

The Differential Impact of Employees' Emotional Labor on Time Banditry Behavior

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Abstract

How to carry out employee emotional labor management and avoid negative behavior results is an important issue facing the service industry. Based on previous researches, this paper analyzes the mechanism of emotional labor on time banditry behavior, and constructs a theoretical model. On the one hand, it explores the mediating role of job burnout between emotional labor and time banditry behavior, and on the other hand, it analyzes the moderating role of workplace fun between job burnout and time banditry behavior. The research has enriched and expanded the related research on emotional labor and time banditry behavior, which has important reference significance for the organization's emotional labor management.

Keywords

Emotional Labor; Job Burnout; Time Banditry Behavior; Workplace Fun.

1. Introduction

In an organization, the emotional state of frontline service employees is linked to a number of important outcomes including service quality, customer satisfaction, loyalty and the sustainable development of the organization[1]. Therefore, the organization always wants employees to manage their feeling and behaviors that are in line with the interests of the organization. However, employees' emotional state does not always follow display rules. So, they will adopt emotional labor strategy, that is, effort to actively display organizationally desired emotions[2]. This requirement inevitably leads to various negative impact of employees, such as browsing the web, playing mobile phones, being late and leaving early at work, etc. This kind of behavior that deals with non-work affairs during working time, encroaches on organizational time and even brings economic losses to the organization is also called time banditry behavior[3]. According to the survey report of salary.com for three consecutive years, the proportion of employees who waste time at work on average every day is rising: from 64% (2012), 69% (2013) to 89% (2014). The average time waste of nearly two hours a day makes the organization lose as much as \$544 billion a year. With the development of electronic products and the Internet, time banditry behavior has become more frequent and difficult to detect, with more and more diversified forms of expression and greater negative impact on the organization[4].

Hochschild (1983) described emotional labor as, "the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily, including surface acting (SA) and deep acting (DA)". Previous studies suggested that surface acting is related to various negative outcomes[5], while deep acting is related to various positive outcomes[6]. Despite the well-documented impact of emotional labor on one's attitude and cognitive changes, limited research attention has been given to its influence on behavior[7]. Some studies examining the relationship between emotional labor and negative outcomes also reported insignificant and inconsistent findings. Some scholars have shown that the relationship between surface acting and negative behavior

is not significant[8, 9], and the relationship between deep acting and positive behavior is not significant[10]. It can be seen that there is a lack of research on the effect and marginal conditions of emotional labor on time banditry behavior.

At work, when employees are unable control their emotions, emotional labor will turn into job burnout, triggering physical, mental and emotional exhaustion[11]. According to Conservation of Resources Theory (COR), burnout caused by resource loss will drive individuals to adopt negative behaviors, such as absenteeism and turnover[12], counterproductive work behavior[13], employee sabotage behavior[14], etc. Research on countermeasure to the above problems found that workplace fun as a broad work resource in the service industry can alleviate the pressure and burnout of service employees[15], help them resist the negative impact of service work and focus on work[16], improve service quality and organizational image[17].

To sum up, given that there are few empirical studies on the behavioral of emotional labor, and the black box about the mechanism of emotional labor and time banditry behavior has not yet been revealed, whether and how workplace fun can regulate the relationship between job burnout and time banditry behavior is also unclear. Therefore, this article aims to use resource conservation theory to explore whether and how the two ways of emotional labor of employees affect employees' time banditry behavior, whether job burnout will mediate the relationship between emotional labor and time banditry behavior, and the relationship between job burnout and time banditry behavior will it be regulated by the fun in the workplace?

2. Theory and Hypotheses

2.1. Emotional Labor and Time Banditry Behavior

The emotional state that employees usually show at work is generally in conflict with their real feelings. The transformation and maintenance of emotions in the process of emotional labor is easy to consume emotional resources[18]. According to COR, the level of individual resources will significantly affect the employees work performance, and lack of resources will reduce the individual's control over negative behaviors[19]; otherwise, it will strengthen or even implement positive behaviors[20].

Surface acting is to suppress their true feelings and fake their emotional display when they are unable or unwilling to change their inner feelings (Hochschild, 1983). It will lead to emotional disorders, trigger negative emotions and consume a large amount of cognitive and emotional resources [21].With the consumption of resources, the individual resource protection mechanism will be self-initiated, reducing self-behavior control, allowing employees to take negative behaviors to vent and confide emotions, and seek other ways to supplement resources and energy[22, 23].At this time, the instrumentalist performance of time banditry behavior helps employees temporarily avoid work pressure and restore their body state, which enhances the willingness of employees to take time banditry behavior.

If the surface acting is recognized by others, employees may not be able to obtain resource compensation, and may even lead to a crisis of trust and negative evaluation, and need to pay additional resources to deal with the new pressure[16]. In order to obtain resource protection disguise, employees may take time embezzlement behavior more frequently.

Deep acting is to reappraise the situation and modifying their feelings accordingly[2]. It will lead to emotional harmony and experience positive emotions[24, 25], and do not likely to cause resource depletion. Positive mental state can also provide more psychological resources, higher individual resilience and risk tolerance, and make employees more active in the face of difficulties rather than avoiding work[26, 27].

Positive behavior can also bring high performance returns and social feedback to the organization and employees[28], stimulate employees to adhere to deep acting, and reduce the implementation of time banditry behavior to avoid adverse consequences.

Thus,

H1: Surface acting will be positively related to time banditry behavior.

H2: Deep acting will be negatively related to time banditry behavior.

2.2. The Mediating Role of Job Burnout

Compared with other factors, emotional labor has a more significant effect on job burnout, especially the core emotional regulation ability is particularly important for employees' job burnout[29]. As a psychological syndrome, job burnout describes an individual's response to emotional and interpersonal stressors at work, which is characterized by three primary symptoms: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment [30]. According to the job demand-resource model, burnout is the result of resource consumption caused by long-term exposure to stressors, and emotional labor, as a job demand, is the main source of stress[31]. That stress caused by emotional labor will lead to psychological fatigue and job burnout[32, 33].

With the increase of working hours, the employees' job burnout has gradually increased, which in turn leads to negative work attitudes and reduces work engagement[34]. Job burnout will also lead to physical and mental health problems, resulting in insufficient rest, sick attendance and even absenteeism[12]. Some studies have also shown that there is a strong relationship between job burnout and counterproductive behavior, which will reduce individual job behaviors[35, 36].

Specifically, as the working hours of employees on the surface acting increase, the consumption of resources is also increasing, and they are more likely to experience job burnout. Driven by the resource conservation mechanism, employees will take the initiative to take time banditry behavior, relieve work pressure and fatigue, and recover their energy through rest to ensure the development of follow-up work[37]. The resource consumption process of deep acting is a virtuous circle, and there is no need to adopt time banditry behaviors to relieve burnout, and the virtuous circle will drive individuals to actively respond to external requirements, and the expected return will also enhance the sense of personal accomplishment. In conclusion, the following assumptions are made.

Thus,

H3: Job burnout mediates the positive relationships between surface acting and time banditry behavior.

H4: Job burnout mediates the negative relationships between deep acting and time banditry behavior.

2.3. The Moderating Role of Workplace Fun

Workplace fun is generally defined as a working environment that intentionally encourages and supports various enjoyable, playful, and pleasurable activities, such as humor, games, parties, awards, and playing competitions[38, 39]. Maslach and Leiter (1997) believes that workplace fun is a positive state that is directly opposite to burnout and characterized by energy, investment and effectiveness. Research has found that workplace fun is instrumental, which can help employees obtain resources, improve work attitude, increase productivity and combat the negative impact of job burnout[40].

Employees who feel burnout will lack of work enthusiasm, increase absenteeism and turnover rate, and reduce job performance[41]. Workplace fun, as a positive work resource[42], can form an upward spiral, reduce the work pressure of service employees[43], reduce job burnout[44], stimulate work enthusiasm[45], promote positive behavior[46], reduce turnover rate[47].

Employees who experience more fun at work have more positive attitudes and emotional states towards work, resulting in increased personal emotional commitment and emotional attachment to the organization, and more positive behaviors[42, 48]. low level workplace fun often contradicts employees' psychological expectations, questioning its authenticity, and even triggers conflict and leads to negative emotions and behaviors (subjective experience of work fun).

Based on this rationale,

H5: Workplace fun moderates the positive direct effects of job burnout on employee time banditry behavior, such that the effects are weaker when employees experience in a higher level of workplace fun.

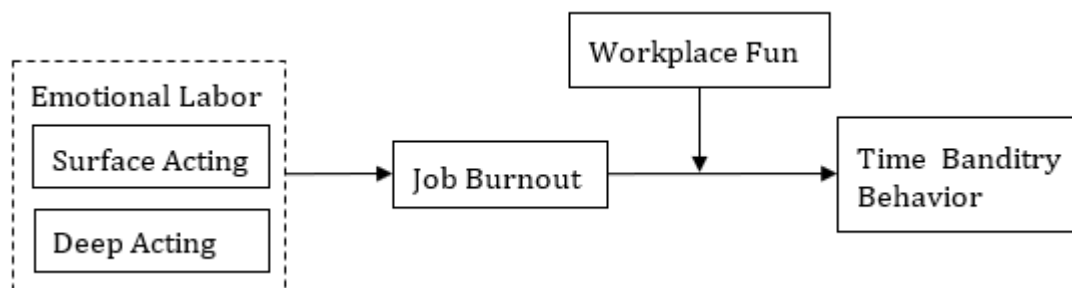


Figure 1. Research model

3. Conclusion

Based on Conservation of Resources Theory, this research constructs a model of the relationship between emotional labor and time banditry behavior. Theoretically explored the relationship between job burnout and workplace fun, emotional labor and time banditry behavior, and the relationship between emotional labor and time banditry behavior is regulated by the mediation effect of job burnout and workplace fun. Different emotional labor strategies all directly or indirectly affect time encroachment behavior through job burnout. In addition, improving workplace fun is an effective solution to reduce employees' time banditry behavior. Organizations should provide adequate support to avoid formalism that increases the workload of employees. Individual employees should also actively participate in various activities of the organization, relax in a reasonable and compliant manner, and increase work commitment and enthusiasm.

The Limitations and future research: ①This article only discusses time embezzlement behavior. Future research can add more negative behaviors and compare them to analyze how employees choose when facing multiple negative behaviors; ②Workplace fun has a "double-edged sword" effect. In this study, only the positive effects of workplace fun are discussed, and the negative effects of workplace fun can be further explored in the future. Especially whether organizational activities during non-working hours will aggravate employees' job burnout and lead to subsequent negative behaviors. ③Due to time and manpower constraints, this study did not conduct empirical research on the four hypotheses. The next step is to focus on scale selection and actual analysis.

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