



2nd GLOBAL CONFERENCE on PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCHES, 28-29, November 2014

Emotional Labor Levels Of Nurse Academicians

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Abstract

This study aimed to identify the emotional labor levels of nurse academicians and was conducted with 152 nurse academicians working at nursing departments of public and private universities in Istanbul. According to the results, the mean score of the scale was 3.01 ± 0.51 in total, 1.68 ± 0.69 in superficial acting dimension, 2.86 ± 1.24 in deep acting dimension, and 4.49 ± 0.55 in expression of naturally-felt emotions dimension. Nurse academicians working at public universities for at least 6 years evaluated the emotional labor score in total and in deep acting dimension higher than the others ($p < 0.05$). In conclusion, they performed mid-level emotional labor in general.

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Peer-review under responsibility of Academic World Research and Education Center.

Keywords: Emotional labor, nurse , academicians, university

1. Introduction

The concept of emotion is a field that has been worked on, and on which various opinions have been brought forward since the end of 1800s. Since 1980s, the presence and manifestation of emotions in work life and the role of emotions in corporate success has been discussed increasingly (Secer, 2005). The concept of emotional labor, which arose accordingly, was mentioned for the first time in 1983 inside 'The Managed Hearth' of Hochschild and was defined as the management of emotions that are expressed through face or body in return for a price, for anybody to be able to observe (Wharton, 2009). Thereby, making sure that a certain emotional signal would be delivered to the other party through manners during the work was now considered to be among the necessities of many jobs, as a feature of the job role that is undertaken (Secer, 2005). Especially in the service sector, or in health and education professions which necessitate human relations, as emotional capabilities gained importance (Savas, 2012; Kaya & Tekin, 2013), the concept of emotional labor was defined to be a second duty that should be exercised along with basic tasks (Ozkan, 2013), or the nameless duty that the workers should be performing while doing their work

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(Basım & Begenirbas, 2012). Emotional labor was also described as showing effort to understand others, as developing empathy to comprehend their situation and the attempt to apprehend how they feel (Steinberg and Figart, 1999), or as workers' feelings that are expressed or suppressed (Turkay et al, 2011), or controlled, while putting forth service as a result of the expectancies of corporations.

In addition, some sociological studies regarding emotional labor suggested that workers spend higher levels of emotional effort in occupations which necessitate love, care, and face to face interaction with public (Wharton, 2009). Educational researchers emphasized that teachers, who have to interact face to face with students in a loving and caring manner, need to practice emotional labor (Isenbarger & Zemblas, 2006). However, Zemblays (2005) mentioned that teachers, as a general rule, should avoid letting their extremely strong and extremely weak emotions be known. Winograd (2003) put forth five feeling and expression rules for them to use. These were; to love and to show enthusiasm for students, to be enthusiastic and passionate about subject matter, to avoid the display of extreme emotions like anger, joy and sadness, to love their work, and to have a sense of humor and laugh at their own mistakes and the peccadilloes of students (Winograd, 2003). This means that if teachers do not manage their emotions appropriately according to the rules, they will be treated as unprofessional. Consequently, teachers have to perform emotional labor. Basically, this argument was accepted by most of education researchers. They investigated the outcomes of the emotional labor in teaching with respect to teachers' psychological well-being and mentality (Tsang, 2014).

Some studies explained that there could be positive outcomes as well as negative ones in terms of emotional labor (Oral & Kose, 2011; Berry & Cassidy, 2013; Picardo et al, 2013). The negative outcomes were; feeling robotic, un-empathetic, role overload, high job turnover, absenteeism and low morale (Berry & Cassidy, 2013). On the other hand, spending high rates of emotional labor and emotional exploitation, therefore depression, alienation, exhaustion and loss of identity were results that might be experienced (Welch 1997; Berry & Cassidy, 2013; Tunc et al, 2014). Hargreaves (2000) explained that performing emotional labor can be pleasurable, rewarding, and that often teachers largely enjoy the emotional labor of working with students because this helps them meet their core classroom purposes. Shuler and Syher (2000) also stated that when emotional labor is conducted for the benefit of students, or for a teacher's own reward and satisfaction, rather than because of organizational demand display rules, then job satisfaction can actually increase.

Considering these results, it was believed to be important to evaluate emotional labor for nurse academicians or nurse teachers who are responsible for training student nurses at health and nursing services which require interactions with people who ask for regular service, where the population of women is high, where emotional labor is practiced often (Kaya & Tekin, 2013), and which demands the management of emotions. Nurse teachers or nurse academicians, as a health team member and an educator, have an important role in making nurse students understand and affect the feelings of patients and other individuals with whom they interact with (Onay, 2011; Picardo et al, 2013), develop effective communication skills, or put emotional labor process into practice in order to be aware of their own feelings during patient-nurse relationship, take those feelings under control and be able to reach their educational goals (Smith & Gray, 2001; Onay, 2011; Williams, 2012; Picardo et al, 2013). That is due to the fact that training students in such a way that they can become advanced in communication, consultancy, and critical thinking is one of the prior goals of nursing education (McQueen, 2003; Onay, 2011). In this direction, nurse teachers have a huge responsibility in making the students successful in management of their emotions, in their training, and their socialization goals (Smith & Gray, 2001; Williams, 2012; Picardo et al, 2013). However, when the studies on emotional labor regarding nurse teachers were searched for, it was seen that especially in nurse training, the literature for high education on emotional labor was limited, just like Constanti and Gibbs (2004) stated.

In this direction, this study was planned with the purpose of specifying emotional labor levels of nurse academicians and factors affecting these levels.

2. Methods

This descriptive research was conducted between June 17 and July 15, 2014, after getting the permission from the nurse departments of 20 state and private universities in Istanbul. The population of the research consisted of 234 nurse academicians working at nursing departments, while 152 (65%) nurse academicians formed the sample. The study tried to reach the whole population instead of using sample selection.

The data was collected by the Emotional Labor Scale that consisted of 13 items, as well as a questionnaire with 14 questions, regarding the demographic features, and lessons and schedules of nurse academicians, via handing in or e-mail. The scale was developed by Diefendorff, Croyle and Grosseran in 2005, was adapted into Turkish by Basim and Begeirbas in 2012, and was a 5 point Likert scale. Percentage, average, Chi-Square, Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Shapiro-Wilk, Kruskal Wallis, Mann Withney U tests were used while evaluating the data. The research was limited with the opinions of nurse academicians working at the universities in Istanbul.

3. Findings

Of the nurse academicians, 35% were 23-30 years old, 61% were married, and 57% did not have any children. 54% worked at a state university, 40% worked at a health sciences faculty, and 82% did not have administrative duties. 60% of the nurse academicians had been at the nursing department for 1-5 years, 44% had academic experience of 1-5 years, and 37% had been working as research associates. 51% were responsible for 1-30 students, 84% for the graduate, 44% for the master science and 22% for PhD classes. 30% had been teaching for 1-10 hours a week. 84% would like to work as an academician if they were given the chance again (Table 2). On the other hand, 77% of the nurse academicians who had been working for 1-5 years as an academician were working at private universities, while 57% of the ones who had been working for at least 6 years were working at state universities ($\chi^2=15.344$; $p=0.000$).

Table 1. Mean scores of Emotional Labor Scale and subscales according to the answers of the nurse academicians (n= 152)

Subscales	State University	Private University	Total
	Mean \pm SD	Mean \pm SD	Mean \pm SD
Superficial acting	1.73 \pm 0.67	1.62 \pm 0.68	1.68 \pm 0.67
Deep acting	3.14 \pm 1.23	2.53 \pm 1.19	2.86 \pm 1.24
Naturally-felt emotions	4.48\pm0.48	4.50\pm0.63	4.49\pm0.55
Total	3.12 \pm 0.49	2.89 \pm 0.51	3.01 \pm 0.51

According to the Emotional Labor Scale, nurse academicians evaluated the scale total as 3.01 \pm 0.51, superficial acting as 1.68 \pm 0.69, deep acting as 2.86 \pm 1.24, and naturally-felt emotions as 4.49 \pm 0.55 in terms of means (Table 1). Additionally, nurse academicians working at state universities had a total mean score of 3.12 \pm 0.49 whereas the ones working at private universities had a mean score of 2.89 \pm 0.51. The nurse academicians working both at state and private universities had the highest mean score for expression of naturally-felt emotions and the lowest for superficial acting (Table 1).

Table 2. Comparison of demographic features of the nurse academicians with the emotional labor scale and scale sub-dimension ranks

Demographic Features	n	%	Superficial acting	Deep acting	Naturally-felt emotions	Total
			Mean Rank	Mean Rank	Mean Rank	Mean Rank

<u>School Type</u>						
State University	82	54	80.84	86.42	74.66	85.65
Private University	70	46	71.42	64.88	78.65	65.87
Total	152					
	MWU; p value=		2514.5 ; 0.185	2056.5 ; 0.003	2719.5 ; 0.564	2119.5 ; 0.006
<u>Duration of Work In The Institution</u>						
1-5 years	90	59	74.88	69.15	71.63	68.73
6 years ↑	61	40	77.66	86.11	82.45	86.73
Total	151					
	MWU; p value=		2644.0; 0.699	2128.5; 0.019	2351.5; 0.121	2090.5; 0.013
<u>Desire To Work As An Academician</u>						
Wants	127	84	71.33	76.61	79.83	74.87
Doesn't Want	25	16	102.74	75.96	59.60	84.76
Total	152					
	MWU; p value=		931.5 ; 0.001	1574.0 ; 0.946	1165.0 ; 0.029	1382.0 ; 0.305

In addition, it was found that nurse academicians working at state universities gave higher ranks to the total scale (MWU=2129.5; p=0.006), to deep acting (MWU=2719.5; p=0.003), and to emotional labor, than the ones working at private universities (Table 2).

Nurse academicians working at their universities for at least 6 years had higher scores for total scale (MWU=2090.5; p=0.013), deep acting (MWU=2128.5; p=0.019), and emotional labor, when compared to the ones who had been working for 1-5 years. (Table 2).

Nurse academicians, who would like to work as an academician if they were given the chance again, had a higher rank for deep acting (MWU=1165; p=0.029), whereas the ones who wouldn't choose to work as an academician proportioned superficial acting (MWU=931.5; p=0.001) with a higher rank (Table 2).

Furthermore, no statistically significant difference was found between age, marital status, number of children, faculties/universities, academic titles, administrative duties, number of years of academic experience, number of students that nurse academicians were responsible for, number of weekly classes and class hours, program at which they carried out their courses and the scale scores and subscales scores (p>0.05).

4. Discussion

As instructors of the nursing profession which requires continuous communication and interaction with patients, their relatives, and health teams and having a key role in the success of nurse students by providing them with support and guidance, nurse academicians need to practice emotional labor both as a health member and as an instructor (Williams, 2012). This study, which examined the emotional labor levels of nurse academicians, has found that all nurse academicians, in particular those working at state universities and would like to keep on working as academicians, performed mid-level emotional labor with sincere, natural, and real feelings. Naturally-felt emotions or genuine emotions, defined as expressing emotions in the natural way, is a type of behavior that comes out because the employees are already feeling the same way as they are supposed to be expressing (Tunc et al, 2014). Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) stated that 'individuals do not need to be acting all the time to meet the role requirements, since real emotions, in some cases, may be the same as the emotions that they are supposed to have.' Emotions that are expected to be expressed and emotions that are felt being similar to each other demonstrates there is a compatibility in terms of feelings. The presence of emotional compatibility pointed to the fact that an individual could go well together with his/her environment. Feeling this way kept the worker away from the stress that was created by the work itself (Lashley, 2002). Therefore, it can be concluded that nurse academicians using their natural emotions more would be away from emotional incompatibility, have emotional harmony, and would not experience internal conflicts.

Nurse academicians working at state universities and at the same university for at least 6 years usually performed mid-level emotional labor, but their emotional labor in terms of deep acting was higher when compared to ones

working at private universities for 1-5 years. Similar to the present one, the study of Zhang and Zhu conducted in China (2008) observed that instructors mostly used deep acting dimension. Moreover, a study carried out in Turkey found that nurses in the private sector had more tendency to conduct deep acting, when compared to nurses that worked in the public sector (Secer ve Tinar, 2004). Deep acting is the effort of one to really feel and experience those emotions that they are expected to be expressing. Thus, intense emotions necessitate deeper acting (Gungor, 2009). In other words, it is the effort of the individual to awaken the expected emotions in themselves by benefiting from some thoughts, imaginations, and memories (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). Stated differently, deep acting consists of the endeavor of workers to feel and present the emotions that are stated and demanded by institutions (Brotheridge & Taylor, 2006). The fact that nurse academicians working at state universities performed deep acting might be rooting from their (at least) 6 years of presence at those universities. Berry and Cassidy (2013) found that period of service was an important factor for instructors in performing emotional labor. In this direction, it can be said that the culture of an institution is learned well and institutional socialization or the social adaptability increases as more and more time is spent at the institution. Institutional socialization or social adaptability are related with norms on some emotions which are supposed to be performed or hidden, or with rules of expression (Hochschild, 1979). This way, workers, during the socialization period, learn which emotions to perform, through reward and punishment mechanisms. Also, many institutions monitor their employees to ensure that they perform / do not perform the specified emotions (Gungor, 2009; Kart, 2011). Academic hierarchy and norms are important for institutional socialization at nursing departments of state universities in Turkey. Therefore, it can be stated that nurse academicians who spend their academic lives at state universities experience institutional socialization better and deeply interiorize the roles that their profession demands.

The dimension of emotional labor that was least used by nurse academicians was superficial acting. This dimension was usually preferred by nurse academicians who did not want to work as an academician. Zhang and Zhu (2008) indicated similar results and it was seen that instructors in China used superficial acting the rarest. Superficial acting or behavior is performing emotions that are not really felt inside (Gungor, 2009), or the course of action that is adjusted to expectations by controlling expressing emotions, without needing to change real emotions (Kaya & Tekin, 2013). In the present study, it was a significant result that the scores of this dimension for the academicians who would not prefer to work as nurse academicians was found high. Therefore, it cannot be expected from someone who does not want or love this role to act sincerely or naturally, or to try to empathize with the emotions and behaviors that being a nurse academician requires. Moreover, a study with meta-analysis explained that spending effort to express emotions that were not sincerely felt had some negative effects. Also, it was stated that superficial acting had a negative relation with job satisfaction and organizational attachment, and a positive relation with emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, psychological strain, and psychosomatic complaints (Hulsheger & Schewe, 2011).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Most of the nurse academicians, especially ones that had been working at state universities or working at their university for at least 6 years, performed mid-level emotional labor. In addition, they expressed their real emotions. In other words, they performed their duties without expressing pretentious emotions, acting like an actor/actress, or spending any effort, while they was teaching students. However, ones that have been working at state universities or working at their university for at least 6 years performed deep acting most of the time, because of trying to experience emotions that they needed to express as a necessity of socialization related to academic lifestyle and working for a very long time. This showed that they internalized the emotions and entailed them to have the capability of managing their emotions well.

If nurse academicians who did not wish to work as academicians and choose to express the emotions that they do not really feel can experience exhaustion and job dissatisfaction, and therefore they shall be trained on emotional management. Otherwise their work performance might be affected negatively and they might feel disappointment (Hayward & Tuckey, 2011). On the other hand, during recruitments and eliminations, turning down nurses who apply to academia, without enjoying or desiring it, just for keeping away from clinical nursing may help prevent this issue and contribute to institutional socialization. Furthermore, it can be suggested to future researchers to analyze the relation of job satisfaction and exhaustion with the dimensions of emotional labor. Emotional levels and factors

affecting emotional labor levels of members of other health professions, nurses, and nurse students can be compared with each other in order to fill out the gap in the literature.

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