

Linking Personality, Emotional Labor and Employee Well-being: The Role of Job Autonomy

Young-Kook Moon¹ · Kang-Hyun Shin² · Jong-Hyun Lee^{3†}

Abstract

This study aimed to examine the cause and consequence of emotional labor strategies based on the emotional labor framework. To investigate the boundary condition of the current research model, the study proposed that job autonomy would moderate the effects of emotional labor on employees' well-being. To achieve the purpose of the study, it was first tested whether neuroticism and extroversion of employees predicted the focal outcomes (i.e., burnout and work engagement) via distinct emotional labor strategies. Second, the moderation effects of job autonomy were tested for each emotional labor strategy in predicting the focal outcomes. Third, the conditional indirect effects of job autonomy on the mediation process were examined. The results revealed that surface acting partially mediated the relationship between neuroticism and burnout, whereas deep acting fully mediated the relationship between extraversion and work engagement. Regarding the moderating effects of job autonomy, it significantly moderated the relationship between surface acting and burnout and between deep acting and work engagement. In addition, from the moderated mediation effects, the conditional indirect effects of job autonomy were significant. Finally, theoretical and practical implications are discussed and limitations and future research directions were suggested.

Key words: Burnout, Emotional Labor, Engagement, Job Autonomy, Reinforcement Sensitivity Theory, Self-Determination Theory

1. INTRODUCTION

Since 2000, the service industry has grown rapidly. Although some experts predicted that the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution will bring the huge changes in our industrial system, the status of service industries is still important (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Oh et al., 2018).

As an academic field related to the service industry, theoretical and empirical approaches on emotional labor (EL) has initiated by Grandey's (2000) EL framework.

This framework proposed the initial nomological network of emotional regulation (ER) in the workplace based on Gross's (1998a, 1998b) model of ER. Numerous studies have examined the employees' emotional regulation process via this model. Most of empirical research of emotional labor supported the Grandey's (2000) theoretical framework, and this empirical evidence further contributed to revision of the model (Grandey & Melloy, 2017). This revised model posits that although many organizations acknowledge the benefits of EL, EL contains

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negative consequences, such as higher burnout, job dissatisfaction, and increased health costs (e.g., Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Grandey et al., 2015).

The primary focus of current research has investigated the mechanisms and boundary condition of EL for intervening the cost of EL (Grandey & Melloy, 2017). Specifically, by drawing on emotional labor framework and Gray's (1990) reinforcement sensitivity theory, this study focus on the individual difference (i.e., extraversion and neuroticism) of emotional labor process. Moreover, based on self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2002), this study examined the moderating role of the job autonomy on the relationship between EL strategies and employee well-being (e.g., burnout and work engagement).

1.1. Revised Model of EL

Grandey's (2000) "modal" model contributed to an expansion of investigation of ER in organizational studies, however, her framework also created some issues. According to Grandey and Melloy (2017), there are four limitations regarding the modal model. First, although the modal model applied Gross's (1998a) ER framework to Hochschild's EL strategies, they are not perfectly matched (Grandey & Melloy, 2017; Grandey, 2015). Second, the modal model mostly focused on the public sphere, especially in service contexts and it is not focused on private feelings (Grandey & Melloy, 2017). Third, early EL studies assumed that deep acting (DA) and surface acting (SA) are reflections of unchanging individual differences (Grandey, 2003), without dynamic temporal variations. Though research using the empirical sampling method demonstrated the momentary and dynamic nature of ER in the workplace (e.g., Scott & Barnes, 2011), it did not demonstrate the temporal process of ER (Gross, 1998a). Fourth, Gross's (1998a) ER model implies that reappraisal is more beneficial than suppression when it comes to cognitive performance and physiological stress, proposing that DA is also helpful

and SA more pernicious. Resultantly, the ER perspective led to the dichotomous perspective that DA is *good* emotional regulation strategies, whereas SA is *bad*. Although some research supported this view, other empirical research has revealed that mixed effects of DA (e.g., Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). Thus, Grandey and Melloy (2017) developed a revised model based on empirical findings which demonstrate the importance of individual differences as well as the work context.

1.2. Good and Bad Dichotomy of EL

Hochschild (1983) originally proposed that enacting either SA or DA was distancing the true-self from the presented-self since inner emotions or explicit expressions follow the display rules of organization. In addition, Hochschild (1983) argued that SA was less harmful than DA because SA only changes emotional displays to fit the rules, with one's true emotions being alienated from the organization. On the contrary, when workers use DA, they change their inner feelings to deceive the customer and themselves, results in the experience of self-alienation.

Thus, DA would be harmful because of emotional estrangement or alienation in the long term. A few studies found that both SA and DA had a positive relation with mental problems (e.g., Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Xu et al., 2020). In terms of performance, DA was negatively associated with call center performance (e.g., Gabriel & Diefendorff, 2015; Xu et al., 2020), and non-significantly related to task performance (e.g., Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). When dealing with highly negative customers, DA is regarded as worse approaches than SA (e.g., Grandey et al., 2004).

Furthermore, the effect of SA is not always harmful. Although workers' suppression and faking emotion showed the positive relationship with negative outcomes, workers with less conscious of SA showed less detrimental results (e.g., Mauss et al., 2006). Other studies found that SA is beneficial to performance when one

feels negatively (e.g., Beal et al., 2006; English et al., 2017; Ivanova et al., 2022), and only harmful when the customers detect it as inauthentic in the situation (e.g., Grandey et al., 2005; Groth et al., 2009; Wang & Groth, 2014).

In sum, the revised model suggested that the EL context and requirements were neither inherently good nor bad; rather, the effects of EL depend on the circumstance (Grandey & Melloy, 2017).

1.3. The Causes of EL

According to personality literature, there were the robust correlations between extraversion and positive emotion, whereas the relationship between neuroticism and negative emotion (Larson, 2000). Extraversion and neuroticism are generally regarded as the two strongest traits in emotional experience and are the focus of several physiologically based theories of personality (e.g., Depue, 1996; Eysenck, 1967; Gray, 1981; 1990; 1994).

Gray (1990) proposed that extraversion is associated with a high sensitivity to incentives, with strong inclination to approach. Gray (1990) termed this inherent sensitivity to incentives as the behavioral activation system (BAS) and this system resonates to reward and generates positive emotion. On the other hand, neuroticism is associated with sensitivity to punishment and frustration. Gray (1990) termed this predisposition as the behavioral inhibition system (BIS). Drawing on this theory to the organizational context, some workers are more likely to respond with positive affect to certain cues, whereas others are predisposed to respond to cues in the work environment with negative affect.

As Grandey (2000) suggested, employees' affective traits might predict the specific EL strategies. Some studies revealed that workers who have high negative affectivity tends to use SA, whereas those who are high in positive affectivity are inclined to engage in DA (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013; Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012). In the field of individual differences, extraversion

and neuroticism represent the different "affective traits" (positive and negative affectivity, respectively). In this regard, service employees will experience different affect depending on their personality. First, extroverted workers will show great social skill, effectively dealing with interpersonal events at work. These characteristics led to higher positive affectivity during the service context (Chi et al., 2011). Thus, they will be advantaged with regard to ER (Bono & Vey, 2007). When workers with higher in extraversion have emotional demands to express enthusiasm, they could reflect their memory and evoke the appropriate positive emotion. In other words, extroverted service workers are able to choose DA strategies, and then experience more engagement, with showing more empathy and consideration (Cheung & Tang, 2009; Diefendorff & Richard, 2003; Diefendorff et al., 2005; Xu et al., 2020; Yi et al., 2006).

However, neurotic workers will experience more anxiety and negative affectivity in general, due to their sensitivity (Bono & Vey, 2007). Because organizations have a tendency to emphasize the expression of positive affectivity (Schaubroeck & Jones, 2000), workers higher in neuroticism will experience more demands for trait-inconsistent behavior. When faced with a role requiring the expression of positive mood, however, workers high in neuroticism may only outwardly express the required emotions (SA). Such superficial displays of a personality-incongruent emotion will demand people high in neuroticism to inhibit negative affect at the same time. Thus, neurotic workers are likely to choose a SA strategy, resulting in higher strain (Gross & Levenson, 1997; Xu et al., 2020).

Hypothesis 1a (H1a): Employees high in neuroticism are more likely to perform SA strategies in service contexts.

Hypothesis 1b (H1b): Employees high in extraversion are more likely to perform DA strategies in service contexts.

1.4. The Consequences of EL

Burnout is described as “a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do people work of some kind” (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). Although burnout research has been expanded into a more generic and broader concept of strain extending beyond the service context (e.g., Demerouti & Bakker, 2008; Schaufeli et al., 1996), burnout syndrome is still a prevalent and important research topic in the human service sector.

Considering that a number of empirical studies have supported the notion that burnout is the primary consequence of EL, the level of employee burnout is practically important for organizations due to the high correlations with employee performance, attitudes, and retention (e.g., Grandey, 2000; Grandey & Melloy, 2017; Jeung et al., 2018). Specifically, jobs with high emotional demands showed higher burnout (Grandey et al., 2007), and SA is consistently positively related to burnout and negatively related to job satisfaction. On the contrary, DA is not significantly related to burnout and weakly positively associated with job satisfaction (e.g., Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Judge et al., 2009).

Hypothesis 2a (H2a): SA is positively related to burnout.

Hypothesis 2b (H2b): Employees high in neuroticism are more likely to experience burnout, due to a high level of SA.

Work engagement is the psychological state where workers feel full of physical energy (vigor), so immersed in their tasks that time seems to fly (absorption), and passionate about the content of their job and the tasks it involves (dedication; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). According to the job demands-resources (JD-R) model, two processes exist in the workplace due to interactions between job demands and resource, gain processes and

loss processes. Gain processes occur when job resources have their motivating potential and become useful for treating job demands. On the other hand, in the case of loss processes, high job demands may lead to depletion of one's personal resources (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). In these processes, employees will experience distinct results, motivations and strains. Thus, work engagement and burnout are the core of the motivation and strain part of the JD-R model, and have been used to measure the well-being status of employees.

Because authentic emotional expression involves a match between display rules and true feelings, modifying inner feelings (DA) is less harmful, and involves “acting in good faith” (Grandey, 2003). This congruence between individuals' inner feelings and the emotions they display leads to resource gains from engaging in positive social interaction (Becker & Cropanzano, 2015). Thus, work engagement is the result of EL, especially when employee use DA strategy. Because employees high in extraversion are more likely to perform DA (Grandey, 2000), it is more likely that they will eventually experience higher work engagement via DA.

Hypothesis 3a (H3a): DA is positively related to job engagement.

Hypothesis 3b (H3b): Employees high in extraversion are more likely to experience engagement, through increased DA.

1.5. The Moderating Role of Job Autonomy

The self-determination theory (SDT) focuses on humans' behavioral motivation, explaining one's self-motivation in terms of inherent growth tendencies and psychological needs (Ryan & Deci, 2000). SDT draws an important distinction between autonomous motivation and controlled motivation (Gagne & Deci, 2005). According to SDT model, autonomy involves the phenomenological experience of choice with a sense of volition (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

In early ER research, the level of self-determination demonstrated to determine whether self-regulatory process is exhausted or not (e.g., Moller et al., 2006). In addition, Bono and Vey (2005) encouraged future researchers to investigate the role of autonomy in determining the relationship between EL and individual outcomes, such as job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion. Empirical research has supported the notion that a perception of autonomy is an important factor in work attitudes (Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Spector, 1998), and in EL research, this has been a robust (negative) predictor of burnout beyond emotional demands (Grandey & Brauburger, 2002). Wharton's (1993) result demonstrated that the result of EL was dependent upon job autonomy (JA), such that employees with high autonomy suffered lower negative effects of EL compared to those with low autonomy. In addition, it was found that JA buffered the strain of DA and SA (e.g., Grandey et al., 2005; Johnson & Spector, 2007). Therefore, Grandey and Melloy (2017) argued that even the “bad” acting is only detrimental when employees feel that they are forced to use EL strategies.

Hypothesis 4a (H4a): The relationship between SA and burnout will be moderated by JA. Specifically, JA will buffer the impact of SA on burnout.

Hypothesis 4b (H4b): The relationship between DA and engagement will be moderated by JA. Specifically, JA will enhance the impact of DA on engagement.

Therefore, integrating the mediation process of EL and moderating effects of JA, JA will have conditional indirect effect in both activation and inhibition processes (Fig. 1)

Hypothesis 5a (H5a): JA moderates the indirect effect of service employees’ neuroticism on their burnout through enacting a SA strategy at work, such that the indirect effect of will be buffered when employees perceive their workplace as autonomous.
 Hypothesis 5b(H5b): JA moderates the indirect effect of service employees’ extraversion on their work engagement through enacting a DA strategy at work, such that the indirect effect will be enhanced when employees perceive their workplace as autonomous.

2. METHOD

2.1. Sample

To examine this research model in service settings, archival data from American hotels was utilized. We obtained the archival data from the cooperation of the personnel department of three hotels. Archival data has been widely used in many organizational research (e.g., Diefendorff et al., 2016; Martin et al., 2016) and emotional labor research (e.g., Gabriel et al, 2015), which allows researchers to obtain more objective records with specific aspects of job domains (Murphy, 2008). The

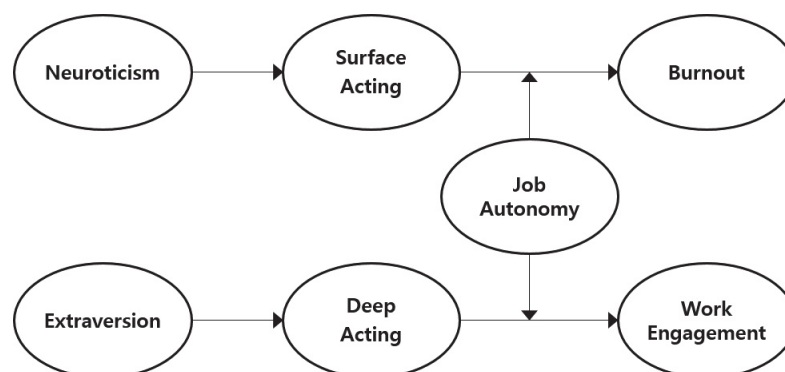


Fig. 1. Research model

survey participants consisted of 200 workers, but 13 surveys were excluded due to the missing records. The sample was 62.3% female, with an average age of 36.1 years ($SD = 11.6$). The average tenure was 49.9 months ($SD = 54.4$). A total of 52.4% of the workers were managerial/supervisory position.

2.2. Measures

Personality. Goldberg's (1992) Big-Five Factor personality scales were used to measure employee's extraversion (10-item) and neuroticism (10-item) with 5-point scale. Sample item of extraversion is "I don't mind being the center of attention." (Coefficient $\alpha = .89$) and neuroticism is "I have frequent mood swings." (Coefficient $\alpha = .85$)

Emotional Labor. EL strategy was measured with 5-point scale via Brotheridge and Lee's (1998) emotional labor scale (surface acting and deep acting with 3-items each). An example item of surface acting is "I hide my true feelings about a situation." (Coefficient $\alpha = .66$), and deep acting is "I try to actually experience the emotions that I must show." (Coefficient $\alpha = .85$)

Job Autonomy. Four times from Hackman and Oldham's (1975) job autonomy scale was used with 5-point scale. An example item is "I have a lot to say over what happens on my job." (Coefficient $\alpha = .75$)

Burnout. 16-items of Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS Schaufeli, et al., 1996) was used to measure employees' negative wellbeing status with 5-point scale. This scale has three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy. Sample items are "I feel emotionally drained from my work." (emotional exhaustion; Coefficient $\alpha = .89$), "I have become less enthusiastic about my work." (cynicism; Coefficient $\alpha = .82$), and "In my opinion, I am good at my job." (professional efficacy; Coefficient $\alpha = .69$)

Work Engagement. 17-items of Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES 17-item; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003) was used to measure employees' positive wellbeing and motivation status. This scale also has three dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption. Sample items are "At my job, I feel strong and vigorous." (vigor; Coefficient $\alpha = .77$), "I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose." (dedication; Coefficient $\alpha = .91$), and "I am immersed in my work." (absorption; Coefficient $\alpha = .78$)

2.3. Analytical procedure

SPSS 25.0 was used to compute the means, standard deviations, and correlations among the study variables (Table 1). To test mediating hypotheses and indirect effects, Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedure and Bootstrap

Table 1. Correlation among variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Gender	-										
2. Age	-.069	-									
3. Tenure	.002	.401***	-								
4. Position	.106	-.023	-.227**	-							
5. Extraversion	-.053	-.301***	-.132	-.139	-						
6. Neuroticism	.137	-.016	-.053	.107	-.267***	-					
7. Surface Acting	.110	-.068	-.120	.010	-.093	.218**	-				
8. Deep Acting	-.059	-.106	-.010	-.071	.230**	-.022	.072	-			
9. Burnout	.009	.025	-.019	.106	-.281***	.448***	.268***	-.184*	-		
10. Engagement	-.079	.198**	.146*	-.299***	.107	-.184*	-.061	.271**	-.516***	-	
11. Autonomy	-.116	-.068	.007	-.447***	.235**	-.242**	.032	.177*	-.381***	.415***	-
<i>M</i>	-	35.96	79.64	-	4.39	2.98	2.86	3.20	2.31	3.42	3.61
<i>SD</i>	-	11.61	86.09	-	.76	.65	.78	.96	.62	.64	.88

*. $p < .05$, **. $p < .01$, ***. $p < .001$

method were conducted. Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test the moderating effects of JA. And the moderated mediation effect was used to test the conditional indirect effect (using PROCESS MODEL 14; Hayes, 2017). Finally, by using the Johnson-Neyman technique (Johnson & Neyman, 1936), the regions of JA which is the effect of personalities on outcome variables is significant and non-significant were determined.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Mediating effects

Table 2 indicates that employees' neuroticism is positively related to SA ($B = .26, p < .01$). Thus, this result supports the H1a. As shown in Step 2 and Step 3, the positive effect of neuroticism was still significant ($B = .38, p < .01$) after adding SA into the regression equation, and SA positively predicts burnout ($B = .14, p < .01$), which indicates that SA partially mediated the relationship between employees' neuroticism and burnout. As shown in Table 3, bootstrap estimation confirmed its

significance, with 5,000 bootstrap samples and a 95% confidence interval of .0024 to .0911 around the indirect effect not containing 0.

Thus, indirect effect of neuroticism on burnout via SA was significant, which supports both H2a and H2b.

As shown in Table 2, employees' extraversion is positively related to DA ($B = .29, p < .01$). Thus, this result supports the H1b. As shown in Step 2 and Step 3, the positive effect of extraversion was not

significant before and after adding DA into the regression equation, and DA had a positive effect on work engagement ($B = .17, p < .01$), which indicates DA fully mediated the relationship between employees' extraversion and work engagement. As shown in Table 3, bootstrap estimation confirmed its significance, with 5,000 bootstrap samples and a 95% confidence interval of .0148 to .1208 around the indirect effect not containing 0. Thus, indirect effect of extraversion on job engagement via DA was significant, which supports both H3a and H3b.

3.2. Moderating effects

As shown in Table 4, JA significantly moderated the

Table 2. Results of the mediation analysis

	Neuroticism-Surface Acting-Burnout			Extraversion-Deep Acting-Work Engagement			
	SA	Burnout		DA	Work Engagement		
	Step1 <i>B(SE)</i>	Step2 <i>B(SE)</i>	Step3 <i>B(SE)</i>	Step1 <i>B(SE)</i>	Step2 <i>B(SE)</i>	Step3 <i>B(SE)</i>	
N	.260**(.086)	.423***(.063)	.383***(.064)	E	.290**(.091)	.089(.061)	.038(.062)
SA			.144**(.055)	DA			.174***(.049)
<i>F</i>	9.094**	45.253***	25.894***	<i>F</i>	10.193***	2.128	7.360**
<i>R</i> ²	.048	.201	.227	<i>R</i> ²	.053	.011	.075

*. $p < .05$, **. $p < .01$, ***. $p < .001$

Note. N=Neuroticism, E=Extraversion, SA= Surface Acting, DA= Deep Acting

Table 3. Indirect effect of emotional labor

Mediator	Burnout				Mediator	Work Engagement			
	Indirect effect	SE	95% CI (bias-corrected)			Indirect effect	SE	95% CI (bias-corrected)	
			LLCI	ULCI				LLCI	ULCI
SA	.0392	.0230	.0024	.0911	DA	.0600	.0274	.0148	.1208

Note. SA= Surface Acting, DA= Deep Acting

Table 4. Results of hierarchical moderated regression analysis

Step		Burnout			Work Engagement		
		<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	ΔR^2	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	ΔR^2
1	SA	.219***	.053	.227***	DA	.136**	.214***
	Autonomy	-2.83***	.048		Autonomy	.279***	
2	SAXAutonomy	-.156*	.061	.028*	DAXAutonomy	.129**	.031**

*. $p < .05$, **. $p < .01$, ***. $p < .001$
 Note. SA= Surface Acting, DA= Deep Acting

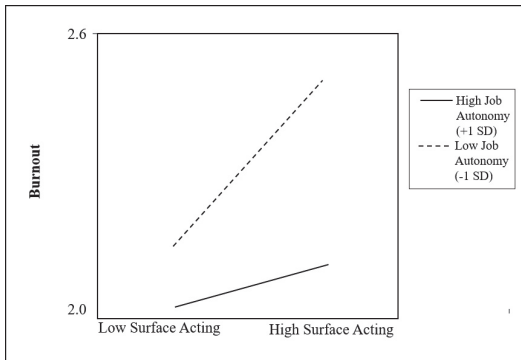


Fig. 2. Interaction effect of job autonomy and surface acting on burnout

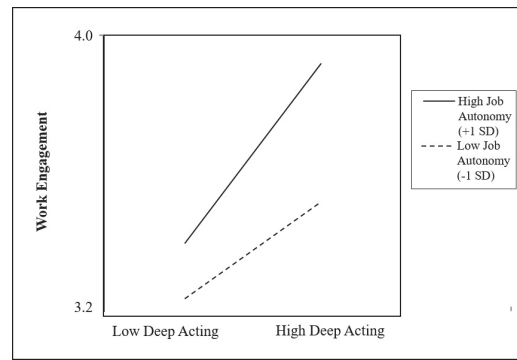


Fig. 3. Interaction effect of job autonomy and deep acting on work engagement

relationship between SA and burnout. In the first step, SA and JA explained 22.7% of the variance ($p < .01$).

The interaction term in the next step explained 2.8% of the additional variance ($B = -.16, p < .05$), supporting the H4a. As shown in Fig. 2, at high levels of SA, employees with lower JA indicated sharp increases in burnout, whereas employees who reported with higher autonomy showed only a little increased burnout with higher SA.

JA also significantly moderated the relationship between DA and work engagement. DA and JA were entered in the first step, explaining 21.4% of the variance

($p < .01$). The interaction term in the next step explained 3.1% of the additional variance ($B = .13, p < .01$), supporting the H4b. As demonstrated in Fig. 3, the positive effect of DA became weaker when JA was lower, while employees with higher autonomy showed experiencing a sharp increase in work engagement.

3.3. Moderated Mediation Effects of JA

Based on the moderated mediation model described by Hayes (2017), we used the sample mean SD to distinguish the different levels of JA and conducted a boot-

Table 5. Conditional indirect effects

	Level	Burnout				Work Engagement			
		Indirect effect	<i>SE</i>	95% CI (bias-corrected)		Indirect effect	<i>SE</i>	95% CI (bias-corrected)	
				LLCI	ULCI			LLCI	ULCI
Autonomy	L	.0689	.0304	.0166	.1343	.0109	.0223	-.0316	.0593
	M	.0379	.0210	.0045	.0859	.0438	.0207	.0109	.0899
	H	.0069	.0225	-.0341	.0586	.0766	.0286	.0284	.1404
	Index	-.0355	.0190	-.0772	-.0036	.0373	.0172	.0085	.0757

*. $p < .05$, **. $p < .01$, ***. $p < .001$

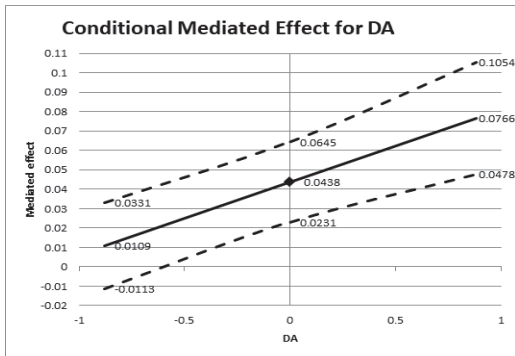


Fig. 4. Conditional indirect effect on burnout

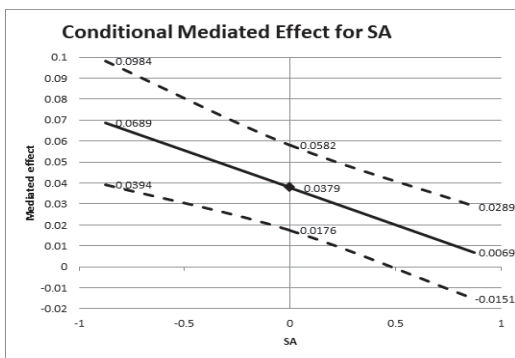


Fig. 5. Conditional indirect effect on work engagement

strapping test. Under the 95% confidence interval, JA moderated the mediation effect of EL strategies on employees' well-being (burnout and work engagement). The results are shown in Table 5. Thus, H5a and 5b were supported.

Specifically, with low (-1 SD), middle (mean), and high (+1 SD) levels, the results of the bootstrapping test showed that the burnout index = $-.0355$ (LLCI = $-.0772$, - ULCI = $-.0036$); work engagement index = $.0373$ (LLCI = $.0085$ - ULCI = $.0757$), which did not contain 0, thus indicating that the mediating role of EL is significant. In addition, the results of Johnson-Neyman technique are shown in Fig. 4 and 5.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Theoretical implications

This research has several meaningful implications for the literature on EL. First, based on Gray's (1990) BAS

and BIS framework, extroverted employees are more likely to use DA, whereas neurotic employees tend to use SA. This result indicates that individual differences are causes of emotional expression styles in the service settings. In other words, the sensitivity of distinct personality traits might affect emotion regulation strategies chosen in a service context.

Second, considering that the different EL strategies also mediated the personality traits and well-being status, this result illustrates the mechanisms underlying the relationship between neuroticism and high burnout, as well as illustrating why extroverted employees are more likely to experience higher work engagement. Since DA fully mediated the relationship between extraversion and work engagement, it is important to understand how certain employees might thrive in emotionally demanding contexts.

Third, the moderating effect of JA on the relationship between EL and workers' well-being is similar to Johnson and Spector's (2007) finding that the perception of JA alleviates the harmful effect of SA. They interpreted that JA provided control over job demands in terms of the demands-control model (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). As mentioned earlier, the JD-R model proposed interactions between job demands and resources that involve both gain and loss spirals (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017, p.278). Thus, this study also applied the JD-R framework within the context of service settings along with self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2002). As a result, JA buffered strain as well as enhanced the motivational state of employees.

Furthermore, this research also addressed the issue of the "good and bad dichotomy" between SA and DA. This dichotomy might be eliminated or reversed in certain contexts (e.g., Grandey & Gabriel, 2015, p.342; Grandey & Melloy, 2017, p.411). Although the basic assumption of EL research has traditionally been that DA and SA are mutually exclusive, these strategies are negatively related (Gabriel et al., 2015). It was also proposed that ER is not always consciously perceived, and

thus self-reports might be biased by limited awareness (Grandey et al., 2015). Mixed results from the effects of DA have been explained that DA increases both resource gain and loss processes in JD-R framework (e.g., Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Becker et al., 2018; Holman et al., 2002; Holman et al., 2008). Yet, this explanation also fails to account for what conditions activate or inhibit DA. Thus, Grandey and Melloy's (2017) revised model proposed that the perception of autonomy is one of the important boundary conditions for EL strategies. Although ER research has been conducted in laboratory experiments, EL has externally controlled or driven as well as internally controlled in the field settings (Grandey et al., 2005). Taken together, in light of self-determination theory and the JD-R model, the findings of the moderating effect of JA on EL also provide room for understanding the previous mixed results of EL.

4.2. Practical implications

The findings of this research also provide meaningful insights to managers in service industries. First, the differences in EL strategies due to personality provide an explanation of why some employees have better motivational status than others and experience different well-being outcomes. Extroverted employees are more likely to experience positive affect than others, because they have good social skills and use DA strategies (Chi et al., 2011). On the other hand, emotional stability and agreeableness have shown to predict better service performance (Grandey & Brauburger, 2002; Hogan et al., 1984; Mount et al., 1998), and our findings provide evidence that workers low in emotional stability (neuroticism) have a tendency to perform SA. In fact, personality tests are reported to be most often used for selection in service contexts (e.g., Ashforth & Saks, 2002), and emotional stability is a key trait for thriving under high emotional demands. Thus, job analysis aimed at illustrating the actual emotional demands of works and KSAOs and test development methodology based

on personality can be used to identify emotion-related skills and knowledges for selection and training protocols for service workers (Arvey, Renz, & Watson, 1998).

Second, the full mediation effect of DA indicates that extroverted workers show better motivational status because they tend to use DA strategy. Although the SA strategy partially mediated the effect of neuroticism on burnout, it is also crucial to prevent this strategy because SA increases emotional dissonance (Hochschild, 1983) and job dissatisfaction (Grandey, 2000). Thus, managers should understand individual differences in ER and how to manage them effectively. For example, employees can learn how to react and modify their emotions in the workplace for both individual and organizational benefits (Goleman, 1995). Indeed, personal well-being and quality of work were improved when workers received ER training (e.g., Clarke, 2006; van der Klink et al., 2001).

Third, although existing selection practices such as measures of personality, presentation, and interviews are effective methods to assess job applicants' ER ability, the moderating effect of JA from the current research findings have implications for organizational management for the sake of both employees' psychological health and their motivation. In this regard, Gabriel et al. (2016) suggested that systems in the workplace should include predictors and boundary conditions of the EL process as well as whether those systems might be perceived as supportive or enforcing (Grandey & Melloy, 2017; Holman et al., 2002). Curtis (1998) argued in favor of giving workers the autonomy to treat rude customers in the manner they regard as appropriate, rather than blindly forcing friendly smiles in spite of sexual harassment or other incivility (Grandey et al., 2005). Given that service workers are more likely to experience unjust treatment and anger from rude customers than workers in other sectors (Andersson & Pearson, 1999), managers should understand such circumstances and attempt to change them. Indeed, managers in the service sector benefit from a system which allows em-

employees to have the resources and autonomy to resort to more than excuses or apologies to rude customers (Bitner et al., 1994; Bitner et al., 1990; Levesque & McDougall, 2000).

Finally, the conditional indirect effects of JA suggest that JA helps both workers who engage in SA and those who engage in DA. This is important for practitioners because even though neurotic employees might use SA in service settings, they might experience better well-being if they have high JA. In addition, extroverted employees might enact better EL strategies than neurotic employees, but without JA, the positive effect of DA is not significant anymore. Therefore, findings in this study about the moderated mediation effect of JA on employee well-being provides more justification for organizations to reassess and adjust frontline service workers' level of JA.

4.3. Limitations and future research directions

This research has some limitations that suggest several directions for future research. First, the self-report measurement and cross-sectional design of this research may have resulted in overstatement of the relationship among variables. Podsakoff et al. (2003) recommended using different sources for the predictor and criterion variables. However, this recommendation is not the best approach for dependent variables because self-reports of wellbeing variables would be best reported by individuals themselves (Johnson & Spector, 2007). Moreover, estimating other workers' EL strategy is difficult since the nature of these variables is hidden (Johnson & Spector, 2007). However, it is still difficult to identify causal relationships in cross-sectional research, and there is common method bias in this research design. To address this issue, future research should adopt a longitudinal design where predictors, mediators, and outcome variables are measured at different time periods. Given that the temporal dynamics of ER research (Grandey & Melloy, 2017; Gross, 2015), using

episodic process model (Beal et al., 2005) or experience sampling methodology would be worthwhile.

Second, variable-centered approach in this research excludes the possibilities of using both regulation strategies at the same time (Gabriel et al., 2015). Several EL studies using a person-centered approach have identified the existence of distinct sub-populations of EL actors (e.g., Gabriel et al., 2015; Oh et al., 2018; Park & Chang, 2017; Park et al., 2022). Although research showed that the correlation between SA and DA was not significant, it is hard to ignore the presence of sub-populations of EL actors. Thus, future research should adopt latent profile analysis to confirm how distinct sub-populations of employees use differential combinations of SA and DA to deal with their emotions at work. In addition, for the validity of the use of a person-centered approach and the generalizability of the model in this study, future research might collect diverse occupational groups beyond the hotel workers. For example, emotional regulation skills are also required in different job and work domains, including sales employees (e.g., Cho & Jung, 2006), firefighters (e.g., Ryu et al., 2020), team settings (e.g., Becker et al., 2018), and workplace meetings (e.g., Moon et al., 2020). Thus, it is worthwhile to reexamine our theoretical frameworks in different settings beyond the service industries.

Third, it is hard to overlook the potential dark side of JA. A very high level of JA might be harmful for the employee's wellbeing due to its uncertainty, huge responsibility on the job, and difficulties in decision making (Warr, 1987; De Jonge & Schaufeli, 1998). Langfred and Moye (2004) argued that employees with higher autonomy would be more cognitively distracted at work, because they engage in more interference and then experience higher switching costs (Cheong et al., 2016). Cheong et al. (2016) proposed and found that empowering leaders have two faces, enabling and burdening effects on employee performance. In light of these views and previous findings, our research might ignore the potential dark side of JA and only shed light on the bright side.

Fourth, future research should examine other variables as causes and consequences of EL strategies. For instance, agreeableness (Kiffin-Petersen et al., 2011) and other personality traits may also result in the performance of distinct EL strategies (Chi et al., 2013; Diefendorff et al., 2005; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013; Liao & Chuang, 2004). According to regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997), a promotion focus plays the role of a “will do” factor (trait or motivational based; e.g., Geng et al., 2018; Llewellyn et al., 2013), whereas, mindfulness (Hülshager et al., 2013) and emotional intelligence (Grant, 2013) can be seen as “can do” factors (ability based) in ER at work.

Finally, further research is needed on boundary conditions of the phenomena identified in the present study. Drawing on self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2002), this research focused on the role of JA as a moderator of the relationship between EL and work engagement and burnout. However, self-determination theory argues that self-determination involves relatedness and competence as well as autonomy. In fact, employees' motivations are different depending on whether the service work is relationship or encounter based (Grandey & Brauburger, 2002, p.263). Service workers are motivated to provide better service to meet the objective of retaining clients (Gutek et al., 1999). According to Gutek et al. (1999), service relationships may extend beyond objective outcomes and meet clients' social and emotional needs, and that is also true for the workers. It seems that a service relationship would lead to workers engaging in authentic emotional expression with clients they meet regularly (Grandey & Brauburger, 2003). In addition, employees' ability and fit are crucial factors in determining whether performing EL is demanding or not (Diefendorff et al., 2015). In this regard, employees who are high in self-monitoring may enjoy working as emotional laborers, and this may allow them to function in workplaces that are generally viewed as unpleasant (Baeck et al., 2014; Humphrey et al., 2015). In fact, Shuler and Sypher (2000) found that 911 emergency call

center workers enjoyed the emotional demands of the job. They found their work fun, exciting, and rewarding (Shuler & Sypher, 2000, p.51). Hochschild (1983) stated that many people regard being a flight attendant as a dream job, though her research focused on their difficulties and the negative consequences of EL. Given that perceived emotional demands-abilities fit explained additional variance in job satisfaction, burnout, and job performance, ruling out the effect of other fit perceptions (e.g., person-organization fit, demand-ability fit, etc; Diefendorff et al., 2015), employees who were good at ER reported better wellbeing and performance (Baeck et al., 2014). Future research should include distinct components of self-determination as boundary conditions of the EL framework.

In conclusion, the current research provides the evidence for rethinking the good-bad dichotomy of EL; good and bad acting is not fixed but determined by the role of work context, JA. Our findings call for additional research that sheds light on the nomological network of this framework as well as interventions that revise job conditions or modify employee attributes.

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Received: 2022.10.30

Revised: 2022.11.27

Accepted: 2022.11.29.