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ABSTRACT

This paper theoretically examined the concept of Emotional Labor in relation to the Negative and Positive impacts it has on employee performance. Based on extant Literature, three dimensions of emotional labor were adopted as the most reliable indicator of emotional labor namely attentiveness of emotion display, varieties of emotions to be displayed and frequency of emotional display. Consequently, our findings revealed that emotional labor is a phenomenon characterized by mixed effect. This is to say that each act of emotional labor displayed by employees in the organization leaves the employees with some positive or negative outcomes which could affect their performance in the organization. The study further discovered that emotional labor could produce some favorable outcomes for the employees such as increased job satisfaction and performance while in cases where employees are forced to display emotions other than their own could lead to stress, burnouts and decreased job performance. To mitigate against these negative tendencies of emotional labor, measures such as proper assessment, self-selection processes, social support and trainings in this area were recommended.

Keywords: *Emotional labor, Attentiveness of emotion display, varieties of emotion display, frequency of emotion display, Employee Performance, Productivity, and Excellent service delivery*

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INTRODUCTION

Extant literature has revealed that employees are the greatest assets in organization because they are the ones that drive the productivity of the organization. Accordingly, Krugman (1994) asserted that the success of a business to a great extent depends on the skills, capabilities and attitudes of its employees. Every employee puts in some form of visible and mental effort in a job. It is therefore important for them to manage and regulate their emotions when dealing with customers/clients in order to help the organization achieve its set goals and objectives.

Kim (2006) also maintained that due to the shift in the economy from manufacturing economy to a service based, most employees in their various jobs are required to regulate/manage their emotions when dealing with customers based on employees' demands.

The importance of emotions in the work environment has become apparent for quite a long time. Researchers have begun to realize the benefits that come from recognizing the value of emotions. For example, Sutton(1987) maintained that because of the rapid growth in the service sector and the continuous competition amongst organizations that provide services; organizations are increasingly concentrating on customer relations and be more focused on the nature of interactions (such as face to face or voice interactions) between employees and customers/clients. Consequently, employees are meant to engage in not only physical and intellectual labor but also emotional labor to increase their performance (Chu & Murmann, 2006; Sharpe, 2005; & Zapf, 2002).

Emotional labor can be generally defined as the process of managing one's feeling and expression to fulfil the emotional requirement of a job. It can also be seen as the process of adjusting and aligning one's

emotion towards pleasing one's clients or customers even though one is feeling otherwise. Some examples of jobs requiring emotional labor flight attendants, daycare workers, TV presenters, actors/actresses, etc.

Studies have shown that emotional labor could leave the organization with a given consequence either positive or negative. Hochschild (1983) posited that emotional labor can result to some psychological consequences such as low self-esteem and psychosexual effect. Similarly, Agervold (2009) asserted that it could lead to depression and burnout. However, Wouter (1989) reported that apart from these harmful effects, emotional labor could produce some positive outcomes for organization such as job satisfaction, and increased performance.

Amid the positive and negative contributions of emotional labor on employee performance, there is few theoretical evidence that clearly examines the double-edged impacts of emotional labor on employee performance particularly as it affects increase in productivity as well as his service delivery. This paper intends to fill in this gap by extending previous theoretical works on emotional labor and employee performance particularly paying attention to gains and dangers it has on employee performance with respect to his productivity and service delivery. We would also proffer some solutions to managing the negative outcomes of emotional labor.

First, the paper would first explore the theoretical framework of emotions, after which the conceptual framework of emotional labor and its dimension in relation to employee performance in the organization would be discussed. Finally, this paper will then examine the positive and negative aspects of emotional labor and how they affect their performance. Practical approaches would be discussed as a means of managing the negative outcomes of emotional labor.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Emotions: The Affective Event Theory (AET)

The concept of emotions can be explained using the Affective Events Theory

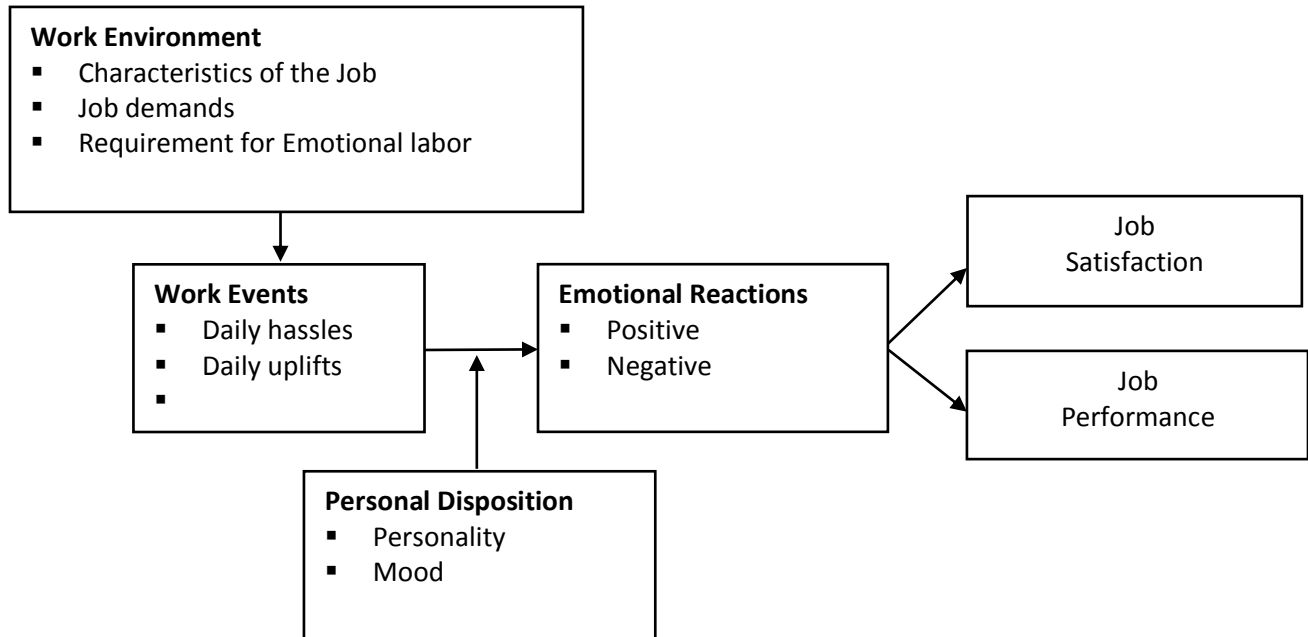


Figure 1: The concept of emotions

Source: Adapted from Robbins (2001) Organizational Behavior.

The affective events theory (AET) maintained that employees respond to emotional things that occur at their workplace and this reaction has the ability to affect their performance and satisfaction on the job. (Weiss & Cropanzano 1996). The Affective Events theory reflects the series of events and emotional interaction with the work environment. The work environment can be seen as surrounding the job, the various characteristics of the job, the job demands and the emotional labor requirements. For instance, certain jobs like nurses, waiters, flight attendants etc. involve some certain amount of emotional labor on such jobs, these requirements can be seen as the work environment (Robbins, Judge & Vohra, 2013).

According to the theory, the work environment are things that happens to employees at work such as daily hassles, set-backs, surprises, good news, daily uplifting could lead to emotional reactions either positive or negative. Also, employees' personality and moods play a great deal; some people can handle some events while some can't. In general, the theory posits that the emotional reactions affect the way employees feel about their jobs which in turn affects their performance. For instance, Robbins et al (2013) posits that positive reactions influences a number of performance and satisfaction. They could lead to organizational citizenship behavior, organizational commitment and increased job performance.

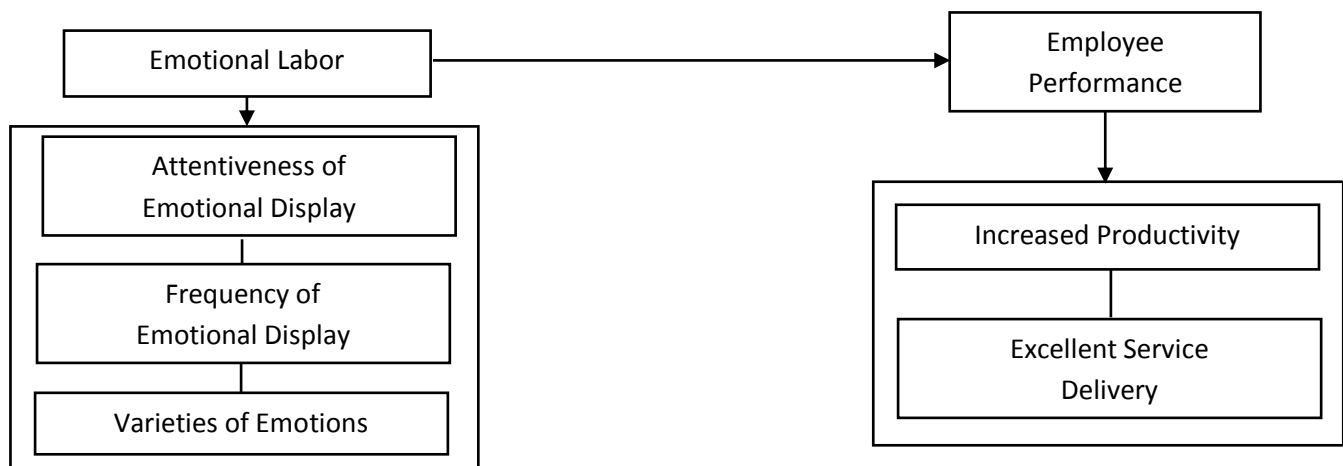


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework (Emotional Labor and Employee Performance)

Source: Morris and Fieldman (1996)

CONCEPT OF EMOTIONAL LABOR

The concept of emotional labor was first introduced by Hochschild Arlie in 1983. He defined emotional labor as the process of managing one's feeling and expression to meet up with the emotional requirement of a job. It can also be seen as the process of adjusting and aligning one's emotion towards pleasing one's clients or customers even though one is feeling otherwise.

Employees are meant to manage their emotions when dealing with customers, co-workers and superiors (Alicia, 2000). This has to do with the analysis and decision making based on the expression of emotions i.e. whether the emotions are felt or not, also the suppression of emotions that are felt and not expressed. Jobs requiring emotional labor includes the jobs that require one-on-one interaction with the public, those that require the employee to influence other people's behavior and the expression of emotions that has to follow certain rules(Hochschild, 1983; Morris & Fieldman, 1996, Zaph, 2002) Examples of such jobs includes doctors, nurses, flight attendants, daycare workers, T.V presenters, actors/actresses, etc.

DIMENSIONS OF EMOTIONAL LABOUR

The concept of emotional labor has been of great interest and importance to various researchers in the past years. They have sought to offer different

approaches to the understanding of the dimensionality of this construct. While some of them conceptualize emotional labor as a uni-dimensional construct which is primarily concerned with the intensity of emotional display- deep/surface acting (Hochschild, 1983, Wharton, 1993, Abraham, 1998) Others viewed emotional labor as a multi-dimensional construct that does not only deal with the intensity of emotion but captures various aspects of emotional labor (Morris& Feldman, 1997, Grandey, 1999, Schaerbeek& Jones, 2000). It is based on these that Morris and Fieldman (1996) have come up with a four dimensional view of emotional labor. They include the frequency of emotional display rules, attentiveness to required display rules, varieties of emotions required to be expressed and emotional dissonance. For this study, we considered Morris and Fieldman (1996) conceptualization more appropriate for our use since it captures various aspects of emotional labor.

Attentiveness of required display rules

Display rules can be referred to as the rules that the organization requires the employee to show that is considered as more appropriate for the job. Attentiveness to display rules refers to the extent to which an employee is engrossed or pays attention to display rules by job. Morris and Fieldman (1996)

posits that the higher the level of attentiveness to display rules, the more psychological energy and physical effort the job will demand from its employees and vice versa. Attentiveness of required display rules is made up of the intensity and duration of emotional display.

Intensity of emotional display: The intensity of an emotional display refers to the depth at which emotions should be expressed. Researchers (Morris & Feldman, 1996; Zaph, 2002) argued that intense emotional display requires more emotional effort, which can likely lead to a high emotional dissonance (a situation where employees project one emotion while feeling other). Hochschild (1983) has advocated that employees can carry out this type of emotional labor using any of these two(2) ways the surface acting and deep acting.

The surface Acting involves employees hiding inner feelings and foregoing emotional expressions in response to display rules. For instance, an employee can put on an emotion which they do not actually feel by changing their outward appearances; they could use their gestures, facial expression, gestures and voice tone when putting on their displayed rules (the needed emotions for the job) example are actors in a movie. In contrast, the deep acting occurs when employees modify a true inner feelings based on display rules. For example, employees try to use their thoughts, images, experiences when bringing about the right emotion.

Duration of emotional displays: it has to do with how long and the efforts it takes to display emotional labor. Rafaeli (1989) asserted that short display of emotion could require little emotional labor unlike the longer ones which requires a more strong and intense emotions. For example, a telemarketer attending to a call may require little emotional labor unlike a care giver

(nurse) who may need a longer interaction with their patients. Similarly, Morris and Fieldman

(1996) added that longer interactions with customers could lead to high level of stress and burnout because the longer the emotional display, the more their jobs requirement for greater attention and emotional stamina.

Frequency of Emotional Display

The Frequency of emotional display has to do with how often the work role requires the appropriate display of emotions (display rules). Studies conducted by Zap (2002) has shown that the higher the frequency of emotional display, the more effort is needed for the job. Hochschild (1983) also posits that higher the frequency of emotional display, the greater the chances of burnout and emotional dissonance.

Varieties of Emotional Labor required to be expressed

The varieties of emotional labor to be displayed refers to range of emotions that are required to be displayed during a job. An employee may be required to put up several emotional expressions at different times depending on his job. Morris and Fieldman (1996) posits that the greater the demand for varieties of emotions to be displayed the greater the emotional labor to be shown. For instance, a salesman may be required to give adequate attention to customers when the business is going at its normal level, on the other hand they may be required to speed up or increase their speed when they have more customers waiting for them. We can therefore say that the amount of emotional labor that is involved in regulating emotional expression can be influenced by the variety.

Employee Performance

Generally, employee performance can be described as the behaviors and actions that can be shown by employees that help an organization achieve its set goals and objectives. Looking at employee performance from an employee point of view in the organization, it has to do with work effectiveness,

quality and efficiency when carrying out a job. Studies (Bormann & Motowidlo, 1993) have shown that employee job performance is important because it helps an organization to be effective and gain competitive advantage. In similar vein, Inuwa (2016) posits that employee performance is critical for organizational growth and profitability. According to Rasiq & Maulabakhsh (2015) employees should try to achieve high performance standard by being motivated, maintaining a positive attitude when dealing with customers to help organization achieve their set goals and objectives.

Increased Productivity

Increased productivity basically refers to a situation where the organization produces a lot of products/services with minimal resources. Research has shown that increased productivity can help an organization generate more income. Zep-Obipi (2015) posits that one of the measures of corporate performance is through increased productivity. He further proffered that one of the ways in which corporate productivity can be measured is through the resource utilization and the product or service. Similarly, Krugman (1994) also maintained that the increase in productivity of an organization is largely dependent on the organization's resources which includes the employees. It is therefore important that organizations provide the necessary requirements to aid the capabilities of its employees. On the part of the employees; they must put in their physical, mental and emotional labor to enhance their performance and productivity.

Excellent Service Delivery:

Today's world is predominantly a service economy. In most western countries today, service can be seen to occupy about 75% of the GDP, which is a share that is likely to be sustained. It is therefore important to say that service is an important factor in most organizations that helps them achieve competitive advantage. Service therefore is an important competitive advantage for most organizations.

Service delivery refers to a situation where an organization is able to meet customers' needs and also remain competitive. Excellent service delivery on the other hand is the ability for the organization to go the extra mile when delivering their services, this results when customers' expectations are surpassed. They feel they have received an unanticipated service which can come in various forms such as gestures, kind acts, positive remarks or an additional efforts by the service provider.

Organizational studies (Gronroos & Ravald, 2011) have shown that excellent service delivery is very necessary for service providers (organizations) that wishes to create value for their customers. Through the provision of excellent services, organizations can increase customer satisfaction, loyalty and high performance (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2001). In order to achieve excellent service delivery, service organizations need to plan the delivery of their services. The burden of emotional labor includes provision of excellent service delivery that will provide that extra value for the customer.

EMOTIONAL LABOUR AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

A number of studies have been carried out on the relationship between emotional labor and employee performance. Studies (Jones, 1997, Waiters, 1989, Ashforth, 1993) have revealed that emotional labor has a psychological effect on employees' performance. These psychological effects could bring about a positive or negative consequences based on the type of emotional labor displayed. For example, Morris and Fieldman (1996) asserted that in situations where employees have to display several emotions at different times and where there are longer interactions with customers could lead to emotional dissonance (situations where employees are constrained to display emotions contrary to their real emotions), and decreased job satisfaction which leads to poor service delivery and reduced

productivity. This could be due to the fact that the longer the display of emotional labor, the more likely that the jobs will become less scripted which requires greater attention and emotional stamina leading to burnouts. Similarly, Jones (1997) posited that the continued display of emotional labor could lead to employees having psychological problems such as low self-esteem. Employees may begin to feel hypocritical; hence they find it difficult to really express themselves when delivering services to their customers which may likely cause a poor service delivery and low productivity.

However, other researchers (Walters, 1989; Adelman, 1995) considers the negative consequences of emotional labor on employees' performance to be only one side of the coin. They posited that emotional labor can also bring about some positive outcomes for the organizations and the individuals. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) viewed emotional labor as being positive because emotional labor helps build up the mutual relationship between employees who perceive it. That is, once employees get used to emotional labor, they tend to stay away from bad situations. This could help in reducing their stress level on the job thereby increasing their satisfaction and performance in terms of service delivery and productivity. In similar vein, Rafeli & Sutton (1991) also asserted that employees who put up smiling faces during work generally have a low level of stress and a high level of job satisfaction.

Practical approaches to managing negative outcomes of emotional labor

Total elimination of the undesirable emotions from the work place may not be feasible, rather organization have to adopt approaches aimed at reducing the ill-effects of emotional dissonance and other Health and organizational implications occasioned by the practices of emotional labor. These approaches may include the perceived job autonomy,

social support, individual qualification and training, and staff selection.

Perceived Job Autonomy

Job autonomy is the extent to which an employee has the liberty and independence to carry out his job. Empirical research (Erickson 1991, Lopez, 2006) has revealed that when employees perceive some level of freedom in their job roles it could help reduce stress and increase their performance. Saas (2002) maintained that employees who personally select the jobs that requires emotional regulation is likely to have greater freedom and autonomy which can help increase their performance based on their service delivery and productivity.

Social support

Social support is another approach service organizations can use to reduce the negative consequences of emotional labor. For example, where employees receive support from the organization in terms of their work- life balance, this could help ease stress and burnouts thereby increasing their performance in terms of their productivity and services they render to their customers.

Qualification and Training

Training can be regularly given to employees who are involved in emotional labor to enable them cope with work demands that can lead to emotional dissonance. Conversely, employees may also be trained to use less straining regulation strategies like antecedent focused regulation or deep acting, instead of response focused regulation or surface acting. Managers may also require training to be able to identify emotional needs among their staff to support them effectively and to serve as positive role model to them.

Staff selection

Staff who engage in emotional work areas should carefully be selected from the onset. Also, rotational changes should be made when the situation demands

and after careful assessment of the employees' disposition to development of emotion dissonance, either as applicants or employee.

CONCLUSION

The study basically reviewed the concept of emotional labor in relation to the dangers and gains it has on employees' performance. While exploring various literatures, the study adopted attentiveness to emotional display, frequency of emotional display, and varieties of emotions as the dimensions of emotional labor. Consequently, extensive literature review has shown that emotional labor is characterized by mixed effect. This means that the act of emotional labor leaves the employees with either positive/negative effects. The study further revealed that emotional labor could produce some useful outcomes for the organization such as increased job satisfaction and increased performance while in cases where employees are forced to display emotions other than their own could lead to burnouts and

decreased job performance. Thus we conclude that irrespective of the negative outcomes of emotional labor, when employees are self-selected, and trained on this area, they are likely to find fulfillment, increased job satisfaction and performance because of the passion and personality traits they possess to cope with emotions at work. We therefore recommend the following: -

- Emotional labor jobs should be carefully assessed and self-selection processes be utilized to place the appropriate employees in such jobs to meet up with the demand of emotion labor.
- Managers should conduct training regularly in order to make the employees involved in emotional labor cope with work demands.
- There should be job autonomy to enable employees have freedom and independence in carrying out its tasks
- The organization should provide social support for the workers such as work life balance to ease stress and burnouts.

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