

Mask It with Emotions – A Study of the Role of Emotional Behavior Among Information Technology Employees

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ABSTRACT

As the intangibility of business increases, even technologically dependent professionals such as IT employees who deal with hardware and software are expected to interact with customers in order to play their roles successfully. This paper examines the role of emotional labor as it relates to organizational citizenship behavior among IT professionals. This topic is an under-researched area in the literature. *Emotional labor* has become a buzzword in service industries, and there has been a tremendous increase in research on the topic. Although many studies have concentrated on the detrimental effects of emotional labor among human service professionals, few studies have focused on the effects among information technology professionals. The first objective of this study is to ascertain the relationship between emotional labor (surface acting, deep acting, and naturally felt emotions) and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) among IT professionals. The second objective is to define the moderating role of perceived organizational support between emotional labor and OCB. To achieve these objectives, the author used descriptive and exploratory methodology, including a hierarchical stepwise regression of 364 responses from IT employees in southern India. The findings indicate that naturally felt emotion is significantly related to organizational citizenship behavior. The study also explores the moderating role of perceived organizational support; offers recommendations on managing workplace emotions, particularly in the IT sector; and discusses the limitations of the current study and the scope of future research.

Keywords: Emotional labor, organizational citizenship behavior, perceived organizational support, information technology

1. INTRODUCTION

When people think of IT employees, they generally think of professionals who deal with technology. While it is true that IT professionals are responsible for devising new technological solutions to business problems, it is also true that they must deal with other human beings in order to perform their job in a better way. While acknowledging the technical aspects, one must not ignore the human element that is also a part of their routine job (Bassellier & Benbasat, 2004). Surviving in a competitive world is one of the biggest challenges facing almost all industries, including the IT sectors. The importance of emotional labor has been emphasized in studies going back to the research conducted on flight attendants by Hochschild in 1983. Put simply, *emotional labor* is the way employees manage and display emotions while fulfilling their organizational goals. Any job that requires employees to interact with customers involves emotional labor. In general, emotional labor can be performed by engaging in one of two strategies; namely, surface acting and deep acting (e.g., Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Grandey, 2003). *Surface acting* means faking emotions or displaying unfeeling emotions. *Deep acting* means modifying inner emotions or displaying emotions as demanded by the job. A third strategy that is not explored much in the Indian context is the display of *naturally felt emotions* (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003).

The research on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) began in the 1980s (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Smith et al., 1983). OCBs are called *extra role behaviors*, which means employees engage in behaviors that are beneficial to the organization but are not specified in their job descriptions. These positive behaviors are influenced by various factors. Diefendorff et al. (2006) found that employees who tend to engage in positive behaviors (deep acting) engage in OCBs more often than those who engage in faking emotions (surface acting).

The current study examines the relationship between emotional labor and OCB in the IT context. Prior studies have found that perceived organizational support (POS) has a positive impact on OCBs (Moorman et al., 1998). Research has also shown that high POS will elicit an employee's sense of obligation to repay the organization for the support received (Eisenberger et al., 1986). According to social exchange theory, employees with a high level of POS put more effort toward helping the organization achieve its goals in terms of the reciprocity norm (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002); so, they may actually engage in experiencing organizationally expected emotions for the return of favorable treatment.

Against this background, the current study has two major objectives:

- (1) To ascertain the relationship between (a) surface acting, (b) deep acting, and (c) naturally felt emotions with regard to organizational citizenship behavior
- (2) To determine the moderating role of perceived organizational support between (a) surface acting, (b) deep acting, and (c) naturally felt emotions with regard to organizational citizenship behavior

This paper is organized into six sections. Following the introduction is a literature review (Section 2) that summarizes theories behind the selection of variables. The conceptual model and hypotheses for the current study are presented in Section 3. Section 4 discusses research methodology, and Section 5 presents an analysis of data and findings. The paper concludes with a discussion of key findings, study limitations, and implications of the research (Section 6).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

One result of the remarkable growth in service industries has been the need to manage the expectations and experiences of customers, clients, and other stakeholders through controlled interaction. Regulation of feelings and expressions at work – known as emotional labor – is a critical element (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983) of many jobs that require employees to interact with customers, coworkers, and the public. Sociologist Arlie Hochschild (1983) coined the term *emotional labor* more than 30 years ago in her study of airline flight attendants and debt collectors. She defined *emotional labor* as “the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display, which is sold for a wage and therefore has exchange value” (Hochschild, 1983).

Since 1983, extensive research has been conducted on the emotional labor construct, but there seems to be no consensus on the dimensions of the construct. Table 1 presents an overview of dimensions studied by various researchers. Table 2 summarizes prior research with regard to researcher, industry sector, survey respondents, and the country in which the research was conducted.

In India, the number of service sectors is increasing. There, as in other countries, the quality of service delivery largely depends on the employees who handle their customers well. More research is needed to better understand the emotional labor construct, and this is particularly true with regard to the Indian context.

Table 1
Overview of the Dimensions of Emotional Labor

Researcher	Dimensions of Emotional Labor
Hochschild (1983)	a. Surface acting b. Deep acting
Morris & Feldman (1996)	a. Frequency of emotional display b. Attentiveness to required display rules c. Variety of emotions required to be expressed d. Emotional dissonance
Morris & Feldman (1997)	a. Frequency of interaction b. Duration of interaction c. Emotional dissonance
Kruml & Geddes (2000)	a. Emotive dissonance = Surface acting, genuine acting b. Emotive effort = Deep acting
Brotheridge & Grandey (2002)	a. Frequency of interaction b. Intensity of emotional display c. Variety of emotional display d. Duration of interaction e. Surface acting f. Deep acting
Brotheridge & Lee (2003)	a. Surface acting b. Deep acting
Glomb & Tews (2004)	a. Genuine positive b. Genuine negative c. Faking positive d. Faking negative e. Suppressing positive f. Suppressing negative
Diefendorff et al., (2005)	a. Surface acting b. Deep acting c. Naturally felt emotions
Chu & Murrmann (2006)	a. Emotive dissonance b. Emotive effort

Source: Sohn, H.K., & Lee, T.J., 2012

Table 2
Summary of Prior Research with Regard to Industry, Respondents, and Location

Researchers	Industry Sector	Survey Respondents	Location of Study
Hochschild (1983)	Aviation	Flight attendants	USA
Rafaeli & Sutton (1987)	Supermarket, amusement park	Employees at a supermarket and amusement park	USA
Van Maanen & Kunda (1989)	Amusement park	Employees at amusement park	USA
Leidner (1999)	Restaurant, insurance	Employees at fast food chain restaurant and insurance company	USA
Schaubroeck & Jones (2000)	Survey research organization	Full-time headquarters employees	Midwestern USA
Pugh (2001)	Banking	Customers of a regional bank	South-Central USA
Brotheridge & Grandey (2002)	Retail, restaurant, banking, accounting, consulting, engineering, construction, nursing, social work	Undergraduate business students	Canada
Glomb & Tews (2004)	Hotel, healthcare organization, assisted-living group home organization, police	Graduate students, employees	Midwestern USA, Eastern USA
Diefendorff et al. (2005)	Sales, service, healthcare, childcare	Undergraduate students	Southwestern USA

--Continued

Table 2 (Cont'd)

Researchers	Industry Sector	Survey Respondents	Location of Study
Grandey, Fisk, Mattila, Jansen, & Sideman (2005)	Videotaped simulated service encounter of a hotel check-in, restaurant	Customers of restaurant	Eastern USA
Tracy (2005)	Public administration	Officers at correctional facilities	Western USA
Chu & Murrmann (2006)	Hotel	Hospitality students, hotel employees	USA
Rupp & Spencer (2006)	Simulation at the call center help desk of a software organization	College students	Midwestern USA
Mikolajczak, Menil, & Luminet (2007)	Hospital	Nurses	Belgium
Austin et al. (2008)	Customer service, social work, nursing, sales, teaching	Undergraduate students	Edinburgh, UK
Kim (2008)	Hotel	Hotel employees	Northwestern USA

Source: Sohn, H.K., & Lee, T.J, 2012

Perceived organizational support (POS) is defined as the “degree to which employees believe that their organization values their contributions and cares about their wellbeing” (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). A study by Gosserand (2003) suggested that POS has a more complex relationship with emotional labor. Hekman et al. (2009) found that professional employees (e.g., doctors, nurses, lawyers) are more likely to

reciprocate POS when they strongly identify with the organization. This relationship has not been studied among IT employees. Employee behaviors are most often influenced by organizational identity. There needs to be ample research to signify the moderating effect of POS between emotional labor and OCB (Chau, 2007).

Positive and negative consequences identified from the review of literature can be grouped as follows:

- **Positive consequences:** Organizational citizenship behavior, task performance, customer service performance, job satisfaction
- **Negative consequences:** Burnout, psychosomatic complaints, strain, perceived stress, intention to quit

3. CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

This section discusses the empirical and theoretical literature related to the variables studied in this research, as a basis for understanding the theoretical context and the rationale for the hypothesized relationships.

3.1. Emotional Labor

Most emotional labor conceptualizations suggest that, to display appropriate emotions at work, individuals sometimes must hide or fake felt emotions (SA) or try to experience the desired emotion (DA). This is because many occupations have the general expectation that positive emotions should be displayed; and DA typically involves trying to experience positive emotions so that positive displays naturally follow. In contrast, SA usually involves faking positive emotions and sometimes suppressing negative felt emotions, so that positive displays will follow. SA has been described as “acting in bad faith,” and DA has been described as “acting in good faith” because the former involves going through the emotions and the latter involves trying to experience the emotions (Grandey, 2003).

Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) argued that focusing on only SA and DA ignores the possibility that employees can spontaneously experience and display appropriate emotions. Indeed, SA and DA may be considered compensatory strategies that help individuals express emotions that do not come naturally. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) considered the expression of naturally felt emotions to constitute emotional labor in that individuals still may have to put forth conscious effort to ensure that their displays coincide with the organization’s expectations.

No published research has examined the display of naturally felt emotions as an emotional labor strategy in the Indian context. Therefore, the current study

considers naturally felt emotions as a strategy of emotional labor and empirically distinguishes it from SA and DA.

3.2. Organizational Citizenship Behavior

The concept of OCB was first discussed in the organization research literature in the early 1980s (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Smith et al., 1983). Employees need to interact with customers either for brief or prolonged periods to maintain healthy relationships with them. For this, they may need to engage in behaviors (e.g., make customers happy) that are not written in their job description. These behaviors which enhance the employee-customer interaction are called OCBs.

OCB is defined by Organ (1988) as "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization." Smith et al. (1983), in a report of empirical research on the nature and antecedents of such behaviors, conceptualized these contributions as "organizational citizenship behavior" (OCB). In service settings, the extent to which an employee engages in surface and deep acting may influence whether he or she performs OCBs. The benefits of helping colleagues, for example, may outweigh the energy expenditure. However, employees who undergo considerable effort in surface acting in high emotional-demand jobs may be less willing to engage in OCBs because of the perceived energy involved. Deep acting may engender a good mood at work because the person actively tries to feel the emotions that are needed (Johnson & Spector, 2007). The enhanced psychological well-being associated with positive emotions may have a positive effect on employees' willingness to perform OCBs. Employees who deep act are also thought to have positive intentions toward the organization, suggesting they may also perform more discretionary behaviors (Grandey, 2000).

There is also little research on the mechanisms by which emotional labor influences OCBs, despite the fact that the performance of OCBs is critical to organizational effectiveness (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000). Goodwin, Groth, and Frenkel (2011) suggested that the relationship between emotional labor strategies and different facets of performance (e.g., customer service outcomes, specific forms of task performance, organizational citizenship behaviors) is an obvious next step for future theoretical and empirical investigation.

Based on the literature review, the current study developed the following hypotheses:

H1a: *Surface acting will have a negative impact on organizational citizenship behavior.*

H1b: *Deep acting will have a positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior.*

H1c: *Naturally felt emotions will have a positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior.*

3.3. Perceived Organizational Support

Although there were relatively few studies on perceived organizational support until the mid-1990s, research on the topic has burgeoned in the last few years. *Perceived organizational support* (POS) is the degree to which employees believe that their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). POS has been found to have important consequences on employee- performance and well-being. POS may not have a direct effect on surface and deep acting (Gosserand, 2003); however, it may have a more complex relationship with emotional labor. Hekman et al. (2009) found that professional employees (e.g., doctors, nurses, lawyers) are more likely to reciprocate POS when they strongly identify with the organization. Indeed, such organizational identification and professional identification combine to influence performance behaviors. The results suggest that POS has the most positive influence on professional employees' work performance when employees strongly identify with the organization and weakly identify with the profession. Future research warrants the moderating role of POS on emotional labor strategies and other variables (Chau, 2007).

There are no published empirical studies examining the effects of POS on emotional labor. Interestingly, Grandey (2000) proposed a negative relationship between support and emotional labor. She argued that social support from coworkers and supervisors consists of an emotional component that creates a positive work environment. This positive work environment, in turn, may result in less emotional labor because employees may be naturally feeling the positive emotions required by the display rules. This way of conceptualizing support differs from the idea of POS in that social (or emotional) support is more affective in nature, whereas POS is more cognitive (or evaluative). That is, POS, by definition, is a cognitive evaluation of an employee's relationship with the organization rather than an affective reaction to the support. Based on social exchange theory,

employees who are high on POS may feel an obligation to their organization to put forth much effort (in terms of surface acting or deep acting) in order to meet the demands of the display rules.

H2: *Perceived organizational support will moderate the relationship between (a) surface acting and organizational citizenship behavior, (b) deep acting and organizational citizenship behavior, and (c) naturally felt emotions and organizational citizenship behavior.*

The above review explains the phenomena that affect caring professionals like nurses, teachers, social workers, and hospitality employees. The current researcher expects the same phenomena to be applied to IT professionals since their jobs involve high-intensity interactions with other employees/customers (Maudgalya, Wallace, Daraiseh, & Salem, 2006). Thus, the researcher hypothesizes similar relationships in this study to explore more in the context of IT employees.

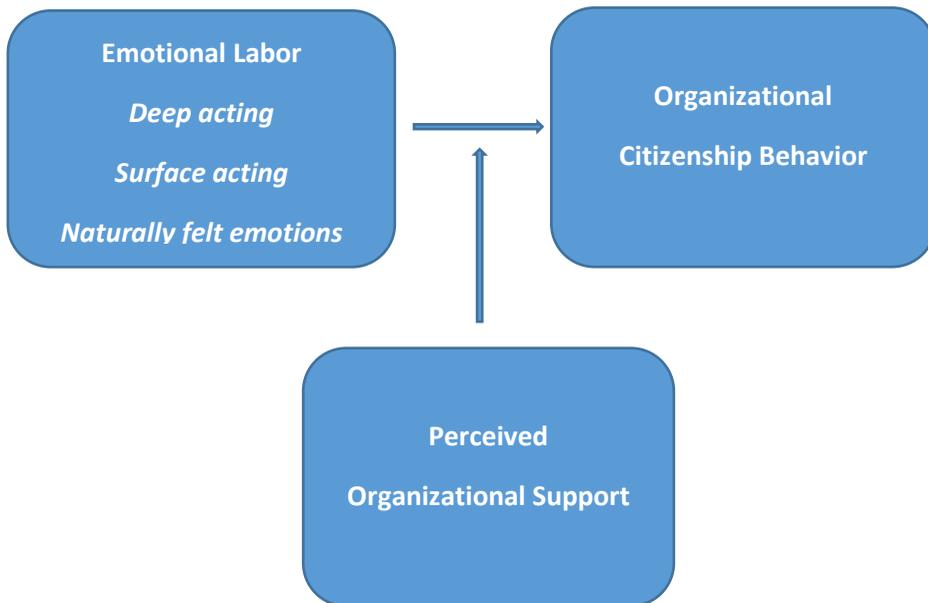


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Current Study

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted descriptive and exploratory methodology. Questionnaires were developed using standardized scales from the literature. The sample included

IT employees in southern India. A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed online to employees. Respondents were selected using the purposive sampling method. A total of 380 questionnaires were completed, for a response rate of 76%. Of the 380 questionnaires, 16 were excluded because they contained invalid data, leaving a final sample of 364. Of the respondents, 30.7% were female and 68.7% were male. The duration of data collection was four months – from August 2017 to January 2018.

The emotional labor scale was developed and items as adopted by Diefendorff, Croyle, and Gosserand (2005) were used. The scale had 14 items and used a five-point rating scale. The scale measured three types of emotional labor: surface acting (7 items), deep acting (4 items), and naturally felt emotions (3 items). The authors established validity for the tool, and the reliability of the scale ranged from 0.84 to 0.94.

The OCB scale developed by Coyle-Shapiro (2002) was used to measure the OCB of IT employees. The OCB scale is a self-report inventory consisting of 22 items that measure five dimensions of OCB: advocacy participation, helping behavior, functional participation, loyalty, and obedience. There are five response categories; namely, *Not at all*, *Rarely*, *Sometimes*, *Often*, and *To a very great extent*. The test–retest reliability of this tool was found to be 0.86, and the split half reliability was 0.88. These values indicated that the tool possessed high internal consistency. The content and face validity were already established in earlier studies. The parallel forms of validity with the OCB scale of Van Dyne et al. (1998) were found to be 0.78

The current study used eight items (Eisenberger et al., 1997; Lynch, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 1999) to measure POS using a five-point rating scale. Prior studies have shown evidence for the high internal reliability and unidimensionality of the survey of perceived organizational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986, 1990). The internal consistency reliability for this scale was 0.74 to 0.95. Hierarchical regression was used to test the hypothesized relationship between variables. They are a type of linear regression model where the predictor variables are added one by one to assess impact on the dependent variable. In the current study, deep acting, surface acting, and naturally felt emotions are predictor variables; perceived organizational support is moderator; and organizational citizenship behavior is the dependent variable. Hierarchical models are a type of multi-level model.

5. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In addition to details about the sample mentioned in previous sections, the researcher obtained a few more details relating to the respondents. For instance, 20.6% of the males were undergraduates, compared with 36.9% of the females. With regard to age, 60.9% of the sample were millennials (60.9%). Table 3 presents the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of study variables. As shown, of the three dimensions of emotional labor, deep acting received the highest mean scores. This shows that most of the IT employees are presenting emotions as they feel inside without faking on the surface level.

Perceived organizational support has significant positive relation ($r=0.628^{**}$) ($p < 0.01$) with deep acting. The higher an employee's perceived organizational support, the more likely the employee will engage in modifying his or her inner emotions to satisfy job emotional display requirements. All the correlation coefficients are statistically significant (less than 0.01) though the values are moderately low. Surface acting has a high negative correlation ($r=-0.622^{**}$) with OCB, and deep acting has a high positive correlation with OCB ($r=0.571^{**}$). This may be because, when employees really feel the emotions (deep act), they tend to engage in OCB, and when they fake emotions, they are less likely to engage in OCB. In other words, when they hide true emotions and fake (surface act), the burden to perform their task is more, and, in turn, they do not engage in extra role behaviors like OCB. These results support hypotheses H1a, H1b, and H1c.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics and Relationship between Study Variables

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Surface acting	3.37	0.812	1				
Deep acting	3.83	0.909	-0.442 ^{**}	1			
Naturally felt emotions	3.24	1.099	-0.357 ^{**}	0.220 ^{**}	1		
Organizational citizenship behavior	3.45	0.513	-0.622 ^{**}	0.571	0.468 ^{**}	1	
Perceived organizational support	4.17	0.731	-0.579 ^{**}	0.628 ^{**}	0.485 ^{**}	0.686 ^{**}	1

* Significance at 0.05 level

** Significance at 0.01 level

According to Baron and Kenny (1986), a basic moderator effect can be represented as an interaction between a focal independent variable and a factor that specifies the appropriate conditions for its operation. In this study, emotional labor is hypothesized as the main independent variable, and perceived organizational support is hypothesized as the moderator.

According to Cohen and Cohen (1983) and Cleary and Kessler (1982), when the moderating effect is assumed to be linear, the hierarchical regression method can be used to capture the interaction effect. In the current study, the following steps were used to run hierarchical regression in SPSS:

- (1) Independent variables were centered to avoid multicollinearity between the variables. Variables were centered by subtracting mean scores from every data point.
- (2) Interaction term was calculated by multiplying centered independent variables.
- (3) Regression analysis was run by entering independent variables in the first block and the interaction terms in the second block.

Table 4 illustrates the moderating effect of perceived organizational support between surface acting, deep acting, naturally felt emotions, and OCB. Note that, in the table, the interaction terms are significant ($p < 0.05$), which implies that POS acts as a moderator. Hence, hypotheses H2a, H2b, and H2c are supported. Given the theoretical possibility (for example, social exchange theory), perceived organizational support might moderate the effect of surface acting and deep acting on OCB. For instance, the interaction term for surface acting is significant ($\beta = 0.69$, $p < 0.05$), supporting the moderation effect of perceived organizational support. Hence, hypothesis H2a is supported. This implies that, when employees perceive support from the organizations, they tend to engage in OCB in spite of faking emotions (surface acting) during their service interactions. Similarly, perceived organizational support of employees moderates the relationship between deep acting and OCB, thus supporting hypothesis H2b.

Figure 2 shows the interaction effects of perceived organizational support as moderator. The graph is plotted with POS on the secondary axis. A high POS increase in surface acting increases OCB. This means that only when employees perceive the organization to be supporting do they engage in OCB. In summary, perceived organizational support emerged as potential moderator in this study.

Table 4
Moderating Role of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) Between Surface Acting (SA), Deep Acting (DA), Naturally Felt Emotions (NFE), and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

OCB									
	M1	M2	M3	SA			NFE		
DA	-0.071*	-0.012	0.571*	M1	M2	M3	M1	M2	M3
POS		-0.182*	0.686*		0.087*	-0.579*		-0.350*	0.485*
DA X POS			0.839*			0.691*			0.795*
Adjusted R ²	0.344	0.432	0.671	Adjusted R ²	0.418	0.551	Adjusted R ²	0.217	0.554
F	3.437	12.31	18.4	F	35.46	19.60	F	20.02	79.19

* Significance at 0.05 level

DA = Deep acting

POS = Perceived organizational support

SA = Surface acting

NFE = Naturally felt emotions

OCB = Organizational citizenship behavior

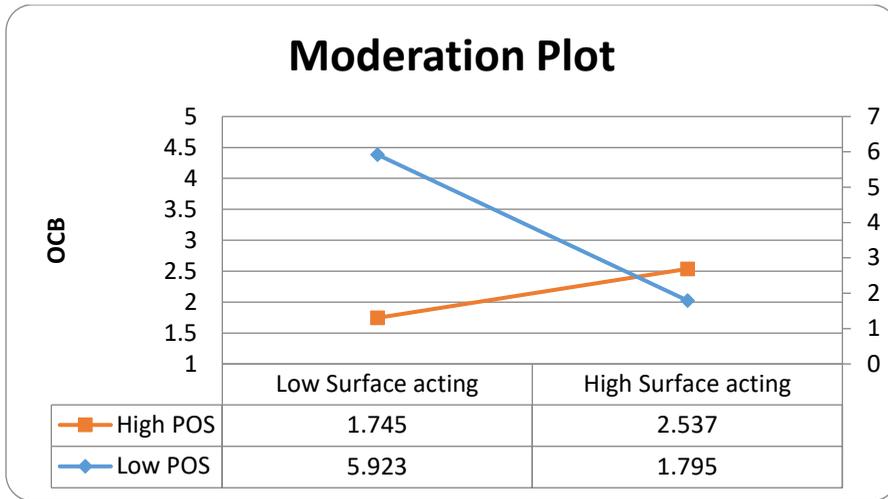


Figure 2: Interaction Effects of Surface Acting and Perceived Organizational Support on OCB

6. DISCUSSION

According to Grandey (2000), emotional regulation is necessary in service settings because employees are required to express emotions that are consistent with norms, or organizational rules, about the appropriate emotional display for the situation. The same applies in the IT sector as well. Recent research focuses primarily on understanding the emotion regulation strategies of surface and deep acting (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003). Surface acting occurs when individuals modify their outward emotion and body language to conform to rules without changing their inner feelings, whereas deep acting involves efforts to change internal feelings to match the display (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983). Surface acting may still be needed when an employee is deep acting in order to prevent any remaining negative feelings from showing in the employee’s facial expression (Grandey, 2003). The current study focuses on antecedents and consequences of naturally felt emotions for better understanding of the third strategy introduced by Diefendorff et al. (2005).

The current study shows that emotional labor has significant negative impact on organizational citizenship behavior. This finding implies that, as employees engage in more emotional labor, their tendency to engage in OCB will decrease. The reason could be that, as they engage in intense emotional labor, they become emotionally exhausted. Moreover, they are not likely to possess enough energy to

indulge in extra role behaviors that are not even considered for reward by the formal reward system.

Halbesleben and Bowler (2007) suggested that, as employees become emotionally exhausted from surface acting, they may increase their performance of OCBs as a way to obtain social support. In contrast, the current study found that OCB has a negative correlation with surface acting. The more that employees engage in surface acting, the less likely will be their OCBs. In a study of public servants, Salami (2007) found a negative relationship between surface acting and OCB and a positive relationship between deep acting and OCB. Inigo et al. (2007) found that one of the emotional labors – namely, deep acting – was associated with performing organizational citizenship behavior. Employees who feel emotions from inside and show pleasant emotions (deep acting) enjoy doing their jobs. They are more likely to engage in behaviors that are not described in their job descriptions. For example, they would like to help their coworkers spread positive notes about their jobs outside the organization. Halbesleben and Bowler's (2007) found that employees who deep act are also more likely to perform discretionary behaviors such as organizational citizenship behavior. In contrast, the current study found that OCB and deep acting are negatively related.

Employees who show naturally felt emotions are more likely to engage in organizational citizenship behavior, and employees who engage in OCB are those who exhibit naturally felt emotions. This is evident in the data in the correlation table, where naturally felt emotion is correlated positively with organizational citizenship behavior. From this result, it can be inferred that employees who are trained to show natural emotions are more likely to engage in helping behavior or employees who engage in extra-role behavior are more likely to empathize with customers and thus exhibit naturally felt emotions. Organizations must therefore reward employees who engage in naturally felt emotions and train employees who engage in surface acting to adopt a better strategy to satisfy their customers.

Behavioral outcomes of POS would include an increase in in-role and extra-role performance and a decrease in withdrawal behaviors such as absenteeism and turnover. According to the organizational support theory (Shore & Shore 1995; Eisenberger et al., 1986), in order to determine an organization's readiness to reward increased work contribution and to congregate socio-emotional needs, employees develop global beliefs concerning the degree to which the organization values their input and well-being. Perceived organizational support (POS) is also valued with the assurance of support availability from the organization when

employees are required to carry out their job effectively without stress (George et al., 1993). POS may not have a direct effect on surface and deep acting (Gosserand, 2003); however, it may have a more complex relationship with emotional labor. In this study, POS has a negative relationship with emotional labor. Also, perceived organizational support acts as a potential moderator between surface acting, deep acting, naturally felt emotions, and organizational citizenship behavior.

Emotional labor has a significant negative effect on OCB, which means that the more that employees engage in emotional labor, the less likely they are to engage in OCB. This relationship is altered, however, when POS is introduced as a moderator. Although employees who are high in emotional labor tend to show less OCB, this is not true if they are high on perceived organizational support. This means that, if an employee thinks that the organization is supporting him or her, the employee will continue OCB in spite of engaging in emotional labor. To make employees engage in OCB in spite of performing emotional labor, the organization can improve POS by signifying that it cares about individuals' opinions and well-being. The organization must acknowledge individuals' goals, values, and work accomplishments and show that it is willing to extend itself to help employees be successful in performing their jobs.

6.1. Managerial Implications

In spite of limitations, the findings of the current study have significant managerial and theoretical implications. The study provides insight on how the nature of interactions impacts emotional labor and organizational citizenship behavior. Although many studies have focused on the antecedents and consequences of emotional labor as a whole, very few have examined how antecedents and consequences of different jobs influence the way an employee performs emotional labor. The results of the current study will help human resources managers to tailor the training needs of individuals depending on the emotional labor strategy used by them.

One of the practical implications of the current study is training "at risk" employees on how to deep act so that they can proactively manage emotional labor as required. Grandey (2000) suggested that attentional deployment and cognitive change are two ways an employee may deep act. Training programs that incorporate these cognitive strategies, along with increased awareness of the possible adverse health effects associated with surface acting, may help to reduce the emotional exhaustion of IT employees.

Employers should consider selecting employees who are high in organizational citizenship behavior to improve performance on the job. If employers focus on the suggested selection practices, they also need to allow employees greater autonomy in how they manage the emotional demands involved in interacting with their customers (Johnson & Spector, 2007). Work re-design at the job level could help to improve performance directly as well as indirectly through increased citizenship behaviors and reduced exhaustion.

The performance of emotional labor by IT employees does not lead merely to negative consequences, but also has positive effects (Wong & Wang, 2009). Although many previous studies tend to emphasize only the damages caused by emotional labor, some studies have shown that emotional labor appears to have positive consequences when it is experienced as self-enhancing or when workers are in control of their emotions (Pugliesi, 1999). Research has also shown that emotional labor can be used to create and maintain relationships between IT employees and customers and thus facilitate task effectiveness (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). Most research on emotional labor has been concerned with its potentially negative impact on service employees (e.g., Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Totterdell & Homan, 2003). Emotional labor has recently received tremendous attention because of its double-edged effects. Although it can have a negative influence on employees' well-being, it can also have a positive impact on company success. The current study, therefore, focuses on organizational citizenship behaviors rather than any negative consequences among IT employees.

6.2. Limitations and Future Research Directions

The current study has a number of limitations. Because it used self-report measures of emotional labor and citizenship behaviors, the study may have over-estimated (Organ & Ryan, 1995) or underestimated the results (Organ, 1994). A further limitation is that the current study focused on occupations in which employees are primarily required to express positive emotions (e.g., happiness) or suppress negative emotions (e.g., anger) during interactions. Another limitation is the fact that the data collected (non-experimental, cross-sectional) did not enable the researcher to test causal pathways among study variables.

The author of the current study suggests that researchers continue to study emotional labor to help increase service quality and citizenship behavior of IT employees. Future research should take into consideration multiple data sources (e.g., supervisors, customers) in order to obtain holistic results. Also, future

research might assess and control for social desirability when testing the relationships of emotional labor strategies with other variables.

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