

PREDICTORS OF EMOTIONAL LABOUR AMONG PUBLIC SERVANTS IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

Abstract

The study investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, pay satisfaction and emotional labour. The study further examined the predictive effects of the independent variables on the dependent measure. The study is an ex-post facto research in which emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and pay satisfaction are the independent variables and emotional labour stands as the dependent variable. Four validated instruments were employed in the study to measure the relevant variables. Pearson Product Moment correlation and multiple regression analysis were used as tools of analysis. The results indicated that there were significant correlations among emotional intelligence, pay satisfaction and emotional labour. The results further demonstrated that the three independent variables had predictive effect on the dependent measure. However, of the three independent variables, only pay satisfaction significantly predicted emotional labour. In the light of these findings, it is suggested that pay could be used to modify behaviour particularly in the area of facilitation of emotional labour process.

Key words: Emotional intelligence, Self-efficacy, Pay satisfaction, Emotional labour, Public servants.

Introduction

Public service by nature is a service-oriented organization. Governmental activities are allotted to the ministries who in turn are expected to deliver services to the public. Thus, as service providers, the ministries are always in constant touch with the members of the public. This interaction goes a long way in the public perception and assessment of government performance. No matter how unpleasant their job is, public servants have to keep their feelings under control in order to safeguard, the interest of their employer. It is at this point that emotional labour comes in. emotional labour holds that employees should display emotion that comply with certain expression norms or rules of the organization which help to create desired state of mind in the customer. By this, employees are expected to appear happy, nice and glad when rendering service to

their customers regardless of any private misgivings or any different feelings they may have. It has been recognized that emotional labour is an issue of considerable relevance in the public service (See, Guy & Newman, 2004; Meier, Mastracci & Wilson, 2006). Scholars have long indicated that the formal and interpersonal side of public service is buffered by a human side that consist values, norms, mores and personal attributes (Barnart, 1939, McGregor, 1960; Simon, 1947).

According to Hochschild (1983). , emotional labour is the management of feeling to create a publicly observable, facial and bodily display, which is sold for a wage and therefore has exchange value. Public servants as point of contact between the government and the governed require a great deal of emotional labour for effective delivery of public services and adequate representation of government. This condition apart from being stressful also constitutes a potential source of job dissatisfaction to workers.

The issue therefore is what makes emotional labour display by employee necessary. There could be several explanations for this poser. First, the manner by which employees portray and present themselves to the public (Consumer of Public Service) and the kind of emotion they manifest in the course of service delivery and interaction will to some extent contribute to the overall perception customers formulate about the organization and the quality of organization's products (Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988; Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Morris & Feldman, 1996; Zaph, 2002). Organizational representation termed as emotional front by Sutton and Rafaeli (1988) serves as an organizational attributes. They explained that emotional front varies from organization-to-organization depending on the values and norms adopted by the organization. Organizational fronts affect in a significant way customers evaluation of the organization.

It makes them to form opinion and judgement concerning the organization and whether they should patronize or do away with the services of the organization.

As indicated by Hochschild (1983), emotional display serves a signal function. This implies that emotions directed at a customer will define the status of that customer according to the organization's emotional front. If the customer appreciates the status accorded him by the organization through its associates, then the customer will continue to patronize that organization. Thus, the way the customer is treated may shapes his perception of the organization and through the customer's perception of the organization, opportunities with the third parties may be enhanced or hindered. It can happen when customers describe their experiences of the services of the organization with friends or close associates (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987; Diefendorf & Richard, 2003).

Hochschild (1983) identified two types of emotional labour: surface acting and deep acting. Surface acting is the outward manifestation of emotion that is not actually felt. An example would be the retail sales clerk who must maintain a smile and generally sociable demeanor even though his or her actual emotion may lean more towards anger, sadness or frustration. Deep acting on the other hand is more involved than just the simple regulation of emotional expression. Hochschild described deep acting as the attempt by the organizational members to feel the actual target emotion, rather than maintaining original felt emotion. In this instance the sales clerk may feel inappropriate emotion when he or she arrives at the work but because he or she is expected to display positive emotion, he may reprogramme felt emotion for more appropriate emotion.

Emotional labour manifestation could be advantageous to the organization in a number of ways. For an organization, regulating employees' emotional display in a

highly scripted manner can guarantee task effectiveness and service quality (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993), and increase sales and repeated business (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). For the individuals, the positive dimension of emotional labour include financial rewards (i.e. tips or salaries) (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987); increased satisfaction, security and self-esteem (Strickland, 1992; Tolich, 1993; Wharton, 1993); increased self-efficacy and psychological well-being (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993); and decreased stress (Conrad & White, 1994). Corroborating the positive aspects of emotional labour, Shuler and Sypher (2000) recognize the positive function of emotional labour because interaction with customer serves as a comic relief.

In view of the available empirical evidences that emotional labour has beneficial consequences for individuals and organization, the present study is undertaken with a view to find out if emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and pay satisfaction could be facilitating factors of emotional labour.

Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence has become a salient factor in work and high work performance (Goleman, 1995, 1998). As providers of public service, public servants have the onerous responsibility of ensuring effective delivery of service. They are there to ensure that the members of public are satisfied with the various services being provided by the government.

They are therefore to ensure public satisfaction with government services. The primary measure by which the success of any government is adjudged is the extent to which members of the public express satisfaction with government services. For government to retain its goodwill among the populace required more than public

satisfaction with its services. Governance is a contract between the government and the governed and therefore involved relationship. Emotional intelligence is at the core of relationship and in service delivery, relationships are everything. Public servants as state agents should have certain internal skills in order for them to create a good public perception of the government. Douglas, Frink and Ferris (2004) regarded emotional intelligence construct as a form of social effectiveness, a set of skills enabling one to read and understand others and utilize such knowledge to influence others in the pursuits of individual and/or organizational goal. Emotional intelligence allows employees to not only perceive and regulate their emotion (Lam & Kirby, 2002), but the emotions of customers as well. Thus employees are able to achieve positive outcome from the interaction as well as building a rapport and level of trust to serve them in future interaction with these customers (Dienfendorff & Richard, 2003). The emotional labour process requires cognitive management of emotion through action of evocation and suppression in order to achieve organizational goals (Erickson & Rita, 2001). Thus there is commonality of purpose between emotional intelligence and emotional labour. Emotional intelligence from this conceptualization could have a balming effect on employee in the course of emotional labour manifestation.

The four dimensions of emotional intelligence as identified by Mayer and Salovey (1997) are capable of facilitating the exercise of emotional labour. These four dimensions as postulated by Mayer and Salovey (1997) are:

- ❖ Perception/expression of emotion
- ❖ Emotional facilitation of thought
- ❖ Understanding emotion

❖ Regulation of emotion

Mayer and Salovey (1997) identified perception/expression of emotion as the most important branch of emotional intelligence. It is considered important in that the other dimensions spring and expand from it. Individuals must have capacity to adequately perceive the emotion of themselves and others in order to facilitate accurate expression of emotion and understand others' expression of emotion. This ability plays a facilitative role in the display of emotion. As indicated by Zapf, Schmute and Isic (2001), it ability is a principal aspect of emotion work. Emotion perception is similarly useful when employing active deep acting techniques. Lending support to the claim Grandey (2000) pointed out that accurate perception of other's emotion is particularly useful in the technique of cognitive change used in deep acting. For the public servants to be effective in the discharge of their duties, they must be able to discern the emotions of the consumers of public services in order to address the cause of those emotions whether the cause is a positive or negative factor and capitalize on those understanding to promote future relations (Zapf, Vogt, Seifert, Mertini & Sic, 1999; Zapf, 2002). Indeed accurate perception of one's emotion will enable one to know if such emotion is at congruence with organizational rules and endeavour to alter or manipulate it to suit the requirements of the organization.

The second aspect of emotional intelligence that is relevant and highly germane to the display of emotional labour is emotional facilitation of thought. This dimension of emotional intelligence builds on the perception to create a reference by which one's emotion may be guided or utilized to alter emotional states (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). For instance in the above example, employees through accurate perception of their own and

the customers' emotion are able to guide their emotional display according to priority of goals. The most important goal here is to ensure that customer has positive perception of the organization over and above the employee personal need or wishes. Emotional intelligence helps in the prioritization and realization of goals (Abraham, 1999; George, 2000). With emotional intelligence it is possible for employees to modify their perception of situation in order to facilitate the appropriate emotional response (Grandey, 2000). Emotional intelligence can also serve as stress buster for the strains emanating from emotional labour.

The third branch of emotional intelligence is understanding emotion. It has as its sub-skills, competencies such as analyzing and understanding emotional antecedents, formulations, and outcomes (Mayr & Salovey, 1997). In terms of relevance to emotional labour, deep acting definitely infers that one has a certain measure of this branch of emotional intelligence. For individual to effectively use his emotion to alter an emotional state, they need to understand their emotional state, and how it evolved and which particular emotion might be employed to alter the current emotional state.

The fourth and final aspect of emotional intelligence is regulation of emotion. It is the skill with which one regulates one's emotion and those of others based on openness to experience, reflection on experienced emotion, and goal-oriented emotional behaviour (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). The ability to regulate emotion has its roots in the three dimensions of emotional intelligence earlier discussed. The ability to regulate emotion facilitates effective performance of emotional labour duties (Lam & Kirby, 2002). According to Morris and Feldman (1996), emotional labour involves cognitive processes to fulfill organizational expectation with reference to emotional display. These cognitive

processes involve effort; planning and control which primarily fall under the branch of emotional regulation (Grandey, 2000). With particular reference to emotional labour functions, this aspects of emotional intelligence provides the channel through which surface and deep acting methods are employed. Employees who are adept and flexible in their emotional reactions are of great benefit to their organization. Again individual who can manage their emotions might suffer less from depression, burnout and physical strains. As indicated by Adeyemo and Ogunyemi (2004) emotional intelligence correlated negatively with occupational stress and also had predictive effect on it as well.

Another variable of interest in this study is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy has to do with the judgment of capabilities to organize and effect courses of action to attain goals. The concept which came into limelight about three decades ago has enjoyed unprecedented attention from psychologists and organizational researchers. As a multidimensional construct, it influences human functioning directly and indirectly through its influence on other determinants, such as motivation, self-regulation, attribution and emotion (Bandura, 1997). The concept of self-efficacy is based on triadic reciprocity model symbolizing a three way reciprocal relationship between: (a) personal factors i.e. cognition, emotion and biological events (b) behaviour, and (c) environmental factors (Maddux, 1995). Cognition, behaviour and emotion are the domains of personality factors which form the basis of research in self-efficacy. As conceptualized by Bandura (1997) self-efficacy is a generative capacity in which cognitive, social, emotional and behavioural skills must be organized and effectively orchestrated to serve innumerable purposes (Bandura, 1997).

Self-efficacy mediates between individual's ability and their purposive action. Perceived self-efficacy influences the course of action adopted, effort invested, endurance and resilience in the face of obstacles and failures, coping and level of accomplishment. Bandura (1997) postulated that people with high self-efficacy tend to be future oriented, take effective course of action and consequently self-efficacy is enhanced. In its role as a mediator between task capability and action, self-efficacy is dependent on one's belief to control capability. Perceived self-efficacy is concerned in people's belief in their capabilities to perform in ways that gives them some control over events that affect their lives (Bandura, 1997, p. 181).

Self-efficacy regulates functioning through four media: (a) cognitive (b) motivational, (c) choice and (d) emotional processes (Bandura, 1999). This regulatory role of self-efficacy in the domains of cognition, behaviour and emotion are highly germane to the facilitation of emotional labour process. In the display of emotional labour the four domains of self-efficacy (cognitive, motivational, choice and emotional processes) come into play. The cognitive processes include one's ability to exercise control over one's thoughts and mental process. Emotional labour undoubtedly requires thoughtful control of action, as well as problem-solving and decision-making. Again to be able to perform the task of emotional labour would require that employees are both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated. Perceived efficacy is crucial for the development and regulation of motivation. Cognitive motivation based on goal intention is mediated by three types of self-influences; self-evaluation, perceived self-efficacy for goal attainment and on going adjustment of personal standard (Bandura, 1990). Of these three mediators of motivation, self-efficacy has a causal influence on motivation.

The next domain of self-efficacy is choice of behaviour. Perceived self-efficacy influences choices of goals, activities directed to attaining the goal, the amount of effort expended and perseverance in the face of adversity. According to Maddux (1995) high self-efficacy leads to setting higher goals and greater commitment to attaining them. Emotional labour display certainly involves behavioural decision. Employee would have to make decision as to which aspect of his/her emotion has to be put on display. This to some extent would be affected by his/her belief in his capacity to perform the behaviour under consideration (behavioural self-efficacy).

The last and definitely not the least of the domain is emotion. Self-efficacy beliefs impact on both the type and intensity of emotion with low self-efficacy to attain a goal leading to despondency. Lack of self-belief in controlling disturbing thought results in negative affect state leading to poor self-efficacy lowered performance and further despondency. Positive affect states leads to enhanced self-efficacy. Emotional efficacy defines as capability to perform emotionally relevant task such as emotional labour attests to the relevance of self-efficacy construct to organizational issue like emotional labour process.

Pay satisfaction is another factor whose relevance to emotional labour was investigated in this study. Pay satisfaction is conceptualized as the amount of the overall positive affect or feelings individuals have towards pay (Heneman, 1985). Viewed from a multidimensional perspectives, Heneman and Schwab (1985) propose a five distinct dimensions of pay satisfaction which are pay level, pay raises, benefits structure and administration. The five dimensions structure was subsequently reduced to four following the discovery that pay structure and pay administration items loaded on the same factor.

Heneman and Schwab (1985) submitted that these dimensions may have differential impact on job outcomes and attitude. Adams (1963) looking at pay from equity perspective concluded that output from the organization which includes pay, time off, benefits and recognition will result in individual's attempt to reduce tensions. From these perspectives, it is possible that pay policy and satisfaction have significant implications for work outcomes which invariably may include emotional labour.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to look at the predictability of emotional labour from the combination of emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and pay satisfaction.

Research Questions

To actualize the aforestated objective, the following three research questions were addressed in the study.

1. What is the pattern of relationship among emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, pay satisfaction and emotional labour?
2. What is the overall effects of emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and pay satisfaction on emotional labour.
3. How much impact did each of the independent variables (emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and pay satisfaction) have on emotional labour.

Method

Research Design

The study is an *ex-post-facto* design. It does not involve the manipulation of any variable. The event has already occurred and the researcher only investigated what was already there.

Participants

The participants in this study were three hundred civil servants randomly drawn from the public service of Oyo State, Nigeria. They were made up of one hundred and eighty males and one hundred and twenty females. Their age ranged between twenty-two and sixty years with a mean age of 34.5 years. Their working experience ranged between two and thirty-four years. The least qualification was school certificate (ordinary level) and the highest was Ph.D. Their salary per month ranged between N14,000.00 and N50,000. Their composition cuts across the administrative, executive and professional classes of the public service.

Procedure

The instruments were administered on the participants at work. To allow the participants to have enough time to respond to the instruments, the researcher had to leave the questionnaires with them for a week. Some of the participants returned the instruments as agreed while others returned them later. This necessitated another visit by the researchers.

INSTRUMENTATION

a. Emotional Intelligence

To assess the emotional intelligence of the participants, the self-report emotional intelligence test constructed by Schutte, Marlowe, Hall, Haggerty, Cooper, Golden and Dornmheim (1998) was used. It is thirty-three items scale with response format ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). "A typical item of the scale reads thus: I easily recognize my emotion as I experience them" The discriminant validity of the instrument was asserted by correlating its scores with SAT scores, it was found that scores on the SRELT did not correlate with SAT score ($r = -.06$). The authors established that the first internal consistency reliability estimate was $\alpha = .90$, with a cross-check of the measure in a second study yielding $\alpha = .87$. Further study resulted in test-retest

reliability index of $\alpha=.78$ after two weeks interval.

b. Emotional Labour Self-Efficacy Scale

Taken into consideration, the specificity of self-efficacy belief, emotional labour self-efficacy scale was constructed by the researcher. Emotional labour self-efficacy is defined as the ability and confidence to perform emotional labour related tasks. The scale has a total of ten items. The instrument was subjected to psychometric analysis. It has a Cronbach alpha value of 0.86. The response format of the instrument ranges from 'No confidence (1) at all to complete confidence (5). A typical item of the scale reads thus: How confident are you that you can persuade members of the public to accept government policies and programmes. The highest score on the scale is fifty (50) and the least is ten (10).

c. Pay Satisfaction

Pay satisfaction was assessed with the satisfaction with pay subscale of the job satisfaction scale constructed by Spector (1996). The instrument has a total of four items with response anchor varying from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Example of the item on the scale read as follow: I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work that I do" The maximum score on the scale is twenty (20) and the minimum is four (4). The scale has been used in several studies across multiple disciplines and it provides; reliability, validity and normative data (Spector, 1996). The pay satisfaction subscale was subjected to reliability analysis using the test-retest method which produced a reliability co-efficient of 0.89 pay satisfaction.

d. Emotional Labour

Emotional labour was assessed with the emotional labour scale used by Prati (2004). The scale, which contain items for deep and surface acting was constructed by Grandey (2003). Some of the items of the scale were also picked from Brotheridge and Lee (1999) studies. Prati (2004) also created some of the items of the scale. Altogether, the scale has 19 items. Seven of the items were taken from the study done by Grandey (2003), and two were drawn from Brotheridge and Lee's (2002) study. The remaining ten

items were created by Prati (2004). A typical items is, “Emotions are one of the things that make my life worth living”

According to Prati (2004), the surface acting, active deep acting and non-acting scales met or exceeded the $\alpha = .70$ reliability threshold of Nunnally (1970).

Data Analysis

Pearson Product Moment correlation and multiple regressions were the statistical tools employed in the study.

Results

The first research question was interested in knowing the pattern of relationships among the study’s variables.

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation and Inter-correlations among the Variables

Variables	Emotional labour	Emotional intelligence	Self-efficacy	Pay satisfaction
Emotional Labour	1.000			
Emotional Intelligence	.102*	1.000		
Self-Efficacy	0.042	0.494**	1.000	
Pay Satisfaction	0.279**	0.065	0.283**	1.000
Mean	55.58	129.01	32.84	25.53
SD	10.57	14.65	4.62	4.72

From the results presented on table 1 above, emotional labour correlates significantly and positively with emotional intelligence ($r = 0.102$; $P < 0.05$) and pay satisfaction ($r = 0.279$). However, emotional labour did not have significant correlation with self-efficacy ($r = 0.0042$, $P > 0.05$). Emotional intelligence correlated significantly with self-efficacy ($r = 0.494$; $P < 0.05$) but it has no significant relationship with pay satisfaction ($r = 0.065$; $P > 0.05$).

Table 2: Multiple Regression Analysis on Emotional Labour Data

Multiple R = 0.206					
Multiple R ² = 0.093					
Multiple R ² (Adjusted) = 0.080					
Standard Error of Estimate = 10.426					
Source of Variation	Df	Sum of Squares	Mean of Square	F-Ratio	P
Regression	3	2196.906	732.302	6.737	<.05
Residual	196	21303.969	108.694		
Total	199	23500.875			

The results on table 2 above show that the combination of the independent variables (emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and pay satisfaction) accounts for 8% of the variance in emotional labour (R^2 adjusted = 0.08). The analysis of variance of the multiple regression data yielded an F-ratio value which was found to be significant at 0.05 Alpha level ($F = 6.737$, $P < 0.05$).

Table 3: The Predictive Effects of each of the Independent Variables on the Outcome Measure

Predictor	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	T-Ratio	P
	B	Std. Error	β		
Constant	33.311	7.589		4.389	0.000
Emotional Intelligence	0.102	0.058	0.137	1.745	>0.05
Self-efficacy	-0.261	0.192	0.111	-1.358	>0.05
Pay Satisfaction	0.695	0.164	0.302	4.237	<.05

The results display on table 3 above, indicate the contributions of each of the independent variables to the prediction. In terms of magnitude of the contribution pay satisfaction contributed the most to the prediction of emotional labour ($\beta = 0.302$; $t = 4.237$; $P < 0.05$). Next to it is emotional intelligence ($\beta = 0.137$, $t = 1.745$; $P > 0.05$). Self-efficacy made the least contribution to the prediction of emotional labour ($\beta = 111$, t

= 1.358; $P > 0.05$). Thus, of the three independent variables, only pay satisfaction made significant relative contribution to the prediction of emotional labour.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the combination of the three independent variable had significant predictive effect on the outcome measure (emotional labour). The three variables (emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and pay satisfaction) accounted for 8% of the variance in emotional labour. The analysis of variance of the multiple regressions yielded an F-ratio value that is significant at the probability level of 0.05. This is an indication that the predictive capacity of the three independent variables is not due to chance factors.

Of the three independent variables, only pay satisfaction made significant relative contribution to the prediction of emotional labour. This is an indication that pay satisfaction is a potent predictor of emotional labour. The explanations for these results are not far fetched. The emergence of pay satisfaction as the best predictor of emotional labour could not be unconnected with the fact that the reward for labour is wages and more so money is required to meet the basic necessities of life. In an environment where money is regarded as the soul of the system, there is no doubt that emphasis and concerns would be on good pay as a logical outcome of performance. This is in line with Mueli, Near, Jung and Greensberger (1991) who found that the receipt of performance – based rewards including merits, increases and bonuses positively affected pay system reaction. Emotional labour is one such pay system reaction.

Emotional intelligence though has significant relationship with emotional labour, it did not have predictive effect on the criterion measure. This finding is in consonance

with Prati's (2004) study where it was hypothesized that emotional intelligence because of its regulatory capacity will moderate the relationship between emotional labour efforts and performance. Contrary to this assumption, the finding failed to support the hypothesis. In the same vein, self-efficacy neither has significant relationship with the criterion nor explained significant variance in emotional labour. The inability of these two variables to predict emotional labour could possibly be attributed to the overwhelming influence of pay on job outcomes. In an environment where money is needed to satisfy basic needs of life workers would certainly consider pay as a motivator rather than their psychological attributes.

Implications of the Findings

The success of any organization depends on the quality of manpower available to it. In this wise it is important for organizations to address the needs of the employee involved in the emotional labour process. The public service commission which is the body responsible for human resource management in the public service has to consider making emotional labour a compensable factors in job evaluation. As pay has been found to be a strong predictor of emotional labour, it amounts to the fact that pay is highly valued. If pay is highly valued as established in this study, it can be used to modify behaviour, particularly in the area of facilitation of emotional labour process. If employees perceive fairness in pay, they will act to reduce tension and stress associated with the display of emotional labour.

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