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WHEN 'THE SHOW MUST GO ON':

SURFACE ACTING AND DEEP ACTING AS DETERMINANTS OF

EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION AND PEER-RATED SERVICE DELIVERY[1]

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Abstract

Affective displays of front-line employees predict beneficial customer reactions, but employees cannot feel positively at all times. Surface acting (modifying facial expressions) and deep acting (modifying inner feelings) are tested as predictors of emotional exhaustion, and coworker-rated affective service delivery. As predicted by the dramaturgical perspective, surface acting was more detrimental for both stress and service delivery than deep acting, beyond job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion. Implications for future research and service work are discussed.

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> "Employers are wise to want workers to be sincere, to go well beyond the smile that's 'just painted on'" (Hochschild, 1983: 33).

Research has shown that positive affective displays in service interactions, such as smiling and conveying friendliness, predicts important customer outcomes such as the intentions to return, to recommend the store to others, and overall service quality (e.g., Parasuraman, et al., 1985; Pugh, 2001; Tsai, 2001). Service providers do not always feel positively, however, and qualitative research has demonstrated that they engage in acting to produce the displays (Ashforth & Tomiuk, 2000; Hochschild, 1983; Parkinson, 1991). The dramaturgical approach to service delivery suggests that this acting takes two forms: surface acting, which is 'painting on' the displays or faking, and deep acting, which is modifying inner feelings to match expressions (Grove & Fisk, 1989; Hochschild, 1983). Research further suggests that surface acting is associated with job burnout and depression (Abraham, 1998; Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Erickson & Wharton, 1997), and may result in negative reactions from observers (Ekman, Friesen, & O'Sullivan, 1988). It is unclear if deep acting has similar effects. This study compares deep and surface acting as determinants of job burnout and affective delivery with customers, as rated by a peer. Acting that tries to appear authentic (deep acting) should receive higher ratings, while intentionally faking (surface acting) should have a negative impact on service ratings. This research tests previous propositions (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983), extends the dramaturgical perspective of service encounters by measuring actor's effort and the performance (Grove & Fisk, 1989), and suggests methods of training service providers.

The Dramaturgical Perspective and The Proposed Model

The dramaturgical perspective provides a way of thinking about service encounters as a performance directed by the organization. On the work floor stage, with carefully designed lighting and costumes/uniforms, service employees perform for a customer audience to garner a positive response to the organization (Grove & Fisk, 1989; Hochschild, 1983). As part of this

performance, service employees follow a script that includes display rules about acceptable and proscribed expressions (Grove & Fisk, 1989). Specifically, the employee is expected to appear approachable and friendly (Parasuraman et al., 1985), with a positive attitude "regardless of circumstances" (Bettencourt et al., 2001: 41). How do employees enact such demanding roles?

The Acting Approach: Surface and Deep Acting

Good person-job fit may lessen the extent that acting is needed in general (Arvey et al., 1998); however, qualitative research shows that all employees find their true feelings do not always conform to the role (Ashforth & Tomiuk, 2000). How do they respond when they do not naturally feel like smiling? Deep and surface acting are two dramaturgical approaches that effortfully modify displays: "Feelings do not erupt spontaneously or automatically in either deep acting or surface acting. In both cases the actor has learned to intervene – either in creating the inner shape of a feeling or in shaping the outward appearance of one" (Hochschild, 1983: 36). Though both are internally false and both involve effort (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993), they have different intentions. When deep acting, the actor attempts to modify feelings to match the required displays. The intent then is to seem authentic to the audience, thus it has been called "faking in good faith" (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987: 32). For example, a hotel clerk may imagine herself in a difficult customer's shoes to try to feel empathy and look concerned. This good intention may not always be present in employees, particularly those who do not identify with and accept their work role (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). In addition, people may not do deep acting if they are unaware how to regulate their emotions (Grandey, 2000). In surface acting, one modifies the displays without shaping the inner feelings. This entails experiencing emotional dissonance, or the tension felt when expressions and feelings diverge (Hochschild, 1983). For example, the same hotel clerk may put on a sympathetic face, but be actually be irritated. Surface acting is "faking in bad faith" (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987: 32): The employee conforms to the display rules to keep the job, not to help the customer or the organization.

Given these conceptual differences of surface and deep acting, the model shown in Figure 1 is proposed to test if they predict stress and service differently. The far left of the model predicts increased acting based on two variables concerning the actor's perception of the work role, display rules and job dissatisfaction. Next, deep acting is shown as related to surface acting, as suggested by previous theories (e.g., Grandey, 2000). The good-faith effort of deep acting modifies internal states to keep any negative reactions from becoming full-blown, and surface acting (faking) follows to cover any remaining leakage of negative feelings. Thus, deep acting may be sufficient for some, but for many both forms of acting will be reported, creating a positive relationship. Finally, the extent and type of acting predicts job burnout (emotional exhaustion) and peer rated service performance (affective delivery and breaking character).

The Actor's Perception of Display Rules and Job Satisfaction

Many different aspects of the situation and employee may impact the need to act (Ashforth & Tomiuk, 2000; Grandey, 2000). Previous researchers (Ashforth & Tomiuk, 2000; Parkinson, 1991) have suggested two in particular: Display rules and job satisfaction.

Display rules. The expectation to express positive emotions is typical for front-line service employees (e.g., Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987), as opposed to displays of anger (bill collector) or neutrality (judges). The actors' awareness of display rules is important for predicting the likelihood of acting because it suggests that emotional expressions are explicitly stated and enforced through supervision (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). Either approach conforms to display rules, since they both involve acting out the role. As stated by Ashforth & Tomiuk (2000): "The prevalence of acting in service roles is not surprising, given the ubiquity of display rules and the fact that even service agents who identify strongly with their role will not always feel

precisely what is expected of them" (189). Assuming that when employees perceive display rules they are motivated to conform to them, display rules positively relates to deep and surface acting (Hypotheses 1a and 1b, respectively).

Job satisfaction. Employees who feel positively at work should be less likely, on average, to perform acting. This is because their natural feelings are typically in line with the expressions normally demanded by front-line work. The research suggests that those who are high in job satisfaction perceive more person-job fit (see Brief, 1998 for a review), and are more likely to have positive moods and emotions while at work (Fisher, 2000). For these reasons, those with higher job satisfaction should perform less acting in service jobs. In previous studies, job satisfaction negatively related to emotional dissonance and faking expressions to customers (Abraham, 1998; Adelmann, 1995; Morris & Feldman, 1997). For example, Parkinson (1991) found that dissatisfied trainee hairstylists were more likely to report acting with customers than satisfied employees. Thus, job satisfaction is posited to negatively relate to deep and surface acting (Hypothesis 2a and 2b, respectively). Assuming an intention to keep the job, this relationship should be more pronounced for surface acting. As employees are more dissatisfied with their jobs, they may be more likely to perform to the minimum level and 'fake in bad faith.'

The Actor's Work Stress: Emotional Exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion is the state of depletion and fatigue that is considered the main component of job burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). Acting as part of the work role may create emotional exhaustion for two key reasons: (1) the experience of tension from emotional dissonance, and (2) the draining of resources while effortfully acting

(Hochschild, 1983; Wharton, 1993). While surface acting, the individual experiences emotional dissonance due to the discrepancy between expressions and inner feelings. Studies have found that emotional dissonance is associated with emotional exhaustion (e.g., Abraham, 1998; Morris & Feldman, 1997); therefore, it is expected that surface acting relates to emotional exhaustion as well (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Hypothesis 3b). Modifying internal states, or deep acting, requires attention and effort (Grandey, 2000). The depletion of cognitive and energy resources, in addition to the alienation from the self by 'selling' feelings for a wage (Hochschild, 1983), suggests deep acting positively relates to emotional exhaustion. However, deep acting by definition minimizes emotional dissonance by bringing feelings in line with expressions; these contradictory forces may result in a weaker negative relationship with emotional exhaustion than surface acting has (Hypothesis 3a).

Role Performance: Affective Delivery and Breaking Character

As stated earlier, the affective tone of service encounters is an important aspect of service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Two outcomes of interest are tested here. First, affective delivery refers to the extent that service delivery is perceived as friendly and warm, which relates to desirable outcomes (e.g., Bettencourt et al., 2001; Pugh, 2001; Tsai, 2001). Second, breaking character refers to the extent that employees reveal negative moods or reactions to customers, which may damage the customer-organization relationship (Bailey & McCollough, 1998). Though both deep and surface acting involve putting on an act to conform to positive display rules, they should predict these differentially due to the authenticity of the display.

Affective delivery. A key factor of good affective delivery is the perceived authenticity of the displays (e.g., Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). Authentic smiling (a Duchenne smile) engages different facial muscles than inauthentic expressions, such as the muscle around the eye (Ekman, 1992). There are mixed findings as to whether these inauthentic smiles can be detected or if they negatively influence observers (DePaulo, 1992), and most of this research has been in short-term experiments with pictures rather than dynamic interactions. However, some evidence suggests that people recognize authentic smiles, and have less positive reactions to inauthentic ones (Ekman, et al., 1988; Frank, Ekman, & Friesen, 1993). For example, when shown a picture of an authentic smile, people reported more positive mood compared to seeing a neutral picture, while the faked smile did not have this positive effect (Surakka & Hietanen, 1998).

Though both surface and deep acting modify expressions, Hochschild (1983) proposed "deep acting has always had an edge over simple pretending in its power to convince" (33), because deep acting changes internal states so that the expression is perceived as authentic. This is acknowledged by Ekman and Friesen (1982), who state that effortful displays are more likely to be successful if "the person, like a Stanislavsky actor, remembers a felt experience from which the smile emerges" (245). This leads to the proposal that deep acting will positively relate to ratings of affective delivery with customers (Hypothesis 4a). Conversely, the service provider conforms to display ruleswhen surface acting, but is consciously inauthentic (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). The experimental research suggests that these expressions may produce less positive reactions in the audience (e.g., Frank et al., 1993). Even worse, in service work the falseness of surface acting denies the sincerity and individual attention that customers expect as part of

quality service (Parasuraman et al., 1985). As stated by a flight attendant: "I worked with one flight attendant who put on a fake voice…I watched passengers wince. What the passengers want is real people" (Hochschild, 1983: 108). The inauthenticity of surface acting should relate to lower ratings of affective delivery (Hypothesis 4b).

Breaking character. Customers do not want to see an employee break out of the role by revealing negative feelings. Breaking character reveals to the audience that the encounter is staged, thus ruining the performance (Bailey & McCollough, 1999; Grove & Fisk, 1989), such as when an actor suddenly forgets their lines. Deep acting is similar to method acting, where one tries to feel what the character would feel (Ekman & Friesen, 1982; Grandey, 2000). Those who perform deep acting should have a more firmly defined role in the face of problems, thus decreasing likelihood of breaking character (Hypothesis 5a). Surface acting attempts to avoid breaking character by pasting on a smile. Ironically, there is evidence that suppressed negative feelings can leak out by "micro-expressions" (Ekman et al., 1988). If the employee typically engages in surface acting to simply suppress negative moods or reactions, this superficial expression may be more fragile, and thus make breaking character more likely (Hypothesis 5b).

Job Satisfaction and Emotional Exhaustion as Predictors of Service Performance

Figure 1 shows job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion with direct paths to affective delivery. Job satisfaction represents a positive reaction to the job and should result in more authentic affective delivery. Research supports a link between job satisfaction and customer service (e.g., Schmit & Allscheid, 1995). For example, Bettencourt et al. (2001), found that job satisfaction was robustly related to a measure of service delivery for a sample of library workers.

Thus, a direct link is included based on previous findings. In addition, a mediated path through acting is proposed: job satisfaction impacts affective delivery because it diminishes the amount of acting needed (Hypothesis 6). Similarly, as employees experience more emotional exhaustion, this may directly impact ratings of affective delivery and breaking character (see Figure 1). If emotionally exhausted one would be less likely to be seen as sincerely warm and pleasant, and it would be easy to experience a 'final straw' that breaks the acted façade. Longitudinal research has supported that emotional exhaustion has a direct negative relationship with service performance (e.g., Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). Thus, any relationship between acting and the service outcomes may be due to a relationship with emotional exhaustion. (Hypothesis 7).

METHOD

Participants

A sample of 131 university administrative assistants participated in this study. This job title has been categorized as a "high emotional labor job" (Hochschild, 1983; Wharton, 1993), and others have supported that "clerical workers are routinely evaluated for their attitude and ability to get along with other people" (Eaton, 1996: 296). One administrative assistant interviewed by the author stated: "It's frustrating at times to always be courteous and helpful to those who may not act as such in return. We need to keep smiling when we really don't feel that way." Thus, there is evidence that clerical workers have display rules, act to perform their work role, and are rated on their affective delivery to the public (students, parents, visitors).

Procedure

Surveys were sent to 600 administrative assistants in all departments at a large mid-western university, and participants were also asked to give a one-page survey to a coworker who observes the participant interacting with the public. Ratings of service delivery require a rater who observes the employee regularly and would be unbiased. Customers, supervisors, self and peers were all potential sources, and each has its own limitations (Turnow & London, 1998). A coworker of the participant was viewed as a reasonable rater of service delivery. A coworker has more representative and reliable observations than supervisors or customers, and minimizes the shared method variance of a self-rating. The drawback is that a friendly relationship with the participant may produce a lenient rating. To minimize this possibility, the coworker received a letter with assurance of anonymity and a request for honest, accurate ratings. No names were used – a code number that matched the target's survey number was on the survey – and ratings were returned directly to the researcher. Surveys were assessed for handwriting to assure that the same individual did not complete both surveys.

After two weeks, a reminder letter and the survey were sent again to all departments. One-hundred and sixty-eight administrative assistants returned the main survey, for a 28% overall return rate, typical for mailed responses to organizational surveys (Paul & Bracken, 1995). One-hundred and thirty-one participants had useable data, since completed coworker surveys were not returned for all participants. There were no significant mean differences between those with a returned coworker rating and those without one. The final sample was 97% women, and the mean age was 45, with a range from 19 to 66 years. Eighty-five percent were full-time employees, and the average tenure was about five and a half years. Nineteen males and 111 females completed the coworker ratings, with one coworker providing no gender information. Gender was not related to the variables of interest.

Measures

All responses were given on a five-point Likert-type scale with either frequency or agreement anchors. Means, standard deviations, and alpha coefficients can be found in Table 1.

Deep and surface acting. No established scales existed for deep and surface acting at the time of this study. Two pilot studies were performed with working items developed by the author and other researchers (Brotheridge & Lee, 1998). After the first pilot study with 73 working students using 23 initial items, seven items were selected that met empirical (strong loadings and small cross loadings in an exploratory factor analysis) and conceptual criteria: 1) items specified working on changing internal feelings or working on external behaviors but not internal feelings, 2) items focused on the public as the audience, not coworkers. The instructions asked participants the extent, on average, they do the following things to be effective at their job, and responses were on the frequency scale. Surface acting items included "Just pretend to have the emotions I need to display for my job", and "Put on an act in order to deal with customers in an appropriate way," while two deep acting items were "Try to actually experience the emotions that I must show", and "Work hard to feel the emotions that I need to show to others." Complete scales are available from the author by request. In a second pilot study with 141 working students in service positions, a confirmatory factor analysis on these seven items revealed that the two-factor model was a good fit with the data (GFI = .93, CFI = .96, RMSR = .07), was a significantly better fit than one-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 100.22$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .001$), and had items loading on separate factors as expected. The surface and deep acting scales had means of 2.79 and 2.68 and good internal consistency (.89, .78, respectively). For the current study, one

surface acting item was added based on qualitative data (Ashforth & Tomiuk, 2000; Hochschild, 1983). A confirmatory factor analysis on these eight items supported that the two-factor model had a good fit with the data (GFI = .93, CFI = .96, RMSR = .05), the alpha coefficients were high for surface acting (.88) and deep acting (.79), and the scales were moderately related as expected (r = .43). The mean levels (see Table 1) were lower for the current sample than for the working students who held mainly restaurant server positions (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002).

Display rules. Three items were used to measure employee perceptions that the role required positive displays using the scale with agreement anchors. The items were written to represent Hochschild's (1983) criteria for emotional labor jobs: "Part of my job is to make the customer feel good," "My workplace does not expect me to express positive emotions to customers as part of my job" (reversed), and "This organization would say that part of the product to customers is friendly, cheerful service" (alpha = .75). In order to assure that these employees had the opportunity to conform to display rules, they were asked about the frequency of contact with "non-employees." The mean was 4.37 (SD=.80), suggesting high levels of public contact. The display rule items were formed into a composite used in further analyses.

Job satisfaction. This scale was from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire with agreement anchors. The items are "Generally speaking, I like working here," "In general, I like working here," and "In general, I don't like my job" (reversed).

Emotional exhaustion. The emotional exhaustion scale was from the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). These nine items were answered on a frequency scale

with items such as “I feel emotionally drained from work,” and “I feel frustrated by my job.”

Affective delivery and breaking character. A coworker who regularly observed the participant with customers completed two sets of items. Affective delivery was measured with six items regarding the sincerity, warmth, friendliness, and courtesy of the employee during service encounters, modified from a ‘secret shopper’ service rating scale by McLellan and colleagues (1998). Items included “This person treats customers with courtesy, respect, and politeness”, and “This person shows friendliness and warmth to most customers.” Four items based on qualitative research (Bailey & McCollough, 1998) measured breaking character, which referred to revealing negative states to the public. Examples include “This person has revealed their true feelings to the public when upset or angry” and “When in a bad mood, this person has trouble hiding those feelings from customers.” A confirmatory factor analysis on the 10 items revealed that a two-factor model was a significantly better fit than a single factor of service performance ($\Delta\chi^2 = 73.23$, $\Delta df = 1$, $\underline{p} < .001$). One breaking character item with a low factor loading and frequency of response was removed, leaving three items (see Appendix). The final two-factor model fit the data for these nine items well (GFI = .91, CFI = .97, RMSR = .05).

Self-ratings of these same measures were also gathered to provide evidence that the peer ratings measured a unique aspect of service interactions. Self-ratings of role performance may represent participants’ intent or perceptions of self, whereas a coworker rating should be based on multiple observations of behaviors with customers. This is especially true with the current sample: administrative assistants work at desks that are open to the public and coworkers can observe interactions. Thus, there should be a positive relationship between self and peer ratings,

since the ratings use the same items to rate one target, though only a moderate one if the peer rating is providing a unique assessment of the employee. The bivariate correlations of the peer and self-ratings for the measures of affective delivery (r = .36) and breaking character (r = .33) were consistent with this prediction. Paired t-tests on the means revealed significant differences for affective delivery (p<.01), though not for breaking character (p<.08). On both dimensions, peer ratings provided a wider range of responses for affective delivery (coworker = 1.67 to 5.00, self = 2.33 to 5.00) and breaking character (coworker = 1.00 to 5.00; self = 1.00 to 4.33).

RESULTS

Table 1 shows bivariate correlations of the scales. The data were analyzed using the AMOS path modeling program with the observed variables. All paths were freely estimated, and error variances were constrained to one. The unexplained variance for the peer-rated outcomes was allowed to covary, since the two dimensions have shared method variance and both refer to an underlying concept of role performance. The error variances in job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion were allowed to covary, to account for common third variables that are not included in the model. The hypothesized model was estimated using maximum likelihood procedures, which provides accurate estimations of parameters with sample sizes between 100 and 200 participants (Gebring & Anderson, 1985). Nested models test the mediation hypotheses.

The proposed model was a good fit (_^{2} = 7.84, df=5, n.s.; GFI = .98, NFI = .97, CFI .99, RMSEA = .066). See Figure 1 for path coefficients. Display rules significantly related to deep acting (_ = .23; H1a supported), but not with surface acting (_ = -.03; H1b not supported). Job satisfaction was negatively related to deep acting (_ = -.21), and more strongly with surface

acting as expected (_ = -.37; H2a and H2b supported). Regarding emotional exhaustion, surface acting had a significant positive path (_ = .33; H3b supported) but deep acting did not (H3a not supported). Paths to affective delivery from surface acting (_ = -.27) and deep acting (_ = .18) were significant in the predicted directions (H4a and H4b supported), beyond job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion. Lastly, surface and deep acting did not have significant paths to breaking character beyond emotional exhaustion (H5a and H5b not supported). In summary, six of 10 hypothesized direct relationships were supported.

In light of the mediation hypotheses, job satisfaction had a non-significant path to peer rated affective delivery beyond the effect of acting, suggesting mediation by acting. Emotional exhaustion had a significant path with peer rated breaking character (ß = .34) while acting did not, suggesting emotional exhaustion may mediate the effect of acting on breaking character. Emotional exhaustion did not have a significant path to affective delivery. To test if these are partially or fully mediated relationships, three nested models were compared to the proposed model. For Hypothesis 6, the path from job satisfaction to affective delivery was constrained to zero. The fit of the model did not change significantly (change in chi-square = 1.16, change in df=1, n.s.), supporting that the job satisfaction-affective delivery relationship (r = .18, p<.05) was fully mediated by acting. To test Hypothesis 7, the paths from surface acting to affective delivery and to breaking character were each fixed to zero. Constraining the path from surface acting to affective delivery decreased the fit significantly (Change in chi-square = 6.19, change in df=1, p<.05), suggesting that surface acting has a direct impact on affective delivery ratings. Constraining the path from surface acting to breaking character did not change the fit significantly (Change in chi-square = .48, change in df = 1, p<.05), supporting full mediation through emotional exhaustion. Deep acting was not significantly related to, so therefore cannot be mediated by, emotional exhaustion (Baron & Kenny, 1986); however, its impact on affective delivery could be partially mediated by its relationship with surface acting. To test this possibility, the path from deep acting to affective delivery was

constrained to zero, resulting in a significant decrease in fit (change in chi squre = 3.90, change in df = 1, p<.05), supporting its direct relationship. The mediation hypotheses were partially supported.

DISCUSSION

Previous qualitative research has demonstrated that employees in a wide variety of service jobs engage in 'acting' in order to conform to the service role (Ashforth & Tomiuk, 2000). Two aspects of job seemed to predict more acting. The direction of relationships with job satisfaction supported that more acting is performed when employees are displeased with the job (Adelmann, 1995; Parkinson, 1991), especially surface acting. A mediation test with a nested model showed that job satisfaction's relationship with affective delivery, demonstrated in the service literature, was fully mediated by acting. Liking one's job impacted affective delivery with customers to the extent that it related to surface or deep acting. This gives new meaning to the importance of the 'happy worker'; that worker may be less likely to put on an act with customers. Perceiving display rules predicted more deep acting, but not surface acting, supporting the idea that this is a good faith response to work demands (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987).

Deep acting, or working on inner feelings to appear authentic to customers, had a positive influence on observed interactions with customers, as predicted, when controlling for the level of job satisfaction, surface acting, and emotional exhaustion. This supports that deep acting has the power to convince an audience, as suggested by the Stanislavsky method of acting and Hochschild (1983, see introductory quote), but is this effortful process stressful for the employee? The deep acting and emotional exhaustion relationship was non-significant in the current study beyond surface acting. This is interesting given the inherent effort in deep acting, as seen in the items referring to 'working hard' to feel certain emotions. The payoffs of deep

acting, reduced emotional dissonance and positive reactions from customers, may restore resources of the employee in a way that surface acting cannot. This suggests future implications for training employees in deep acting, by raising awareness of emotional cues and teaching techniques of emotion regulation as demonstrated elsewhere (Totterdell & Parkinson, 1999).

Surface acting is faking in bad faith – would an observer recognize the inauthenticity and view the service worker as less capable at affective delivery? With this front-line sample, the more surface acting reported, the lower the perceived affective delivery: the perceived warmth, sincerity and courtesy with customers. Those who report more surface acting were also more likely to be caught breaking character with customers, which seemed to be due to the mediating role of emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion was more likely to be experienced when employees engaged frequently in surface acting, as suggested by previous research on emotional dissonance (e.g., Abraham, 1998, Morris & Feldman, 1997), and this state of depletion leaves one with few resources to keep from breaking character. Another possible explanation is that the employee may try to *cope* with emotional exhaustion by revealing their negative feelings to customers in order to reduce the emotional dissonance experienced. This provides further support for the damage from burnout in service work (e.g., Wright & Cropanzano, 1998).

Limitations and Future Directions

Although this study extended research on the emotional effort of work beyond hospitality services and wait staff (Eaton, 1996), the sample used in this study was homogeneous in gender and job type. The return rate for the surveys was lower than preferred, but comparison analyses found that the included sample did not differ significantly from the broader surveyed sample. The mean coworker ratings of service performance are high, which may be a function of leniency due to friendship. Future researchers may want to measure these relationships with a different source of delivery ratings. Another possibility is ceiling effects –

employees still in the job have to perform at a high level. Skewed service performance measurement is common and actually leads to an underestimation of the relationships (Peterson & Wilson, 1992). Range restriction and shared method variance in the self-reported variables require caution in interpreting these relationships. Affective disposition, such as work mood, dispositional affectivity, or expressivity, was not tested here. It would be of interest to understand what type of person is more likely to deep act, rather than surface act; no known relationships have tested these ideas. A "fit" interaction effect could also be pursued in a study with a wider range of display rules and dispositional variables, as suggested by Grandey (2000) and others (e.g., Arvey et al., 1998). The current cross-sectional data cannot test causality, but longitudinal research could test the possibility of a spiraling relationship, where deep acting contributes to emotional exhaustion, and then surface acting is used as a lower-investment approach for meeting display rules. Experimental research would also help tease out the relationships between affective displays and observer reactions. The variables included in this study are not exhaustive: Research is needed which controls for other known predictors of emotional exhaustion and service delivery, such as role stress. Also, acting may also occur with coworkers and supervisors, for service personnel, this acting may be considered more "extra-role" than "in-role" and may have different outcomes (see Grandey & Brauburger, 2002).

Positive displays seem to be vital for quality service. While good person-job fit and high job satisfaction will help decrease the need for acting, it is doubtful that service personnel will always feel positively toward customers. Thus, it is important to communicate that all acting is not created equal. This study provides evidence for encouraging and training service personnel in deep acting when "the show must go on."

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TABLE 1

Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities, and Zero-Order Correlations for Study Variables[a]

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Display rules[b]	4.44	.77	.75								
2. Job satisfaction	4.33	.93	-.02	.89							
3. Surface acting	2.26	.72	.06	-.45**	.88						
4. Deep acting	2.48	.86	.23**	-.21*	.43**	.79					
5. Emotional exhaustion	2.14	1.00	.08	-.64**	.58**	.33**	.90				
6. Peer - Affective delivery	4.68	.61	-.01	.18*	-.31**	.01	-.28**	.93			
7. Peer - Breaking character	2.08	.99	.04	-.06	.22*	.03	.35**	-.57**	.81		
8. Self - Affective delivery	4.52	.55	.20*	.24**	-.42**	.03	-.39**	.36**	-.25**	.88	
9. Self - Breaking character	1.90	.89	-.04	-.15	.32**	.00	.36**	-.25**	.33**	-.47**	.72

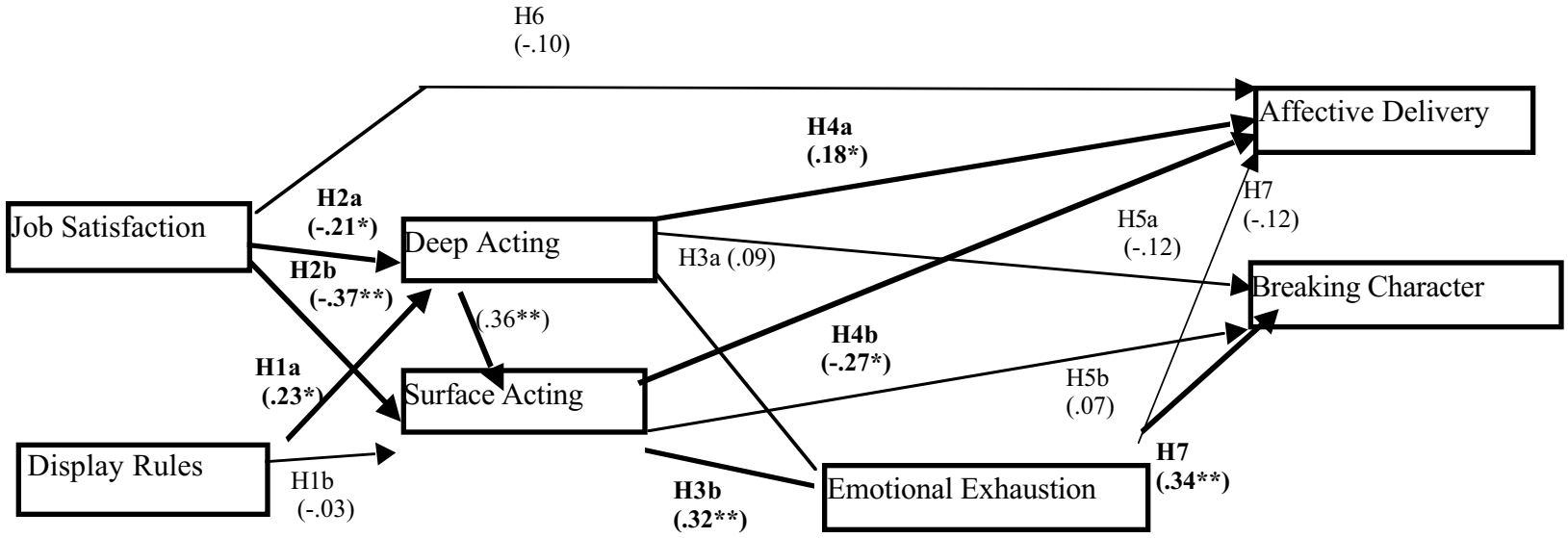
Note: [a] Underlined values on diagonal are alpha coefficients. [b]All variables are on a five-point scale.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$.

FIGURE 1

Hypotheses and Path Coefficients for the Dramaturgical Perspective of Front-Line Service Workers



Note: Standardized beta coefficients are shown, with supported hypothesized paths in bold. Error variances are allowed to covary for job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion, and for the two peer ratings. Hypothesis 6 and 7 refer to mediation hypotheses, which are further tested with a nested models approach (see text).

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

Biographical Sketch

Dr. Alicia A. Grandey earned her Ph.D. at Colorado State University in 1999. She is an assistant professor in industrial-organizational psychology at The Pennsylvania State University. Her research interests include the process and outcomes of expressing and regulating emotions at work, and the perceptions of and barriers to family-friendly policy effectiveness.