

## The Cost of Emotional Labour: Implications for Commercializing Human Resource Outcomes in Modern Organizations

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### **Abstract**

*Frontline employees in the Modern industry are expected to maintain calmness and pleasant interactions with customers, regardless of their actual emotions. This requirement, commonly referred to as emotional labour, which involves regulating and managing emotions to meet organizational display rules. This paper examines the relationship and between emotional labour and its implication towards commercialization of administrative and management (human resource outcomes) among employees. Emotional labour is the predictor variable, conceptualized through surface acting, deep acting, and emotional expression, while commercializing human resource outcomes are assessed through job satisfaction and employee performance. The paper adopts a conceptual and theoretical approach based on a review of existing literature rather than primary data collection. It is anchored on Hochschild's Emotional Labour Theory, Grandey's Emotion Regulation Model, which provide a theoretical explanation of how employees' emotional regulation strategies influence their workplace experiences and performance. The empirical review considers studies conducted in Nigeria and other contexts to identify patterns in the relationship between emotional labour and human resource outcomes. The reviewed literature indicates that deep acting and genuine emotional expression are generally associated with higher job satisfaction and improved employee performance. In contrast, surface acting, although potentially useful for managing challenging customer interactions in the short term, is more often associated with emotional exhaustion, lower job satisfaction, and inconsistent performance over time. The paper concludes that emotional labour is a significant human resource management concern because it influences both employees' work experiences and service delivery. It recommends that organizations*

*provide training in deep acting, encourage appropriate authentic emotional expression, and minimize workplace pressures that promote excessive reliance on surface acting.*

**Keywords:** *Emotional labour, surface acting, deep acting, emotional expression, job satisfaction, employee performance*

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## 1.0 Introduction

Work in service-oriented organizations has changed considerably from what it was three or four decades ago. Where once an employee's job could be reduced to routine technical tasks, today's employee is expected to do something far less mechanical: to manage feelings, both their own and those of the customer standing before them, in a manner that protects the organization's image and keeps the customer coming back. A customer who encounters a service failure does not want to meet an irritated employee on the other side of the counter. The employee is expected, often without being told so explicitly, to suppress whatever frustration the encounter provokes and respond instead with composure, courtesy and a measure of warmth. Hochschild (1983) was the first scholar to give this phenomenon a name, describing it as emotional labour, which she defined as the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display that conforms to the demands of a job. In many organizational settings, particularly those characterized by intense customer interaction, competition is shaped not only by products or pricing but by the quality of human interaction. Organizations that aim to retain customers cannot afford employees who allow their private moods to spill into service encounters. This has made emotional labour an unavoidable part of job roles for customer facing staffs and even back-office staff who occasionally interact with the public. The difficulty is that emotional labour does not come without cost. Employees who continually present emotions, they do not genuinely feel, what scholars call surface acting, may over time experience emotional exhaustion, a sense of inauthenticity and eventual burnout (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). Others align their inner feelings with emotions the job requires through a more effortful process called deep acting, which research generally finds to be the less damaging and more likely to be associated with positive outcomes (Grandey, 2000; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013). A third possibility exists where employees genuinely feel and express required emotions naturally, referred to as genuine emotional expression. (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). How these different forms of emotional labour affect employees are of direct relevance to human resource management. Two outcomes in particular have attracted sustained scholarly attention: job satisfaction, which reflects how employees feel about their work, and employee performance, which reflects how effectively they carry out their duties.

Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand, use, and manage your own emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively with others, overcome challenges and defuse conflict (Samuel, 2024). Organizations that understand the relationship between emotional labour and these outcomes are better positioned to design training programmes, support systems and supervisory practices that enhance performance while protecting employee wellbeing. Employees in high contact service environments often operate under demanding conditions shaped by customer expectations and competitive pressures. It is against this background that this study examines emotional labour and its relationship with human resource outcomes, conceptualizing emotional labour through surface acting, deep acting and emotional expression, and assessing outcomes through job satisfaction and employee performance.

## 2.0 Statement to the Problem

Organizational management has traditionally concentrated its human resource attention on outcomes that are easier to measure and reward, such as targets achieved, tasks completed and

output delivered. The emotional component of work, the daily requirement that employees regulate their feelings and present an appropriate demeanour to customers, has received comparatively little deliberate attention, even though it occupies a substantial part of the working day. This neglect creates a gap between what organizations formally measure as performance and what actually determines whether an employee can sustain that performance over time. Several observable problems point to the seriousness of this gap. Employees are frequently exposed to difficult and sometimes hostile customer behaviour arising from service failures, delays and other operational challenges. Studies have found that a notable proportion of employee's report dissatisfaction with their jobs, partly due to the demand for a service mentality that requires them to interact pleasantly with customers exhibiting widely varying and sometimes difficult behaviours. When this demand is met through forced or insincere displays, surface acting, employees' risk emotional exhaustion, which undermines both job satisfaction and consistency service delivery (Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011).

A second dimension of the problem concerns the absence of structured attention to deep acting as a skill that can be taught and reinforced. Where deep acting is left to develop without organizational support, only employees who naturally possess the disposition or experience benefit from its more favourable outcomes, while others default to surface acting and bear its associated costs. A third problem lies in the scarcity of context specific knowledge. Much of what is known about emotional labour and human resource outcomes comes from healthcare, hospitality, and aviation or from studies conducted in different regional or cultural contexts. While these studies offer useful theoretical insights, there remains a need for more focused synthesis that integrates both local and broader perspectives into coherent understanding of how emotional labour influences job satisfaction and employee performance within organizations.

### 3.0 Conceptual Framework

The framework guiding this paper positions emotional labour as the predictor variable and human resource outcomes as the criterion variable. Emotional labour is broken down into three dimensions: surface acting, deep acting and emotional expression, following the conceptualization associated with Hochschild (1983) and later extended by Ashforth and Humphrey (1993). Human resource outcomes, on the other hand, are measured through job satisfaction and employee performance, two of the most frequently studied consequences of emotional labour in the organizational research. The conceptual focus of this paper is succinctly represented in the framework below.

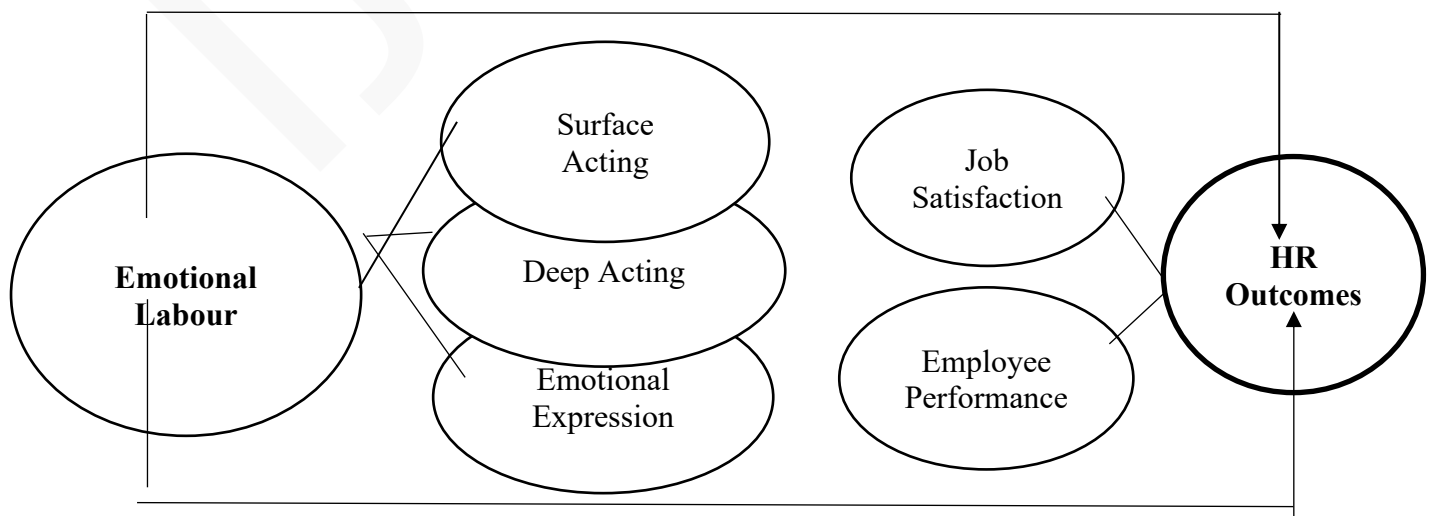


**Figure 1.1:** *Conceptual framework for emotional labour and human resource outcomes.*

**Source:** *Adapted from Grandey, (2000) and Brotheridge & Lee (2002), and conceptualized by the researcher.*

#### **4.0 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between emotional labour and human resource outcomes. Specifically, the study:

- i. Examine the relationship between surface acting and job satisfaction.
- ii. Ascertain the relationship between surface acting and employee performance.
- iii. Evaluate the relationship between deep acting and job satisfaction.
- iv. Examine the relationship between deep acting and employee performance.
- v. Examine the relationship between emotional expression and job satisfaction.
- vi. Examine the relationship between emotional expression and employee performance.

### **Literature Review**

#### **5.1 Theoretical Framework**

This paper draws on three theories that have shaped the study of emotional labour over the past four decades: Hochschild's emotional labour theory, Grandey's emotion regulation model and Hobfoll's conservation of resources theory.

#### **Emotional Labour Theory**

Arlie Hochschild is credited as the originator of the term emotional labour, which she introduced in her 1983 book, *The Managed Heart*, to describe the management of feeling required to create a publicly observable display that organizations consider appropriate for a given role (Hochschild, 1983). Hochschild argued that any job involving emotional labour shares three characteristics: it requires the worker to have voice or face to face contact with members of the public, it requires the worker to produce an emotional state in another person, such as gratitude or trust, and it permits the employer, through training and supervision, to exert a degree of control over the emotional activities of employees. Hochschild distinguished two main strategies employees use to manage this demand. Surface acting involves changing one's outward expression without changing how one actually feels inside, much like an actor putting on a costume. Deep acting goes further, involving an attempt to actually change or summon the required inner feeling so that the outward expression flows from something genuinely felt, achieved either by actively trying to evoke the right emotion or by drawing on trained imagination, such as recalling a pleasant memory to summon a feeling of warmth. Hochschild's framework remains the foundation upon which almost all subsequent work on emotional labour rests, including the present paper's treatment of surface acting and deep acting as core dimensions of the construct.

#### **Emotion Regulation Model**

Building on Hochschild's foundational work, Grandey (2000) proposed a model that reframed emotional labour as a form of emotion regulation in the workplace, drawing on the broader psychological literature on how people manage their emotions in everyday life. In Grandey's model, surface acting corresponds to what emotion regulation researchers call response focused regulation, where the employee changes the outward expression or behaviour after an emotion has already been felt, essentially suppressing or masking it. Deep acting, by contrast, corresponds to antecedent focused regulation, where the employee intervenes earlier in the emotional process, before the emotion is fully experienced, through techniques such as reappraising the situation or redirecting attention.

Grandey's model further identifies situational cues, such as the frequency, duration, variety and intensity of required emotional displays, as factors that push employees toward one

strategy or the other. A particularly important contribution of this model, later elaborated by Grandey and Gabriel (2015), is the proposal that emotional labour can be understood as comprising three components: emotional requirements imposed by the job, the emotion regulation process the employee uses to meet those requirements, and the emotional performance that results, which in turn shapes outcomes such as job satisfaction and job performance. This model is particularly useful for the present paper because it explains the mechanism by which surface acting tends to be more depleting than deep acting, since suppressing an already felt emotion demands more continuous effort than reshaping the emotion before it fully forms.

## **6.0 Conceptual Review**

### **6.1 Emotional Labour**

Emotional labour, as already noted, was conceptualized by Hochschild (1983) as the management of feeling to produce a publicly observable display consistent with organizational expectations. Morris and Feldman (1996) offered a related definition, describing emotional labour as the effort, planning and control needed to express organizationally desired emotions during interpersonal exchanges. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) defined emotional labour more narrowly as the act of displaying the appropriate emotion, that is, conforming to a display rule, regardless of whether that emotion is genuinely felt or simply performed. What unites these definitions is the recognition that emotional labour is fundamentally about aligning emotional display with the expectations attached to a job role, and that this alignment can be achieved through different psychological routes.

In organizational settings, emotional labour manifests whenever employees interact with others and are expected to project warmth, patience and helpfulness irrespective of personal circumstances or how others behave. Arisukwu et al. (2021) note that employees often act as though a required emotion is felt, such as smiling during difficult interactions even when no such feeling is genuinely present. Because many roles are relationship driven and sensitive to perception, poor emotional regulation can quickly translate into dissatisfaction and negative organizational outcomes (Asumah et al., 2019).

### **6.2 Surface Acting**

Surface acting refers to the practice of simulating an emotion that is not genuinely felt by adjusting one's outward presentation, including facial expression, tone of voice and gestures, without any corresponding change in inner feeling (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983). Chu (2002), as cited in Asumah et al. (2019), describes this as a process in which employees display emotions that are not actually felt by changing their outward appearance while exhibiting the emotions their role requires. The defining feature of surface acting is the gap it creates between the employee's inner state and outer display, a gap referred to as emotional dissonance. This dissonance is widely regarded as the primary mechanism through which surface acting produces negative consequences, since maintaining a false display over an extended period requires continuous self-monitoring and suppression of the felt emotion, both of which draw down psychological resources without replenishing them (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011).

Surface acting is therefore generally regarded in the literature as the more costly of the emotional labour strategies, more strongly associated with emotional exhaustion, burnout and, in some studies, with counterproductive workplace behaviour (Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012). At the same time, some research nuances this picture by showing that surface acting is not uniformly harmful in every context. Bechtoldt et al. (2011), cited in Asumah et al. (2019), found that the negative effects of surface acting can be buffered where employees possess strong emotion recognition skills, and other studies, discussed later in the empirical review, have found surface acting to bear a positive though limited relationship with certain task

performance indicators, suggesting that its consequences may depend heavily on the surrounding work conditions.

### **6.3 Deep Acting**

Deep acting describes the process by which employees attempt to genuinely change their internal feelings to match what the organisation expects them to display, rather than merely adjusting the outward expression as in surface acting (Grandey, 2000). Hochschild (1983) identified two routes through which deep acting can be achieved. The first, which she called exhorting feeling, involves actively trying to summon or suppress an emotion through deliberate effort, much as one might talk oneself into feeling calmer before a difficult meeting. The second, trained imagination, involves deliberately invoking thoughts, images or memories that are likely to produce the desired emotional state, such as imagining a pleasant experience to generate a feeling of warmth that can then be genuinely expressed.

Deep acting is generally considered more psychologically demanding in the moment than surface acting, since it requires active internal work rather than a superficial adjustment of expression (Grandey, Diefendorff & Rupp, 2013). However, because deep acting reduces the gap between felt and displayed emotion, it does not generate the same level of emotional dissonance associated with surface acting. The resources invested in deep acting tend to produce a more durable emotional state that can sustain positive interpersonal interactions over a longer stretch of the working day. This is the basis on which Hülshager and Schewe (2011) and Kammeyer-Mueller et al. (2013) concluded, through their respective meta-analyses, that deep acting is overall a more adaptive strategy than surface acting where employee health and performance are concerned.

### **6.4 Emotional Expression**

The third dimension of emotional labour considered in this study, emotional expression, refers to situations in which an employee's genuinely felt emotion already matches what the organizational display rule requires, such that no acting, whether surface or deep, is necessary (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). Asumah et al. (2019) explain this point clearly, noting that genuine emotion display does not contain an acting element because the employee's authentic feeling is already congruent with what is being shown to the customer, and consequently it does not produce the emotional dissonance that characterises surface acting.

An employee who is naturally cheerful, enjoys interacting with others and derives satisfaction from helping others is, in such moments, engaging in emotional expression rather than emotional labour in the acting sense. This dimension is theoretically important because it represents the most sustainable of the three forms, requiring little or no continuous expenditure of self-regulatory resources and therefore posing the least risk of emotional exhaustion (Hobfoll, 1989). Some scholars, including Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) themselves, have argued that organisations would do well to select and place employees in frontline roles partly on the basis of how naturally their disposition aligns with the emotional demands of the job, since this reduces reliance on the more costly forms of emotional labour. However, emotional expression cannot be easily manufactured through training in the same way as deep acting, as it depends largely on an individual's disposition, mood and the specific circumstances of a given interaction. This makes it a less controllable, though often more beneficial, mechanism within the organizational settings.

### **Human Resource Outcomes**

The concept of human resource is used for those employees who manage the people resources of an organization (Alwaheeb, 2020). The efforts of these individuals in managing the people side of business are crucial in ensuring that workers are equipped and motivated to do their

jobs. Therefore, successful human resource (HR) strategies help in providing a conducive work environment for employees, and is key for the performance of the organization as it. The role of HR in organizational performance makes it necessary for organization to be concerned with understanding the outcomes of their human resource efforts. The first step to understanding HR outcomes is to have a clear definition of the term. Subsequently, HR outcome is defined by Guest (2001) and Katou (2008), as the measurable results from HR management efforts as regards employees' skills, attitudes and behaviour. Katou (2008) emphasized that employees' skill in this regard includes their competence and cooperation while their attitudes include their motivation, commitment, loyalty and satisfaction, and their behaviour include their intentions, retention and availability. It is however, important to note that each HR outcomes exist in a positive to negative continuum (i.e., satisfaction to dissatisfaction), nevertheless, our interest for this study is on the positive HR outcomes as mentioned earlier. Similarly, Bamber *et al.* (2014) asserted that the main outcomes of human resources efforts are employee satisfaction, employee relation, and employee retention. Based on the foregoing discussion, this particular study conceptualizes HR outcomes as employee satisfaction and employee retention. The study assumes this approach in corroboration with the suggestion of Tseng and Lee (2009), that examining multiple dimensions will aid in enhancing and broadening organizational strategies to adequately adapt to the environment. Hence, this study measures HR outcomes as employee retention and employee satisfaction as will be elaborated subsequently

### **6.5 Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is one of the most extensively researched constructs in organizational behaviour, generally defined as the pleasurable or positive emotional state that results from an employee's appraisal of his or her job (Chu, 2002, as cited in Asumah et al., 2019). Ghazzawi (2008), also cited in the same source, observes that job satisfaction is typically classified within the broader category of job attitudes alongside related concepts such as organizational commitment and turnover intention. Scholars generally approach the measurement of job satisfaction in one of two ways: a global approach that captures an employee's overall feeling about the job as a whole, or a multidimensional approach that breaks satisfaction down into specific facets such as satisfaction with pay, supervision, coworkers, promotion opportunities and the work itself (De Cieri et al., 2005, as cited in Asumah et al., 2019).

Within the context of emotional labour, job satisfaction is particularly important because it is directly tied to how an employee's experience the emotional demands of their roles on a day-to-day basis. Employees whose emotional labour leaves them feeling drained, inauthentic or resentful is unlikely to report high levels of job satisfaction, even when other aspects of the job, such as pay or job security, are favorable. Conversely, employees who finds deep acting or genuine emotional expression manageable or rewarding are more likely to derive satisfaction from the interpersonal dimension of their work. Job satisfaction is also significant for organizations beyond the individual wellbeing, as satisfied employees tend to display lower turnover intention, lower absenteeism and a greater willingness to contribute positively to organizational goals (Jamal, 1997; Moser, 1997, both as cited in Asumah et al., 2019).

### **6.6 Employee Performance**

Employee performance refers to the extent to which an employee successfully carries out the duties, tasks and responsibilities assigned to their role, typically assessed against standards such as quality, efficiency, timeliness and goal attainment (Amanawa & Joseph, 2023). In organizational context, employee performance is commonly understood through indicators such as the quality of service delivered, the speed and accuracy with which tasks are completed, the achievement of assigned targets, and the degree to which an employee contributes to broader organizational goals (Amanawa & Joseph, 2023; Benard, 2025).

Emotional labour bears directly on employee performance because many roles performed through interpersonal interaction, meaning that the employee's emotional state and emotional display are not separable from the service being delivered. Samuel (2024) contends, the integration of Emotional Intelligence in communication enhances job performance and managerial efficacy. Leaders equipped with Emotional Intelligence are better equipped to navigate change and guide their teams through transitional phases effectively. An employee who is visibly impatient, regardless of how technically accurate their work is, may deliver a poorer overall experience than one who manages the same task with composure and warmth. This is why the literature treats emotional labour not as a soft or peripheral consideration, but as something with measurable implications for key performance indicators such as customer satisfaction, complaint levels and goal accomplishment (Amanawa & Joseph, 2023).

## **Empirical Review**

### **7.1 Emotional Labour and Job Satisfaction**

A substantial body of empirical research has examined the relationship between emotional labour and job satisfaction across various organizational settings. Asumah et al. (2019) found that deep acting has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction, particularly when supported by strong social relationships within the workplace, while surface acting showed an insignificant negative relationship with job satisfaction that social support did not meaningfully alter. This finding lends empirical weight to the theoretical expectation that deep acting is the more sustainable and rewarding of the two acting strategies. Similarly, Asumah and Owusu (2021) observed differences in emotional labour strategies across organizational contexts, suggesting that organizational or workplace culture and situational pressures influence how employees engage in surface and deep acting.

Within Nigeria, Olayemi and Shomoye-Olusi (2023) reported that deep acting was a significant predictor of job satisfaction, whereas surface acting did not significantly predict job satisfaction. The authors emphasized the importance of reducing workplace stress and strengthening interpersonal relationships between employers and employees as a way of improving employee wellbeing and, by extension, job satisfaction. Further studies, such as Arisukwu et al. (2021), highlighted that psychosocial predictors including attitude towards organizational change can influence emotional labour, while job satisfaction, plays a more limited but still relevant role in shaping emotional outcomes. The authors concluded that employee emotions and job satisfaction deserve a place in management's strategic planning during major organizational changes such as mergers, since the success of such transition's rests substantially on how well the human dimension is managed.

Balogun (2016) also found that employees with higher emotional intelligence were more likely to engage in deep acting, while those with lower emotional intelligence tended toward surface acting. This has implications for recruitment, selection, training and development practices across organizations. Igbojekwe (2017) examined the impact of emotional labour on employee job performance in hotels across south east Nigeria, finding that the emotional labour dimensions of surface acting and deep acting were significantly related to service quality, customer emotional satisfaction, job commitment and job satisfaction, with job satisfaction rated comparatively lower among employees of one to two star hotels than among those in five star establishments, suggesting that organizational resources and support structures shape how successfully employees manage the emotional demands of frontline service work.

### **7.2 Emotional Labour and Employee Performance**

Turning specifically to employee performance, the most directly relevant study for the present paper is that of Amanawa and Joseph (2023), who examined the relationship between emotional labour and employee performance. Using Spearman's rank order correlation

coefficient, the study found that emotional labour had a strong positive correlation with quality service delivery, a strong positive correlation with goal accomplishment, and a strong positive correlation with timely customer service, all measured as dimensions of employee performance among the Rivers State banks studied.

The authors concluded that emotional labour, captured through surface acting, deep acting and what they termed emotional deviance, affects employee performance, and recommended that employees in service organizations such as banks, hotels, adopt appropriate emotional labour behaviour to ensure timely, quality service delivery to customers. This study is particularly significant for the present paper because it provides direct, locally generated evidence that the relationship being theorized here, between emotional labour and human resource outcomes already has empirical support within the same geographic and institutional setting.

### **Implications for Commercializing Human Resource Outcomes in Modern Organizations**

The human resource outcomes in the modern organization resonate with the performance matrix of the organization. According to Armstrong (2009), the concept of performance covers both what has been achieved and how it has been achieved. Uhuru (2021) opined that human resource outcomes are essential elements that determines innovation and enhance performance in the organization. Performance is measured through key performance indicators which are usually to do with financial results or productivity. A considerable amount of research has been conducted recently on the impact of human resource outcomes and performance for example Arthur (1990, 1992, 1994) obtained data from 30 US strip mills and assessed impact on labour efficiency a crap rate by reference of either a high commitment strategy or a control strategy. The research outcomes were that firms with a high commitment strategy had significantly higher levels of both productivity and quality than those with a control strategy. Purcell et al (2003) studied twelve companies to establish how personnel management impact on organizational performance and resolved that the most successful companies had the big idea. They had a clear vision and set of integrated values.

They were concerned with sustaining performance and flexibility. Clear evidence existed between positive attitude towards HR policies and practices, levels of satisfaction, motivation and commitment, and operational performance. Policy and practice implementation (not the number of Human Resource practices adopted) is the vital ingredient in linking people and this is primarily the task of line managers. According to Mwaniki and Gathenya (2015), on the role of human resource management functions on organizational performance with reference to Kenya Power and lighting company Nairobi West Region. A questionnaire was administered to the respondents the responses establish that high percentages of 46.7 and 47.8 respectively agreed that there had been continuous year under research and an increase in customer base. A high percentage of 33.7 strongly agreed that there had been increase revenue levels in the year under review. The study found out that the HR functions of recruitment and performance contracting positively affected organizational performance and recommended continuous improvement on the HR functions to ensure continuity in increased organizational performance. The implication of human resource outcomes in any organization cannot be over emphasized, according to Mayhew (2019), These include:

1. Strategic Management Improvement: HR improves the company's bottom line with its knowledge of how human capital affects organizational success, leaders with expertise in HR strategic management participate in corporate decision-making that underlies current staffing assessments and projections for future workforce needs based on business demand.
2. Wages and Salaries: Human Resource compensation structures that set company wages competitive with other businesses in the area, in the same industry or companies competing for employees with similar skill. They conduct extensive wage and salary surveys to maintain compensation costs in line with the organization's current financial status an projected revenue

3. **Analyzing Benefits:** Benefits specialists can reduce the company's costs associated with turnover attrition and hiring replacement workers. They are important to the organization because they have the skills and expertise necessary to negotiate group benefit packages for employees, within the organization's budget and consistent with economic conditions. They also are familiar with employee benefits most likely to attract and retain workers. This can reduce the companies consists associated with turnover, attrition and hiring replacement workers.
4. **Minimizing Liability Issues:** HR relations specialists minimize the organization's exposure and liability related to allegations of unfair employment practices. They identify, investigate and resolve workplace issues that left unattended, could spiral out of control and embroil the organisation in legal matters pertaining to federal and state antidiscrimination and harassment laws.
5. **Training and Development:** HR training and development specialists coordinate new employee orientation, an essential step in forging a strong employer-employee, relationship. The training and development area of HR also provides training that supports the company's fair employment practices and employee development to prepare aspiring leader's for supervisory and management roles.
6. **Employee Satisfaction:** Employee relations specialists in Hr help the organisation achieve high performance, morale and satisfaction levels throughout the workforce by creating ways to strengthen the employer employee relationship. They administer employee opinion surveys, conduct focus groups and seek employee input regarding job satisfaction and ways the employer can sustain good working relationship.
7. **Hiring Processing:** HR professionals work closely with hiring managers to effect good hiring decisions, according to the organization's workforce needs. The provide guidance to managers who aren't familiar with HR or standard hiring processes to ensure that the company extends offers to suitable candidates

## 8.0 Discussion of Findings

The literature reviewed in this paper points to a fairly consistent thread running through emotional labour research. Surface acting, the strategy by which employees fake an emotional display without genuinely feeling it, recurs throughout the literature as the dimension of emotional labour most reliably associated with negative or, at best, neutral consequences for job satisfaction. The studies by Asumah et al. (2019) and by Olayemi and Shomoye-Olusi (2023), conducted several years apart and in different countries, arrived at strikingly similar conclusions: deep acting predicted job satisfaction significantly, while surface acting does not. This convergence suggests that the mechanism described by Grandey (2000), whereby surface acting depletes psychological resources through the continuous suppression of a felt emotion, operates with reasonable consistency regardless of national context.

Where employee performance rather than job satisfaction is the outcome of interest, the picture becomes somewhat more nuanced. Amanawa and Joseph's (2023) study found a strong positive correlation between emotional labour broadly and employee performance, without finding that surface acting specifically undermined performance the way it undermines satisfaction in other studies. This is not necessarily a contradiction. Drawing on Hobfoll's (1989) conservation of resources theory, surface acting can sustain acceptable performance in the short term, as an employee may mask frustration well enough to complete tasks competently, while still incurring a longer-term cost to satisfaction and wellbeing that become visible over time through outcomes such as turnover and absenteeism. The Pakistani banking study reviewed lends some support to this interpretation, having found a positive though limited relationship between surface acting and task performance specifically under conditions of low-performance based pay, implying that the performance consequences of surface acting

may depend on factors external to the emotional labour process itself, such as how an employee is compensated.

Deep acting, by contrast, shows a more uniformly favourable relationship with both job satisfaction and performance across the reviewed studies. This consistency aligns with the theoretical framework adopted in this paper, as deep acting closes the gap between felt and displayed emotion, it avoids the chronic dissonance that drains an employee's psychological resources under surface acting, while at the same time producing a genuinely warmer, more attentive interaction that customers are likely to notice and respond to positively, which in turn reinforces the employee's sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. The dual pathway findings discussed in the empirical review, showing that deep acting influences perceived service quality through both emotional contagion and customer participation while surface acting works through emotional contagion alone, offer a plausible explanation for why deep acting tends to produce the stronger and more reliable performance benefits observed in the literature. Emotional expression, although less studied as a discrete variable, emerges from existing evidence and from Ashforth and Humphrey's (1993) theoretical contribution as a dimension worth taking seriously alongside surface and deep acting. The inclusion of emotional deviance in Amanawa and Joseph's (2023) study, indicates that researchers working within this context already recognise that authentic, even unsanctioned, emotional display by employees has a measurable bearing on performance, a recognition that aligns with this paper's decision to treat emotional expression as a distinct, third dimension of emotional labour rather than collapsing it into deep acting. A further point worth drawing from the reviewed literature concerns the moderating role of organizational and personal resources. Social support, examined directly by Asumah et al. (2019), strengthened the positive relationship between deep acting and job satisfaction but did not buffer the negative relationship between surface acting and job satisfaction, a pattern suggesting that social support works best when it reinforces an already constructive emotional labour strategy rather than when it is asked to compensate for a more depleting one. Similarly, the Ondo State findings reported by Balogun (2016), linking emotional intelligence and positive affectivity to a preference for deep acting, point toward selection and development as practical levers organizations can use to shift the balance of emotional labour strategies among their workforce away from surface acting and toward deep acting and genuine expression. Overall, the discussion suggests that the relationship between emotional labour and human resource outcomes is not a simple uniform relationship but one that depends on which dimension of emotional labour is being practiced, the conditions, including reward structures and social support, under which it is practiced, and which specific outcome, satisfaction or performance, is being assessed.

## **9.0 Conclusion**

This study is set out to examine emotional labour and human resource outcomes, treating emotional labour as a predictor variable conceptualized through surface acting, deep acting and emotional expression, and human resource outcomes as a criterion variable measured through job satisfaction and employee performance. Drawing on Hochschild's emotional labour theory, Grandey's emotion regulation model and Hobfoll's conservation of resources theory, alongside a wide-ranging review of conceptual and empirical literature from Nigeria and beyond, the paper has shown that emotional labour is not a marginal feature but a core component of what frontline employees do every working day, with real consequences for how satisfied they are and how well they perform. The evidence reviewed indicates that deep acting and genuine emotional expression are generally associated with more favourable human resource outcomes than surface acting, although the relationship between surface acting and performance specifically is less uniformly negative than its relationship with satisfaction, suggesting that an employee can sustain acceptable performance through surface acting in the short run even

while paying a longer term cost in satisfaction and wellbeing. The direct evidence from Amanawa and Joseph's (2023) study of Rivers State deposit money banks confirms that this relationship is already observable, lending local credibility to a body of theory and evidence that originated largely outside Nigeria.

For organizations, the implication is that emotional labour deserves a place in human resource planning alongside the more conventional concerns of recruitment, training, compensation and performance appraisal. Treating the emotional demands of frontline work as an unavoidable but manageable feature of the job, rather than an invisible burden employees are simply expected to absorb on their own, offers organizations a pathway to improving both the wellbeing of their employees and the quality of service their customers experience.

### **10.0 Recommendations**

Arising from the conceptual and empirical review undertaken in this paper, the following recommendations were made:

1. Organizations should incorporate structured deep acting training into their customer service and onboarding programmes, teaching employees' specific techniques, such as perspective taking and positive reappraisal of difficult customer encounters, to support the genuine regulation of emotion rather than mere surface display.
2. Human resource departments should work to reduce avoidable sources of surface acting, particularly by addressing the operational failures that generate the difficult customer encounters.
3. Organizations should consider periodic, confidential assessment of employee emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction, allowing management to identify branches or units where surface acting may be accumulating unaddressed psychological costs before these costs manifest as turnover, absenteeism or visible declines in service quality.

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