

# INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEE FACTORS AFFECTING EMOTIONAL LABOR AND JOB OUTCOMES: A CASE STUDY OF HOTEL FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES IN PHUKET

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## Abstract

Despite the rapid evolution and high competition in the accommodation sector, there are still pressing questions regarding the attitudes, job performance, and behavior of frontline employees within such organizations, which are affected by factors of the individual employees. This study aimed to examine such factors, specifically how gender, age, length of work experience, and marital status, affect emotional labor and job outcomes. Questionnaires were distributed to 325 frontline employees of hotels in Phuket. The study utilized observed variables to examine the latent variables, applying an MIMIC (multiple indicators multiple causes) analysis through structural equation modeling. The results revealed that age, experience and marital status had both positive and negative effects regarding emotional labor and job outcomes, but gender did not have any significant impact. Managerial implications from the results of the study could have beneficial outcomes for the hospitality and service industry, particularly regarding the human resource management process in terms of dealing with employees' emotional labor, and also in terms of the custom treatment of different groups of hotel frontline employees.

**Keywords:** emotional labor, hotel frontline employees, individual factors, job outcomes

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## INTRODUCTION

Emotional labor strategy is the concept of frontline employees managing their emotions as part of their job demands (Hochschild, 2012). It is the strategy of regulating both one's feelings and one's expressions to adhere to the organization's policies, and requires employees to use emotional regulation strategies at work (Diefendorff, Croyle, & Gosserand, 2005; Grandey, 2000) in order to sustain the goals of the organization (Lee & Ok, 2012). Employees, especially frontline hotel staff, are inclined to regulate the display of their emotions, and this results in emotional labor behaviors, depending on the efforts and methods used to modify their emotions (Johnson & Spector, 2007; Liu, 2017). When engaging in many tasks with challenging service encounters, employees might experience both negative and positive sides of the effects of emotional labor (Grandey, 2003; Johnson & Spector, 2007; Karatepe & Aleshinloye, 2009; Rathi & Lee, 2016), potentially leading to a detrimental impact on their work attitudes (Siegel, Post, Brockner, Fishman, & Garden, 2005; Zhang, Xu, Jin, & Ford, 2018), job performance, and behavior within the organization.

Recently, it has been noted that job outcomes, emotional exhaustion, and job satisfaction are areas that affect individuals and organizations, both negatively and positively. Emotional exhaustion is a source of job stress (Hochschild, 2012) caused

by emotional labor (Grandey, 2003; Johnson & Spector, 2007; Karatepe & Aleshinloye, 2009; Rathi & Lee, 2016). It is a chronic state of mental and physical depletion (Cropanzano, Rupp, & Byrne, 2003), which is often accompanied by a high rate of absence and turnover, poor job performance and low organizational effectiveness (Deery, Iverson, & Walsh, 2002).

On the other hand, job satisfaction is a constructive approach to both physical and mental fulfillment that leads to employee satisfaction when successfully accomplishing the objectives of the organization. Job satisfaction can provide positive effects in terms of employees' quality of life, and is also crucial for business as it affects productivity, performance, profits, and many other outputs (Çelik, Dedeoğlu, & Inanir, 2015). It is a valuable and imperative property for employees and the organization. As such, organizations must reduce emotional exhaustion while increasing employees' job satisfaction as a result of their policies.

In the evolution of the accommodation sector in Thailand, hotels and restaurants together accounted for 5.8 percent of Thailand's GDP, with an expansion of 8.5 percent in 2017, and authorities are planning for even more rapid growth in the future. Thailand is estimated to receive more than 100 million tourists a year, with 40 percent of them visiting Phuket and neighboring areas (World Bank Group, 2017). Nevertheless, there are

still pressing issues, such as a shortage of skilled personnel, and lack of desired support and assistance from the government (National Statistical Office, 2013). Moreover, a shortage of hotel labor in Thailand has resulted from the higher turnover of new hires (Ministry of Labor Thailand, 2012, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c). Furthermore, several studies have suggested considering differences in personal factors when investigating the determinants of emotional labor strategies (Allen, Pugh, Grandey, & Groth, 2010; Chen, Chang, & Wang, 2019). Such recommendations are consistent with the findings of various studies that have shown the different effects of gender, age (Cheung & Tang, 2010; Liu, 2017; Mann, 2007; Scott & Barnes, 2011) and marital status of employees (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000) on both surface action and deep action — the elements of an emotional labor strategy. In addition, these demographic factors of hotel employees can also be seen to be related to one's level of stress (Koc & Bozkurt, 2017; Zhang et al., 2018) and emotional dissonance (Pugh, Groth, & Hennig-Thurau, 2011), which could lead to emotional exhaustion (Judge, Woolf, & Hurst, 2009) and even changes in job satisfaction (Zhang et al., 2018). There have been many studies on the emotional labor of hotel employees in Thailand (Aukkawanichcha & Thevata, 2016; Nanthapreechawong, 2009; Yuanlaie, 2011), but there has been a limited amount of empirical research conducted on the effect of

particular personal factors on emotional strategy and outcomes (Daskin, 2016; Karatepe, Karadas, Azar, & Naderiadib, 2013). Taking this into account, a study that explores a variety of personal factors in relation to the job outcomes of hotel frontline employees, is of value. As such, the present study could help organizations to understand how to solve such problems and manage their employees based on the factor differences of individuals. The findings can shed light on the impacts of emotional labor strategy in order to prevent emotional exhaustion, increase job satisfaction, and contribute beneficial outcomes to the hospitality and service industry.

## **OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this study was to examine the effects of background factors or differing personal factors among frontline employees in the hotel industry — namely gender, age, length of work experiences, and marital status — on the groups of female, younger, junior, and married employees, and how these factors affect surface acting, deep acting, emotional exhaustion, and job satisfaction.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Emotional Labor**

Emotional labor is the process of regulating one's feelings and expressions according to the organizational goals required by organizational display rules, irrespec-

tive of one's felt emotions — hence the need for emotional regulation strategies among employees at work (Diefendorff et al., 2005; Grandey, 2000). As frontline employees act as a contact point between customers and the organization, they are viewed as a source of service differentiation or competitive advantage for companies (Tsaur & Tang, 2013). The quality of the interaction between customers and frontline employees creates an impact on the levels of customer satisfaction, their intention to repeat procurement, and the sharing of positive word-of-mouth (Xu et al., 2018). At the same time, frontline employees must make a genuine effort to provide good service and display appropriate emotions, while obeying the organization's emotional display rules (Chen et al., 2019; Johnson & Spector, 2007). Frontline employees in hotels are frequently involved in emotionally-demanding interactions with customers and may be required to express emotions that they do not genuinely feel or experience (Rathi & Lee, 2016). If they are not always good at managing their emotions, this condition may lead to regular exhaustion (Grandey, 2000). Most studies have focused on the two strategies of emotional labor generally used by employees to manipulate their emotional displays at work (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Brotheridge & Lee, 2003; Diefendorff et al., 2005; Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 2012). These are surface acting, and deep acting, and are discussed below.

**Surface Acting** or “acting in bad faith” refers to the suppression of one's true felt emotions and manipulating oneself to express the desired emotions. It is a way in which a person manipulates the emotional expressions he or she shows to society, in response to the expectations or rules of performance (Display Rules) in each situation. Frontline employees may feel uncomfortable about the display rules of the service that are not consistent with their own feelings (adjusting one's observable expressions to mask one's true feelings and pretending to feel the desired emotion).

**Deep Acting** or “acting in good faith” refers to a true experience of the desired emotions, whereby one must make an effort to experience the desired emotions, leading to an ordinary or natural display of emotions. It is a process in which a person manipulates his or her emotions so that their feelings can be reflected in a way that is visible and in a manner which is consistent with the display rules in the given situation. A service provider may try to maintain a generally positive attitude while holding off his or her negative emotions, such as dissatisfaction with customers, or may try to change his or her mood in order to appear happy or bright, while he or she is actually bored or tired (modifying one's true feelings to feel the desired emotion).

Individuals that express emotions which contradict their true feelings and personal goal hierarchy, could face internal conflict and dissatisfaction (Ashforth &

Humphrey, 1993; Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 2012; Morris & Feldman, 1996; Wharton, 1993). An increasing inclination to put effort into surface acting eventually results in energy depletion (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Brotheridge & Lee, 2003). When employees engage in surface acting, their actual and desired emotions must be adjusted; such individuals must make continuous efforts to change their emotional expression (Grandey, 2003; Martínez-Iñigo, Totterdell, Alcover, & Holman, 2007). It can be seen that this is one reason why surface acting results in individuals feeling drained and exhausted (Coté, 2005; Yagil & Medler-Liraz, 2017).

### **Emotional Exhaustion**

Emotional exhaustion is one of the most dysfunctional states of mind in the modern high-stress workplace (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Van Rhenen, 2009). It is the feeling of being emotionally overstressed and exhausted from work and is revealed by both physical tiredness and a sense of feeling psychologically and emotionally drained (Chen et al., 2019; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Schaufeli & Buunk, 2003; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998) and stressed from work. If this is experienced over a long period, it can lead to bitterness and low quality work, and frequently occurs among individuals that work in the service sector. Emotional exhaustion is one of the most frequently-cited negative consequences of an emotional labor strategy (Bono & Vey, 2005;

Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002) which affects hotel frontline employees (Grandey, 2003; Grandey, Fisk, & Steiner, 2005; Hochschild, 2012; Johnson & Spector, 2007; Karatepe & Aleshinloye, 2009; Rathi & Lee, 2016). Emotional exhaustion has been shown to be the best indicator of burnout (Donahue et al., 2012; Piko, 2006). It has a strong relationship with job-related outcomes and creates numerous negative consequences for organizations (Cropanzano et al., 2003; Johnson & Spector, 2007; Kenworthy, Fay, Frame, & Petree, 2014; Lee & Ashforth, 1996). Emotional exhaustion is a source of job stress (Hochschild, 2012). It may result in adverse outcomes for individuals and for the organization and could raise a number of negative job-related consequences, such as reduced organizational commitment or low organizational citizenship behavior (Cropanzano et al., 2003; Seery & Corrigan, 2009), decreased job satisfaction (Grandey, 2003; Judge et al., 2009), low job performance (Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007; Sun & Pan, 2008), increased turnover intentions (Kraemer & Gouthier, 2014; Lee & Ashforth, 1996), and poor general health, psychological, and physiological well-being of individuals (Khamisa, Oldenburg, Peltzer, & Ilic, 2015). As such, many studies on the hospitality sector have considered these problems and have paid increased attention to the potential determinants of emotional exhaustion (Kim, 2008; Lee & Ok, 2012), while trying to prevent its occurrence due to an

emotional labor strategy (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002).

### **Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is determined by an individual's attitude toward their job, and encourages positive and pleasing emotional states, leading to the promotion of positive job values (Cheng & Yi, 2018; Locke, 1976). It is the condition of a person's realistic determination or attitude toward his or her work. A person with positive approaches to both physical and mental fulfillment will be satisfied when they accomplish the objectives of the organization. Job satisfaction is important for employees, as a good work life responds to the needs of employees and positively affects their quality of life. It is also crucial for businesses as it affects productivity, performance, profits, and many other outputs (Çelik et al., 2015). The variables affecting job satisfaction can be categorized into two groups: individual factors (age, gender, marital status, race, and education level) and work-related factors (Porteous, 1997). Many studies have identified five facets of job satisfaction: the nature of the work, one's relationships with coworkers, supervision, and opportunities for promotion (Drafke & Kossen, 1998; Luthans, Luthans, & Luthans, 2015; Rast & Tourani, 2012; Robbins, 2001). These will be discussed in the following section.

### **Gender**

Previous research has found gender differences in the display of

both positive and negative emotions (Johnson & Spector, 2007; Jung & Yoon, 2014; Mann, 2007; Scott & Barnes, 2011; Simpson & Stroh, 2004). Findings regarding the different effects of gender on emotional labor have also been supported in several empirical studies. Gender acts as a substantial moderator on the results of emotional labor and its workplace outcomes (Fay, 2011). A significant level of difference regarding surface acting, one of the emotional labor strategies, exists in gender (Liu, 2017). The effects of gender as a moderator have been found to exist at a stronger level in females with regards to the inverse correlation between emotional labor and job satisfaction. Gender has also been shown to create differences in the effect of emotional labor on emotional exhaustion, and burnout. Male and female employees respond and behave differently depending on the stimuli in the work environment, and their satisfaction (Otis, 2016). In a study by Markiewicz, Devine, and Kausilas (2000), it was found that quality friendships were related to job satisfaction and career success among employees, and that the quality of close male friendships was more strongly associated with career success and job satisfaction than the quality of close female friendships.

Studies have found that women will follow the emotional display rule for expressing positive emotions while suppressing negative ones more frequently than men (Lovell, Lee, & Brotheridge, 2009). Women more frequently implement feminine

display rules that require diminishing negative emotions and replication of positive emotions. Conversely, men more frequently implement male display rules which require the reduction of positive emotions and the simulation of negative ones (Simpson & Stroh, 2004). From the above findings, hypotheses regarding the effects of gender on emotional labor, emotional exhaustion, and job satisfaction were developed as shown below.

- H1a: Female gender has a significant positive effect on surface acting.
- H1b: Female gender has a significant negative effect on deep acting.
- H1c: Female gender has a significant positive effect on emotional exhaustion.
- H1d: Female gender has a significant negative effect on job satisfaction.

### **Age and Work Experience**

Socioemotional selectivity theory suggests that age-related motivational shifts lead to changes in the way that individuals actively interact with their situation (Carstensen, Fung, & Charles, 2003). People of different age groups uphold different emotional management strategies to interact and cope with the situations in their lives. Findings from many studies have also supported this idea by stating that age-related factors interact positively with emotional management and older individuals seem to engage in deep acting more than younger people

(Cheung & Tang, 2010). On the other hand, deep acting seems to play a weaker role, for employees that have just entered the workplace. A significant difference in the level of deep acting in frontline employees of different ages was found while little effect was observed regarding surface acting (Liu, 2017). Bakker, Demerouti, and Schaufeli (2003) accordingly reported that older employees with more work experience, more job demands, and fewer resources might be less able to use surface acting. Additionally, other studies have also supported the idea mentioned above (Cheung & Tang, 2010; Hur, Moon, & Han, 2014).

Hochschild (2012) also claimed that age was positively related to the management of one's emotions. Older individuals engage more in deep acting than their younger peers (Cheung & Tang, 2010) as they can draw from broader emotional memories than young ones, and hence show better performance in terms of deep acting (Kruml & Geddes, 2000). Older service employees sought to capitalize on their positive emotional experiences and to diminish their negative emotional experiences (Dahling & Perez, 2010). Furthermore, they could control their emotions and external displays better than their younger peers (Kim, 2008). One report indicated that older employees with more work experience, more job demands, and fewer resources might be less able to use surface acting (Bakker et al., 2003); it could be said that older

employees may prefer to show an authentic display rather than to deploy inauthentic emotions. In addition, there is also research supporting a link between age and job satisfaction. Older employees or senior employees reported higher job satisfaction than younger (Clark, Oswald, & Warr, 1996) or junior ones. Hypotheses regarding the effects of individual factors— younger or junior employee status on emotional labor, emotional exhaustion, and job satisfaction— were therefore developed as follows.

- H2a: Younger employees have significantly higher levels of surface acting.
- H2b: Younger employees have significantly lower levels of deep acting.
- H2c: Younger employees have significantly higher emotional exhaustion.
- H2d: Younger employees have significantly lower job satisfaction.
- H3a: Junior employees have significantly higher levels of surface acting.
- H3b: Junior employees have significantly lower levels of deep acting.
- H3c: Junior employees have significantly higher emotional exhaustion.
- H3d: Junior employees have significantly lower job satisfaction.

## **Marriage**

The marital status of employees is related to various job outcomes as

it can cause a conflicting role or interference between the incompatible demands of work and family. Hotel frontline employees generally endure long working hours, high levels of employment anxiety, and irregular and inflexible work schedules. These factors often have a detrimental impact on individuals' work attitudes (Siegel et al., 2005; Zhang et al., 2018) and occur when behaviors, moods, stress, and emotions from work are transferred to the family domain (Lawson, Davis, Crouter, & O'Neill, 2013). This scenario is usually recognized under the term work-family conflict, indicating the inter-role conflicts between work and family roles that can fall in two directions: work can interfere with family, and family can interfere with work (Frone, Yardley, & Markel, 1997). Work-family conflict occurs when the general demands of time devoted to, and strain created by, family and work are in conflict, and is linked to physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion.

Studies on the working family broadly support the notion that negative moods generated in the workplace can affect the moods and behavior of the family (Schulz, Cowan, Pape, & Brennan, 2004). The consequences of high levels of work-family interference might include reduced customer satisfaction (Zhao, Mattila, & Ngan, 2014), decreased job satisfaction (Zhang et al., 2018; Zhao & Mattila, 2013), and higher levels of turnover (Nohe & Sonntag, 2014). Higher levels of physical exhaustion could increase the level of



“fake” positive emotions and simultaneously suppress negative emotions (Zhao et al., 2014). Surface acting may have indirect effects on one’s marital partner via a loss of energy resources (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000), stimulation of facial expressions to suppress genuine emotions, and the pretense of different emotions, including internal states and observable behavior. This feeling expression incongruence or emotional dissonance (Pugh et al., 2011) is uncomfortable, can be linked to negative moods in employees (Judge et al., 2009), and could lead to emotional exhaustion. Hypotheses regarding the effect of employees’ individual factors on emotional labor, emotional exhaustion, and job

satisfaction were developed as shown below.

- H4a: Married employees have significantly higher levels of surface acting.
- H4b: Married employees have significantly lower levels of deep acting.
- H4c: Married employees have significantly higher emotional exhaustion.
- H4d: Married employees have significantly lower job satisfaction.

Table 1 represents the conclusion of several prior research studies on the effect of employees’ individual factors on emotional labor and job outcomes.

**Table1.** The effect of employees’ individual factors on emotional labor and job outcomes

Directions	Authors	Sample	Main results
Gender → Emotional labor	Jung and Yoon (2014)	308 deluxe hotels employees	The moderating effects of employees’ gender on emotional labor were found.
Gender → Emotional labor	Mann (2007)	221 service providers	Emotional display was shown to differ between males and females.
Gender → Emotional labor Gender → Emotional exhaustion	Johnson and Spector (2007)	176 customer service employees	Gender was a significant moderator of the relationships between emotional labor strategies and emotional exhaustion

Table 1 (continued)

<b>Directions</b>	<b>Authors</b>	<b>Sample</b>	<b>Main results</b>
Gender → Job satisfaction	Otis (2016)	hotel employees in service	Males and females responded differently depending on the stimuli in the work environment and their satisfaction.
Female → Surface acting	Lovell et al. (2009)	278 physicians	Females express positive emotions and suppressed negative ones more frequently than males.
Female → Surface acting Female → Emotional exhaustion	Scott and Barnes (2011)	68 service providers	The moderating effects of surface acting on gender were stronger for females than for males. Surface acting was found to be stronger in females and associated with work withdrawal.
Age → Emotional labor	Dahling and Perez (2010)	Service employees	Age was positively related to the use of deep acting and negatively related to surface acting.
Age → Emotional exhaustion Age → Job satisfaction Experience → Job satisfaction Experience → Emotional exhaustion	Koc and Bozkurt (2017)	206 hotel employees in Turkey	Age, education, and experience were related to the level of stress and satisfaction.
Experience → Emotional labor Younger → Emotional exhaustion	Hur et al. (2014)	256 service providers	Employees that had more work experience reported a negative influence on surface acting. Younger employees can manage their emotions less effectively than older workers.

Table 1 (continued)

Directions	Authors	Sample	Main results
Younger → Emotional labor Younger → Job satisfaction	Cheung and Tang (2010)	386 various frontline staffs	Younger workers reported lower use of deep acting, and the conditional indirect effect of deep acting between age and job satisfaction was significant.
Marriage → Emotional labor Marriage → Emotional exhaustion	Zhao et al. (2014)	200 hotel employees	Family to work conflict was linked to physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion.
Marriage → Job satisfaction	Zhao and Mattila (2013)	Hotel frontline employees	Role conflict between work and family resulted in less positive affective reactions to the job.

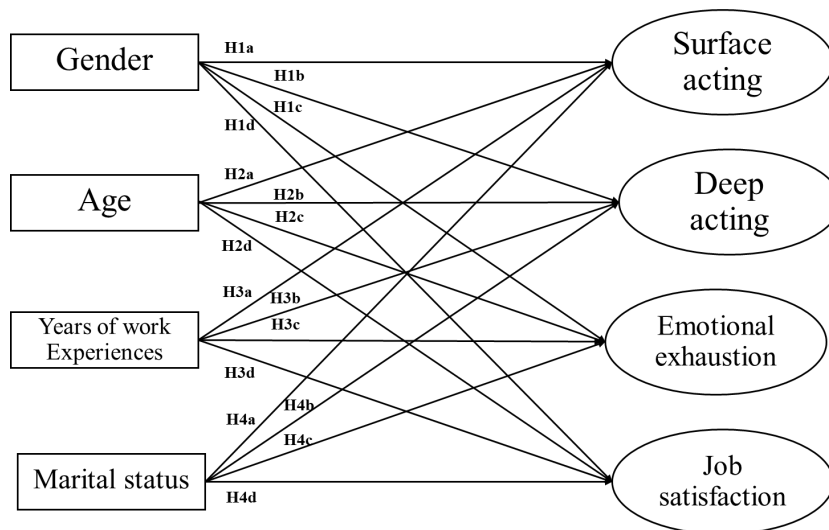


Figure 1. The MIMIC model for the study of individual factors of hotel frontline employees—gender, age, years of work experience, and marital status—and their effects on surface acting, deep acting, emotional exhaustion, and job satisfaction

The study model has been developed, as shown in Figure 1. The tool was developed to enable the researcher to understand the respondents' demographics and to separate the individuals according to gender, age, years of work experience, and marital status, which formed the characteristics of the population and were used as the control variables for this study. The younger and older age groupings and the junior and senior experience groupings were separated according to the respective mean values. Younger employees were defined as those under 31 years of age, and junior employees were defined as those that had work experience of less than 3 years.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

Data were collected from hotels in Phuket, Thailand, using a questionnaire and a multiple-step sampling technique. The random sampling technique was used to select the hotels, and purposive sampling was used to define the subjects comprising frontline hotel employees. With permission from the hotels, a total of 325 self-administered questionnaires were distributed. The study was conducted during the period from May to July 2018.

The study focuses on structural equation modeling analysis, or the MIMIC concept (multiple indicators

multiple causes), investigating the contextual factors of individuals that can affect personal and job outcomes.

## **Operational Constructs and Measurements**

The original English questionnaires representing the study's four research constructs were translated into Thai and interpreted back into English in order to check for mistranslation. The first part of the questionnaire was developed to enable the researcher to understand the respondents' demographics and to separate the groups of female, younger, junior, and married employees. The second part pertained to the two elements of emotional labor strategy; surface acting was measured using eight items, while deep acting was measured using five items, with the scales derived from the study of Brotheridge and Lee (2003), and Chu and Murrmann (2006). The third part concerned emotional exhaustion and totaled 9 items. The scale included items synthesized and created based on the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). In the fourth part, in order to evaluate job satisfaction, the researcher used scales derived from the MSQ (Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire) by Weiss, Dawis, England, and Lofquist (1967) and consisted of 20 items.

## **Analysis Methods**

This study used the concept of MIMIC (Multiple Indicators Multiple

Causes) in order to incorporate additional variables assumed to influence the latent factors, and also for the testing of the hypotheses regarding the direction of differences between the factors. The concept of MIMIC analysis is to investigate the causes of the latent variables, taking into consideration those caused by other exogenous variables (Krishnakumar & Nagar, 2008). The model consisted of two parts—a measurement model to define the relationship between the latent variable and its indicators and a structural model to specify the causal relationship between each variable and its causal effects (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996). In this study, the gender (female), age (younger), years of work experience (junior), and marital status (married) of hotel frontline employees were designated as individual factor indicators. The controlled variables were set to a dummy value as follows: gender: female = 1, male = 0; age: younger = 1, older = 0; years of work experience: junior employee = 1, senior employee = 0; marital status: married employee = 1, single employee = 0. The younger and older age groups and the junior and senior groups were, however, separated according to their respective mean values. After controlling for these individual factors, the direct paths could indicate the differences in these factor indicators, and could be attributed to the covariates of the results; namely, surface acting, deep acting, emotional exhaustion, and job satisfaction.

## **RESULTS**

### **Descriptive Statistics**

The sample of 325 respondents, was comprised of 190 females and 135 males with ages ranging from 20 to 59. After the younger and older age groups, and the junior and senior groups were separated according to their respective mean values, 202 of the respondents were designated to the younger group while 123 were placed in the older grouping; 220 were designated to the junior group, while 105 were placed in the senior group. Regarding marital status, 100 respondents were married, while 225 were single.

### **Measurement Model**

In the first step of the four-step approach (Mulaik & Millsap, 2000) to structural equation modeling (SEM), each latent variable was investigated using exploratory factor analysis in order to select the essential variables for the measurement model. In this process, some indicators with a low factor loading were eliminated. Thus, the measurement model had a total of 18 indicators, consisting of 3 indicators for surface acting, 3 indicators for deep acting, 5 indicators for emotional exhaustion, and 7 indicators for job satisfaction. In order to investigate all of the construct variables and to evaluate the composite reliability and average variance extracted, the results were reported together with Cronbach's alpha and KMO values. The reliability of the observed variables in each construct was reported using

Cronbach's alpha, each passing the criteria of  $\alpha$  0.720 - 0.896. KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity were used as a measure to accept the adequacy of the sample. The KMO of all the constructs ranged between 0.660 and 0.858. Furthermore, Bartlett's test of sphericity indicated values less than 0.05, demonstrating the validity and suitability of the tool used in this study. The composite reliability score was high (0.746–0.893) when compared with Hair et al.'s (2010) standard of 0.6. This study used standard procedures in evaluating the scale's convergent validity. Each construct exhibited an average extracted variance (AVE) between 0.506 and 0.638. This result was also higher than the standard 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), supporting the

convergent validity of the measures. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed in order to test the measurement model (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). All of the factor loadings were found to be significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), with all measurement items loading on their expected factors. The results for adaptability were chi-squared/degree of freedom ( $df < 2$ ,  $CFI > 0.95$ ,  $TLI > 0.95$ ,  $RMSEA < 0.05$ ,  $SRMR < 0.05$ , which were above the model adaptability standard suggested by Hair et al. (2010). The results of the CFA for each individual construct were above the criteria for the model fit indices suggested by Hair et al. (2010), supporting the unidimensionality of the scales. The results are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Results of validity and reliability of all measurement scales

Variables	$\beta$	t-value	CR	AVE
<b>Surface acting (<math>\alpha = 0.720</math>, KMO = 0.660)</b>			<b>0.746</b>	<b>0.506</b>
I display emotions that I am not actually feeling.	0.841	56.969*		
I fake a good mood when interacting with customers.	0.753	20.623*		
My interactions with customers are very robotic.	0.493	9.602*		
<i>Model fit indices: <math>\chi^2 = 0.721</math>, <math>df = 1</math>, <math>p\text{-value} = 0.396</math>, <math>CFI = 1.000</math>, <math>TLI = 1.004</math>, <math>SRMR = 0.000</math>, <math>RMSEA = 0.009</math></i>				
<b>Deep acting (<math>\alpha = 0.832</math>, KMO = 0.770)</b>			<b>0.892</b>	<b>0.638</b>
When helping customers, if I pretend I am happy,	0.661	19.237*		
I can actually start to feel it.				
When getting ready for work, I tell myself that I am going to have a good day.	0.938	185.886*		
I try to actually experience the emotions that I must show when interacting with customers.	0.773	29.908*		
<i>Model fit indices: <math>\chi^2 = 1.533</math>, <math>df = 1</math>, <math>p\text{-value} = 0.216</math>, <math>CFI = 0.999</math>, <math>TLI = 0.996</math>, <math>SRMR = 0.041</math>, <math>RMSEA = 0.010</math></i>				

**Note:**  $\beta$  = standardized coefficient,  $\chi^2$  = chi-squared,  $df$  = degrees of freedom, RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation, CFI = comparative fit index, TLI = Tucker and Lewis index, SRMR = standardized root mean square residual, \* $p < 0.05$ .

**Table 2.** (continued)

Variables	$\beta$	t-value	CR	AVE
<b>Emotional exhaustion (<math>\alpha = 0.896</math>, KMO = 0.833)</b>			<b>0.893</b>	<b>0.627</b>
Working with people all day is really a strain for me.	0.768	29.751*		
I feel burned out from my work.	0.867	42.115*		
I feel frustrated by my job.	0.899	51.930*		
I feel I'm working too hard on my job.	0.745	24.609*		
Working with people directly puts too much stress on me.	0.656	18.546*		
<i>Model fit indices: <math>\chi^2 = 4.318</math>, <math>df = 2</math>, <math>p</math>-value = 0.116, CFI = 0.998, TLI = 0.988, SRMR = 0.060, RMSEA = 0.010</i>				
<b>Job satisfaction (<math>\alpha = 0.887</math>, KMO = 0.858)</b>			<b>0.881</b>	<b>0.516</b>
The competence of my supervisor in making decisions.	0.771	21.275*		
Being able to do things that don't go against my conscience.	0.646	16.860*		
The way my job provides for steady employment.	0.708	20.939*		
The chance to do something that makes use of my abilities.	0.700	20.527*		
The way my co-workers get along with each other.	0.786	27.874*		
The praise I get for doing a good job.	0.691	19.649*		
The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job.	0.715	21.436*		
<i>Model fit indices: <math>\chi^2 = 11.961</math>, <math>df = 11</math>, <math>p</math>-value = 0.367, CFI = 0.999, TLI = 0.998, SRMR = 0.016, RMSEA = 0.018</i>				

**Note:**  $\beta$  = standardized coefficient,  $\chi^2$  = chi-squared,  $df$  = degrees of freedom, RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation, CFI = comparative fit index, TLI = Tucker and Lewis index, SRMR = standardized root mean square residual, \* $p < 0.05$ .

Table 3 displays the assessment of discriminant validity, which compares the square root for each value of average variance extracted (AVE), as shown in the diagonal, with the corresponding correlation coefficients (off-diagonal) for each construct, in their respective rows and columns (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

After comparing this value to the correlation of interest, the values of the square root of AVE were all larger than the value of the respective constructs. Thus, discriminant validity could be accepted for this measurement model and the discriminant validity between the constructs is supported.

**Table 3.** Discriminant validity of all constructs considered for the model

	Mean	S.D.	Surface acting	Deep acting	Emotional exhaustion	Job satisfaction
<b>Gender</b>	-	-				
<b>Age</b>	0.614	0.483				
<b>Years of work experiences</b>	0.677	0.468				
<b>Marital status</b>	-	-				
<b>Surface Acting</b>	0.520	0.589	<b>(0.711)</b>			
<b>Deep Acting</b>	-0.030	0.837	-0.114	<b>(0.799)</b>		
<b>Emotional Exhaustion</b>	0.187	0.729	0.615	-0.434	<b>(0.792)</b>	
<b>Job Satisfaction</b>	-0.084	0.626	-0.500	0.585	-0.690	<b>(0.718)</b>

**Note:** The bold numbers in parentheses on the diagonal are the square root of average variance extracted.

### **Structural Equation Modeling: Analysis using the MIMIC Technique**

In the second step, the MIMIC model was applied for analysis of the data. The MIMIC method analysis in this study incorporated additional variables assumed to influence the latent factors and also the testing of the hypotheses regarding the direction of differences between factors. Based on the hypotheses of the study pertaining to the individual factors of employees, namely gender, age, years of work experience, and marital status, the findings identified the following effects on emotional labor and job outcomes. Firstly, the effect of gender was found to be insignificant regarding surface acting, deep acting, emotional exhaustion, and also job satisfaction, with no significant difference observed for female employees in comparison to male employees. Hence, hypotheses H1a, H1b, H1c, and H1d were rejected. Age did have a positive

significant effect on surface acting, a negatively significant effect on deep acting, a positively significant effect on emotional exhaustion, and a negatively significant effect on job satisfaction, with younger employees having significantly higher levels of surface acting, lower levels of deep acting, higher emotional exhaustion, and lower job satisfaction. Thus, hypotheses H2a, H2b, H2c, and H2d were accepted.

Regarding the effect of the length of employees' work experience, the findings showed a significant effect, whereby junior employees had significantly higher levels of surface acting, thus supporting hypothesis H3a. However, hypotheses H3b, H3c, and H3d were rejected, as there was no significant difference between junior and senior employees regarding deep acting, emotional exhaustion, or job satisfaction. The findings of the study further showed that marital status of employees had no significant effect on surface acting, deep acting, or job



satisfaction, but did have a significant positive effect on emotional exhaustion. Thus, hypothesis H4c was accepted while hypotheses H4a, H4b, and H4d were rejected.

**Table 4.** The model relationships obtained

Relationship	$\beta$	t-value	Hypothesis supported
Female → Surface acting	-0.122	-1.785	Not support H1a
Female → Deep acting	0.071	1.197	Not support H1b
Female → Emotional exhaustion	-0.080	-1.403	Not support H1c
Female → Job satisfaction	0.044	0.747	Not support H1d
Younger → Surface acting	0.175*	2.248	Support H2a
Younger → Deep acting	-0.169*	-2.525	Support H2b
Younger → Emotional exhaustion	0.208*	3.235	Support H2c
Younger → Job satisfaction	-0.198*	-2.944	Support H2d
Junior → Surface acting	0.183*	2.385	Support H3a
Junior → Deep acting	0.042	0.635	Not support H3b
Junior → Emotional exhaustion	-0.011	-0.172	Not support H3c
Junior → Job satisfaction	0.059	0.885	Not support H3d
Married → Surface acting	0.133	1.850	Not support H4a
Married → Deep acting	0.057	0.911	Not support H4b
Married → Emotional exhaustion	0.169*	2.840	Support H4c
Married → Job satisfaction	-0.036	-0.569	Not support H4d

**Note:**  $\beta$  = standardized coefficient,  $\chi^2$  = chi-squared, df = degrees of freedom, RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation, CFI = comparative fit index, TLI = Tucker and Lewis index, SRMR = standardized root mean square residual, \* $p < 0.05$ .

## CONCLUSIONS

The results of the MIMIC model analysis in this study found that gender, specifically if employees were female, did not affect the emotional labor strategy for either surface acting or deep acting, nor the job outcomes of emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. On the other hand, age, specifically

whether the employees were younger, had significant effects on their emotional labor strategy both in terms of surface acting and deep acting. These findings were consistent with previous studies, which suggested that age has a relationship with emotional labor. Similarly, regarding job outcomes, younger employees were seen to experience more emotional exhaustion and lower job

satisfaction at work. The study also found significant effects of work experience in that the employees with less work experience would manipulate their surface acting in their service interactions. Marital status had positive significant effects on emotional exhaustion whereby married employees were found to have signs of emotional exhaustion in their service work, a key element of burnout.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

In terms of further practical implications, hotels should provide different human resource managerial management approaches for different types of employees, including factors such as age, work experience, and family status. For instance, organizations could take advantage of the multiple skilled emotional strategies of older employees for recruitment and placement. Tailored training workshops that suit workers' unique age needs should be provided to employees in order to encourage them to use their deep acting skills in the workplace (Cheung & Tang, 2010). Furthermore, appropriate types of employees (junior and senior employees) should be allocated to the most suitable work in order to minimize negative and maximize positive emotions (Cho, Rutherford, & Park, 2013). Additionally, hotels should develop activities which support the relationship between the work and family of their frontline employees. When work and family

demands are balanced, and interference from one domain with the other is minimized, employees demonstrate a more positive attitude toward their jobs (Zhao et al., 2014).

In order to solve the negative results of the emotional labor strategies used, as well as surface acting and deep acting on the part of frontline employees, and also to increase the job satisfaction and lower the emotional dissonance which can lead to emotional exhaustion, it is suggested that organizations should provide useful and practical considerations in their selection processes, individually and in accordance with the nature of each employee. For instance, the selection procedure ought to include the assessment of prescribed job attributes (Mann, 2007) and endeavor to recruit and hire employees that are a good fit with frontline jobs, which require intense social interaction. Good hiring decisions should be made regarding candidates that value customer satisfaction and service quality excellence (Lam & Chen, 2012; Lee & Ok, 2012). Hur et al. (2014) suggested that organizations should require a desirable emotional regulation strategy when hiring new employees by focusing on developing methods to identify and hire employees that would not hide their true emotions and also by fostering a work setting which consistently promotes genuinely positive employee emotions (Cho, Rutherford, Friend, Hamwi, & Park, 2017).

The organization should also develop inventories to measure emotional labor strategies in order to alleviate the adverse effects of surface acting and employ emotional development programs to adopt employees' emotional competence. For example, personal development programs are necessary to enable employees to display positive emotions without emotional dissonance (Lee & Ok, 2012). It is evident that deep acting has potential benefits for employees, and also in terms of customer outcomes (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). Strategic plans and training should be conducted regarding service values and methods in order to convey a wide variety of emotional expressions which would be more likely to result in deep acting. The implications of favorable display rules should be formulated (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Cho et al., 2017; Jung & Yoon, 2014; Shani, Uriely, Reichel, & Ginsburg, 2014) in order to improve and maintain high-quality service while protecting frontline employees from the harmful effects of emotional labor. Additionally, rewards such as promotions and bonuses, should be given to employees that have demonstrated high service quality (Seymour, 2000; Shani et al., 2014).

Organizations should focus on reactive steps in order to help employees cope with their emotional exhaustion, for example, training them to make the most efficient and effective use of their emotional resources to help reduce and prevent

physical and cognitive stress (Cho et al., 2017).

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The MIMIC analysis in this study demonstrated that the age and work experience of hotel frontline employees indeed affects emotional labor. One of the limitations of this study is that it only discussed the different effects of individual factors on specific groups without making a broader comparison between the two ends of the factor spectrum, e.g., younger and older; junior and senior; and single and married employees. Thus, a study that compares the level of job outcomes between those groups of frontline hotel employees should be carried out.

Another limitation is that in this study, the personal factors affecting emotional labor and job outcomes were rated by the subjects themselves, and these ratings could be biased. Future research could also consider asking the customers and managers of service organizations to evaluate hotel frontline employees by using this study's model. In addition, this study used a questionnaire and quantitative methods to collect data from hotel frontline employees. It would be appropriate to employ focus groups and in-depth interviews in future qualitative studies to collect more in-depth data in order to build greater detail regarding the knowledge of individual factors, emotional labor, and job outcomes.

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