

Study On The Antecedents And Consequences Of Emotional Labor At Work Of Lgu Front-Line Employees In Batangas Province

Gina D. Bonifacio

Batangas State University, College of Accountancy Business Economics and International Hospitality Management
gdbmarinecor@yahoo.com

Abstract. This study determined the emotional labor (EL) at work of front-line employees in local government sector in Batangas Province. Specifically, it sought to describe the employees' individual characteristics in terms of affectivity and empathy, consequences of EL in terms of job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion, and moderator of EL in terms of social support and job autonomy. Further, this study explained the emotional labor of the respondents with regards to effects of antecedents to EL, and the effects of EL to its consequences and when social support and job autonomy moderate. Lastly, proposed a human resource development program based on the results of the study.

Keywords: Emotional Labor, Front-liners, Local Government Units, Emotional Exhaustion, Job Satisfaction

I. Introduction

Service sector is a vital component of any country's economy. It makes a direct and significant contribution to gross domestic product (GDP), creates jobs and provides important inputs for each player in the economy. Due to this, growth and development of one's economy can also be directly attributed to the role of this sector. The major components of service sector of every economy are the health, education and utility sectors. As a matter of fact, most countries including the Philippines frequently generate around 50 percent of their GDP from the mentioned sector. The common issues to the providers are the quality of their service which is highly flexible with its performer or the front line employees. Thus, studies such as service quality and the proficiency of the employees have always been a topic of research in other sectors and industries. However, existing studies related to service quality and the proficiency of its performers leave a gap on how to enhance service delivery. Further, the antecedents of these gaps have not been well explored in research. Among these antecedents, the researcher found the employees' emotional labor as a significant factor that is worth delving on. Emotional labor is the display of expected emotions by service agents during service encounters. It is performed through surface acting, deep acting, or the expression of genuine emotion. Surface acting requires an individual to exhibit physical signs, such as smiling, that reflect emotions customers want to experience. On the other hand, deep acting takes surface acting one step further. This time, instead of faking an emotion that customers may want to see, an employee will actively try to experience the emotion they are displaying. This genuine attempt at empathy helps align the emotions one is experiencing with the emotions one is displaying. Genuine acting occurs when individuals are asked to display emotions that are aligned with their own. The idea is simple: staff practicing emotional labor is required to express emotions they do not necessarily feel. They are required to smile, to be positive, to appear relaxed, or whatever they actually experience. Hence, they have to learn to become method actors. They must really experience emotions to be able to convincingly portray them. Arlie Russell Hochschild through her book "The Managed Heart : Commercialization of Human Feelings" explained that service workers, whose emotions are

"managed and controlled" by their employers, become alienated from their real feelings. The sorts of emotions are showing patience, friendliness, curiosity, while suppressing boredom, frustration and anger. Since emotional labor is commonly exercised for jobs that require employees to have direct contact with customers, they are the class that is most prone to such alienation. This class of employees is commonly referred to as front-line employees. [1] Front-line employees or front-liners is a general term used to describe the customer service employees who play a role in a typical sales and service organization. Retail sales and service employees are often referred to as a company's front-line workers because they usually have the most consistent, direct interaction with customers. Moreover, front-liners are most commonly found on industry sector of government units. In the 21st century environment,, excellent customer service has become the core competitive advantage. Since, many services are delivered by people in real time, service providers have always been expected to act in a particular manner. This is true to all sectors, but is extremely applicable to the academic sector. They have to exhibit a certain aura that shows warmth and approachability in engaging with their superiors, peers, and especially, students. This becomes part of the foundation upon which they build their professional relationships and conduct their responsibilities as frontliners. As such, it is vital for them to be able to manage their emotions even during situations that may compromise their composure. This is of no difference when it comes to the sector of local government unit. Front liners are dealing with day to day transactions with people from different sects of society as clients. Being in the public service, they are required to exhibit service delivery in a way that is pleasing to everyone. They should also adhere to the level and standards of public service the government should give to its citizens. Moreover, in public service, perceptions of service quality rely heavily on views of the citizens, who are the beneficiaries of public services. In order to create a positive service interaction, government workers are expected to display a limited range of emotions. In fact, many employers encourage street-level bureaucrats, the ones who interact daily with citizens, to exhibit positive behavior, such as enthusiasm and cheerfulness, as they believe that these qualities will increase customer satisfaction. On the surface, emotional labor can seem something normal and commonplace in an economy where ser-

vice jobs are so ubiquitous. But as a lot of research shows, the pressure to produce and manufacture certain emotional states can be more draining for some employees than others. When thinking through various workplace inequalities, such as wage gaps and a lack of diversity in certain occupations, it is just as critical to consider how important unseen labor is in shaping how work gets done, and who gets to do it. In the light of the aforementioned instances, this study focused on the concept, definition, structure, emotion work strategies, measurement, antecedents, consequences and the possible mediator of emotional labor. The emotion of individuals, as members of organizations, has long been the topic of research in business administration, although the focus of the past studies has been in terms of sales and profit increase based on organizational effectiveness, not in terms of the value of individuals. Although an organization also needs to be treated as an organism, it is clear that the presence of individuals in the framework of performance-based thinking of the organization has been less emphasized.

II. Objectives of the study

This study aims to determine the emotional labor at work of front line employees in the local government sector. Specifically, it sought to answer the following:

1. What type of emotional labor do the employees perform at work?
2. How may the respondents be described based on the following:
 - 2.1. individual Characteristics
 - 2.1.1. affectivity
 - 2.1.2. empathy
 - 2.2. consequences
 - 2.2.1. job satisfaction
 - 2.2.2. emotional exhaustion
3. Moderator:
 - 2.3.1. social support
 - 2.3.2. job autonomy
3. How may the following explain the emotional labor of the respondents?
 - 3.1. effects of antecedents to emotional labor
 2. effects of emotional labor to its consequences
 3. effects of emotional labor to its consequences when social support and job autonomy moderate.
4. What Human Resource Development Program maybe proposed based on the results of the study?

III. Methodology

The main purpose of this study is to analyze the antecedents and consequences of emotional labor of front line employees in local government service sector in Batangas province. In view of this, the researcher used the descriptive method of research in gathering information about the existing condition. The researcher believed that this was the most appropriate design because it helped explain the information gathered and contributed in analyzing the data needed in determining the possible antecedents and consequence of emotional labor at work of front-line employees from the public sector. Moreover, this also ensured that the questions raised were answered effectively since it followed systematic processes in collecting and obtaining the necessary and accurate information in making the study. Specifically, the information used in the study came from the outlook, opinions and insights of the respondents as

specified in the standardized questionnaire distributed to them. Furthermore, this method was appropriate to the study because the study sought to answer one of the current problems and status of the subject of the study. Overall, the respondents of the study are 228 front-line employees from Local Government Unit (LGUs). Since the availability of data for the sector is the main challenge for the researcher, multi-stage random sampling design were utilized to ensure that all members of the population were given equal chance to be part of the respondents. These are the common sampling design used by SWS, Nielsen and Citizen Satisfaction Index System which are the known survey teams in the Philippines. The researcher used a standardized questionnaire as an instrument to acquire the needed information. The researcher surfed the internet and browsed books related to human resource management to get a standardized questionnaire related to the study. The most appropriate standardized questionnaire was developed by Kay Hei-Lin Chu (2002) who used it in her study. The said questionnaire was developed through item generation and scale purification, and ends at reliability and validity analysis. For this study's purpose, the researcher assured the respondents that all the data that they provided would be highly confidential. All questionnaires that were retrieved as part of the research were well kept and sealed. Further, during the distribution of the research instrument, the researcher ensured that no respondents were forced to answer, and was merely based on their willingness to answer the instrument. The respondents answered the parts of the questionnaire by putting a circle on the appropriate number that corresponds to the responses. For part 1, 1 to 7 means rarely to often, and for parts 2-4, 1-7, ranges from strongly agree to strongly disagree For section 1 of the questionnaire, the researcher took the average of each type of emotional labor, with the highest mean serving as the type of emotional labor performed by the respondents. It can be either surface acting, deep acting, or genuine acting. For sections 2 and 3, the researcher got the total score for each variable. The following is the scoring process for this section

Score	Level of individual characteristics/ Social Support and Job Autonomy
Less than 15	Low
15-24	Average
Above 24	High

For section 4, the researcher got the total score for each variable. The following are the scoring for this section:

Score	Level of individual characteristics/ Social Support and Job Autonomy
Less than 60	Low
60-99	Average
Above 99	High

All the data gathered through the questionnaire were incorporated into a master tally sheet so that the total number of responses in each item could be easily analyzed. The data gathered were interpreted and analyzed through relative frequency and percentage, and regression analysis.

IV. Results and discussion

This section presents the finding of the study. The researcher analyzed the data gathered through library research and review of literature.

1. Assessment on the emotional labor at work of the Respondents

Table 4.1 shows how frequent front liners perform the different types of emotional labor at work. Emotional labor in this study is categorized into three: genuine acting, surface acting, and deep acting.

Table 1
Emotional Labor at work of the Respondents

Level		LGU	Total
Genuine	F	95	138
	%	41.7%	41.7%
Surface	f	24	36
	%	10.5%	10.9%
Deep	f	109	157
	%	47.8%	47.4%
Total	f	228	331
	%	100.0%	100.0%

It is also shown in the table that front liners in LGUs frequently perform emotional labor in the deep acting category, taking 47.8 percent or 109 out of 228 respondents, while only 41.7 percent or 95 out of 228 respondents perform emotional labor in the genuine acting category, and the least are those performing in the surface acting category, with only 10.5 percent or only 22 out of 228 respondents. This implies that majority of the front liners in LGUs alter their feelings and emotions in order to meet the desired emotion necessary in carrying out their job. It also noticeable that front liners are also into performing emotional labor in genuine acting, which allows them to feel what they really feel in doing their job. The statement in the questionnaire that relates to this is "When working with customers, I attempt to create certain emotions in myself that present the image that my company desires". This is very well exhibited in local government units as they always need to adhere with the highest standards of public service. This sometimes results to the creation of an emotion which they do not necessarily feel, but they are not forced to fake it as well. These results, according to the FGD participants, are due to cases wherein they need to actually feel the emotions of their client to better under-

stand them. There are also instances wherein they just have to demonstrate what they should feel as it is similar with the emotion of the client. Participants from the LGU also explained that the result from their sector is because of the fact that public servants as they are and from the LGUs at that, they already have familiarity with their clients and seeing them and being able to help and assist them is already part of their day to day working life. What they actually do is serve their constituents as their primary mandate. This is the reason why most of them are in the deep and genuine acting categories and only a minimum are in the surface acting category. When asked why, it was assumed that those in the surface acting category might have been new entrants in the LGUs.

2. Description of the antecedents, consequences and moderators of emotional labor.

The level of individual characteristics of the respondents in terms of affectivity are as follows; high level of affectivity got a frequency of 146 or 64 percent, average level of affectivity got a frequency of 82 or 36 percent and none have low level of affectivity. On the other hand, the level of individual characteristics in terms of empathy are as follows; a frequency of 114 or 50 percent is characterized to be having high level of empathy, 112 or 49.1 percent have average level and 2 or 0.9 percent have low level. This is for the reason that the field of work in LGUs is identified under the public services and it requires them to be more enthusiastic and cheerful while delivering service. When working they are not feeling irritable, upset, scared or jittery. Moreover, front line employees in LGU have low level of emotional exhaustion taking 60.1 percent or 137 out of 228 while there is 37.3 percent or 85 with average level and only 2.6 percent or 6 have high level of emotional exhaustion. Whereas in term of job satisfaction, front liners in LGU have high level of job satisfaction taking 71.1 percent or 162, while, 28.1 percent or 64 have average level and only 0.9 percent or 2 out of all respondents have low level of job satisfaction. This could probably be brought as well by the employees' perception that people with the same job as his/hers are generally satisfied adding up to one's own feeling of satisfaction. On the other hand, given the nature of their job, they may really feel satisfied as they are being filled with so much experience from their transactions to different clients with different situations. Further, front line employees in LGUs have high level of organizational support with 63.6 percent or 145, some of them have average level taking 34.6 percent or 79 and only 1.8 percent or have low level of organizational support. In terms of job autonomy, front line employees on LGUs have average level of job autonomy taking 56.1 percent or 128 while 41.2 percent or 94 have high level and only 2.6 percent or 6 have low level of job autonomy. This implies that in some way respondents feels liberty upon doing their tasks this is probably because the line of work in the government sometimes requires them to follow certain standard. Their job also does not deny them much chance to use their personal initiative or judgment when interacting with customers.

3. Effects of Emotional Labor.

Front line employees' level of affectivity does not affect performance of emotional labor at work. Looking at the empathy level, the results imply that in the sector, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis as the p-value of 0.43

LGU is more than the level of significance of 0.05. This means that the level of empathy has no significant effect on the emotional labor of front liners. Moreover, in terms of effect of emotional labor to job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion, the results implied that in terms of emotional exhaustion, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis as the p-value 0.38 for LGU is more than the level of significance of 0.05. This means that the extent of emotional labor has no significant effect on the level of emotional exhaustion of front liners. While in terms of job satisfaction, it was found out that the extent of emotional labor has no significant effect on the level of job satisfaction of front liners, with the p-value 0.10, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis as this is more than the level of significance of 0.05. The researcher did not test the moderation of social support and job autonomy to the effect of emotional labor to emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction since from the start, the emotional labor has no significant effect to its consequences.

4. Proposed Human Resource Development Program.

A set of activities for the program was formulated to lessen the negative effects and to strengthen the positive effects of emotional labor. The results revealed that the front-liners in the academe and LGU sector perform emotional labor under deep acting category while front-liners in the hospital sector perform under genuine acting. The researcher came up to formulating a Human Resource Development Program that will help front-liners who perform emotional labor under deep acting shift it into performing under genuine acting. Performance of emotional labor under such category brings about more positive impact on employees job performance and decreases the negative effect of emotional labor according to different studies. The Human Resource Development Program consists of wide range of strategies that is focused on enhancing emotional intelligence to close the gap on the real emotions of employees and the emotions needed for the performance of emotional labor.

V. Conclusion

All the assessment considered, the respondents from the sector of LGU were characterized to be performing emotional labor under deep acting category. They also perceived that the level of individual characteristics was high in terms of affectivity and empathy. Additionally, front line employees have low level of emotional exhaustion. But, respondents were found out to be having high level of job satisfaction. Likewise, the respondents perceived that they have high level of organizational support and characteristics. While in terms of job autonomy or characteristics, respondents perceived that they have average level. There was no significant effect brought by individual characteristics in terms of affectivity and empathy to the extent of performance of emotional labor of front line employees. Also, performing emotional labor has no significant effect to job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion of front-liners

VI. Recommendations

The sector involved may develop long term plans to maintain a reasonable level of emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. Also, the management may use positive reinforcement to encourage more job satisfaction and to lessen emotional exhaustion. It is further recommended that the

management may give a close attention to job autonomy and organizational support and develop strategies to strengthen such for the continuous improvement of the level of job satisfaction. They may develop organizational policies and programs that would increase job autonomy and organizational support specifically to front line employees performing emotional labor.

VII. References

- [1] OECD, 2008. *The Contribution of Services to Development and the Role of Trade Liberalization and Regulation*. OECD Global Forum on International Investment
- [2] Russell Hochschild, Arlie 1983. *The managed heart: commercialization of human feeling*. Berkeley: University of California Press. California, USA
- [3] Colella, A., Hitt, M., and Miller, C. 2011. "Organizational Behavior". Hoboken.
- [4] Chu, K. H. 2002. "The Effects of Emotional Labor on Employee Work Outcome (Dissertation, Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksberg)"
- [5] Aamodt, M. G. 2013. "Industrial and Organizational Psychology" 2nd Edition. Cengage Learning Asia Pte Ltd. 151 Lorong Chuan #02-08 New Tech Park Singapore 556741
- [6] Armstrong, M. 2006. "A Handbook of human Resource Management Practice." 10th Edition. Kogan Page Publishing, London.
- [7] Arter, J. and Ford, L. 2013. "Human Relations: A Game Plan for Improving Personal Adjustment" 5th Edition. Pearson Education, Inc. 1 Lake St., Upper Saddle River, NJ 07458.
- [8] Barrick, M., Field, H. S. and Gatewood, R., 2008. "Human Resource Selection." 6th Edition. Thomson South Western. 5191 Natorp Boulevard Mason, OH 45040 USA.
- [9] Burger, J. M. 2000. "Personality." 5th Edition. Wadsworth, a division of Thompson Learning.
- [10] Colquit, J. A., Lepine, J. A., and Wesson, M. J. 2013. "Organizational Behavior: Gaining Performance and Commitment in the Workplace." McGraw- Hill Irwin.
- [11] Daft, R. L., Marcic, D. 2007. "Management: The New Workplace." Thomson South-Western Corp. South-Western, Thomson.
- [12] David, K. and Newstrom, J. W. 1997. "Organizational Behavior: Human Behavior at Work." 10th Edition. Beethoven Publishing, Copyright 1997. The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.
- [13] Franken, R. E. 2007. "Human Motivation." Thomson Wadsworth, Thompson Higher Education 10 Davis Drive Belmont, CA 94002- 3098 USA.

- [14] Gerhart, B. et., al., 2010. "Human Resource Management: Gaining A Competitive Advantage" 7th Edition. McGraw- Hill Education (Asia).
- [15] Glinow, M. V. and McShane, S. L. 2009. "Organizational Behavior: Essentials." 2nd Edition. The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.
- [16] Hellriegel, D. and Slocum, J. W. Jr. 2009, "Principles of Organizational Behavior." 12th Edition. China: South Western Publishing Co.
- [17] Hendon, John R. 2013. "Human Resource Management Functions, Applications, and Skills Development". 2nd Edition. SAGE Publications. CA, USA.
- [18] Ivancevich, J. M., Konopaske, R., Matteson, M. T. 2008. "Organizational Behavior and Management." The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.
- [19] Kinicki, A. and Kreitner, R. 2007. "Organizational Behavior." 7th Edition. McGraw- Hill Irwin.
- [20] Lahey, B. B. 2004. "Psychology: An Introduction". Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- [21] McShane, S. L. and Glinow, M. V. 2009. "Organizational Behavior: Essentials." 2nd Edition. McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.
- [22] Mullins, J. L. 2005. "Management, Skills and Application." 7th Edition. Pearson Education Limited.
- [23] Roebuck, K. 2012. "Emotional Intelligence: High Impact Strategies, What You Need to Know..."
- [24] Salovey, P., Rothman, A., Detweiler, J., and Steward, W. 2000. "Emotional States and Physical Health". American Psychologist.
- [25] Schermerhorn, Jr. J. R. 2005. "Management." 8th Edition. C and E Publishing
- [26] Sirug, W. S. 2011. "Introduction to Business Statistics: A Comprehensive Approach." Mindshapers Co., Inc. 61 Muralla Street, Intramuros, Manila.
- [27] Slocum, J. W. 2009. "Principles of Organizational Behavior." McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.
- [28] Stets, J., and Turner, J. H. 2007. "Handbook of the Sociology of Emotions." 1st Edition, Springer-Verlag US.
- [29] Wharton, Amy S. 2004. "The Sociology of Emotional Labor." Washington State University.
- [30] Zeithaml, A. and Bitner, M. 2000. "Services Marketing: Integrating Customers focus Across the Firm." 2nd Edition, McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. New York.

Author's Profile

Gina D. Bonifacio received AB Behavioral Science from University of Sto. Tomas and MBM at University of Batangas. She will receive her DBA from Batangas State University in September 2018.

