



THE EFFECT OF EMOTIONAL DEMAND AND JOB DEMAND ON EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION IN SALES EXECUTIVES FROM AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY

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Abstract:

The service employees frequently engage in emotionally demanding interactions with customers. They are likely to have high levels of emotional exhaustion. The present study explores the effect of emotional demand and job demand the independent variables on the dependent variable emotional exhaustion. Data for this were collected from 70 automobile show room executives. The result of this study indicates that emotional demand and job demand are positively related to emotional exhaustion. Three validated instruments were employed in the study to measure the relevant variables. Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis were used as tools of analysis. The results supported the hypothesis and showed that the independent variables emotional demand accounts for forty five percent and job demand accounts for fifteen percent of effect on the dependent variable - emotional exhaustion. Of the two independent variables emotional demand has more influence on the emotional exhaustion than the job demand. This study is the first to examine the simultaneous effect of emotional demand and job demand on emotional exhaustion. Implications of the findings are discussed.

Key Words: Emotional Exhaustion, Job Demand & Emotional Demand

Introduction:

Organizations are witnessing rampant changes due to the increasing business complexity, competition, and uncertainty in business environment. As the business becomes more complex, organizations are continually challenged to engage in activities to increase their performance. An organization needs to understand and translate customer requirement to meet the challenges. Many industries are faced with unique challenges which include difficulty in attracting customers. In order to thrive in the competition, organizations have changed their focus on service. Organizations in all sectors are improving their service interactions with the customers. In this changing context, employees are desired to express the emotion that satisfies their customers. This is being considered as an important HR system that can generate business value and contribute to organizational growth and effectiveness. Increased competition among service sector raises the need to understand the factors involved in increasing the quality of service to the customer. This led many researchers to investigate the role of emotion as a determinant in the evaluating the quality of service provided to the customers.

It is a collaborative effort of workers from different disciplines and often involves high degree of adaptability. Managing performance of workers may, thus, involve several intricate challenges. One of the challenges faced by an employee is to manage the emotions as per the demands of an organization. An organization shapes employees' emotion and emotional display, which is known as emotional demand. It is an emotionally charged interaction at work which is considered to be an important source of job strain (Totterdell & Holman, 2003). Emotionally demanding conditions require energy investment that may exhaust employees' resource reservoir. When energy is depleted, job strain is likely to occur. This is in line with (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, and Tice's, 1998) theory on ego depletion. Acts that require self-control use up this limited energy, and exhaust it.

Job demand refers to those physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical or mental effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and psychological costs (Bakker et al., 2003). Many empirical studies have shown that job demand is an important determinant of emotional exhaustion. High job demands are likely to result in strain reactions which in turn may lead to an increase in emotional exhaustion. In this study, we focus on the two job characteristics job demand and emotional demand which are determinant in causing emotional exhaustion.

Review of Literatures:

Due to the increased competition among the service organizations (Axtell, Parker, Holman, & Totterdell, 2007), there is a need to understand the factors which contributes to the quality of customer service. In the service organizations, the role of employees' emotion is the major determinant of customer service quality (Brief & Weiss, 2002; Groth, Hennig-Thurau, & Walsh, 2009; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). The organization's emotional display rules specifies and prescribes the expression of emotion to the customers which are the key component of employees' performance (Morris & Feldman, 1996). Nevertheless the service employees may not always be in a good mood to express the positive emotions that contributes to the efficacy of the organization (Grandey, 2003; Morris & Feldman, 1996).

Emotion is a continuous process that develops from the ones' personal situation (Schutz & DeCuir, 2002). Emotion is a major factor in the people's life and is linked with the well-being.

The feelings of emotion if not properly noticed will lead to stress which can change the emotional behavior either by preceding it or by consequence of one's action. It is assumed by the organizational researchers that there exists interdependence between emotion and stress. (Lazarus, 1993; Lazarus & Cohen – Charash, 2001; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Emotional exhaustion is a subject of importance for the well-being of employees and for the optimal functioning of the organization. An extensive review of burnout literature has revealed emotional exhaustion as one of the core dimensions of burnout and occurs when employees feel fatigued, overwhelmed and emotionally drained by their job (Maslach, 1981; Griffin, Hogan, Lambert, et al., 2010).

This study is carried out to find the simultaneous effect of emotional demand and job demand on emotional exhaustion in service sector. Emotional exhaustion is primarily predicted by workload and lack of social support as hypothesized by Janssen *et al.* (1999). When individuals cannot deal with this stress by allocating or investing new resources, it ultimately causes emotional exhaustion. When employee fail to express appropriate emotions then they have to rely on compensatory strategies, called coping strategies (Diefendroff, Croyle, & Gosserand, 2005; Grandey 2000). As per Hochschild's (1979, 1983) research there are two main processes of coping strategies - surface acting and deep acting adopted in response to emotional demand. Employees mostly modify and control their emotional expressions.

Several studies found that emotional demands have a stronger effect on human service employees' well-being (de Jonge *et al.*, 2000; de Jonge & Hamers, 2000; Gonge *et al.*, 2002; B. Soerfeldt *et al.*, 1997; van Vegchel *et al.*, 2002). Therefore, an additional assumption was that emotional demand would have a stronger impact than job demands. With regard to emotional exhaustion, it should be mentioned that the strongest associations were found for both job demand and emotional demand. This result is in line with the job demand –resources model (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001), which assumes that job demand are primarily and positively related to emotional exhaustion. It was also concluded by Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998) that the emotional exhaustion is influenced by job demands.

Job demands refer to all physical, psychological or social aspects of the job that require sustained physical or mental effort and are therefore associated with psychological costs, such as emotional exhaustion, a core dimension of burnout (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Job demand is assumed to play a pivotal role in the energy-depletion process. In any work environment, these demands may exhaust the energy reserves of an employee, causing stress-related problems, which may lead to health problems.

Objectives:

The primary purpose of this study is to assess the relative importance of job demand and emotional demand in predicting emotional exhaustion. Emotional demand is a pre-script for the emotions to be expressed and is related to emotional exhaustion. Past study has suggested that emotional demand and job demand independently influencing the emotional exhaustion. Based on the research objectives, this study will address the following questions:

- The role of job demand on emotional exhaustion.
- The role of emotional demand on emotional exhaustion.

To assess the relative importance of job demand and emotional demand on emotional exhaustion following hypothesis were framed.

H1: Emotional demand has no effect on the emotional exhaustion.

H2: Job demand has not effect on the emotional exhaustion.

Methodology:

The study is descriptive in studying the level of existence of job demand, emotional demand among employees causing emotional exhaustion. A thorough literature review on these constructs was made and a questionnaire was developed taking cues from a number of studies. Seven point scale was used and 65 questions were formulated in total. The questionnaire was tested for content validity where expert opinion was sought from both academicians and industry experts regarding the statements under each construct. The questionnaire was administered to about 40 respondents who work as sales executives in automotive sector. This data was used to validate the questionnaire; the process of purification helped in removing 10 questions from the questionnaire to arrive at a final validated instrument. The final data collection was done with 70 respondents of similar profile. The data was used to test if there is any impact of emotional demand and job demand on emotional exhaustion using correlation and regression.

Instrument Development and Validation:

The study used literature review and pre-validated questionnaires to develop instruments that measure the required constructs of this research. The final questionnaire developed was validated using a pilot data of 40 respondents. Emotional Demand was measured by subscales from Frankfurt Emotion Work Scales - E (FEWS; Zapf *et al.*, 2001). Job Demand was measured by subscales from a Dutch questionnaire on organizational stress

(Vragenlijst Organisatie Stress-Doetinchem; Bergers, Marcelissen, & De Wolff, 1986; range 1-4). Emotional exhaustion was measured by subscales from a Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach et al., 2001).

Analysis of Mean Values of the Constructs Measured:

The key constructs were studied in general for their prevalent levels among the respondents and the same are represented in Table 1. Emotional exhaustion has got a mean score of 5.83, Emotional Demand 5.28 and Job Demand 5.44 in a scale of 1 to 7, and hence it can be observed that the respondents do experience demand and exhaustion at a considerable level.

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics and the correlation matrix for the study variables. Emotional demand was positively related to emotional exhaustion ($r = .513, p < .01$), job demand and emotional exhaustion were positively related to each other ($r = .346, p < .01$). Furthermore, emotional demand were positively related to job demand ($r = .442, p < .01$)

The findings suggest that the higher the emotional demand, the higher the emotional exhaustion, and higher the job demand, higher is the emotional exhaustion. Also the emotional demand is positively related to job demand, such that emotional exhaustion increases as the level of emotional demand and job demand increases.

Table 1: Correlation Matrix

		ED	Job Demand	EE
ED	Pearson Correlation	1	.442**	.513**
JD	Pearson Correlation	.442**	1	.346**
EE	Pearson Correlation	.513**	.346**	1
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Table 2 presents regression analysis. Hypothesis 1, was not supported as emotional demand was positively and significantly related to emotional exhaustion ($\beta = .447, t < .01$). However, hypothesis 2 was supported as job demand was positively but not significantly related emotional exhaustion ($\beta = .148, t > .05$)

Table 2: Results of Regression Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.527	.840		.627	.533
	Emotional Demand	.442	.114	.447	3.872	.000
	Job Demand	.211	.165	.148	1.278	.206
a. Dependent Variable: EE						

Discussion:

The result of this study contribute to a better understanding of the interplay between job demands, emotional demand and emotional exhaustion and support the need to take effective measures to reduce emotional exhaustion. Job demand is positively related to emotional exhaustion. This prediction rests on the reasoning that high job demands produce a state of arousal in worker that would normally be reflected in such response as elevated heart rate or adrenaline excretion. When job demands are high emotional exhaustion develops irrespective of the type of job or occupation. (Demerouti et al, 2001). Previous studies in several organization has confirmed this hypothesis by showing that high job demands exhaust employees' mental and physical leading to the depletion of energy (i.e. a state of exhaustion) (Bakker, Demerouti, De Boer, & Schaufeli, 2003a; Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2003b; Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2004; Demerouti et al., 2001). The result of the present study confirmed our expectation. These results are taken as support for the hypothesis. The possible reason might be that cognitive and emotional workload may evoke chronic stress, overfatigue and finally exhaustion. Thus, job demands and emotional demand are more likely to be related to the well-being of employee. (Hakanen et al, 2006; Rudow, 1999).

Although it is likely that job demands, and emotional demand influence feelings of emotional exhaustion, it might be the other way around as well. That is, feelings of emotional exhaustion may influence the perception of stress related at work. The role of the present study was to identify the relationship of emotional demand and job demand on emotional exhaustion on the sales executives in the automobile industry. As organization continue to emphasize on customer service quality, understanding of the impact of this relationship on emotional exhaustion has become more important. Using the self-report measure, the present study found that there exist positive relationship between emotional demand, job demand and emotional exhaustion. Our findings suggest that (a) emotional demand is positively related to emotional exhaustion, (b) job demand is positively related emotional exhaustion, (c) emotional demand is positively related to job demand. We assessed the relative importance of emotional demand and job demand in predicting emotional exhaustion.

First of all our study is consistent with the previous studies demonstrating that emotional exhaustion is positively associated with emotional demand (Ybema and Smulders 2002).

In prediction of emotional exhaustion, emotional demand is more important than job demand. The correlation analysis indicated that emotional demand, job demand are related to emotional exhaustion. Further, the correlation analysis is highly significant. Previous studies on emotional demand have focused generally on the relationship between emotional labor and emotional exhaustion. At the same time, however, these studies were limited in that they did not account for how emotional demand is related to emotional exhaustion. Along the same line, past research in emotional demand emphasized the consequences of emotional demand and overlooked how individual perception of emotional demand is related to emotional exhaustion. Through its use of the above construct, our study filled in the literature's gap concerning perception of emotional demand, and job demand in causing emotional exhaustion. The results of the present study are contrary with Brotheridge and Lee's (1998, cited in Zapf et al., 1999) view that the emotional demands of work do not directly lead to emotional exhaustion.

The emotional requirements of the organization are thus only marginally relevant for an understanding of the frequency with which individuals use emotional regulation strategies. Individual emotional regulation strategies may be much more dependent on the psychological make-up of the individual than upon the organizational make-up. Consistent with previous research (Wharton, 1993; Wharton & Erickson, 1995), this study found that employees in "people work" (e.g., service, sales, caring professions) did not report significantly higher levels of emotional exhaustion than did respondents employed in other occupational groups (e.g., managers, clerical workers, physical laborers). Even clerical workers and physical laborers reported a non-zero level of the emotional demand, acting as a reminder that interactions with the public and emotional control are required in almost any job. This is especially true as the economy has become more service oriented and most industries need to be customer focused (Bitner, Booms, & Treault, 1990). As the organizations continue to emphasize customer service quality, understanding not only how emotional demand affect emotional exhaustion, but also understanding the process that impact this relationship will become more important (Hochschild, 1990; Morris & Feldman, 1996).

Implications:

The results of this study have useful implications for managers for business practice. First, emotional demand, which leads to burnout, is prevalent among service executives. With this realization, managers should organize effective and continuous training programs to teach their employees how to cope with emotionally demanding interactions with customers. Specifically, training in listening and problem-solving skills as well as sensitivity training would be helpful for service employees to understand customers requests and complaints better, show empathy to complainants, and seek help and advice from coworkers when needed (Johanson and Woods, 2008). Effective and ongoing training programs are not widespread in many organization (cf. Babakus et al., 2008). Therefore, such implications would serve as potential remedies for employees to be able to alleviate emotional demand in the service encounter.

Second, employees perceive that their supervisors are the agents of the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Accordingly, effective and continuous training programs should also be arranged for supervisors so that they could learn how to provide assistance to employees in coping with emotional demand and job demand. This is critical, because employees should receive signals from supervisors that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. Such an implication is important for the executives. That is, supervisors in authority feel that they are obliged to provide support and protection to employees under their care and such employees, in turn, show loyalty, deference, and compliance to their supervisors as reciprocity of care, support and protection of the paternal authority (Aycan, 2001).

Third, managers should provide their employees with adequate job autonomy so that such employees can decide how to manage various problems associated with emotional demand and become less vulnerable to emotional exhaustion.

Since job demand play a central role in the emotional exhaustion, reducing those demands seems to be warranted. Many preventive organizational based strategies exist to tackle high job demands such as job redesign, flexible work schedules, and goal settings. Hence, from a preventive point of view, decreasing job demands is to be preferred above increasing job resources.

Limitation:

A limitation of this study is that we considered only the emotional exhaustion dimension of burnout. Although it has been suggested that emotional exhaustion reflects a main dimension of burnout (Lee & Ashforth 1996). Further studies could be carried out with other dimensions of burnout.

Conclusion:

One of the issues that every organization needs to deal with is finding efficient and productive ways to diminish negative impacts of high job demands and emotional demand on both individual employees and organization. Organizations are recommended to cultivate recovery strategies through training and company policies.

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