

# A Theoretical Approach to the Concept of Emotional Labor in Organizational Management

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## Abstract

The stages of transition to the service sector by completing the industrialization processes of developed countries have caused changes in the market, competition conditions and workforce structures. Before this period, the weight of industrial companies in the national economy was considerably higher than other sectors. Today, this situation has brought about the rapid rise of the service sector. Today, it is seen that the largest and most important companies in the world are service businesses. With the development of the service sector, the number of companies producing services all over the world has increased, and a large proportion of the workforce has started to be employed in the service sector. The fact that the service sector has become more attractive to employees and more companies enter the market has further aggravated the conditions of competition. In the study, it is aimed to draw a theoretical framework, especially to look at the concept of emotional labor from a historical perspective.

## The Concept of Emotional Labor and Its Development

Rules that standardize the emotional attitudes that organizations expect from employees are called emotional behavior rules. Complying with these rules helps to achieve a certain quality standard in customer relations and to ensure customer satisfaction. Another benefit is that it contributes to the performance of the employee by minimizing the possible problems that may occur between the employee and the customer. However, the emotional conflict experienced by the employees because of losing their control over their own emotions and behaving in a way they do not feel can also bring some negative consequences. For example, the fact that employees express

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the expected emotions by keeping their real emotions under control can cause them to feel that they are constantly acting and lose their sense of sincerity. The emotional reactions that should be shown to customers under the control of the organization can become a pressure factor for employees and increase work-related stress. In addition to these, reducing the job satisfaction levels of the employees and increasing their burnout levels are among the possible negative consequences of emotional labor display. In this study, it has been tried to examine the effects on the burnout and job satisfaction levels of the employees by bringing a theoretical approach to the concept of emotional labor in organizations.

Today, the emotions and behavior styles of company employees, especially the behavior styles of people working in large companies operating all over the world, such as multinational companies, and the desire to act with common emotions in terms of being a part of the company culture, has paved the way for the use of emotion management methods in employees, either consciously or unconsciously. Two different approaches, physiological and cultural, are discussed in the explanation of the formation of emotions. In the physiological approach, instincts and drives play an important role, while in the cultural dimension, there is a situation of reconciliation with a social situation. The first study on the issue of emotional labor and that emotions are an input to business life beyond being the subject of life was published in 1983 by the American sociologist Arlie R. Hochschild in the book 'The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling'. used. Hochschild (1983) stated that the service sector should gain importance and this requires a more one-to-one relationship with the customer. He argued that it turned into a commodity and turned into an object that came out of the essence of humanity and sold its feelings for money. Hochschild (1983) emotional labor; He defined it as the management of emotions with gestures and mimics or body movements observable by everyone. (Ashforth vd.,1993,s.90) defined emotional labor as 'the act of displaying appropriate emotion during service'. Morris and Feldman (1996) defined it as the projection of desired emotions by interpersonal relations after a certain plan, control and effort. On the other hand, (Wharton ,2009,s. 60) defined it as the effort of employees whose jobs require interaction with customers to display the emotions deemed appropriate by the organization. (Steinberg vd.,1999,s.11) defined it as 'the effort to develop empathy and understand what one feels in order to understand others'. (Eroğlu,2010,s.19) defined it as 'the necessity of feeling and conveying the appropriate emotion in order to best serve the stakeholder in the process of applying the rules determined by the institution where the employee works'.

In the light of these definitions, we can define the concept of emotional labor as the most appropriate behavior expected from the employees by considering the interests of the organization. It can be said that emotional labor behaviors are mainly handled within the scope of adapting the emotions of the person to the requirements of the job, as well as the use of physical and mental power (Kaya vd., 2012,s.111)

Like when an employee makes a customer feel good or a police officer makes a prisoner feel bad; While emotional labor is the process of transforming positive emotions into behavior in some professions, it can be expressed as the display of negative emotions for some professions. In both cases, the obligation to feel the emotions that should be at the base of the expected behaviors is expected from the employee (Türkey vd.,2011,s.203) In the tourism sector, employees are asked to display positive emotions.

Since the concept of emotional labor was introduced, many studies have been carried out in certain occupational groups such as tourism sector worker, social worker, daycare worker, doctor, nurse, lawyer, teacher, collector, sales representative, call center worker, police, waiter. has been made. Most of the studies have included the individual and organizational results of emotional labor. As a result of these studies, some researchers have stated that emotional labor can have positive results as well as negative consequences. Although the results are different from each other, the effort of the employees who are in one-to-one communication with the customers to adapt their emotional displays to the standards determined by the organization and the effort they spend in this process is called emotional labor (Birol 2004).

It is accepted that these works, which are in one-to-one interaction with the customer, are the 'face of the organization'. Emotional labor is therefore instrumental, because the management of emotions is for the benefit of another person (Özgen 2010,s.15).

In summary, the concept of emotional labor appears and develops in different variations in every period. The development and change of the human factor, especially in the service sector, necessitated its own change in this concept.

### **Emotional Labor Approaches**

Since the concept of emotional labor was introduced, different approaches and models have been put forward by researchers in order to understand the dimensions of the concept and to develop the concept. Although there have been many studies on the emotional labor approach, four approaches

in particular are accepted. These approaches are reviewed chronologically below.

### **Hochschild's Approach to Emotional Labor**

Hochschild's work on emotion began in the 1960s, inspired by Goffman. Hochschild (1983) defines the customers as the "audience", the employees as the "actors" and the workplace as the "stage" in the relations between the employees and the customers, and describes this relationship process as a staged play. From this point of view, he stated that the actors should convey the role required by the play to the audience sincerely, sincerely and naturally. Only in this way, the audience believes in the reality and sincerity of the play, and the play turns into a reflection of the reality on the stage rather than being a play. Hochschild stated that service workers should establish a control and control mechanism over their real emotions while transferring the appropriate emotion to the other party. Hochschild explained this situation by describing two different types of behavior. The first is the surface act, that is, pretending to feel emotions that the person does not really feel. Diplomats and movie actors are examples of superficial behavior. Secondly, deep act is trying to really experience and feel the emotions that the person is asked to show.

Hochschild(1983), in his work, talks about the study of the emotional labor processes of the stewardesses by participating in the courses at the hostess training center of Delta Airlines. In the study, it was determined that the stewardesses were asked to smile constantly during the flight, and in order to increase the ticket sales of the airline company and to impress the businessmen who travel extensively, the stewardesses were played in the advertisements and the stewardesses were advised not to exceed a certain weight. This situation required the hostesses to spend more emotional labor while doing their job. It was stated that the smiles of the hostesses did not belong to them, that is, it was not a sincere behavior.

Hochschild's(1983) main focus on emotions is the commercialization of emotions. When emotion becomes traded in the job market like a good or service, or in other words, when it goes out of use value and has exchange value, the results will be different on the employee (Özgen, 2010,s. 17). He stated that making a difference causes 'emotional conflict' and its results are destructive compared to in-depth behavior. As a result of such an effort, it has been revealed that severe headaches occur in employees and that their absenteeism increases.

Hochschild(1993) argued that certain occupations require emotional labor and divided it into 6 groups. These occupational groups are as follows (Öz, 2007,s.4 )

- Self-Employed Employees (Doctors, Lawyers)
- Operators and Managers
- Salespersons
- Carers
- Waiters
- Officers

Hochschild claimed that the above-mentioned occupational groups would experience greater emotional exhaustion towards other occupational groups. Hochschild's categorization of these occupations according to emotional labor caused him to be criticized. Today, occupations that require emotional labor require a wider grouping study, including the characteristics of societies (Özgen, 2010: 18-19).

### **Ashforth and Humphrey's Approach to Emotional Labor**

Ashforth and Humphrey interpreted and developed the work of Hochschild. Ashforth and Humphrey define emotional labor as the display of behavior that will give the appropriate emotion. Because the important thing is not to focus on the emotions underlying the behaviors, but to focus on the behaviors that can be observed. Ashforth and Humphrey argued that emotional labor is a kind of impression formation. Grandey (1999) defined impression making as an attempt by a person to direct or change the thoughts of others about him. In creating an impression, people want others to think well of them and therefore exhibit behaviors that can be considered appropriate by everyone.

In the Ashforth and Humphrey approach, in addition to the superficial and in-depth behavior in the display process of emotional labor described by Hochschild, they added sincere behavior as a third behavior. According to this approach, he mentioned that there may be situations where the employee can really feel the emotion that he should show, and he explained this as a sincere behavior. For example, it is sincere that the nurse caring for a child with cancer should be genuinely upset and show it. In sincere behavior, there is no domination of the behavior, as in either superficial or in-depth behavior. In sincere behavior, the behavior that should be shown is really felt and shown (Özgen,2010:20).

Ashforth and Humphrey examined the consequences of emotional labor on employees within the scope of social identity theory. The more the employee identifies with the emotional behavior rules determined by the organization, the more sincere behavior will be displayed. In this way, he will willingly fulfill the rules with which he is identified, and in this process he will act as himself and not pretend. The higher the level of acting like oneself, the less the negative effects of emotional labor.

### **Morris and Feldman's Approach to Emotional Labor**

Morris and Feldman(1996) defined emotional labor as the effort, planning and control of the organization to reflect the desired emotions in the process of interpersonal interaction. According to this approach, even if the emotion that the employee should display and the emotion he/she feels at that moment coincide, a certain amount of effort must be exerted in order for the organization to exhibit the emotional behavior it desires. Whether the employee behaves deeply, superficially or sincerely, using his emotions in the organization means showing emotional labor. Because the purpose of all behaviors is to fulfill the behavioral rules determined by the organization. Even if the employee actually feels the emotion he has to show, being able to put these emotions into behaviors desired by the organization is also considered a labor task. Morris and Feldman emotional labor; instead of in-depth, superficial and sincere behavior, they examined different variables as emotional labor dimensions.

Morris and Feldman(1996) emphasize that emotional labor can change according to the current conditions and therefore the level of emotional labor will also differ. Emotional labor dimensions are classified as follows.

- Frequency of emotion display
- The attention given to the determined emotional behavior rules
- Variety of emotions to be reflected
- Emotional conflict

### ***Frequency of Displaying Emotions***

The frequency of display of emotions is related to how often employees display the desired emotions from employees. This dimension is the first and most studied subject of emotional labor. Customers tend to do more work in organizations with which they have emotional attachment (Wharton vd.,1993,s.465).

The higher the frequency of emotional behavior of the employees and the importance of this behavior in terms of organizational performance, the greater the need for the clearly stated emotional behavior rules of the organization. In addition, the frequency of emotion display varies according to occupations. For example, a receptionist may contact a customer once an hour, while a cashier may have to deal with fifteen customers per hour (Güngör ,2009,s.171-172).

### *Attention Given to Identified Emotional Behavior Rules*

The second dimension of emotional labor is the level of attention given to the established rules of behavior. Since jobs that require attention require more psychological and physical effort, it can be said that more emotional labor is spent in these jobs (Güngör,2009,s. 172). This dimension is divided into two categories in itself. These are the duration of the display of emotions and the intensity of these emotions. The higher the emotional intensity that employees will show during interaction with customers, the longer they will reflect these feelings, the more they will pay attention to their attitudes and behaviors. Thus, the need for emotional labor will increase. While the effort is less in a short-term customer relationship, more effort is shown to reflect the required emotion as the time lengthens (Öz, 2007,s.9).

The longer the employee interaction period, the more information is obtained about the customer, and this information may prevent employees from hiding their personal feelings and sometimes cause them to violate organizational rules. The same is true for the intensity of emotions (Özgen 2010,s.21). As the emotions that need to be reflected to the customer get stronger, the employees will need to express themselves better and therefore the emotional labor they give will increase (Morris vd.,1996,s.991). For example, while cashiers interact with customers for a short time and are kind and smiling to the customers they serve, nurses interact with patients for a longer period of time and they need to be understanding, loving and compassionate in different situations they encounter (Güngör,2009,s.172-173).

### *Variety of emotions to be reflected*

This dimension is also related to the level of diversity of emotions that should be shown to customers. Employees have to make more than one plan for certain situations and consciously monitor their own behavior. This means more mental and physical effort and emotional labor. The variety of emotions that need to be reflected are classified as positive, negative and neutral by Morris and Feldman (1996), and as complementary, differentiating

and masking by Wharton and Erickson (1993). Positive (complementary) emotions make customers and employees think well of each other; With negative (differentiating) emotions, the employee aims to display an angry and hostile attitude towards the customer, while neutral emotions aim to display an impartial and authoritarian attitude.

The emotions that need to be reflected may vary according to the professions. While front office workers are generally expected to display positive emotions towards customers, negative emotions are expected from debt collectors and neutral emotions from judges (Grandey,2000,s.102). Another example of the diversity of emotions is; While the salespeople are expected to deal with the customers individually when the customer density is low, they are expected to shorten the time of dealing with the customers when the business accelerates, especially as the closing hours approach. In some cases, they need to show this change within minutes. This is also synonymous with spending more emotional labor.

### *Emotional Contradiction*

Emotional conflict is the difference between the emotion that the organization wants to display and the emotion felt by the employee. (Bakker vd.,2006,s.426). Although many researchers see emotional conflict as a result of emotional labor, Morris and Feldman consider it as a dimension of emotional labor.

The display rules determined by the organizations may not always coincide with the real feelings that the employee feels. The element that makes emotional labor more challenging for the employee is emotional conflict. For example, a salesperson who trusts the product he is selling and thinks it is useful will experience less emotional conflict, while the neutral emotions of a nurse who lost a patient will experience more emotional conflict as it will be more difficult to exhibit(Güngör, 2009,s.174)

Morris and Feldman; They associated emotional labor dimensions with organization, job, customer and employee characteristics and tried to determine what kind of results emotional labor had on employees. Organization-related features; Clarity of codes of conduct, observation of behavior, autonomy, work-related characteristics, task routine, task diversity, face-to-face communication, customer-related characteristics, role strength, employee-related characteristics, gender, positive affect, negative affect (Kaya vd.,2012,s.112).



## **Grandey's Approach to Emotional Labor**

In his study on emotional labor, Grandey brought some criticisms to previous studies. He stated that previous studies did not define emotional labor alone and that all studies on emotional labor needed to be combined. For this, he brought a new perspective to the subject by integrating the three approaches developed before him. In Grandey's work, firstly, the conceptualization of emotional labor takes place. Grandey defined emotional labor as the regulation of both emotions and expressions in a way that will serve the purposes of organizations. In another study he conducted on emotional labor, it is the regulation of emotions. Emotion regulation emphasizes which emotion individuals will experience in their environment or which emotion they will change, rather than the automatic or sudden emergence of emotions ( Öz,2007,s.11).

Two strategies are used in the emotion regulation process. These are antecedent-focused emotion regulation and reaction-focused emotion regulation (Grandey 200:98). Prior-focused emotion regulation is a type of adjustment made before the emotion to be encountered (Gross, 1998). Prior-focused emotion regulation consists of four steps in itself.

- Selecting Media
- Changing Media
- Diverting Attention
- Cognitive Change

### ***Selecting the Environment***

It is the first step in prioritizing emotion regulation. It is to approach or avoid the environment and emotions according to the effect of certain emotions. For example; Not entering the office for a certain period of time during the visit of a customer who is very angry on the phone can be called escaping from the environment ( Öz,2007,s.12).

### ***Changing the Media***

It is making changes to the environment that can create certain positive and negative emotions. For example; An employee who knows that he or she has a negative experience when meeting with a customer face-to-face is to contact this customer via e-mail instead of face-to-face contact (Özgen ,2010,s.28).

***Diverting Attention***

It is the employee's thinking or doing some activities that make him/her happy or feel good while working. For example; A waiter who likes to sing can sing to himself while serving, and in this way he feels good and displays positive emotions towards customers (Güngör, 2009,s. 174).

***Cognitive Change***

It is a method of changing understanding, which we can define as evaluating the current situation in another way. An example of this is that the flight attendant, who has to deal with problem passengers patiently, treats passengers as children and approaches them. Thus, the employees can more easily meet the constant demands, complaints and negative behaviors of the passengers (Güngör, 2009,s. 174).

In response-oriented emotion regulation, it is the type of adjustment that is made after the emotion is experienced personally. The initial response may weaken later. For example, you get angry at a car that honks at you, and then you realize that there is an emergency and you become angry (Özgen,2010,s.29).

Grandey's response-oriented emotion regulation with superficial behavior; He suggested that distraction and cognitive change overlap with behavior in depth. He stated that the aim of the emotion regulation strategy is to comply with emotion display rules. The employee performs a masking within the framework of the display rules. In doing so, it must be convincing to customers. Otherwise, emotions and behaviors that will be understood to be insincere will have a negative effect on the customer (Oral vd.,2011,s. 466).

**Emotional Labor Dimensions**

Emotional labor dimensions are basically handled in two ways. These are superficial representation and deep representation.

Superficial representation means to prevent the emergence of real feelings, to pretend that they did not happen and not experienced, and to hide the truth in lived situations. It is stated that employees who make an effort to display the desired emotion in appearance and behavior exhibit superficial behavior. These employees really independently changed their external appearance with their behaviors, facial expressions and tones of voice. As a result, personal emotions dominate the employees and a false emotion is created (Onay ,2011,s.592). Those working in the superficial

behavior dimension only differentiate their facial features and mimics. For example, even if he is angry with the person in front of him, he appears to him in a cordial and sincere manner and exhibits such behavior. In Depth Representation, for example, making other people feel emotions as they should be, trying to live as they should be, or trying to show emotions as a part of the job can be given as examples.

### **Studies on Emotional Labor**

In the study of Chu (2002) on the effect of emotional labor on business results with 285 hotel employees, it was revealed that as the positive emotional behaviors of the employees increased, the emotional conflict decreased. Employees with high positive affect can display their emotional behaviors more sincerely than those with low positive affect. There was no significant relationship between negative affect and emotional conflict. It has been revealed that employees with high affectivity spend more emotional effort while displaying emotional labor than employees with low negative affect.

There was no significant relationship between emotional contagion and emotional conflict. It has been concluded that individuals with high levels of emotional contagion make more effort while spending emotional labor. Since emotional effort is associated with in-depth behavior, it is concluded that as deep behavior increases, job satisfaction will increase. A negative relationship was found between emotional conflict, which is stated as a result of superficial behavior, and emotional exhaustion, which is a sub-dimension of burnout. In other words, it has been revealed that as the surface behavior increases, emotional exhaustion decreases.

Pala (2008) reached the following conclusions in his thesis study with a sample of 174 tourism workers.

There was a negative relationship between age and emotional labor display time. In other words, as the age increases, the emotional labor display time decreases. It was concluded that there is a negative relationship between negative emotion and positive emotion, intensity, frequency, variety, the necessity of showing positive emotion and deep behavior, and a positive relationship between the difficulty of maintaining emotional behavior rules. A negative relationship was found between negative emotion and deep behavior, but no significant relationship was found between negative emotion and surface behavior.

Köksel (2009) reached the following conclusions in her research on the relationship between emotional labor, burnout and job satisfaction with a sample of 136 doctors. In his factor analysis, he reached the conclusion of emotional labor, which has four or six dimensions. These dimensions are surface behavior, deep behavior, emotional effort and suppression of real emotions. It was concluded that emotional labor sub-dimensions did not differ depending on gender. In terms of job satisfaction and sense of personal accomplishment, it was found that the average of men was higher than that of women. It was concluded that emotional labor dimensions did not show any difference in terms of marital status. In terms of job satisfaction and sense of personal accomplishment, married people have a higher average than single people. In other words, job satisfaction and sense of personal accomplishment are higher in married people than in single people.

It was concluded that emotional labor dimensions did not differ according to age. It was concluded that emotional labor dimensions did not show any difference depending on the total working time.

It was concluded that there is a negative relationship between surface behavior and job satisfaction. It has been concluded that surface behavior and deep behavior have a significant effect on explaining job satisfaction. In addition, it was concluded that the dimensions of surface behavior, deep behavior, emotional effort and suppression of real emotions have a significant effect on explaining burnout.

In summary, It was concluded that there is a positive relationship between emotional effort and emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. It was concluded that there is a negative relationship between in-depth behavior and depersonalization. No relationship was found between the sub-dimension of suppressing true emotions and job satisfaction.

## **Conclusion**

The classical management approach has considered the human being as one of the other organizational resources that should be used rationally in the production process. This approach has seen man as a rational being who always maximizes his personal benefit by choosing the most suitable one among the alternatives in front of him in order to achieve his goals. Emotions are phenomena that have no place in organizational life and it is thought that if they are used, they will prevent rational behavior. With the development of the neo-classical approach, organizations have begun to be considered as socio-technical systems. According to this approach, the productivity of a person is closely related to the satisfaction of some emotional needs such

as motivation or job satisfaction. The neo-classical approach's handling of human emotions as an important factor in organizational life has led to an increase in the importance given to emotions in business life and scientific studies in this field. Another development experienced during this time was the completion of the industrialization processes of modern societies and the rapid rise of the service sector. The service sector generally has a structure that requires face-to-face or verbal communication between the service provider and the service provider. Most of the time, the quality of the service provided is closely related to the behavior of the service provider. The difficulty of competition in the service sector has led to an increase in the expectations of organizations from employees who are in contact with customers and provide services to them. Employees now undertake the task of giving some emotional messages during service delivery as part of their organizational roles, and influencing the emotions of customers by using their own emotions. Emotional labor emerges at this point, and it means that employees make their emotional displays as a part of their jobs comply with the standards determined by the organization. In particular, it is seen that large companies aiming to standardize service quality have chosen to clearly define the behaviors they expect from employees with emotional behavior rules. According to the literature, employees use one of three different mechanisms when performing emotional labor. These are in-depth behavior, superficial behavior and sincere behavior. In-depth behavior is when the employee harmonizes his real feelings with the behaviors he has to show. Superficial behavior is the employee's showing the expected emotional expression even though his real feelings are different. Sincere behavior, on the other hand, is the name given to the type of behavior that occurs when the emotions that the employee has to reflect with their real feelings are already the same.

Emotional labor can bring some positive results. For example, exhibiting the right behavior towards customers, thanks to the rules of emotional behavior, can minimize the possible problems between the employee and the customer and thus increase his personal performance. Thus, the customer satisfaction and performance increase provided by the employees will also positively affect the organizational performance. However, this benefit provided on a personal and organizational basis can also provide some financial advantages to the employee. Despite the existence of positive aspects, emotional labor also brings some negative consequences for employees. As it is known, emotions are extremely personal phenomena and their external manipulation can be quite disturbing for some. Depending on the characteristics of the job, the personal characteristics of the employee

and the expectations of the organization, emotional labor can lead to some important negativities such as job dissatisfaction, burnout, alienation and work-related stress. The negative consequences of emotional labor are often associated with surface behavior. It is thought that the difference between the emotions people feel and the emotions they show will cause them to experience emotional conflict, which in turn will bring negative consequences. Among the mentioned negative results, the most emphasized ones are job dissatisfaction and burnout. The reason for this is that these two phenomena are important for both the organization and the employee in terms of their results.

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