

A SUMMARY REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON EMOTIONAL LABOUR IN THE SERVICE SECTOR

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[Emotional labour refers to “the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display”. (Arlie Hochschild, 1979) Emotional Labour is what happens within the workplace and is a form of emotion management that is required in course of buyer-seller interaction. Several emotion regulation theories clearly show that emotional labour is the outcome of two antecedent i.e. situational factors and individual factors. A thorough research has been carried out on the situational factors, but very few researches have been conducted to analyse how important are the individual factors in the emotion regulation process. The concept of emotional labour will become more clear and defined if the individual characteristics are placed in the emotional framework and its outcome is evaluated and analysed. Individuals behave differently in different situations. Some are more emotional some are less, some are better at regulating their emotions while others find it difficult, some get stressed easily while others are good enough to handle stress.

Emotional labour is mostly witnessed in the service industries where the service providers and service receivers come in direct contact with each other for the service delivery process. Service providers deliver their services in both favourable and unfavourable circumstances. Under favourable circumstances emotional labour results in less exhaustion and more job satisfaction. Moreover if a service provider’s personality or traits fit the job requirements, it can be assumed that he/she will experience more “emotional harmony” than “emotional exhaustion”. If there is lack of fit between a service provider’s personality and job requirements, then he/she will probably experience more negative consequences of emotional labour that will result in emotional exhaustion, stress and job dissatisfaction. Researchers have conducted thorough research on EL on different service sectors like airline, bank, police force, front office jobs and to a little extent on nurses and doctors of mental patients. A research on healthcare professionals comprising of the doctors, nurses and administrative unit, as a whole has not been conducted so far. A study on the same has become quite essential in present social structure.

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Emotional Labour-Review of Literature

Emotion is a commonly used term in our everyday life. The term is simply used in the sense what people feel. Emotions actually denote feelings of individuals which dictate mood. Emotion involves feeling, mood, temperament, personality, disposition and motivation. However psychologists prefer to define emotions differently. Distinguished professor James S. Nairne in his book *Psychology: The Adaptive Mind (2000)* defined emotion as “a complex psychological event that involves a mixture of reactions:

- a) A physiological response (usually arousal),
- b) An expressive reaction (distinctive facial expression, body posture, or vocalisation), and
- c) Some kind of subjective experience (internal thoughts and feelings)

Robert J. Sternberg, a highly respected expert in psychology and intelligence, in his book *In Search of Human Mind* expressed emotion as “a feeling comprising physiological and behavioural (and possibly cognitive) reactions to internal and external events.

The scholarly definitions clearly expressed that emotion is a complex state of feeling. It influences the thought and behaviour of human beings which leaves an impact not only on the physical as well as psychological state of the human beings. To understand emotion it is imperative to understand several concepts of emotions. Researchers are carrying on widespread researches on the various facets of

emotions and one of the most research aspects is Emotional Intelligence (EI).

Emotional Intelligence is the ability to recognise and manage one’s own emotions and the emotions of others. Professors of Psychology Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer in their article *Imagination, Cognition and Personality (1990)* clearly explained the concept of Emotional Intelligence. They described it as “a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and action.”

Emotional Intelligence has been a popular topic of research since its inception. In common terms it can be clearly explained as the capability of individuals to identify their own emotions and those of others, understanding the different feelings and categorize them appropriately. It then applies the emotional information to direct thinking and behaviour, manage and/or adjust emotions to adapt to environments or move towards fulfilling one’s goals. Researchers intended to investigate whether EI has an effect on work performance. Eventually researchers identified emotion management in workplace. Several jobs require face-to-face contact with the customers, the employee to exhibit a certain emotional state for the specific job and even regulate and control emotion through proper training and supervision as provided by the employer to the employee. This gave rise to a new concept Emotional Labour (EL).

The concept of emotional labour was first introduced by American sociologist and academics Arlie Russell Hochschild in her book *“The Managed Heart: The Commercialisation of Feeling.”*(1983)

According to Hochschild emotional labour refers to “the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display”.

However there lies a distinct difference between EI and EL. EI can explain how individuals differ in their ability to recognize and regulate emotions, while EL describes how emotional regulation and expression in the workplace affects individual or organisational well-being. EL is a sub set of EI and EL cannot be studied without a thorough study on EI. As enough research has been conducted on EI, the relevance of EL has been realised and researchers are now focussing on this for study.

Emotion in the work place has been a focus of researchers for a significantly long time. Today as the world is looking forward for technological development, innovations, and scientific researches and so on, the whole concept of emotion seems to be insignificant. This however does not mean that human beings are without emotions. The employees who come in direct contact with the customers have to at some point of time display their emotions. This phenomenon of emotional display is mostly practised in service organisations where the service providers come in direct contact with the service receivers to deliver the service.

Emotion Labour is what happens within

the workplace and is a form of emotion management that is required in course of buyer-seller interaction. Emotional labour has been found to be very much dominant mostly in the service industries where it is popularly termed as Service Encounter.

Emotional Labour Framework

Research studies reveal different perspectives of emotional labour. Accordingly two frameworks have been developed giving two separate dimensions of emotional labour i.e.

- Interactionist Framework-Morris, Feldman
- Dramaturgical Framework-Irvin Goffman.

According to the Interactionist Framework, emotions are mostly guided by the social environment. Researchers like Morris and Feldman who believed in this approach expressed emotional labour as the “effort, planning and control needed to express organisationally desired emotions during interpersonal transactions.”

On the other side Hochschild’s perspective of Emotional labour was based on the Dramaturgical Framework which had a different outlook. This perspective focussed on the employee’s effort to manage emotions appropriately for their respective organisational roles. The perspective explains “how” emotions can be managed in a workplace. This emotion management is considered to be the focal point of employees’ job performance and meaning towards organisational goal.

Hochschild’s dramaturgical perspective (1983) propounded two techniques that the employees may observe to manage their emotions.

- **Surface Acting** - regulating emotional expressions
- **Deep Acting** - modifying feelings in order to express the desired emotion.

There is still another technique that the employees may observe to manage emotional labour and i.e.

- **Genuine Acting**- experiencing and expressing the expected emotion without exerting any effort.

Background of the study

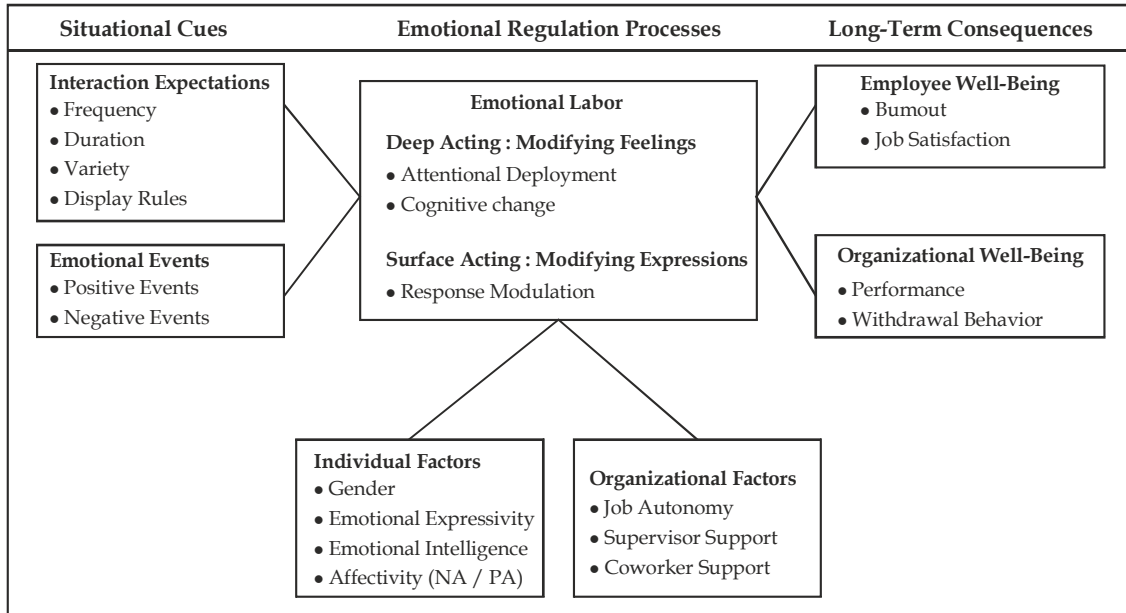
Researchers carried out several studies on Emotional Labour from different

perspectives and one of the most popular and well-established model on emotional labour was provided by James J. Gross, a psychologist and emotional researcher at Stanford University, California.

According to Gross, emotions are brief responses which affect both behaviour as well as body. Gross believes that emotions can be regulated, modulated or changed. The process model by Gross(1998) focussed on five major components during emotion regulation and they are:-

- Situation selection
- Situation modification
- Attentional deployment
- Cognitive Change
- Response modification

Conceptual Framework of Emotion Regulation Performed in the Work Stetting



Source: James J. Gross (1998b) *Review of General Psychology* 2(3), 271-299, 1998.

The model starts with the situational cues which involve situation selection and the situation modification. Emotions are the result of situations. In any service delivery process the situation that exists is the interaction between the service provider and the service receiver and that is what is referred to as service encounter. During any service encounter there lie certain expectations. Researchers have termed this as interaction expectations which involves frequency of face and voice contact (Frequency as proposed by Hochschild), duration of interactions (Duration as proposed by Morris and Feldman), variety of interactions (Variety as discussed by Jones & Best, Wharton & Erickson) and finally the perception of the employees that emotional expression is a part of the job (Display rules proposed by Hochschild).

The employees experience an event that requires emotion regulation to maintain the appropriate appearances at work. This is what has been referred to as emotional events in Gross's model. Emotional event can be positive or negative. If the event creates a positive emotion that may help to meet the display rules there will be less emotional labour and hence the event will be stress free. The employee may also face an emotion that requires more emotion regulation, these results in more emotional labour and the event becomes stressful.

The emotion regulation theory clearly shows that emotional labour is the outcome of two antecedent i.e. situational

factors and individual factors. A thorough research has been carried out on the situational factors, but very few researches have been conducted to analyse how important are the individual factors in the emotion regulation process. The concept of emotional labour will become more clear and defined if the individual characteristics are placed in the emotional framework and its outcome is evaluated and analysed. Individuals behave differently in different situations. Some are more emotional some are less, some are better at regulating their emotions while others find it difficult, some get stressed easily while others are good enough to handle stress.

It becomes important to study the individual antecedent to find out what exactly are the individual characteristics that are responsible for emotional labour. Study can be carried out to understand how and to what extent these characteristics can be controlled and regulated to provide an emotion that fits the job requirement and satisfies the customers.

Emotional labour is mostly witnessed in the service industries where the service providers and service receivers come in direct contact with each other for the service delivery process. Both the service provider and the service receiver should be physically present at the time of service delivery and this direct interaction is known as service encounter in management terms.

Emotional Labour	Consequences		Outcomes
	Job Satisfaction	Emotional Exhaustion	
1) High Deep Acting	High	Low	High Emotional Effort
2) Low Deep Acting	Low	High	Low Emotional Effort
3) High Surface Acting	Low	High	High Emotive Dissonance
4) Low Surface Acting	High/Low	Low	Low Emotive Dissonance
5) High Genuine Acting	High	Low	-----
6) Low Genuine Acting	Low	High	-----

Source: Developed by the researcher

The above table shows that both deep acting and genuine acting associate positively with job satisfaction and negatively with job exhaustion. On the other hand surface acting associate negatively with job satisfaction and positively with emotional exhaustion.

This aspect of the discussion can be further explored as few areas still remain unanswered. It is always assumed that the circumstance under which emotional labour is practised is negative in nature. Service providers deliver their services in both favourable and unfavourable circumstances. It is not true that practicing genuine acting or deep acting will lead to high emotional exhaustion and low job satisfaction. Under favourable circumstances emotional labour results in less exhaustion and more job satisfaction. Moreover if a service provider’s personality or traits fit the job requirements, it can be assumed that he/she will experience more “emotional harmony” than “emotional exhaustion”. If there is lack of fit between a service

provider’s personality and job requirements, then he/she will probably experience more negative consequences of emotional labour that will result in emotional exhaustion, stress and job dissatisfaction.

The existing knowledge on emotional labour can be further extended by exploring these avenues. One of the primary concerns in this regard will be the individual characteristics of the service providers that act as an antecedent in emotional labour.

Review of Literature

The purpose of a literature review is to provide foundation of knowledge in the field of study. It seeks to identify inconsistencies and research gaps in the existing literature, and aids in the formulation of research objectives for the present study. Literature review implies identification of published and unpublished work from secondary data sources on the topic of interest, evaluation of the work in relation to the problem and

the documentation of the work.

At the initial stage, a comprehensive literature review has been conducted. The essence of the studies and their findings can be presented as follows:

Studies in the Global Context

Maslach and Jackson (1981) added new dimension in the study of emotional labour in work place by emphasising on the concept of burnout in their article entitled as "*The measurement of experienced burnout*". The objective was to assess various aspects of burnout syndrome for which a scale was designed. A wide range of human service professionals were administered for the purpose. The main finding of this study was that emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and personal accomplishment are the three principle factors behind this burnout.

Maslach and Jackson (1982) carried on with their research on burnout and came up with another study presented in their article entitled as "*After-effects of job-related stress: families as victims*". The objective of the study was to review the research on the type of job stress experienced by workers in the helping professionals. The study was conducted on police couples, illustrating the effects of job stress on family life. Studies from Maslach Burnout Inventory reveals that police officers who were experiencing stress, were more likely to display anger. This led to disturbed marriage, not spending quality time with family members and even distancing oneself from family and family matters.

Hochschild, A.R. in her book entitled The

Managed Heart, (1983), defined emotional labour as "*the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display; emotional labour is sold for a wage and therefore has exchange value*". Hochschild carried out her research in the airline industry and she worked on the emotional work of flight attendants. In her study she found that those performing emotional labour are actually based on the acting they are performing. She eventually categorised these acting as Surface acting and Deep acting.

Solomon, M.R., et al. (1985) in their article entitled as "*A role theory perspective on dyadic interactions: the service encounter*", argued that many employees internalized their expectations and values of a job role as their own. In the study due importance has been given to the role expectations in service performance. But expectations of emotional expression has not been included in the role expectations that can guide one's performance. It is important to understand and analyse expectations about emotional expression as because expectations, or feelings, might influence an individual's experience of emotional dissonance and as a consequence, job satisfaction and performance.

Rafaeli, A. and Sutton (1987) in the study entitled as "*Expression of emotion as part of the work role*", used the role theory and asserted that one's internalised feelings rule a particular role and that results in less emotional dissonance when complying with feeling rules on the job. These propositions, however, have not been empirically tested.

Ashforth B.E. & Humphrey, R.H. (1993) in their study entitled "*Emotional labour in Service Roles: The Influence of identity*" defined emotional labour as "the act of displaying the appropriate emotion". They aimed at studying the role of social identity and integrate it into the study of emotion and their expression at work. It was observed that it is the actual behaviour rather than the presumed emotion that underlies the behaviour. Following the social identity theory, the researchers drew the conclusion that some effects of emotional labour are moderated by the social and personal identities of the individuals and emotional labour also stimulates pressure for the person to identify with the service roles.

Julian, C.C. and Ramaseshan, B. (1994), emphasised on the issue of emotional dissonance and its relevance in customer contact personnel and marketing, in their study entitled "*The role of customer-oriented personnel in the marketing of a retail bank's services*". The study was undertaken on retail banks to study the role of customer-contact personnel in the marketing process. The conclusion drawn from this study was that the low self-esteem evident in the customer-contact personnel resulted in poor customer services which ultimately lead to poor organizational performance.

Morris J.A. & Feldman D.C. (1996, 1997) in their research work entitled "*The dimensions, antecedents, and consequences of emotional labour*" conducted to the growing literature on emotional labour in organizations by clarifying the conceptualization of emotional labour.

They defined emotional labour as "the effort, planning, and control needed to express organizationally desired emotion during interpersonal transaction."

Morris & Feldman came up with four specific dimensions while concluding emotional labour.

- 1) The frequency of appropriate display
- 2) Attentiveness to required display rules
- 3) Variety of emotions required to be displayed
- 4) The emotional dissonance generated as a result of having to express organizationally desired emotions that are not genuinely felt.

Jane Richard and James Gross (1999) in the article name as "*Composure at any cost? The cognitive consequences of emotion suppression*" made the attempt to find out whether emotion suppression has any social benefit or not. They carried out two studies which showed that emotion suppression has cognitive consequences. The overall findings suggested that emotion suppression is a cognitively demanding form of self-regulation.

Grandey, A.A. (2000) in his study entitled as "*Emotion regulation in the workplace: A new way to conceptualize emotional labour*", defined emotional labour as "the process of regulating both feelings and expressions for organizational goals". His objective was to develop a conceptual model of emotional labour by using emotional regulation theory. In this regard the objectives of his research can be presented in the following manner.

- i) Review and compare already analysed perspectives of emotional labour.
- ii) Provide a definition of emotional labour that combine these perspectives.
- iii) Discuss emotion regulation as a leading theory for understanding the mechanisms of emotional labour.
- iv) Present a model of emotional labour that will involve both individual differences and organisational factors.

The principal findings of Grandey's study was that work role demands that certain expressions can be shown to the customers and this requires managing the emotions. Grandey emphasised on the significance of Surface Acting (SA) and Deep Acting (DA) during the process of performing emotional labour. He concluded with the observation that both SA and DA can bring not only positive but also negative results.

Brown et al (2002) in their study entitled as "*The customer orientation of service workers: personality trait effects on self and supervisor performance ratings*", focussed on customer orientation as "an employee's tendency or predisposition to meet customer needs in an on-the-job context". The paper suggested that the recent definition of customer orientation represents a form of role internalisation. This definition of customer orientation is regarded as "Customer service role internalisation" (CSRI) in order to distinguish it from traditional definitions of customer orientation that reflect the performance of customer oriented behaviours.

The study of Diefendorff, Croyle and Gosserand, (2005) as presented in their book entitled as "*The dimensionality and antecedents of emotional labour strategies*" was conducted to find out how in order to experience work specific display rules surface acting can be used by service agents either to hide or fake felt emotions. Deep acting, on the other hand, implies the service agents attempt to experience the desired emotion so that the correct and positive display follows. This study concluded that emotional labour can be treated as a symbol of the exploitation of the service workforce through the creation of organisational display rules.

Dewettinck, K. and Buyens, D. (2006), in their book entitled as "*Linking Behavioural control to Frontline Employee Commitment and Performance: A Test of two alternative explanation using motivational theories*", conceptualised a model in which behavioural control was connected to frontline employee commitment and performance. The researchers examined the intermediate role of job autonomy and the situational learning orientation. The final findings of the research indicated that situational learning orientation is an important consideration in connecting behavioural control to performance. Job autonomy appears to be significant in explaining employee outcomes but it is only marginally related to behavioural control.

Julian C. (2008) carried out her research on emotional dissonance which she presented in her paper entitled as "*Emotional dissonance and customer service: an exploratory study*". The study primarily

focussed on emotional dissonance and its importance in marketing. The findings of the study highlighted the impact of customer role internalisation on emotional dissonance. It also suggested that the impact of emotional dissonance on customer oriented behaviours and job satisfaction can be examined in the future studies.

Nuvian Daniel in his thesis "*Understanding the moderating role of the professional service encounter in consumer perceptions of health service risks*", 2008 attempted in examining the role of the professional service encounter as a moderator of risk perception. Service employees use emotional labour and try to understand the perception of consumers that arise due to the use of emotional labour to create empathy and increase consumer engagement. His findings suggested that the role of emotional labour is dependent on both the professional content in which health service is offered as well as the relative position status of the health service consumers.

Cote S., Miners C., (2010) added a new dimension to emotions in workplace as revealed in their study in "*Emotional intelligence and leadership emergence in small groups*." They tried to find out the association between emotional intelligence and leadership emergence in small groups. The major findings of this research work were the observation that emotional intelligence was measured with an ability test. It was also concluded that the ability to understand emotions, one of the dimensions of emotional

intelligence, is the most consistently associated with leadership emergence.

George J. M. (2011) in his article entitled as "*A Minimum condition for understanding affect in organisations*", attempted to find out whether both positive effect and negative are functional and adaptive in organisational emotions. The objective of the study was also to find out dual-tuning perspective of emotions in an organisation. It was found that positive and negative emotions are automatically and adaptively incited in response to stimuli that have a relevance for well-being. It was also concluded positive and negative moods on cognitive processes, motivation and effort may result in dual mood.

Studies in the Indian Context

Emotional Labour has been studied widely from different aspects and for different service sectors at the international level for a period of time. However few researches have been conducted at the national level as well. Researchers at the national level have started focussing on the varied dimensions of emotional labour.

Sandeep Kaur studied the impact of emotional labour on job satisfaction in selected public and private hospitals of Punjab. His article "*Influence of Emotional Labour on burnout in selected hospitals of Punjab: structural equation modelling approach, 2014*" showed that in selected hospitals in Punjab employees had moderate level of emotional labour and burnout. Emotional labour and burnout were directly related according to the

study. The study further suggested that hospital authorities should provide emotional assistance to their employees by arranging for them with recreational clubs, yoga training, seminars etc.

Madhuree Modekurti, Mahato, Pranab Kumar studied the impact of emotional labour on role related outcomes like organisational role stress in the service sectors in India. Their study “ *Impact of emotional labour on organisational role stress, a study in the service sector in India, 2014*” tried to corroborate the emotional labour and its consequential impact on employee related outcomes in the Indian context. The findings from the study revealed that there is a positive and moderate relationship between emotional labour and organisational role stress for the overall sample irrespective of the demographic influences.

Research Gap

The literature surveyed by the different researchers so far is not adequate enough to shed insights on the study. A cursory overview would reveal certain genuine gap that persists in this domain of study. It has already been stated that researchers have primarily worked on the situational antecedent to study emotional labour. Although researchers have put forward the individual antecedent in the emotional labour framework, but no significant research has been conducted in this context. The extent to which individual attributes or personality traits are responsible for emotional labour in the workplace and whether such emotions can be managed and regulated have not been analysed in any of the studies.

Researchers have conducted thorough research on EL on different service sectors like airline, bank, police force, front office jobs and to a little extent on nurses and doctors of mental patients. A research on healthcare professionals comprising of the doctors, nurses and administrative unit, as a whole has not been conducted so far. A study on the same has become quite essential in present social structure.

Certain domains need to be worked in this respect as the relevance of emotional labour and the degree of its importance has taken shape over the years. Further studies on the background literature shall throw open the doors to identify further gaps and hence reinforce and strengthen the present study.

Identification of the research gaps shall pave the way for development of research design and facilitate the outlining of the research objectives pertinent in the present study.

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