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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL
LABOUR, WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT AND
BURNOUT AMONG FEMALE TEACHERS IN
SELANGOR

BY

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ABSTRACT

The negative outcomes associated with suppressing and hiding emotions in the teaching profession have often been overlooked as teaching has always been perceived as an easy job with a lot of holidays. This study investigated the direct effect of emotional labour (surface acting and deep acting) on teachers' burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment), and examined the mediator effects of work-family conflict on the relationship between emotional labour and burnout. Emotional labour was assessed by the Emotional Labour Scale, work-family conflict was assessed by the Work-Family Interference Scale, while burnout was measured using the Teacher Burnout Inventory. These measures together with several demographic items were administered to one hundred female teachers with at least 1 child from several schools in Selangor. The findings of this study indicated that surface acting was positively associated with emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, but negatively associated with personal accomplishment. Deep acting, on the other hand, was not related to burnout. The results also showed that work-family conflict mediated the relationship between emotional labour and burnout. However, this mediation effect was only found in the relationship between surface acting and emotional exhaustion, and between surface acting and depersonalization. These findings are discussed with respect to the literature on emotional demand, work-family conflict and burnout.

ملخص البحث

ذلك أن النتائج السلبية المرتبطة بالعواطف المُقَمَّعة والمُخَفَّية في التدريس؛ كثيرا ما كان يُعَفَّل عنها نتيجة لاعتبار التدريس مهنة سهلة تتميز بكثرة العُطل و الإجازات. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى بحث التأثير المباشر للعمل العاطفي (التصرف السطحي والتصرف العميق) على الإحترق النفسي عند المدرسين (الإستنفاد العاطفي ، إلغاء الشخصية وإنجازات الشخص). كما أن الدراسة في الوقت ذاته تبحث التأثيرات الوسيطة للصراع بين متطلبات الأسرة و العمل لدى العمّال؛ في العلاقة بين العمل العاطفي و الإحترق النفسي. وتتبنى الدراسة فرضيتين أساسيتين هما: أولا_ يرتبط العمل العاطفي إيجابياً بالإحترق النفسي؛ ثانيا_ للصراع بين متطلبات الأسرة و العمل لدى العمّال، دور الوسيط في العلاقة بين العمل العاطفي و الإحترق النفسي. تمّ قياس العمل العاطفي، بإستعمال مقياس العمل العاطفي؛ و الصراع بين متطلبات الأسرة و العمل بمقياس الصراع بين متطلبات الأسرة و العمل، بينما تمّ قياس الإحترق النفسي باستخدام مقياس الإحترق النفسي لدي المُدرّس. أجريت الدراسة على عيّنة من مختلف مدارس ولاية سيلانجور مكوّنة من 100 مُعلّمة، بحيث لكل واحدة منهنّ طفل على الأقل. بيّنت نتائج الدراسة أن التصرف السطحي له علاقة إيجابية على التوالي بالإستنفاد العاطفي وإلغاء الشخصية، و بالمقابل تبين أن التصرف السطحي له علاقة سلبية بالإنجاز الشخصي. أما بالنسبة للصراع بين متطلبات الأسرة و العمل ، فقد بيّنت النتائج وجود وساطة كاملة بين التصرف السطحي والإستنفاد العاطفي، كما أثبتت النتائج وجود وساطة جزئية في العلاقة بين التصرف السطحي و سلب الشخصية. بيد أنه لا يوجد أي أثر ملحوظ للوساطة فيما يتعلق بالإنجاز شخصي. هذه النتائج نوقشت مع مراعاة لأدبيات المتطلب العاطفي، الصراع بين متطلبات الأسرة و العمل و الإحترق النفسي.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Human Sciences (Psychology).

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Revealed Knowledge and Human
Sciences

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Masyitah binti Zainuddin

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**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL LABOUR, WORK-FAMILY
CONFLICT AND BURNOUT AMONG FEMALE TEACHERS IN SELANGOR**

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This research is dedicated to my beloved parents,
Zainuddin Haji Shariff and Norhayati A. Razak,
my sisters and brothers,
and
to all the teachers out there,
your love and wisdom are beyond words.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Research on emotion in the workplace has become increasingly vital as over one-third of all workers in the United States held jobs that involve emotional labour which require them to regulate their emotions (Hochschild, 1983). For some workers, two-thirds of workplace communications involve managing their emotions (Mann, 1999).

Emotional labour is a term first coined by Hochschild (1983) which refers to paid work that requires the worker to maintain observable facial and bodily displays with the intention of creating a particular emotional feeling in clients. It is the manipulation of one's inner feelings or outward behaviour to display the appropriate emotion in response to display rules or occupational norms and thus, is performed for the sake of wages.

It has been argued that displaying such organizationally or professionally sanctioned emotions to customers, clients, or patients is actually a form of labour since such effort involves planning and adjustment to situations that may require one to display emotions that one does not privately feel (Morris & Feldman, 1997). It also requires workers to suppress their private feelings to show the "desirable" work-related emotion (Mastracci, Newman & Guy, 2006). It is in some ways defined and controlled by management and as a result is always perceived as inauthentic (Miller, Considine & Garner, 2007). Some have argued that this prescription and supervision of workers' feelings and expressive gestures is a stressful or alienating experience (Pugliesi, 1999).

Previous research on emotion at work has explored the different emotional displays that are required by different jobs (Pugliesi, 1999; Sutton, 2004). According to Hargreaves (2009), just as people from different cultures express and experience emotions differently from one another, the expectation to display a particular emotion is also different from one occupation to another. For example, service workers and front-liners are usually expected to express happiness and sympathy when dealing with their clients and customers (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983). It is a must for them to smile and put on a warm face as required by their employers. Bill collectors have to observe a different kind of emotions in which they have to display negative emotions such as irritation and aggression in order to gain compliance from the debtors (Hochschild, 1983).

Emotional labour or emotional management is also crucial in teaching professions. As mentioned by Hargreaves (2000), emotions are integral part of education. Even though teaching, learning and leading may not be solely emotional practices, they are always irretrievably emotional in character. Teachers believed that controlling and regulating their emotions make their teaching more effective and perceived emotional regulation as a mean to conform to their idealized image of a teacher (Sutton, 2004). It is believed that expressing anger in the classroom provides an unhealthy model to the student (Liljestrom, Roulston & deMarrais, 2007); thus part of a teacher's work involves emotional management and avoiding the experience of anger, or, in cases where these are not possible, to avoid the expression of anger.

Research on the consequences of emotional labour has shown mixed findings (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Glomb, Kammeyer-Mueller & Rotundo, 2004; Mann, 2007). Even though it can contribute to low job satisfaction and burnout (Hochschild, 1983), it can also be self-enhancing when workers are in control of their emotion

management (Gimlin, 1996; Pugliesi, 1999). However, even though the findings are mixed, there is more support for emotional labour to be associated with negative outcomes such as burnout and low job satisfaction (Seery, Corrigan & Harpel, 2008) than positive outcomes like increased self-efficacy and psychological well-being (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). Therefore, the first objective of the present study is to examine the relationship between emotional labour and negative outcome.

Furthermore, emotional labour has been found to be more related to women (Hochschild, 1983). Due to their caring nature, women tend to opt for jobs that involve nurturing and caring for others. These female-dominated occupations such as teaching and nursing are expected to employ more emotional skills to bring about organizational ends as opposed to men-dominated occupations (Meier, Mastracci & Wilson, 2006). Hence, due to the jobs that women tend to be involved in and also the family demands such as child-rearing, they typically will do more emotion works, which involve active strategies to modify, create, or alter the expression of emotions, both at work and home (Hochschild, 1983).

Emotional demand at work combined with family demands can contribute to work-family conflict. Work-family conflict according to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) is defined as interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. Work-family conflict has been used in many studies as a mediator variable (Lingard & Francis, 2004; Montgomery, Peeters, Schaufeli & Den Ouden, 2003; Montgomery, Panagopolou, Wildt & Meenks, 2006) and is viewed as a mechanism through which work role stress and work demands influence well-being.

However, there are not many studies done in relation to emotional labour, work-family conflict and burnout. According to Montgomery et al. (2006), work-

family conflict may act as mediator variable between emotional labour and burnout due to the findings by Wharton and Erickson (1995) that women's well-being is threatened more by their involvement in family emotion work than by their actual performance of emotional labour. Dealing with husband, children and at the same time managing all the household responsibilities are really tiresome and create psychological, emotional as well as physical strain in women. To make things worse, according to the gender role theory, women tend to see the family role as part of their social identity, more so as compared to men (Cohen & Liani, 2008). Even though more women are now participating in the workforce and sometimes even act as the breadwinners in the family, according to Noraini Mohd Noor (2006), the expectations placed on them with regards to the family roles and responsibilities have not diminished. They still have to juggle their family and work roles, making conflict between the two domains inevitable.

With this in mind, there is a good reason to believe that work-family conflict may mediate the relationship between emotional labour or emotional demand at work and burnout. The demands that teachers faced at school, the ensuing stress and the suppression of these work-related emotions may conflict with conditions at home, thus, affecting their well-being. Hence, the second objective of this paper is to test the mediator effect of work-family conflict on the relationship between emotional labour and burnout.

1.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this study is derived from Grandey's (2000) model of emotional labour. Grandey defines emotional labour as the process of regulating both feelings and expressions to achieve the organizational goal. This model has been

developed based on Hochschild's (1983) work which emphasizes on surface acting and deep acting. Surface acting refers to the act of changing one's outward emotional expressions but the person does not attempt to feel the emotions that he or she displays. Deep acting, on the other hand, refers to the act when the employee attempts to actually feel the emotions, as if the emotions really come from within and not merely displayed as facial expressions. Through both types of acting, employees will then alter their emotional expressions to fit the organisational requirements.

Although both types of acting involve the management of emotion, they actually have different intent. Surface acting has been called "faking in bad faith" since employee conforms to the display rules in order to keep the job, not to help the customer or organisation. In contrast, deep acting has been called "faking in good faith" as the intent seems authentic to the audience (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987; as cited in Mishra, 2006).

According to Grandey (2000), these two ways of producing the appropriate emotional display, surface acting and deep acting, match the working definition of emotional labour as the process of emotional regulation. Both surface acting and deep acting are related to each other since both strategies could be used when there is a need for emotional regulation. However, they are distinct facets as the use of one does not necessarily require or inhibit the use of the other (Monaghan, 2006).

Since the definition and model of antecedents and outcomes of emotional labour have been continuously developed throughout the years (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1992; Bono & Vey, 2005; Grandey, 1999; Morris & Feldman, 1996; as cited in Monaghan, 2006), Grandey's (2000) model of emotional labour has also acknowledged and integrated other perspectives, such as from Morris and Feldman (1996), and Ashforth and Humphrey (1993). As can be seen in Figure 1.1, this

theoretical framework involves situational, individual and organisational factors that may contribute to emotional labour as well as the potential consequences that may emerge as the result of having to practice emotional labour.

According to Grandey (2000), by focusing on surface acting and deep acting as two distinct methods for performing emotional labour, it is possible for emotional labour to have both positive and negative outcomes. Monaghan (2006) also suggested that emotional labour can lead to both positive and negative consequences for the organisation and the employee. According to previous studies, due to the differences in their internal psychological processes (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003), surface acting is related positively to emotional exhaustion, while deep acting is not linked to emotional exhaustion (Bono & Vey, 2005). Surface acting is also related to stress outcomes (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Pugliesi, 1999) as opposed to deep acting which may bear positive consequences (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002) and relates positively to psychological well-being, such as job satisfaction and level of personal accomplishment (Brotheridge & Lee 2002; Grandey 2003).

Model of Emotional Labour

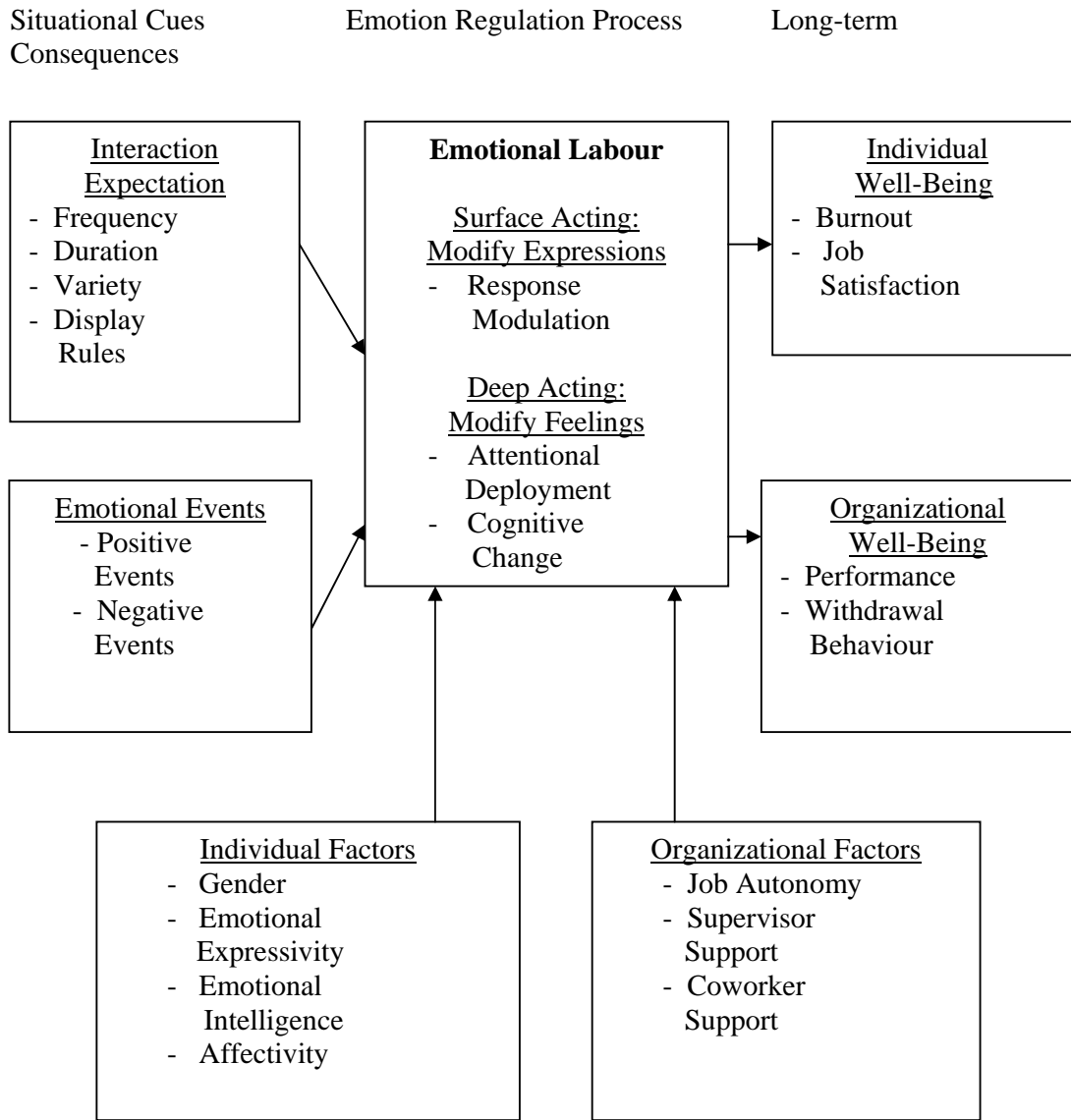


Figure 1.1: Grandey's (2000) model of emotional labour.

1.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for the present study was based on the theoretical framework of Grandey (2000). Firstly, as can be seen in Figure 1.2, the direct effect of emotional labour on burnout was tested.

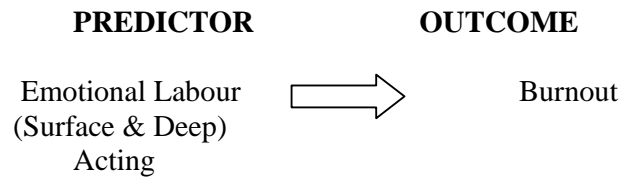


Figure 1.2: The direct effect of emotional labour on burnout.

Secondly, work-family conflict was postulated to act as a mediator in the above relationship. Again, using Grandey's (2000) model of emotional labour, Figure 1.3 shows the mediator role of work-family conflict in the relationship between emotional labour and burnout.

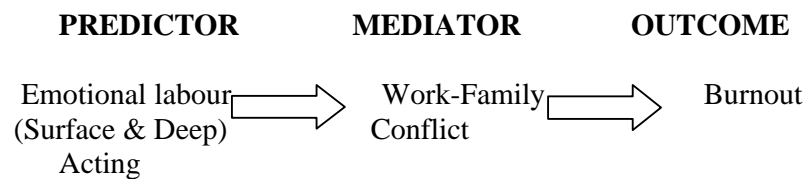


Figure 1.3: Work-family conflict as mediator in the relationship between emotional labour and burnout.

In the present study, these two relationships were tested.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Teaching has always been perceived as easy and flexible with a lot of holidays. However, it is actually a very demanding and highly stressful job. The study by Johnson, Cooper, Cartwright, Donald, Taylor and Millet (2005) on the experience of job-related stress across 26 different occupations found that teachers reported worse than average scores on physical health, psychological well-being and job satisfaction. A study carried out on 306 school teachers in Kelantan revealed that one out of every two teachers reported their job as very or extremely stressful (Yen, 1997).

However, most of the studies on teachers and work stress, especially in Malaysia have emphasized on the job demand such as work overload and time strain as the sources of stress. The other demand of the job, which is the emotional demand as a source of stress, has been largely neglected in the literature. According to Hargreaves (2000), educational policy and administration, and most of the educational research community has paid little or no attention at all to emotions.

Teachers' responsibilities have been increasing as they no longer merely have to teach, mark papers and prepare for exam questions but they also have to be actively involved in student activities such as camping, educational visits and even sport activities. As a result, their role as parent or spouse may be affected as their job demands may spill over into their family roles. Overload also is likely to happen with increased demands from work and family domains. The female teachers have to juggle these roles as they are the ones who usually are in-charge of raising the children and at the same time doing the house chores such as cooking and cleaning. This situation leads them to experience work-family conflict. This is supported by Farah Shikh Abdul Rahman (1998) in her study on the stress faced by English language teachers in Bayan Lepas where she found that the prevalence of stress

among the teachers was significantly related to role conflict, role ambiguity and other job-related variables. However, regardless of the changes to work demand, the teaching profession has been largely overlooked by work-family conflict researcher (Cinamon, Rich & Westman, 2007).

Furthermore, according to Seery, Corrigan and Harpell (2008) there are only few studies that have focused on the relationship between emotional labour and work-family conflict. Montgomery, Panagopolou and Benos (2005) found that surface acting at work was positively related to work-family interference among Greek doctors, while surface acting at home was related to family-work interference among Greek nurses. In another study, Montgomery et al. (2006) found that work-family interference partially mediated the relationship between surface acting and burnout or psychosomatic complaints. In addition, recently Chung and Tang (2009) found that surface acting was related to work-family interference, while deep acting was not.

Lack of research with regards to emotional labour and work-family conflict makes it difficult to understand the linkage between them especially among teachers. Even though work life and family life are two distinct areas, they influence each other greatly. The emotional job demand at work and in the case of a teacher at school may spill over to his or her personal life to conflict with family demands. Emotional labour as the predictor of stress is consistent with the idea that people bring the emotional stress from work to home (Montgomery, Panagopolou & Benos, 2005).

Thus, the study addressed two research questions:

1. Is there a relationship between emotional labour and burnout among teachers in Selangor?
2. Can work-family conflict mediate the relationship between emotional labour and burnout?

1.5 CONCEPTUAL AND OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

1.5.1 Emotional Labour

Conceptual Definition

The process of regulating both feelings and expressions for organizational goals (Grandey, 2000).

Operational Definition

Emotional labour was measured by using the Emotional Labour Scale (Brotheridge & Lee, 1998).

1.5.2 Burnout

Conceptual Definition

Burnout has been conceptualized as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs frequently among individuals who do ‘people work’ (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

Operational Definition

In this study, burnout was assessed by using the Teacher Burnout Inventory (Leong, 1995), adapted from the MBI-Educators Survey.

1.5.3 Work-family Conflict

Conceptual Definition

Work-family conflict is defined as a type of inter-role conflict wherein some responsibilities from the work and family domains are not compatible and have a negative influence on an employee's work situation (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Operational Definition

In this study, work-family conflict was measured by using the Work-Family Interference Scale. This scale has been used before in previous research on emotional labour and work-life interference (Montgomery, Panagopolou & Benos, 2005; Montgomery et al., 2006).

1.6 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The present study examining the relationship between emotional labour, work-family conflict and burnout among female teachers is important for several reasons.

First, the present study contributes to the existing literature on emotional labour and burnout. There is no study that has examined the link between emotional labour and burnout among teachers in Malaysia, and whether similar outcomes as found in the West will be observed.

Second, this study aims to identify the mediator role of work-family conflict in the relationship between emotional labour and burnout. Currently, only a few studies have been done with regards to emotional labour and work-family conflict (Seery, Corrigan & Harpell, 2008). These studies showed a positive association between surface acting and work-family interference (Montgomery, Panagopolou & Benos,