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Impact of Emotional Labor on Organizational Role Stress – A Study in the Services Sector in India

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Abstract

The present study examines the impact of emotional labour on role related outcomes viz., organizational role stress in the services sector in India. Review of literature reveals that emotional labour studies in India hardly have a presence and just about 1% of studies have been researched empirically. This study tries to corroborate the emotional labour and its consequential impact on employee related outcomes in the Indian context as confirmed by numerous studies in the western context. Study reveals that there is positive and moderate relationship between emotional labour and organizational role stress for the overall sample irrespective of the demographic influences. This relationship proved to be higher and positive for the female married segment thus creating latitude for policymakers to examine the nuances.

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Keywords: emotional labour; organizational role stress; services sector; female married; India

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1. Introduction

Traditional Organizations operated largely under predictable business environments and were driven towards premeditated consensus. According to (Malhotra Y., 2000) the latest in-thing is a dynamic and discontinuous change which has unseated the former organizational routines and underlying assumptions. Even the 'best services' of vesterday have transformed to become the 'worst practices' while core competencies turned into core rigidities. The role of employees and their attitudes have been the focal point of many studies as they help craft the smooth transformations for organizations into one that is modern, suitable and performing. The overall implications for creating right employee attitudes and positive perceptions can be studied for an upsurge in employee productivity, organizational growth and effectiveness and as a general boost in the quality of work life and satisfaction amongst employees. Employees' attitudes are largely influenced by the core of emotions they experience both within and outside their workplace. Emotions are created through the perceptions generated out of cognitive appraisal of the situation at hand which can determine the well-being. Emotional well-being in its experience and expression has been a chief construct of interest for researchers owing to its implications. Though emotions in organizations existed for a long time, organizational behavioural frameworks started giving acceptance and consideration to this only recently (Brief and Weiss, 2002). This in itself is an indication of the lack of tangible evidences in this research field and helps to bring in novelty and freshness to this subject of research. Emotions have gained widespread popularity with the growth in services sector contributions; team based structures and raised the levels of interdependence amongst the various departments and employees alike. Psychologists are of the view that people bring in their mental and affective processes to work. Sociologists also suggest along the same lines that social exchanges are an inevitable part of organizations. Due to this the emotions so expressed during the interpersonal interactions gain centrality. Even historically, emotions in organizations have been undervalued in favor of rationality with dualistic assumptions made regarding the two (Dougherty & Drumheller, 2006). However these dualistic assumptions have become archaic as organizations are re-branding their corporate images as favourable to customers and in the process have realized that employees' attitudes facilitate the same.

2. Overview of emotional labor

With awareness and realizations about work based emotions escalating, research in the area of emotions is done primarily under work or social settings. Over the years, the scope of this research has broadened itself to lead us to a newer concept of "Emotional Labor". Emotional Labor, as advocated by Arlie Hochschild is all about 'the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display for a wage'. To start with, emotional labor research started exploring role related aspects. The role based research reviewed "role sending" and "receiving" and the psychological presence of the employee during the actual performance in the role becomes a major determinant in deciding the effectiveness of the role outcomes. (Kahn, 1990) further emphasizes that people can use varying degrees of their selves, physically, cognitively, and emotionally, in the roles they perform, even as they maintain the integrity of the boundaries between who they are and the roles they occupy. This leads to the

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