Introduction to Emotional Labor

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“...the experience of work is saturated with feeling.”

(Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993, p. 98)
Roadmap for today

• What is emotional labor and what do we know about it?

• What can we do with it?
  • Individually
  • Organizationally
To be effective in my job, I must:

• Try to act excited, enthusiastic, proud, or determined.
• Act cheerful and sociable.
• Act interested or attentive to another person.
• To make a good impression on others (e.g., bosses, co-workers, customers, etc.), I must try to act excited, enthusiastic, proud, or determined.

(1) almost never occurs
(2) seldom occurs
(3) occasionally occurs
(4) occurs frequently
(5) occurs very frequently

(1) is very brief (< 5 minutes)
(2) is brief (> 5 min., < 15 min.)
(3) occurs for a lengthy interval (> 15 min., < 1 hour)
(4) is fairly continuous (> 1 hour, < full shift)
(5) is continuous (lasts full shift)
To be effective in my job, I must:

• Try to suppress how upset or distressed I may feel.
• Suppress anger and contempt I may feel.
• Try to pretend I am not upset or distressed.
• Try to pretend I am not angry or feeling contempt.

(1) almost never occurs
(2) seldom occurs
(3) occasionally occurs
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In order to do your job effectively, how much do you do the following behaviors?

- Put on an act in order to deal with customers in an appropriate way
- Fake a good mood.
- Put on a “show” or “performance.”
- Just pretend to have the emotions I need to display for my job.
- Put on a “mask” in order to display the emotions I need for the job.

1 = never
2 = seldom
3 = sometimes
4 = often
5 = always
In order to do your job effectively, how much do you do the following behaviors?

- Try to actually experience the emotions that I must show.
- Make an effort to actually feel the emotions that I need to display toward others.
- Work hard to feel the emotions that I need to show to others.

1 = never
2 = seldom
3 = sometimes
4 = often
5 = always
Emotional Labor

- **Display rules**: the rules that describe the expression or suppression of emotions

- **Surface acting**: when employees superficially express the required emotions without adjusting their inner felt emotions

- **Deep acting**: when employees reappraise a situation to evoke the required emotions
Sounds familiar?
More harm than good?

• EL is associated with positive and negative outcomes

• Obligatory display rules take a toll

• Faking *doesn’t* make it!

• Deep acting is less bad, but not a magic bullet
Should we perform emotional labor?
What options do we have?
RQ: How do individual and organizational factors differentially predict emotional labor strategies?

**Individual Factors**
- Emotional Intelligence
- Dispositional Affect

**Organizational Factors**
- Organizational Justice
- Autonomy
- Feedback
- Perceived Organizational Support

**Emotional Labor**
- Surface Acting
- Deep Acting
Study Sample

n = 1861 librarians

f = 1646 (88.4%)
m = 215 (11.6%)
# Results - Model comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Surface Acting</th>
<th>Deep Acting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>.208</td>
<td>.040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>z=14.463, p&lt;.001</td>
<td>z=17.199, p&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>.138</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

**Individual Factors**
- NA positively predicts surface acting
- PA, EI, and NA positively predict deep acting

**Organizational Factors**
- Work autonomy and POS negatively predicted surface acting
- Work autonomy (negatively) and feedback (positively) predicted deep acting
Individuals
Emotional Intelligence

“The abilities that enable awareness of the emotional states of oneself and others, and the capacity to regulate or use emotions to positively affect role performance.”
Perceive and express emotions

- Identify emotions accurately in self, in others, in artwork
- Accurately express emotions
- Discriminate between accurate and inaccurate expressions

Use emotions to facilitate thinking

- Emotions direct attention to important information
- Assist with judgment and memory, problem solving
- Encourage consideration of multiple views

Understand emotions

- Label and discriminate between similar emotion terms
- Understand relationships between events and emotions
- Understand complex emotions and transitions between emotions

Manage emotions

- Engage or detach from feelings based on their usefulness
- Reflect on emotions in self and others: typical, reasonable?
- Moderate negative and enhance positive emotions
The benefits of EI

- Better social relations
- High EI is perceived more positively by others
- Better family relationships
- Better academic achievement
- Better social relations during work performance and in negotiations
- Increased psychological well-being
What you can do?

• **Recognize**: Improve recognition of your emotions
  *Ask*: what am I feeling right now?

• **Express**: Balance authenticity with professionalism
  *Ask*: How can I best convey what I’m feeling

• **Analyze**: Be mindful of emotion appraisal process
  *Ask*: Why am I feeling this way?

• **Embrace**: Make the most of the emotions you feel
  *Ask*: What can be gained by this emotion?
Organizations
Organizational Solutions
**Social Support**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Sharing is/can...</th>
<th>Co-rumination is/can...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...seeking social support and constructive advice from co-workers.</td>
<td>...venting to co-workers in a non-constructive way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...healthy and positive.</td>
<td>...form a vicious cycle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...create positive work environments.</td>
<td>...lead to mistreatment of customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...solution oriented.</td>
<td>...problem oriented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...seeking help/support.</td>
<td>...seeking pity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Supervision

- Create and monitor support networks
- Involve employees in clarifying expectations
- Remove work barriers
- Model effective EL
- Celebrate EL successes
Training

For Staff
- Understand Expectations
- Learn about Tactics

For Managers
- Understand Emotional Demands
- Learn about Employee Experiences
Human Resources

• Incentives, rewards, recognition

• Include EL as part of a fair performance appraisal process

• Introduce general stress management and wellness programs

• Examine job roles and demands ➔ Low cognitive and high emotional can be problematic
Organizational Culture

- Physical Symbols
- Written Documents
- Underlying Values
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References and Images


