

ARTIFICIAL EMOTIONS AMONG SALESPEOPLE: UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF SURFACE ACTING

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Given the importance of salesperson satisfaction and commitment, managers are vested in understanding what variables impact salesperson attitudes. Surface acting, the process by which the employee regulates emotional expression, tends to produce internal tension which can reduce satisfaction and commitment. This impact is relevant in the sales role because emotional display rules change as salespeople span boundaries and because garnering customer commitments through sales presentations can involve faking emotions. Utilizing structural equation modeling, a surface acting model among 235 salespeople is tested. The authors find that surface acting inhibits job satisfaction, as well as suggest social support may offset the harm surface acting poses to organizational commitment. Furthermore, results indicate that training salespeople to internalize others' emotions (i.e., self-monitoring) increases the success at authentic displays, thus reducing the negative feelings that spill over into feelings about the job.

INTRODUCTION

Companies incorporate Hochschild's notion of the "managed heart" when they call on employees to exhibit forced niceness and phony smiles and to suppress anger. In these cases, employee training manuals urge clerks to express concern to customers, make their voices warm and friendly, and prevent the showing of frustration and impatience. Some companies even monitor employee interactions with customers and reward individuals who put their personal feelings aside. (Mumby & Putnam, 1992, p. 472)

Research indicates reduced turnover and improved performance are functions of managing job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Parasuraman & Futrell, 1983; Pettijohn, Pettijohn, & Taylor, 2009; Schwepker, 2001). Research from the management discipline finds that surface acting, the process by which the employee regulates emotional expression (Hochschild, 1983), creates negative organizational

outcomes (Diefendorff, Erickson, Grandey, & Dahling, 2011), negative employee attitudes (e.g., Pugliesi, 1999), and customer feelings of unmet goals (e.g., Butler et al., 2003). The internal tension that can ensue as a result of surface acting (Baumeister, Vohs, & Tice, 2007; Hochschild, 1983; Pugliesi, 1999) is the mechanism which harms the employee and creates negative outcomes.

While these relationships have been studied among frontline employees (e.g., Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2005; Grandey, 2003; Groth, Hennig-Thurau, & Walsh, 2009), this literature stream excludes salespeople. Yet, research shows surface acting is common in sales careers. In fact, surface acting occurs most regularly among salespeople (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002) and has been shown to improve sales performance (Barsade & Gibson, 2007). However, surface acting has also been shown to adversely influence a salesperson's attitudes and behaviors (Kidwell, Hardesty, Murtha, & Sheng, 2011). The inauthenticity of faking a smile or empathy, for example, when interacting with a customer creates discomfort for the salesperson, and is proposed in this research to spill over into discomfort with the role (i.e., reduced job satisfaction) and employer (i.e., reduced organizational commitment). These counterbalancing

principles warrant further investigation in the sales and sales management domain.

This research develops a model of salesperson surface acting, with emotion monitoring skills and workplace support as antecedents. The study proposes that the process of surface acting is a workplace social comparison that creates feelings of inauthenticity when unsuccessful. Further, the theoretical model suggests that training salespeople for emotion monitoring skills allows the salesperson to internalize others' emotions, increasing the success at acting authentically and, in turn, reducing the likelihood of harmful outcomes to the organization. As a result, this study offers three key contributions.

First, the process of surface acting among salespeople is likely to be different than that of frontline employees. In addition to the frequency with which an employee perceives the need to surface act, prior research has also established that the quality of surface acting is likely to differ across types of roles (e.g., Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). This may be because unlike other frontline employees, a primary role of salespeople is to generate revenue. Prior research finds the salesperson's presentation of emotions, depending on the perceived level of authenticity, leads to either positive or negative customer impressions of the firm (Hennig-Thurau, Groth, Paul, & Gremler, 2006; Pugliesi, 1999). Because the salesperson is often the customer's only impression of the firm (Bitner, Booms, & Tetreault, 1990), a great proclivity to surface act exists in the personal selling role.

Salespeople also span more organizational boundaries than other frontline employees (Walker, Churchill, & Ford, 1975). The variability within these multiple interactions cause salespeople to tailor emotional displays to many different stakeholders, such as customers, colleagues across divisions, vendors, sales managers, marketing teams, and engineer teams. Thus, it should not be assumed that the surface acting process of frontline employees is the same as that of salespeople considering the sharp differences between these two roles. Extending frontline employee models of surface acting to the selling context is important

for understanding the boundaries or extensions of surface acting concepts.

Second, greater understanding of how the selling process promotes surface acting among salespeople offers sales managers new tools for offsetting and preventing the detrimental outcomes associated with emotional suppression. Our research proposes that training salespeople to self-monitor emotions can foster job satisfaction and organizational commitment through increased authenticity. Unique to the selling process, self-monitoring allows a salesperson to internalize others', such as consumers', emotions, thereby reducing the need to suppress emotions and act in an inauthentic manner. Thus, incorporating this skill into a surface acting model offers scholars and managers a better understanding of the antecedents of this harmful process and, in turn, the malleable skills and abilities to prevent it.

Third, the surface acting process offers a unique theoretical link between display rules and emotional states, potentially providing a more meaningful explanation about how satisfaction and commitment ensue. Aside from a select few studies, such as Krush, Agnihotri, Trainor, and Krishnakumar's (2013) assessment of the salesperson resiliency-job satisfaction relationship, research mostly focuses on state-like, emotionally-based antecedents to job satisfaction and organizational commitment, such as emotional exhaustion and dissonance (Abraham, 1999; Babakus, Cravens, Johnston, & Moncrief, 1999). Surface acting offers managers a unique avenue for understanding the process through which these outcomes occur. Testing this process is important because prior research describes the relationship between job satisfaction and many of its antecedents as equivocal (e.g., Singh, 1998).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Surface Acting

Salespeople participate in essential and frequent customer interactions as a requisite of their job. Such interactions often include workplace acting, such as the salesperson faking a smile or displaying an artificial good mood. Characterized as the organization's form of emotion control (Brotheridge & Grandey,

2002), display rules involve the presentation of positive emotions to customers in order to reflect well on the organization and produce positive customer outcomes. These display rules encourage surface acting, which Hochschild (1983) defines as the process by which the employee regulates emotional expression. Surface acting involves the “pushing down” of one’s true emotions (Grandey, 1998), which results in a state of misalignment and reduced well-being (Sheldon, Ryan, Rawsthorne, & Ilardi, 1997). This is because the reduced sense of authenticity surface acting facilitates (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002) leads to internal tension that, in turn, often leads salespeople to negatively appraise their role and their organization. Holistically, research finds the undesirable impact of salesperson inauthentic displays and the suppression of feelings have greater resource costs than antecedent-focused emotion regulation (Richards & Gross, 1999).

One could anticipate some benefits to salesperson surface acting, such as enhanced performance and customer satisfaction. However, research predominately finds that surface acting has an adverse impact on employees. This is especially true when the customer becomes aware of the surface acting behavior. When acting is perceived to be inauthentic by the consumer, surface acting leads to a negative change in customer affect (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006) and decreased consumer perception of the employee’s customer orientation (Groth et al., 2009). The key to understanding the perils of surface acting is the acknowledgement that employees cannot successfully surface act all of the time (Ashforth & Tomiuk, 2000).

For example, given that salespeople are so important to customer impressions (Bitner, Booms, & Tetreault, 1990), the salesperson’s positive emotional expressions can lead to rewarding customer reactions (Pugliesi, 1999). Yet, because research establishes it as unrealistic for individuals to always internalize workplace emotions (Ashforth & Tomiuk, 2000), surface acting simultaneously creates internal tension (Baumeister, Vohs, & Tice, 2007; Hochschild, 1983; Pugliesi, 1999). The internal tension created by inauthenticity (i.e., unsuccessful surface acting) materializes into

stress (Grandey, 2003), reduced job satisfaction (Grandey, 2003; Kinman, 2009), emotional numbing (Totterdell & Holman, 2003), psychological distress (Kinman, 2009), burnout (Mikolajczak, Menil, & Luminet, 2007), and burnout’s dimension of emotional exhaustion specifically (Grandey, 2003).

Social Comparison Theory

Researchers believe workplace social comparisons often prompt salesperson behaviors (e.g., Palmer & Pickett, 1999), such as surface acting. Specifically, salespeople surface act so that emotional expressions satisfactorily fit the social norms of the organization (i.e., display rules). Thus, surface acting may best be explained via social comparison theory. Festinger (1954) articulates this theory as the individual’s comfort with like-minded groups. Social comparison theory suggests that the desire to fit-in encourages the development of reference groups for emotional expression (Festinger, 1954). Individuals continuously assess their attitudes, feelings, and beliefs, feeling uncomfortable when this assessment renders them different from their reference groups. In the sales context, discomfort is prevalent because of the salesperson’s many reference groups with conflicting expectations for social displays (e.g., customers, supervisors, vendors). Thus, social comparison theory provides a strong theoretical framework for explaining the adverse influences of surface acting and the mitigating influences of social reference group (i.e., social support) and social skill (i.e. self-monitoring) variables.

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The Impact of Surface Acting on Job Satisfaction

Locke (1976) conceptualizes job satisfaction as the salesperson’s positive or negative feelings about their job based on needs and expectancies. Otherwise stated, this construct is a match or mismatch resulting from either a positive or negative assessment of one’s job. Satisfaction is a widely researched construct in sales literature examining emotions (e.g., Park & Deitz, 2006), largely because boundary spanning roles are often characterized by job

anxiety (Fry, Futrell, Parasuraman, & Chmielewski, 1986; Sumrall & Sebastianelli, 1999).

The personal selling context should intensify the negative relationship between surface acting and job satisfaction found among frontline employees in prior research (e.g., Diefendorff et al., 2011). The boundary spanning role of the salesperson involves variations in display rules across parties beyond the firm's boundaries and, thus, surface acting. This variation leads the salesperson to not only display emotions tailored for each party, but may also lead to more difficulty in convincing the party that the display is authentic (i.e., increased customer recognition of faking) since prior research establishes surface acting is difficult to consistently attempt successfully (Ashforth & Tomiuk, 2000).

Diefendorff and colleagues (2011) find surface acting emotions are inversely related to job satisfaction, but research has yet to test this relationship among salespeople. Schaefer and Pettijohn (2006) do find a negative relationship between salespeople acting in an inauthentic manner and salespeople who find selling rewarding and satisfying. Further, Kinman (2009) finds that emotional faking leads to reduced levels of job satisfaction among salespeople. While these two studies test relationships involving inauthentic displays and emotional faking, extensions can be made based on their conceptual similarity to surface acting. To help theoretically make this extension, social comparison theory predicts one way the salesperson will appraise the job will be through comparing the personal ability to match felt emotions to those expected for each reference group. This matching is rarely successful (Ashforth & Tomiuk, 2000) and often creates negative feelings in salespeople (McFarland, 2003), thus leading to dissatisfaction when surface acting occurs.

H₁: Salesperson surface acting is negatively associated with job satisfaction.

The Impact of Self-Monitoring on Surface Acting and Job Satisfaction

Salespeople are understood to be incapable of successfully presenting fake emotions (i.e., surface acting) in a way that is perceived as authentic all of the time (Ashforth & Tomiuk, 2000). As such, tools available to the employee that reduce the need to suppress felt emotions and display inauthentic emotions in the workplace are important for fostering job satisfaction and avoiding negative feelings (e.g., internal tension, burnout, detachment). This is especially true for salespeople because such boundary spanning roles confront many expectations for workplace emotional displays that vary greatly across management, colleagues, and customers (Walker et al., 1975). One such tool is self-monitoring. Snyder (1974) defines self-monitoring as the individual's ability to manage expressive behavior so as to match the expression and display of others in social situations.

Those with the ability to monitor their emotions in a way that successfully matches expressed emotions to their audiences' displayed emotions will be more successful at surface acting than those without this ability. While matching another's emotions is acting, self-interpretation of such emotions involves an internalization processes. Riggio and Friedman (1982) explicate this distinction by explaining that self-monitoring is bi-dimensional and involves both acting and other-directedness. Individuals with high ability to self-monitor emotions are socially sensitive and able to internalize the emotions of others. Thus, it is not that high self-monitors will surface act relatively less often, but rather that they will be relatively more successful at the internalization process involved in surface acting. This success reduces the likelihood of the negative feelings that can ensue after surface acting (e.g., psychological distress, internal tension, burnout).

Abraham (1999) finds a negative interaction between frontline employee self-monitoring and dissonance, the negative feeling that occurs when felt emotions do not match the surface acted emotions. This interaction offers additional evidence of self-monitoring holding an ability to counter negative surface acting

feelings. Furthermore, recent research finds that salespeople able to regulate emotions based on the evaluation of feelings of others are less likely to experience interpersonal conflict (Mulki, Jaramillo, Goad, & Rivera, 2015). It is the multitude of stakeholders and varying expectations for emotional displays that makes acting authentic especially difficult for salespeople. However, as social comparison theory would predict, it is hypothesized that self-monitoring acts as a salesperson tool for managing the desired fit between internal emotions and socially interpreted emotions offered by reference groups, thus reducing the need to suppress emotions.

H₂: Salesperson self-monitoring is negatively associated with surface acting.

In addition to reducing the discomfort surface acting creates, Abraham (1999) also finds that monitoring one's emotional displays leads to job satisfaction. The salesperson's ability to use self-monitoring to avoid emotional suppression counters internal tension and facilitates job satisfaction. In fact, research examining salespeople finds the ability to manage emotions is critical in the sales culture. Rozell, Pettijohn, and Parker (2006, p. 121) find that the ability to manage emotions is a skill that allows salespeople to "thrive in the emotionally charged 'topsy-turvy' world of professional selling."

Self-monitoring can influence job satisfaction in several ways. Self-monitoring leads to more internal comfort (i.e., reduced negative feelings, positive interactions) (Mulki et al., 2015). Also, the other-directedness dimension of self-monitoring allows the salesperson to effectively internalize, rather than suppress, emotions so as to avoid the negative feelings of discomfort and tension (Riggio & Friedman, 1982). Thus, social comparison theory posits that individuals feel most comfortable when their attitudes or feelings align with their social reference groups and self-monitoring facilitates this alignment and comfort.

H₃: Salesperson self-monitoring is (a) positively associated with job satisfaction and (b) the positive relationship between self-monitoring

and job satisfaction is partially mediated by salesperson surface acting.

The Impact of Surface Acting on Organizational Commitment

Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979, p. 226) define organizational commitment as "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization." Research supporting the negative impact of surface acting emotions on organizational commitment is limited among frontline employee research and absent among sales employee research. However, research does suggest surface acting emotions indirectly inhibit frontline employee organizational commitment through feelings of detachment (Bolton & Boyd, 2003; Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Lee & Ashforth, 1996).

Prior research describes detachment as occurring when an employee gives up on organizational resources after unsuccessful surface acting (e.g., Bolton & Boyd, 2003; Hochschild, 1983). Hochschild (1983, p. 198) articulates detachment from the organization as occurring when surface acting transforms feelings into a relationship for the organization which "comes to belong more to the organization and less to the self." Similarly, Bolton and Boyd (2003, p. 298) find that such employees "draw upon social, rather than organizational, feeling rules" to restore order to the team. In essence, employees act so as to "take one for the team," but this involves depersonalization because to do so means detaching from their organization.

Extant literature has yet to test a relationship between surface acting and organizational commitment among frontline employees or salespeople. However, prior research does suggest that the workplace emotional processes which involve surface acting, such as emotional labor or burnout, lead employees to detach themselves from the organization because organizational resources do not ease the internal tension felt. This closely resembles a loss of organizational identity, a thinner version of organizational commitment (DeConinck, 2011). Organizational identity is "the individual's knowledge that he/she belongs to certain social

groups together with some emotional and value significance” (Tajfel, 1972, p. 292).

Sales literature examining emotions often emphasizes organizational commitment concepts because jobs which require the management of emotions tend to see heightened change in work attitudes (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002). Specifically, Kidwell et al., (2011) find that emotional displays and suppression play a prevailing role in sales by influencing a salesperson’s attitudes and behaviors. Thus, it is reasonable to suggest that the detachment from the organization surface acting creates leads to a damaged organizational identity and, in turn, reduced commitment to the organization. Accordingly, social comparison theory predicts that the salesperson’s appraisal of poor fit between internal and external emotions will lead to an appraisal of a lack of salesperson fit with the organization.

H₄: Salesperson surface acting is negatively associated with organizational commitment.

The Impact of Social Support on Surface Acting, Organizational Commitment, and Job Satisfaction

House (1981) conceptualizes social support as an interpersonal transaction within the organization in which organizational members offer concern, aid, and information to an employee for improved emotional coping. Social support is a situational variable for reducing job-related stress (Abraham, 1998; Haines, Hurlbert, & Zimmer, 1991) and necessary for the personal selling role because surface acting is often a necessary part of the selling role. It is unreasonable for the organization to expect employees to be successful (i.e., achieve customer perceptions of authenticity) at surface acting all of the time (Ashforth & Tomiuk, 2000), especially considering varying expectations for salesperson emotional displays across firm boundaries. As such, failed attempts to act authentically can be detrimental to the salesperson (e.g., psychological distress, internal tension, burnout) and, thus, the organization (e.g., job dissatisfaction, lack of organizational commitment). Yet, prior research exploring social support’s ability to

prevent emotional suppression among salespeople is limited.

Prior research suggests social support facilitates a positive environment for frontline employees to learn what emotions are required in their frequent customer interactions (Gump & Kulik, 1997). Unfortunately, however, prior research has not tested the social support – surface acting relationship amongst salespeople. Frontline employee research does suggest that if a salesperson learns the rules for emotional expression through a high degree of social support, that is positive and supportive of workplace relationships, then the likelihood the salesperson also learns how to effectively internalize the emotions expressed should increase (Gump & Kulik, 1997). This reference group-supported learning environment improves the salesperson’s ability to match the emotional displays of others and, thus, reduces the need to suppress.

Abraham (1998, p. 239) further suggests that emotional support among co-workers may “reverse the deleterious effects” of emotional dissonance, the emotional state when acted feelings are not actually felt. She proposes this relationship based on Hochschild’s (1983) observations of frontline employees holding informal meetings to lift behavioral restraints by venting about the negative feelings of dealing with problem customers. Further, it seems reasonable that social support would counter negative feelings about the job given it is well established as reducing job-related stress (Abraham, 1998; Haines et al., 1991).

H₅: Social support available to the salesperson is negatively associated with surface acting.

Social comparison theory would predict that individuals who have social support feel aligned with some reference groups in a manner that masks or reduces the discomfort of not aligning with all reference groups of the organization, thus positively influencing organizational commitment. Employees who have supportive social relationships are thought to garner coping resources to deal with the discomfort associated with surface acting and are therefore less likely to experience work-related stress (Wharton & Erickson, 1993). In

turn, these supportive social relationships allow salespeople to internalize emotions when they learn they fit with the organization's culture and display rules. Additionally, prior research finds when support is present in the organization and among its members, salespeople are relatively more likely to experience multiple facets of commitment, including commitment to the organization (Fu, Bolander, & Jones, 2009). If a positive workplace environment with social support exists, the salesperson is likely to experience commitment to the organization through social alignment. Thus, this internalization process results in a reduced need for emotional suppression and an increase in commitment because salespeople are less likely to feel the discomfort and tension prompted by unsuccessful surface acting.

While social support should theoretically strengthen a salesperson's organizational commitment, this improved relationship with the organization is also likely to occur because of reduced emotional suppression. Those who are less able to internalize the emotions displayed during surface acting are relatively less likely to hold commitment toward the sales role (Schaefer & Pettijohn, 2006), positioning social support as a tool for attenuating surface acting's negative influence on the organization. Social support can facilitate internalization of others' emotions and, in turn, work to prevent the negative impact suppressing emotions has on organizational commitment. This mediated relationship is likely to be especially important to the sales role considering the need to internalize emotions of a multitude of audiences (Walker et al., 1975).

H₆: Social support available to the salesperson is (a) positively associated with organizational commitment and (b) the positive relationship between social support available to the salesperson and organizational commitment is partially mediated by salesperson surface acting.

Aside from organizational commitment, workplace social support is examined in prior research for greater insight into the alleviation of a host of negative emotions (e.g.,

Hochschild, 1983). Thus, the coping resources collected through social support should lead to positive job appraisal. Prior sales research confirms this relationship, showing that support in the organization and among its members is positively related to job satisfaction (Fu et al., 2009).

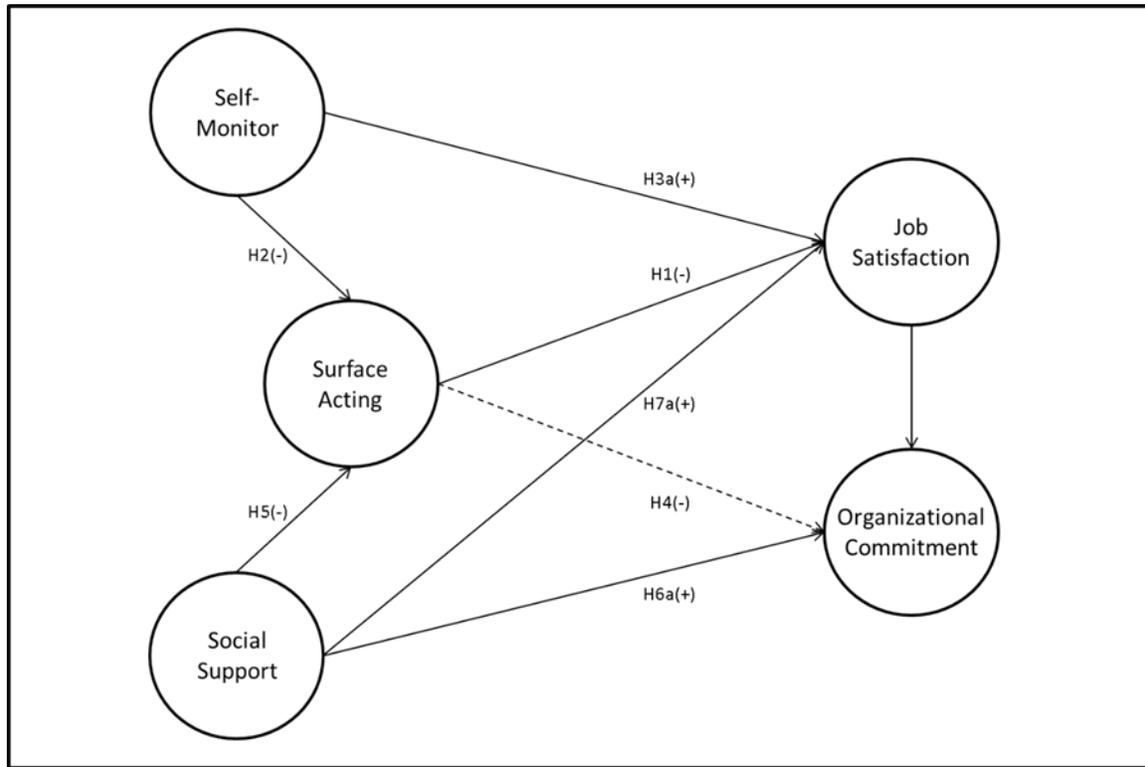
The relationship between social support and job satisfaction, however, also likely occurs through the reduced emotional suppression involved in surface acting. This too is supported by the chain of relationships championed by Wharton and Erickson (1993), which indicate employees who have social support are better able to deal with the discomfort associated with surface acting and, in turn, experience less work-related stress. Support available to salespeople should therefore reduce the need to suppress emotions and increase their job satisfaction when this need is alleviated. Thus, salespeople with social support available are likely to appraise their job in a satisfactory manner.

H₇: Social support available to the salesperson is (a) positively associated with job satisfaction and (b) the positive relationship between social support available to the salesperson and job satisfaction is partially mediated by salesperson surface acting.

The Impact of Job Satisfaction on Organizational Commitment

While numerous proposed antecedents to salesperson organizational commitment exist, job satisfaction has perhaps received more attention than any other precursor (Babakus et al., 1999; Boles, Madupalli, Rutherford, & Wood, 2007). Job satisfaction is an antecedent to organizational commitment (Brown & Peterson, 1993; Schetzle & Drollinger, 2014), indicating that a positive attitude towards a job is predictive of organizational commitment. This established linkage between job satisfaction and organizational commitment is controlled for in this surface acting model.

FIGURE 1:
Surface Acting’s Impact on Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment



METHOD

Sample

The subjects for this study were recruited using an online panel. A total of 549 respondents that reportedly work(ed) in sales entered the site and began the questionnaire. Respondents who did not complete the survey were removed (n = 92), along with those reporting they do not currently work in sales (n = 142). Listwise deletion is considered acceptable in cases where the study has the sample size to support the technique (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham 2010; 2012; Wyner, 2007; Yenduri & Iyengar, 2007). Of the remaining 315 completed surveys, respondents classified themselves as working in retail (57.4%) or business-to-business sales. Individual cases were examined for excessive missing data (>10%) on the examined variables. Two respondents were removed given the amount of missing data. Next, variables were examined for percent of missing data. The highest amount of missing data on any given variable was 1.3%. Given

that no single variable had over 10% missing data, the complete case approach (listwise deletion) was then considered. A minimum sample size of 100 is recommended by Hair and colleagues (2010) when the model has 5 or fewer constructs. In total, 78 respondents were removed. The final number of usable responses is 235 for an effective usable response rate of 42.8%. Overall, the item-to-respondent ratio is 1:8. According to Marsh, Hau, Balla, and Grayson (1998) and Boomsma and Hoogland (2001), an item to respondent ratio of at least 1:5 is required. The missing data appear to be missing completely at random. Non-response bias was disconfirmed after finding no significant differences between early and late responders with accordance to Armstrong and Overton’s (1977) procedure. The sample is 54.5% male and 42.9 years of age on average. The average hours worked per week is 40.3.

Measurement

As the Appendix details, all items were measured on seven point Likert-type scales

anchored by strongly (dis)agree, with the exception of the social support scale which is measured on a five point Likert-type scale anchored by “very much” and “don’t have any such person.” Results showed that all scales had reliability estimates above the .70 Cronbach’s alpha criterion suggested by Nunnally (1978). Surface acting was measured using the three items of the Emotional Labor subscale of Adelman (1989) and had a reliability of .93. Self-monitoring was assessed using the seven items of the Ability to Modify Self-Presentation subscale of Lennox and Wolfe (1984) and had a reliability of .76. Social support was measured using the four items of Caplan’s (1976) scale adapted for workplace settings and had a reliability of .85. Job satisfaction was measured using four items that tap into employees’ overall satisfaction with work (Comer, Machleit, & Lagace, 1989; Lagace, Goolsby, & Gassenheimer, 1993) and had a reliability of .93. Organizational commitment was evaluated using the nine items of Mowday et al., (1979) scale, with a reliability of .95 (see Table 1).

Analytic Approach

The analytic approach to evaluating the hypothesized structural model with data collected for the study involved three steps. First, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted by creating a measurement model using LISREL 8.80 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2001) in which each construct is allowed to co-vary with each other. This was done in order to ensure that each item is loading on the correct construct. Convergent validity, which indicates that the items that make up a construct share a high proportion of variance, was assessed by examining the factor loadings of the items in the study. As further evidence of convergent validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) was calculated for each construct (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Discriminant validity, which examines how distinct constructs are from each other, was assessed by comparing the AVE to the square of the inter-correlations among factors (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

In accordance with the procedure laid out by Lindell and Whitney (2001), the hypothesized

**TABLE 1:
Construct Correlations and Reliabilities**

	OC	JS	SM	SS	SA
OC	(.95)				
JS	.73**	(.93)			
SM	.24**	.33**	(.76)		
SS	.55**	.46**	.26**	(.85)	
SA	-.16*	-.18**	-.001	-.14*	(.93)
Mean	4.76	4.83	5.04	3.55	4.23
Std. Deviation	1.42	1.43	0.88	0.85	1.52
Range	6.00	6.00	4.29	4.00	6.00
AVE	0.71	0.78	0.44	0.62	0.60

- * Indicates that correlations are significant at the p = .05 level.
- ** Indicates that correlations are significant at the p = .01 level
- () Cronbach’s alpha reliability estimates are on the diagonal.

OC = Organizational Commitment; JS = Job Satisfaction; SM = Self-Monitoring; SS = Social Support; SA = Surface Acting

model was re-run with the addition of an established marker variable - age (Griffith & Lusch, 2007). The marker variable was thought to have no relationship with, or impact on, any of the variables in the study. The marker variable was linked to all other endogenous constructs in the study and set to co-vary with all of the exogenous constructs in the study. If the marker variable shows a significant parameter estimate, an issue with common methods variance potentially exists (Williams, Hartman, & Cavazotte, 2010).

In order to determine how well the hypothesized relationships among the constructs fit the data, the structural model was also assessed using LISREL 8.80. The relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment was controlled for in the model. Mediation was evaluated using the method suggested by Preacher and Hayes (2004). Once direct and indirect effects were determined to be significant, each instance of mediation was evaluated by removing the mediated path and evaluating the strength of the direct effect. Then the mediated path was replaced and the change in the direct effect was noted. If the decrease in the strength of the direct path is statistically significant (insignificant), partial (full) mediation is established.

RESULTS

Measurement Model

The model has a chi-square of 611.68 ($df = 309$) and meets Hu and Bentler's (1999) criteria of a chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio of two to one or less. Hu and Bentler (1999) further recommend an SRMR of less than or equal to .08. The score on the measurement model of SRMR = .07 indicates an unlikely chance of errors in the structure of the model. Hair and colleagues (2010) also recommend a CFI greater than or equal to .95 or an RMSEA less than or equal to .08. The scores on the measurement model of CFI = .96 and RMSEA = .07 indicate that the factors are loading on the correct constructs. No items were removed from the measurement model, enabling each construct to be measured by a full, validated survey instrument. The results provide evidence of convergent validity. All factors meet the

criteria of both significance and a standardized weight above .50 (Hair et al., 2010). The only exception is the seventh item on the self-monitoring scale, which while still significant, has a standardized weight of .47. One factor (self-monitoring) falls below the recommended cutoff value of .50 (see Table 1). While this is just below the recommended cutoff, there is precedence for using a construct with a standardized weight below .50 (Babin & Boles, 1998). The overall construct AVE average is .63.

Since the AVE of self-monitoring is not large (.62), it is of little surprise that when the self-monitoring scale (and link) is removed from the model, AVE is not greatly affected. As seen in Table 1, the endogenous variables have an explained variance of: .35 (affective organizational commitment), .28 (job satisfaction), and .14 (surface acting). After removing the link between self-monitoring and surface acting, affective organizational commitment's explained variance is still .35, job satisfaction's .20, and surface acting's .11.

The results also provide evidence of discriminant validity. In all instances, the AVE is greater than the squared inter-correlations between factors. Finally, the results of the marker variable test indicate that all five paths between the marker variable age and the endogenous constructs in the study are non-significant: job satisfaction ($t = -1.21$), organizational commitment ($t = 1.44$), surface acting ($t = .43$), self-monitoring ($t = .95$), and social support ($t = 1.09$), suggesting common method is not an issue.

Structural Model

The structural model displays the requirements for good fit as well: chi-square = 572.36 ($df = 308$), CFI = .98, RMSEA = .06, and SRMR = .07. Since the results indicate an unlikely chance of errors in either structure or loadings, the individual hypotheses are examined next. H_1 examines the negative relationship between surface acting and job satisfaction. The results indicate that H_1 is supported ($\beta = -.30$, $t = -3.75$, $p < .05$). H_2 predicts the negative relationship between self-monitoring and surface acting. Findings indicate that H_2 is supported ($\beta = -.45$, $t = -3.98$, $p < .05$). H_{3a} tests the positive

relationship between self-monitoring and job satisfaction. Results indicate that H_{3a} is supported ($\beta = .43, t = 3.94, p < .05$). H_{3b} predicts the relationship between self-monitoring and job satisfaction is partially mediated by surface acting. The results of a chi-square difference test indicate support for H_{3b} ($\chi^2 = 8, 1 df$). H₄ examines the negative relationship between surface acting and commitment to the organization. H₄, however, is not supported ($\beta = -.01, t = -.15, p > .05$). Findings support the negative relationship between social support and surface acting as H₅ predicts ($\beta = -.41, t = -3.05, p < .05$). H_{6a} predicts a positive relationship between social support and organizational commitment. Results indicate support for H_{6a} ($\beta = .40, t = 4.34, p < .05$). H_{6b} hypothesizes the relationship between social support and organizational commitment is partially mediated by surface acting. Since no significant link between surface acting and organizational commitment exists (H₄), H_{6b} is not supported. H_{7a} predicts a

positive relationship between social support and job satisfaction. H_{7a} is supported ($\beta = .61, t = 4.57, p < .05$). H_{7b} states the relationship between social support and job satisfaction is partially mediated by surface acting. The results of a chi-square difference test support H_{7b} ($\chi^2 = 19, 1 df$). Finally, the control linkage states that a salesperson’s organizational commitment should increase as job satisfaction increases. As expected, this relationship is supported ($\beta = .48, t = 7.47, p < .05$). Table 2 provides a summary of these linkages.

DISCUSSION

Theoretical and Managerial Implications

The present research studies workplace emotions in the sales context. In addition to extending surface acting within the sales literature, the findings contribute to personal selling and sales management literature gaps in two ways: it provides (1) insights into

TABLE 2:
Structural Model Results

Hypothesis	Linkage	Parameter Estimate	t-value	p-value	Result
H ₁	Surface Acting→Job Satisfaction	-0.30	-3.75	< 0.05	Supported
H ₂	Self-Monitoring→Surface Acting	-0.45	-3.98	< 0.05	Supported
H _{3a}	Self-Monitoring→Job Satisfaction	0.43	3.94	< 0.05	Supported
H ₄	Surface Acting→Organizational Commitment	-0.01	-0.15	> 0.05	Not Supported
H ₅	Social Support→Surface Acting	-0.41	-3.05	< 0.05	Supported
H _{6a}	Social Support→Organizational Commitment	0.40	4.34	< 0.05	Supported
H _{7a}	Social Support→Job Satisfaction	0.61	4.57	< 0.05	Supported
--	Job Satisfaction→Organizational Commitment	0.48	7.47	< 0.05	Supported
Mediation Hypothesis	Partial Mediation			Chi Square Difference	Result
H _{3b}	Self-Monitoring à Job Satisfaction mediated by Surface Acting			8 (df=1)	Supported
H _{6b}	Social Support à Organizational Commitment mediated by Surface Acting			N/A	Not Supported
H _{7b}	Social Support à Job Satisfaction mediated by Surface Acting			19 (df=1)	Supported

equivocal findings within job satisfaction models by studying the mediating role of surface acting with two offsetting variables – self-monitoring and social support – and (2) a theoretical link between display rules and salesperson emotional states through the process of surface acting.

Findings demonstrate that surface acting emotions lead salespeople to experience reduced levels of job satisfaction, an important concept for salesperson retention (e.g., Pettijohn, Pettijohn, & Taylor, 2007). As some antecedents to job satisfaction in extant literature are equivocal, surface acting may play a role in these relationships procedurally. For example, while role stress is a symptom of spanning boundaries, surface acting should be considered as a boundary spanning routine. Thus, accounting for surface acting in models of workplace emotion could potentially explain additional variance in job satisfaction above and beyond that explained by the emotional state of role stress.

The mediating effect of surface acting also helps to clarify the processes through which self-monitoring and social support lead to salesperson attitudes. The counter-effect of social support is established to show a mechanism practitioners can use for offsetting an indirect negative relationship between surface acting emotions and job satisfaction. To drive social support, sales managers should encourage social relationships with salespeople and among their colleagues. Specifically, Roberts, Lapidus, and Chonko (1997) suggest practitioners develop mentoring programs with supervisors so as to foster a socially supportive environment. Brotheridge and Lee (2002) further suggest increasing social support provided to salespeople can be accomplished when the role is structured to enable multiple opportunities for interaction with co-workers.

Support of the partially mediated relationship of self-monitoring and social support to job satisfaction via surface acting offers two mechanisms the sales manager can use to offset the negative feelings involved with surface acting. Yet, research often recommends tight supervision by managers for effective salesperson surface acting (e.g., Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987) and emotion regulation (Rozell

et al., 2006). For example, Mastracci, Newman, and Guy (2006) recommend practitioners encourage the incorporation of emotions in job appraisals so as to better control and supervise the suppression of real emotions and display of fake emotions. However, prior research finds when frontline employees suppress emotions, job dissatisfaction ensues (e.g., Babakus et al., 1999; Morris & Feldman, 1996). Similarly, this study finds when salespeople suppress emotions, job dissatisfaction ensues.

Instead of training salespeople to suppress real emotions and present fake emotions, results of the present study suggest sales managers should consider facilitating the development of a supportive organizational culture. Additionally, research also suggests that sales managers can use training to influence the salesperson's ability to self-monitor emotions. Such training is facilitated through programs that involve practice at being more adaptive. This can be accomplished when sales managers facilitate role-playing activities or anonymous customer exit interviews in which feedback is provided about salesperson attention to unique customer needs (Deeter-Schmelz & Sojka, 2007).

Limitations and Future Research

The data do not support a negative relationship between surface acting and organizational commitment. One possible explanation for this non-significant relationship pertains to the thought that the adverse outcomes associated with surface acting may be more appropriately associated with the sales occupation instead of the sales organization. Affective outcomes of inauthentic workplace displays, such as job satisfaction, are likely the result of internal tension caused by unsuccessful surface acting. However, the impact on commitment to the organization may only indirectly operate through this relationship and the heightened change in work attitudes specific to the role (Reichers, 1986). In fact, the salesperson may not envision the surface acting requisite of the personal selling role varying greatly from one organization to the next. Future research should therefore consider capturing the influence of surface acting on occupational commitment to compare effects of surface acting and identify if the potential drop in commitment resulting from salesperson surface acting is actually more

targeted at the sales role instead of the organization.

Future research should also consider how being satisfied with the sales career and/or committed to the organization might increase the likelihood that the salesperson actually feels the positive displays (e.g., good mood, empathy) when interacting with various parties, and, in turn, reduce the need to act. Mallin and Serviere-Munoz (2013) find that salespeople with relatively low levels of organizational commitment are more likely to engage in an internal justification process to close the gap between potential selling behaviors and internal feelings. Similarly, it is possible that varying pressures, such as from a customer versus a vendor or to attract versus retain a client, might also vary the perceived pressure to surface act. In essence, future research should incorporate organizational antecedents, instead of just salesperson traits, which may heighten or lessen the salesperson's perceived need to surface act. Another issue future research should further examine is the relationship between surface acting and self-monitoring in order to determine what is behind the insignificant correlation yet significant direct linkage. Is this an artifact in the study's data, is there some sort of suppression effect, or is something more going on?

Finally, while this study successfully incorporates surface acting within sales research, the cross-sectional data does not prove causality. Longitudinal data may overcome this limitation because it provides a means of supporting causal order and demonstrating that as surface acting increases, job satisfaction decreases. Longitudinal data may also provide stronger support for the mediating role of surface acting in the procedural relationships from self-monitoring and social support to job satisfaction. In addition to longitudinal data, another data source which would help overcome the limitations of cross-sectional data is dyadic salesperson-customer data. This would allow researchers to compare supplier and buyer perspectives. While customers may have consequential responses similar to suppliers if salesperson surface acting is identified (e.g., reduced trust), there may also be benefits

realized if surface acting is not identified (e.g., comfort sharing knowledge).

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APPENDIX: Scale Items

Construct/Items

Surface Acting (7-point, strongly disagree/strongly agree)

Please answer the following section with regards to yourself:

1. Resist expressing my true feelings
2. Pretend to have emotions that I don't really have
3. Hide my true feelings about a situation

Self-Monitoring (7-point, strongly disagree/strongly agree)

Please answer the following section with regards to yourself:

1. Once I know what the situation calls for, it's easy for me to regulate my actions accordingly
2. I have found that I can adjust my behavior to meet the requirements of any situation
3. I find myself in I have trouble changing my behavior to suit different people and different situations
4. In social situations, I have the ability to alter my behavior if I feel that something else is called for
5. I have the ability to control the way I come across to people depending on the impression I wish to give them
6. When I feel that the image I am portraying isn't working, I can readily change to something that does
7. Even when I might be to my advantage, I have difficulty putting up a good front

Social Support (5-point; very much, somewhat, a little, not at all, don't have any such person)

Please answer the following questions with regards to yourself:

1. How much do other people at work do out of their way to do things to make your work life easier for you?
2. How easy is it to talk with other people at work?
3. How much can other people at work be relied on when things get tough at work?
4. How much are other people at work willing to listen to your person problems? **Job Satisfaction** (7-point, Strongly Disagree/Strongly Agree)
5. Please answer the following section with regards to yourself:
6. My work gives a sense of accomplishment My job is exciting My work is satisfying
7. I'm really doing something worthwhile in my job

Organizational Commitment (7-point, Strongly Disagree/Strongly Agree)

Please answer the following section with regards to yourself:

1. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that expected in order to help this organization be successful
2. I talk up my organization to my friends as a great organization to work for
3. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization
4. I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar
5. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization
6. I feel this organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance
7. I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined
8. I really care about the fate of this organization
9. I feel, for me, this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work