



Employee performance outcomes and burnout following the presentation-of-self in customer-service contexts



Catherine Prentice^{a,*}, Po-Ju Chen^b, Brian King^c

^a Faculty of Business and Enterprise, Swinburne University, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

^b Rosen College of Hospitality Management, University of Central Florida, Florida, FL, USA

^c SHTM, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, Hong Kong

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Burnout
Occupational commitment
Emotional intelligence
Emotional labour
Organizational citizenship behaviour
Task performance
Moderation

ABSTRACT

This study examines how emotional intelligence and occupational commitment have a moderating effect on the relationship between emotional labour and its potential outcomes. Two acting strategies reflect emotional labour, namely surface and deep acting, with burnout and performance as the prospective outcomes. Burnout is operationalized into emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and diminished personal achievement; whereas performance is operationalized into task performance and organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB). The study investigates employee responses from several tourism and hospitality organizations in Florida, USA. The results show that emotional labour relates most positively to task performance and to burnout in the case of surface acting. Tests of moderation show that occupational commitment enhances performance outcomes by facilitating emotional labour strategies, and the prevalence of higher emotional intelligence amongst employees reduces burnout. These findings contribute to the literature on emotional labour by incorporating emotional intelligence and occupational commitment as moderators and by incorporating OCBs within performance analyses.

© 2013 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Emotional labour (EL) has been discussed extensively in the relevant literature, consistent with the importance of services to the economy and the increasing application of dramaturgical perspectives to the study of customer interactions. Defined by Hochschild (1983) as managing emotions through surface or deep acting by following organizational display rules in return for a wage, EL designs provide a means of enhancing task performance and a strategy for the effective management of service encounters through appropriate acting. Various researchers (Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002; Mann and Cowburn, 2005; Surana and Singh, 2009) have reached broad agreement that deep acting leads to task effectiveness; whereas surface acting has negative consequences. However, a conceptual study by Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) argued that both acting strategies executed by frontline employees in service roles may lead to unfavourable outcomes by triggering negative connotations such as emotive dissonance and self-alienation. Drawing on this study, the present paper re-examines the relationship between emotional labour and the two most cited outcomes for frontline roles in the service context, namely performance and burnout.

Despite its likely effect on employee performance, EL is widely acknowledged as having detrimental effects on the workforce including burnout (e.g., Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002; Johnson et al., 2007; Montgomery et al., 2006). Given that EL commonly forms part of the job descriptions of frontline employees, the factors facilitating the EL process should be identified in order to improve employee performance and ameliorate unfavourable consequences. Such factors are generally referred to as moderators (Baron and Kenny, 1986). Previous research has been primarily focussed on the antecedents and consequences of EL. The present study sheds lights on EL research by examining the remedy (moderator) with a view to enhancing the applicable outcomes.

Adopting a social identity theory perspective, Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) have indicated that individuals tend to “act” appropriately by conforming to organizational display rules in identifying with their occupations. An introverted salesperson may for example, act in an extrovert manner in order to achieve sales effectiveness when identifying with the selling role. Witt’s (1993) study shows that occupational identification has a positive effect on the level of commitment that is shown, which indicates greater commitment on the part of those who identify strongly with their occupations. These studies show that occupational commitment may moderate EL and its performance outcome.

EL Proponents argue that appropriate acting by frontline employees when dealing with various personal encounters enhances organizational effectiveness. Such encounters are

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +61 406 627622.

E-mail addresses: cathyjournalarticles@gmail.com (C. Prentice), Chen.poju@gmail.com (P.-J. Chen).

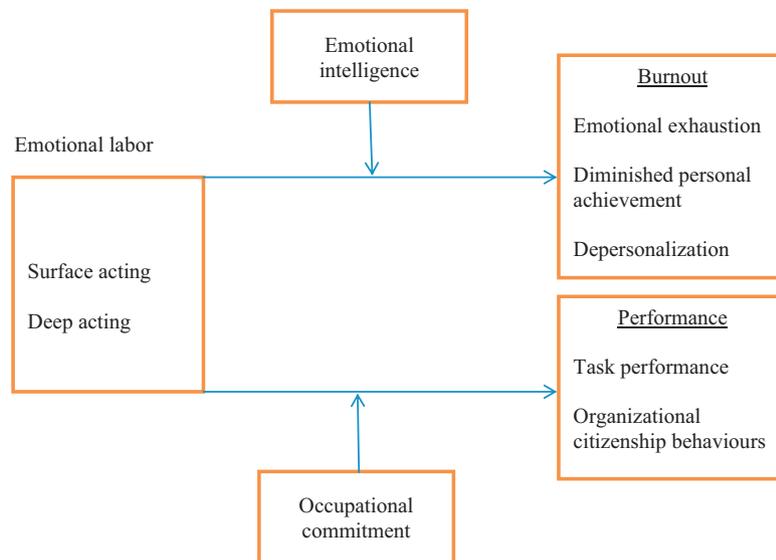


Fig. 1. The study model: Emotional labour as the predictor, performance and burnout as the outcome variables, and emotional intelligence and occupational commitment as the moderators.

emotionally loaded, particularly in the case of dealings with unreasonable and emotional customers (Daus and Ashkanasy, 2005). The employees are under a strong compulsion to “act” hard in order to make customers satisfied, often leading to negative consequences. The prevalence of emotional skills on the part of employees (or labourers), may facilitate the service transaction by managing and regulating emotional encounters, thus lessening potentially negative outcomes. Hartel et al., 1999 note that customer-contact employees who possess greater emotional intelligence manage service encounters more effectively. Emotional intelligence offers the prospect of facilitating either EL acting strategy and lessening its negative consequences.

Consistent with the discussion noted above, the current study proposes occupational commitment and emotional intelligence as moderators and examines their prospective moderating effects on EL outcomes. In particular the research explores the effect of occupational commitment on the relationship between EL and job performance, and the effect of emotional intelligence on the relationship between EL and burnout. Job performance is operationalized into task and contextual performance and burnout into emotional exhaustion, diminished personal achievement and depersonalization. The proposed relationships are outlined in Fig. 1. The following section provides a review of the relevant literature and a rationale and hypotheses to support the proposed model.

2. Emotional labour and performance

Emotional labour includes enhancing, faking, or suppressing emotions in order to modify the expression of emotions (Hochschild, 1983). It involves two main categories of performance. Firstly, the employee may engage in surface acting to comply with the prevailing rules of display. This type of acting involves simulating emotions that are not felt, and feigning emotions that are not experienced. The second type of performance involves deep acting—making a genuine attempt to experience or feel the emotions that are on display. Research into the EL concept focusses primarily on frontline service industry personnel, and has strong applicability to service encounters. Daus and Ashkanasy (2005) indicate that service roles involve a substantial EL component. On the basis that employees occupy the interface between an organization and its customers and form the first point of contact for

customers, EL also has a high social component. Service transactions often involve face-to-face interactions between employees and customers (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993).

According to Hochschild (1983), the display feelings of the EL process during service interactions have a strong impact on the quality of service transactions and on the attractiveness of the interpersonal climate and experience of emotions. Dynamic encounter communications may be enhanced where service employees have acquired prescribed sets of responses and patterns of EL-related behaviours (Mann, 1997). This can lead to increased product sales and to effective complaints handling, thereby ensuring smooth interactive communications (Hochschild, 1983). In combination, these should ultimately lead to better performance. Though previous research has reported a positive relationship between EL and job performance, EL researchers are in general agreement that only deep acting leads to the enhancement of performance which is typically referring to task performance in particular (e.g. Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002).

Enhanced performance may follow from both task performance (in-role behaviours), and contextual performance which is often referred to as organization citizenship behaviours (OCBs) (Borman and Motowidlo, 1997; Carmeli and Josman, 2006; Rousseau, 1995). Task performance refers to employer expectations and requirements of employee behaviours or work performance in return for remuneration (see Borman and Motowidlo, 1997). In the case of frontline service employees, such performance may concern customer evaluations of service quality leading to satisfaction and loyalty, and ultimately to company profitability (e.g., Zeithaml et al., 1996; Prentice and King, 2011; Singh, 2000). OCBs include “individual behaviours that are discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and in the aggregate promote the efficient and effective functioning of the organization” (Organ, 1988, p. 4). These behaviours are important for improving organizational efficiency and effectiveness and have an indirect effect on customer perceptions of the quality of the firm. A combination of task performance and OCBs is more indicative of employee performance. Previous EL-related studies have focussed exclusively on a single dimension and have failed to capture the holistic picture of performance evaluation. On the basis of the foregoing discussion, the present study will investigate the prospective effects of surface or deep acting on both task performance and OCBs.

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات