



EMOTIONAL LABOUR: THE INVISIBLE UNPAID WORK OF NURSES AND HOW IT AFFECTS THE JOB SATISFACTION

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Abstract:

Emotions form an inevitable part of everyday work life. Emotional labour, as an emerging field of research is only three decades old. Emotions are crucial in the service interactions, direct interactions with customers or clients, hence the service employees in each organization are subjected to considerable managerial intervention. They perform emotional labour, as it requires effort on the part of the employees to display appropriate emotions as specified by the organization. The healthcare industry is one among the rapidly expanding industries in the service sector. The emphasis now is on developing a close holistic relationship between the nurse and the patients to facilitate healing and this places the nurse at the centre of the network of healthcare professionals. The increasing demands of contemporary nursing practices such as cost containment, resource deficit, greater patient acuity, bed shortages and low morale place greater emotional demands than ever on nurses and their ability to constantly maintain an emotionally appropriate, professional and caring demeanour, thus increasing the demand for emotional labour. Emotional labour as work is invisible, but the costs and importance, though less tangible, are equal to that of physical labour. Though there is an increase in public service jobs that require emotional labour, it is seldom or never recognized and honoured and almost never taken into account by the organization as a source of job stress. This paper presents a short review on emotional labour and examines its relationship to job satisfaction.

Key Words: Emotions, Service Interaction, Emotional Labour, Job Satisfaction & Job Stress

1. Introduction:

Emotions form an inevitable part of everyday work life. According to Arvey, Renz and Watson (1998), till late nineties emotions were not studied much for two reasons, first, emotions were viewed as dysfunctional and irrational, and treated as an interference to work, Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) and second, emotions by their nature are challenging to study and measure (Arvey et al., 1998), because emotions are subjective feeling states. Hence till the recent past, emotions were ignored in the study of organizational behavior. The workplace was looked upon as a rational environment, and emotions as obstacles in the way of sound judgment. Thereby, emotions were never considered as justifications for workplace phenomenon. With more and more research work being done in the field of workplace emotion, this belief is being dismantled with new research insights that hold the work place emotions offering justifiable explanation to important individual and organizational outcomes. Modern economy has a fast growing service sector that generates a major share of the total revenue. The service sector includes a broad spectrum of jobs, ranging from the teachers to doctors to salesman to truck drivers to front office receptionists. The relative intangibility, heterogeneity, perishability and inseparability of production of service from its consumption create difficulty for the customer to isolate service quality from the quality of interaction during service delivery, i.e. the service interaction. As a result the customer's evaluation of the service interaction becomes central to the evaluation of overall service experience. Hence the role played by the service employee who performs the service interaction for the organization is of great significance since customer's perception of the service quality is influenced by the way the service employee expresses his/her emotions in the service interaction. Most service organizations have display rules for their service employees and the employees are expected to present emotions desired by their organizations apart from high level of competency in the job. But most often the emotions genuinely 'felt' by these employees are different from the organizationally 'desired' emotions and hence it requires 'effort' or 'work' or 'labour' on the part of the employee to display the appropriate emotions specified by the organization. This type of labour is called emotional labour. With the shift of the manufacturing based economy to service economy and the development of service industries, emotional laborers, who are wanted by the organizations to hide their genuine emotions and display emotions that customers want, have rapidly increased. Grandey (2000) identified two long term consequences of emotional labour, job satisfaction and burnout, which affects the individual wellbeing.

2. Methodology:

2.1 Participants: The participants were 60 nurses of a major hospital in the corporate sector in Madurai, coming under various designations: Nursing superintendent, nursing supervisor, charge nurse, staff nurse, ANM, and OP.

2.2 Materials: The data on was collected using a tested questionnaire with three sections namely: one each for emotional labor, job satisfaction and demographic information. Each statement of the questionnaire was evaluated based on a Likert scale.

2.2.1 Emotional Labour: The 14-item scale described by Brotheridge and Lee (1998) was used. The scale items covered six dimensions of emotional labour namely duration, frequency, intensity, variety, deep acting and surface acting. Some rewording was done with regard to the work environment of the current sample. In particular the word “customers” in the Brotheridge and Lee items was replaced by “patients”. Brotheridge and Lee (2002) report good combined coefficient alpha for the role characteristics (frequency, intensity and variety) subscales ($\alpha = 0.71$), as well as for the deep acting and surface acting subscales ($\alpha = 0.89, \alpha=.86$).

2.2.2 Job Satisfaction: The three item scale of the job satisfaction subscale of Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins &Klesh, 1979) was used. Grandey (2003) reported a high alpha of 0.93 for this subscale.

2.2.3 Demographic Data: Five items were included to assess the designation, educational qualification, job tenure, family size and total family income of the respondents. The appropriate choices were given and respondents were asked to tick the suitable answer.

2.3 Procedure: To conduct the survey, the researcher contacted the hospital to solicit their participation in this research. Once the Human Resource Director agreed to participate in this survey ,the questionnaires were handed out by the researcher to the respondents during different shifts. Nurses from among all the cadres participated in the study. It includes both male and female respondents. Taking into consideration the very busy schedule of the nurses, as requested, they were given ample time to fill in the questionnaires. Primary data was collected with the help of a questionnaire consisting of questions on the demographic information, emotional labor scale and job satisfaction subscale. Secondary data related to the study was collected from journals, books and the internet.

2.4 Framework of Analysis: This study was conducted based on Grandey’s model of emotional labor. Grandey (2000) integrated previous models of emotional labor (Hochschild, 1983; Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Morris & Feldman, 1996) to provide a comprehensive theoretical model. This model encompasses situational cues, the individual and organizational factors that affect the emotion regulation process and the long-term consequences of emotional labor. She proposed that the emotional labor processes of surface acting and deep acting correspond to the description of emotional labor as emotional regulation, and can serve as a means to operationalize emotional labor. Grandey (2000) provided three reasons for the operationalization of emotional labor as surface and deep acting. First, surface and deep acting can have both positive and negative outcomes, therefore researchers can explain negative outcomes such as burnout, as well as positive outcomes such as customer service and increased personal accomplishment. Next, if these two processes have differential outcomes, then organizational training and stress management programs can be modified accordingly. Lastly, conceptualizing emotional labor as surface and deep acting links this model of emotional labor to an established theoretical model of emotion regulation. Two of the long-term consequences of emotional labor identified by Grandey (2000), burnout and job satisfaction deal with individual well-being. Job satisfaction provides an estimation of how an employee feels about his or her job. Parkinson (1991, as cited in Pugliesi, 1999) argued that when employees’ genuine feelings are masked, it lead to decrease in job satisfaction. Abraham (1998) proposed that increase in emotional dissonance reduces job satisfaction. Consistent to this argument, Cote and Morgan (2002) found that the suppression of unpleasant emotions decreases job satisfaction and increases the intention to quit.

3. Results and Discussion:

1. Demographic Profile: The researcher identified 5 aspects of demographic profile which are depicted in the following table.

Table 1: Demographic Profiles

Details	Category	No. of Respondents	Percent
Designation	Nursing Supervisor	2	3
	Staff Nurse	29	49
	ANM	23	38
	OP Asst.	6	10
Education	BSc Nursing	14	24
	Dip in Nursing	17	28
	ANM	23	38
	Plus Two	6	10
Tenure	Less than a year	19	32
	1-3 years	35	58

	3-6 years	5	8
	above 6 years	1	2
Family Income	< 5,000	32	53
	5,001-10,000	21	35
	10,001-15,000	6	10
	15,000 and above	1	2
Family Size	2	1	1.6
	3	10	16.4
	4 and above	49	82

A frequency distribution (Table 1) of the demographic data reveals that the sample constituted 49% of staff nurses, 38% of ANM, 10% of OP Assistants and 3% of Nursing supervisors. Approximately 28% of the sample had a Diploma in Nursing and 24% were B.Sc Nursing graduates, 38% had completed the ANM course while the rest 10% had completed their Plus Two. Table 1 reveals that about 58% of the sample had an average tenure between one to three years, while only two percent of the respondents had a tenure of above 6 years. More than fifty percent of the respondents had a family income less than rupees 5000 per month, 35% of the respondents had a family income between rupees 5000 and 10000 per month and 10% had a family income between rupees 10000 and 15000, while only 1.7% had the family income above 15000 per month. 82% of the respondents had a family size of above 4.

2. Dimensions of Emotional Labour: The emotional labor scale comprised of subscales that measured the six dimensions of emotional labor: Duration of interaction, frequency of interaction, intensity of emotions, variety of emotions, surface acting and deep acting. The number of patients attended to by each respondent per day and time spent with each patient i.e duration were identified through two free response questions that asked the respondent to identify the number of patients attended to every day and time spent with each patient.

Table 2: Frequency distribution (Patients attended / day) and (Duration per patient per day)

Factor	Category	No. of Respondents	Percent
Patients/day (Frequency)	<5	5	9
	5-10	44	73
	11-15	3	5
	16-20	5	8
	26-30	3	5
Duration/patient (minutes)	<10	10	17
	10-15	29	48
	16-20	13	22
	21-25	3	5
	>25	5	8

About 73% (majority) of the respondents (Table 2) attended about five to ten patients per day, 9% of the respondents attended only less than five patients a day, 8% of them attended between 16 to 20 patients a day and out of the remaining 10%, five percent attended eleven to fifteen patients a day and another five percent attended between twenty six to thirty patients in a day. According to Table 2 about 48.3% of the respondents spent between 10 to 15 minutes with each patient every day and around 22% of the respondents spend between 16 to 20 minutes with each patient every day, while an 8% spent more than 25 minutes with each patient.

The means and standard deviations for the emotional labor scale were worked out, for individual statements (Table 3) in the emotional labor scale.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics (Emotional Labor)

Statements.	Mean	Std Deviation
Interact with patients	4.28	0.715
Adopt emotions as part of job	3.40	1.182
Express particular emotions needed for the job	3.23	1.442
Express intense emotions	2.42	1.078
Show some strong emotions	2.37	1.073
Display different kinds of emotions	2.40	1.045
Express many different emotions	2.43	1.095
Display different emotions when interacting with others	2.62	1.151

Make an effort to actually feel the emotions	3.13	1.200
Try to experience the emotions that I should show	3.37	1.119
Really try to feel the emotions	3.52	1.255
Resist expressing my true feelings	3.25	1.083
Pretend to have emotions that I really don't have	2.43	1.226
Hide my true feelings about a situation	3.23	1.198

Table 4 reveals the means and standard deviations of the different dimensions under the emotional labor scale and Table 5 shows the frequency of response to the different dimensions of emotional labor

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics (dimensions of Emotional Labor)

Dimensions	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation
Frequency EL	2	5	3.67	0.986
Intensity EL	1	5	3.38	0.904
Variety EL	1	4	2.52	0.854
Deep acting EL	1	5	3.95	0.769
Surface acting EL	1	4	2.75	0.728

Table 5: Frequency of response to different dimensions of EL

Responses (Scores)	Frequency	Intensity	Variety	Deep Acting	Surface Acting
	No. of Respondents	No. of Respondents	No. of Respondents	No. of Respondents	No. of Respondents
Never (0)	nil	1	8	1	2
Rarely (1)	8	7	19	1	19
Sometimes (2)	18	27	27	10	31
Often (3)	20	18	6	36	8
Always (4)	14	7	nil	12	nil
Total	60	60	60	60	60

The data collected and analyzed revealed that emotional labor is present among the respondents.

Table 5: Emotional Labor Index

Emotional Labor Level (%)	No of Respondents	Percentage
0 - 20	nil	0
21 - 40	6	10
41 - 60	24	40
61 - 80	30	50
81 - 100	nil	0
Total	60	100

According to Table 5, ten percent of the respondents have a low EL level, another 40% of the respondents have a moderate level of EL and the remaining 50%, the majority of the respondents, show a high EL level.

Table 6: Inter Correlation between the study variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Designation	-												
2. Education	.90**	-											
3. Tenure	.09	.14	-										
4. Gender	.19	.25*	-.20	-									
5. Patients/day	.56**	.48**	.14	.13	-								
6. Duration	-.46**	-.41**	-.02	.11	-.34**	-							
7. Frequency (EL)	-.19	-.07	-.31*	.09	-.29*	.11	-						

8. Intensity (EL)	-.23	-.32**	-.24	.02	-.17*	.13	.18						
9. Variety (EL)	-.55**	-.56**	-.15	-.35**	-.30**	.25	.21	.20					
10. DA (EL)	.27*	.21	.15	-.03	.10	-.16	.02	.05	-.03				
11. SA (EL)	-.05	-.04	.00	-.15	.10	.02	-.04	.09	.10	-.08			
12. JS	.15	.16	.01	.17	.01	-.15	.05	.05	-.02	.34**	-.11		
13. EL	-.39**	-.32**	-.13	-.18	-.38**	.38**	.66**	.30**	.58**	.10	.29**	.01	.23

Note. EL= Emotional Labor, DA= Deep Acting, SA= Surface Acting, JS= Job Satisfaction

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

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

Table 6 displays the inter correlations among all the study variables. The number of patients attended to per day was found to be highly related to the designation and educational qualification. Customer interaction expectations can be subsumed under the frequency and duration of interactions, the variety of emotional expressions required, and display rules of the organization. The subscale for the frequency dimension contained three items that addressed the frequency of the display of organizationally prescribed emotions. Majority of the respondents felt that the frequency of display of organizationally prescribed emotions was often in their job (Table 5). Frequency was found to be significantly negatively related to tenure and patients attended per day.

The intensity subscale consisted of 2 items that assessed how often the employee expressed strong or intense emotions. About 45% of the respondents felt that they did sometimes express strong emotions while another 30% felt that they had to often express strong or intense emotions. The intensity factor was found to be negatively correlated to designation, education, tenure, gender and patients served per day. The variety subscale measured the variety of emotional expression on the job and contained three items. More than 45% of the respondents felt that they had to sometimes express a variety of emotions on their job. Another 33% expressed that they rarely expressed a variety of emotions, while a 10% responded that they often expressed a variety of emotions on their job. The variety dimension was found to significantly positively correlate to a number of factors like designation, education, gender, patients served per day and intensity of emotional display. The deep acting subscale had three items that assessed how much an employee had to modify the felt emotions to comply with the display rules. More than 60% of the respondents expressed that they had to modify their emotions often in their job to comply with the display rules, while another 20% felt that they modified their emotions always in their job. But 2% of the respondents expressed that they never resorted to modification of emotion in their job.

Deep acting was found to be negatively related to gender, such that females engaged in significantly more deep acting. It also displayed a significant positive relationship with designation and a negative relationship with the variety dimension. The positive relationship between deep acting and intensity factor supports the research that deep acting produces intense emotions as the employee must actively call to mind thoughts, images and memories that will aid in expressing the required emotion and that work roles requiring display of intense emotions entail more deep acting and thus greater effort on the part of the role occupants (Morris and Feldman, 1996).

Deep acting was found to display significant positive relationship with job satisfaction thus supporting the research that if an employee engages in deep acting this may lead to feelings of personal accomplishment and by extension, job satisfaction (Kruml & Geddes, 2000). The surface acting dimension consisted of three items that measured the extent to which the employee had to express emotions that are not felt. The analysis reveals that above 52% of the respondents sometimes expressed emotions that are not felt. Another 25% of them often engaged in expression of emotions that are not felt while a 3% never resorted to expression of emotions that are not felt. Surface acting displayed a negative relation with designation, educational qualification, gender, frequency of display of display of emotions and deep acting. It expressed no relationship with tenure. Surface acting displayed a negative relationship with job satisfaction and a positive relationship with emotional exhaustion supporting the research that employees who engage in surface acting were more emotionally exhausted than those who adhered to display rules by deep acting. (Kruml & Geddes, 2000). According to Table 6. emotional labor as a whole was found to display a significant negative relationship with designation, educational qualification, and patients attended to per day. Emotional labor was found to be significantly positively related to duration per patient per day, frequency of emotional display, intensity of the emotions displayed, variety of emotions and surface acting. It was found to display a negative correlation with tenure, gender and a positive relationship with deep acting and job satisfaction. Scale scores were obtained for Job satisfaction. The means and standard deviations of the same were worked out. The job satisfaction of the respondents was assessed using the job satisfaction subscale of Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire. It consisted of three items that assessed the overall job satisfaction.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics (Job Satisfaction)

Statements	Mean	Std Deviation
I do not like my job	1.42	.743

I am satisfied by my job by all means	4.42	1.587
I like working here	4.48	.930

According to Table 7, the mean value of the first statement indicated that the respondents strongly disagreed to the statement that they did not like the job. The mean values of the second and the third statement indicated that the respondents agreed that they were satisfied by their job by all means and liked working there.

Table 8: Frequency of response to Job Satisfaction

Responses	No of Respondents
Strongly disagree (1)	nil
Disagree (2)	1
Slightly Disagree (3)	5
Slightly agree (4)	25
Agree (5)	18
Strongly Agree (6)	11
Total	60

Results reveal that around 20% of the respondents strongly agreed that they were satisfied in their job, while 33% of them agreed to this. A 40% of the respondents slightly agreed that they liked their jobs. According to Table 6. (Inter correlation between the study variables) job satisfaction displayed a negative relationship with duration per patient per day and variety of emotions displayed. It was found to display a significant positive relation with deep acting and was negatively correlated to surface acting. This supports the research that if an employee engages in deep acting this may lead to feelings of personal accomplishment and by extension, job satisfaction (Kruml & Geddes, 2000).

4. Conclusion:

Results of this study reveal that the consequences of emotional labor can be either positive or negative, depending on how it is performed. Beyond this, this study could make the service industry aware of their employees' emotional contribution to the organization's performance.. Providing training programs to develop necessary skills to perform emotional labor may require more concerted efforts by organizations than reliance upon selection. Thinking and feeling are indispensable part of human actions (Muchinsky, 2000). Thus the need of research on feelings of individuals in the workplace is very important as feelings are at the core of human emotions and emotion plays a vital role in organizations. Service employees are paid to be nice but the ability to be consistently nice to strangers requires incredible effort. When such effort succeeds, it is a remarkable feat. Emotional labor should be taken seriously, since it affects customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and eventually, organizational financial performance. People performing emotional labor deserve the public's respect and need to be financially recognized. It is hoped that this study will provide a better understanding of how employees perform emotional labor, how this labor affects employees' job satisfaction, and how this labor should be measured scientifically.

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