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A Study on relationship between Emotional Dissonance and Turnover Intention among IT Professionals

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Abstract: ***Emotional dissonance stems from emotional labor theory. Emotional labor describes the effort required to create and maintain a desired emotional demeanor (Hochschild 1983). Emotional dissonance means the felt conflict between the way one feels toward interaction partners and the emotion one feels compelled to display toward those individuals. Today's information technology professionals accept a heavy load. Spending cuts and changes in IT implementation have forced these employees to work longer hours and take expanded organizational roles (Hoffman 2003). Main purpose of this study is to investigate whether emotional dissonance affects IT professionals work exhaustion, job satisfaction and turnover intention. The result indicate that that both negative and positive emotional dissonance increased IT professionals' work exhaustion, which reduced job satisfaction and ultimately increased turnover intention.***

Keywords: Emotional Dissonance, Work Exhaustion, Job Satisfaction, Turnover Intention, Role Conflict.

I. INTRODUCTION

Emotional dissonance is defined as the conflict between expressed and experienced emotions" (Abraham, 1998a). It arises when an employee's displayed emotions represent the obeying organizational rules, but do not represent his or her actual feelings (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). Expressing appropriate emotions during face-to-face or voice-to-voice interactions is a job demand for many employees in the service industry, particularly in IT jobs (Zapf, Isic, Bechtoldt, & Blau, 2003). Recent studies have differentiated various dimensions of emotion work while most of them comprise the frequency of emotion expression and emotional dissonance (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Büssing & Glaser, 1999). For IT sector, increasing percentage of turnover is among the basic challenges they face today (Aşkun, 2007) As part of the task specifications, IT work is often highlighted as particularly stressful, and by implication, that it is more stressful than any other comparable forms of employment (Turnover of Moroccan Call Centers, 2005). Related to this, emotional labor can become dysfunctional for the IT jobs when dissonance between felt emotions and displayed emotions is experienced. Emotions into felt or displayed. Felt emotions are an individual's actual emotions. In contrast, displayed emotions are those that the organization requires workers to show and considers appropriate in a given job. The current study examines whether emotional dissonance (ED) affects IT professionals' work exhaustion job satisfaction, and, turnover intention.

II. EMOTIONAL DISSONANCE AND THE ROLE OF IT PROFESSIONALS

We expect flight attendants and sales clerks to be cheerful, police officers to be authoritative, and nurses to be compassionate. Although no one has studied display rules in an IT context, one can infer emotional display expectations from the nature of the IT function. For example, as business partners, IT personnel need to show concern for business, rather than just technical, functions. A technically focused IT professional who conveys an attitude of indifference toward business outcomes may suffer a lack of credibility in the eyes of IT users and management (Markus and Benjamin 1996). While systems development often involves conflict (Barki and Hartwick 2001), IT professionals may feel they should not display anger when

conflict arises. Computer support personnel may be expected to display concern for those seeking technical assistance rather than exasperation for their technical naiveté. IT managers and project leaders may be expected to display neutrality when making work assignments or sternness when dealing with underperforming subordinates. These examples illustrate a few possible IT-related display rule expectations. This study helps explain how these demands impact IT professionals.

III. Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the relationship between the perceived workload, role ambiguity, role conflict, autonomy, fairness of rewards and work exhaustion amongst IT professionals.
2. To find out the relationship between the work exhaustion and turnover intention amongst IT professionals.
3. To find out the relationship between emotional dissonance, job satisfaction and turnover intention amongst IT professionals.

IV. Emotional Dissonance Theory and Hypothesis

Emotional dissonance is not the only stressor expected to affect IT professionals. More recent emotional dissonance studies distinguishes between suppressing negative emotions and amplifying positive emotions (e.g., Côté and Morgan 2002; Diefendorff and Richard 2003; Schaubroeck and Jones 2000). This distinction is very important since the two types of dissonance may have different outcomes. Workers who need to suppress the display of anger or irritation (NED) may feel they have lost some control over their emotional expression. The intrusion of professional requirements upon personal expressions may create negative reactions in employees which may be amplified by being unexpressed. In other words, one may not be annoyed at a customer, but one may also be angry about the need to suppress that emotion. The effort required to deal with this display expectation may deplete one's emotional resources, this will increase work exhaustion. Also, a worker who is unable display felt negative emotion may find that this experience colors his or her attitude toward the job itself, resulting in decrease job satisfaction. Finally, negative emotional dissonance (NED) induces employee strain (Morris and Feldman 1996) and should, therefore, lower job satisfaction.

By contrast, positive emotional dissonance (PED) may produce positive outcomes. Whereas negative emotional dissonance (NED) involves choking back felt emotion, PED involves simulating a positive emotional display that conforms to a display norm. This emotional facade may lead employees to experience the emotion displayed. Researchers suggest that facial expressions involved with emotional display may affect the experience of emotion (Adelmann and Zajonc 1989; Buck 1980; Izard 1990; McIntosh 1996). These studies provide evidence that those who feign the expression of positive emotion report more positive mood than those who maintain a neutral display. In addition, emotional contagion theory suggests that individuals will tend to mimic one another's affective displays, thereby influencing partners' felt emotions (Pugh 2001). Person who makes a convincing positive emotional display may obtain feedback from others that reinforces the positive emotion (Côté and Morgan 2002). The display of positive emotion often leads to the experience of positive emotion. This is important, because positive affect can influence one's perceptions of the job, thus increasing job satisfaction (Isen and Baron 1991). Positive affect has also been prescribed to counter workplace stress, which may lead to burnout (Isen and Baron 1991). The links from emotional dissonance to work exhaustion and job satisfaction have received some empirical support (e.g., Côté and Morgan 2002; Erickson and Ritter 2001).

Job Satisfaction

The researchers also include employee job satisfaction in the study. Adding job satisfaction (Igbaria and Greenhaus 1992) this study provides an additional way to anchor emotional dissonance in the IT turnover literature. While we could include other constructs (e.g., organizational commitment), these constructs are not as well grounded in the emotional labor literature. Comparing job satisfaction and emotional dissonance is appropriate because job satisfaction is inherently affective. (Weiss and

Cropanzano 1996) suggest "satisfaction is an evaluative judgment about one's job that partly, but not entirely, results from emotional experiences at work".

Work Exhaustion

Job satisfaction is also important because it relates to work exhaustion. Work exhaustion is expected to produce lower job satisfaction. IT professionals who feel overwhelmed by job demands are unlikely to be satisfied with that job. Although one could argue the direction of causality, both longitudinal work (Wolpin et al. 1991) and meta-analysis (Lee and Ashforth 1996) provide evidence that work exhaustion negatively affects job satisfaction.

Role Ambiguity & Role Conflict

Role ambiguity and role conflict both relate to job expectations. Role ambiguity is a sense of uncertainty about what is expected, how to achieve expectations, or the consequences of job performance. Each aspect of uncertainty could lower job satisfaction. Role conflict is an incompatibility between job expectations that may originate from one or more individuals with whom an employee interacts (Van Sell et al. 1981). Role conflict often reduces job satisfaction. An employee who experiences high role ambiguity or role conflict is less likely to evaluate the job positively (Baroudi 1985; Guimaraes and Igbaria 1992; Igbaria and Greenhaus 1992). Work Exhaustion

Autonomy

An employee with a high degree of autonomy has discretion over how to perform work responsibilities and should experience greater felt responsibility for the work, leading to increased job satisfaction (Hackman and Oldham 1976). This relationship has received extensive empirical support (e.g., Cheney 1984; Thatcher et al. 2003).

Turnover Intention

Employees who experience job dissatisfaction are more likely to leave those jobs. Numerous studies have identified job satisfaction as a key factor of turnover intention (e.g., Hackman 1980; Igbaria and Greenhaus 1992).

Null hypotheses formulated for the Study

- Hypothesis 1a: Negative emotional dissonance is positively related to work exhaustion.
- Hypothesis 1b: Negative emotional dissonance is negatively related to job satisfaction
- Hypothesis 2a: Positive emotional dissonance is negatively related to work exhaustion.
- Hypothesis 2b: Positive emotional dissonance is positively related to job satisfaction.
- Hypothesis 3: Work exhaustion is negatively related to job satisfaction.
- Hypothesis 4: Role ambiguity is negatively related to job satisfaction.
- Hypothesis 5: Role conflict is negatively related to job satisfaction.
- Hypothesis 6: Autonomy is positively related to job satisfaction.
- Hypothesis 7: Job satisfaction is negatively related to turnover intention.

V. METHODOLOGY

The data was collected from four IT firms. The questionnaire sent to IT professionals working in different levels. A total number of 270 IT professionals were conducted for this study, out of which a total of 246 responses were found usable for the final analysis. Multi - stage sampling was the sampling technique used for the study. Different measurement scales were utilized to measure individual perception of emotional dissonance, work exhaustion, job satisfaction and turnover intention. The

variables used in the study are based on standardized scales available in the literature. All the variables were measured using a 5- point likert scale.

VI. Construct Measures Emotional Dissonance

Scientists have largely settled on the definition of emotional dissonance, but not on its measurement (e.g., Hochschild 1983; Morris and Feldman 1996; Rafaeli and Sutton 1987). For example, Morris and Feldman (1997) capture emotional dissonance with three items (e.g., "Most of the time, the way I act and speak with patients matches how I feel anyway") that differ from the Pugliesi and Shook (1997) measures (e.g., "I am required to be 'artificially friendly' to clients or students"). Mann (1999) also uses a different scale. Abraham (1998, 1999) assesses the difference score between a set of parallel items developed by Adelmann (1989) (e.g., "To what degree do you think each of the following is expected of you as part of your job?" or "To what degree do you think you actually do each of the following as part of your job?"). Other studies use separate positive and negative emotional dissonance measures (Côté and Morgan 2002; Erickson and Ritter 2001; Schaubroeck and Jones 2000), although few have adopted these measures (for exceptions, see Schaubroeck and Jones 2000; Zapf et al. 1999). We felt it important to separate the positive and negative emotional dissonance variables because of the theoretical reasons stated earlier. Based on several sources (e.g., Côté and Morgan 2002; Erickson and Ritter 2001; Schaubroeck and Jones 2000), we developed five positive and five negative items. The wording most closely resembles the Schaubroeck and Jones scale (2000). We chose a direct perceived measure instead of difference scores, first, because of well-known difficulties with difference score measures (Edwards 1996, 2001); second, because direct scores tap into memorable suppressing or amplifying experiences; and third, to make our results comparable to the majority of studies. We also chose to orient the questions toward IT professionals' interactions with customers or clients, as opposed to coworkers, since client exchanges are more likely to trigger emotional dissonance (Tschan et al. 2005).

TABLE I Other Measures

Measurement Items	
Constructs	**Source of Measures**
Perceived workload	Kirmeyer and Dougherty 1988Moore 2000a
Role ambiguity	Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman 1970 Moore 2000a
Role conflict	Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman 1970 Moore 2000a
Autonomy	McKnight 1997
Fairness of rewards	Niehoff and Moorman 1993 Moore 2000a
Work exhaustion	Schaufeli, Leither, and Kalimo 1995Moore 2000a
Job satisfaction	McKnight 1997
Turnover intention	Moore 2000a

VII. Analysis and Results

Reliability estimates were assessed by calculating Cronbach alpha values for the variables used in the study. Reliability values 0.83 the measurement scales used in this study can be considered relatively reliable.

TABLE II Factor Analysis

Constructs	Indicators	Indicator loadings
Negative Emotional Dissonance	To be effective in my job, I must not demonstrate how agitated I may feel with customers.	0.83
	To do my job well, I must pretend not to be irritated at customers even when I may feel that way.	0.88
	To do my job effectively, I must hide any anger I may feel with customers.	0.91
	To carry out my job, I must try to pretend I am not annoyed with customers when I really am.	0.87
	In interacting with customers, I must suppress irritation I may feel.	0.89
Positive Emotional	To be effective in my job, I must try to be sympathetic with customers even when I am not.	0.78

Dissonance	In doing my job, I must portray myself as interested in the customers' frustrations even when I don't really care.	0.76
	To do my job effectively, I must act as if I empathize with the customer despite my actual lack of concern.	0.75
	I must act like I care about customers' concerns even when I find it hard to be interested.	0.75
	To be successful in my job, I must pretend to care about customers' problems even when I am indifferent.	0.85

Constructs	**Indicators**	**Indicator loadings**
Perceived Workload	I feel that the number of requests, problems, or complaints I deal with is more than expected.	0.74
	I feel that the amount of work I do interferes with how well it is done.	0.74
	I feel busy or rushed.	0.77
	I feel pressured.	0.70
Role Ambiguity	I know exactly what is expected of me.	0.86
	I have a defined role in my workgroup.	0.85
	Each assignment has a clear objective.	0.67
Role Conflict	I do things that are apt to be accepted by one person and not accepted by others.	0.81
	I sometimes have to buck a rule or policy in order to carry out an assignment.	0.84
	I frequently receive incompatible requests from two or more parties.	0.82
	I often perform work for two or more parties who operate quite differently	0.78
	In my work, I have to try to balance two or more conflicting preferences.	0.81
Autonomy	In my work, I usually do not have to refer matters to my direct supervisor for a final decision.	0.66
	Usually, my direct supervisor does not have to approve my decisions before I can take action.	0.80
	Rather than asking my direct supervisor, I usually make my own decisions about what to do on a job.	0.86
	I can usually do what I want on this job without consulting my direct supervisor.	0.81
Fairness of Rewards	I think my level of pay is fair	0.84
	Overall, the rewards I receive here are quite fair.	0.65
Work Exhaustion	I feel emotionally drained from my work.	0.83
	I feel used up at the end of the workday.	0.90
	I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.	0.73
	I feel burned out from my work.	0.75
Job Satisfaction	Generally speaking, I feel satisfied with this job.	0.74
	Overall, I feel satisfied with the kind of work I do in this job.	0.82
	In general, I feel satisfied with my job.	0.89

Constructs	Indicators	Indicator loadings
Turnover Intention	I will be with this company five years from now.	0.63
	How likely is it that you will be working with this company this time next year?	0.67
	I will probably look for a job at a different company in the next year	0.65
	How likely is it that you will take steps during the next year to secure a job at a different company?	0.86

The above Table 2 shows that output result of factor analysis KMO value is 0.63. The 39 variables were reduced to ten factors each factor with Eigen value more than one. The ten factors extracted were named as Negative Emotional Dissonance, Positive Emotional Dissonance, Perceived Workload, Role Ambiguity, Role conflict, Autonomy, Fairness of Rewards, Job Satisfaction, Work Exhaustion, and Turnover Intention. The factor analysis was run with principal component method with Varimax rotation.

TABLE III Correlation and Descriptive Statistics

Variables	NED	PED	PW	RA	RC	AT	FR	WE	JS	TI
NED	**1**									
PED	0.067	**1**								
PW	0.01	.449**	**1**							
RA	.128*	.255**	.143*	**1**						
RC	.166**	.422**	.482**	.230**	**1**					
AT	0.085	-0.054	0.051	-0.085	.275**	**1**				
FR	.273**	-0.047	-.252**	.165**	0.018	.134*	**1**			
WE	.248**	.195**	.556**	-0.075	.368**	.194**	-0.045	**1**		
JS	.126*	-.132*	-.357**	.143*	0.059	.170**	.441**	-.306**	**1**	
TI	.179**	0.071	0.1	-.166**	.228**	.333**	.240**	.474**	.131*	**1**
MEAN	3.75	3.72	3.49	3.72	3.25	2.88	2.94	2.87	3.33	3.00
STD.DEV	1.09	0.886	0.762	0.751	0.713	0.904	1.016	0.889	0.941	0.39

Note: *The correlation is significant at α=0.01. Notes: **The correlation is significant at α=0.05.

NED – Negative Emotional Dissonance

PED – Positive Emotional Dissonance

PW – Perceived work load

RA – Role ambiguity

RC – Role conflict

AT – Autonomy

FR – Fairness of Rewards

WE – Work Exhaustion

JS – Job satisfaction

TI – Turnover Intention

The above Table 3 shows that, correlation between NED is positively correlated (r = 0.24) with the experience of work exhaustion at work, whereas NED correlates positively (r = 0.12) with job satisfaction. PED is positively correlated (r = 0.19) with the experience of work exhaustion, whereas PED is negatively correlated (r = 0.13) with the job satisfaction. Work exhaustion is negatively correlated (r = - 0.30) with experience of job satisfaction, whereas Role ambiguity correlates (r = 0.14) with positively job satisfaction. There is no correlation (r = 0.05) between Role conflict and job satisfaction. Autonomy is

positively correlated (r = 0.17) with the experience of job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is positively correlated (r = 0.13) with the experience of Turnover intention.

VIII. Hypothesis Testing Results

The hypotheses are evaluated by examining the relationship of the construct. Negative Emotional Dissonance has been positively related to Work Exhaustion (H1a supported) and negatively related to job satisfaction (H1b supported). Positive Emotional Dissonance has been positively related to Work Exhaustion (H2a not supported) and job satisfaction (H2b supported). Work Exhaustion is negatively related to job satisfaction (H3 supported). Role ambiguity is negatively related to job satisfaction (H4 supported), Role conflict is negatively related to job satisfaction (H5 supported) and Autonomy is negatively related to job satisfaction (H6 not supported). And job satisfaction has been negatively related to turnover intention (H7 supported).

IX. Summary of findings

In summary, this study indicates that NED and PED increased IT professional work exhaustion and reduced job satisfaction. There is no relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction. This finding suggests that as IT professionals are increasingly subject to display rules and the associated emotional dissonance, they must devote mental resources toward coping with that dissonance. This leads to work exhaustion and thus to reduced job satisfaction.

X. Suggestions

- IT employees feel compelled to maintain appropriate emotional displays on the job, and that they undergo associated ill effects. This is important in light of increased concern about IT professionals work exhaustion. If work exhaustion is decreased by reducing the emotional dissonance it will automatically increase the job satisfaction and will suppress their objective on negative turnover intention.
- Work exhaustion negatively correlated with Job Satisfaction. It is highly suggested that IT organizations must practice awareness programs on the various roles played by their employees. This will help the IT professionals to discover what exact role they play for the development of the organization and their own development. This in turn will reduce the role conflicts among the professionals.
- Managers are the backbone in the organisational structure of an IT company. Experience in managing the workloads of others, insights gained from fellow managers regarding workload expectations, and the manager's knowledge of the worker's strengths and weaknesses and general tendencies can help in pinpointing the cause. Once the manager and employee believe they have identified the cause of exhaustion, the manager can take the lead in developing a plan of action to instructively target the cause.

XI. Conclusion

This study examines whether emotional dissonance (ED) affects IT professionals' work exhaustion and job satisfaction, and turnover intention. It can be concluded that both negative and positive emotional dissonance increased IT professionals' work exhaustion, which reduced job satisfaction and ultimately increased turnover intention. IT professionals become exhausted due to work overworked like pressurized targets, day-to-day task completion and organization-critical systems. Unless adequate steps are taken to safeguard the IT professionals from this pressure filled job, it could hit their emotions and suppress them. Higher level authorities in IT field should be aware of not only role stressors like role conflict and role ambiguity, but also the incremental tension that emotional dissonance can produce. This study unveils the importance of emotional dissonance in understanding the work exhaustion and turnover intention of IT professionals.

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