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## **The Relationship between Emotional Labour and Job Satisfaction: A Study of Senior Teachers in Selected International Schools in Colombo District, Sri Lanka**

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### **Abstract**

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#### **Area of the Study**

This study attempts to identify the relationship between emotional labour and job satisfaction of senior teachers in selected International Schools in Colombo district, Sri Lanka.

#### **Problem of the Study**

There is an empirical knowledge gap in Sri Lankan context on the relationship between emotional labour and job satisfaction of International School teachers. This study is aimed to investigate the relationship between emotional labour and job satisfaction of senior teachers in selected International Schools in Colombo district, Sri Lanka.

#### **Method of the Study**

The data were collected from a randomly selected sample of 120 senior teachers in selected three International Schools in Colombo district in Sri Lanka by administering a structured questionnaire, which consisted of 32 questions/statements with 5 point scale. The data analyses included the univariate and bivariate analyses.

#### **Findings of the Study**

This study found that there is a weak negative relationship between surface acting and job satisfaction and a moderate strong positive relationship between deep acting and job satisfaction of senior teachers in the selected three International Schools.

#### **Conclusion of the Study**

It is concluded that the surface acting is negatively associated with job satisfaction while deep acting is positively associated with job satisfaction of senior teachers in International Schools. Thus, it is advisable for Teacher Training Institutes to give a better understanding of these emotional demands and different strategies in teacher training programmes to enhance job satisfaction and teaching effectiveness.

**Keywords:** Surface Acting, Deep Acting, Emotional Labour, Job Satisfaction, International School Teachers

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### **Introduction**

In today's task-oriented work environment, it is very difficult to find a place for emotions. Employees' feelings, emotions and their expressions are controlled and managed by various means in organizations. More often, employees are supposed to display certain emotions while suppressing others in their daily interaction with customers. In order to meet organizational expectations entailed in their job roles, employees put on a 'mask' of emotions that they need to display to their clients (Torland 2012)<sup>[1]</sup>. The concept 'emotional labour' emerges when individuals' emotional display conflict with their inner feelings. Performing emotional labour considered to be more important in service sector organizations as it has more face-to-face interaction.

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Emotional labour refers to ‘the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display’ (Hochschild 1983, p. 7)<sup>[2]</sup>. It deals with emotions which employees feel, irrespective of their true emotions in meeting their job requirements (Lazányi 2010)<sup>[3]</sup>. Employees are being rewarded for their expressions of appropriate emotions and employer exercises control over its employees’ emotions. The employees regulate their emotional expressions, instead of displaying their true emotions in order to comply with the organizational norms (Lazányi 2010)<sup>[4]</sup>.

Emotional labour is performed through either surface acting or deep acting. Surface acting is where an individual fake unfelt emotions or hide felt emotions in order to display the appropriate emotions required by their work (Yin 2015)<sup>[5]</sup>. Surface acting may be desirable to organizations so that clients always see the expressions that are mandated, even when the employee may feel differently (Grandey 2000)<sup>[6]</sup>. Attempting to actually experience or feel the emotion that they wish to display is known to be deep acting (Mann 1997)<sup>[7]</sup>. Here individuals try to modify their felt emotions using cognitive techniques in order to display required emotions (Yin 2015)<sup>[8]</sup>.

In regulating emotions, surface acting and deep acting results individual and organizational consequences such as burnout, job satisfaction and organizational wellbeing. Job satisfaction is a measure of the employee’s evaluation of the job (Grandey 2000)<sup>[9]</sup>. Job satisfaction can be identified as an outcome of emotional labour. Teaching satisfaction or teachers’ job satisfaction is a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal, by the teacher, and that their achievement justifies their working values (Ho & Au 2006)<sup>[10]</sup>. Simply put, teaching satisfaction reflects the extent to which teachers like teaching (Hirschfeld 2000)<sup>[11]</sup>. It is an important indicator of teachers’ psychological well-being (Grandey 2000)<sup>[12]</sup>. The relationship between teaching satisfaction and various emotional labour strategies have been examined by a few recent studies. Accordingly, this study investigates the relationship between emotional labour and job satisfaction of International School teachers in Sri Lanka.

### **Problem Background and Problem of the Study**

Although results of studies usually support a positive association between the expression of naturally felt emotion and teachers’ job satisfaction, the relationships between surface and deep acting and teaching satisfaction are not so consistent (Zhang & Zhu 2008)<sup>[13]</sup>. Teachers who reported more emotional labour were more emotionally exhausted and less satisfied with their work (Kinman, Wray & Strange 2011)<sup>[14]</sup>.

The study done by Zhang and Zhu (2008)<sup>[15]</sup> mainly focuses on the effect of surface acting and it was found that surface acting significantly predicts the variance of job satisfaction in a negative direction. Surface acting creates dissonance between the employee’s display and his or her internal experience (Grandey 2000)<sup>[16]</sup>, which may have a more immediate negative effect on job satisfaction. Both Zhang and Zhu’s study (2008)<sup>[17]</sup> and Yin’s study (2015)<sup>[18]</sup> found that deep acting is not a significant predictor of teachers’ job satisfaction and that deep

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acting positively impacts teachers' job satisfaction. Based on Hochschild's (1983)<sup>[19]</sup> work, there is a negative relationship between deep acting and job satisfaction. There seems to be less empirical support for the relationship of deep acting with job satisfaction.

Although, a considerable number of researches have been done in the Western countries, it seems to be there is quite less research on emotional labour in Sri Lankan context. This research attempts to find whether there is a relationship between emotional labour and job satisfaction of International School teachers in Sri Lanka. Therefore by considering the above factors it can be stated that this research would be a new research compared to other research studies.

The theoretical and empirical evidence on relationship between managing emotions at work and job satisfaction has been contradictory. The researches show that there are mixed findings and variations in the relationship between deep acting or surface acting and job satisfaction. It seems that there is a gap in the empirical knowledge available, especially in Sri Lankan context in relation to emotional labour and job satisfaction of school teachers. *Therefore, the research problem addressed under this study is to investigate the relationship between emotional labour and job satisfaction of senior teachers in International Schools in Colombo District, Sri Lanka.*

### **Research Framework**

The research framework of this study has three major variables, of which two are independent and one is dependent variable. The dependent variable is job satisfaction. The job satisfaction can be defined as the extent to which an individual like or dislike his or her job. The variance of the dependent variable is attempted to be explained by independent variables, that is emotional labour strategies. Hence the independent variables of this study are surface acting and deep acting.

Surface acting is a significant predictor of experiencing burnout and job satisfaction of teachers while deep acting has no significant relationship (Dias & Arachchige 2014)<sup>[20]</sup>. While some studies have suggested that surface acting is unrelated to job satisfaction of employees (Johnson & Spector 2007<sup>[21]</sup>; Ozturk, Karayel & Nasoz 2008)<sup>[22]</sup> it was found that surface acting significantly predicts the variance of job satisfaction in a negative direction (Zhang & Zhu 2008)<sup>[23]</sup>. As such there are mixed results relating to surface acting, hence, this study developed the first hypothesis as:

*H<sub>1</sub> - There is a relationship between Surface Acting and Job Satisfaction*

Because of deep acting, employees feel less or no emotional dissonance since employees manage their emotions by aligning genuine emotions with the emotions they display to clients (Sharpe 2005<sup>[24]</sup>; Zammuner & Galli 2005)<sup>[25]</sup>. As per research done by Walsh and Bartikowski (2013)<sup>[26]</sup>, deep acting positively affects the job satisfaction of male but not female service employees. According to the research study done by Dias and Arachchige

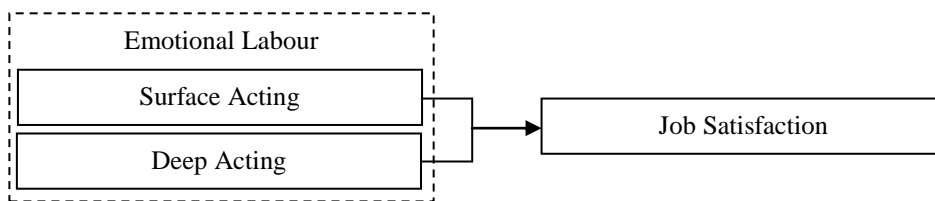
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(2014)<sup>[27]</sup>, deep acting has no significant relationship with job satisfaction of teachers (Dias & Arachchige 2014)<sup>[28]</sup> this study developed the second hypothesis as:

H<sub>2</sub> - *There is a relationship between Deep Acting and Job Satisfaction*

Relevant schematic diagram is shown in Figure 1. Surface acting and deep acting of International School teachers are labeled as independent variable. Job satisfaction of International School teachers is labeled as the dependent variable.

Figure 1: Schematic Diagram of the Research Framework



**Method**

***Study Design***

The main objective of this research is to investigate the relationship between emotional labour and job satisfaction of senior teachers in selected International Schools in Colombo district, Sri Lanka. As very few studies have been done on emotional labour concept, there is no adequate information available on this research area in the Sri Lankan context. Therefore, the type of investigation of this study was exploratory. As this study was conducted in International Schools, which is natural environment, where events normally occur, this is non-contrived setting. This study examines the relationship between emotional labour and job satisfaction of teachers in natural working environment of International Schools. The data for this study were collected within a period not less than a month and data were gathered just once. Hence, this study was cross sectional in nature. The unit of analysis was the individual, since the data were gathered from each teacher in selected International Schools in Colombo district and each teacher’s response was treated as an individual data source.

In this study the target population was all senior teachers (who teach for students from grade six to grade thirteen) in International Schools in Colombo district, Sri Lanka. The survey was carried out among 120 senior school teachers in selected International Schools in Colombo district. Simple random sampling was used as the sampling method. The reason for only senior school teachers were with the sample is that, as it was observed that senior school teachers are required to involve in more emotional balance than junior school due to nature of the students in senior schools.

***Measures***

The variables in the research model: surface acting, deep acting and job satisfaction were measured through questionnaire with five point scales, which were completed by respondents themselves approximately as they have experienced.

The independent variables of the research model were, surface acting and deep acting which was measured by an instrument consisting of eighteen statements, which was developed based on the standard questionnaires which were originally developed by Brotheridge and Lee (1998)<sup>[29]</sup>, Brotheridge and Grandey (2002)<sup>[30]</sup> and Liu and Zhang (2015)<sup>[31]</sup>.

The dependent variable of the research model was the job satisfaction and was measured by an instrument consisting of fourteen statements, which was developed based on the standard questionnaires which were originally developed by Ngimbudzi (2009)<sup>[32]</sup>. The job satisfaction was measured in terms of eight dimensions as co-workers, job itself, level of responsibility, opportunity for promotion, pay, job security, fringe benefits and supervisor.

**Reliability and Validity**

The internal reliability of the instrument was estimated using Cronbach’s Alpha. The result of Cronbach’s Alpha test is given in Table 1, which implies that the instrument employed in this study was reliable.

Table 1: Reliability of Variables

No	Instrument	Cronbach’s Alpha
1	Surface Acting	0.719
2	Deep Acting	0.891
3	Job Satisfaction	0.872

The content validity of the instruments was ensured by the conceptualization and operationalization of the variables using the available literature, and indirectly by the high internal consistency reliability of the instruments as denoted by Alphas.

While the construct validity of the variables of the study was ensured by the fact that the correlation and the regression analysis support the hypotheses formulated linking the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

**Techniques of Data Analysis**

Data collected from primary source were analyzed using the computer based statistical data analysis package, SPSS (version 16.0) for validity, reliability and relationship testing. The data analysis included univariate and bivariate analyses.

**Results**

To investigate the responses for surface acting, deep acting and job satisfaction of senior teachers in International Schools in Colombo district, the univariate analysis was used. The results of the univariate analysis are given in Table 2.

According to Table 2, the level of surface acting, deep acting and job satisfaction are approximately normally distributed. The mean value of surface acting is 1.87, which

indicates that the surface acting of the respondents is at minimum. The mean value of deep acting is 3.79. Therefore, it is indicated that, the deep acting of the senior teachers of International Schools is at a high level. As per Table 2, the job satisfaction has a mean value of 4.06, indicating a high level of job satisfaction among the senior teachers of International Schools in Colombo district.

Table 2: Univariate Analysis

	Surface Acting	Deep Acting	Job Satisfaction
Mean	1.87	3.79	4.06
Median	2.00	4.00	4.00
Mode	2	4	4
Std. Deviation	.607	.697	.725
Variance	.369	.486	.526
Skewness	.299	-.146	-.224
Std. error of Skewness	.221	.221	.221
Kurtosis	.660	-.121	-.648
Std. error of Kurtosis	.438	.438	.438
Maximum	1	2	2
Minimum	4	5	5

According to Table 3, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient of surface acting and job satisfaction is -0.211 and relationship is statistically significant as correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2- tailed). This indicates that there is a weak negative correlation between Surface Acting and Job Satisfaction. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient of deep acting and job satisfaction is 0.656, which indicates that there is a moderately strong positive correlation between Deep Acting and Job Satisfaction. The found relationship is statistically significant as correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2- tailed).

Table 3: The Relationship of Job Satisfaction with Surface Acting and Deep Acting

	Surface Acting	Deep Acting
Correlation	-.211*	.656**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.021	.000

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4: Cross Tabulation of Surface Acting and Deep Acting with Gender

Surface Acting			Never	Rarely	Some times	Often	Total
Gender	Female	Count	29	68	10	0	107
		% within Gender	27.1%	63.6%	9.3%	.0%	100.0%
	Male	Count	1	9	2	1	13
		% within Gender	7.7%	69.2%	15.4%	7.7%	100.0%
Deep Acting			Rarely	Some times	Often	Always	Total
Gender	Female	Count	3	30	58	16	107
		% within Gender	2.8%	28.0%	54.2%	15.0%	100.0%
	Male	Count	0	5	8	0	13
		% within Gender	.0%	38.5%	61.5%	.0%	100.0%

Table 4 shows how female teachers and male teachers engage in surface acting and deep acting. Cross tabulation of gender and surface acting discloses that 7.7% of male teachers engaged in surface acting more often, while none of the female teachers engaged in surface acting often. The percentage of female teachers who never engage in surface acting (27.1%) is more than three times that of male teachers. 63.6% of female teachers rarely engage in surface acting and nearly 70% of male teachers engage in surface acting rarely. When engaging in deep acting, 15% of female teachers always engage in deep acting while male teachers are not engaged in deep acting always. According to cross tabulation 54.2%, 28% and 2.8% of female teachers respectively engaged in deep acting often, sometimes and rarely. Out of male teachers, 61.5% often and 38.5% sometimes engage in deep acting.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

According to the results of Pearson’s Product Moment correlation analysis, it was statistically claimed that there is a weak negative relationship between surface acting and job satisfaction and a moderately strong positive relationship between deep acting and job satisfaction of senior teachers in the selected three International Schools.

The found negative relationship between surface acting and job satisfaction is established by the research findings of Grandey (2000)<sup>[33]</sup>, Hochschild (1983)<sup>[34]</sup>, Judge, Woolf and Hurst (2009)<sup>[35]</sup>, Zhang and Zhu (2008)<sup>[36]</sup>, Yin (2015)<sup>[37]</sup> and Torland (2012)<sup>[38]</sup>. The findings of the present study on the relationship between deep acting and job satisfaction were supported by the arguments given by Sharpe (2005)<sup>[39]</sup>, Zammuner and Galli (2005)<sup>[40]</sup>, Torland (2012)<sup>[41]</sup> and Yin (2015)<sup>[42]</sup>.

The study shows that there is a positive relationship with deep acting and the job satisfaction of the teachers in this particular sample. However there is a negative relationship with surface acting and job satisfaction. Further, the male teachers’ percentage those who engaged in surface acting is more than female teachers while the percentage of female teachers who are engaged in deep acting is more than male teachers. Almost all the teachers in this study show high job satisfaction with their job. Based on the findings it can be said that the International School teachers are performing effectively and have a high level of job satisfaction.

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The findings of this research may be important on the theoretical as well as practical scenario. By considering the relationship of surface acting and deep acting with teachers' job satisfaction, it could be concluded that deep acting is more effective than surface acting. The results of the present study can be used to enhance the effectiveness of the practice of teaching and teacher development. It is advisable for Teacher Training Institutes to give a better understanding of these emotional demands and different emotional labour strategies in teacher training programmes.

In this study, only surface acting and deep acting were considered ignoring the genuine emotions. Genuine emotions also could be taken into account by future researchers. Future researchers can test whether there is any difference in perceiving emotional labour by the teachers between senior and primary teachers as they have to contact with students of different ages. As this research was a quantitative study, future research can be conducted using the qualitative approach to support the quantitative findings.

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