

THROUGH THE YEARS: EVOLUTION OF EMOTIONAL LABOUR AS A CONSTRUCT AND A MEASURE

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ABSTRACT:

Emotional labour is a relatively new topic of research in India. This paper discusses how the concept evolved in the last thirty years. The paper mainly aims to explain the different dimensions of emotional labour and the attempts made to quantify the construct. The paper also focuses the progress in emotional labour research in India. Suggestions for future research are also discussed.

KEY WORDS: Labour, Emotional, Research, India.

Emotions were always a topic of interest for psychologists. The definitions of emotions often refer to its components than to the very process. Clubbing the various definitions available for emotions, they can be considered as the appraisals of a situational stimulus or context, changes in physiological or bodily sensations, the free or inhibited display of expressive gestures and a cultural label applied to specific constellations of one or more of the first three components (e.g. Cannon & Bard,1927; Schachter & Singer,1962, Lazarus,1991). As Thoits (1989) suggests these four components are not always needed for emotions to occur. Unlike Psychologists who tried to measure emotions in terms of physiological changes (For eg: Cannon & Bard,1927) sociologists and social psychologists tried to view emotions as a dependent variable, the product of social influences (eg., Hochschild,1979, Thoits,1989). But recent psychological researches on emotion assert that they have both social and biological components (Barrett, 2012). Emotions play a major role in any situation involving interaction and work place is no exemption. Until recent times, Psychologists and organisation theorists have ignored emotions at workplace (Martin, Knopoff, & Beckman, 1998). Emotions were considered rather inappropriate in organizational settings (Putnam & Mumby, 1992) because they are rather linked to the “expressive arenas of life, as opposed to the instrumental goal orientation of the business world” (Tran, 1998). Another two reasons attributed to the neglect are, 1) The scientific temper prevailed in these two fields considered emotions as irrational (Grandey,2000) 2) The difficulty in measuring emotions since they are very subjective((Arvey, Renz, & Watson, 1998). The scenario has changed now and researchers are now focussing more on the emotions at work place ((Damasio, 1999; Kalat & Shiota, 2007).

The hidden role of emotions in effectively performing the duties at workplace was first put forth by Hochschild, 1983, an American sociologist. Her work drew inspiration from the dramaturgical perspective put forth by Erving Goffman, a symbolic interactionist. The dramaturgical perspective urged that the workplace is the stage, employee as the actor and

customer as the audience. The labour which was performed in terms of emotion was thus called as emotional labour. She defined it as the act of expressing socially desired emotions during service transactions (Hochschild, 1983). Hochschild argued that service employees are expected to experience and express certain feelings during service interactions, but that attempting to conform to those expectations causes certain pernicious psychological effects among the employees. Hochschild considered emotional labour as a form of emotion management. She suggested that this emotion management is accomplished in the context of prevailing "feeling rules" (Hochschild, 1979), which prescribe emotional states, and "display rules," which guide the expression of emotion (Ekman, 1973). Interpersonal forms of emotion management are central to emotional labour (Pugliesi, 1999). Drawing inspiration from Hochschild's seminal work 'The managed heart' many researchers have done extensive studies on how the various factors at work such as roles, tasks, designation and organisational culture affect the different emotional displays at work. (Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988; Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989, 1999; Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Morris & Feldman, 1996., Grandey, 2000, Zapf, 2002, Chu, 2004, Mishra, 2012).

Through the years: The known and the yet to be known Emotional labour : The construct and dimensions

Research on emotional labour has witnessed a tremendous growth in the years after the introduction of the concept. Emotional labour may be defined as the display of desired emotions at the workplace (Hochschild, 1983; Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993., Grandey, 2000). For Hochschild (1990), the phrase "emotion work" refers to the emotion management we do in private life, whereas "emotional labour" is the emotion management we do for a wage. Hochschild argued that for emotional labour to take place at the work place, three conditions should be fulfilled to First, they require employees to interact face-to-face or voice to-voice with other people, like clients, customers, and guests. Second, they require the worker to produce an emotional state in another person. Third, employees' emotional expressions are shaped by organizational display rules and requirements (Hochschild, 1983). Hochschild (1983) conceptualized emotional labour as a unidimensional construct, which was questioned by later studies (eg., Morris & Feldman). Hochschild (1983) suggested that emotional labour takes place in two forms at the work place: surface acting and deep acting. She has drawn the concept of surface acting from the dramaturgical perspective of Goffman (1959). Later she introduced the expanded Goffman's dramaturgical view of surface acting by adding the notion of method or deep acting, a term coined by theatrical director Constantin Stanislavski. In surface acting, the service agent pretends to show the emotion whereas in deep acting, they induce themselves to feel the emotion. Hochschild (1983) pointed out that surface acting was the main determinant of emotional dissonance since it forced employees to modify their true feelings to required feelings. Furthermore, the psychological effort derived by engaging in both surface acting and deep acting can result in detrimental effects on employees. In the qualitative study with flight attendants and bill collectors, she investigated the negative effects of emotional labour and found that it related to substance abuse, headaches, and absenteeism. Hochschild's perspective on emotional labour was negative and she assumed it will lead to negative outcomes, since engaging in emotional labour itself is stressful to the employees.

The negative consequence perspective of Hochschild was first challenged by Ashforth and Humphrey (1993). They argued that if the customer perceives the emotional expression of the

employee as positive, it can lead to task effectiveness (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). Ashforth and Humphrey agreed with Hochschild that emotional labour may be dysfunctional if employees do not show genuine expressions. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) added the concept of identity to emotional labour. They assumed that the negative effects of emotional labour could be moderated by the identification with the role (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). The more a person identifies with the role, the lesser strain he feels in performing emotional labour. Through identification they assumed that the negative effects of emotional labour can be controlled (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). Ashforth and Humphrey were more concerned with emotional labour as an observable behavior than as a management of feelings (Grandey, 2000). Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) added a third category of emotional labour called genuine acting. They stated that Hochschild (1983) overlooked the possibility that employees are able to express appropriate emotions spontaneously and naturally in their work places.

The unidimensionality of emotional labour put forth by Hochschild was challenged by Morris and Feldman (1996). They tried to conceptualize emotional labour in terms of four dimensions: frequency of appropriate emotional display, attentiveness to required display rules, variety of emotions to be displayed and emotional dissonance generated by having to express organizationally desired emotions not genuinely felt. They were the first researchers to identify both individual and organizational level factors as the antecedents of emotional labour. Morris and Feldman (1996) assumed that the frequency of appropriate emotional display changes from job to job. For eg., an airhostess is supposed to smile at the passengers and to exhibit a warm expression throughout their duty., whereas a cop is not expected to do that. Regarding attentiveness, they proposed that the more attentiveness to display rules is required the more effort is demanded to carry out emotion work. Morris and Feldman (1996) said attentiveness consist of both duration and intensity of emotional display. They have drawn the concept of duration of emotional display from Sutton and Rafaeli's (1988) work with convenience store clerks. The study suggests that short interactions with customers often involve highly scripted interaction formats-a simple thank you, perhaps a slight smile. Zapf (2002) had also tried to connect this concept with schemata, cognitive frame work centering a social process that helps us to control routine behavior (Schank & Abelson, 1977). The concept of intensity refers to the strength of the emotional labour to be displayed. For eg., an interrogator, questioning a suspect has to be more strict and harsh to elicit the fact. The fourth dimension variety refers to what kind of emotional display has to be made depending upon the situation. Coming back to the example of a police officer, he has to display sympathy to the grieving parents of a victim whereas he has to act strict to the suspect. Hence depending upon the situation the type of emotion he has to display also varies. The fourth dimension of emotional dissonance was considered as a consequence of emotional labour by many researchers (for eg., Adelman, 1989). Emotional dissonance refers to the discrepancies arising out of the emotions displayed and the emotions genuinely felt. Morris and Feldman (1996) argues that "when mismatches between genuinely felt and organizationally required emotions exist, then, greater control, skill, and attentive action will be needed."

Though detailed studies have been made on the dimensionality of emotional labour, the role of emotion regulation in emotional labour was first studied in detail by Grandey (2000). She suggested that "emotion regulation can act as a guiding theory for understanding the mechanisms by which emotional labour may be stressful to individuals but still be useful

to the organization". Her conceptualization of emotional labour as a kind of emotion regulation stems from Gross's emotion regulation theory (1989). Emotion regulation theory, defined as "the processes by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions" (Gross, 1998), provides a very useful guiding framework for emotional labour. Gross (1998) suggested, emotion regulation takes place at two points. The first point is called antecedent-focused, and this is when individuals regulate the antecedents of emotions; whereas the second point, which is Response- Focused, tells that the individual modifies the physiological signs of emotions. The second point (Gross, 1998), the response- focused emotion regulation, or response modulation, is when the person manipulates how they express or show a specific emotional response. In this technique, employees try to display the adequate emotions for the situation than what they feel. They may even try to suppress their actual emotions if it is not acceptable. On the basis of emotion regulation theory Grandey (2000) defined emotional labour as the process of regulating both feelings and expressions of emotions to meet the organizational goals. Based on Hochschild's conceptualization, she agreed that emotional labour includes both surface acting and deep acting. Grandey (2000) says surface acting is similar to response focused emotion regulation and deep acting is similar to antecedent focused emotion regulation. According to Gosserand (2003), Grandey's conceptualization follows internal emotion regulation approach rather than occupational categorization (Hochschild, 1983), observable expressions of emotions (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993), or characteristics of the situation or emotional dissonance (Morris & Feldman, 1996).

Zapf (2002) put forth a psychological perspective of emotional labour. Zapf was against the idea of calling it as emotional labour and preferred the term emotional work. Hochschild (1983), as a sociologist, differentiated between emotional labour as the exchange value of work which is sold for a wage and emotion work or emotion management, which refers to the private context where they have use value (Zapf,2002). In psychological studies, psychological processes, such as the regulation of work actions, rather than societal and economic aspects of labour are considered (Zapf, 2002). In psychology, the term labour is used when sociological or societal concepts are involved, e.g., in the division of labour, labour- management relations, conflict resolution, and collective bargaining. The term is not used for individual behavior and intrapsychic concepts, e.g., physical and mental work demands work motivation, work involvement, work design, etc (Zapf, 2002). Since emotional labour includes such interpsychic concepts, Zapf preferred to use the term emotional work. Zapf (2002) has used action theory to describe a third way of performing emotional labour known as automatic regulation (which is called as genuine acting by Ashforth and Humphrey).

He asserted that the regulation of emotion could be either automatic or controlled. Automatic regulation is the automatic display of an organizationally desired emotion deriving from an emotion that is spontaneously felt. This was later on confirmed by Diefendorff et al. (2005) as naturally felt emotions. To elaborate

Emotional labour measures

Since the inception of the concept attempts have been made by researchers to measure emotional labour. One of the first measures used to measure the concept was observation. Raefali and Sutton's (1989) study on convenience store employees is an example. Participant observation was used as the tool to measure emotional labour in the convenience store study. Another

method used to measure emotional labour was questionnaires. Many researchers have developed tools to measure emotional labour. Since there is no consensus among the researchers on the dimensions of emotional labour, each tool measures different dimensions according to the author. The main measures developed are as follow

Morris and Feldman's questionnaire

Morris and Feldman (1999) were the first researchers tried to quantify the construct of emotional labour. The dimensions of emotional labour measured by them were frequency, intensity and interaction of emotions, variety of emotions and emotional dissonance. The questionnaire had a Cronbach alpha of 0.80. The data were collected mostly from a sample of nurses. Hence the scope was limited for the scale. Antecedents were not properly assessed was another disadvantage of the scale.

The Emotional Labour Scale (ELS) by Brotheridge & Lee (1998)

Brotheridge and Lee (1998), developed and validated the Emotional Labour Scale (ELS). They considered emotional labour as a multidimensional construct. The concept underpinning this measure stems from a combination of the work of Hochschild (1983) and Morris and Feldman (1997). Initially, it was a 19 item scale, which was revised after exploratory factor analysis. The modified ELS consists of a 15-item self report questionnaire and it measures emotional display in the workplace, which includes the frequency, intensity and variety of emotional display, the duration of the interaction, surface and deep acting, as well as depersonalisation. The Cronbach's alpha values of the subscales ranged from 0.58 to 0.85. The main disadvantages of scale are it did not mention about emotional dissonance at work place and the variable depersonalization studied was not a part of emotional labour but Maslach's burnout inventory.

Emotional Labour Inventory (ELI) by Mann (1999)

Mann (1999), measured three dimensions of Emotional Labour, the first dimension, an external component of emotional labour, was the expectations or rules about emotional display, while the second and third dimensions, which were internal, consisted of emotional suppression and emotional faking. ELI consists of 17 items with a Cronbach's alpha of .88. Although this scale tried to measure emotional labour at two levels, it failed to measure emotional labour beyond the superficial level i.e. surface acting.

Frankfurt Emotion Work Scale (FEWS) by Zapf (1999)

Zapf (1999) measured emotional labour as a job characteristic and a source of stress. The scale consisted of 53 items. Zapf et al. (1999) included all the sub-measures which make up Emotional Labour such as the display of Positive Emotions, Negative Emotions, Neutral Emotions and Certain Emotions, as well as the Demands for Sensitivity, Emotional Sympathy, Emotional Control, Interaction control, Emotional Dissonance, Norms regarding emotion and the extent of client contact. The original scale was in German which has been translated to English. This tool was validated across many professions. Serkel (2006) observed that the English translation was harsher than the original German scale, thus doubting its ability to elicit the correct response. Though FEWS was a comprehensive scale developed till then, it was lengthy.

Emotional Labour by Kruml & Geddes (2000)

Kruml and Geddes (2000), had developed and validated a scale that measured emotive dissonance and emotive effort. Kruml and Geddes (2000) argued that Morris and Feldman's dimensions did not describe individual effort, planning and control, and that the content validity of their questionnaire was doubtful. The measure of Emotive Effort consisted of 4 items and it has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.66. Emotive Dissonance consists of 2 items with a Cronbach's alpha

of 0.68. Emotive effort was a new dimension evolved in their study. Authors themselves admitted that these two dimensions alone can't measure emotional labour.

Emotional Labour Scale by Schaubroeck & Jones (2000)

Schaubroeck and Jones (2000), measured Emotional Labour by indexing the character of emotions that were to be perceived to be encouraged on the job. They formed a composite demand for positive efference (8 items) and suppression of negative efference (8 items) by using duration and frequency. In their study they measured individual differences, physical symptoms as well as dispositional variables. One disadvantage of the tool is it is not validated across various professions. The items were also very complex leading to confusion.

Integrative Emotional Work Inventory (IEWI) by Strazdins (2000)

Strazdins (2000), devised the Integrative Emotional Work Inventory (IEWI). This measures the frequency of Emotional Labour in family and work roles, as the author sees Emotional Labour as a role (Strazdins, 2000). There are 3 subscales which reflect companionship, help and regulation dimensions. The IEWI consists of 21 items (Strazdins, 2000), with 7 items for each dimension. There was high internal consistency for both the combined scales (cc ranges from 0.91 to 0.94) and subscales (ct ranges from 0.73 to 0.94) of Emotional Labour. The effectiveness of the scale was not measured across various service professions.

Discreet Emotions Emotional Labour Scale (DEELS) by Glomb & Tews (2004)

Glomb and Tews (2004), developed the Discrete Emotions Emotional Labour Scale (DEELS). The DEELS directly measures frequency, and indirectly assesses variety and intensity. The measure taps into Emotional Dissonance, Surface Acting, as well as Emotional Exhaustion. The DEELS consists of 3 sub-scales, genuine expression, faking and suppression. Internal consistency reliability ranged between 0.73 to 0.87. This measure was also not validated across population.

Hospitality emotional labour scale by Chu and Murrmann (2004)

Chu and Murrmann derived a 22-item scale, with fourteen items measuring emotive dissonance, and eight items measuring emotive effort. The cronbach's alpha ranged between .77 and .86.

Dutch questionnaire on emotional Labour by Naring et.al (2007)

D-QEL was developed by Dutch researchers Naring, Briet and Brouwers. D-QEL consists of 13 items measuring surface acting, deep acting, emotional consonance and suppression. The cronbach's alpha's of the sub scales ranged from 0.61 to 0.81.

Indian scale on emotional labour by Gaan (2011)

The ELS is a 12-item self-reporting questionnaire that measures four facets of emotional labour (EL) in the workplace, namely, emotional display, deep acting, surface acting and automatic regulation. The estimates of internal consistency for the subscales range from 0.67 to 0.89.

This article reviewed some of the important scales developed to measure emotional labour. Among these scales, the FEWS (Zapf et al; 1999) is the most comprehensive measure for emotional labour to date, as it measures various dimensions of emotional labour such as the display of positive emotions, the display of negative emotions, showing sympathy, sensitive requirements, emotional dissonance, routines and interaction control. Most of the scales discussed above are developed in the United States and European countries. The ELS by Gaan is the first attempt in India to measure emotional labour (Gaan, 2011). Though it measures only certain aspects of emotional labour, it is a welcome step in emotional labour research in India. Construction of new scales or adaptation or revision of existing scales in Indian context is necessary for a better understanding of emotional labour.

Emotional labour research in India

Emotional labour is an emerging topic in India. Though the concept is not new, the studies on emotional labour are very limited in India. The main studies are conducted on aircraft employees (Waddar & Aminabhavi, 2012), medical representatives (Mishra & Bhatnagar, 2010) and hospitality employees (Rathi, 2012).

Waddar and Aminabhavi (2012) conducted a study on aircraft employees and found that in India, airhostesses experienced higher emotional labour compared to pilots and air traffic controllers. The researchers couldn't find any significant difference between pilots and air traffic controllers in their emotional labour. They also found that female aircraft employees were higher on emotional labour compared to male aircraft employees.

Another study by Rathi et. al (2012) on hospitality industry employees found that frequently engaging in surface acting may negatively affect the psychological health of employees. The results of the study indicate a negative relationship between surface acting and employee well-being, whereas deep acting was found to be positively correlated with the well-being of hotel employees. Findings of the study suggest that faking emotions in order to fulfill organizational display requirements may be detrimental to the employee (Rathi, et.al,2012). The results of the study revealed that surface acting was negatively related with organizational commitment whereas it increases the intention to leave the organization. The study also found that emotional intelligence is positively related with deep acting and surface acting.

In their study on Indian medical representatives, Mishra and Bhatnagar (2010) found that apart from its direct effect, emotional dissonance has a mediating effect too on the relationship of organizational identification with turnover intention and emotional well-being.

Mishra (2011) found support for a positive relationship of both perceived organizational support and perceived external prestige with the way in which employees perform emotional labour. The study further found the importance of perceived external prestige of the organization in influencing the relationship between perceived organizational support and emotional labour.

Conclusion

Organisation theorists have now realized the importance of emotions at work. Without recognizing the importance to emotions, organisations cannot go ahead in this world of competition. This paper has made an attempt to chronologize the various perspectives on emotional labour as well as the various attempts made to measure the construct. Emotional labour research has come a long way in these 30 years, but still the construct is not clearly defined, though there is no consensus in the dimensions of the construct. This paper has also given a special emphasis on emotional labour research in India. India is growing into a service sector economy, where the quality of service determines the success. In this changed scenario, emotional labour's significance in India is more. In this context there is a special need for research across a wide variety of professions and service fields to better understand the concept. Emotional labour is slowly gaining interest among Indian researchers. Except for a few studies in certain fields, the literature on emotional labour in India is very limited. An extensive research is needed to understand the importance of emotional labour in various sectors. Also it is important to differentiate if Indians experience the same kind of emotional labour as their western counterparts. Only more research can answer this question. Apart from the indigenous scale by Gaan (2011), there is no alternative. Future research should focus on developing more comprehensive scales as well as validating the existing scales in Indian context.

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