THE RELATION BETWEEN EMOTIONAL LABOR, JOB BURNOUT AND INTENTION TO TURNOVER: A RESEARCH ON TRAVEL AGENCY WORKERS

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The aim of this study is to show the relation between emotional labor, job burnout and intention to turnover of travel agency workers, and to develop appropriate suggestions in the light of obtained findings. For this aim, a survey is applied to travel agency workers which is one of the emotional labor-intensive jobs. According to the results of this research, emotional labor behaviors of travel agency workers influence job burnout negatively and their level of job burnout influences intention to turnover positively. However, any relation between emotional labor and intention to turnover was not found.

Key words: emotional labor, job burnout, intention to turnover, hotel employees.

Introduction. Previously, emotions were not seen as an important factor in the researchs regarding organizational citizenship. Most of the organization theories tend to trivialize or marginalize the re-invention of emotions [34] and a large number of organizational studies were based on the assumption

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that human-beings are creatures whose inefficient irrationality cannot be trusted [25]. However, recently it is possible to see various studies which introduce the importance of emotions in working life by putting forward their positive and negative effects in workplace [10], [36], [46].

Additionally, unconditional customer satisfaction plays an important role for the concept of total quality which is introduced by global competition in service sector [17]. For this, many employers determine the appropriate attitude toward customers and make the emotional labor behaviors which needs to be displayed obligatory for personnel through in-company trainings. Whether employees display these behaviors sincerely or they pretend through masking may end up with job satisfaction and job burnout [23], [44].

Therefore, the general aim of this study is to show the relation between emotional labor, job burnout and intention to turnover and to develop appropriate suggestions in the light of obtained findings. For this aim, the variables of emotinal labor process of travel agency workers, which is one of the emotional labor-intensive jobs, and their opinions on job satisfaction are tried to be determined.

The aims of study:
1. Do emotional labor behaviors of participants vary according to demographical variables?
2. Does level of job burnout of participants vary according to demographical variables?
3. Does participants’ intention to turnover vary according to demographical variables?
4. Is there a significant relation between participants’ emotional labor behaviors and their level of job burnout?
5. Is there a significant relation between participants’ emotional labor behaviors and their intention to turnover?
6. Is participants’ level of job burnout affected by their emotional labor behaviors?
7. Is participants’ intention to turnover affected by their emotional labor behaviors?
8. Does the effect of emotional labor behavior on that participants’ intention to turnover is affected by their level of job burnout?

Literature Review

The Concepts of Emotion and Emotional Labor in Companies

Although previously emotion was not a widely used phenomenon, it has been an area on which various studies were conducted and various remarks was made since late 1800s. Because examining feelings and emotional conditions of human-beings and making predictions about their effects have a position which draws attraction in literature, it is possible to see various biological, psychological, social and cultural explanations of feelings and emotions. Especially since 1980s, the existence of emotions in working life, their forms of expression and their role in organizational success are started to be discussed increasingly [54]. From past to present, researchers have discusses the concept of emotion through different point of views. Whereas in past it is emphasized that emotions affect the process of rational reasoning negatively, many researches which is made nowadays suggest that emotions actullay lead people to realist thinking [47]. In a manner of speaking, contrary to rationalist approaches, emotions are moods which mobilize and energize people. Likewise, “motus anima” which refers to emotion in Latin means “mobilizing soul” [13]. Therefore, emotions which are experienced in daily life have a strong influence on human behavior.

“Emotional labor is a form of labor which workers have to perform in order to meet job’s requirements in jobs which necessitates intimate relationship, and it includes transforming emotions” [53]. The concept of emotional labor has been described in different ways by authors. According to Özkaplan, emotional labor is “a part of the package which companies sell to customer”. According to her, whereas industrial worker sells his/her manual labor and information technology worker sells his/her intellectual labor, emotional worker sell his/her “smiles” [38]. According to Ashforth and Humphrey who examine emotional labor through the perspective of the theory of social identity, emotional labor is expressed as the action of displaying appropriate emotion [4].

In the light of these descriptions, the concept of emotional labor can be stated as that employees control their emotions to create positive relationships with customers in order to guarantee customer satisfaction and they display emotions which company wants to be displayed instead of their own emotions [29].


**Dimensions of Emotional Labor**

One of the important points regarding the phenomenon of emotional labor is about in which form employees display emotions toward customers. In this context, emotional labor behaviors have various dimensions in literature. Surface acting as one of these dimensions is to pretend that actually nonexistent emotions exist [23]; in other words it refers to that one represses his/her emotions through emotional masking and pretends by displaying fake emotions [15]. A worker who pretends by superficially displaying emotional labor behaviors toward customers, actually acts as if he/she feels the emotions that his/her job requires while he/she is working even if he/she feels different emotions [7]. It is stated that in surface acting employee experiences emotional contradiction in a great level [24], [30]. Hence, the dimension of surface acting is also referred as emotional contradiction in relevant literature [27], [32], [60].

Considering emotional effort (which is also called deep acting in literature) as another dimension of emotional labor, one tries to synchronize his/her actual emotions with expected behaviors. According to Kruml and Geddes [32], this dimension is the basis of the phenomenon of emotional labor. For employee, it requires too much effort to empathize with customer, to make customer pleased with service which he/she buys, and to approach with positive emotions by understanding the conditions which make customer difficult/aggressive [23]. In addition to that employee does not perform his/her own emotions either in emotional contradiction which includes the display of surface acting or in emotional effort, it is possible to say that there is a difference between these two forms emotional acting. In surface acting, employee does not feel, but only acts. On the contrary, in emotional effort, employee tries to actually feel emotions he/she reflects. This situation is exemplified as an actor/actress who loses himself/herself in his/her role [33]. According to this, in surface acting, displaying emotional labor rules which are determined by the organization is an externally imposed obligation; in emotional effort, it is a necessity based on internal motivation. Because behaviors are supported by actual emotions in emotional effort, this situation may make customer relations more sincere. However, at this point, it is necessary to indicate one more time that in both situations of emotional labor, acting within the rules determined by employer or administration is the situation [43].

Another dimension of emotional labor is the expression of genuine emotion. Ashforth and Humprey (1993: 33) mention that in addition to surface acting and emotional effort there might be situations in which workers genuinely experience expected emotion; and they refer this type of acting as the expression of genuine emotion. The employee who displays his/her emotions through this way does not pretend toward customer, and acts in this way because he/she is ready to help and experiences positive emotions [16]. On the other hand, Morris and Feldman tries to bring a holistic approach to the issue. According to them, either surface acting or emotional effort or expression of genuine emotions, all of them require effort in a certain extent; because the aim of all behaviors is to fulfill the requirements of emotional behavior rules determined by the organization [37].

**Intention to Turnover**

Intention to turnover is destructive and active actions made by employees in situations they feel unsatisfied about the working conditions [49]. There is a widespread opinion that intention to turnover affects organizational effectiveness. By detecting the factors which influence intention to turnover, researchers can predict and explain turnover behaviors in advance and managers can take precautions in order to avoid possible turnovers [26]. In many researches, job satisfaction is pointed out as the most significant factor among factors which affect intention to turnover.

Intention to turnover is an early indication for actual absenteeism and it brings costs in a significant extent. In literature, there are theoretical and empirical findings for that there is a negative relation between intention to turnover and job satisfaction [28], [50], [52].

Employees’ intention to turnover causes several practical problems such as loss of skills, additional staff and increase in managerial costs. Environmental factors which influence employees’ intention to turnover are organizational culture and values of organization, relationships with coworkers, demands and expectations regarding job/role, and opportunities for career development and reward structures such as
autonomy [52]. Factors which avoid turnover are job satisfaction, investments on job, alternative job opportunities and organizational rewards.

**Job Burnout**

The concept of burnout was firstly described by Freudenberger in 1974 as failure, exhaustion, loss of energy and power as a result of overloading or exhaustion in individual’s internal resources and energy as a result of unsatisfied desires.

Among psychological, behavioral and physical problems caused by organizational stress, some different reactions were observed in 1970s and they were denominated as burnout. The feature of burnout which distinguishes it from other reactions caused by organizational sources of stress is that it appears as a result of employees’ frequent and intense interactions with people they encounter as a part of their job (Torun, 1997).

In order to detect levels of burnout, Burnout Inventory designed by Maslach was used. According to Maslach, burnout is described as the situation which is experienced subjectively, is derived from working in environments with intense emotional expectations for a long time, and is accompanied by indications such as physical exhaustion, desperation, hopelessness, disappointment, development of a negative self-conception, development of negative attitudes toward job, workplace, employees and life (Çokluk, 2000). Emotional exhaustion is the dimension of burnout related with stress and refers to the decrease in individual’s emotional and physical sources. The most important sources for this process are being overloaded by work and interpersonal conflicts in workplace. Employees, at this stage, feel that they “get thin” and “get emptied” like they cannot be “refilled” (Solmuş, 2004:103). Desensitization manifests in the forms that the service or product one provides causes contradiction in the eyes of buyers, that one ignores the features which make service/product quality, that one embraces a humiliating approach toward people, that one categorizes people and that one keeps his/her distance with people who he/she provides service (Maslach et al., 2001: 403; Leiter and Maslach, 1988: 297). Low sense of personal success causes depression about employee’s feeling of ineligibility and not being able to sufficiently handle the work stress. Additionally, it gets deeper through lack of social support and unrecognized occupational development opportunities (Maslach, 1998; Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter, 2001). As a result of individuals’ negative self-evaluation, an unsuccessfulness in job and relationships with people who one encounters as a part of his/her job and a decrease in feeling of competence are seen. These people, who think that they can’t make progress in their jobs and even they drop behind, feel guilty (Dilsiz, 2006: 14).

In accommodation establishments, service provision to customers occurs in an integrated way with the products they buy. Customers who enjoy accommodation establishments pay attention to this point. Customers generally decide whether the physical standards of accommodation establishments meet their expectations before they decide in which place they will be for their vacation. After they decide, they compare the service qualities. For consumers, it becomes easier because of raising awareness of consumers who buy touristic products, of easier access to information and of existence of information regarding quality of product and service of accommodation establishments on the internet. Because of the raising awareness and opportunities of consumers and because professionals in the sector care about service quality and customer satisfaction, it became inevitable to care about the human factor who produces service [56].

**Studies on Emotional Labor and Business Behavior**

Emotional labor became a part of the literature after it is described as selling emotions in return of wage in Hochschild’s (1983) study. Emotional labor is studied mostly on service sector employees; these studies are mostly focused on customer service representatives [1], [11], call center employees [22], [48], (Özkan, 2011), healthcare workers (Mikolajczak, Menil & Luminet, 2007; Çaldağ, 2010), [31], shopping center workers [8], [16], [45], education workers [55], (Kaya, 2009), finance workers [37], [42], (Diamond, 2005).

Among studies on emotional labor, employees in tourism establishments and tourism workers are started to be studied. Even if it is a quite new concept in tourism area, there are many qualitative and quantitative researches about emotional labor [12], [21], [24], [27], [30], [57], [58]. For instance, Seymour (2000) conducted interviews with employees in traditional silver service restaurants and employees in fast-food restaurants in order to measure the levels of emotional labor in food and beverage establishments with two different styles of service delivery; he detected that intensity of emotional labor in traditional establishments is higher. Kim (2008) examined the priorities and results of two strategies of emotional labor (surface and deep acting) in accommodation industry. The study showed that employees
who display surface acting get more exhausted than employees who display deep acting. Zapf and Holz (2006), in their study on hotel establishments, food and beverage establishments and call centers in Germany, found that there is a close relation between emotional labor and burnout syndrome (Avcı and Kılıç, 2010: 293). Chen et al. (2009), tried to identify how students’ will to work and emotional awareness during thir period of internship affect their job satisfaction; they detected that emotional awareness and will to work affect job satisfaction positively.

In Turkey’s literature, Avcı and Boylu (2010) made validation for the level of measurement developed by Chu and Murmann (2006) through a research on undergraduate and graduate tourism students. Avcı and Kılıç (2010), with same level of measurement, tried to identify in which degree emotional labor behaviors of employees in accommodation sector differ. In this research, emotional labor behaviors discussed in terms of “emotional effort” and “emotional contradiction” dimensions; it is observed that employees’ emotional labor differs from the dimension of “emotional contradiction”. Similarly, Pala and Tepeci (2009) conducted a research on levels and dimensions of emotional labor of employees in tourism establishments; dimensions which constitute emotional labor in tourism establishments were identified as “deep acting” and “surface acting”. Kozak and Güclü (2008) made a research in order to put forward in what extent factors of emotional labor are taken into consideration during the recruitment process in tourism establishments; at the end of the research they found that the factor of “genuine behavior” among emotional labor factors is the one which is paid most attention. In Genç’s (2013) study, it is observed that level of emotional labor and emotional intelligence of employees in tourism establishments affect their job satisfaction, and considering the influence of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction, emotional labor partially mediates. Similarly, many researches in literature of tourism area emphasize that emotional management affects job performances of employees [36].

In provision of services, because service employees whose physical, mental and emotional labor are demanded create added value for service product specifically in accommodation industry, emotional labor and emotional management are seen as important phenomena [12], [57].

There are researches which examine tourism employees’ intention to turnover [40], level of job burnout and job satisfaction [2], [3], [6], [18], [41], [56]. According to these researches, employees encounter with burnout syndrome and it affects their performance and hence businesses’ service quality.

Methodology

Population and Sample

This research is made on employees of travel agencies in Diyarbakır. All population was tried to be reached and 110 people were reached.

Data Collection Tool

In research, survey was used for data collection. Surveys were made by directly going to travel agencies and through face to face talking. Surveys were made between January and March in 2015.

Among levels of measurement used in surveys, the ones regarding emotional labor were taken from 12-question Tourism Employees Emotional Labor level of measurement which was prepared Chu and Murmann (2006) and translated into Turkish by Pala and Tepeci (2008) and Boylu and Avcı (2010); the ones regarding job burnout were taken from 22-question Maslach Burnout Inventory which was developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981) and translated into Turkish by Ergin (1992); and ones regarding intention to turnover were taken from 5-question level of measurement prepared by Blau and Boal (1989) and translated into Turkish by Zayas (2006) and Yağcı (2010). Negative statements in level of measurement were inputted into the statistical programme in computer through reverse coding [5], [9], [12], [19], [35], [39], 59.

Analysis of Data

For validity and reliability of research, reliability test and confirmatory factor analysis were made.

In order to test hypotheses of research, descriptive statistical tests, percentage, frequency, mode, median, variance and standard deviation, crosstabs were included [14].

Correlation analysis was used in order to find the relation between variables and regression analysis was used in order to find interaction and mediation between variables.

Validity and Reliability Studies

Common point in descriptions and explanations about validity is that level of measurement correctly measures what is supposed to be measured. Because levels of measurement of emotional labor, job burnout and intention to turnover have been already tested, validation test was not required.
Confirmatory factor analysis, CFA, was made and it confirmed that levels of measurement correspond to factors given in literature. As a coefficient of reliability, Cronbach’s Alpha statistic was used and it determined that Cronbach’s Alpha statistic is located between 0.621 and 0.832. Therefore, it is possible to say that levels of measurement are in a sufficient level of reliability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Measurement</th>
<th>Results of Authors</th>
<th>Results of Researcher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Labor</td>
<td>0.621</td>
<td>0.729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface Acting</td>
<td>0.710 (Pala and Tepeci, 2010)</td>
<td>0.729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep Acting</td>
<td>0.851 (Pala and Tepeci, 2010)</td>
<td>0.812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Burnout</td>
<td>0.789 (Ergin, 1992)</td>
<td>0.796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Exhaustion</td>
<td>0.83 (Ergin, 1992)</td>
<td>0.832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desensitization</td>
<td>0.65 (Ergin, 1992)</td>
<td>0.796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Sense of Personal Success</td>
<td>0.72 (Ergin, 1992)</td>
<td>0.676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention to Turnover</td>
<td>0.83 (Zayas, 2006)</td>
<td>0.803</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Made by researcher.

Result of Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Level of Measurement of Emotional Labor
First level factorial structure of level of measurement of emotional labor which includes two sub-dimensions and 12 articles (six articles about surface acting and six articles about deep acting) was tested via computer programme. In five-point likert scale, covariance matrix was created via method of calculation of maximum likelihood and through data collected from 110 subjects (Kline, 2011). Scheme of values of parameter including first level confirmatory factor analysis of the scale was created. Values of goodness of fit which were obtained as a result of first level CFA ($\chi^2[51, N=110]=84,718; p<0.01; \chi^2/\text{sd}=1.66; \text{RMSEA}=0.078; \text{CFI}=0.918; \text{GFI}=0.885$) show that two-factor model which was suggested is acceptable and compatible with data. These results introduces that obtained data and anticipated theoretical structure of level of measurement of emotional labor (two-factor model) are compatible.

First level factorial structure of level of measurement of intention to turnover which includes one dimension and 5 articles was tested via programme called LISREL 8.5 (Scientific Software International). In five-point likert scale, covariance matrix was created via method of calculation of maximum likelihood and through data collected from 536 subjects (Kline, 2011). Scheme of values of parameter including first level confirmatory factor analysis of the scale was presented above as Scheme 3. Values of goodness of fit which were obtained as a result of first level CFA ($\chi^2[4, N=110]=5,787; p<0.01; \chi^2/\text{sd}=1.446; \text{RMSEA}=0.064; \text{CFI}=0.992; \text{GFI}=0.978$) show that one-factor model which was suggested is acceptable and compatible with data. These results introduces that obtained data and anticipated theoretical structure of level of measurement of intention to turnover (one-factor model) are compatible.

First level factorial structure of level of measurement of job burnout which includes three dimensions and 22 articles (9 articles about emotional exhaustion, 5 articles about desensitization and 8 articles about personal failure) was tested via programme called LISREL 8.5 (Scientific Software International). In five-point likert scale, covariance matrix was created via method of calculation of maximum likelihood and through data collected from 536 subjects (Kline, 2011). Scheme of values of parameter including first level confirmatory factor analysis of the scale was presented above as Scheme 4. Values of goodness of fit which are obtained as a result of first level CFA ($\chi^2[203, N=110]=436,203; p<0.01; \chi^2/\text{sd}=2.149; \text{RMSEA}=0.103; \text{CFI}=0.741; \text{GFI}=0.754$) show that three-factor model which was suggested is acceptable and compatible with data. These results introduces that obtained data and anticipated theoretical structure of level of measurement of job burnout (three-factor model) are compatible.

Data Analysis and Findings
66.4% of participants are male and 33.6% of them are female. 24.5% of participants are married and 75.5% of them are single. 44.5% of participants are graduated from high school, 36.4% of them are graduated associate degree program and 19.1% of them are graduated from university. 66.5% of participants received tourism education and 34.5% of them did not.

Model of Research
In this research, for testing hypotheses, model called SEM was used and the model below was obtained. According to this model, employees’ emotional labor behaviors affect job burnout negatively.
and significantly, and their level of job burnout affect their intention to turnover positively and significantly. However, their emotional labor behaviors do not significantly affect their intention to turnover. Values of goodness of fit ($x^2[1, N=110]=1,110; p<0.01; x^2/\text{sd}=1,110; \text{RMSEA}=0,032; \text{CFI}=0,998; \text{GFI}=0,993$) are between acceptable values.

At the end of the research, following results was reached: Considering the effect of emotional labor behaviors on intention to turnover, job burnout does not have mediation effect.

**Correlation Analysis**

Results of correlation analysis which was made in order to find the relation between dimensions and the level of this relation can be seen in the Table 2.

According to the table above, the dimension of deep acting among strategies of emotional labor is related with all dimensions of job burnout in reverse direction and in medium level. This means that when tendency to display deep acting increases, level of job burnout decreases. Similarly dimension of surface acting also is related with all dimensions of job burnout in reverse direction and in medium level. However, because reverse coding was made before the analysis of data, reverse direction of surface acting refers normally to same direction. This means that when tendency to display surface acting increases, level of job burnout increases. Intention to turnover is related only with sub-dimensions of job burnout called emotional exhaustion and desensitization in same direction. This means that when emotional exhaustion and desensitization increases, intention to turnover increases. Any relation between intention to turnover and deep acting was not found.
In studies on emotional labor and job burnout, Dijk and Brown (2006), in their study on employees of two historical establishments which provide service for tourists, reached the result that emotional labor affects emotional exhaustion. Hwa (2012:121), in his/her study on front office employees, found that surface acting affects emotional exhaustion positively and deep acting affects emotional exhaustion negatively. Kim (2008), in his/her study on employees in tourism sector, suggests that surface acting has a medium level and positive significant influence on emotional exhaustion and deep acting does not have a significant influence. Basım, Beğenirbaş and Can Yalçın (2013), detected that surface acting affects emotional exhaustion positively and deep acting affects emotional exhaustion negatively. Grandey, Fisk and Steiner (2005: 900), suggests that obligation to regulate emotions causes emotional exhaustion. Brotheridge and Grandey [11], in their research on the effect of emotional labor on emotional exhaustion of employees from different sectors, found that surface acting affects the dimension of desensitization positively and significantly, and it affects the dimension of sense of personal success negatively and significantly; deep acting affects only dimension of low sense of personal success positively and significantly [11]. Glomb and Tews, in their study to develop a level of measurement for emotional labor, found a significant and positive relation between surface acting and emotional exhaustion [21]. Mikolajczak, Menil and Luminet (2007), reached the result that surface acting affects job burnout negatively and significantly, and that deep acting affects job burnout positively and significantly.

In studies on the relation between emotional labor and intention to turnover, Karatepe and Aleshinloye (2009), in their research on hotel employees, indicates that affective disharmony and emotional exhaustion influence intention to turnover positively and significantly, and that emotional exhaustion has a partially mediation effect on the effect of affective disharmony on intention to turnover. Goodwin, Groth and Frenkel (2011), in their research in which they examine the relation between emotional labor, job performance and intention to turnover, suggest that deep acting affects job burnout and intention to turnover positively and significantly, and that surface acting affects emotional exhaustion positively and significantly [22].

Wong and Wang indicate that emotional behaviors of tour leaders affect their interactions with tourist and their ability of problem solving [58]. Gürsoy, Boylu and Avcı, in their study on trainees, found that emotional labor affects job satisfaction negatively and significantly [24].

**Conclusion.** First and important impression of customers regarding service quality is constituted of behaviors displayed by employees who provide service. Therefore, examining levels and dimensions of emotional labor is significant for companies in order to create advantage in competition by guaranteeing efficiency in recruitment in human resources management and employing right person in right area. Labor-intensivity, customer centricity and high level of rates of employee turnover makes human resources management more important for businesses. In this framework, success of companies which aim to become successful in service sector can be ensured by recruiting workers who tend to display emotional labor and by not employing ones who do not. Whereas knowledge and skills are learned through experiences, emotions are not learned or cannot be changed. Additionally, employees who tend to display emotional labor do not encounter with negative situations such as alienation, physical or emotional stress when business asks for cheerful and sincere behavior [5], [39].

This research was conducted in order to introduce travel agency personnels’ level of emotional labor, level of job burnout and intention to turnover, and the relation between them.

In another research, any difference in dimensions of emotional labor was not found regarding employees’ demographical characteristics such as their age, educational background, seniority, marital status and total working hours. [51]. In researches conducted, results on the effect of working hours on deep acting are obtained [37], [55]. According to the results of researches mentioned, increase in working hours increases employees’ tendency to display deep acting.
Appendix:

Emotional Labor Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Intention to Turnover Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Job Burnout Confirmatory Factor Analysis

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REFERENCES