



Psychological strain and emotional labor among police-officers: A diary study

Benjamin van Gelderen ^a, Ellen Heuven ^{b,*}, Marc van Veldhoven ^c,
Marcel Zeelenberg ^c, Marcel Croon ^c

^a Dutch Police Force, 'Politie Midden en West Brabant', The Netherlands

^b Department of Social and Organizational Psychology, Utrecht University, Heidelberglaan 1,
P.O. Box 80.140, 3508 TC, Utrecht, The Netherlands

^c Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Tilburg University, The Netherlands

Received 27 August 2007

Available online 14 September 2007

Abstract

The authors examined the relationship between psychological strain, emotional dissonance and emotional job demands during a working day of 65 Dutch (military) police officers, using a 5-day diary design. We hypothesized that emotional dissonance partly mediated the relationship between psychological strain at the start and at the end of a work shift. We also tested the mediating role of emotional dissonance between emotional job demands and psychological strain at the end of a work shift. Results of structural equation modeling analyses showed that psychological strain at the start of a work shift had a positive effect on the experience of emotional dissonance and psychological strain at the end of a work shift. Emotional dissonance partly mediated the relationship between psychological strain at the start and psychological strain at the end of a work shift. Results are discussed in light of conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, S. E. (1988). *The ecology of stress*. New York: Hemisphere Publishing Corporation).

© 2007 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Keywords: COR theory; Emotional dissonance; Emotional labor; Police officers; Psychological strain

* Corresponding author. Fax: +31 30 2534718.

E-mail address: E.Heuven@fss.uu.nl (E. Heuven).

1. Introduction

Emotional labor refers to how employees regulate their emotions as part of the work role, and their consequences of doing so (Hochschild, 1983). Most emotional labor research has been conducted within the human service industry, in which human interactions play an important part of the job. Emotional labor is mainly instigated by implicit or explicit display rules that state which emotions are appropriate for employees to express. As a result of obeying these rules, employees who engage in emotion work may experience emotional dissonance, which refers to a discrepancy between felt and displayed emotions (Hochschild, 1983). Emotional dissonance is considered to be an important predictor of impaired psychological well-being in the form of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Ashfort & Humphrey, 1993; Brotheridge & Lee, 1998, 2003; Grandey, 2000; Heuven & Bakker, 2003; Zapf, 2002).

The present study among police officers examined how psychological strain at the start of a work shift may increase the likelihood of emotional dissonance during the shift. The innovation of our research was found in the addition of psychological strain at the start of a work shift. We came to this based on the theoretical assumptions regarding the conservations of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989). Following COR theory, we argued that a higher level of psychological strain at the start of a work shift will affect the experience of emotional dissonance; a higher level of psychological strain at the start of a work shift will leave less energy for regulating one's emotions during work. Also, the mediating role of emotional dissonance, mediating psychological strain at the start and at the end of a work shift, was explored. The idea was that this initial state may 'steam through' the experiences of the police officers during the rest of the work shift and may increase the level of emotional dissonance and psychological strain at the end of a work shift. Past research did examine the relationship between strain, task-regulation and task-performance (e.g., Schellekens, Sijtsma, Vegter, & Mijeman, 2000), but put less emphasis on the effects of initial strain. This hitherto unstudied temporal pattern offered an interesting addition in studying the effects of emotional dissonance within emotional labor research. In addition, we examined the mediating role of emotional dissonance in the relationship between emotional job demands and psychological strain at the end of a work shift. It was expected that emotional demanding situations would contribute to the arise of emotional dissonance, which in turn would lead to a higher level of psychological strain at the end of a work shift.

1.1. *Emotion regulation among police officers*

Police officers are a very relevant and highly intriguing population to study. In performing police work many emotionally demanding interactions take place. On a daily basis police officers are confronted with human sorrow in the form of violence, aggression, accidents, crime victims and death (e.g., Brown & Campbell, 1990). Since police officers constantly have to show the right emotions in order to keep up a professional appearance and achieve organizational goals, the management of emotions holds a central role in conducting police work. It is therefore not surprising that the expression and suppression of a wide variety of emotions is an important element in the performance of police work.

Most service jobs require employees to suppress negative emotions and express positive emotions. Expressing these socially desired emotions are assumed a key dimension of delivering a high-quality service and reach a higher level of customer satisfaction (Tsai

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