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EMOTIONAL LABOUR AND EMOTIONAL BURNOUT: EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF SERVICE SECTOR EMPLOYEES

Abstract. Emotional labour (hereinafter EL) is a form of work that involves managing emotions and emotional expressions during social interaction to achieve professional goals and to fulfil the emotional requirements of a job. EL can bring negative psychological consequences for employees such as burnout and exhaustion. Such negative outcomes are determined mostly by the EL strategy that employees implement. This article seeks to expand understanding of the dispositional and situational determinants of EL, and the role played by dispositional variables in determining the outcomes of EL. Drawing on survey data from 29 employees working in the service sector, we find that among EL strategies surface acting has been consistently shown to have the most detrimental effects on employee well-being. On the other hand, deep acting can be viewed as a healthier way to perform EL, and the expression of genuine emotions can even reduce the negative outcomes of EL. Understanding the antecedents of EL strategies would therefore enable more effective interventions to be developed aimed at reducing burnout by influencing the way in which employees perform EL.

Keywords: emotional labour, burnout, antecedents of emotional labour

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Introduction

“Today, one only has to walk into any supermarket, phone a call centre or check into a hotel to recognise that for many frontline service workers managing their emotions as well as those of the customer is an integral part of what they do for a living” (Payne, 2009). This quote indicates that typically the modern service economy – the biggest employer in the labour market

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- is increasingly employing workers based on their social and emotional competence, also known as their 'people' or 'soft' skills. The management of emotions during social interaction in the labour process is connected with the concept of emotional labour (EL), a term coined by Hochschild (1983/2012). What is probably less obvious in the lay perception is that, first, EL is based on the emotional 'rules of the game' established by organisations and, second, that EL is neither inherently pleasurable, enjoyable nor fun, but can cause negative psychological consequences. The core of EL is made up of requirements to restrain and transform one's 'true', 'genuine' and 'private' emotions (or what the individual feels as their 'true self') to fit the organisation's expectations and requirements. Demands to suppress an individual's negative emotions or show positivity which they do not feel (i.e., emotional dissonance - the mismatch between genuine emotions and those required) requires energy and the use of internal resources. Over time, the constant effort to contain emotions (rather than express anger, offence, fear etc.) induces depleted emotional resources that can lead to burnout. While on the surface EL seems simple and effortless or enjoyment-filled, in the background complex roles and requirements are involved that result in high levels of stress, burnout and other affective outcomes. In her theory of EL, Hochschild (1983/2012) was primarily concerned with the consequences experienced by individuals performing EL and mainly focused on negative consequences. While conflict between the emotions felt and those prescribed is strongly related to burnout, EL is not necessarily something bad. According to Hochschild, both harmful and positive consequences of this kind of labour depend on when and how it is performed. Subsequent research has shown that negative outcomes associated with performing EL are determined mostly by the EL strategy employees implement (Pugliesi, 1999; Brotheidge and Lee, 2003; Judge et al., 2009). The concept of EL is thus useful in understanding the complexity of the emotional part of service work, its stressful and psychologically damaging nature, and the mechanisms that lead to the ill-effects of having to display conflicting emotions in the workplace. Yet, at the same time, it enables us to avoid the pitfalls of the mythologisation of EL as indicated above.

Hochschild described EL as a form of work "which requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others (...). This kind of labour calls for a coordination of mind and feeling, and it sometimes draws on a source of self that we honour as deep and integral to our individuality" (1983/2012: 7). The definition outlines two features of EL: it is performed for the benefit of others and requires the coordination of one's own emotions to create a specific mental state in others, such as joy, pleasure, security etc. Hochschild also defines EL as "the management of feeling to create a publicly observable

facial and bodily display” that is “sold for a wage and therefore has exchange value” (1983/2012: 7). The management of emotions includes pretence (the pretence of emotions and the hiding of true emotions – surface acting) and the ‘transmutation’ of one’s inner self (fusing the real and acted emotional self – deep acting). Workers who provide ‘services with a smile’ hide their real emotions and keep ‘smiling and being friendly’, or transmute them to client-friendly and profitable emotions as guided by commercial imperatives. EL therefore defines the conflict between projected, commodified emotions and unprofitable emotions that underlie workplace performances and need to be concealed or repressed. As Hochschild stated: “(...) for the flight attendant, the smiles are *a part of her work*, a part that requires her to coordinate self and feeling (...) to disguise fatigue and irritation” (1983/2012: 8, italics in the original). If a passenger reacts negatively, the flight attendant is expected to neutralise the situation – by increased kindness and use of the “company language”, which dictates standardised expressions of empathy. Competition in the labour market is forcing organisations to keep pressing for a ‘genuinely friendly’ service through the intensification of work, which on the individual level means that “for workers, the job of ‘enjoying the job’ becomes harder and harder” (1983/2012: 125).

According to Hochschild, the profession of flight attendant is the model that can be generalised relative to other service professions in which workers need to match their private emotions with the emotional rules of the company. Organisations force rules to homogenise service interactions, improve service quality, increase customer satisfaction and in this way facilitate their success and competitive advantages in the market. Emotions with the company’s interventions stop being the grounds of personal experience and become part of the capitalist labour process and the object of strategic use, management and control. This is leading to the ‘transmutation of an emotional system’ in which private emotions are sold as commodities. This kind of use of EL and the control over emotions reflects the imperatives of capital and profit-making.

EL – traditionally privatised and feminised – is becoming the model of the working behaviour of female and male service workers and a characteristic of the labour force in post-Fordist service industries generally. EL is clearly a class issue. It is characterised by exploitative and poor working conditions (such as low wages) and related to unequal power and control being actively exercised by management, while workers, especially in low-status service jobs, lack autonomy concerning how and when EL is performed, resulting in higher levels of stress and burnout. Further, a gender issue arises with EL because most employees in the service sector work are women, particularly at the bottom end. The unequal gender distribution of EL reflects the gendered emotion–reason binary and structural positionality of women in

society as natural caregivers, an aspect Hochschild (1983/2012) also underscored in her analysis. As noted by Müller (2019), women who do EL are not only exploited as workers, but also in a gender-specific way given their social position as women and the relatedness of EL to female gender (e.g., tasks including caring and loving are considered part of a woman's nature). In the context of hierarchical gender relations, where a woman's position is less valued than a man's, EL as women's work is undervalued, defined as unskilled and poorly paid. EL is considered women's work regarding which men are reserved due to its connotations with femininity (kindness, deference, empathy, complaisance, subordination) (see, e.g., Nixon, 2009).

Hochschild claims that the EL theory is useful while researching service workers in the private sector. Still, the EL concept is also popular among researchers who study a wide range of professional groups, including sales and waiting staff, school teachers, nurses, call-centre workers, workers in holiday and leisure centres, public service jobs and many others (see Bolton 2005; Glinsner et al., 2019; Veldstra, 2020, to mention just a few recent examples). The work of different service workers varies in both content and the complexity of their roles and interactions, which means this is a heterogeneous group of workers with differences between them reflecting the complexity of work or skills and qualifications required by different professional roles in the labour market (Payne, 2009). As precarious contractual forms of work expand, precarious work and the accompanying EL are not limited to the lowest-paid employees, but can also occur in better-paid jobs in the private and public sector, including management and highly-skilled professions.

In the context of precarious working conditions employees are required to not only produce positive emotions for their economic productivity, but to suppress the negative emotions caused by the neoliberal forms of work or insecurity of neoliberal capitalism. Veldstra (2020) identifies "the increasing demand for emotional labour from workers expected to manage a complicated set of feelings that include not only projected, commodified affects, but also the ambivalent or negative feelings that derive from their working environment, location in a class structure, temporal burden, cost-of-living, and social situation" (2020: 11). For example, Butler and Stoyanova Russell (2018) find that the EL of employees in the creative sector is not simply a source for cooperation with consumers (creating the feeling of well-being in users and clients), but also with (several) employers and during salary negotiations. To please employers and preserve the relationships with them on an equal level – even when the payment rate and timeliness of payment fall below acceptable standards – they are forced to project an image of positivity and suppress their feelings of anxiety and frustration (and not appear too needy or too forward) that come from financial insecurity.

EL therefore includes the replacement of an 'unkind' personality with a 'friendly' one and at the same time certain kinds of enthusiasm, engagement and passion in playing the commodified form of personality despite or precisely because, as Veldstra (2020) notes, such work is often precarious, unprotected and insecure. A positive attitude to work – the creation and maintenance of seeming satisfaction and optimism – is thus ideologically enforced on late capitalism's precarious workers – contributing to the normalisation of insecure working conditions without improving the quality of life for precarious workers or ensuring their future. This means that employees working in companies which follow explicit or implicit affective labour policies are forced to internalise the burden of their own precarity, and manage it through affective resilience as if it were an ordinary crisis (Veldstra, 2017). Workers therefore carry a large personal cost due to precarity, while they continue to express optimism. Such an emotional attitude portrayed by workers to their own working environment at its core inauthentic and psychologically burdens the individual due to the continuous practice of hiding of their negative feelings. The EL expected from precarious workers is defined by "cruel optimism", an expression used by Lauren Berlant (2011, as cited in Veldstra, 2020: 4) to define a contemporary structure of feelings where the goals one is required or desires to pursue simultaneously impede on the ability for one to flourish.

Although many studies have examined the consequences of EL, empirical evidence is mixed; research has found that EL produces both benefits and detrimental effects for individual workers (see, e.g., Lazányi, 2010). The purpose of the article is to deepen understanding of the influence of personal and situational factors while responding to the need for EL and the role of personal factors in determining the outcomes of EL. Understanding the influence of dispositional variables in the occurrence of consequences associated with performing EL would assist while developing interventions aimed at reducing them. Most burnout interventions were historically oriented to the individual (Maslach and Goldberg, 1998). Yet, more recent interventions acknowledge that such interventions should consider both situational and dispositional aspects in order to be effective because burnout may also occur as a result of person-job misfit (Maslach and Goldberg, 1998; Maslach et al., 2001).

The article is structured as follows. First, we present different EL strategies. Next, the situational and dispositional antecedents included in the study are described along with an explanation of why they are considered to be important in EL. Our findings are then presented in light of burnout prevention and discussed in consideration of certain previous research in the area. The final section presents the conclusion.

Emotional labour strategies

EL research indicates that in itself the expression of emotions is not necessarily stressful; the negative consequences are chiefly due to emotional dissonance (Mesmer-Mangus et al., 2012). Still, regardless of the importance of emotional dissonance in EL, especially in determining the outcomes of performing EL, it is important to keep in mind that EL does not always involve emotional dissonance (Brotheridge and Lee, 2003). Throughout this article, EL is viewed as expressing organisationally prescribed emotions, regardless of the level of emotional dissonance. In cases characterised by dissonance, expressing the required emotions is definitely more difficult than when there is congruence between genuine emotions and the prescribed ones. However, even when the required and genuine emotions are congruent, EL is still present because these emotions have to be expressed in the appropriate way. Display rules also prescribe how emotions should be expressed, not only which ones have to be expressed (Morris and Feldman, 1996).

Accordingly, better understanding of the EL process can be achieved if all possible EL strategies, i.e., all possible responses to emotional demands, are included. When a discrepancy arises between prescribed and genuine emotions, surface and deep acting enable employees to conform to the display rules and express appropriate responses. Still, an individual faced with this discrepancy can choose to express their genuinely experienced feelings regardless of the mismatch between the prescribed and their genuine emotions, which results in negative consonance or emotional deviance (Mikolajczak et al., 2007; Zapf, 2002; Cukur, 2009; Scarduzio, 2011). Emotional deviance is present when expressed emotions match genuinely felt emotions but are inconsistent with the display rules – the employee intentionally disregards the display rules and expresses emotions that are genuinely felt (Mikolajczak et al., 2007). Lastly, if organisationally prescribed emotions match genuine emotions employees might fulfil the display rules without any additional effort. In these cases, employees are performing EL through the expression of naturally felt emotions (Diefendorff et al., 2005) or emotional consonance (Näring et al., 2006).

Different EL strategies have been shown to have various dispositional and situational determinants (Wang et al., 2011; Osolnik, 2011). Some individuals might be predisposed to surface act in response to EL demands, while others might prefer to fulfil them through deep acting. Distinct EL strategies have been associated with differential outcomes as well.

The results of meta-analyses confirm that emotional dissonance and surface acting bring the most detrimental outcomes for employee well-being and that deep acting has generally weak effects that are negligible compared to the effects of surface acting (Mesmer-Mangus et al., 2012; Wang et al.,

2011; Osolnik, 2011). The effects of expressing genuine negative emotions (emotional deviance) are comparably unfavourable (Osolnik, 2011). On the other hand, emotional consonance is generally unrelated to (Mesmer-Mangus et al., 2012) or even reduces reported levels of burnout (Osolnik, 2011). This means the negative consequences of performing EL might be largely due to felt dissonance and surface acting. Thus, EL is not necessarily a source of job stress or employee dissatisfaction (Šadl, 2002: 66).

Hochschild (1983/2012) proposed that most of the negative consequences associated with performing EL might be explained by feelings of inauthenticity – when employees feel fake – resulting from the mismatch between their genuine emotions and those they express. This could help explain the differences in the effects of surface and deep acting. While deep acting, employees consciously attempt to modify their inner feelings in order to conform to the display rules. Therefore, the discrepancy between the felt and expressed emotions shrinks accordingly. On the other hand, surface acting only entails modifying outward expressions, without any changes in inner feelings. When surface acting, employees only pretend, fake and suppress their emotions, which might only deepen the discrepancy. The discrepancy between the felt and expressed emotions should hence be smaller for deep acting compared to surface acting since deep acting involves attempts at modifying inner feelings to bring them into line with the displays required. The resulting difference in emotional dissonance is an explanation proposed for the differences in the effects of surface and deep acting (Mann, 1999; Grandey, 2003; Judge et al., 2009).

Different EL strategies have distinct impacts on employee well-being. Accordingly, understanding what leads an individual to respond to emotional demands in a particular way might prove to be beneficial. Here, both situational and dispositional factors should be considered.

Previous research has shown that individual difference variables have the ability to influence the way in which employees perform EL (Diefendorff et al., 2005; Wang et al., 2011).

The role of dispositional and situational determinants in emotional labour

Surface acting has been consistently linked with detrimental outcomes for employee well-being. This means that understanding why an individual responds to emotional demands by surface acting should be a priority. Both positive affect (hereinafter PA) and negative affect (hereinafter NA) are expected to play an important part in determining the extent of surface acting. Understanding what enables employees to perform EL through emotional consonance seems equally important. This approach to EL has in fact

been associated with diminished levels of negative outcomes generally associated with performing EL. If dispositional factors play a crucial part in determining the response to EL demands (display rules), then influencing the way in which employees perform EL through selection and training would enable organisations to reduce the levels of burnout experienced by employees. Selecting employees based on their tendencies to experience certain emotions would also result in greater person-job fit (Morris and Feldman, 1996). A lack of person-job fit is one of the factors contributing to the experience of burnout. Conversely, greater person-job fit could potentially lead to higher engagement – the opposite of burnout (Maslach and Goldberg, 1998).

Emotional experience can be separated into two general dimensions: PA and NA. NA represents a general category encompassing dissatisfaction and aversive mood states. The dimension is composed of several more specific negative emotional states such as: fear, anger, sadness, guilt, contempt, disgust and nervousness. Analyses of emotional experience indicate that individuals predisposed to (experiencing) a particular negative emotion such as sadness also experience other negative affects – fear, anger and guilt to a greater extent (Watson and Clark, 1992). Therefore, negative affect encompasses a tendency to experience negative emotions. Similarly, PA reflects a tendency to experience positive emotions more often – the extent to which an individual experiences positive emotions like enthusiasm, interest, excitement and alertness (Watson and Clark, 1997). Both PA and NA affects entail a tendency to experience certain emotions, hence it seems reasonable to expect that both types of affect have an impact on the level of discrepancy between organisationally prescribed emotions and emotions that are felt – the extent to which an individual will have to manage their emotions or emotional displays in order to meet the EL demands.

Diefendorff et al. (2005) categorised dispositional determinants into factors that determine the need to act and factors that influence the individual's willingness to act – willingness to regulate emotions. The PA and NA affects should determine the need for acting the most among dispositional factors. Moreover, previous research findings indicate that among individual difference variables NA and PA are responsible for the strongest effect on burnout (Alarcon et al., 2009; Swider and Zimmerman, 2010).

For deep acting, a certain level of PA should first be required – which enables deep acting (to allow an individual to deep act). Then factors of willingness should play a decisive role. Job satisfaction is treated as a factor of willingness in this study. Employees who are more satisfied with their work should more readily engage in deep acting (in the case of a discrepancy between their genuine and the organisationally prescribed emotions). On the other hand, less satisfied employees should be more inclined to surface act in response to emotional demands (Wang et al., 2011).

Individuals who experience negative emotions more often (high NA) should also find their genuine emotions to more frequently be at odds with the display rules. Consequently, high NA individuals are expected to resort to deep or surface acting to meet the display rules more often (Brotheridge and Lee, 2003; Judge et al., 2009). Yet, previous research summarised in meta-analytic findings indicates that these individuals are more likely to surface act in response to EL demands (Wang et al., 2011; Osolnik, 2011). Similarly, individuals who do not experience positive emotions frequently might find their true emotions to be at odds with the display rules more often and therefore encounter a stronger need for acting (both surface and deep acting; Brotheridge and Lee, 2003).

While deep acting, employees attempt to alter their emotions by redefining the situation (e.g., viewing an agitated client as a hurt family member with a traumatic past) or recalling the appropriate emotions and expressing them (see Hochschild, 1983/2012; Wang et al., 2011). Individuals who tend to experience positive emotions less often thus should have greater difficulty recalling the prescribed positive emotions. Consequently, individuals low on PA should engage in surface acting to a greater extent (compared to deep acting). On the other hand, recalling pleasant, positive emotions should be easier for individuals who tend to experience them more often. This should enable high PA individuals to perform EL through deep acting to a bigger extent (Wang et al., 2011).

Therefore, individuals low on PA and high on NA should be predisposed to surface act the most given that they will be faced with the discrepancy between the genuine and organisationally prescribed emotions the most; lower levels of PA would also make it more difficult for them to perform EL through deep acting.

Hypothesis 1a: Surface acting will be positively related to NA and negatively related to PA.

Conversely, individuals high on PA and low NA should encounter the discrepancy between the genuine and prescribed emotions less frequently. This would enable them to meet the display rules through emotional consonance to a greater extent.

Hypothesis 1b: Emotional consonance will be positively related to PA and negatively related to NA.

Among situational determinants, display rules are the most widely studied antecedent of EL (Wang et al., 2011), followed by interaction characteristics (duration, frequency, and level of routines of interactions, as well as the intensity and variety of emotions displayed). In the present study, only display rules (both NA and PA) were included along with the frequency and

duration of interactions. Job satisfaction was also considered as an antecedent of EL, even though job satisfaction has been considered as both an antecedent and outcome of EL in previous EL research.

Based on past research, employees were expected to respond to positive display rules primarily by deep acting and emotional consonance; and surface acting to a smaller extent. Several authors agree that individuals respond to positive emotional requirements by deep acting because people have a tendency to experience positive emotions (Wang et al., 2011).

In contrast, employees tend to surface act in response to negative display rules – requirements regarding the suppression of unfavourable negative emotions (Wang et al., 2011; Osolnik, 2011). Surface acting should require less effort in dealing with negative emotions compared to deep acting (Wang et al., 2011).

Hypothesis 2a: Positive display rules will be positively and weakly related to deep acting and emotional consonance, and surface acting.

Hypothesis 2b: Negative display rules will be positively and strongly related to surface acting, and deep acting and negatively related to emotional consonance.

Outcomes of emotional labour: Burnout

Past research shows that the response to EL demands plays a vital role in determining the consequences of EL (Martinez-Iñigo et al., 2007). Surface acting is the most stressful and harmful response to EL demands. In contrast, deep acting represents a less detrimental form of EL (Mesmer-Mangus et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2011; Osolnik, 2011). The most promising finding arising from past research is that emotional consonance is unrelated to (Mesmer-Mangus et al., 2012) or even reduces levels of burnout and stress (Osolnik, 2011).

Burnout is the most widely researched outcome of EL. Burnout represents a pressing challenge for organisations since employees who were once enthusiastic and motivated professionals become exhausted, cynical and inefficient. Even though some of these employees quit their jobs as a result of burnout, many remain in their positions even though they only meet the minimum requirements and not their true potential. This demise in the quality of their work is felt by everyone affected by their work (Maslach and Goldberg, 1998).

Maslach (1982, as cited in Halbesleben and Buckley, 2004) defined burnout as a form of prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors present within one's job. Burnout comprises three

dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and lack of personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation develop as a result of work overload and personal conflict; while a diminished sense of personal accomplishment develops in response to a lack of resources that would enable one's job tasks to be carried out (e.g., lack of time, lack of tools, of lack of information; Maslach, 2003). *Emotional exhaustion* refers to feelings of emotional over-extendedness and a lack of emotional resources. Employees experience it as a lack of the resources and energy that would enable them to improve their work performance. The main sources of emotional exhaustion are work overload and interpersonal conflict in the workplace. Employees feel depleted, without any possibilities for replenishment. Individuals lack the energy they need to face another workday (Halbesleben and Buckley, 2004; Maslach and Goldberg, 1998). Emotional exhaustion leads to emotional and cognitive distancing from one's work, presumably as a form of coping with job demands. For this reason, emotional exhaustion is usually closely tied to depersonalisation (Maslach, 2003; Maslach et al., 2001). The current study includes only one dimension of burnout - emotional exhaustion. Based on previous research, surface acting is expected to have the strongest effect on emotional exhaustion. Conversely, emotional consonance is expected to be related with lower levels of burnout. The relationship between deep acting and emotional exhaustion should be weak. When considering the relationship between deep acting and emotional exhaustion, it seems important to consider that an employee probably applies all EL strategies during the workday. For instance, an employee might express genuine feelings (emotional consonance) in part of their workday, while the rest of the time they perform EL by deep acting, and when dealing with a difficult client express appropriate responses through surface acting. When examining the consequences of EL, this fact should not be overlooked, whereas when determining the outcomes of a particular EL strategy, e.g., deep acting, the effects of other strategies should be taken into account. Therefore, the level of surface acting should be considered while examining the effects of deep acting on emotional exhaustion.

Hypothesis 3a: Emotional exhaustion will be positively related to surface acting.

Hypothesis 3b: Emotional exhaustion will be negatively related to emotional consonance.

While the theoretical underpinning is deeper in the theoretical part of the article, our empirical work in this study is limited to correlational analysis.

Method

Participants and Procedure

The sample comprised 29 employees working in the service sector in Slovenia. While 'services with a smile' were relatively poorly developed during the time of socialism, changes in the economic structure moving towards a market economy and Slovenia's insertion into the global economy (beginning in the late 1980s) have required positive EL in service sector jobs similar to that required in the service sector in the West. Thus, successful frontline employees must constantly adapt to new organisational contexts and demands. As new forms of affective forms of labour have emerged, this takes considerable effort and can be exhausting.

Some of the occupations covered in the sample include: tourism and restaurant employees, sales and bank employees, hairdressers and other service occupations. A relatively small company operating in the tourism sector agreed to distribute questionnaires within the company and mail the responses to the researchers. Part of the sample included acquaintances of the authors who provided their responses in an online survey. The participants had to provide their responses by the start of April 2012 in order to be included in the study. The mean age in the sample was 38 years ($M = 38.46$, $SD = 11.30$) and two-thirds of the sample was female ($N = 19$).

Materials

The questionnaire included measures of positive and negative display rules, EL, the frequency and duration of interactions, emotional exhaustion, positive and negative affectivity. The scales were translated from English into Slovenian by the authors.

Positive and negative display rules, emotional labour, as well as the frequency and duration of interactions were measured/assessed by scales developed by Diefendorff et al. (2005). Even though the positive display scale includes four items, one was omitted due to reliability considerations. One item was also omitted from the negative display rules scale based on similar considerations. Both the frequency and duration of interactions scales include two items; however, duration was assessed with only one item. The scale for surface acting comprised seven items, while the emotional consonance scale was assessed with three items. Even though the original scale contains four items, deep acting was assessed with three items after one was omitted based on reliability considerations. All of the items had responses on a scale ranging from 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree". The sample size was quite small, which may have caused the troubles

concerning reliability. Decisions to omit items were based solely on reliability considerations since the sample size did not allow for factor analysis.

Positive and negative affect were assessed with PANAS (Watson et al., 1988). The scale includes 10 items for positive and 10 items for negative affect. The respondents provided their answers on a scale ranging from 1 “very slightly or not at all” to 7 “extremely”.

Emotional exhaustion was assessed with the burnout measure developed by Malach-Pines (2005). The scale is made up of 10 items with responses ranging from 1 “never” to 7 “always”.

Job satisfaction was assessed with three items. Respondents provided their answers on a scale ranging from 1 “strongly disagree” to 5 “strongly agree”.

The frequency and duration of interactions were included primarily as control variables because the sample included employees from a range of occupations. Both duration and frequency can differ significantly among different occupations and could have an important impact on a study’s findings. As the frequency or duration of interactions increases, it becomes more likely that employees will experience a discrepancy between their genuine and the organisationally prescribed emotions – which may affect the need for acting (Morris and Feldman, 1996; Zapf, 2002).

Analysis

Before proceeding with further data analysis, reliability statistics were computed. Items were omitted in order to ensure higher levels of reliability.

First, (descriptive statistics) means and standard deviations were computed for all study variables. Next, correlations between all variables included in the study were computed. This provided a test of hypotheses 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 3a and 3b.

Results

Table 1 includes the means, standard deviations, and correlations of the variables included in the study. Cronbach’s coefficients α are shown on the diagonal.

The effects of dispositional determinants

Table 1 shows that surface acting was negatively related to PA ($r = -.39$, $p < .05$) and positively related to NA ($r = .40$, $p < .05$). Emotional consonance follows the opposite pattern of correlations, being positively related to PA ($r = .51$, $p < .05$) and negatively related to NA ($r = -.52$, $p < .05$). Hypotheses 1a and 1b are therefore supported.

Table 1: SUMMARY OF MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, RELIABILITIES, AND CORRELATIONS OF STUDY VARIABLES

	M	SD	1.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.
1. duration	3.57	.99	-									
2. surface acting	3.17	.68	-.03									
3. deep acting	3.20	.92	.25	(.82)								
4. emotional consonance	3.64	.76	.15	-.19	(.73)							
5. positive display rules	4.08	.70	.39*	.19	.27	(.68)						
6. negative display rules	3.46	.89	-.13	.36	-.13	-.03	(.61)					
7. frequency	3.30	.92	.20	.11	-.32	.14	-.24	(.79)				
8. job satisfaction	3.89	.73	.42*	.14	.04	.15	-.33	.31	(.74)			
9. positive affect	3.55	.53	.12	-.49*	.51*	.27	-.47*	-.14	.33	(.71)		
10. negative affect	1.94	.54	-.21	.08	-.52*	-.21	.09	.18	-.06	-.24	(.84)	

Table 1 includes means, standard deviations, and correlations of variables included in the study. Chronbach's coefficients α are shown on the diagonal.

Note: N ranges from 27 to 29. Correlations, statistically significant at the $p < .05$ are marked with an *.

Source: Own calculation.

The effects of situational determinants

Table 1 indicates that Hypothesis 2a was partially supported: individuals respond to positive display rules through emotional consonance ($r = .27$, ns), deep acting ($r = .19$, ns) and, contrary to expectations, also through surface acting ($r = .20$, ns). Hypothesis 2b was confirmed: employees primarily follow negative display rules by surface acting ($r = .49$, $p < .05$); however, they also deep act in response to negative display rules ($r = .36$, $p < .05$).

Emotional exhaustion as an outcome of emotional labour

Emotional exhaustion was positively related with surface acting ($r = .55$, $p < .05$) and negatively related to emotional consonance ($r = -.12$, ns). Hypothesis 3a was confirmed. The results support the expected direction of the correlation between emotional consonance and emotional exhaustion. Still, the association between emotional exhaustion and emotional consonance was relatively weak and not statistically significant. Hypothesis 3b was not fully supported.

Conversely, the level of emotional exhaustion decreases as interactions become longer for individuals who engage in surface acting less often. It is possible that individuals with lower levels of surface acting fulfil their EL requirements through deep acting or emotional consonance - which have been shown to produce less detrimental outcomes. Yet, when faced with

short superficial transactions, it is possible that they surface act to a greater extent since more genuine displays are more difficult in such cases/situations. Hochschild (1983/2012) observed that since the time for customer interaction is being drastically shortened, “it can become impossible to deliver emotional labor” (Hochschild, 1983/2012: 121). In these situations, any more involved relationship becomes unattainable and hence deep acting is replaced by the less persuasive surface acting (see Hochschild, 1983/2012). Even employees who would want to offer a deeper, more involved relationship are unable to do so in the given situation.

On the other hand, it is possible that such shorter interactions are more emotionally exhausting for different reasons (e.g., work overload or a lack of time) even for individuals who report lower levels of surface acting.

This study has several limitations; the first limitation to be mentioned is the sample size. This fact should be borne in mind while interpreting the study's findings. Therefore, future studies based on larger sample sizes should seek to support the reported findings before any more definite conclusions can be drawn. Next, another important consideration refers to causal inferences. All of the data obtained were cross-sectional. Due to the lack of a longitudinal design, the direction of the cause-and-effect relationship cannot be established. For example, it is equally likely that more satisfied employees will be more motivated to deep act since it is likely that employees who deep act experience more positive interactions with their co-workers, supervisors or clients – and are thus more satisfied with their work. Another important consideration is common method bias: all the data were collected from a single source (employees) using one methodology. Further, our analysis is still limited to correlational bivariate analysis. Further analysis should embrace multivariate analysis taking the interactions among the variables into account.

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of the article was to deepen understanding of the personality and situational factors in EL, and of the consequences of performing EL, especially the role of personality factors in determining them. Different forms of EL hold diverse outcomes; surface acting has been linked to the most devastating effects, while emotional consonance could even reduce levels of emotional exhaustion (Näring et al., 2007; Martinez- Iñigo et al., 2007). Dispositional factors (PA and NA) also had a significant effect on all EL strategies. Consequently, organisations could indirectly impact the level of employees' emotional exhaustion by adapting selection procedures, developing training and coping programmes, or adapting the work process. Past research consistently shows that the degree of emotional dissonance

plays a vital role in determining the negative outcomes of EL. Further, previous research provides support for the importance of dispositional factors in determining the response to EL demands. Many authors agree that increasing the person-job fit, especially by selecting employees predisposed to experiencing emotions that coincide with the organisationally prescribed emotions, should result in a diminished experience of emotional dissonance and, in turn, lower levels of burnout. The present study's findings confirm the importance of dispositional factors in EL. PA and NA had a significant effect on all EL strategies. Of note, PA and NA together accounted for almost half the variability in emotional consonance.

Dispositional determinants also significantly impacted surface acting, particularly on the correlation level. However, PA and NA together did not account for the majority of the variability in surface acting as had been expected. Moreover, contrary to expectations, surface acting had a significant effect on emotional exhaustion even after taking the effects of PA and NA into account. Prior research nevertheless points to the important role of PA, and especially NA, in surface acting (Wang et al., 2011; Osolnik, 2011).

PA also played an important role in deep acting: for individuals with a certain level of PA deep acting is strongly related to job satisfaction. Therefore, potential interventions aimed at increasing job satisfaction would bring more favourable outcomes for these employees. Thus, organisations can indirectly influence the way in which employees perform EL by including tendencies for experiencing (selected) emotions in selection procedures. Influencing the way in which employees perform EL can in turn affect the experience of burnout. Emotional consonance could reduce the levels of emotional exhaustion, while surface acting causes the most detrimental outcomes. Selecting employees based on affect tendencies could also lead to a greater person-job fit since most service occupations call for expressing of positive emotions while suppressing negative ones.

Past research has consistently linked surface acting to the most detrimental outcomes (Mesmer-Mangus et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2011; Osolnik, 2011). Burnout reduction interventions should accordingly be aimed primarily at reducing levels of surface acting.

Apart from being the most emotionally exhausting EL strategy, surface acting became increasingly emotionally exhausting as the interaction progresses. For employees who tend to surface act less, the levels of emotional exhaustion actually decrease as the interaction progresses.

The frequency and duration of interactions could be conceptualised as an indicator of workload. Despite the study's relatively small sample size, the duration of interactions and surface acting were found to interact in their effects on emotional exhaustion. Hence, if the duration of interactions is viewed as an indicator of the workload, then as the misfit on this dimension

increases surface acting becomes increasingly emotionally exhausting. However, this effect was not found for the other possible indicator of workload – the interaction effect of frequency of interactions and surface acting on emotional exhaustion was not empirically supported.

A similar interaction effect of surface acting and one of the dimensions of person-job fit – the control dimension – was reported by Grandey et al. (2005); the positive association between surface acting and emotional exhaustion was stronger for employees with lower levels of autonomy. The relationship between surface acting and emotional exhaustion was not as strong when employees enjoyed greater control or autonomy. Therefore, as the misfit in the control dimension (i.e., the lack of control/autonomy) increases, surface acting becomes increasingly emotionally exhausting. Comparable findings were reported by Scott and Barnes (2011): the association between surface acting and work withdrawal was stronger for women than for men. Gender differences in evaluations of work and work performance have generally favoured men both financially and socially. Therefore, gender differences might entail a difference in the dimension of rewards.

Burnout occurs most often in emotionally highly demanding professions (Černigoj Sadar, 2002; Pujari and Pal, 2018). Here, it is important to apply an intersectional lens while researching workers' burnout as some groups may become burdened with the most EL: "often it's people experiencing oppression or marginalization through multiple factors who are assumed to owe the most EL to those in dominant groups" (Jorgensen, 2019). It is critical to understand the seriousness of the health problems resulting from EL among frontline service workers and to provide interventions to prevent or relieve burnout at work. Service workers' burnout is a complex problem, which means the solutions are also complex and require interventions on multiple levels – individual, workgroup, organisational and structural. By nurturing "the culture of well-being" (Čehovin Zajc and Kohont, 2017), organisations can help reduce the negative health effects of stressful working environments. Similarly, leadership can also play a significant role in dealing with EL by encouraging employees to share emotional responses. Leadership efforts aimed at removing emotional barriers in communication can improve the emotional climate of the organisation and have a positive impact on workers' satisfaction (Kanjuo-Mrčela and Vrčko, 2007). In addition to the individual and organisational interventions mentioned above (training and coping programmes, workplace transformation etc.), we believe that strong informal workgroup cultures or "communities of coping" (hereinafter CC) (Korczyński, 2003) can play an important role in supporting the health and well-being of employees. Research has found that CC can serve as a buffer against burnout (Surana and Singh, 2009). Communal coping, defined as "the pooling of resources and efforts of several individuals [...] to confront

adversity” (Lyons et al., 1998: 580), expands “resources and capacity for coping with stressors” (ibid.: 587). “Banding together to address stress provides some distinct benefits not gain acting alone” (ibid.). The stressor is perceived and acted upon as ‘our problem’ (ibid.) and stress becomes a community-level concern. Moreover, CC provide safe spaces removed from organisational surveillance and monitoring. Based on the organisation’s goals and norms, management can dictate the display rules and determine appropriate ways of coping with stress and burnout in order to better control workers’ responses. In CC, which workers might create in order to escape from the display rules imposed by management, workers can freely discuss work-related difficulties (low pay, excessive emotional and job demands, conflicts with customers or supervisors, stress) and understand the positive and negative effects of organisation-level interventions on their well-being and capacity to effectively respond to their customers’/organisations’ demands.

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