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AN EXPLORATORY INVESTIGATION INTO THE MODERATING EFFECT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON THE EMOTIONAL LABOR AND BURNOUT RELATIONSHIP

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Emotional intelligence has received increased attention in recent years. Much of this attention is due to research that supports a direct relationship between emotional intelligence and positive organizational behaviors. However, little research has investigated the moderating effects of emotional intelligence. This paper addresses this gap in the literature by investigating the moderating effect of emotional intelligence on the emotional labor and burnout relationship. Results support significant direct relationships of both emotional labor and emotional intelligence on burnout. The self-awareness dimension of emotional intelligence also moderated the emotional labor and burnout relationship. Implications for research and practice are discussed.

Introduction

Emotional intelligence has received increased attention among both academics and organizational practitioners in recent years. Much of the appeal of emotional intelligence is due to the increasing number of research studies that support a direct effect of emotional intelligence on employee success and effectiveness. Recent empirical studies support the relationship between emotional intelligence and life success, problem solving, job productivity, and managerial success (Kelley & Caplan, 1993; Sosik & Megerian, 1999; Sternberg, 1996). Evidence is also emerging that indicates that emotional intelligence is related to employee job attitudes such as organizational commitment and decreased levels of experienced workplace stress (Nikolaou & Tsaousis, 2002). The popularity of the construct, coupled with its relationship with positive workplace attitudes and behaviors, have led to the suggestion that emotional intelligence be identified as a positive organizational behavior (POB) construct deserving increased research and management attention (Luthans, 2002).

Although empirical research continues to investigate the direct effects of emotional intelligence, little or no empirical research has investigated the moderating effects that the construct may have on the relationships between important workplace variables. The moderating role of emotional intelligence has been proposed in theoretical research. Specifically, Jordan, Ashkanasy, and Hartel (2002) proposed a moderator effect for emotional intelligence on the relationships between perceived job insecurity and subsequent emotional reactions and coping strategies. However,

with the exception of this study, little to no research has investigated the moderating effects of emotional intelligence.

This study addresses this gap in the emotional intelligence research literature by examining the moderating effect of emotional intelligence on the relationship between emotional labor and employee burnout. Using the model of emotional intelligence developed by Goleman (1995), it is hypothesized that the emotional intelligence dimensions of self-awareness, self-regulation, and social skills moderate the emotional labor and burnout relationship. Individuals with higher levels of these emotional intelligence characteristics will be less likely to burnout given the emotional requirements of the job. Implications for research and practice are discussed.

Emotional Labor and Burnout

Due to the service nature of many jobs, employees increasingly find themselves in situations where they must manage their emotions by expressing emotions contrary to their emotional state. In service sector jobs, it is becoming more common for management to develop strong norms and expectations regarding the display of emotions (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002). For example, employees are expected to smile and be courteous to a customer even though they may not feel like smiling and being nice. Emotional labor results when the employee must express an emotion she does not feel or when she must not express an emotion she does feel. It occurs as the employee modifies their emotions by enhancing, faking or suppressing the emotional state (Grandey, 2000).

Research indicates that organizational display rules often force the regulation of required emotions (Ekman

& Friesen, 1975; Goffman, 1959; Hochschild, 1983). These rules may come in the form of training, selection criteria, implications made by co-workers, and norms established by the leadership (Grandey, 2000). Rafaeli and Sutton (1987) documented that emotional displays will be based on both the organizational context and emotional transactions. The organizational context involves selection, reward systems, and socialization; while the emotional transactions aspect is comprised of reactions of a target person that the employee will look back on for future reference.

There are several mechanisms through which employees attempt to manage their emotions in accordance to display rules in jobs with high emotional labor requirements. One mechanism is surface acting, which is when one manages their emotions and actions so as to appear to be feeling a certain emotion. Secondly, the employee can deep act, which consists of consciously changing one's feelings about the situation so as to produce the desired feelings (Hochschild, 1983). Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) contend that emotional labor doesn't necessarily involve conscious effort, but often can become routine to the employee. However, it should be noted that just because emotional suppression becomes routine does not mean that the emotion isn't felt internally. Often, it is just as strongly felt as if it would be when it is expressed (Richards & Gross, 1999).

Emotional labor requirements can have both positive and negative effects on workers. One positive effect of repressing emotions deals with holding in negative emotions. Negative emotions like anger, hostility, and aggression can have negative ramifications for workplace relationships and customer retention if expressed. It may be beneficial for both individual and organization for the employee to repress negative emotions so as to avoid negative consequences of ineffective emotional displays (Murray, 1985; Tavis, 1984). Therefore, emotional labor may prove to be beneficial to performance under the correct circumstances.

Although there are potential benefits to emotional labor requirements, most research indicates that engagement in emotional labor generally has negative consequences on workers (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002; Gross, 1989; Pennebaker, 1990; Spiegel, Bloom, Kraemer, & Gottheil, 1989). One negative consequence of emotional labor is job burnout. Burnout has been defined as emotional depletion and loss of motivation (Freudenberger, 1975) that includes exhaustion from emotional or physical overextension.

Current research suggests that burnout is often due to organizational and environmental factors experienced

in the work environment (Angerer, 2003; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001), such as emotional labor display rules and requirements. It may result from a reaction to role stress and is quite prevalent among human service professionals unable to deal with excessive demands on their energy, time, and resources (Greer & Wethered, 1984). Faking a smile all day at work could lead to burnout by causing the employee to feel tired and causing him or her to objectify the customer and experience emotional estrangement, which occurs when the employee is unable to tell what he or she actually feels (Grandey, 2000). This results because the organization is controlling a very personal part of a worker, his or her emotions, through display rules. This control is uncomfortable.

The discomfort, plus the added strain of having to fake one emotion while feeling another, can lead to burnout and job stress (Hochschild, 1983). Maslach (1982) found positive correlations between jobs requiring frequent personal transactions between the worker and clients and levels of emotional exhaustion, which is a component of job burnout. Displays of emotion required by caregivers in health care jobs also lead to emotional exhaustion (Kahn (1993). Stressors such as role conflict due to display rules, ambiguity, and over-stimulation can lead to stress immediately. After building up over time, these stressors lead to burnout (Densten, 2001; Gmelch, 1993; Gold and Roth, 1993).

Moderating Role of Emotional Intelligence

Although current research has emphasized the role of organizational and job factors (i.e., emotional labor requirements) in accounting for burnout, it is recognized that these factors may have differential effects on the manner in which different employees experience stress, exhaustion, and burnout (Angerer, 2003; Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002). Due to individual difference variables, some employees may better equipped to cope with emotional labor demands than others. We believe that one such individual difference variable is emotional intelligence. High emotionally intelligent individuals should be better equipped to cope with emotional labor demands and, therefore, experience fewer adverse personal consequences such as burnout.

Emotional intelligence has become a topic of much interest during the last decade in psychology, education, and the management sciences (Goleman, 1997; Jordan, Ashkanasy & Hartle, 2002; Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 1999, Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Much of the interest is due to theoretical propositions and empirical investigations regarding the correlates of emotional

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intelligence. Although there is much interest in the construct, research continues to suffer from an agreed upon definition and precise measurement. While we recognize that several definitions and models of emotional intelligence exist, we have chosen to use the definition and model proposed by Goleman (1995). Goleman defines emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive one's own emotions, to be able to manage these emotions and the emotions of others, and use one's emotions to motivate the self.

Goleman (1998) proposed a model of emotional intelligence based on a definition and initial model proposed by Salovey and Mayer (1990). Goleman identified five dimensions of emotional intelligence: self awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Of these five dimensions, self-awareness, self-regulation, and social skills are hypothesized to moderate the relationship between emotional labor and burnout. These three dimensions are hypothesized to act as a moderator because they concern the ability to understand and control one's emotions and the ability to connect with others in a positive manner by understanding the emotions of others. These abilities should help the individual cope with emotional labor requirements. The ability to motivate oneself and empathy are not believed to relate to the ability to understand and control one's emotional state to the degree as does self-awareness, self-regulation, and social skills. Therefore, only self-awareness, self-regulation, and social skills are hypothesized to function as moderators.

Self-awareness is defined as: the ability to know what one is feeling and to be able to guide decisions based on those emotions at that time. This dimension appears to be the foundation and basis for the other emotional intelligence dimensions. Individuals high in self-awareness are aware of what they are feeling and conscious of the emotions within themselves. This allows them to better understand their emotional state and channel their emotions and behaviors in a productive manner. Individuals high in self-awareness should experience less stress and burnout from high emotional labor demands since they are aware of and understand the emotions they are experiencing; increasing the likelihood they will adopt positive coping strategies.

Hypothesis 1: Self-awareness will moderate the relationship between emotional labor and burnout so that individuals with higher levels of self-awareness will be less likely to experience burnout given the perceived emotional labor demands.

A second dimension of emotional intelligence proposed to moderate the emotional labor and burnout relationship is self-regulation. Self-regulation is the ability to manage one's emotions so that negative emotions inconsistent with display rules do not interfere with task performance (Goleman, 1998). Self-regulation consists of managing emotional states so that they do not interfere with expectations or goal achievement. It does not necessarily mean denying or repressing emotions, but understanding and acting on them in a manner which enables the employees to handle a situation productively (Cook & Hunsaker, 2001). It is hypothesized that self-regulation of emotions should enable the employee to better cope with emotional labor demands by managing the emotional state to lead to more effective and productive resolutions of emotional labor experiences.

Hypothesis 2: Self-regulation will moderate the relationship between emotional labor and burnout so that individuals with higher levels of self-regulation will be less likely to experience burnout given the perceived emotional labor demands.

A third hypothesized moderator of the emotional labor and burnout relationship is social skills. Goleman (1998) defines social skills as the ability to handle emotions when dealing with relationships so that an individual is able to read situations appropriately in order to persuade, lead, negotiate, settle disputes, cooperate, and work well in a situation. An important aspect of social skills is the ability to respond effectively to the emotional displays of others. For example, a bank teller with high social skills would be able to understand and respond to the emotions of an angry customer. She would be able to connect with the person and diffuse the emotionally charged situation. The ability to understand, connect with others, and diffuse conflict should decrease the stress and exhaustion experienced in intense emotional labor situations.

Hypothesis 3: Social skills will moderate the relationship between emotional labor and burnout so that individuals with higher levels of social skills will be less likely to experience burnout given the perceived emotional labor demands.

METHOD

Participants

The sample (N = 118) consisted of individuals

employed within the residence life and services department of a large Midwestern university. Of the 118 subjects, 39 (33.05%) were males and 79 (66.95%) were females. The mean age was 20.80 ($SD = 11.55$). The age range of subjects was from 19-60 years of age. There were approximately 71 resident assistants, 7 hall directors, 7 assistant hall directors, 2 area coordinators, 3 assistant directors, 1 director, and 22 administrative staff members who completed surveys which measured perceived emotional labor requirements of the position, emotional intelligence and experienced burnout.

Measures

Emotional labor. The 14 item emotional work requirement scale (EWRS, Friezt, Jones, Best & Downey, 2002; Jones & Best, 1995) was used in this study. The EWRS was created to measure emotional display rules and requirements in organizations. Subjects rated each item on the scale as to how often they felt required to behave or feel a certain way (on a scale ranging from (1) not at all required to (5) always required). This scale was adapted from Ashforth & Humphrey (1993). Coefficient alpha of the scale was .84 which is an acceptable reliability coefficient.

Burnout. A 20 item burnout scale (Burn & Payment, 2000: 33) was used to measure the subject's degree of exhaustion and burnout. Subjects rated each item on a scale ranging from 1 (almost never) to 5 (always). The coefficient alpha of the scale was .88 which represents acceptable reliability for the scale.

Emotional intelligence. The emotional intelligence dimensions of self-awareness, self-regulation, and social skills were measured with 18 items taken from the EQ index (EQI, Rahim & Psenicka, 2002). The EQI was developed to measure the five emotional intelligence dimensions proposed by Goleman (1995). The overall 18 item measure of the three dimensions had acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .83$). Five items measured subjects' level of self-awareness ($\alpha = .71$). Six items measured self-regulation ($\alpha = .70$). Seven items measured the social skills dimension ($\alpha = .69$). All the subscales demonstrated acceptable reliability for exploratory stages of research such as this (Nunnally, 1967). Subjects rated each item on a scale ranging from 1 (almost never) to 5 (always).

Procedure

The 52 item questionnaire was distributed to subjects at staff meetings within the residence life and

services department. Attached to the front of all questionnaires was a letter explaining the purpose of the study and that participation was completely voluntarily. The surveys for area coordinators, assistant directors, and directors were handed out during Monday morning staff meetings. The hall directors and assistant hall directors completed their surveys during their area meetings held on Tuesdays. The participating resident assistants completed their surveys during their building meetings held every Wednesday.

Finally, the administrative workers completed their surveys during their departmental meetings held on Thursday. Questionnaires were to be completed only during these meetings and were completely confidential. No names or any type of identifiable information were included on the surveys.

RESULTS

Although the measures used in this study have been psychometrically developed in previous research, a decision was made to conduct factor analyses on the three scales to make sure that the factor structure of the scales from this sample was consistent with those reported in previous research (see references for respective scales in methods section). Separate factor analyses were conducted for each of the three scales. Results of each analysis were consistent with results reported in previous research, with no significant departures in factor structure. Since each of the scales have been psychometrically developed in academic research and reliability coefficients and factor analytic results were consistent with previous psychometric scale data, the three scales were deemed appropriate for use in this study. Furthermore, because the scales have been psychometrically developed previously, it was decided not to include tables containing specific factor loadings in this study.

Three separate 3 x 4 (emotional intelligence dimension x emotional labor) factorial ANOVAs were conducted to test the hypotheses. Burnout was the dependent variable with both emotional labor and one of the three dimensions of emotional intelligence entered as independent variables for the respective analysis. Both main effects and interaction effects of the independent variables on burnout were examined, although the main interest was on the interaction effects among the independent variables.

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations among the variables included in the study. Correlations of interest are modest, although many are statistically significant.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among the Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. EL	2.95	.58	-					
2. BO	2.34	.66	.25**	-				
3. EI	3.75	.46	.27**	-.10	-			
4. SA	3.80	.60	.06	1.27**	.72**	-		
5. SR	3.68	.61	.32**	-.04	.82**	.37**	-	
6. SS	3.76	.53	.24**	.02	.84**	.44**	.55**	-

** p < .01. EL = emotional labor; BO = burnout; EI = 18 item emotional intelligence scale; SA = self-awareness; SR = self-regulation; SS = social skills.

A 3 x 4 (self-awareness x emotional labor) factorial ANOVA was conducted to test hypothesis 1. Hypothesis 1 stated that self-awareness would moderate the relationship between emotional labor demands and burnout. Significant main effects of both emotional labor and self-awareness on burnout were found.

Furthermore, consistent with hypothesis 1 in the previous, results indicated that self-awareness moderated the relationship between emotional labor and burnout, $F(6, 101) = 2.83, p < .05$. Hypothesis 1 was supported. See table 2 below for the ANOVA results.

Table 2: Self-Awareness Analysis of Variance for Burnout

Source	df	f	p
EL	3	4.43**	.006
SA	2	5.94**	.004
EL x SA	6	2.83*	.014
Within-Group Error	101	(.324)	

*p < .05; **p < .01. Value enclosed in parentheses represents the mean square error. EL = emotional labor; SA = self-awareness.

A post hoc Tukey's HSD test was conducted to identify significant mean differences between the groups in the ANOVA. An examination of group means in table 3 provides insight into the nature of the moderator effect. An examination of the results of the Tukey's HSD test reveals that burnout is highest for those individuals with low self-awareness who experience moderate to high levels of emotional labor requirements. Moderate levels of self-awareness significantly decrease experienced exhaustion and burnout in the moderate to high emotional labor condition. Self-awareness appears to be most effective at decreasing experienced exhaustion and burnout in the low to moderate and high emotional labor conditions.

These results are consistent with hypothesis 1 in the previous page that individuals with higher levels of self-awareness emotional intelligence will experience decreased levels of burnout. What is difficult to explain is why high self-awareness individuals in moderate to high emotional labor conditions experience higher levels of burnout (although not statistically significantly higher) than those in the high emotional labor condition. A possible explanation could be that high emotional labor environments require a consistent and repeated use of emotional intelligence skills that enable the employee to perfect those skills and better cope with high emotional requirements over time.

Table 3: Mean Comparison of Emotional Labor and Self-Awareness Groups Self-Awareness

	Low	Moderate	High
Low EL	2.30	2.00 ^{gk}	2.08 ^g
Low-Moderate EL	2.48	2.30 ^g	1.95 ^{gk}
Moderate-High EL	3.34 ^{bcdhfl}	2.31 ^g	2.48
High EL	2.46	2.88 ^{bfl}	1.99 ^{gk}

^a = significantly different from Low EL-low self-awareness at .05; ^b = significantly different from Low EL-moderate self-awareness at .05; ^c = significantly different from Low EL- high self-awareness at .05; ^d =

significantly different from Low-moderate EL-low self-awareness at .05; ^e = significantly different from Low-moderate EL-moderate self-awareness at .05; ^f = significantly different from Low-moderate EL-high self-awareness at .05; ^g = significantly different from Moderate-high EL-low self-awareness at .05; ^h = significantly different from Moderate-high EL-moderate self-awareness at .05; ⁱ = significantly different from

Moderate-high EL-high self-awareness at .05; ^j = significantly different from High EL-low self-awareness at .05; ^k = significantly different from High EL-moderate self-awareness at .05; ^l = significantly different from High EL-high self-awareness at .05.

A 3 x 4 (Self-Regulation x Emotional Labor) factorial ANOVA was conducted to test hypothesis 2. See table 4 for the results of the ANOVA.

Table 4: Self-Regulation Analysis of Variance for Burnout

Source	df	f	p
EL	3	2.13*	.10
SA	2	.792	.456
EL x SR	6	2.80	.945
Within-Group Error	99	(.407)	

*p < .10. Value enclosed in parentheses represents the mean square error. EL = emotional labor. SR = self-regulation.

Hypothesis 2 stated that self-regulation would moderate the relationship between emotional labor requirements and burnout so that individuals high in self-regulation would be less likely to experience burnout. Results of the analysis indicated a significant main effect of emotional labor at the p < .10 level of significance. No main effect was found for self-regulation. The interaction term also failed to reach significance. Therefore, the results failed to support hypothesis 2.

It is interesting that in this analysis emotional labor has no significant main effect on burnout at the p < .05 level of significance. One explanation for this is that the two independent variables are accounting for common variance in burnout. The correlation between emotional labor and self-regulation is moderate (r = .32) and not strong enough to warrant a concern with multicollinearity. Collinearity diagnostics indicate that multicollinearity is not a problem. The tolerance value is .894 and the variance inflation factor (VIF) value is 1.118. Conventionally, tolerance values below .10 and VIF values above 5.0 indicate multicollinearity

problems. The tolerance and VIF values in this analysis are clearly within accepted ranges.

Because the collinearity diagnostics indicated no problem with multicollinearity, there was no need to center the variables and conduct subsequent analyses using the centered variables. Although multicollinearity does not appear to be an issue, it does appear that the correlation between the two variables is high enough that they fail to account for enough unique variance in burnout to be statistically significant at the .05 level.

A 3 x 4 (Social Skills x Emotional Labor) factorial ANOVA was also conducted to test hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 3 stated that social skills would moderate the relationship between emotional labor requirements and burnout so that individuals high in social skills would be less likely to experience burnout. Results of the analysis indicated a significant main effect of emotional labor. However, there was no main effect of social skills and no moderator effect of social skills on the emotional labor and burnout relationship. The results failed to support hypothesis 3. See table 5 for the results of the ANOVA.

Table 5: Social Skills Analysis of Variance for Burnout

Source	df	f	p
EL	3	2.79*	.044
SS	2	1.60	.206
EL x SS	6	.540	.777
Within-Group Error	99	(.390)	

*p < .05. Value enclosed in parentheses represents the mean square error. EL = emotional labor. SS = social skills.

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Discussion

Although only one of the three moderator hypotheses was supported, this study does take a first step in the empirical investigation of the moderating role of emotional intelligence. Considering the exploratory nature of the research, we believe that the results are encouraging and warrant future investigation into the moderating role of emotional intelligence as well as the differential prediction and correlation of the emotional intelligence dimensions (Goleman, 1995).

Although not a central focus of the present study, the results do provide evidence that the different emotional intelligence dimensions are differentially related to certain outcome variables. Main effects of the self-awareness dimension on burnout were found. However, main effects of self-regulation and social skills on burnout were not supported.

This suggests that different emotional intelligence dimensions could be more or less important depending upon the desired outcome a manager desires to achieve or specific problem he is confronted with (i.e., high burnout and turnover among employees). Future research is needed that examines the correlates of the individual emotional intelligence subscales instead of the overall emotional intelligence construct that aggregates the individual dimensions.

The most encouraging result was the evidence for hypothesis 1 supporting the moderating role of the self-awareness dimension on the emotional labor and burnout relationship. Results indicate that employees low in self-awareness tend to experience highest degrees of stress and burnout in those situations characterized by moderate to high emotional labor requirements.

One explanation as to why the moderate to high condition may be most stressful for low self-awareness individuals is that emotional labor demands and expectations may not be as consistent and stable in this condition as they might be in high emotional labor environments. The lack of consistency in managing emotional displays may actually create more stress for the low self-awareness individual with low coping mechanisms.

High self-awareness emotional intelligence does appear to be beneficial to employees in high emotional labor conditions. Employees in this group experienced some of the lowest levels of reported burnout. Higher levels of self awareness can relate to lower levels of burnout for several reasons. One is because someone who is more self-aware is better able to know whether something he or she is doing at work is making him or herself more tired or unhappy. Therefore, they may be

able to change the behavior or speak to a supervisor in order to attempt to alter the behavior required. Secondly, a person who is more self-aware is better able to see the warning signs of burnout rather than someone who has less self-awareness. Therefore, a person with higher levels may be able to react quicker and prevent actual burnout from occurring.

Because a person higher in self-awareness is more aware of his or her emotions, then he or she will better be able to know if exhaustion is being felt from work, or if he or she is more dissonant than normal when in work related situations. These signs will allow for someone higher in self-awareness to know that he or she needs help or needs to make a change in order to prevent more of these feelings of burnout.

This suggests that managers should manage the negative effects of burnout by making certain that employees in jobs known to have high emotional labor requirements have sufficient levels of self-awareness emotional intelligence in order to cope with and avoid emotional exhaustion and burnout. It is imperative that managers develop an emotionally healthy workforce in those high emotionally demanding environments (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002).

Training can be developed to train employees in self-awareness skills. If some sort of self-awareness training were created and implemented it is feasible to reduce burnout levels in organizations. For instance, if nurses were able to be trained on self-awareness in order to realize when they are beginning to show signs of burnout in order to allow them to remove themselves from certain situations or to do some sort of exercise to reduce tension, then hospitals may be able to keep more satisfied nurses on staff and possibly reduce turnover.

Secondly, emotionally healthy workforces may be developed through personnel selection. Organizations could test applicants for self-awareness for selection into those jobs that job analysis indicates have high emotional labor requirements. The result would be employees who have a higher degree of demand-abilities fit with the job and is better equipped to cope with the high emotional demands. It is less likely that these employees will experience burnout and leave the organization. It may also be beneficial to test current employees in high emotionally demanding jobs to identify self-awareness deficiencies and training needs in the current workforce. Training programs could focus on the signs and symptoms of burnout, increased self-awareness skills, and coping strategies.

The failure to find a moderating effect of self-regulation on the relationship between emotional labor and burnout may be due to the very nature of self-

regulation itself. Self-regulation allows a person to alter his or her mood or state in order to feel a certain way. Altering one's state is a form of emotional labor in and of itself. Although someone could convince himself or herself with greater ease to feel a desired way, the fact that he or she does have to change their true feelings could cause them to resent the job due to being forced to feel the desired way.

This resentment could build up and cause a level of burnout. Also, by constantly having to regulate one's feelings, a tremendous amount of emotional labor is being experienced because that person's real desires or feelings are being suppressed in order to feel a certain way. Even though an employee may have a high enough level of self-regulation, it is still stressful to be forced to put aside one's natural feelings in order to display certain emotions and behaviors. Therefore, self-regulation may not necessarily lower the amount of emotional labor. Since it may actually increase the amount of emotional labor, it won't be able to prevent the burnout caused by emotional labor.

This study does have a few limitations. First, the nature of the sample might limit the generalizability of the results. Subjects were employees in university resident life positions and it is possible that the results could be specific to this sample. Some resident life workers reside in their working environment and, therefore, may have a difficult time escaping the demands and stressful situations of the work environment. It is possible that their emotional labor and burnout scores could be positively biased as a result of this work arrangement. This is not a typical work arrangement for the majority of workers who leave the work context after work hours. Therefore, the present results may not generalize to other samples due to the fact that this sample is not representative of a majority of the working population.

Future research is needed to determine whether emotional labor and emotional intelligence function in the same manner in other workers in different contexts. Secondly, the study could suffer from the use of self-report measures and common method variance. In order to avoid this, future research should include the use of objective measures such as supervisor ratings of employee emotional intelligence or some objective measure of emotional labor requirements.

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