focus of the proposed relationship to be on trust, identity, and risk. The paper is framed around HR practices and helping behavior, but introducing the notion of trust, risk, and identity seemed at first a bit "of track." I believe I understand, but the approach is a bit confusing to follow as you are linking systems of HR practices to elements of relational climates (e.g., trust), but also discuss specific HR practices and broad relational climates (e.g., market pricing) – these latter variables are not directly incorporated in your propositions but are in large part the basis for the arguments/propositions. Piecing this altogether is thus a challenge and leaves the reader a bit confused as to where you're going based on the front-end positioning and where you've ended up in regards to the propositions. At the minimum, these propositions need to be clarified – for example, "compliance-based HR practices" should be stated within

the text of Prop 1(a-d) as each proposition read without that context does not make sense. In addition, perhaps some clarification and elaboration in the front-end on the approach and link across constructs would help. In addition, you are incorporating quite a lot of different and rich constructs such as trust, risk, and identity, yet this seems a bit "off track" from the general focus on HR systems and helping behavior. There is certainly a rich literature on trust development, for example, and I'm not sure you can do this literature justice in this paper. Would it make sense to perhaps focus in a bit and drop the propositions for trust and identity (for example)?

7. I'm not clear on the conceptualization of collaborative-based HR. It seems to be a mix of the other two, but I don't see this explanation as helpful. What distinguishes collaborative from commitment based HR, for example? I believe you need to offer a clear conceptualization of this HR system beyond being "intermediate" or a mix of the other two in order to then pose arguments for the link to a specific relational climate (e.g., equality matching) vs. the other forms of relational climates.

8. It seems that the HR structures are being somewhat defined by the relational climates. I noticed this to a great extent in the discussion of collaborative-based HR practices but also for the commitment-based. This may stem from an unclear conceptualization of the HR systems (comment 7) but it also goes back to my question in comment 4 regarding the link between HR systems and relational climates (alignment vs. HR facilitating climates for helping?) I just worry about whether HR systems are being confounded with relational climates for helping; the descriptions of the HR systems seem to greatly reflect the nature of the helping.

9. I found the paragraph leading up to Proposition 2e somewhat confusing to follow. This relates to my previous concern regarding a lot of constructs being involved (comment 6), but I am simply not clear on the nature of the relationships among constructs and what is being argued in regards to linking knowledge based trust, identity, appropriate role behavior, reciprocity… and then the role of collaborative-based HR.

10. I believe my fundamental confusion can be linked to this statement in beginning the Discussion section: "identifying three sets of strategic HR practices, a relational climate supported by each particular set, and the form of helping behavior expected to emerge in each climate" (p. 24). This statement suggests that the HR practices/systems need to "align" with (i.e., are supported by) a particular climate and that this will result in the form (and what does "form" mean?) of helping behavior. I do not see these elements and their relationships stated here as consistent with your actual propositions. I also don't see this general argument as being consistently presented throughout the manuscript. I really believe this can be (and needs to b) clarified and the writing/arguments tightened throughout in regards to how these constructs relate.

More minor comments:

11. Can you offer a more compelling rationale for the focus on HR practice-individual level behaviors (pp. 2-3) beyond the notion that prior/recent work calls for such an approach? I am not questioning the value but would like to see a more compelling rationale, perhaps linked to behavior-based perspective in SHRM research.
12. It might be helpful to elaborate a bit on the "traditional predictors" (p. 4) of helping behaviors to get a better sense of what would be viewed as relational versus other variables in this literature.
13. Please offer a "reminder" of what is meant by "equality matching climates" (p. 14) when discussing collaborative-based HR.
14. In the discussion of compliance-based HR system, I did not see a clear link between evaluative performance feedback (and performance goals) and market pricing climate. I believe this discussion needs to be strengthened.

15. I don’t see that Table 2 is needed.

I enjoyed reading this manuscript and do hope that my comments help you to further clarify your ideas/arguments and ultimately lead to a stronger contribution.