

IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL LABOR ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT WITH MEDIATORY ROLE OF SELF-EFFICACY AMONG CALL CENTRE EMPLOYEES IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper was to examine the impact of emotional labor on organizational commitment with mediatory role of self-efficacy. Data were collected from 120 employees working in different Call Centers across Pakistan using a questionnaire. Results indicate that emotional labor is negatively associated with organizational commitment even though the relationship is insignificant. While mediatory role of self-efficacy is established, implications are also discussed.

INTRODUCTION

In today's business environment, service sector organizations are trying to gain competitive advantage by providing high quality customer service (Peccei & Rosenthal, 1997). Therefore, organizations force their workers to develop a positive attitude when dealing with customers, (Schaubroeck & Jones, 2000) and expect from them to show friendly behavior by suppressing their true feelings of boredom or irritation (Byrne, Morton, & Dahling, 2011). So in this situation, there is a difference between the emotions employee actually feel and the emotions required by the organization. There is an effort (or labor) clearly seen to express fake emotions, and this phenomenon is termed as Emotional Labor which is an act of showing emotions desired by the organization during service transactions (Morris & Feldman, 1996). This discrepancy of emotions is well described in Self-discrepancy theory presented by Higgins (1987), which is the underpinning theory of this paper.

A number of studies have been done previously on emotional labor and its effects on organizational related outcomes such as job stress, job satisfaction (Pugliesi, 1999) and as stated by Abraham (1999) that one of the aspects of emotional labor is emotional dissonance which produces negative consequences for employees like lower job satisfaction and ineffective commitment (Seery & Corrigan, 2009). The outcomes of emotional labor are controversial and this is due to differences in context (Kim & Han, 2009). Past studies proved; that culture affects the emotional labor processes, as customer expectations vary from country to country and employees should provide the quality of service that is matched with their cultural norms (Allen, Diefendorff,

& Ma, 2013). A study like this, examines the negative impact of emotional labor on commitment to organization within a Pakistani culture.

The relationship between emotional labor and organizational commitment presented in this study is mediated by self-efficacy, which is an individual's ability to accomplish a certain task confidently (Abraham, 1999). The role of self-efficacy in emotional labor is that it helps employees when dealing with aggressive customers, to avoid the difference between the emotions they feel and display. Highly self-efficacious employees overcome the state of dissonance, and low efficacious employees feel distinction in their behavior which causes tension and stress (Heuven, Bakker, Schaufeli, & Huisman, 2006). Karatepe, Arasli, and Khan (2007) described the impact of self-efficacy on job outcomes such as job performance, job satisfaction and effective organizational commitment and stated that high self-efficacious employees are more committed to organizations.

Past studies explore the emotional labor processes in the service industries like hospitals, tourism, hotels and call centers (Wegg, Van Dick, & Van Bernstorff, 2010; Adil & Kamal, 2013; Karim & Weisz, 2011). Study on emotional labor has not been done in a Pakistani call center with this unique framework, in which Self-efficacy plays a mediatory role unlike past study done by Abraham (1999) on Emotional dissonance with mediatory role of Self-esteem. So this study tries to fill this gap, and identify the impact of emotional labor among various call center agents. This study will be effective for Pakistani call center managers, to know about the psychological health of call center agents, and the required emotional job demands in order to take initiatives to reduce this dissonant state of employees through effective training

practices, and to make employees more committed to their organization. This paper will also help employees to use self-efficacy approach, in order to deal with customers confidently in conflicting situations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional Labor and Organizational Commitment

“Emotional labor refers to effort, planning, and control required to display organizationally desired emotions during interpersonal transactions, performed by individuals either through deep acting or surface acting” (Karim & Weisz, 2011). Surface acting is the act of hiding inner true feelings by expressing fake emotions to please others, while display acting is the individual’s true inner feelings, consistent with the behavior he think he should express externally (Moran, Diefendorff, & Greguras, 2012 ; Lv, Xu, & Ji, 2012 ; Karim & Weisz, 2011). With this definition, it is analyzed that emotional labor is the name of a discrepancy between felt and displayed emotions (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993) which leads to an emotional dissonance state. This state is considered to be aroused by a threat to positive image of oneself (Therkelsen, 2011) and this self-discrepancy state is related to a theory postulated by Higgins (1987) which stated that incompatibility between an individual’s thoughts and attitudes give rise to a state of discomfort, the more the discrepancy the more will be the discomfort.

With relevance to service sector, it has usually been seen that employees dealing with customers have more emotional work which may lead them to emotional exhaustion (Adil & Kamal, 2013). To meet the workplace demands and customer expectations, employees are more engaged in managing their emotions positively (Shuck, Shuck & Reio, 2013), and if any discrepancy arises in hiding their negative feelings like anger, it will produce tension and lead them to burnout. (Erickson & Ritter, 2001).

Several studies in the past have found mix findings about the effects of emotional labor on employees (Pugliesi, 1999). Some researchers have found positive outcomes of emotional labor as did by Meier, Mastracci, and Wilson (2006) who stated that emotional labor may help to increase organizational effectiveness and to do task effectively by regulating behavior appropriately when dealing with customers (Meier et al., 2006), while negative consequences have also been found such as job dissatisfaction, (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003) emotional exhaustion and turnover intention as studied by Lv et al. (2012). Abraham (1999) examined consequences of emotional dissonance due to job dissatisfaction and emotional exhaustion in her earlier studies. She then

expanded her research to find out other consequences as well such as organizational commitment and intention to turnover. She explains that emotional dissonance state lead employees to dissatisfaction from jobs, reduces his/her commitment to organizations and finally to turnover intentions and shows that emotional labor has a negative impact on organizational commitment which leads us to the first hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1. Emotional labor is negatively related to organizational commitment.

Self-efficacy as Mediator between Emotional labor and Organizational Commitment

The terminology of self-efficacy has gained considerable attention in literature of organizational behavior (Gist & Mitchell, 1992). According to Chen, Gully, and Eden (2004) and MacNab and Worthley, (2008), the term self-efficacy was developed by Bandura in his social cognitive theory. It is the person’s ability to perform a task in order to deal with specific situations, and it also involves (Bandura, 1977) the people’s perception of their capabilities to recognize what actions they need to take in order to achieve something (Schunk, 1995).

So, self-efficacy is said to be a belief that an individual is capable of doing a task well. Perceived self-efficacy helps to cope with different states of stress and in situations where individual faces failure. Self-efficacy is developed when a person attains different complex physical, social or linguistic skills through experiences (Bandura, 1982) and through personal qualities and social skills. As they perform, they get feedbacks from others about their performance, and thus this feedback enhance their self-efficacy (Schunk, 1995).

Gist (1987) has described the development of self-efficacy in a person on the basis of studies done by Bandura & Adams (1977). There are four sources of information that determine self-efficacy. Performance accomplishment on the basis of mastery experiences, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and a state of emotional (physiological) arousal.

Emotional arousal gives the person information about their competencies when they face a stressful situation, and it has influence on perceived self-efficacy to cope with a threatening situation (Bandura, 1977).

Studies have been done in the past on self-efficacy and its relation to emotions. Various studies proved self-efficacy as the predictor of cognitions, emotions and behaviors (Federici & Skaalvik, 2011). Individuals with high self-efficacy are able to deal with their emotions appropriately as compared to low efficacy individuals. Thus employees dealing with customers directly needs

to regulate and express emotions that satisfies their customers. This depends on the confidence an employee has about his/her capabilities to give appropriate responses (Abraham, 2000). The appropriateness of surface emotions are usually conflicted by truly felt emotions, and a need to exert force or labor is required to display the required emotions with confidence (Diefendorf & Gosserand, 2003). In a specific emotion related work, self-efficacy has been studied by Heuven et al. (2006) shedding light on the discrepancy of emotions (namely emotional dissonance) and its relevance to self-efficacy, which proved the negative consequences for this emotional state on employee health and well-being and reduction in self-efficacy beliefs. They negatively relate self-efficacy to emotional job demands, emotional dissonance and emotional exhaustion.

Different people have different level of self-efficacy depending on their level of skills (Gist & Mitchell, 1992). Study done by Gecas (1989) shows that there are positive and beneficial consequences of high self-efficacy, while low self-efficacy is the indicator of negative consequences. Self-efficacy plays an important role in performing job related tasks effectively. For example, in an organization, an employee is expected to perform his job as the job demands, and this depends on his ability to perform well so that it can also be beneficial for the organization. Highly efficacious individuals are likely to take risky decision, and are persistent and more committed to a project or work even in failing project situations. Conversely, low efficacious individuals are not willing to take any risk because they are not confident about their skills and abilities and are easily disappointed from failure (Pethe & Chaudhari, 2000). Luthans and Peterson (2002) studied the psychological state of self-efficacy, and proved that it is helpful to strengthen the relationship between employees engaged in work, and managerial effectiveness, which resulted in a positive outcomes as well as management development. Staples, Hulland, and Higgins (1998) has suggested different outcomes of self-efficacy, performance and other outcome variables which are mainly job satisfaction, coping ability, organizational commitment and job stress. The concept of organizational commitment, which can be studied through attitudes and feelings of an individual about his or her organization (Madsen, Miller & John, 2005), has been a very popular concept in management research for the past twenty five years (Stephens, Dawley & Stephens, 2004). It is the primary feature of successful organizations (Lambert, Kellays, & Hogan, 2012). The committed employees are intrinsically motivated to play their part in organizations (Bloemer, 2010) and help to achieve organizational goals (Arnolds & Boshoff, 2002). They took the company's success or failure as their own success or failure (Giffords, 2003).

Kim and Rowley (2005) studied dual commitment in Asian organizations to find out the relationship between commitment and its antecedents. Study of self-efficacy done by Karatepe, Arasli, and Khan (2007) clearly showed that highly self-efficacious employees are more effectively committed to the organization. So, we can hypothesize that self-efficacy is the significant predictor of organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 2. Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between emotional labor and organizational commitment.

METHODOLOGY

Instrumentation

The research was based on self-assessed and self-rated questionnaires of Emotional labor, self-efficacy and organizational commitment. Questionnaires were self-administered for every participant. Every participant was briefed about the purpose of the research and were explained the questionnaires in detail for the need of accurate responses. A total number of 140 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 120 were received back, making response rate as 83.3 percent. All outcome measures were assessed with 5-point Likert scales with anchors of 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

Measures

Following measures were adopted and used in this research.

Emotional Labor

The questionnaire for Emotional labor was adopted from Grandey, (1999) containing 12 items. Few sample statements of the scale are; (1) I put on an act in order to deal with customers in an appropriate way, (2) I try to be a good actor by showing the right "face" at work, (3) I show an emotion that I don't really feel. Cronbach's Alpha of this scale in our study was 0.700, after deleting items 1 and 3 from those 12 items (n = 120).

Self-efficacy

To measure Self-efficacy, a scale of seventeen items was adopted from Sherer et al. (1982); item no. 1 and 15 were deleted to improve the chronbach's alpha reliability to 0.720. Few sample statements of the scale are; (1) I give up on things before completing

them, (2) When I decide to do something, I go right to work on it, (3) I feel insecure about my ability to do things.

Organizational Commitment

The questionnaire for organizational commitment was adopted from Mowday, Steers & Porter, (1979) containing 15 items initially, but to improve chronbach's alpha reliability, item no. 3, 11, 12 and 15 were deleted to reach chronbach's alpha reliability of 0.737. Sample statements are; (1) I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for, (2) I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar, (3) For me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.

Population and sample

The population for this study was the customer services representatives from cellular service providers of Islamabad and Rawalpindi cities of Pakistan. Equal number of employees from the job designation of customer services representatives was purposively drawn (n=120).

Convenient sampling technique was used. Furthermore the sample include, 60.8% (n = 73) males and 39.2% (n = 47) females. Sample was a reasonable blend of different age groups as 5% (n = 6) were under 20 years old, 59.2% (n = 71) were between the age of 21-30 years, 32.5% (n = 39) were between the age of 31-40 years and 3.3% (n = 4) were between the age of 41-50 years. Our sample included participants (CSRs) with average qualifications as 11.7% (n = 14) holding FA/ FSc degrees, 50% (n = 60) holding BA or BSc degrees, 29.0% (n = 35) holding MA or MSc degrees and only 9.2% (n = 11) having MS /Phd degrees. 32.5% (n = 39) were married, 62.5% (n = 75) were unmarried, four were divorced and one was a widow. Years of experience or

tenure was as follows: 24.2% (n=29) were having less than 1 year experience, 35.8% (n=43) having 1-2 years, 25.8% (n=31) having 3-5 years, 10.8% (n=13) having 6-10 years and 3.3% (n=4) were having over 10 years of experience as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Demographic Characteristics

Category		Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Male	73	60.8
	Female	47	39.2
Age	Under 20	6	5.0
	21-30	71	59.2
	31-40	39	32.5
	41-50	4	3.3
Education	FA/FSc	14	11.7
	BA/BSc	60	50.0
	MA/MSc	35	29.0
	MS/PhD	11	9.2
Marital Status	Single	75	62.5
	Married	39	32.5
	Divorced	4	3.3
	Widow	2	1.7
Tenure	Less than 1 year	29	24.2
	1-2	43	35.8
	3-5	31	25.8
	6-10	13	10.8
	Over 10	4	3.3

RESULTS

Correlation among Study Variables

Table 2 indicates correlations, among demographics, emotional labor, self-efficacy and organizational commitment. There is statistically significant positive relationship between emotional labor and self-efficacy (.3088**), while the relation between self-efficacy and organizational commitment is very weak and negative (-.056). The correlation between emotional labor and organizational commitment was found to be very weak (.017).

TABLE 2
Correlations Analysis

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Gender	1							
2. Age	-.138	1						
3. Education	-.166	.436**	1					
4. Marital Status	-.100	.578**	.226*	1				
5. Tenure	-.204*	.557**	.437**	.383**	1			
6. Emotional Labor	-.198*	-.100	-.164	-.047	-.171	1		
7. Self-Efficacy	-.008	-.239**	-.097	-.138	-.226*	.308**	1	
8. Organizational Commitment	-.052	-.017	-.012	-.002	-.020	-.017	.056**	1

* $P < 0.05$ and ** $P < 0.01$

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Regression Analysis

Two types of regression analysis have been used to test the hypothesis as shown in Table 3 and 4. Simple

regression analysis for outcomes to test the effect of independent variables on dependent variable is shown in table 3 as follows:

TABLE 3
Regression Analysis for Outcomes

Predictors	Self-Efficacy			Organizational Commitment		
	β	R ²	ΔR^2	β	R ²	ΔR^2
Step1						
Control Variables		.075			.059	
Step2						
Emotional Labor	.301**	.159	.085**	.024	.004	.001
Self-Efficacy				.170**	.08	.05**

Gender, age, education, marital status and tenure were entered as control variables in the first step and only value of their R square is reported. In the second step of Table 3, emotional labor and self-efficacy were regressed on organizational commitment showing values of beta (β), R square and R square change. Emotional labor brings only 4 % variance on organizational commitment and self-efficacy.

TABLE 4
Mediated Regression Analysis

Predictors	Organizational commitment		
	β	R ²	ΔR^2
Step 1			
Control Variables		.004	
Step 2			
Self-Efficacy	.170**	.08	.05**
Step 3			
Emotional Labour	.050	.011	.002

A three step mediated regression analysis has been done to check the mediatory role of self-efficacy between emotional labor and organizational commitment as shown in Table 4. R square of control variable is .004 and when organizational commitment is regressed across emotional labor. It shows that self-efficacy mediates the relationship.

DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis for this study was that emotional labor is negatively related to organizational commitment.

Table 2 shows the correlation value of these two variables as .017, which is not negative but a very low value confirms the insignificant relationship between these two variables, thus accepting our first hypothesis that there is inverse relation between emotional labor and organizational commitment.

These results are in consonance with the findings of Seery and Corrigan (2009), that if an employee has to work on suppressing true emotions to make customer happy and to behave in organizationally desired ways as a continuous practice, it will demotivate employee to do work and he will be dissatisfied from the job which will lead him to turnover intentions, and commitment to organization will be eroded. Customer services departments like in telecommunication sectors of Pakistan, the Call Centre agents have to face the same problem of hiding true emotions for the sake of goodwill of the organizations in which they are working, and through this effort of emotional labor chances of turnover intentions increases and there is decline in organizational commitment.

The second hypothesis was that self-efficacy acts as a mediator between emotional labor and organizational commitment. In table 2, the correlation between emotional labor and self-efficacy is .308**, which shows the significance of the relation. This is also proved by regression analysis as $t= 3.37$, while p value is .001. This result shows that the more a person will be self-efficacious, the more he will be able to cope with emotional labor situations. It was also hypothesized that self-efficacy plays an important role in increasing organizational commitment, .

These results show that self-efficacy does not enhance organizational commitment in our Pakistani context, because there is no concept of job rotation

and career development like in developed countries. In Pakistan, training sessions are there to increase command on work and organizations want to retain those skilled and trained employees to do the same job for the benefit of company, but in this situation personal skill development of employees gets blocked as they only have efficacy of doing a specific task/job. Employees feel boredom in doing the same job with same routine for their whole life, but they have to do it because of fear of not getting another job due to increased unemployment ratio in Pakistan. Another reason is economic benefits provided by their organizations which help in supporting their families pertaining to a collectivist culture that prevails. Unlike other western and developed countries, employees have to continue doing monotonous work with intentions of leaving and reduced commitment, waiting for a better opportunity in another company as an incentive to leave the current one.

In developed countries like USA, to make employees more committed, organizations offer specific types of skill development programs and job rotation within the organization so that employees will not get bored from the same task and feel as an important part of organization; that they are being cared and employers and management are considering their wellbeing. In our underdeveloped country there are no such facilities to promote the wellbeing of employees, but few multinational companies are practicing such activities to enhance organizational commitment.

CONCLUSION

The objectives of this empirical study were to find the negative association between emotional labor and organizational commitment and then see the mediating effect of self-efficacy on this association. The study targeted participants from Telecommunication sector who completed a self-rating questionnaire of emotional labor, self-efficacy and organizational commitment. Analysis was done using SPSS software. Two hypotheses were tested using data gathered for the study. One hypothesis was accepted but the other was rejected as per empirical evidence. Study concluded that there is a negative association between emotional labor and organizational commitment. It was also concluded that presence of self-efficacy helps to deal with emotional labor while it deteriorates the organizational commitment. Topic needs further investigation in future.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

There are several limitations to this study. As this study measures the impact of emotional labor on organizational commitment, other variables should also

be studied.

Workers, given a high degree of autonomy, are able to cope effectively with emotional labor, hence should be studied. An important limitation of this research is that it was conducted with a small sample size. Future researchers should use a larger sample size for the research. Finally, like most studies of emotional labor, this study used customer service representatives. It would be useful to extend the analysis to professionals, whose reaction to emotional labor may be expected to differ from that of first-level service employees.

This study will be effective for Pakistani Call Center managers to know about the psychological health of Call Center agents and the required emotional job demands to take initiatives to reduce this dissonance state of employees through effective training practices in order to make employees more committed to the organization. This paper will also help employees to use self-efficacy approach to deal with customers confidently in conflicting situations.

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