



A Study of Measuring Effect of Emotional Labor on Employee Wellbeing of Employees Working in BPO & KPO Firms

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Abstract

Emotional labor play crucial role in managing wellbeing at workplace, keeping this philosophy in mind the current study conducts an empirical survey of employees working in BPO & KPO to understand the relationship between emotional labor and employee wellbeing. Through this pilot research, the study shall measure level of emotional labor and wellbeing of employees along with relationship between them. The survey was conducted on 190 employees with a structured questionnaire and measure the level and impact of emotional labor on employee wellbeing using one-sample test and linear regression analysis. The study found high level of emotional labor of employees of both BPO & KPO firms and significant impact is observed of emotional labor on employee wellbeing. The study proves that employees working in service firms with high degree of emotional labor are successful, satisfied & happy and successfully managing their wellbeing which primarily includes mental, psychological and physical health. It is the mantra for service quality delivery and high performance.

Keywords- Emotional Labor, Employee Wellbeing, BPO, KPO, Service Quality, Service Industry etc.

INTRODUCTION

Emotional labor is a subjective characteristic of human personality that enable someone to handle emotional waves which may come across to perform their duties sincerely and dedicatedly (Adair & Xiong, 2018). It is an art of handling inner emotions which hinder performance and service delivery at the time of service encounter. Emotional labor ability may vary across cultural background of the employee as culture is a potential factor (Allen, Diefendorff & Ma, 2014). In a broader perspective, emotional labor ability helps to keep someone happy even in adverse situation thus contribute to country's happiness index also by minimizing work related burnout and job stress (Anand, Nandedkar & Kumar, 2023). The study on emotional

labor largely target service industries where client facing is crucial for business growth and popularity (Riforgiate, Howes & Simmons, 2021). Client facing or servicing need high emotional labor to ensure desired service quality to the client and achieving organizational goals. Employees with high degree of emotional labor handle personal emotions and sentiments during service encounter and deliver required performance every time they come across the clients or the customers (Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2003).

Emotional Labor

“Emotional labor is defined as managing inner emotions according to the job requirements without affecting given task to be performed”. More appropriately, it is a feeling management with respect to present publicly acceptable facial expressions and body language.

It is about emotions management as per job requirements and shaping work specific behavior to manage job performance especially in service industry. It is like, an employee need ‘smile’ every time he/she meets a client. Organizations like call centre, hotels, aviation etc. desires positive behavior, attractive personality along with soft spoken every time when client interacts with service executives (Yang & Chen, 2020).

Employee Wellbeing

Wellbeing deals with overall health of an employee which motivate his/her to deliver consistent performance with high enthusiasm and happiness. It includes, physical, mental, emotional and economic health of the employee which may derive from favorable working condition and culture (Waida, 2021). Firms who ensure good wellbeing through best HR practices usually succeeded in managing lower stress level of employees thus achieve high employee efficiency and performance (Keeman, Naswall, Malinen & Kuntz, 2017). Furthermore, healthy and favorable working culture of the organization build strong connection with employees and help to create strong employee wellbeing. Employee wellbeing primarily focuses on mental and physical health getting influence from work and related environment (Dewe & Cooper, 2012). Service firms always desire high wellbeing because it directly influence executives’ performance and client servicing. The organizational positive attitude facilitates favorable working environment in which employee feel comfortable and motivated for consistent service performance (Kapp, 2012).

Emotional Labor and Employee Wellbeing

Studies establishes strong connection between emotional labor and employee wellbeing especially in service firms (Chen, Chang & Wang, 2019). Emotional labor help to fight back with adverse emotional as well as physical conditions at workplace and minimize burnout situation (Keyes, 2005). Emotionally strong employees don’t get influenced so fast from regular obstacles and work related toughness. Even they can accommodate easily in apparently appeared non-favorable working condition thus share positive view around themselves (Dougherty & Drumheller, 2006). Specialists believed that, employee wellbeing is an important determinant of a healthy and progressive working environment that promote favorable work culture and conditions (LaMontagne & Keegel & Vallance, 2007). Emotional labor positively impacts mental health of the employees by efficiently managing emotions at workplace. It also improves ability to get involved in

working group and match sentiments with group members. Employees with high emotional labor usually found happier and confident at workplace (Taris & Kompier, 2014).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mental as well as physical health of the employees is crucial for desirable service quality and client servicing especially in service industry. Wellbeing has strong association with employee's performance hence, it is become an untold responsibility of the organization to ensure comfortable working environment for them to maintain high degree of wellbeing (Chen, et al., 2012). Employee wellbeing comprises all the important dimensions of an employee's health be it- emotional, psychological, mental, physical etc. which is necessary to have consistent job performance and minimizing job stress (Cheng & Yang, 2018). Poor emotional labor shows significant impact on employees' health because it affects employees' ability to handle work pressure which may put adverse effect. It primarily includes, insomnia, stress, anxiety, obesity etc. Hence, the rapidly growing service economy desires high level of emotional labor in order to cope with changing demand of the industry (Aung & Tewogbola, 2019). Experts believed that, emotional intelligence and feeling management are very crucial skills which can restrict negative thoughts and effects comes from adverse working culture and environment which may have considerable impact on employee wellbeing particularly on physical or mental health (Kim, Lee & Jung, 2018). Poor emotional labor also leads to job stress and dissatisfaction and leads to high attrition rate. Emotional labor not only adjust work related behavior but also broaden the horizon of employees' perspective. Employees with broadened perception take things at positive note and agree with the situation happily (Chung, Jung & Kim, 2017).

RESEARCH METHOD

Method

The study follows empirical research method to investigate the impact of emotional labor on employee wellbeing with special reference to service industry. It also measures the level of emotional labor and wellbeing of employees working in BPO and KPO. The empirical approach represents current situation through primary data collected from target employees and give clear understanding of the scenario.

Sampling Plan

Judgmental sampling technique has been used to obtain data from appropriate respondents. Primarily BPO & KPO firms have been targeted with a self-structured questionnaire measuring their level of emotional labor and wellbeing. Total 190 responses were collected from 4 BPO and 4 KPO firms covering three states like- Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujrat. The diversified sampling may give wider perspective of the phenomenon.

OBJECTIVES

1. Measuring the level of emotional labor of BPO and KPO employees.
2. Measuring the level of wellbeing of BPO and KPO employees.
3. Measuring the effect of emotional labor on employee wellbeing

HYPOTHESES

H₀₁: Level of emotional labor of BPO employees is significantly low.

H₀₂: Level of emotional labor of KPO employees is significantly low.

H₀₃: Level of employee wellbeing of BPO employees is significantly low.

H₀₄: Level of employee wellbeing of KPO employees is significantly low.

H₀₅: Emotional labor doesn't have significant impact employee wellbeing.

ANALYSIS

1. Measuring the level of emotional labor of BPO and KPO employees.

H₀₁: Level of emotional labor of BPO employees is significantly low.

Table 1- One Sample Test for BPO_EL

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
BPO_EL	29.017	94	.000	1.04939	.9776	1.1212

The assumption of hypothesis H₀₁ stands rejected with sig. value .000 < .05 which reveal that the level of emotional labor of employees working in BPO firms is significantly high. The test statistics indicate t(94)= 29.017, MD= 1.04939. The result reveal that, employees' emotional labor is significantly higher which help them to perform their task efficiently with high degree satisfaction. Good emotional labor help employees to manage emotions for desired performance at workplace.

Table 2- Test Statistics

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
BPO_EL	95	4.0494	.35249	.03616

Table 2 supports the one sample test by showing mean score of the sample. It is observed that the M= 4.0494 is greater than the test value of 3 which indicate towards the degree of emotional labor. The level of emotional labor is quite good which means BPO employees are able to adjust work related behavior and deliver what they are expected to. It also keeps them stable and happy at workplace.

H₀₂: Level of emotional labor of KPO employees is significantly low.

Table 3- One Sample Test for KPO_EL

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
KPO_EL	31.399	94	.000	1.10850	1.0384	1.1786

Here, the null hypothesis H02 is observed to be rejected with sig. value $.000 < .05$ which means the level of emotional labor of employees working KPO firm is significantly high. The test statistics are $t(94) = 31.399$, $MD = 1.10850$. High level of emotional labor shows that the employees are mature enough and understand what they are supposed to do and how they can accommodate themselves in diverse working environment. It leads to job satisfaction and minimizes work related stress.

Table 4- Test Statistics

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
KPO_EL	95	4.1085	.34410	.03530

Table 4 supports the one sample test by showing mean score of the sample. It is observed that the $M = 4.1085$ is greater than the test value of 3 which indicate towards the degree of emotional labor. The level of emotional labor is quite good which means BPO employees are able to adjust work related behavior and deliver what they are expected to. Emotional labor of employees is desirable in service industry with respect to service quality and work related consistent.

2. Measuring the level of wellbeing of BPO and KPO employees.

H₀₃: Level of employee wellbeing of BPO employees is significantly low.

Table 5- One Sample Test for BPO_EW

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
BPO_EW	42.892	95	.000	1.02517	.9777	1.0726

The null hypothesis H03 is observed rejected with sig. value $.000 < .05$ which means the level of employee wellbeing of employees working in BPO firm is significantly high. The test statistics are $t(95) = 42.892$, $MD = 1.02517$. High wellbeing shows mental and physical fitness of the employees which may be the outcome of

good working culture and facilities at workplace. Wellbeing also indicate employees' job satisfaction and happiness at workplace.

Table 6- Test Statistics

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
BPO_EW	96	4.0252	.23418	.02390

Table 6 supports the one sample test by showing mean score of the sample. It is observed that the $M= 4.0252$ is greater than the test value of 3 which indicate towards the degree of employee wellbeing. The level of employee wellbeing is quite good which means BPO employees are healthy in all respect. Good wellbeing indicates psychological wellbeing along with physical health which derive from good infrastructure, organizational policies and favorable working condition.

H₀₄: Level of employee wellbeing of KPO employees is significantly low.

Table 7- One Sample Test for KPO_EW

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
KPO_EW	42.958	94	.000	.99561	.9496	1.0416

The null hypothesis H₀₄ is observed rejected with sig. value $.000 < .05$ which means the level of employee wellbeing of employees working in KPO firm is significantly high. The test statistics are $t(94)= 42.958$, $MD= .99561$. High wellbeing shows mental and physical fitness of the employees which may be the outcome of good working culture and facilities at workplace. Wellbeing also indicate employees' job satisfaction and happiness at workplace.

Table 8- Test Statistics

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
KPO_EW	95	3.9956	.22590	.02318

Table 8 supports the one sample test by showing mean score of the sample. It is observed that the $M= 3.9956$ is greater than the test value of 3 which indicate towards the degree of employee wellbeing. The level of employee wellbeing is quite good which means KPO employees are healthy in all respect. Good wellbeing

indicates psychological wellbeing along with physical health which derive from good infrastructure, organizational policies and favorable working condition.

3. Measuring the effect of emotional labor on employee wellbeing

H₀₅: Emotional labor doesn't have significant impact employee wellbeing.

Table 9- Regression Analysis

ANOVA ^b						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.992	1	.792	11.741	.018
	Residual	9.925	188	.053		
	Total	10.017	189			

a. Predictors: (Constant), EL

b. Dependent Variable: EW

The assumption of null hypothesis H₀₅ stands rejected with sig. value .018 < .05 which indicate that emotional labor has significant impact on employee wellbeing of employees working in BPO & KPO firms. The test statistics is found F(189)= 11.741, MS= .792 & SQ= .992. The test reveal that, employees' emotional labor helps significantly to manage their wellbeing which primarily includes mental, physical and psychological health. Employees with high emotional labor tend to be mentally and physically fit for the job and deliver consistent performance. The regression analysis reflects significant relationship between the variables. Employees must maintain their emotional intelligence in order to meet work related requirements without getting affect from external environmental factors.

Table 10- Model Summary

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.46	.39	.376	.22977	.009	1.741	1	188	.189

a. Predictors: (Constant), EL

Furthermore, with respect to measure the intensity of association between the emotional labor and employee wellbeing model summary has been referred wherein value of adjusted R square is considered which shows 38% impact (R= .376) of emotional labor on employees' wellbeing. Good emotional labor undoubtedly enlarges emotional power to accept and comfortably accommodate themselves in the environment. Which reduces working culture and condition related uneasiness and help to maintain satisfaction. High emotional labor also decreases job stress in service industry.

FINDINGS

The research found that, emotional labor of employees of service industry is reasonably good which indicate towards their mental health and ability to manage emotions at workplace. BPO and KPO firms provide essential amenities and facilities to the employees for smooth working with high satisfaction. Result also support the relationship between emotional labor and employee wellbeing which means employees' emotional labor contribute significantly to their emotional health and physical. Emotional labor is essential for higher performance and good health at workplace. Mentally and physically fit employees deliver high job performance while managing emotions efficiently.

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