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Emotional Labor at a Crossroads: Where Do We Go from Here?

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emotional labor, emotional performance, emotion regulation

Abstract

Three decades after its introduction as a concept, emotional labor—regulating emotions as part of the work role—is fully on the map in organizational behavior and organizational psychology. As research has accelerated, roadblocks, such as fuzzy construct conceptualizations, assumed but untested processes, and methodological stagnation, have emerged. To provide direction to new scholars and suggestions to seasoned emotional labor researchers, we review theoretical perspectives and evidence for emotional labor and its (a) construct development and measurement, (b) chronic and momentary determinants, (c) prediction of employee well-being and (d) influence on organizational performance. On this path, we introduce emotional labor as a dynamic integration of three components (i.e., emotional requirements, emotion regulation, and emotion performance), interpret personal and organizational moderators, and point to innovative new methodological approaches. Overall, we provide a new road map to jump-start the field in exciting new directions.

INTRODUCTION

Emotional labor, the idea of managing emotions with others as part of the work role, was proposed in sociology three decades ago (Hochschild 1983). Back then, emotional labor in organizational sciences was like the back roads of a country town: relatively unexplored and hard to navigate, with some people telling you not to take that route. Slowly, the organizational behavior (OB) and organizational psychology (OP) literature began recognizing the value of understanding emotions at work, and emotional labor became a focal area of study (Barsade et al. 2003). The past decade has seen unprecedented growth and impact in this focal area, as illustrated by recent meta-analyses (Hülshager & Schewe 2011, Kammeyer-Mueller et al. 2013, Mesmer-Magnus et al. 2012), exponential growth in citation counts (over 16,000, triple the number across the prior two decades), and a cross-disciplinary book devoted to the topic (Grandey et al. 2013c).

Growth is exciting, but it can also create challenges. As Bono & Vey (2005) stated in their review of the topic, emotional labor has survived the first stage of scientific construct development: concept introduction and elaboration. However, they also summed up the state of emotional labor by stating that “[a]greement on how to define and [operationalize] emotional labor. . . has not been reached” and that “emotional labor now seems to be struggling through the throes of construct adolescence” (p. 216). Almost 10 years after Bono & Vey’s review, the assessment remains the same (see Mesmer-Magnus et al. 2012). Thus, emotional labor is stalled at a crossroads.

Our review is meant to jump-start new research in the area of emotional labor by reviewing where we have been and new directions that seem promising. We organize our review in three main sections highlighted in **Figure 1**: (a) defining and measuring emotional labor (*hourglass in center*), (b) describing the chronic and momentary antecedents of emotional labor (*left side*), and reviewing how emotional labor is related to (c) employee well-being and job/organizational performance (*right side*). Across these three sections, we review dominant theoretical perspectives (shown inside the *arrows* in **Figure 1**) and how personal, dyadic, and organizational moderating effects inform and change our conclusions (*bottom box*).

EMOTIONAL LABOR: DEFINITION AND MEASUREMENT

The quote often used to define emotional labor is hidden in a footnote in Arlie Hochschild’s (1983, p. 7) seminal book *The Managed Heart*, in which she is distinguishing emotional labor from related concepts: “I use the term *emotional labor* to mean the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display; emotional labor is sold for a wage and therefore has *exchange value*. I use the synonymous terms *emotion work* or *emotion management* to refer to these same acts done in a private context where they have *use value*” (emphasis in original). Hochschild described her observations of how management practices are used to encourage flight attendants and bill collectors to actively regulate their moods and expressions with customers, linking their efforts to dramatic techniques used in theater. At the end of her book, Hochschild provided an appendix with a proposed list of high emotional labor jobs for further study.

Emotional Labor as Three Separate Components

In light of Hochschild’s (1983) work, emotional labor represented an occupational category, the emotional effort or labor to perform that job, and the interpersonal expressions as the fruits of the labor. These three components—emotional requirements, emotion regulation, and emotion performance, respectively—were then often studied and measured separately in emergent research.

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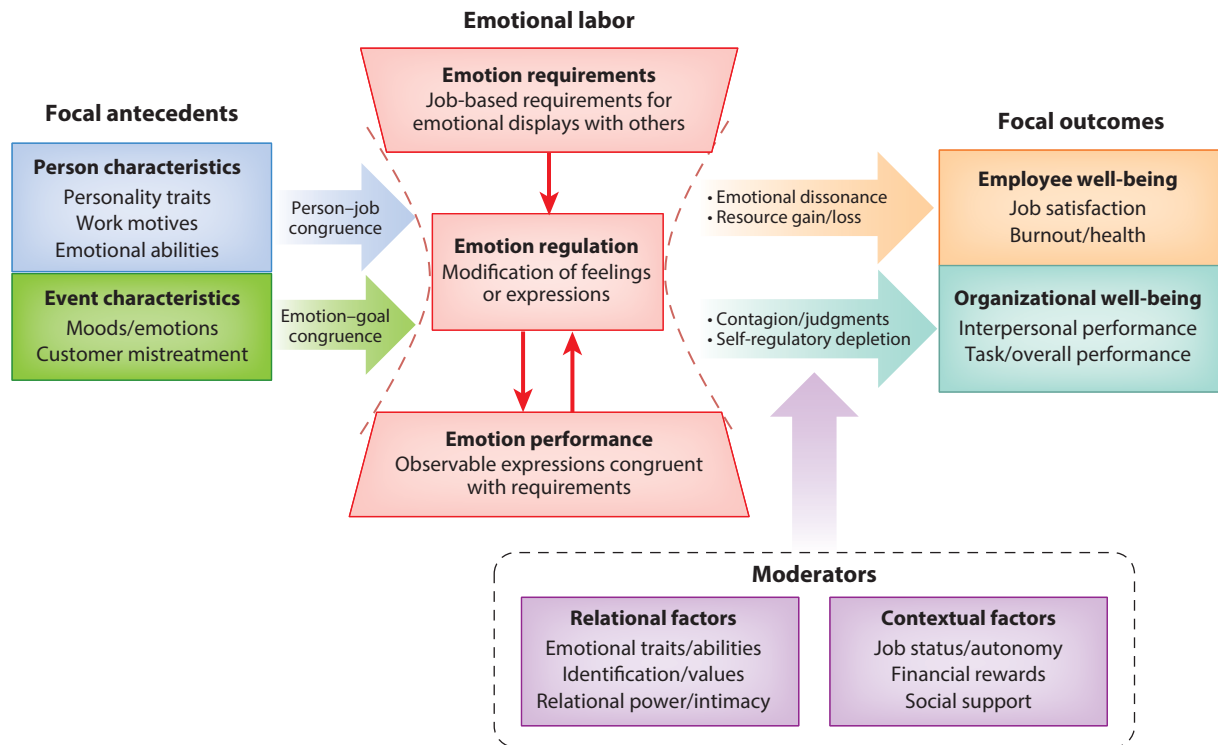


Figure 1

An integrated three-component model of emotional labor antecedents, outcomes, and moderators.

Emotional requirements. Some researchers focus on emotional labor as a type of job that has high customer or emotional demands (Wharton 1993). Such emotional requirements, as we label this approach, typically have an “integrative” goal with showing positive displays and hiding negative ones (i.e., “service with a smile”), but can also require negative or neutral displays in certain occupations (e.g., judges, bill collectors; Sutton 1991, Wharton & Erickson 1993).

Emotional requirements are typically measured as employee perceptions of their jobs’ display rules, which vary by job category but also by personality (Brotheridge & Grandey 2002, Diefendorff et al. 2006). As discussed later, a more conceptually consistent and less biased method is to aggregate perceptions either to the unit level (Diefendorff et al. 2011) or to the job level. Researchers using the latter approach link participant job titles to their emotional requirements as rated by incumbents and/or experts (e.g., O*NET) and then link those jobs to outcomes with interesting results (Bhave & Glomb 2015, Glomb et al. 2004, Grandey et al. 2007). For example, Glomb and colleagues (2004) demonstrated that as emotional requirements increase according to the O*NET codes, employees’ wages decrease unless the job also has high cognitive demands. In OB/OP research, emotional requirements are also experimentally manipulated for participants in work simulations (Bono & Vey 2007, Goldberg & Grandey 2007, Trougakos et al. 2011).

Emotion regulation. The second component is the effort expended by the employee in trying to meet the socioemotional demands of the job. Hochschild (1983) observed employees using two types of dramaturgical techniques: surface acting, in which one is just putting on the emotional mask that is expected, and deep acting (i.e., method acting), in which one tries to really create the

feelings that must be expressed. Grandey (2000) connected these concepts to the now dominant emotion regulation theory in psychology (Gross 1998). Specifically, Grandey suggested that deep acting was similar to the broader concept of antecedent-focused emotion regulation, which is used to change a situation or cognitions to modify feelings (e.g., situational avoidance, reappraisal, distraction), and that surface acting is a type of response-focused emotion regulation, which is used to change expressions and behavior after an emotion is felt (e.g., suppression, relaxation). Although this theoretical linkage permitted early researchers to draw on a rich lab-based literature, Grandey (2000, p. 101) noted the caveat that such evidence may not perfectly apply to these two concepts and the work context, a point we return to later.

As an intrapsychic concept, measures of emotion regulation tend to be self-reported. Deep acting measures ask about attempts or effort to change feelings to be congruent with emotional requirements (Brotheridge & Lee 2003) or about the extent of using reappraisal or refocusing to improve moods in difficult interpersonal exchanges (Grandey et al. 2004). Surface acting is measured as pretending, suppressing, and faking expressions with customers (Brotheridge & Lee 2003, Grandey 2003). Critically, the items often confound the acting with the affective-motivational experiences for both surface acting (i.e., confounded with negative affect/stress) and deep acting (i.e., confounded with motivation). Some researchers focus only on regulating expressions, omitting deep acting (Grandey et al. 2005b), differentiating upregulating (i.e., amplifying) from downregulating (i.e., suppressing) emotional expressions (Côté & Morgan 2002, Côté et al. 2013), or differentiating between faking, suppressing, and expressing (i.e., genuine) discrete emotions (Glomb & Tews 2004). Other researchers find that genuine emotional labor, or “naturally displaying felt emotions,” is a separate emotion regulation dimension (Diefendorff et al. 2005), which seems to predict customer outcomes beyond deep acting (Hülshager et al. 2015). This distinction provokes the question of what low surface and deep acting indicate if not genuine expression. Low surface and deep acting could reflect low motivation to follow display rules (i.e., goal abandonment; Diefendorff & Gosserand 2003), high person–job fit (Gabriel et al. 2015b), or, more problematically, a measurement artifact.

Emotion performance. Finally, the third component of emotional labor is observable expressions. Early authors focused on emotional labor as observable expressions with others that may be authentically felt or faked (Ashforth & Humphrey 1993). Emotional performance is when employee expressions are congruent with job emotional requirements (Bono & Vey 2007), and emotional deviance is when expressions are incongruent with such emotional requirements (Rafaeli & Sutton 1987). Early researchers found that observed expressions were unrelated to employees’ reported moods, supporting that the displays were strategic rather than expressions of feelings (Pugh 2001).

Emotion performance is measured in field observations of facial or vocal cues of emotional expressions, typically frequency of smiling, eye contact, and pleasant tone by trained coders (Barger & Grandey 2006, Bono & Vey 2007, Pugh 2001, Rafaeli & Sutton 1990). Another approach to studying emotional performance is to manipulate the discrete emotions communicated (e.g., anger and happiness; Van Kleef et al. 2004) or the authenticity of the emotional performance in videos or with confederates (Grandey et al. 2005a, Sy et al. 2005). This approach is clearly more focused on how perceivers respond to the emotional labor than on the experience of the actor.

Emotional Labor as an Integrated Process

The whole of emotional labor is greater than the sum of its parts. To most clearly recognize the unique nature of emotional labor and differentiate it from other concepts, scholars should

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consider emotional labor an umbrella term for an integrated process represented by job emotional requirements (environmental stimulus), emotion regulation (intrapsychic response), and emotion performance (interpersonal behavior). As shown in the hourglass portion of **Figure 1**, these three lenses together (i.e., using trifocals; Grandey et al. 2013b) illustrate the dynamic and reciprocal emotional labor process.

In support of an integrated view, the three components are related in expected ways. At the top half of the hourglass (see **Figure 1**), job emotional requirements are positively related to the extent and type of emotion regulation. Specifically, “showing positive emotion” requirements are strongly linked to deep acting, and “hiding negative emotion” requirements are strongly linked to surface acting (Diefendorff et al. 2011, Kammeyer-Mueller et al. 2013). Glomb & Tews (2004) showed that jobs involving caretaking involved frequent expressing and faking of positive emotions, whereas policing involved such positive faking as well as more expressing and faking of negative emotions. As a newer exploration, Trougakos and colleagues (2011) held constant the job (i.e., polltakers on campus) and manipulated positive and neutral display requirements. Compared to positive requirements, neutral emotional requirements elicited more surface acting (i.e., suppression).

Emotional requirements also influence observable emotional performance (Diefendorff & Richard 2003, Gosserand & Diefendorff 2005, Trougakos et al. 2011) beyond emotion regulation (Mesmer-Magnus et al. 2012). Emotional requirements may influence emotional expressions by unconscious regulation, by different emotion regulation strategies than are typically measured, or by encouraging genuine expressions (Ashforth & Humphrey 1993, Diefendorff et al. 2005).

Moving to the bottom half of the hourglass, we find that emotion regulation in the form of deep acting is positively related to emotional performance, beyond emotional requirements and traits, whereas surface acting’s relationship is weaker across studies (Hülshheger & Schewe 2011, Kammeyer-Mueller et al. 2013). Notably, meta-analyses of lab-based studies support the opposite conclusion: Expressive suppression (surface acting) is actually more effective at changing observed displays than reappraisal is (deep acting) (Webb et al. 2012). This could be in large part due to the measurement artifacts of emotional labor mentioned above (i.e., deep acting items confounded with motivation) or to the fact that lab studies manipulate with instructions rather than obtain self-ratings of regulation. Also, in the work context, surface acting’s effect on emotional performance depends on the motivation and skills of the actor and perceiver (Chi et al. 2011, Groth et al. 2009).

Finally, we acknowledge that this process is not unidirectional; there are likely feedback loops and cycles as well [see James Gross’s (2015) forthcoming advancement of his theory in *Psychological Inquiry*]. Similarly, an employee’s emotion performance feeds back to the employee to inform subsequent emotion regulation needed and reinforce the awareness of emotional requirements. Emotion performance also influences the perceiver’s (i.e., a customer’s) emotions, with the perceiver’s reactions also influencing employee’s emotion regulation (Diefendorff & Gosserand 2003).

Future Directions: Caution with Construct but Risk Taking with Measurement

In the past decade, emotional labor has tended to be equated with surface and deep acting, with new work applying those concepts to interpersonal contexts beyond customer service. We see some need for care in this approach and encourage innovation in other approaches.

Caution with construct boundaries. Emotional labor was originally defined as emotion regulation for the goal of publicly observable expressions in a paid exchange, prototypically with customers. Today, emotional labor is being studied as surface and deep acting with coworkers

(Ozcelik 2013) and leaders (Ashkanasy & Humphrey 2011, Gardner et al. 2009), and even with marital partners (Yanchus et al. 2010). To what extent do the main distinctions and assumptions of emotional labor change when we move away from the labor required of low-status service providers with one-time customers to more intimate/equal-status relationships or higher-status actors with more resources (Diefendorff et al. 2010, Tschan et al. 2005)? Emotion regulation is certainly done in many work exchanges, but for emotional labor to be a unique construct nonredundant with emotion regulation, does there need to be some of the defining features identified by Hochschild (Grandey et al. 2013b) Moreover, studying emotional labor with internal members of the organization starts to overlap with other OB/OP topics, such as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and impression management. One good next step would be to demonstrate both how emotional labor with organizational members is conceptually distinct or related to these existing interpersonal behaviors and the incremental validity of the newer concept of emotional labor.

Measure at the appropriate level of analysis. Emotional requirements and emotion regulation tend to be measured at the person level, but this may not be appropriate because conceptually these concepts vary by work context (i.e., a higher level of analysis) and moods/emotional events (i.e., a lower level of analysis), respectively (Beal & Trougakos 2013, Groth & Grandey 2012). Consistent with this notion, perceived and objectively measured emotional requirements have been shown to vary by the employee's supervisor (Wilk & Moynihan 2005), workgroup (Diefendorff et al. 2011), and occupation (Bhave & Glomb 2015). Thus, one's formal and informal work environment clearly does influence the emotional requirements, and treating employees with shared social contexts as independent data points may not be appropriate.

Similarly, research with experience sampling method (ESM) shows that surface and deep acting have significant variations within a single day (Judge et al. 2009, Scott & Barnes 2011, Totterdell & Holmann 2003), thus more closely capturing the momentary changes in emotion regulation by moods. Yet, daily ESM still depends on retrospective memory for use of emotion regulation (which may not always be in conscious awareness) and may be impaired by recall and biases. An exciting new within-person approach is online momentary assessments of felt moods, surface acting, and deep acting (Gabriel 2013). In this line of work, participants were asked to provide continuous ratings (i.e., recorded every 200 ms) of their felt emotions and emotion regulation (i.e., surface acting, deep acting) as they listened to a recording of a difficult interaction they just had with a customer (confederate) caller during a simulation. As illustrated in **Figure 2**, surface and deep acting were found to change continuously, with each person having a unique trajectory that ebbed and flowed in response to emotional events and felt emotions. By contrast, the aggregate of the continuous rating assessments (shown on the *right* of **Figure 2**), which mimics retrospective measures as done with ESM or other person level approaches, neglects the actual emotional labor process as it unfolds during a performance episode (e.g., Beal & Trougakos 2013). Combined with ESM approaches, this work illustrates that there is much insight to be gained from micro-level assessments of emotional labor.

Overall, the mismatch in concept and measurement may explain why relationships found for (person-level) surface acting and deep acting (Hülshager & Schewe 2011) are sometimes contradictory with experimental (event/emotion-level) evidence (Webb et al. 2012). Accurately aligning measurement with the corresponding emotional labor conceptualization will help minimize biases that may otherwise explain relationships with employee outcomes.

Expand beyond measures of surface and deep acting. As noted above, the measures for surface and deep acting have confounding and artifactual issues that constrain interpretation of findings

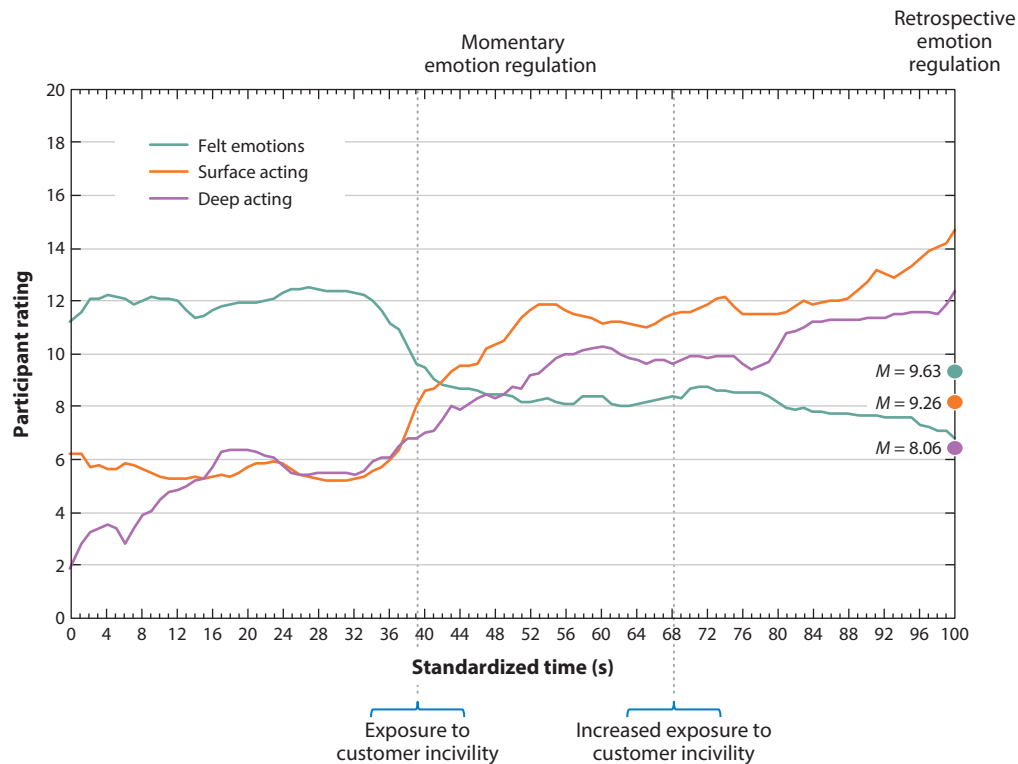


Figure 2

New momentary and continuous measurement of emotion regulation compared with (traditional) retrospective measurement. Ratings were captured every 200 ms and aggregated to form 1-s averages. Data represent a subset of participants ($n = 19$) from Gabriel (2013) who were exposed to increasing levels of customer hostility as the call progressed.

(i.e., surface acting measures capture negative mood and both amplification and suppression; deep acting is confounded with motivation; it is unclear what low surface and deep acting reflect). Moreover, most emotion regulation research measures surface and deep acting as two independent variables, but they may not be. A new individual difference is emotional labor variability (Scott et al. 2012), or how much a person varies in using surface and deep acting over time, which predicted outcomes beyond either regulation strategy alone. Another approach is emotion regulation profiles (Gabriel et al. 2015b), with the researchers identifying five unique groups based on surface and deep acting usage (e.g., “regulators” have high levels of both surface acting and deep acting). Notably, all of these approaches assume that emotion regulation is consciously performed. However, emotion regulation (particularly cognitive regulation, known as deep acting) may become automatic and thus easier for the actor (Mauss et al. 2007). Future researchers may be able to show this with longitudinal methods (i.e., studying new employees and their regulatory tendencies over time) or innovative implicit measures of emotion regulation (Moon & Lord 2006).

Finally, other emotional labor approaches move away from the traditional surface and deep acting. For example, one approach measures specific forms of emotion regulation as suggested by Gross’s (1998) framework (Diefendorff et al. 2008). Another approach groups expressive regulation with other strategies to regulate the emotions of others rather than one’s own emotions

(i.e., interpersonal emotion regulation; Niven et al. 2009). A third examines how emotion regulation is done via computer-mediated technology, such as email, chat, and text, to communicate with customers (Byron 2008).

DETERMINANTS OF EMOTIONAL LABOR: PERSON AND EMOTION CONGRUENCE

We now shift to predictors of emotional labor (*left side* of **Figure 1**). We describe two theoretical perspectives: person–job congruence (i.e., the person matches the emotional requirements) and emotion–goal congruence (i.e., emotions/events match the emotional requirements).

Person–Job Congruence: Emotional Traits, Motives, and Abilities

Given that most jobs tend to expect positive and prosocial interactions (Diefendorff et al. 2006), traits, motives, and abilities congruent with positive emotional requirements tend to predict emotion regulation and performance (cf. Dahling & Johnson 2013).

Personality traits. Personality traits may be congruent with the emotional requirements, such that the traits are conducive with the emotional performance expected. Traits that are congruent with the positive requirements of service jobs (i.e., extraversion, agreeableness) tend to be linked to perceptions of positive emotional requirements, suggesting either self-selection or self-confirming biases (Diefendorff & Richard 2003, Kammeyer-Mueller et al. 2013). Once on the job, extraversion and self-monitoring (i.e., sensitivity to social cues and willingness to change the self to match such cues) each predict both forms of acting and emotional performance, regardless of the emotional requirements or target of the emotional regulation (Mesmer-Magnus et al. 2012, Ozcelik 2013).

Other traits predict specific types of emotion regulation that are congruent with employees' personal tendencies. Individuals who are higher in agreeableness and trait positive affectivity tend to engage in prosocial behaviors of deep acting and showing genuine displays (Diefendorff et al. 2005, Kammeyer-Mueller et al. 2013). As expected by person–job congruence, the relationship of positive affectivity and deep acting is strengthened when a person is working in a group with higher positive emotional requirements (Diefendorff et al. 2011). By contrast, surface acting is more likely from those with the personality tendency to feel negative (i.e., negative affectivity) and to be moody and cynical (i.e., neuroticism) (Kammeyer-Mueller et al. 2013), and this link is strengthened by positive emotional requirements or person–job incongruence (Diefendorff et al. 2011). Such negative personalities should be a good fit in jobs with negative emotional requirements (i.e., bill collectors). However, only one known study has tested this: Bono & Vey (2007) manipulated positive and negative display requirements and found that extraverts were less distressed from positive display rules, consistent with a fit perspective, but neurotic individuals were not better off in the negative requirements and felt stress regardless.

Work motives. Beyond personality traits, the congruence between employees' motives is linked to which form of emotion regulation is used. Employees who have a strong prosocial or customer orientation (i.e., a propensity to want to give outstanding customer service) are more likely to use deep acting in response to emotional requirements (Allen et al. 2010, Gabriel et al. 2015b, Maneotis et al. 2014). Surface acting is more likely from those who do not share the overall work goals of the organization (Ozcelik 2013), consistent with it being a bad faith approach to emotional labor (Ashforth & Humphrey 1993). However, employees who were more committed



to emotional requirements used both surface acting and deep acting in response to requirements, suggesting they are both seen as effective (Gosserand & Diefendorff 2005).

Employees also vary in their motives for emotion regulation at work, such as to obtain social or financial rewards, to make others feel better, and/or to conform to professional norms (Adelmann 1995, Bolton & Boyd 2003). In a recent ESM study, Von Gilsa and colleagues (2014) found three main types of daily motives: pleasure (to improve self, relationship), prevention (to prevent problems, arguments), and instrumental (to conform to requirements). The pleasure motives were linked to more deep acting and genuine expression but less surface acting; days with greater prevention and instrumental motives covaried with surface acting (Von Gilsa et al. 2014). Finally, Dahling & Johnson (2010) applied regulatory focus theory (Brockner & Higgins 2001), showing that promotion- and prevention-regulatory motives are linked to deep and surface acting, respectively, suggesting a new theoretical basis for understanding emotional labor.

Emotional labor abilities. There are two main approaches to emotional labor ability: emotional intelligence (EI) and emotion self-efficacy. Congruence between job-based emotional requirements and EI predicts job performance (Joseph & Newman 2010). Across studies, EI (often self-report or trait measures) is positively related with deep acting but negatively related with surface acting (Mesmer-Magnus et al. 2012), suggesting that those who tend to feel more positively about themselves tend to use the more motivated approach rather than the more cynical approach. Similarly, emotional self-efficacy (Pugh et al. 2011) and peer-rated emotional competence (Giardini & Frese 2006) seem to help employees effectively engage in emotional labor. A new approach in emotional labor research is to directly measure the perceived fit between one's emotional abilities and emotional requirements (i.e., emotional demands–ability fit), which was found to be distinct from other forms of person–job fit and uniquely predicts supervisor-rated performance (Diefendorff et al. 2015).

Using objective measures of EI tells a somewhat different story. Emotion regulation knowledge, a dimension of EI that captures awareness of display rules and effective ways to regulate across different situations, has been linked to surface and deep acting at work (Grant 2013). This suggests that people who are aware of effective ways to regulate see value in either emotion regulation approach. In fact, emotion regulation knowledge predicts both prosocial and deviant behaviors depending on Machiavellian motives (Côté et al. 2011), and the ability to perceive others' unintended expressions (“eavesdropping”) may come with costs to the social dynamics (Elfenbein & Ambady 2002). Another new approach in EI research is to directly measure the ability to enhance or suppress emotional expressions when instructed to; this ability seems to be effective for interpersonal functioning (Bonanno et al. 2004, Côté et al. 2010) and is likely to help at work as well.

Emotion–Goal Congruence: Emotional Events

In contrast to the chronic state of congruence between personality traits and emotional requirements, we now turn to the momentary congruence between emotional events at work and emotional requirements. To understand these dynamic processes, researchers have used control theory principles, which argue that human behavior is guided by attempting to minimize discrepancies between current states (e.g., negative feelings, expressions) and situational goals (e.g., to conform to emotional requirements, to have satisfied customers) (Diefendorff & Gosserand 2003). If a discrepancy is detected by an employee between his/her felt emotions and display rules (i.e., emotion-goal incongruence), emotion regulation can be used to bring felt emotions and emotional requirements in line.

The standard way that emotional events are studied in emotional labor is through interaction with hostile or rude customers, which typically evokes a discrepancy between one's emotions and emotional requirements. Person-level survey studies have supported that employees who perceive injustice or mistreatment by customers tend to use surface acting but not necessarily deep acting (Grandey et al. 2004, Rupp et al. 2008, Sliter et al. 2010). Laboratory experiments with call center simulations have also shown that exposure (direct or observed) to a hostile customer induces negative emotions and elicits more surface and deep acting to reduce the discrepancy with the interpersonal goals (Goldberg & Grandey 2007, Rupp & Spencer 2006, Spencer & Rupp 2009).

More directly testing the discrepancy-reduction predictions about emotional labor requires a within-person (or even a within-episode) research approach (Diefendorff & Gosserand 2003). In one ESM study, on days when customers were less pleasant, employees reported more surface acting (faking), but less deep acting (perspective taking and positive refocusing) (Totterdell & Holmann 2003). This suggests that surface acting addresses the display goal, but higher-order goals (i.e., personal values, work motivation) may determine deep acting. Recently, discrepancy-reduction predictions were tested with momentary fluctuations in felt emotions and emotion regulation (Gabriel 2013). Manipulated emotional events (i.e., customer incivility) immediately reduced positive mood (discrepancy creation), which corresponded with a sharp rise in surface acting and a slower rise in deep acting (discrepancy-reduction effort; see **Figure 2**). Surface acting immediately conforms to the goal, but deep acting may help reduce the dissonance. Moreover, both forms of emotion regulation seemed to stabilize felt mood (see **Figure 2**) and observer-rated emotional expressions in the voice (not shown).

Future Directions: Expand the Emotional Labor Antecedents

Person-level traits and event-level mistreatment by customers are the most commonly studied antecedents of emotional labor, mostly in call centers. Expansion to other antecedents is needed.

Include emotion as part of a dynamic process. Per emotion regulation theory (Grandey 2000, Gross 1998), deep acting should be a determinant of felt emotion and surface acting a response to felt emotion. However, emotions are often not included in emotional labor research, and not in this theoretical way. Some researchers put emotion as an antecedent of both forms of emotion regulation (Rupp & Spencer 2006, Totterdell & Holmann 2003), whereas others include emotion as an outcome of both (Judge et al. 2009, Wagner et al. 2014). The discrepancy-reduction model of emotional labor (Diefendorff & Gosserand 2003) suggests that emotion-goal discrepancies predict the use of emotion regulation, but also that the regulation changes the emotion and expression. More attention to the reciprocal and unfolding emotion-emotional labor process is needed through momentary assessments (Gabriel 2013) or lagged effects (i.e., predicting emotion regulation at T with mood at T-1, controlling for previous regulation at T-1).

Test congruence ideas more completely. Both the person-job congruence and emotion-goal discrepancy approaches have tested only half the story: negative events incongruent with positive emotional requirements. Only a few laboratory studies have directly compared negative or neutral emotional requirements and tested the effect on emotional labor and work outcomes. Bono & Vey (2007) manipulated the job to be either a tour guide (positive requirements) or bill collector (negative requirements) and did not find congruence effects with traits on emotion regulation. A useful future approach would be to study contexts where negative expressions are norm appropriate (e.g., negotiations, sports coach, army cadet training) and functional (Sy et al. 2005, Van



Kleef et al. 2010). In such contexts, do requirement-congruent negative moods and events help the emotional performance and personal outcomes, or are they always problematic for the actor?

In addition, attention should be paid to positive events and moods at work and how they motivate—or reduce the need for—emotion regulation. Positive events, such as customers' prosocial behaviors toward employees, are rarely studied, but new scales and evidence are emerging showing that some—but not all—of such behaviors elicit positive mood and lower job stress (Maneotis 2014, Zimmermann et al. 2011). Would positive customer behaviors reduce surface acting (by improving mood) but increase deep acting (by enhancing motivation), or reduce both? Finally, emotional events are typically focused on the customer (performance-goal oriented), but events with coworkers, leaders, and even family members can affect moods and the need for and motivation to use emotion regulation strategies.

Explore congruence between social groups and jobs. Social groups (i.e., gender, race, nation) may be expected to show certain emotions that are incongruent with job requirements and thus induce the need for emotion regulation. In emotional labor contexts, positive emotional requirements are more congruent with social norms for women than men (Hochschild 1983), but evidence for gender differences in emotional labor frequency are mixed (e.g., Johnson & Spector 2007, Scott & Barnes 2011). Younger employees seem to have to fake it more than older employees to manage impressions of their skills and motivation (Dahling & Perez 2010); this effect is amplified when employees are working in highly age-diverse groups (Kim et al. 2013). Racial group membership also seems to predict surface acting with customers (Grandey & Houston 2013) and with workgroups: More surface acting was used by racial minority members when they were the “token” member of their group (i.e., potentially to override stereotypes), whereas majority group members (White) used surface acting when racial diversity was high (i.e., potentially to avoid seeming prejudiced) (Kim et al. 2013, p. 632).

National culture has received relatively more attention than race/ethnicity and is certainly critical in the global economy. Culturally based differences in perceptions of emotional requirements (i.e., display rules) reflect differences between more collectivistic and individualistic countries, such as being more accepting of expressing negative emotions with coworkers in the United States than in Singapore, but suppressing negative emotions with customers was a strongly held norm that varied little by country (e.g., Grandey et al. 2010, Moran et al. 2013). Even in more emotionally expressive cultures, the frequency of using emotion regulation with customers is constant across nationality of respondent (Allen et al. 2014, Grandey et al. 2005b); however, positive emotional requirements were more strongly linked to surface acting for US employees and to deep acting for Chinese employees (Allen et al. 2014). Later, we discuss cultural differences in outcomes from performing emotional labor. More work is needed on congruence between social groups and emotion labor.

EMOTIONAL LABOR AS IT RELATES TO EMPLOYEE AND ORGANIZATIONAL WELL-BEING

Emotional Labor and Employee Well-Being

The dominant perspective is that emotional labor is harmful to personal well-being (Hochschild 1983), but a contradictory perspective also exists that argues emotional labor can be beneficial (Ashforth & Humphrey 1993, Côté 2005). To test these ideas, the majority of studies have focused on job satisfaction and job burnout as indicators of employee well-being.



The evidence for these contradictory views is also mixed, depending on the emotional labor component and the specific measure used. For example, employees in jobs coded high emotional requirements (O*NET) reported higher job satisfaction (Bhave & Glomb 2015), but also higher job burnout (Grandey et al. 2007). Group-level positive emotional requirements among health-care workers predicted higher burnout but lower job satisfaction among members (Diefendorff et al. 2011). Individual perceptions of positive emotional requirements are unrelated to strain and weakly but positively related to job satisfaction; however, perceiving the requirement to suppress negative emotions consistently predict job dissatisfaction and stress/burnout (Kammeyer-Mueller et al. 2013). Thus, having a high emotional labor job does not seem to help or harm well-being consistently.

By contrast, emotional labor conceptualized as emotion regulation shows somewhat more consistent patterns with well-being, such that surface acting is problematic and deep acting is more beneficial. Surface acting—measured as individual differences across studies or within-person with ESM—is consistently positively related to job burnout and negatively related to job satisfaction, whereas deep acting is unrelated to job burnout and weakly positively related to job satisfaction (Hülshager & Schewe 2011, Judge et al. 2009). These same conclusions remain when negative personality traits are controlled for (Kammeyer-Mueller et al. 2013) and time-separated and cross-lagged methods are used (Côté & Morgan 2002, Hülshager et al. 2010).

To make sense of these inconsistent findings, we organize our review by two broad mechanisms that help explain why and when emotional labor is linked to personal well-being: (a) dissonance or inauthenticity and (b) resource gains/losses (Hülshager & Schewe 2011).

Dissonance or inauthenticity mechanism. Hochschild (1983) argued that emotional labor requires one to be incongruent with the self, an inherently detrimental condition for employees. She applied cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger 1957) to argue that suppressing oneself in order to express job-required emotions creates tension or emotive dissonance. Over time, Hochschild argued, ignoring one's own feelings can create alienation from the self, creating health and relational issues.

Positive emotional requirements can elicit dissonance due to mistreatment by customers or fatigue, but the employee can reduce emotion–display rule dissonance by changing attitudes and moods to be consistent with the expressions expected. Surface acting maintains dissonance between expression and feelings, but deep acting attempts to bring moods and attitudes in line with emotional requirements. In fact, surface acting is positively related to dissonance, whereas deep acting is unrelated to dissonance and positively to job satisfaction (Hülshager & Schewe 2011, Kammeyer-Mueller et al. 2013).

Emotional labor as incongruence or self-suppression (e.g., requirements to suppress negative emotions, surface acting, dissonance, or inauthenticity) is robustly positively associated with employee burnout and job dissatisfaction (Diefendorff et al. 2006, Erickson & Wharton 1997, Mesmer-Magnus et al. 2012). In a specific test of dissonance mechanisms, daily surface acting was related to changes in anxiety, indicating internal tension (Wagner et al. 2014). Despite benefits to job attitudes and moods, deep acting tends to be weakly related to job burnout and physical symptoms (Hülshager & Schewe 2011, Kammeyer-Mueller et al. 2013, Mesmer-Magnus et al. 2012). These findings fit with Hochschild's (1983, p. 33) argument that deep acting “involves deceiving oneself as much as deceiving others,” which may have costs despite improving moods and performance in the moment.

Dissonance-based moderators. The dissonance from emotional labor is most distressing if acted behaviors violate self-identity perceptions (Ashforth & Humphrey 1993, Festinger 1957).

Employees who are fully identified with the work role, and thus have internalized the organizational values/goals, are less likely to experience health costs from emotional labor (Schaubroeck & Jones 2000, Wilk & Moynihan 2005). Pugh and colleagues (2011) showed that the dissonance experienced while surface acting was particularly distressing for employees who value authenticity. Similarly, when surface acting was behaviorally congruent with traits (i.e., extraverts) or values, it was less stressful (Judge et al. 2009); however, this was not supported for neuroticism (Bono & Vey 2007). Consistent with identity and dissonance perspectives, women were more distressed and dissatisfied by faking displays because being genuinely warm with others is congruent with gender identity norms for women (Johnson & Spector 2007, Scott & Barnes 2011). Similarly, when surface acting was consistent with cultural values for social harmony (i.e., collectivistic cultures), it was less distressing than when performed by those who highly value individual expression (Allen et al. 2014). Finally, dissonant behavior was less self-relevant, and thus less distressing, if the behavior was coerced (i.e., by financial rewards) rather than optional (Festinger 1957); similarly, financial incentives buffered the dissatisfaction from surface acting, but not from deep acting (Grandey et al. 2013a). However, in contradiction to this forced choice assumption of dissonance theory, job satisfaction did not depend on whether employees rated emotional expressions as in-role or as extra-role requirements (Diefendorff et al. 2006), and having more job autonomy buffered the strain from surface acting (Grandey et al. 2005b).

Resource gains/losses mechanism. A different theoretical approach suggests that emotional labor uses up employee resources (i.e., motivational energy) (Brotheridge & Lee 2002) or enhances resources that predict well-being (e.g., money, social support) (Côté 2005). The most consistently used resource-based theory is conservation of resources (COR) (Hobfoll 1989). Within this theory, emotion regulation strategies are ways of coping with emotional requirements and events in attempts to gain, conserve, or protect resources. If emotion regulation is effective, there may be a net gain in resources and job satisfaction. If emotion regulation is ineffective, a resource loss spiral makes it harder to recover or protect resources and results in job burnout.

From this perspective, the positive relationship of emotional requirements with well-being (Bhave & Glomb 2015, Wharton 1993) derives from gains in motivational resources such as task significance and feedback from clients (Grandey & Diamond 2010). Notably, job requirements to express negative emotions or to just be neutral should not result in the social resource gains that nullify the energy losses, thus explaining why such forms of emotional labor are more distressing (Troughakos et al. 2011).

Amplifying positive emotions to others is positively related to subsequent job satisfaction, potentially due to positive social feedback serving as a resource (Côté & Morgan 2002). The null relationship of deep acting with job strain can be conceptually explained by employees experiencing both energy losses from the effort and social gains from appearing genuine (Brotheridge & Grandey 2002), although this relation, to our knowledge, has not been directly tested in a dynamic way. Moreover, the inauthenticity inherent in surface acting is less likely to increase social resources, such that there is a net loss in resources over time. In fact, surface acting is associated with the desire to withdraw from work and actual turnover, both of which are ways of conserving resources (Chau et al. 2009, Goodwin et al. 2011). Overall, the resource-based theoretical perspective fits the evidence fairly well.

Resource-based moderators. A resource-based perspective suggests that emotion regulation will be less depleting in a work context in which there are more resources available. Although there are a multitude of possible resources for employees to capitalize on, researchers have focused on two

primary types as moderators: (a) formal job-based financial and psychological resources (autonomy, money, status) and (b) informal social or energy resources.

The original approach to emotional labor was focused on jobs for which there were few motivational and financial resources (Hochschild 1983). However, emotional labor jobs vary in these resources (Glomb et al. 2004), which may explain the mixed effects on burnout and satisfaction (Grandey & Diamond 2010). High emotional labor jobs greatly differ with respect to their social impact and financial compensation (e.g., education and health-care jobs versus customer service and sales jobs), which predict differences in job satisfaction (Mesmer-Magnus et al. 2012). Even engaging in surface acting can be satisfying when monetary incentives for emotional labor are offered to employees (Grandey et al. 2013a), although it is unclear whether job burnout is buffered by financial resources.

Social rewards can also be a valuable employee resource that buffers the strain from emotion regulation (Lee et al. 2010). Organizational support perceptions gave a sense of value that buffered the dissatisfaction from emotion regulation of retail workers (Duke et al. 2009). A socially supportive context among coworkers can also provide a self-regulatory break, buffering strain by giving employees a chance to recover energy resources. In a laboratory experiment, social sharing after a difficult customer exchange reduced feelings of anger (McCance et al. 2013), and a climate for authenticity among hospital staff reduced the burnout from surface acting with patients (Grandey et al. 2012).

Future directions: compare theories and expand beyond job strain. Although a great deal of work has linked emotional labor processes with well-being, similar to other portions of this review, growth is needed. In particular, we believe future work should include comparisons of theoretical mechanisms and boundary conditions, expand beyond burnout as indication of well-being, and evaluate how employees can gain (rather than lose) resources.

Compare theoretical mechanisms and boundary conditions. There are contradictory theoretical views and evidence as to how emotional labor affects well-being. Overall, effectively testing the social interaction theory (Côté 2005) or COR theory (Hobfoll 1989) requires not only episodic, dynamic methodology, but also consideration of reciprocal effects from the actor performing emotional labor on the perceiver's response, as these reciprocal effects will impact the actor's strain over time. Within such a framework, research is needed that directly compares theoretical mechanisms (i.e., dissonance, resource gains/losses) and moderators (i.e., does forced choice from organizational practices reduce dissonance, do social and financial resources equally buffer against the strain of emotional labor?), rather than focusing on one paradigm or another.

Expand beyond job burnout and satisfaction. Much of the work conducted on well-being and emotional labor has utilized self-reported assessments of job-related strain and attitudes. A dissonance paradigm requires examining self-relevant constructs as buffers or outcomes from engaging in emotional labor, such as self-esteem or identity. A resource paradigm suggests a focus on perceived or objective levels of resources. More theory-driven and innovative choices for outcomes are needed. One area of promise is physiological assessments to indicate well-being. Notably, the dissonance mechanism assumes arousal and tension, whereas the resource loss mechanism assumes exhaustion and fatigue; these could be indicated by physiological measurement. Experimental conditions that produce dissonance (i.e., positive emotional requirements and customer incivility) corresponded with increased blood pressure and heart rate (Hopp et al. 2010). Longitudinal approaches could determine how and when dissonance arousal results in resource losses through exhaustion.

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The focus on job satisfaction and job burnout as the well-being outcomes is work-centric; it ignores how emotional labor may affect the whole person. Hochschild (1983) originally spoke of emotional estrangement—a lack of connection to one’s self—that affects all relationships. One way this is beginning to be studied is through emotional labor spillover to nonwork relationships. Self-reported emotional regulation at work is correlated with self-reported emotion regulation at home and perceived work–family conflict (e.g., Wagner et al. 2014, Yanchus et al. 2010), but surprisingly little research has assessed how emotion regulation at work is linked to employee marital quality, friendships, and children’s health (Grandey & Krannitz 2015, Wharton & Erickson 1995). If resources are gained or lost from emotional labor, these should have implications for nonwork relationships as well.

Identify resource gains from emotional labor. Additionally, more emphasis can be placed on the financial and social resource gains associated with emotional labor. If emotional labor is unique because it is done for a wage, we need to establish a unique effect of such monetary gains on employees. Do they act as a personal resource if one is rewarded for showing negative or neutral emotions, or just as an incentive for being positive? Furthermore, although the social interaction model (Côté 2005) was published a decade ago, few have directly tested whether emotional labor could improve social resources that then buffer the employee’s strain. Social resources may come from coworkers and leaders, but they also may vary by emotional labor occupations based on the extent of ongoing relationships and positive behaviors from customers (Gabriel et al. 2015a, Maneotis 2014). It would also be interesting to explore possible resource gains from engaging in emotional deviance, such as feeling authentic and strong in standing up to a hostile customer.

Emotional Labor and Organizational Performance

A truism in business is that “service with a smile” (and a “happy workforce”) is good for business. This assumption explains why emotional displays are an in-role requirement (Diefendorff et al. 2006), enforced through monitoring, training, and incentives (Pugh et al. 2013, Rafaeli & Sutton 1987). At the same time, scholars have pointed out that requiring a smile may create negative moods that ironically undermine the happy performance (Ashforth & Humphrey 1993). Below, we review how emotional labor benefits interpersonal performance through social processes in the customer/perceiver. We then review the self-regulatory depletion perspective, which explains why emotional labor may not benefit task and overall performance.

Interpersonal reactions: emotional contagion and social judgments. Emotional labor is connected to interpersonal job performance because employees’ expressions affect customers’ attitudes, intentions, and judgments. This can occur through two mechanisms: automatic emotional contagion and cognitive judgments about performance, recently summarized in the emotions as social influence (EASI) model (Van Kleef 2009) as affective and inferential processes.

Emotional contagion processes are fairly automatic and socially adaptive responses to observing emotional expressions (Hatfield et al. 1994). The emotions “spread” to targets (i.e., customers) through unconscious mimicry of expressions, which induces a change in mood in the perceiver, affecting his or her judgments and behaviors. In customer service, service employees’ positive emotional performance (coded by researchers) predicted customers’ reports of positive mood, which explains performance judgments, time in the store, and behavioral intentions (Pugh 2001, Tsai & Huang 2002, Tsai 2001). More specifically, positive expression mimicry has been found between employees and customers and linked to positive moods and then higher performance evaluations (Barger & Grandey 2006, Tan et al. 2004). Emotional contagion has also been

demonstrated with peers (Barsade 2002, Totterdell 2000) and from leaders to followers (Bono & Ilies 2006, Sy et al. 2005), with both positive and negative expressions being “caught” and affecting work judgments and behaviors.

Inferential processing mechanisms suggest that expressions provide information about the actor/organization (i.e., smiling employees are perceived as friendly and helpful; scowling employees are seen as powerful) or the perceiver (i.e., the employee is performing well/poorly), and these judgments affect subsequent behaviors (Van Kleef et al. 2012). In fact, positive expressive behaviors (i.e., smiling) predict appraisals of the employee/organization (i.e., friendly climate, performance judgments), explaining behavioral intentions beyond felt moods (Barger & Grandey 2006, Tsai & Huang 2002). Notably, in some contexts, negative emotions are helpful to organizational goals by communicating information about the power of the actor or the subpar performance of the target (Sinaceur & Tiedens 2006, Sy et al. 2005).

However, emotional performance that seems inauthentic is less likely to have these benefits to interpersonal performance (Ashforth & Humphrey 1993, Grandey et al. 2005a). Deep acting should be more effective, as by changing feelings one appears more genuine than when surface acting. In fact, across studies, employees’ deep acting has positive associations with customer satisfaction, whereas surface acting has weak negative effects (Hülshager & Schewe 2011). Positive expressions that seem genuine appear to amplify both the affective and inferential mechanisms: Deep acting strengthens the likelihood of catching the positive mood expressed (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2006) and improves appraisals of service quality from positive displays (Grandey 2003, Hülshager et al. 2010). A smile created by surface acting has a weak effect that depends on other factors.

Researchers have started to link emotional labor to interpersonal performance with coworkers as well as customers. Beyond employee positive affectivity, deep acting was positively related to self-reported OCB toward coworkers, whereas those who tend to use surface acting engage in less OCB (Kiffin-Petersen et al. 2011, Troughakos et al. 2015); by contrast, no direct effect was found with supervisor-rated OCB (Grant 2013). Surface acting with coworkers had a direct negative effect on workgroup performance rated by a supervisor; deep acting was not tested (Ozcelik 2013). It is unclear whether emotion regulation strategies are linked to coworker OCB due to global motivational tendencies, or whether performing emotion regulation may indirectly affect the ability to perform internally (i.e., through depletion of resources).

Social contagion and judgment-based moderators. Several factors determine whether emotional regulation and the observable emotional performance has desired effects on customer reactions. In a dyadic field test, Groth and colleagues (2009) found that deep acting improved performance appraisals by affecting judgments of the employee’s service orientation. Surface acting’s effect on judgments of the employee was negative only when customers accurately detected that they were faking. In both a lab and field study, deep acting directly improved customer reactions (i.e., tips, performance judgments), but surface acting’s effectiveness depended on the social skills (i.e., extraversion) of the actor (Chi et al. 2011). Thus, the combination of actor and perceiver skills to enact and detect authenticity is an important boundary condition.

Task/overall performance: self-regulatory depletion. Of course, customer satisfaction and interpersonal performance are not the only indicators of how well someone is performing. When task-based performance or overall performance is used, the relationship with emotional labor is mixed. Deep acting has a weak positive and surface acting a weak negative correlation with task and overall job performance in meta-analyses, even when trait affectivity is controlled for (Hülshager & Schewe 2011, Kammeyer-Mueller et al. 2013, Mesmer-Magnus et al. 2012). Based on



one theoretical perspective, these weak relationships may be due to performance trade-offs from engaging in emotional labor. From the ego depletion theoretical perspective, individuals have a limited pool of resources to help effectively manage their performance, and self-regulation on one self-regulatory task (i.e., suppressing expressions) can have costs for subsequent self-regulation in the same or another (i.e., attentional focus) domain (Muraven & Baumeister 2000). Given that employees in emotional labor jobs are trying to achieve emotion regulatory goals in addition to other self-regulatory goals (Diefendorff & Gosserand 2003), emotion regulation may have costs for those other goals throughout the workday.

Several laboratory studies with service simulations provide evidence that emotional labor has costs to task performance. Emotional requirements and emotion regulation reduced subsequent self-regulatory performance on attentional tasks, decision making, and physical exertion (Goldberg & Grandey 2007, Zyphur et al. 2007). However, these costs seem to be specific to surface acting or suppression. The tendency to suppress emotions was negatively related to task performance, whereas the tendency to use reappraisal (i.e., deep acting) was positively related, and mediated by attentional focus (Wallace et al. 2009). Going beyond the surface–deep acting dichotomy, an experiment showed that attempting to modify the emotions of others was also self-depleting, and associated with lower levels of persistence on an unsolvable anagram (Martínez-Íñigo et al. 2013).

Self-regulatory depletion moderators. Ego depletion theory assumes that the effect of emotion regulation on performance depends on the actor's capacity and motivation for self-regulation (Muraven & Baumeister 2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, often present in a work context, can help to override such depletion, such that self-regulation may not necessarily harm task or overall performance (Muraven & Slessareva 2007). Moreover, self-regulatory breaks can help employees replenish resources and improve emotional performance, compared with when breaks are used for chores (Troughakos et al. 2008). Greater experience or practice engaging in emotion regulation should also strengthen one's capacity to engage in emotional labor, suggesting that job tenure or regulatory training should matter.

Future directions: test assumptions and boundary conditions. Similar to our suggestions for well-being outcomes, research linking emotional labor and performance would benefit from testing assumptions about financial and store-level gains, an expanded performance criterion, and the social-motivational conditions that moderate the relationship of emotional labor with performance.

Test the assumption of bottom-line gains. Although much support exists for momentary effects of positive displays on the target (e.g., customer/perceiver), we have limited evidence that positive emotions are “good for business” in the form of purchases, loyalty behaviors, or other bottom-line outcomes. Financial decisions may be more affected by negative emotional performances that communicate power and instill fear (e.g., by negotiators, bill collector, interrogators) (Van Kleef et al. 2004) than by positive displays that communicate affiliative tendencies. However, the few studies that do look at such outcomes suggest the opposite. Positive emotional performance was negatively related to sales in convenience stores due to the confound of store busyness (Sutton & Rafaeli 1988), and it was unrelated to purchasing behavior of shoe store customers, although customers did stay longer (Tsai 2001). No known studies have directly demonstrated that the emotional labor of a service provider or unit increases the likelihood of customers buying more, returning to the store, or recommending it to others. Such evidence and the mechanisms by which



the behaviors occur are needed if we are to argue that emotional labor is necessary and worth the costs to employees' well-being.

Expand the performance criterion. If emotion regulation depletes self-regulatory resources, deregulated or counterproductive behaviors may also be more likely the more one regulates. Some work suggests that when employees must constantly fake and suppress negative feelings, they may “break character” (Grandey 2003, Groth & Grandey 2012). Covert sabotage against customers is an outcome of being mistreated by customers (Wang et al. 2011), although it is unclear if emotion regulation makes this more or less likely. A recent study found that suppressing emotions in general, measured as a trait-like emotion regulation tendency, increased the association between daily negative work emotions and organizationally directed counterproductive behavior, but not interpersonally directed counterproductive behavior (Matta et al. 2014). Based on ego depletion, emotion regulation with customers should have performance costs to other regulatory domains.

Scholars interested in linking emotional labor with coworker interpersonal performance need to consider the social context. Deep acting was more likely to predict OCB with team members when there was a team-level climate for deep acting rather than surface acting (Becker et al. 2014). Leaders have been encouraged to use deep acting strategies to appear authentic to followers (Gardner et al. 2009); yet, this may only be important to employees with high-quality leader relationships who expect more “real” interactions (Fisk & Friesen 2012). In fact, surface and deep acting in response to difficult situations at work both improved supervisor ratings of employees' performance because they tended to speak up about problems more effectively (Grant 2013). These studies illustrate the importance of social norms and expectations to determine the effectiveness of emotion regulation strategies.

Identify the boundary conditions of emotional labor on performance. Surface acting has a weak negative effect on performance, suggesting moderating conditions. The EASI model (Van Kleef 2009) proposes that the effect of emotional labor depends on the perceiver's motivation to use emotion as information, such as power differentials or intimacy. Similarly, the level of familiarity between an employee and a customer has been found to neutralize whether positive displays predict service performance; an amplified positive display was more expected for first-time interactions (Gabriel et al. 2015a, Wang & Groth 2014). As another example, amplifying positive expressions was beneficial for performance ratings of African American service employees, though not for White employees, possibly by overriding stereotypes (Grandey & Houston 2013). Clearly, understanding more about motivational and relational differences can help determine how people respond to emotion regulation and performance.

Finally, although ego depletion theory suggests that emotion regulation should not impair subsequent regulatory performance when one has strong motivation to perform, has recovered regulatory resources by a break, or has strengthened regulatory capacity through practice or training (Muraven & Slessareva 2007), no known research has tested these theoretical possibilities in a work context. These are exciting directions to pursue and to “give back” to the social psychology literature regarding boundary conditions of emotion regulation outcomes.

CONCLUSION

We have covered a lot of ground in our review of emotional labor, carving out many new roads for scholars to follow. We now turn to next steps in terms of both the practical implications and research directions.

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Practical Implications: Balancing Employee and Organizational Well-being

Early articles provided case studies of the practices used to manage emotional labor (Rafaeli & Sutton 1987, Van Maanen & Kunda 1989). Yet, quantitative evidence comparing practices to manage and support emotional laborers is minimal (Pugh et al. 2013). Organizations can focus on how to recruit and select the best fit for these jobs, such that self-expression is congruent with emotional requirements (Arvey et al. 1998), which will affect the person–job congruence depicted in **Figure 1**. Socialization is also used to increase identification with the organization goals, which buffers strain from emotional labor (Schaubroeck & Jones 2000, Van Maanen & Kunda 1989). However, negative events are likely to occur, which makes self-expression challenging, and organizations may not be able to select the perfect fit at all times. Thus, other practical implications have been proposed to manage emotional labor.

Interestingly, research has not found support for Hochschild's (1983) proposal that management tactics, such as monitoring and rewards, make emotional labor more controlling and distressing. In fact, performance monitoring in call centers did not increase emotional labor and strain if the perceived purpose of monitoring was supportive (Holman et al. 2002), and financial incentives enhanced satisfaction from emotional labor (Grandey et al. 2013a). Overall, the presence of human resource practices for emotional labor increased commitment to emotional goals (Diefendorff & Croyle 2008), which motivated the use of surface and deep acting in response to the emotional requirements (Gosserand & Diefendorff 2005). Thus, management tactics may provide necessary value and support for an otherwise undervalued aspect of labor.

In the practical implication section of most emotional labor studies, there is usually the suggestion for training emotion regulation, specifically deep acting. However, deep acting may have hidden costs to employees due to constantly changing their emotional signals internally (Hochschild 1983) and, in a recent meta-analysis, was positively related to physiological indicators of strain (Hülshager & Schewe 2011). Moreover, management-trained deep acting may function differently than deep acting that emerges naturally. There is evidence for emotional competence training to improve self-efficacy and well-being, as well as other-rated relational outcomes (Kotsou et al. 2011). However, such training has not been directly applied to emotional labor contexts, and, unfortunately, such training is often invested only into managers and leaders, not into service workers. Other interventions, such as end-of-day positive reflection and mindfulness (i.e., nonjudgmental complete attention; Bono et al. 2013, Hülshager et al. 2013), are effective for employee well-being and seem conceptually related to deep acting and to restoring regulatory resources. Finally, another practical avenue for management is to train or socialize the behavior of the customer (Groth 2005), reducing the customer mistreatment that has been identified as a predictor of surface acting and burnout.

Identifying and testing practical interventions are critical to the future of emotional labor as an organizational topic. We encourage scholars to consider not only how organizational practices affect emotional labor in isolation, but also how practices (e.g., recruitment, training, performance management) function as a system to create environments conducive to more beneficial forms of emotion regulation.

Research Implications: Question Assumptions and Expand Existing Approaches

We encourage researchers to question and test assumptions about emotional labor. We identified four that we feel exist but need more evidence. One assumption is that people who are a better fit will need to do less emotional labor. Yet, when traits are congruent with emotional requirements (i.e., extraversion, self-monitoring, positive affectivity), more regulation (i.e., deep acting) is

Roadblock/unmapped	Suggested direction or detour
Construct and measurement confusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain construct boundaries with three-component model • Measure at event and dyadic levels of analysis • Go beyond current surface and deep acting measures
Limited understanding of antecedents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include emotion in the dynamic emotional labor process • Test congruence with negative requirements and positive events • Assess social group differences in emotional congruence
Well-being tested in a narrow way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare theoretical mechanisms and boundary conditions • Expand beyond job strain to physiological and nonwork strain • Identify resource gains (financial, social) and positive outcomes
Performance assumptions untested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test objective gains such as sales and long-term behaviors • Expand to counterproductive and citizenship behavior • Identify boundary conditions to test theoretical processes

Figure 3

Summary of emotional labor concerns and suggestions for future research.

elicited. Is deep acting simply capturing work motivation, and is this a problem of measurement or concept? A second assumption is that surface acting is “bad” and deep acting is “good.” Yes, surface acting often predicts burnout and deep acting usually predicts performance, but as reviewed, these relationships can be neutralized and reversed under certain conditions. Identifying those moderators would provide important insights about the theoretical processes of emotional labor. Third, there is an assumption that emotional labor is good for organizational performance but bad for employee well-being. However, these two outcomes are rarely considered simultaneously. In an emotional labor context, performing emotional labor may improve interpersonal performance but have trade-offs with well-being, or performing well may increase one’s social resources and self-evaluations, thus improving well-being. A final assumption is that emotion regulation for a wage is worse than emotion regulation in unpaid contexts; however, researchers rarely test the role of economic or social-relational motives or compare work and nonwork contexts and outcomes, and the current evidence actually suggests the opposite. These four assumptions need direct theory-based testing with strong methods and evidence if they are to be overturned; but doing so will set the field in new and exciting directions.

We conclude our review by steering future researchers toward a summary of suggestions in **Figure 3**. These suggestions refer back to the future directions we presented at the end of each of the main sections. In general, we encourage expanding beyond existing emotional labor measurement and well-tested correlates, using event- and dyadic-level analyses, and thoughtfully and comprehensively comparing theoretical mechanisms and moderators. We recognize that our suggestions increase the complexity of the work researchers need to tackle. However, we believe the time is right for scholars go around these roadblocks, take the road less traveled, and drive emotional labor forward.

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