

A Study on Antecedent Variables for Emotional Labor

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study is to verify antecedent variables that affect emotional labor. The results are as follows. First, display rules positively affected deep acting and negatively affected surface acting. Second, customer contact time positively affected deep acting but did not affect surface acting. Third, the interaction between display rules and customer contact time did not have significant effects on surface acting but negatively affected deep acting. The implications based on these results are as follows. First, theoretically, this study extends the range of leading variables that affect emotional labor and verifies the moderation effects between these variables. Next, practically, this study suggests that presenting harmonious criteria with regards to display rules and customer contact time that fit well into the concept of food service company is a very useful tool to manage emotional labor of the employees. The limitation of this study is that the causal relationship between variables demonstrated in this study cannot be generalized due to convenience sampling and cross sectional research.

Keywords: Emotional Labor, Surface Acting, Deep Acting, Display Rules, Contact Time, Food Service Company

INTRODUCTION

Hospitality industry could be considered people industry in which a variety of services are carried out at contacts with customers (Kim KJ, 2011a; Kim KJ & Kim YH, 2013; Kim KJ, 2013b). Since production and consumption cannot be separated in service industries, attitudes and behaviors of employees directly correlate with customer satisfaction and service quality from the perspectives of customers (Bowen DE & Schneider B, 1985). This suggests that the attitudes and behaviors of employees during their interaction with customers determine service quality of a company and serve as a crucial factor that determines competitive power and success of a company (Kim KJ, 2011a).

Expression of positive emotions by employees through bright facial expression, smiles, active attitudes, sincere greetings and responses, and polite way of speaking satisfy customers and enable them to make positive evaluations about service qualities (Grandey AA, 2003). The concept of emotional labor was generated from these contexts, and the importance of emotional labor is being underscored in service industries (Kim YJ, 2008).

The studies on emotional labor have classified the relevant variables into antecedent variables and consequent variable. Antecedent variables of emotional labor include job satisfaction (Grandey, 2003) display rules (Grandey AA, 2003; Pugh SD, 2001), and job characteristics (Kim YJ 2008), etc. Consequent variables of emotional labor include emotional exhaustion (Grandey AA, 2003) and job burnout (Kim KJ, 2011a; Kim YJ, 2008; Brotheridge CM & Grandey AA, 2003; Moris JA & Feldman DC, 1996; Ashforth BE & Humphrey RH, 1993), etc. Also, the variables for moderation effects

between emotional labor and consequent variables include employment form (Kim KJ, 2011) and organizational support (Ashforth BE & Humphrey RH, 1993), etc.

It is important to consider the variables that moderate antecedent variables which affect emotional labor in hospitality industry in addition to the antecedent variable themselves because verification of the variables that can moderate the degree of emotional labor at contacts with customer can have meaningful practical implications. Therefore, the purposes of this study are as follows. First, this study aims to examine the impacts of display rules and customer contact time on emotional labor. Second, this study examines the impacts of interaction between display rules and customer contact time on emotional labor. Third, based on the results, this study aims to decide the theoretically and practically applicable extent of display rules and customer contact time that can maintain the optimal level of emotional labor and to present the most efficient job environment. For these aims, this study performs theoretical investigations on these variables and presents the most appropriate research model based on these investigations. This paper presents the results from empirical analysis, conclusions, and implications.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Emotional Labor

Hochschild AR (1979a) defined emotional labor as an effort to control the experienced emotion or to express the emotion required by the organization in order to perform the job effectively under the conditions where there is a difference between these

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two types of emotions. Gardner WL & Martinko MJ (1988) suggested that emotional labor could be considered a way of managing impression in order to form one's specific social recognition and certain atmosphere during interaction by purposefully adjusting one's behavior to fit into other people.

Also, based on Goffman's theory of impression management (1959) which argues that numerous people tend to make efforts to create certain impression while performing their roles in social interaction, Hochschild AR (1983) explained emotional labor as dramaturgical perspective associated with social interaction. Afterwards, Ashforth BE & Humphrey RH (1993) defined emotional labor as a behavior that shows appropriate emotion, namely following display rules. This differs to some extent with definition by Hochschild AR (1983b) that emotional labor is "a form of emotion regulation that creates a publicly visible facial and bodily display within the workplace" (Ashforth BE & Humphrey RH, 1993).

Regarding the way of carrying out emotional labor, Hochschild AR (1983b) argues that employees can choose between surface acting and deep acting to interact with customers. Surface acting focuses on explicitly expressing the emotion required by the organization. This relates to expressing emotion that one does not actually experience in order to comply with display rules of the organization by using facial expression, vocal tones, and gestures, etc. Therefore, surface acting is an effort for explicit expression rather than for actual change in emotion and relates to hiding one's true emotion inside the expressed emotion (Grandey AA, 2003; Hochschild AR, 1983b).

Deep acting is an effort to actually experience the emotion required by the organization in addition to explicitly expressing it and entails active efforts to change mental images, thoughts, or physical forms. This is an active attempt to change inner emotion in order to follow the norms of emotional expression designated by organization rather than simply focus on explicitly expressed emotion and consequently is based on sincerity (Grandey AA, 2003; Hochschild AR, 1983b).

Antecedent Variables of Emotional Labor

Display rules

Employees working in hotels, airlines, and department stores where the importance of employee's service is relatively high should represent their organization at the frontline to contact with customers and affect satisfaction levels and purchase intentions (Bitner MJ, 1990). The way that employees act or speak to customers is of major interest in business administration. Therefore, a large number of companies set certain display rules and control their employees to display their emotions following these rules apart from the emotions actually experienced by them (Hochschild AR, 1983b).

Display rules are generally a function of social, occupational, and organizational norms (Rafaeli A & Sutton RI, 1989). Service employees at the frontline are expected to express positive emotions as opposed to anger or state of neutrality (Rafaeli A & Sutton RI, 1997). Recognition of such expectations or display rules are crucial to predict the possibility of their acting.

There could be differences in display rules. First, customers generally agree about what composes good service, but details of

customers' expectations could differ depending on their occupations, transacted services, and backgrounds and requests. Second, social norms that provide general rules regarding how service employees should express their emotions while in contact with their customers differ among different cultural boundaries.

Precedent studies on display rules and emotional labor are as follows. In a study targeting administrative assistants, Grandey AA (2003) showed that display rules significantly affect deep acting but not surface acting. Diefendorff JM, Croyle MH & Gosserand RH (2005) and Kim YJ (2008) showed that positive display rules significantly affect deep acting, whereas negative display rules significantly affect surface acting. Thus, this study suggests research hypotheses regarding display rules and emotional labor as follows.

H1: Display rules have significant effects on emotional labor.

H1-1: Display rules negatively affects surface acting.

H1-2: Display rules positively affects deep acting.

Contact time

The theory of Morris JA & Feldman DC (1996) is the most representative one about how the contact variables between customers and employees are related to emotional labor. They argued that emotional displays for long duration requires more efforts than those for short duration and causes higher level of emotional labor. Hochschild AR (1983b) argued that job characteristics, especially numerous interactions with customers, increase emotional labor of service employees. Brotheridge CM & Grandey AA (2002) argued that frequency and variety of emotional displays positively relate to deep acting.

Representative attributes of job characteristics are frequency with customers, duration, and routineness, etc. (Diefendorff JM, Croyle MH & Gosserand RH, 2005). In this study, based on precedent studies, job characteristics are defined as contact time between customers and employees. In the study by Diefendorff JM, Croyle MH & Gosserand RH (2005), frequency, duration, and routineness did not significantly affect surface acting, whereas duration positively affected deep acting and routineness negatively affected surface acting. This indicates that long contacts with customers lead to employees' deep acting because it becomes harder for employees to deceive their emotions over time. In a study based on employees in hotel, Kim YJ (2008) showed that duration positively affects deep acting. Precedent studies show that contact times with customers generally increase emotional labor such as surface acting or deep acting. Also, it is expected that there will be moderating effects generated by interaction between display rules and contact times. Hence, this study suggests hypotheses regarding contact times and emotional labor as follows.

H2: Contact times will have significant effects on emotional labor.

H2-1: Contact times will have negative effects on surface acting.

H2-2: Contact times will have positive effects on deep acting.

H3: Interaction between display rules and contact times will have significant effects on emotional labor.

H3-1: Interaction between display rules and contact times will have significant effects on surface acting.

H3-2: Interaction between display rules and contact times will have significant effects on deep acting.

METHODS

Samples and Period of the Study

Samples were chosen from employees working in food service industries by using non-probability convenience sampling and material was collected by using self-administered questionnaires. 166 questionnaires were returned from total of 200 questionnaires and the survey was carried out from May 19th to May 30th for 12 days.

Research Model (Fig. 1)

Composition of Questionnaires

Emotional labor

Emotional labor is defined as a demonstration of proper emotions that follow display rules (Ashforth BE & Humphrey RH, 1993). Questions were taken from those used in the study by Brotheridge CM & Grandey AA (2002). There were six questions on deep acting: "I try to come up with the emotions to express towards customers from deep inside my mind," "I try to actually experience the emotions that I must show," "Kind responses to customers derives from my actual emotions," "The emotions that I express to customers are mostly from the bottom of my heart," "I try to be truly kind to customers," and "I gradually feel such emotions in real". There were four questions on surface acting: "I encounter with customers as if I'm performing in a show or a drama," "I hide my actual emotions and make up emotions required by my job," "I pretend to have those motions in real," and "I make affected expression of the emotions I don't really have towards customers." Each part was measured by using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1=never, 7=always).

Display rules

Display rules are defined as demonstration of emotions made as rules by organization. Three questions regarding display rules were taken from studies of Hochschild AR (1983b) and Grandey AA (2003): "Part of my job is to make the customer feel good," "My workplace does not expect me to express positive emotions to customers as part of my job (reversed)," and "This organization would say that part of the product to customers is friendly, cheerful service." Each part was measured by using a 7-point

Likert-type scale (1=disagree, 7=agree).

Contact time

Contact time is defined as the duration of the time during which an employee makes contacts with customers within working hours. Contact times with customers were classified by percentile (20, 40, 60, 80, 100%) and measured by using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=0~20%, 5=80~100%).

EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Demographic Characteristics of Responders

Based on frequency analysis performed to understand the demographic characteristics of responders to the study, 104 males (62.7%) and 62 females (37.3%) participated in the study. Length of service was more than 6 years for 89 responders (53.7%), 3 to 5 years for 27 responders (16.3%) and less than 2 years for 50 responders (30%). In terms of the form of employment, 64 responders were full time employees (39%) and 102 responders were part-time employees (61%).

Factor Analysis and Reliability Analysis

Principal component analysis and Varimax rotation, which is one of orthogonal factor rotations, was used for factor analysis. Only the factors with eigen value above 1 were selected and factor loading above 0.4 was considered significant (Hair JJF *et al.*, 2010).

Three factors as shown in Table 1 were extracted from factor analysis about emotional labor and display rule. Factor loading was mostly high, ranging between 0.619~0.909, so convergent validity could be secured. Discriminant validity could also be secured by using orthogonal factor rotation. Cumulative variance was 74.175 % and Cronbach's α of each factor ranges between 0.808 and 0.938, indicative of high reliability.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis shows that deep acting positively correlates with display rules and contact times but surface acting negatively correlates with these factors. This is consistent with suggested hypotheses.

Hypothesis Testing

Testing of hypothesis 1

Display rules positively affect deep acting ($t=11.827, p=.000$) and negatively affect surface acting ($t=-2.839, p=.005$). Therefore, hypothesis 1 was selected.

Testing of hypothesis 2

Contact times positively affect deep acting ($t=2.232, p=.027$) and do not affect surface acting ($t=-.530, p=.596$). Therefore, hypothesis 2 was partially selected.

Testing of hypothesis 3

Interaction between display rules and contact times did not significantly affect surface acting and negatively affected deep acting ($t=-2.117, p=.036$). Therefore, hypothesis 3 was partially selected.

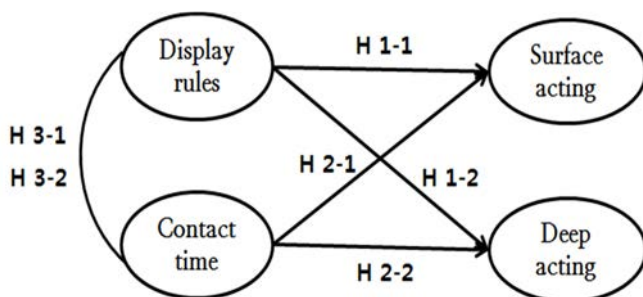


Fig. 1. Research model.

Table 1. Exploratory factor analysis of emotional labor and display rules

	DA	DR	SA
I try to come up with the emotions to express towards customers from deep inside my mind.	.863	.212	-.082
I try to actually experience the emotions that I must show.	.859	.270	-.050
The emotions that I express to customers are mostly from the bottom of my heart.	.834	.154	-.176
I try to be truly kind to customers.	.823	.155	-.205
I gradually feel such emotions in real I gradually feel such emotions in real.	.778	.107	-.042
Kind responses to customers derives from my actual emotions.	.778	.269	-.009
This organization would say that part of the product to customers is friendly, cheerful service.	.269	.909	-.033
My workplace does not expect me to express positive emotions to customers as part of my job(reversed).	.282	.906	-.046
Part of my job is to make the customer feel good.	.224	.902	-.044
I pretend to have those motions in real.	-.044	.020	.857
I hide my actual emotions and make up emotions required by my job.	-.165	-.048	.841
I make affected expression of the emotions I don't really have towards customers.	-.013	.013	.833
I encounter with customers as if I'm performing in a show or a drama.	-.119	-.093	.619
Eigen value	4.313	2.721	2.606
Variances	33.175	20.932	20.050
Cronbach's α	.923	.938	.808

Note: DR: display rules, DA: deep acting, SA: surface acting.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics correlations

	M	SD	DA	SA	DR	CT
DA	5.06	1.08	1			
SA	3.67	0.99	-.158*	1		
DR	4.89	1.38	.679**	-.215**	1	
CT	2.72	1.52	.171*	0.026	0.066	1

Note: DA: deep acting, SA: surface acting, DR: display rules, CT: contact times

Table 3. Regression of emotional labor on display rules, contact times, and interaction between display rules and contact times

Independent variables		Dependent variables			
		Surface acting		Deep acting	
		<i>t</i> (β)	Sig.	<i>t</i> (β)	Sig.
Step 1	DR	−2.839(−.217)	.005	11.827(.671)	.000
	CT	.530(.041)	.596	2.232(.127)	.027
Step 2	DR	−2.919(−.223)	.004	12.031(.676)	.000
	CT	.509(.039)	.611	2.287(.128)	.023
	DR×CT	1.618(.123)	.108	−2.117(−.119)	.036

Note: β : standardized beta weight, DR: display rules, CT: contact times, SA: surface acting, DA: deep acting, figures in parentheses are refer to standardized beta weight.

CONCLUSION

Results of this study are as follows. First, display rules positively affect deep acting and negatively affect surface acting. These results are consistent with studies by Grandey AA (2003), Diefendorff JM, Croyle MH & Gosserand RH (2005), and Kim YJ (2008). These results confirm that appropriate display rules presented to employees at contacts with customers in food industries serve as very useful job standards, provide motivation that generates deep acting, and reduces surface acting.

Second, contact times positively affect deep acting but do not affect surface acting. These results are consistent with studies by Diefendorff JM, Croyle MH & Gosserand RH (2005) showing that employees at contacts with customers having more difficulties with artificially deceiving their own emotions with increase in customer contact times lead to deep acting.

Third, interaction between display rules and contact times does not significantly affect surface acting but negatively affects deep acting. These results are meaningful because they demonstrate that appropriate display rules and contact times that differ depending on the characteristics of food industries are present. Therefore, managers of food industries should recognize that not making decisions about standards for proper display rules and contact times that fit into the concept of food industries based on various inside information regarding overall work by employees can negatively affect employees' emotional labor to a great extent.

Suggestions based on the results are as follows. Theoretically, this study extends leading variables that affect emotional labor and confirms the moderating effects between these variables. Practically, this study suggests that presenting harmonious standards about display rule and contact times that fit into the concept of food industries is a very useful tool to manage employees' emotional labor. Limitation of this study is that this study does not sufficiently consider numerous leading variables other than display rules and contact times that affect emotional labor. Also, generalization of the results regarding causal relationship between variables is limited due to convenience sampling and cross sectional research.

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