Emotional Labour and Its Psychometric Consequences on the Mental Health of Service Providers

Abstract

The current study intends to examine the role of individual attributes in performing various forms of emotional labour and also to know its collaborative impact upon the mental health of the service providers. Based on various Sociological and Psychological studies conducted on the very concept, this proposes a theoretical model. The study also intends to research the relationship of Emotional Exhaustion (EE) with Deep Acting (DA) and Surface Acting (SA).

Keywords: Psychometric, Emotional Labour, Emotional Exhaustion, Deep Acting, Surface Acting.

Introduction

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As quoted by Arlie Russel Horchshild (1983), Emotional Labour performed by employees is now becoming, one of the driving tools of Hospitality Industry. Whilst, others are recruiting "hands", or "heads", the hospitality industry strives hard to hire the people with best intellect and mannerism. The underlying principle of Hospitality industry is to get the job done with the right kind of attitude, right degree Candour and right amount of concern for the recipient/customer. The employees are expected to present themselves in front of the guests with full warmth, amicability, intriguing and optimism frame of mind. Not only in case of hospitality industry, there are other job categories that demand a modus operandi of emotional display while interacting with the recipients. While some jobs are performed to have a positive display of emotions, some job profiles like that of a Bill Collector demand a very energetic and straightforward attitude. Interestingly, some jobs require voice to voice interaction with customers too, especially the employees of call centres, which also demand a calm, problem solving and optimistic attitude.

The interaction between the service provider and the corresponding recipient forms the basis of service experience that regulates the customer's discernment of the service quality. Ergo, it becomes pertinent for the managers to regulate the employee's behaviour while on duty. Some hotels have an exclusive mention in their missions which reveals the degree of their dedication and perseverance towards the delivery of best service quality (Steinberg and Figat, 1999), "We are unswervingly committed in providing outstanding services and experiences to new and returning guests by exceeding their expectations of what we can offer, by recognising and acknowledging our employees' contribution and involvement..." (Mission Statement of Impiana Hotels and Resorts)

The term emotional labour was proposed by Arlie Russel Hochschild through her book "The managed heart", published in 1983. She invented the term during her study on flight attendants and defined it as "the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display; emotional labour is sold for a wage and therefore, has an exchange value.

With the change in the economy, the nature of job profile requirements has considerably changed. The job specifications vary from mechanical jobs to intellectual jobs to service Jobs. Whereas, other job profiles require technical skills or physical strength, the service jobs demand more of a social skill. An optimistic employee-customer interaction is the basic ingredient of service delivery in Hospitality industry. Both Hospitality and Service Industry, an amicable yet disciplined attitude is considered as a value-added of the product delivery (Schneider and Bowen, 1985)
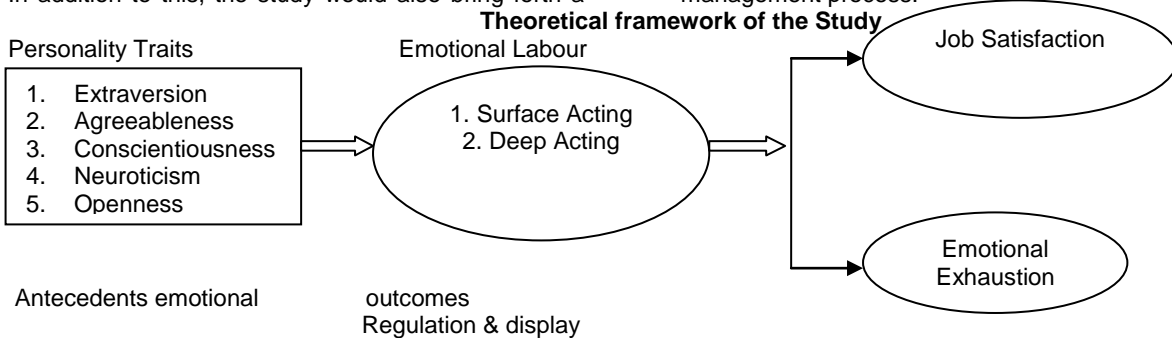
A great deal of research on consequences of emotional labour had been conducted in the past. Overall, results indicated that the regular performance of emotional labour brought potentially atrocious consequences on the mental health of the service providers. Emotional Exhaustion and job Dissatisfaction are the mostly quoted outcomes of emotional labour.

The study intends to research the relationship of Emotional Exhaustion (EE) with Deep Acting (DA) and Surface Acting (SA). Also, it is proposed to study the association of DA and SA with Job Satisfaction in employees. The effect of personality of workers on performance of emotional labour would also be investigated in the study. It is highly anticipated that by studying the above said objectives, the resultant outcomes and interferences would not only contribute to the existing literature pertaining to the concept but would also bring some implementable solutions to the industry under study. In addition to this, the study would also bring forth a

set of tactics to neutralize the negative outcomes of performing emotional labour.

The current study intends to examine the role of individual attributes in performing various forms of emotional labour and also to know its collaborative impact upon the mental health of the service providers. Based on various sociological and psychological studies conducted on the very concept, this study proposes a theoretical model.

Ceteris paribus what makes a service provider choose surface acting or Deep Acting to deal with the recipient? The question still pertains. But the answer may lie behind the concept of individual characteristics that helps an employee to involve in different forms of emotional labour. In the current study, the main focus is on five major personality traits – Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness. The study investigates how these characteristics or traits effects the way a service provider choose to involve in emotional management process.

Theoretical framework of the Study

Personality Traits

1. Extraversion
2. Agreeableness
3. Conscientiousness
4. Neuroticism
5. Openness

Emotional Labour

1. Surface Acting
2. Deep Acting

Job Satisfaction

Emotional Exhaustion

Antecedents emotional　　　　　outcomes
　　　　　　　　　　　　Regulation & display

Research Methodology

The current study intends to work on nature, consequences and various approaches of emotional labour. Further, the role of individual characteristics or overall personality of service providers is comprehensively investigated to know how different attributes lead to adaptation of a particular approach in performing emotional labour.

Dutch Questionnaire of Emotional Labour

The degree of emotional labour measured in employee by using Dutch Questionnaire (also written as D-QEL) designed by G. Naring, M. Briet and A. Brouwers.

It is a thirteen-item questionnaire package that measures the four forms of emotional labour- Surface Acting, Deep Acting, Suppression and Emotional Consonance. Surface Acting (α = 0.944) is one of the approaches employed by the service providers which includes display of desirable emotional expressions by actually not feeling them internally. It is like a mask on the face with pretending emotions (Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002). Deep acting (α = 0.82) refers to the situation in which a service provider adheres to the display rules by actually feeling them from inside. This may occur due to training or is based on some past experience that

he she is able to act genuine ely while interacting with the employee (Zammuner and Galli, 2005a). Further, Suppression (α = 0.921) is another acting mechanism in service interaction in which an employee is expected to hide the original emotions (like anger, disgust, fear etc.) in order to perform effectively. As investigated by Ybema and Smulders (2002), job profiles like fireman, police and security officers adapt this technique to the maximum as they have no room for expressing their original emotions of fear, disgust, annoyance, anger etc. Until Hochschild (1983) called it as emotional management "passive deep acting", the emotional Consonance (α = 0.95) approach was less explored. It reflects a situation in which an individual effortlessly feels the emotions required in a certain situation. Further the scale is Five-point scale in which 1= never, 2= sometimes, 3= regularly, 4= Often and 5 means always. The questionnaire was both designed in Dutch (2005) and English Language (2007). According to the authors of the scale, "the statements in the questionnaire package would explain the way to deal with the emotional at work". Table 3.1 indicates the Dutch questionnaire with its thirteen statements indicating four dimensions of emotional labour.

Table 3.1 Dutch Questionnaire (D-QEL) of Emotional Labour

S. NO.	Subscales	Statements
1	Surface Acting	I put on a show at work
		I put on a mask in order to deal with customers in appropriate way
		I pretend to have emotions I need to display for my job
		I put an act in order to dealwith customers in an appropriate way
		I fake a good mood
2	Deep Acting	I work hard to feel the emotions that I need to show to others
		I make an effort to feel the emotions that I need to show to others
		I work at conjuring up the feelings I need to show to recipients
3	Emotional Consonance	I react to customers emotions naturally and easily
		I easily express positive emotions to recipients as expected for my job
4	Suppression	I hide my anger about something a recipient had done
		I hide my disgust over something a recipient has done
		I hide my fear of a recipient who appears a threatening.

Source: Naring and Briet (2007)

D-QEL is a 5-point likert scale varying 1 to 5; verbal labels for 1=never, 2=Sometimes, 3= regularly, 4=often and 5= always

Sample and Sampling Technique

The survey and study has been conducted with the employees of working in Hotel Industry of North India in which three regions were selected namely Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi-NCR (National Capital Region). Further, five four and three-star hotels registered with HRANI-Hotel and Restaurant Association of North India which is a regulating body and lead training partner for hospitality sector in Northern India enrolled by the Food safety and Standard Authority of India (FSSAI) have been selected. The sample technique used for the study is Convenience or Purposive Sampling.

Techniques and statistical Tools

For Statistical analysis, various techniques were used. To apply the techniques, there statistical tools have been used extensively employed namely- IBM SPSS Statistical 20, JAMOVI 1.1.40 and SMARTS3. To test the reliability and validity of the scales involved in the very study, Confirmatory Factor analysis (CFA) was conducted.

Results and Analysis

The principal component analysis has been performed to determine the scale items.

In order to identify the accuracy of factor analysis and also to predict the data adequacy, KMO and Bartlett's score of sphericity had been interpreted.

Principal Component Analysis of Surface Acting (N=50)

Items of Survey	Component
	1
I put on show at work	.866
I put on mask in order to deal with customer in an appropriate way	.857
	.869
I pretend to have emotions I need to display for my job	.854
	.858
I put an act in order to deal with customers in an appropriate way	
I fake a good mood	
Variance Explained	63.4%
Reliability Coefficient (Cronabach Alpha)	4.75%
KMO Measure	0.894
Barlett's Test of Sphericity (Significance level)	0.000

Aim of the Study

The Current Study intends to examine the role of individual attributes in performing in performing various forms of emotional labour.

Conclusion

The current study found that the personality attribute Extraversion is negatively correlated with the degree of Surface Acting. It inferred that, the more an individual is outgoing and sociable, the lesser would he/she adapts Surface Acting approach during interaction with the recipients. Further, a statistical test to investigate the relation between Agreeableness and Surface acting interpreted that no significant association exists between the two variables. In other words, the personality trait agreeableness does not play any role during the performance of Surface acting during an interaction with the customers.

The study delineates the impact personality attributes of the employee over the performance of emotional labour. Out of all the outcomes, the most evident is emotionally exhausted state of mind of employees. The organisations are expected to keep a check on such type of mental health risks and practice the necessary interventions for the resolution of such issues.

It can be inferred that the prowess to be "nice" and "warm" to the recipients demands extra efforts. The succession of such efforts not only brings good fortune to the company but also imparts a sense of gratification in the service providers.

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