

Let's face emotions!

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LET'S FACE EMOTIONS!

Towards a more comprehensive understanding of emotional labor strategies



Merve Alabak

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Towards a more comprehensive
understanding of emotional labor strategies

DISSERTATION

To obtain the degree of Doctor at Maastricht University,

On the authority of the Rector Magnificus,

Prof. Dr. Rianne M. Letschert

In accordance with the decision of the Board of Deans,

To be defended in public

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General introduction

A few months ago, I participated in a teaching development workshop. During the workshop, teachers were asked to share difficult encounters with students (e.g., conflicts) and their strategies to deal with these challenges. The most memorable story was of a student who fell asleep during a neuro-psychology tutorial. As a result, the teacher was experiencing a mix of negative emotions: anger, disappointment, and a sense of incompetence. However, she had to control her negative feelings in order to continue teaching in a professional manner. She suppressed her negative feelings and acted as if she was calm. Yet, this was difficult for her, and she felt even worse at the end of the class. Could she have acted differently and would she then have felt better in the end? More generally, what strategies can employees use to manage their emotions at work during interpersonal encounters and what are the consequences of these strategies? These questions are examined in this dissertation.

As illustrated by the situation above, most employees, including but not limited to teachers, cashiers, customer service employees, nurses, and doctors, must regulate their emotions as an integral part of their jobs. This is called emotional labor (Hochschild, 1983). For example, teachers need to stay calm when dealing with difficult students, cashiers have to greet all customer with a smile, and doctors and nurses need to express empathy towards their patients.

During the past three decades, a large body of research on emotional labor has emerged. Most of these studies focused on two emotional labor strategies: surface acting and deep acting (Grandey, 2000; Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Hochschild, 1983). When engaging in surface acting, employees *pretend* to have organizationally-required emotions or *hide* their undesirable emotions. In contrast, when engaging in deep acting, employees attempt to actually *feel* the emotions they have to show as part of their job. In the example above, the tutor engaged in surface acting, as she adapted her outward expression to look calm while in reality she felt very emotional. Alternatively, she could have engaged in deep acting by making use of one of the following three specific emotion regulation strategies (Grandey, 2000). She could have thought (a) that the fatigue of the student is caused by personal problems (perspective-taking), (b) that the situation is not all that bad as all other students are enthusiastic about participating in her class (positive reappraisal), or (c) about her upcoming holiday which provides a pleasant distraction (attentional deployment).

Each of these three forms of deep acting regulates inner feelings and results in expressions mandated by the job (Grandey, 2000).

Given this fundamental distinction between surface and deep acting, researchers have compared their consequences for employees' well-being and performance. The current theory distinguishes between proximal outcomes and more distal outcomes of surface and deep acting (Holman, Martínez-Iñigo, & Totterdell, 2008; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Wang et al., 2017). Several key outcomes have been proposed to act as proximal consequences through which surface acting and deep acting eventually influence more distal outcomes such as strain, job satisfaction, task performance, or customer satisfaction (Holman et al., 2008; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Wang et al., 2017). These proximal outcomes include resource depletion, self-authenticity, positive/negative affect, rewarding interactions with customers, customer-perceived authenticity, and customers' service appraisal (Holman et al., 2008; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Wang et al., 2017). Empirical research has supported the proposed connections, demonstrating that surface and deep acting are differentially related to well-being and performance outcomes (e.g., Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Martínez-Iñigo, Totterdell, Alcover, & David, 2007). Yet, empirical investigations of the proximal outcomes and proposed mechanisms driving relationships with distal outcomes have been scarce.

Meta-analyses of studies examining the impact of chronic use of deep acting and surface acting found that surface acting had a robust positive relationship with distal strain outcomes (e.g., emotional exhaustion) while deep acting displayed weak and inconsistent relationships with strain outcomes (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Mesmer-Magnus, DeChurch, & Wax, 2012; Yin, Huang, & Chen, 2019). A similar pattern of results was found in daily diary studies investigating short-term within-person associations of deep and surface acting with employee outcomes. For example, while within-person daily surface acting was related to higher levels of resource depletion, deep acting was not related to depletion (e.g., Huppertz, Hülshager, De Calheiros Velozo, & Schreurs, 2020; Uy, Lin, & Ilies, 2017). Likewise, surface acting appears to be a less optimal strategy than deep acting for performance outcomes (Grandey, 2003; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). It was negatively associated with task and emotional performance (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). In contrast, deep acting was related to greater emotional performance, while it was not related to task performance (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011).

Although prior research on emotional labor has increased our understanding of emotional labor strategies and their potential consequences, there are three critical research gaps in the literature. **First, while surface acting seems to have a robust negative association with employees' well-being and their performance, research on consequences of deep acting has provided mixed results and therefore, deep acting is less well understood.** For example, some studies suggest that deep acting promotes employees' well-being (e.g., Scott & Barnes, 2011) while other studies have not observed such an effect (e.g., Judge, Woolf, & Hurst, 2009). This is troublesome because this mixed evidence restricts our understanding of the consequences and practical value of deep acting. One reason for these mixed findings may be the assessment of deep acting (Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011). Previous studies have often investigated deep acting as a unitary construct without specifying specific emotion regulation strategies. For example, the widely-used deep acting scale includes items like, *"I try to actually experience the emotions that I must show"* and *"I really try to feel the emotions I have to show as part of my job"* (Brotheridge & Lee 2003). Yet, such items do not capture the multifaceted nature of deep acting (Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011). To engage in deep acting, employees can rely on various strategies (Grandey, 2000). For example, they may adopt the customer's perspective, find positive meaning in a negative situation or distract themselves with a happy memory (Grandey, 2000). Combining these different strategies into a single construct may mask important (positive or negative) effects of individual strategies on key proximal outcomes (Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011). Moreover, the typical deep acting scale (Brotheridge & Lee 2003) confounds the motivation to engage in emotion regulation (e.g., motivation to change feelings) with the actual cognitive-emotional strategies used (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). Taken together, a multi-dimensional perspective on deep acting that takes into account possible differential consequences of specific deep acting strategies is needed to better understand the deep acting construct. Doing so may provide insights into the relationship of deep acting with key indicators of well-being and performance and distinguish aspects of deep acting that foster them from those that do not. Such insights will eventually help resolve contradictory findings observed in prior research on deep acting.

Second, despite continued theoretical and empirical interest in understanding the outcomes of deep acting (Grandey, & Gabriel, 2015), the causal role of deep acting has been rarely demonstrated. This is problematic because the question of whether deep acting impacts well-being and performance-related outcomes cannot be conclusively answered without causal evidence. From a practical perspective, this lack of causal evidence is also problematic as it limits the development of deep acting training programs that may benefit employees and organizations.

Based on existing cross-sectional relationships, we cannot conclude whether deep acting actually causes the studied outcomes or whether the causal arrow goes the other way around. For example, the cross-sectional finding that deep acting is positively related to rewarding customer treatment (Zhan, Wang, & Shi, 2016) could also be due to deep acting strategies being chosen when interacting with nice clients, rather than deep acting impacting the customer interaction. Similarly, employees may use deep acting when they already feel positive in pleasant interactions to reciprocate customer's positive behavior (Diefendorff, Gabriel, Nolan, & Yang, 2019; Totterdell & Holman, 2003). Moreover, cross-sectional findings may underestimate the role of situational or dispositional factors that could act as confounding variables in the relationships between deep acting and studied outcomes. For example, it might be that customer familiarity increases both deep acting and rewarding interactions, creating a spurious relationship between deep acting and rewarding interactions.

Experimental research is needed to observe the true nature of the relationship between deep acting and emotional labor outcomes. Experimental studies also allow testing whether different specific deep acting strategies show differential causal links with key proximal outcomes such as resource depletion, self-authenticity, positive/negative affect, customer-perceived authenticity, or customers' service appraisal. Moreover, establishing the causal links between specific deep acting strategies and these proximal outcomes provides the necessary input for eventually developing a robust theoretical model on the consequences of deep acting.

Third, by focusing mostly on deep acting and surface acting researchers may have overlooked other emotional labor strategies that employees can use when engaging in emotional labor. For example, going back to the teacher example, she could have

used a range of other strategies instead of surface acting or deep acting. For example, she could have interrupted the class and talked to the student in private to help the student solve his/her problems, or she could have encouraged the student to see the situation from her perspective, or she could have reminded the student about her expectation that students should actively participate during class discussions. Each of these alternative strategies could help the teacher to regulate her emotions but they do not fall within the broad classes of deep acting or surface acting. It is thus likely that there are emotional labor strategies that are beyond the scope of deep and surface acting. To fully understand the construct of emotional labor, a systematic and complete taxonomy emotional labor strategies is of key importance.

At least two research lines suggest what these additional regulation strategies may entail. First, Gross's (1998) theoretical model on emotion regulation covers two regulation strategies that have been understudied in the context of emotional labor: situation selection (i.e., seeking or avoiding situations that will cause particular emotions) and situation modification (i.e., changing the situation in order to decrease its emotional impact; Gross, 1998). Diefendorff and colleagues (2008) provided first evidence that these situation-targeted strategies are frequently employed in emotional labor contexts. Concrete examples of these strategies include a waiter who chooses to interact with a nice regular customer while avoiding a rude customer who just walked in, or a teacher who focuses on pleasant and engaged students in an interactive course while ignoring the non-motivated students.

Second, research on interpersonal emotion regulation (outside the organization sciences) suggests that individuals can regulate their own emotions by regulating their interaction partners' emotions (Swerdlow & Johnson; 2020; Williams, Morelli, Ong, & Zaki, 2018). Considering the interpersonal nature of emotional labor, employees may utilize interpersonal regulation strategies when engage in emotional labor. For example, a nurse may comfort an anxious patient, and the anxiety reduction in the patient may subsequently help the nurse to stay calm herself and manage her own negative feelings. Yet, interpersonal strategies have hardly been considered in the context of emotional labor, neither theoretically, nor empirically.

Overall, these theoretical frameworks show that there may be many emotional labor strategies that are yet to be studied. Therefore, there is a clear need for a new

taxonomy of emotional labor strategies that comprehensively describes employees' repertoire of emotional labor strategies. Such a taxonomy would provide a clearer and richer overview of emotional labor strategies, and ultimately of their consequences.

The current dissertation aims to fill these three critical gaps in the literature. Specifically, it will address the following questions:

- 1) Do mixed findings on deep acting stem from its multidimensional nature? Do different strategies (perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, and attentional deployment) involved in deep acting differentially relate to key proximal outcomes (i.e., resource depletion, self-authenticity, rewarding interactions with customers) between and within-persons?
- 2) Do specific deep acting strategies *causally* impact key outcomes (i.e., resource depletion, self-authenticity, positive/negative affect, rewarding interactions with customers, customer-perceived authenticity, and customers' service appraisal)? Can deep acting strategies easily be manipulated in a lab context?
- 3) Are there emotional labor strategies that employees use that go beyond deep and surface acting? How does a complete taxonomy of emotional labor strategies look like?

In the following section, I will elaborate on how the current dissertation will address the three identified gaps and on the importance of filling these gaps for the emotional labor literature.

Dissertation Outline

The main body of this dissertation consists of four chapters. **In Chapter 2**, a literature review is presented that forms the foundation of the three empirical chapters of this dissertation. This review highlights the knowns and unknowns about emotional labor strategies and their outcomes. **In Chapter 3**, we¹ aim to deepen the current knowledge on deep acting. We argue that previous inconsistent findings on deep acting can be partially explained by the fact that the broad category of deep acting encompasses fundamentally different emotion regulation strategies. Specifically, in this chapter, we examine the association between three specific deep acting strategies (perspective-

1 I used the term "we" as the empirical chapters were conducted with co-authors.

taking, positive reappraisal, and attentional deployment) and three key proximal outcomes (resource depletion, self-authenticity, and rewarding interactions) using a daily diary study. **Chapter 4** examines the impact of the same three deep acting strategies but this time using an experimental approach. In a travel agency simulation, we manipulate perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, and attentional deployment and test their impact on employees' affective state, depletion, and authenticity as well as customers' perception of authenticity and service appraisals. **In Chapter 5**, we argue that employees' emotional labor strategy repertoire includes far more than deep acting and surface acting only. In this chapter we develop the first bottom-up taxonomy of emotional labor strategies. Using semi-structured interviews, we first collect information on a wide range of emotional labor strategies and subsequently categorize these strategy statements based on their similarities. This approach can result in a new taxonomy of emotional labor strategies consisting of both established as well as novel emotional labor categories. Finally, **Chapter 6** presents a summary of the empirical findings and discussion of these findings' theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions.

General Contributions

This dissertation advances the field of emotional labor in several ways. First, it helps refine emotional labor theory (Grandey, 2000). Specifically, Chapter 3 and 4 empirically test whether deep acting involves fundamentally different strategies that have different relationships with key employee outcomes. This multi-dimensional perspective on deep acting may yield unique relationships of different deep acting strategies with key emotional labor outcomes. Such findings may increase our understanding of the nature of the deep acting construct as well as its outcomes.

Second, the current fine-grained investigation of deep acting may explain past inconsistent findings on the deep acting-wellbeing relationship (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). Despite the clear theoretical distinctions between specific deep acting strategies, past research treated deep acting as a unitary construct, which complicated predictions about deep acting outcomes. By isolating the underlying strategies, the present dissertation tests whether inconsistencies in previous research might be partially attributed to the fact that perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, and attentional deployment have different links with well-being.

Third, Chapter 5 extends current emotional labor theories by going beyond deep and surface acting. Our bottom-up taxonomy of emotional labor strategies can foster a more comprehensive understanding of emotional labor. Furthermore, it may stimulate further theoretical and empirical research on understudied and unrecognized emotional labor strategies.

Fourth, this dissertation offers several methodological advancements to emotional labor research. We employ three different approaches, which allow us to overcome previous methodological shortcomings and obtain more robust conclusions:

- (a) Using a daily diary approach in Chapter 3, we investigate the relationships between deep acting strategies and key emotional labor outcomes both *within* and *between* persons. Testing the relationships at both levels allows us to see the short-term within-person and long-term between-person associations between deep acting strategies and important outcomes. Overall, this provide a more detailed understanding of the consequences of deep acting.
- (b) Using an experimental approach in Chapter 4, we investigate deep acting strategies as possible *causes* of key outcomes in a simulated customer-service setting. This overcomes the limitations associated with the observational designs that have thus far dominated the emotional labor domain. The experimental protocol we developed may also inspire future experimental work who can build on our protocol and further refine it.
- (c) Using a bottom-up approach in Chapter 5, we go beyond deep and surface acting and provide a more comprehensive understanding of emotional labor strategies that could be obtained when relying solely on top-down theoretical approaches.

Finally, this dissertation is valuable from a practical perspective. It is vital to understand (consequences of) specific emotional labor strategies, as these findings provide critical input to training programs aimed at optimizing emotional labor outcomes. The inconclusive results on the consequences of deep acting in the literature present a major challenge to translate current empirical findings into useful practices and training programs. Our multidimensional focus on deep acting may reveal a particularly adaptive deep acting strategy for employees' well-being and performance, and service employees can be encouraged to especially train that particular strategy. In fact, the fundamental emotion regulation literature showed that perspective-taking, positive reappraisal and attentional deployment can all be trained, making them

suitable for emotional labor intervention and training (for a review, Denny, 2020). Finally, our bottom-up taxonomy of emotional labor strategies may allow extending current training programs by going beyond deep acting strategies, which, ultimately may augment the effectiveness of training programs.

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A review of emotional labor research: The road behind and the road ahead

Abstract

Research on emotional labor has grown exponentially over the last three decades. This research has shown that employees engage in different strategies (especially deep and surface acting) to manage their emotions in client interactions, and that the particular emotional labor strategies they use influences their well-being and performance. However, critical but unresolved questions have remained. Why did previous studies of deep acting outcomes produce inconsistent findings? Is it due to the multidimensional nature of deep acting? Are different subtypes of deep acting (causally) differently associated with emotional labor outcomes? Do surface acting and deep acting exhaustively describe employees' repertoire of emotional labor strategies? In this chapter, we, therefore, review the current state of theoretical and methodical knowledge and identify how researchers can advance the field of emotional labor.

Keywords: deep acting, emotional labor, emotion regulation, surface acting

An airline company of Garuda Indonesia considers different options to remove flight attendants' face masks. The CEO reported that "Many customers have complained about the flight attendants wearing masks as [the passengers] cannot see whether or not the [flight attendants] are smiling or frowning." (Slotnick, 2020). This situation perfectly illustrates the individual, organizational and societal relevance of emotional labor, which refers to controlling one's emotions for work purposes (Grandey, 2000). Emotional labor poses challenges for employees, organizations and society at large. For employees, emotional labor is an effortful process as adjusting one's emotions often requires resources (Grandey, 2000; 2003; Hochschild, 1983). It can also be costly as emotional labor may threaten employees' well-being and even their sense of self (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Brotheridge & Lee, 2003).

For organizations, emotional labor presents a challenge as they need to find the right balance between the well-being of their employees and the satisfaction of their customers. On the one hand, due to its effortful nature, emotional labor may threaten employees' health and well-being, which may eventually lead to turnover (Chau, Dahling, Levy, Diefendorff, 2009; Goodwin, Groth, Frenkel, 2011; Grandey, 2000). On the other hand, emotional labor is crucial for customer satisfaction, which is key for organizations' survival and success (Hallowell, 1996; Humphrey, Ashforth, Diefendorff, 2015; Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006).

For society, the challenge is to respond to the growing demands of the emotional labor economy. More than 70% of employees in developed economies, including European countries, are working in service jobs (The World Bank, 2020). That means more and more employees are facing emotional labor demands. Moreover, emotional labor can have a negative effect not only on employees' well-being, but also on that of their family members (Sanz-Vergel, Rodríguez-Muñoz, Bakker, & Demerouti, 2012). Consequently, psychological health care demands may grow in parallel with the increase in emotional labor jobs. Moreover, emotional labor is essential for the competitive advantage of service companies, and these companies' success may ultimately influence societal welfare (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003).

Coined by Arlie Hochschild in 1983, emotional labor has generated a great deal of interest in practice and various research fields (e.g., psychology, organizational behavior, and sociology). Considerable progress has been made in outlining

emotional labor strategies and their consequences for employees and organizations. Past studies have mostly focused on the two broad emotional labor strategies of surface and deep acting and their consequences for employees' well-being and performance. Specifically, surface acting (i.e., faking the expected displays) has been found to be a predictor of decreased well-being and performance (for meta-analysis, Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). In contrast, deep acting (trying to feel and show the expected displays) has been found to be a predictor of increased performance although, overall, evidence is rather mixed, especially regarding its relationship with well-being (for meta-analysis, Hülshager & Schewe, 2011).

Understanding emotional labor strategies and their consequences is essential to address the individual, organizational and societal challenges of emotional labor. However, the current state of knowledge about emotional labor suggests that we might have overlooked important issues. For example, why does deep acting show inconsistent relationships with employee outcomes? How can we obtain causal evidence to examine whether emotional labor actually impacts employee outcomes (rather than the other way around)? Does the deep acting-surface acting dichotomy suffice to capture all possible emotional labor strategies? Answering these questions is of vital importance to advance our current understanding of emotional labor.

The present review has two goals. The first aim is to provide an overview of emotional labor research to date. The second aim is to identify key research gaps in the emotional labor domain. In our review, we concentrate on the impact of the two main emotional labor strategies (deep acting and surface acting) because they have been often studied and have deepened our understanding of emotional labor. To make the review tractable, we will focus on the impact of these two strategies on the following key outcome variables: resource depletion, self-authenticity, positive/negative affect, rewarding interactions with customers, customer-perceived authenticity, or customers' service appraisal. We selected these outcome variables because of their theoretical and practical value. From a theoretical perspective, they are well-established proximal outcomes of emotional labor strategies that precede more distal well-being and performance outcomes (Holman, Martínez-Iñigo, & Totterdell, 2008; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Wang et al., 2017). Studies on these outcomes are rare but have enabled deeper explanations of the long-term and short-term consequences

of deep and surface acting (Huppertz, Hülshager, De Calheiros Velozo, & Schreurs, 2020; Zhan, Wang, & Shi, 2016). For example, they can advance our understanding of the dynamic mechanisms underlying the effects of surface and deep acting (e.g., Huppertz et al., 2020; Zhan et al., 2016). Moreover, a better understanding of these outcomes can facilitate theoretically grounded investigations. From a practical perspective, focusing on these proximal outcomes can inform practitioners and researchers alike about *why* the desirable or undesirable more long-term effects of deep and surface acting occur. This may also guide practitioners in their endeavors to design targeted occupational health interventions.

We organize the review as follows: First, we provide a short historical overview of the different approaches used in emotional labor research. Next, we will review research on the two dominant emotional labor strategies in the literature: deep acting and surface acting. We will focus on the measurement of these two strategies and summarize empirical evidence on the association of these emotional labor strategies with the mentioned key proximal outcomes. Finally, we will discuss research gaps and suggest avenues to further improve emotional labor research.

What is Emotional Labor?

In 1983, sociologist Arlie Hochschild brought emotional labor to scientific attention with her book “The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling”. She argued that the rise of the service economy created many occupations where employees engage in emotional labor in exchange for a wage, such as customer service and health care jobs. These emotional labor occupations were characterized by three features: 1) frequent contact with clients (customers, patients), 2) the requirement of generating organizationally desired reactions (e.g., positive customer emotions), and 3) the control of client interactions via organizational practices (e.g., display rules or rewards; Hochschild, 1983).

At the core of Hochschild’s (1983) approach, emotional labor is seen as *occupational requirements*. This approach suggests that employees *dramaturgically act* to create the expected emotions (Grandey, Diefendorff, & Rupp, 2013). In particular, she focused on two acting techniques, namely, surface acting and deep acting. Surface acting refers to matching outward expressions with the emotional expectations of

the job, while deep acting refers to deeply experiencing and showing the expected emotions (Hochschild, 1983).

Although the fundamental arguments of Hochschild (1983) have continued to shape emotional labor research, different theoretical interpretations of emotional labor have developed across different disciplines (Grandey et al., 2013). Building on Hochschild's (1983) approach, organizational behavior researchers adopted a more behavioral perspective to study emotional labor (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Grandey et al., 2013). They studied *emotional labor as emotional displays* and only focused on employees' emotional observable displays (e.g., greeting and smiling, Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993), disregarding employees' feelings (Grandey et al., 2013). To create job-congruent displays, employees were suggested to fake in good faith (internalizing display rules) or fake in bad faith (following display rules without internalizing them, Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987).

Another perspective considers emotional labor as *intrapsychic experiences* (Grandey et al., 2013). According to this view, emotional labor involves *effortful management of feelings* to create organizationally required displays (Grandey, 2000; Grandey et al., 2013). Therefore, emotional labor was defined as: "emotional labor is the process of regulating both feelings and expressions for organizational goals" (Grandey, 2000, p. 97). This operationalization of emotional labor as emotion regulation has become mainstream in the emotional labor literature, particularly in psychology (Grandey et al., 2013). The present review, therefore, mainly focuses on this perspective.

This perspective links Hochschild's (1983) deep and surface acting to emotion regulation strategies of the process model of emotion regulation (Gross, 1998). Grandey (2000) argued that deep acting relies on antecedent-focused emotion regulation where employees influence their undesirable emotions before they escalate (Grandey, 2000; Gross, 1998). Consequently, the resulting expressions are naturally aligned with jobs' expectations (Grandey, 2000). In contrast, surface acting relies on response-focused emotion regulation where employees only manipulate their outward expressions after their emotions are already stronger (Grandey, 2000; Gross, 1998).

What Emotional Labor Strategies are Most Frequently Studied?

Undoubtedly, the most studied emotional labor strategies are deep acting and surface acting (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Grandey & Melloy, 2017) although some researchers have also acknowledged the existence of automatic regulation or the expression of naturally felt emotions (Diefendorff, Croyle, & Gosserand, 2005; Scott, Lennard, Mitchell, & Johnson, 2020). Yet, our focus will be on effortful emotion regulation strategies and therefore on deep and surface acting. As mentioned above, the distinction into deep acting and surface acting parallels the distinction between antecedent-focused and response-focused emotion regulation put forth by Gross's (1998) in the general emotion regulation literature. Let's consider the example when a customer service employee is getting annoyed by an indecisive customer during a long interaction. To deep act, she can engage in antecedent-focused emotion regulation. Although deep acting has been typically considered as a uniform strategy, the service employee can in fact use three antecedent-focused strategies: perspective-taking, positive reappraisal and attentional deployment (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983; Rupp, McCance, Spencer, & Sonntag, 2008). In *perspective-taking*, she puts herself in the indecisive customers' shoes to modify her emotional state. She may think that it may take some time to decide for a meticulous person. In *positive reappraisal*, she makes positive interpretations about the situation (Grandey, 2000; Gross, 1998). In this case, the service employee can see the interaction with the indecisive customer as a challenge (e.g., a chance to improve her selling techniques). Finally, in *attentional deployment*, she shifts her attention to objects or thoughts that can positively influence her emotional state (Grandey, 2000; Gross, 1998). She may recall happy moments with her child, which helps her feel more positive. To surface act, she can engage in response-focused emotion regulation and masks her annoyance with a smile. (Grandey, 2000).

How Has Emotional Labor been Studied?

To measure emotional labor strategies and associated outcomes self-report scales have been most often used. The first generation of emotional labor research treated it as a stable construct. These studies were cross-sectional in nature and utilized trait-level measures (for meta-analysis, Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). In these studies deep acting measures capture employees' general efforts to modify their true feelings,

while surface acting measures capture the degree to which employees hide and fake emotional expressions (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003). For example, deep acting is measured by items like *"I try to actually experience the emotions that I must show"* and *"I really try to feel the emotions I have to show as part of my job"* (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003). Surface acting is measured by items like *"I pretend to have emotions that I don't really have"* and *"I hide my true feelings about a situation"* (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003). This static approach has revealed that the chronic use of emotional labor strategies is related to emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, and emotional performance (Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011).

The second generation of emotional labor studies adopted a more dynamic approach recognizing that the use of emotional labor strategies is variable within individuals over time and that this within-individual variation might have implications for emotional labor outcomes (e.g., Beal, Trougakos, Weiss, & Green, 2006; Judge, Woolf, & Hurst, 2009; Scott & Barnes, 2011). In contrast to cross-sectional studies, within-person studies (daily-diary and experience-sampling studies) reveal how a person varies from his/her own average use of emotional labor strategies across time and how this variation relates to key outcomes variables such as resource depletion, self-authenticity, and rewarding interactions with customers (Huppertz et al., 2020; Zhan et al., 2016). To measure within-person variation in emotional labor strategies, these second generation studies adapted the trait-level measures (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003) to a daily context by modifying the wording of items. They also shortened the list of items to decrease participants' burden. This dynamic within-person focus on emotional labor is becoming more dominant in the literature. Researchers have argued that within-person investigations can more closely capture the true nature of emotional labor as it is inherently a dynamic process (Beal & Trougakos, 2013; Beal et al., 2006). Indeed, emotions and emotion regulation change over time, which makes it critical to study the dynamic components of emotional labor.

What are the Consequences of Emotional Labor?

The main focus of emotional labor research has been on the consequences of emotional labor strategies for employees' well-being and performance. By drawing on well-established theories (i.e., conservation of resources and emotions as social information model), researchers have made a distinction between proximal and more

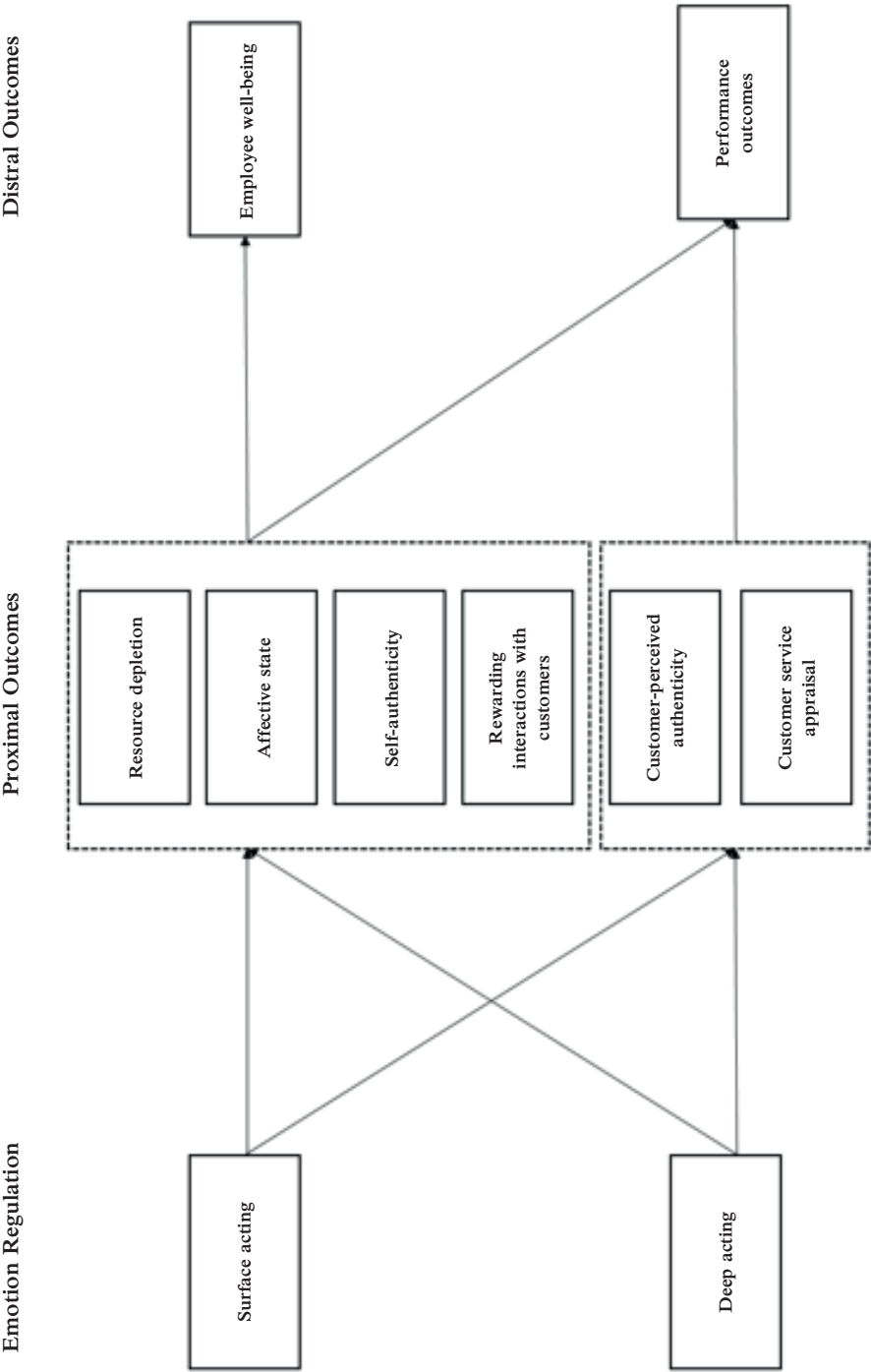


Figure 1. A model of emotional labor strategies, proximal outcomes, and distal outcomes based on Grandey (2000), Holman et al. (2008), Hulsheger & Schewe (2011), and Wang et al. (2017)

distal outcomes of emotional labor (Holman et al., 2008; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Wang et al., 2017). More specifically, the following proximal outcomes have been identified: resource depletion, positive/negative affect, self-authenticity, customer-perceived authenticity, rewarding interaction with customers, and customer service appraisal (Holman et al., 2008; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Wang et al., 2017). These key outcomes have been found to connect deep and surface acting to more distal individual and organizational-related outcomes such as, emotional exhaustion/burnout, job satisfaction, performance, counterproductive work behaviors, customer incivility and customer satisfaction (Deng, Walter, Lam, & Zhao, 2017; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Zhan, Luo, Ding, Zhu, & Guo, 2021; Zhan et al., 2016).

Figure 1 illustrates how surface and deep acting relate to proximal and in turn to distal outcomes. In the next section, we elaborate on the links of surface and deep acting with these proximal outcomes by describing relevant theoretical and empirical research.

Resource Depletion

Resource depletion is both an acute and possible chronic result of emotional labor characterized by feelings of fatigue (Beal et al., 2013; Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Trougakos, Beal, Cheng, Hideg, & Zweig, 2015). According to the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 2002; 2011), surface acting and deep acting draw upon employees' resources as regulating emotions is effortful (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). If employees cannot replenish their consumed resources, they face detrimental consequences, such as burnout (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002).

Although emotional labor consumes resources, deep acting has the potential to generate new resources, such as positive or authentic emotional feeling states (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Côté, 2005; Grandey & Melloy, 2017; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). In contrast, surface acting fails to build up such resources (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Côté, 2005; Grandey & Melloy, 2017; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). Consequently, when engaging in deep acting, employees both consume and build resources, and can keep their resources in check. In contrast, when engaging in surface acting, employees only experience resource loss (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Grandey & Melloy, 2017).

Although the resource-draining nature of daily and habitual surface acting has been consistently demonstrated, empirical evidence is less robust when it comes down to the consequences of deep acting (Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011; Huppertz, Hülsheger, De Calheiros Velozo, & Schreurs, 2020). For example, some have suggested that resource gain outweighs resource loss in deep acting by showing a negative link between deep acting and depletion or exhaustion (e.g., Deng et al., 2017; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Oerlemans, & Koszucka, 2018). However, others have not found any link between deep acting and resource depletion (e.g., Huppertz et al. 2020; Sayre, Grandey, & Chi, 2020).

Affective State

Affective state refers to the emotions employees experience during and following emotional labor (Scott & Barnes, 2011). Employees' affective state is contingent on the emotional labor strategy they use (Scott & Barnes, 2011). This actual state is highly relevant to employees' job-related well-being and organizational effectiveness as positive emotions are positively associated with job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior (extra work behavior) while negative emotions relate to less job satisfaction and more counterproductive work behavior (for reviews, Judge, & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2008; Shockley, Ispas, Rossi, & Levine, 2012; Thoresen, Kaplan, Barsky, Warren, & De Chermont, 2003).

Surface acting does not help diminishing employees' negative feelings, and the unresolved negative feelings can exacerbate (Scott & Barnes, 2011). In contrast, deep acting can modify employees' emotional state and increase positive feelings (Scott & Barnes, 2011). While past studies consistently showed that surface acting is related to higher negative affect, they reported inconsistent findings on the link between deep acting and employees' affective state (Judge et al., 2009; Semmer, Messerli, & Tschan, 2016; Scott & Barnes, 2011). For example, in Judge and colleagues' study (2009), on days when employees reported a high level of deep acting, they reported feeling less positive, but in Scott and Barnes's (2011) study, daily deep acting was related to an increase in positive affect.

Self-authenticity

Authenticity is "the unobstructed operation of one's true or core self" (Kernis & Goldman, 2006, p. 294). At first glance, it may seem impossible to maintain self-

authenticity while engaging in emotional labor, but it has been argued that the effect of emotional labor on self-authenticity actually depends on the emotional labor strategy (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). Moreover, the resulting (in)authenticity of these strategies can affect employees' well-being and performance (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). Theory and empirical research suggest that self-authenticity is a crucial aspect of psychological health (Kernis & Goldman, 2006; Kifer, Heller, Perunovic, & Galinsky, 2013). Likewise, a higher sense of authenticity at work is related to improved performance (Van den Bosch & Taris, 2014).

From a theoretical perspective, one may expect that employees' sense of authenticity suffers as surface acting changes the emotional display but not the emotional experience (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). In contrast, deep acting should not come at the cost of experiencing inauthenticity, as employees change both their display and emotional state (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). Yet, empirical research revealed equivocal findings for deep acting whereas surface acting was consistently negatively related to self-authenticity (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Huppertz et al., 2020). For example, while Brotheridge and Lee (2002) observed that deep acting was positively related to employees' sense of authenticity, Huppertz et al. (2020) did not find any link between deep acting and self-authenticity.

Customer-perceived Authenticity

Authenticity can also be viewed and examined from a customer's perspective (Côté et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2017). In fact, customers' perception of employee authenticity is a key determinant of customer outcomes (Lechner & Mathmann, 2020; Paul, Hennig-Thurau, & Groth, 2015). It is positively related to perceived service quality, customer satisfaction, loyalty, and money spent by customers (Gong, Park, & Hyun, 2020; Grandey, Fisk, & Steiner, 2005; Groth, Hennig-Thurau, & Walsh, 2009; Paul et al., 2015; Seger-Guttmann & Medler-Liraz, 2016; Wang et al., 2017).

According to the emotions as social information model (Van Kleef, 2009) and its extension to emotional labor (Côté et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2017), emotional labor reveals informational cues (e.g., facial cues and tone of voice) about employees' true feelings and intentions (Côté et al., 2013; Pugh, 2001; Wang et al., 2017). Customers attend to these informational cues, particularly the authenticity of employees' displays, to predict employees' actual intentions (e.g., Is he a reliable sales-person?;

Côté et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2017). Authentic expressions signal that the employee is trustworthy, whereas inauthentic expressions signal that the employee looks friendly because of his jobs' demands and he might be manipulative (Wang et al., 2017).

Customers perceive employees' expressions as sincere to the extent that such expressions reflect employees' true feelings (Côté et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2017). Therefore, surface acting and deep acting should affect customers' perception of authenticity differently (Côté et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2017). Consistent with this assumption, empirical findings have shown that customers can read that expressions arising from surface acting are fake (e.g., inconsistent positive displays) leading them to question employees' sincerity (Groth et al., 2009). Likewise, customers can sense the genuine expressions stemming from deep acting where employees' expressions correspond to what they actually feel (Groth et al., 2009). The authentic expression of deep acting may also be perceived as an extra effort going beyond the job requirements (e.g., she is trying her best), which enhances the perception of employees' sincerity (Grandey et al., 2005).

Rewarding Interactions with Customers

Rewarding interactions with clients reflect the extent to which employees perceive having a satisfying relationship with their customers, which involves employees' feeling of appreciation by customers (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). Such interactions are promising opportunities for employees to gain new resources such as a positive mood and self-efficacy, which can counter the resource depletion effect of emotional labor (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Hobfoll, 1989; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Lilius, 2012). In line with this assumption, previous research showed that employees' rewarding interactions with customers were associated with decreased emotional exhaustion, the core burnout dimension (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Martínez-Iñigo, Totterdell, Alcover, & David, 2007).

From the social interaction perspective of emotional labor (Côté, 2005), employees' rewarding interaction with customers depends on the adopted emotional labor strategy. Surface acting interferes with the development of a positive connection with customers, as they would perceive inauthentic expressions as unreliable or manipulative (Côté, 2005; Zhan et al., 2016). In contrast, deep acting can facilitate a

satisfying interaction, as customers would reciprocate employees' authentic positive expressions with similar positive feelings (Côté, 2005; Zhan et al., 2016).

This assumption has received empirical support for surface acting (Martínez-Iñigo et al., 2007). However, interestingly, empirical findings have remained mixed for the impact of deep acting on rewarding interaction with customers. For example, Martínez-Iñigo et al., (2007) showed that deep acting enhances employees rewarding interaction with their clients. Similarly, Zhan et al., (2016) found that deep acting is positively linked to positive customer treatment at both the within and the between-person level. Yet, according to Huppertz et al.'s (2020) findings, deep acting was not related to rewarding interactions at the within-person level.

Customer Service Appraisal

Service quality appraisal refers to customers' appraisal of the responsiveness and efficiency of the provided service (Grandey, 2003; Barger & Grandey, 2006; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985). Positive appraisals enhance customers' satisfaction and loyalty (Gong et al., 2020; Grandey, 2003).

Drawing on the emotions as social information perspective (Côté et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2017), one can argue that surface acting and deep acting may produce different service appraisals. Two specific mechanisms may play a role in customers' appraisals: affective reactions (i.e., catching employees' expressed emotions) and cognitive appraisals (i.e., interpreting the meaning of employees' expressions; Côté et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2017). Catching the inauthentic expressions of surface acting may trigger disappointment or anger Côté et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2017). Consequently, customers may start to feel negative, resulting in unfavorable service evaluations (Côté et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2017). Likewise, inauthentic displays may lead customers to infer that the employee is not enthusiastic or devoted to offering a quality service (Côté et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2017). In contrast, detecting the authentic expressions of deep acting may elicit positive emotions and further positive evaluations of customers (Côté et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2017). Similarly, the authenticity of employees' displays may be perceived that the employee tries to provide a high quality service by truly caring about customers' needs (Côté et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2017). Supporting these theoretical ideas, studies found that deep acting is positively associated with customer tips while surface acting increased tips

only for extravert employees (Chi, Grandey, Diamond, Kimmel, 2011; Hülshager et al., 2015).

Roadmap: Where We Need to Go from Here?

Our review so far showed that there are several theoretical reasons to categorize emotional labor strategies in two categories: deep acting and surface acting (Grandey, 2000). Deep acting has been theorized to be a more promising strategy than surface acting in terms of improving individual and organizational outcomes. Yet, despite the significant insights gained, our understanding of emotional labor is still limited. First, empirical investigations did not consistently show that deep acting is adaptive for well-being and performance. In fact, while empirically findings were largely consistent for surface acting, the findings on the relationships of deep acting with key proximal outcomes reviewed above were largely inconsistent. Second, there is almost no causal evidence on the consequences of deep acting. A large number of cross-sectional and experience-sampling studies have been conducted but these studies do not allow for a strong test of the possible causal impact of deep acting. Finally, the current focus on deep and surface acting may be too narrow. Employees can resort to a wide range of strategies to engage in emotional labor and the deep-surface acting dichotomy does not fully reflect the emotional labor domain.

In the following sections we elaborate on these key limitations of research on emotional labor that we believe should be tackled to deepen our understanding in this domain.

Resolving Inconsistent Findings: Towards a Fine-grained Understanding of

Deep acting

Deep acting is an umbrella term covering various antecedent-focused emotion regulation strategies: perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, and attentional deployment (Grandey, 2000, Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). This single-construct approach is also reflected in the measurement of deep acting. Extant empirical research has mostly relied on scales with broadly-worded items, such as *"I make an effort to actually feel the emotions that I need to display to others"* (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003) without tapping into specific regulation strategies.

This is an important oversight, considering that conceptually distinct strategies used for deep acting may have different consequences for emotional labor outcomes (Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011). The scarcity of research on the relationship between specific deep acting strategies and the reviewed proximal outcomes combined with the importance of these outcomes predicting well-being and performance raises critical questions. How do specific deep acting strategies (i.e., perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, and attentional deployment) relate to the key proximal outcomes? Do they display a different pattern of relationships with these outcomes? Answering these questions is crucial for getting a better understanding of the consequences of deep acting and it may shed light on the processes underlying the mixed evidence on deep acting outcomes observed in previous research.

Experimental Studies on Deep Acting

Although the broader emotion regulation literature outside the organization sciences is filled with experimental studies (for meta-analysis, Webb, Miles, & Sheeran, 2012), the emotional labor literature has been slow to draw on experimental designs. There are only a few lab-based experimental studies on emotional labor (e.g., Buckner & Mahoney, 2012; Goldberg & Grandey, 2007), and none of these studies have manipulated emotional labor strategies. Instead, these studies examined emotional labor as a result (dependent variable) of other variables (e.g., display rules), and therefore do not speak to the possible causal impact of deep acting on employee outcomes.

Until now, we could only infer information about the possible causal impact of deep acting from longitudinal studies using cross-lagged analyses (e.g., Hülsheger, Lang, & Maier, 2010; Philipp & Schüpbach, 2010). Yet, these analyses only allow establishing granger causality. Moreover, longitudinal studies did not provide consistent evidence for the (granger) causal relationship between deep acting and employees' well-being. In a longitudinal study conducted by Philipp and Schüpbach, (2010) deep acting was predictive of a well-being indicator (emotional exhaustion), meaning that employees using deep acting experienced less emotional exhaustion at the next assessment. However, Hülsheger and colleagues (2010) did not observe a significant lagged effect of deep acting on another well-being indicator (strain). Therefore, there is a clear need for an experimental design to ascertain the causal effects of specific deep acting strategies on employee outcomes. Such design would allow researchers to

study emotional labor as it occurs and without any confounds of cross-sectional design (e.g. common-method bias) and self-report measures (e.g., does it measure motivation or emotion regulation?).

Given its advantages, the lack of experimental research in the field of emotional labor is surprising. A key reason for this might be the challenge of developing appropriate manipulations for perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, and attentional deployment in a highly interactive context. Indeed, while these strategies can be easily manipulated in non-interactive contexts (for a meta-analysis, Webb et al., 2012), emotional labor context may cause additional cognitive and emotional load. In non-interactive experimental paradigms, participants typically watch emotionally arousing videos and subsequently regulate their emotions in an instructed manner (Webb et al., 2012). In such settings, it is not difficult to devote one's resources to implement the instructed emotion regulation strategy. Yet, in emotional labor contexts, participants should assist customers and comply with display rules while implementing emotion regulation instructions, and all of this at the same time. This is obviously cognitively much more complex. Moreover, emotional labor may be emotionally very challenging. Participants may perceive emotional stimuli as more personally relevant in emotional labor contexts (e.g., the customer is criticizing my performance) compared to non-interactive contexts (e.g., watching emotional pictures or videos).

The highly complex nature of the emotional labor context suggests that we cannot simply generalize experimental findings from the non-work context to the emotional labor context. Consistently, several studies found that the outcomes of emotion regulation strategies may vary depending on the context (Aldao, 2013; Shafir, Schwartz, Blechert, & Sheppes, 2015). For example, positive reappraisal has been found to be less effective in reducing negative emotions in highly intense situations (Shafir et al., 2015). Therefore, manipulating positive reappraisal or other deep acting strategies in a customer service setting may not only be a challenge in itself but may also result in different effects compared to lab research conducted in the field of non-work related emotion regulation.

A Comprehensive Taxonomy of Emotional Labors Strategies

As evidenced by numerous studies, the surface-deep acting dichotomy has produced valuable insights. Yet, the literature has remained largely silent about other possible strategies to engage in emotional labor, which might also be prevalent and impact key employee outcomes. In fact, first evidence is available that there are other emotional labor strategies that employees can use. Recently, researchers started to pay more attention to all strategies of the process model of emotion regulation (Gross, 1998) in the context of emotional labor (Chang & Taxer, 2020; Taxer & Gross, 2018; Diefendorff et al., 2008). Extending Grandey's (2000) perspective, these studies showed that situation modification/selection strategies (altering the emotional aspects of the situation) of Gross's (1998) model should also be considered as emotional labor strategies. It has been argued that service sector employees have less control over their client interactions (Grandey, 2000), but there is initial empirical evidence that they do use situation selection/modification strategies to engage in emotional labor (Diefendorff et al., 2008). For example, a service employee may pass a difficult customer to a more experienced colleague.

Moreover, recent emotion regulation studies outside the emotional labor domain have demonstrated that emotion regulation is not necessarily an intrapersonal process. Instead, it can also be interpersonal (Dixon-Gordon, Bernecker, & Christensen, 2015; Swerdlow, & Johnson, 2020; Williams, Morelli, Ong, & Zaki, 2018; Zaki & Williams, 2013). This is called intrinsic interpersonal emotion regulation and is defined as "slice of interpersonal interactions deliberately devoted to influencing one's own emotions." (Dixon-Gordon et al., 2015, p. 37; Zaki & Williams, 2013). Applying this intrinsic interpersonal emotion regulation to emotional labor, employees may regulate their emotions through regulating their customers' emotions. For example, a customer service employee can help her customer see the situation differently or more positively (Swerdlow, & Johnson, 2020). As the customer feels better, she also regulates her own feelings. Yet, such forms of interpersonal emotion regulation has hardly received any attention in the emotional labor literature.

Notably, although these studies suggest alternative emotional labor strategies, they may not reveal the full picture. A top-down theory-driven approach is valuable but might also constrain our understanding of emotional labor strategies because the suggested additional strategies are formulated *a priori* based on prior theoretical

work (Gross, 1998; Zaki & Williams, 2013). Employees may manage their emotions in even more ways than those described in prior theoretical frameworks. We argue that a bottom-up investigation should therefore complement the present theoretical understanding of emotional labor to capture the full array of strategies. A bottom-up approach entails first documenting a wide range of emotional labor strategies via interviews and subsequently categorizing these strategies based on their similarities. This procedure is consistent with calls to use new approaches to capture the full array of emotional labor strategies (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Grandey & Melloy, 2017) and may shed new light on the emotional labor domain.

Conclusion

During the past decades, significant progress has been made in understanding the nature and consequences of emotional labor. Yet, we identified three key gaps in prior research: (a) inconsistent findings on the consequences of deep acting, (b) a lack of experimental studies to test the possible causal impact of emotional labor strategies, and (c) a lack of a comprehensive bottom-up taxonomy of emotional labor strategies. We believe that addressing these gaps will not only improve our scientific understanding of emotional labor but also offer key insights to address the individual, organizational and societal challenges of emotional labor.

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More than one strategy: A closer examination of the relationship between deep acting and key employee outcomes

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Abstract

The relationship between emotional labor strategies (i.e., deep acting and surface acting) and employee outcomes has been often studied. Yet, although the impact of surface acting on employee well-being is clear, findings regarding deep acting have been inconsistent. In the present study, we propose that this may be explained by the multidimensional nature of deep acting, which subsumes different specific emotion regulation strategies. With a 5-day diary study, we investigated the links between subtypes of deep acting (i.e., cognitive change and attentional deployment) and key employee outcomes (i.e., mental fatigue, self-authenticity, and rewarding interactions) in a sample of 244 employees. Multilevel analyses confirmed that different emotion regulation strategies underlying deep acting were differentially related to employee outcomes, which may explain the mixed results of previous research examining deep acting as a uniform construct. Theoretical and practical implications of considering specific emotion regulation strategies underlying deep acting are discussed.

Keywords: attentional deployment, cognitive change, surface acting, mental fatigue, self-authenticity, rewarding relationships

The service sector takes center stage in the present economic landscape. For example, in the United States, Japan, and Europe, the number of employees working in this sector mounts to 70% or higher (The World Bank, 2016). This implies that many employees have to interact regularly with clients or customers. During these interactions, employees are expected to conform to organizational display rules. Typically, these rules require them to show positive or neutral expressions, even during negative encounters. Consequently, emotional labor, defined as emotion regulation to fit organizationally desired displays, is currently a key component of many jobs (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983).

A distinction has been made between two ways of engaging in emotional labor: deep acting and surface acting (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983). Deep acting refers to the adjustment of one's internal emotional state to create emotional expressions that are aligned with display rules (e.g., transforming a negative feeling into a positive one to behave friendly toward a rude customer). Surface acting refers to the alignment of one's emotional expression with display rules without altering one's emotional experience (e.g., faking a friendly face when interacting with a rude customer).

Deep acting and surface acting have been theorized to have different consequences for employee outcomes. In particular, although surface acting would be generally a maladaptive strategy (e.g., decreasing job satisfaction or well-being), the opposite would hold true for deep acting (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013). Although empirical studies generally supported the negative relationship between surface acting and well-being-related outcomes, findings regarding the role of deep acting have been mixed (Bono & Vey, 2005; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013).

One potential reason for these mixed findings is that the multi-dimensional nature of deep acting is typically ignored (cf. Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). In particular, to perform deep acting, employees may rely on at least two fundamentally different emotion regulation strategies: cognitive change and attentional deployment (Grandey, 2000). Moreover, these regulation strategies may differentially impact employee outcomes (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Mikolajczak, Tran, Brotheridge, & Gross, 2009). Yet, deep acting is typically assessed as a unitary construct that captures employees' attempts or efforts to align felt and required emotions (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003; Grandey &

Gabriel, 2015; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). This approach has two disadvantages: First, the actual emotion regulation is confounded with the underlying motivation of modifying emotions to follow display rules (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). That is, the current deep acting measures may be more likely to assess the level of motivation of employees to adjust their emotions rather than their actual engagement or success in deep acting. Second, the actual cognitive strategies used by employees to change felt emotions are not captured (Mikolajczak et al., 2009). We will therefore focus on the two specific cognitive emotion regulation strategies that have been argued to underlie deep acting efforts, namely, cognitive change and attentional deployment (Grandey, 2000; Groth, Hennig-Thurau, & Walsh, 2009).

The overall aim of the present study is to examine the relationship between deep acting strategies (i.e., cognitive change and attentional deployment) and three employee outcomes: mental fatigue, self-authenticity, and rewarding interactions. Considering that emotions and the use of emotional labor strategies fluctuate within individuals over time (cf. Beal & Trougakos, 2013; Hülshager, Lang, Schewe, & Zijlstra, 2015; Judge, Woolf, & Hurst, 2009; Scott & Barnes, 2011), our predominant focus is on relationships at the within-person level of analysis. We focus on mental fatigue, self-authenticity, and rewarding interactions as outcomes because they constitute the key proximal outcomes of emotional labor strategies (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Côté, 2005; Holman, Martinez-iñigo, & Totterdell, 2008; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011) and are determinants of important downstream well-being outcomes such as job satisfaction or emotional exhaustion (Holman et al., 2008; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). By examining the possible differential impact of subtypes of deep acting (i.e., attentional deployment and cognitive change) on the three examined employee outcomes, the present study will advance the current literature because it may explain why previous research on deep acting–outcome relationships has been inconsistent. Furthermore, knowledge about the functioning of specific cognitive emotion regulation strategies in relation to well-being-related outcomes is instrumental in designing work-related emotion regulation interventions. In the remainder, we will first elaborate on the multidimensional nature of deep acting and subsequently present the hypotheses of the present study.

Deep Acting: Cognitive Change and Attentional Deployment

There are many parallels between theories on emotional labor (Grandey, 2000) and the process model (Gross, 1998), of which the latter is the dominant theory in the field of emotion regulation. The process model makes a distinction between antecedent-focused and response-focused strategies. Deep acting maps onto antecedent-focused emotion regulation, which aims at preventing or changing emotions before they are fully developed. Surface acting maps onto response-focused emotion regulation, which refers to suppressing the experience or expression of emotions.

The category of antecedent-focused strategies is further distinguished in subcategories, and Grandey (2000) pointed out that two of these subtypes together constitute the construct of deep acting, namely, cognitive change and attentional deployment. Cognitive change refers to altering one's way of thinking about the situation so that the desired emotion emerges (Grandey, 2000; Gross, 2014). Cognitive change, in turn, can be further subdivided into two specific strategies, namely, perspective-taking (i.e., taking the customer's perspective regarding the situation) and positive reappraisal (i.e., reinterpreting the situation; Diefendorff, Stanley, & Gabriel, 2015; Grandey, 2000, 2003; Gross, 2001; Rupp, Mc-Cance, Spencer, & Sonntag, 2008). For example, a hotel clerk may adopt the perspective of a rude customer (Grandey, 2003) or she may see the encounter as a challenge instead of a stressor (Grandey, 2000) to change her emotional experience, which, in turn, prevents her from expressing a negative emotion. Both perspective-taking and positive reappraisal are frequently used to regulate emotions (Totterdell & Holman, 2003; Totterdell & Parkinson, 1999). For example, 911 call-takers reported often trying to see the situation from a caller's point of view (Tracy & Tracy, 1998), and bill collectors reappraised unpleasant interactions with debtors by thinking that these arguments are not personal (Sutton, 1991).

Attentional deployment refers to shifting one's focus away from the situation or from the emotional parts of it to modify the emotional state (Grandey, 2000; Mikolajczak et al., 2009). For example, a hotel clerk may recall a happy memory during an interaction with a negative customer to modulate his negative feelings, preventing him from expressing a negative emotion. Similar to cognitive change, attentional deployment is often adopted and has even been found to be one of the most frequently recruited

regulation strategies (Brans, Koval, Verduyn, Lim, & Kuppens, 2013; Diefendorff, Richard, & Yang, 2008; Totterdell & Parkinson, 1999). For example, Scott and Myers (2005) found that firefighters often resort to attentional deployment to regulate their emotions.

Cognitive change (subsuming perspective-taking and positive reappraisal) and attentional deployment have been argued to be the underlying emotion regulation strategies of deep acting (Grandey, 2000; Groth et al., 2009; Hülshager et al., 2015; Mikolajczak et al., 2009). The deep acting construct as it is typically assessed in the emotional labor literature, however, captures the attempts to align required and felt emotions, but not the actual strategies involved in doing so (cf. Hülshager et al., 2015; Mikolajczak et al., 2009). Employees endorsing deep acting items (e.g., "I made an effort to actually feel the emotions that I need to display to others" [Brotheridge & Lee, 2003]) may thus engage in cognitive change strategies (subsuming perspective-taking and positive reappraisal), attentional deployment, or both. This is troublesome because cognitive change strategies and attentional deployment are fundamentally different (Gross, 1998). Although cognitive change requires one to actively attend to the emotion-eliciting situation, attentional deployment often involves diverting attention (Paul, Simon, Kniesche, Kathmann, & Endrass, 2013). This is also reflected at the neural level where cognitive change strategies and attentional deployment strategies have been found to have different neural correlates (McRae et al., 2010; Thiruchselvam, Blechert, Sheppes, Rydstrom, & Gross, 2011). In addition to these fundamental differences in the nature of these regulation strategies, attentional deployment and cognitive change strategies have been shown to be differentially related to a wide range of outcome variables outside the field of emotional labor research. For example, it has been shown that attentional deployment is more useful for temporary emotional relief (Paul et al., 2013), whereas cognitive change is more effective to handle with negative encounters in the long run (Kross & Ayduk, 2008). Moreover, in an organizational context, Bal, Chiaburu, and Diaz (2011) found that employees using high levels of cognitive change are successful at coping with the negative results of contract breaches and are more likely to engage in taking-charge behaviors. These patterns were not observed for attentional deployment. Given these differences in outcomes, these strategies may also differentially impact employee outcomes in the emotional labor context, where emotional situations are more complex. In the following sections, we will briefly discuss the impact of deep acting

subtypes (attentional deployment vs. cognitive change) on employee outcomes (mental fatigue, self-authenticity, and rewarding interactions). In particular, we will argue why attentional deployment may be differentially related to each of these outcomes as compared with cognitive change. Because previous research indicated that perspective-taking and positive reappraisal had similar emotional outcomes (Webb, Miles, & Sheeran, 2012), we expect similar relationships between both forms of cognitive change and the three proximal employee outcomes.

Mental Fatigue

Effects of emotional labor on employee well-being have frequently been explained using resource-based theories such as the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Hobfoll, 1989, 2002). According to the COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002), individuals seek to protect valued resources because they are functional in achieving their goals. These resources are manifold and can reside at the individual (e.g., mental and energetic resources) as well as the contextual level (e.g., social support; ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). By engaging in emotion regulation in situations demanding emotional labor, employees try to portray the organizationally desired emotion while protecting their personal resources (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). Within the context of emotion regulation and emotional labor, a particular threat to individuals' personal resources is that emotion regulation requires the expenditure of energetic and mental resources to manage one's emotions (Gross, 2001; Holman et al., 2008; Richards & Gross, 2000). This may lead to feelings of mental exhaustion and fatigue in the short term (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Oerlemans, & Koszucka, 2018) as well as to chronic forms of fatigue and exhaustion, such as burnout, in the long term (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011).

Despite the close theoretical connection between emotional labor and mental fatigue, it is unlikely that all emotional labor strategies similarly deplete one's mental resources. Indeed, although suppression (a form of emotion regulation similar to surface acting) and surface acting have been found to deplete individuals' mental resources (Martínez-Iñigo, Totterdell, Alcover, & Holman, 2007; Richards & Gross, 2000), deep acting has been argued to be less effortful and consume less mental and energetic resources, as felt and required emotions are aligned and do not need to be constantly monitored (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Grandey, 2003; Uy, Lin, & Ilies, 2017).

This prediction has, however, rarely been tested empirically. Furthermore, specific subtypes of deep acting (attentional deployment vs. cognitive change) may also differ regarding the extent to which they require mental energetic resources and are experienced as draining. Studies directly comparing the extent to which subtypes of deep acting strategies drain mental resources in an interpersonal context are lacking, but initial evidence is available suggesting that especially cognitive change strategies (i.e., perspective-taking and positive reappraisal) allow for successfully engaging in emotional labor while largely preserving one's resources. In particular, in experimental research, cognitive change strategies have been found to have rather low cognitive costs (John & Gross, 2004; Sheppes & Meiran, 2008). This suggests that cognitive change strategies may also come with rather low cognitive costs in real-life settings, but direct evidence is needed to back this hypothesis. On the otherhand, employees using attentional deployment strategies such as distraction need to alternate between paying attention to those distractors and to their communication partner. Task switching is known to be very taxing (Rogers & Monsell, 1995) even when engaging in two largely automated tasks such as talking on the phone while driving (Chabris & Simons, 2010). In emotional labor situations, it is unlikely that dealing with a difficult customer will ever become a fully automated task, adding to the cognitive load involved when resorting to distraction to conform to organizational display rules.

Based on this initial evidence and theoretical rationale, we expect that when an employee engages in attentional deployment or cognitive change more than usual on a particular day, he or she will experience greater mental fatigue. However, because attentional deployment may be more effortful than cognitive change, we expect attentional deployment to be more strongly related to mental fatigue.

Hypothesis 1: Cognitive change in terms of (a) perspective-taking and (b) positive reappraisal is positively related to mental fatigue.

Hypothesis 2: Attentional deployment is positively related to mental fatigue.

Hypothesis 3: Attentional deployment is more strongly related to mental fatigue than cognitive change strategies, that is, (a) perspective-taking and (b) positive reappraisal.

Self-Authenticity

Self-authenticity refers to remaining true to the self (Vannini & Franzese, 2008). In contrast to surface acting, deep acting has been assumed to contribute to feeling

authentic because emotional experience and expression are aligned (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Groth et al., 2009; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). Yet, subtypes of deep acting may be differentially related to self-authenticity, and these differential relationships may have been masked in previous studies using an omnibus measure of deep acting assessing the attempt to align required and felt emotions (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002).

Direct evidence on the relationship between cognitive change (i.e., perspective-taking and positive reappraisal) and attentional deployment with self-authenticity is largely lacking. However, it can be expected that attentional deployment will result in lower levels of self-authenticity compared with cognitive change strategies (i.e., perspective-taking and positive reappraisal). Attentional deployment and cognitive change strategies differ with respect to the nature of the emotion that they elicit and may therefore result in different levels of emotional congruence (i.e., congruence between felt and displayed emotions). Cognitive change strategies alter the meaning of the current encounter such that an initial negative event is experienced as neutral or even positive. As a result, the exposed emotional behavior is a direct readout of the employees' evaluation of the situation, allowing the employee to feel authentic. From the discordance–congruence perspective of emotional labor (Mesmer-Magnus, DeChurch, & Wax, 2012), this generates a congruent emotional state in which employees' authentically felt emotions are in harmony with their expressed emotions. Attentional deployment, however, creates an additional neutral or positive emotion, leaving the initial appraisal of the negative encounter unaddressed. Consequently, it creates a discordant emotional state in which employees' authentic emotions still partially disharmonize with their emotional expressions (Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012). Even though employees' expression may match display rules, they are likely to feel inauthentic when serving with a smile during an encounter appraised as negative. Based on this reasoning, we expect that when an employee engages in more than his or her typical level of attentional deployment on a particular day, he or she may report less self-authenticity. In contrast, when an employee engages in more than his or her typical level of cognitive change on a particular day, he or she may report greater self-authenticity.

Hypothesis 4: Cognitive change in terms of (a) perspective-taking and (b) positive reappraisal is positively related to self-authenticity.

Hypothesis 5: Attentional deployment is negatively related to self-authenticity.

Rewarding Interactions

As indicated earlier, the COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002) maintains that individuals seek to protect and (re)gain resources that can reside internally within the individual or externally within the (work) context. Hobfoll (1989) argued that social relations may facilitate the preservation of other valued resources and are therefore instrumental in (re)gaining resources. In the context of emotional labor, the experience of satisfying interactions with customers that are experienced as rewarding has therefore been identified as an important contextual resource. In fact, in addition to mental fatigue and self-authenticity, rewarding interactions are seen as a key proximal outcome of emotional labor strategies and an important mechanism explaining their differential impact on more distal downstream well-being outcomes (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Holman et al., 2008; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Martinez-Inigo et al., 2007). Rewarding interactions capture employees' experience of the extent to which interactions provide them with positive social feedback, turning interactions into a rewarding experience for the employee (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). Notably, previous research has suggested that deep and surface acting are differentially related to rewarding interactions (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Martinez-Inigo et al., 2007) because clients are able to differentiate between authentic and inauthentic emotional displays (Grandey, Fisk, Mattila, Jansen, & Sideman, 2005). The authentic nature of emotions expressed through deep acting (vs. faking through surface acting) may be noticed by customers, who then likely respond in a positive manner such that rewarding interactions are created (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Côté, 2005). However, we argue that the degree to which this is the case may depend on the type of deep acting employees engage in.

In non-organizational contexts, it has been shown that people adopting cognitive change strategies (i.e., perspective-taking and positive reappraisal) are perceived as caring and responsive by others (Cutuli, 2014). Moreover, people who frequently use cognitive change strategies tend to maintain closer relationships with others (English, John, Srivastava, & Gross, 2012; Gross & John, 2003; Gross, Richards, & John, 2006). In contrast, attentional deployment is less rooted in a motivation for friendly and proactive contact (Totterdell & Holman, 2003), and employees who engage in attentional deployment may find it more difficult to carefully listen to customers because they are cognitively engaged with an unrelated distractor. Moreover, it has

been shown that customers feel negative emotions when employees rely on non-problem-focused strategies to deal with their complaint, such as creating distraction by telling a joke (Little, Kluemper, Nelson, & Ward, 2013). Based on these findings, we expect that when an employee deals with attentional deployment more than he or she normally does on a particular day, he or she will experience less rewarding interactions. In contrast, when he or she engages in cognitive change strategies more than he or she normally does on a particular day, he or she may experience more rewarding interactions.

Hypothesis 6: Cognitive change in terms of (a) perspective-taking and (b) positive reappraisal is positively related to rewarding interactions.

Hypothesis 7: Attentional deployment is negatively related to rewarding interactions.

To test our hypotheses, we conducted a diary study repeatedly assessing subtypes of deepacting strategies and three employee outcomes (mental fatigue, self-authenticity, and rewarding interactions). Notably, considering the inherent dynamic nature of emotions (Kuppens & Verduyn, 2017) and emotion regulation (Kalokerinos, Résibois, Verduyn, & Kuppens, 2017), all hypotheses will be primarily examined at the within-person level of analysis. However, to make full use of the data, these hypotheses will also be tested at the between-person level in a supplementary analysis.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants were recruited from a variety of occupations and organizations in Germany and Canada using the snowballing technique (Gosserand & Diefendorff, 2005; Grandey, Fisk, & Steiner, 2005). In the first place, a total of 464 participants were approached in person, via e-mail, text messaging or social media (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn) and asked to forward the study invitation to other people they know. Participants were eligible for participation if they worked at least 20 hours per week and if their job required them to interact with customers. A total of 376 participants met the eligibility criteria and started participation in the study by filling in the general questionnaire and by providing an e-mail address on which they could receive the daily diary surveys. The study was approved by the local ethical review board (#ECP-166_05_04_2016).

The diary study was conducted online. Accordingly, the 376 participants received an e-mail at around 5 pm on 7 consecutive days (Monday to Sunday) with an invitation to fill in the respective daily diary survey. Many people working in service jobs do not have regular Monday to Friday working weeks, but also work on Saturdays and/or Sundays. Daily surveys were therefore sent out on 7 consecutive days and participants were instructed to complete the daily surveys only on work days. In order to control that surveys were not filled-in on non-work days, a filter question with a skip logic was included at the beginning of every daily survey.

We restricted our sample to participants who filled out at least three daily diary surveys. This resulted in a final sample of 244 participants (181 German). The majority of the participants were female (65%). On average, participants were 40 ($SD = 13.8$) years old and had been working for 10 years in their current jobs ($SD = 10.7$). Most participants held a bachelor's or a higher degree (64.5%). The sample included employees from two different occupational contexts. We therefore used Humphrey and colleagues' (Humphrey, Pollack, & Hawver, 2008) taxonomy (customer service jobs, caring professions, and social control jobs) and The International Standard Classification of Occupations (2008) to categorize which occupational context our participants belonged to using the job title they indicated in the general questionnaire. Accordingly, services and sales workers (e.g., sales assistant, hair-dresser, and waiter) and clerical support workers (e.g., bank teller and call center employee) were classified as customer service employees (Humphrey et al., 2008; The International Standard Classification of Occupations, 2008), whereas health-care sector employees (e.g., nurse and social worker; Kinman & Leggetter, 2016) and education sector employees (e.g., teacher and academic; Ang, 2005; Lawless, 2018) were classified as caring professions. More than half of the participants (54%) were employed in caring work (e.g., nurses, teacher, academic, and psychologist), which necessitates showing sympathy and understanding in stressful life events (Humphrey et al., 2008) or academic and personal problems (Ang, 2005; Lawless, 2018). The remaining 46% were employed in service work (e.g., waiter/waitress, hairdresser, sales assistant, and bank teller), which requires showing welcoming and friendly expressions (Humphrey et al., 2008). Nine participants indicated a vague job title and could therefore not be assigned to an occupational context. The rest of the participants could be assigned to either the service or the caring category. Notably, none of our participants held social control jobs (e.g., police officers, bouncers, or bill collectors), jobs that may

require the display of anger (Humphrey et al., 2008). A sample including diverse occupations is often used in emotional labor research (Humphrey et al., 2008) and has the advantage that increases the generalizability of our findings by capturing a wider range of occupations with emotional labor requirements.

Measures

The general questionnaire consisted of demographic variables (i.e., age, gender, tenure, and educational level). The daily surveys assessed day-level surface acting, cognitive change (i.e., perspective taking and positive reappraisal), attentional deployment, mental fatigue, self-authenticity, rewarding relationships, and customer-related social stressors. All questionnaires were provided in English to Canadian participants and in German to German participants. In terms of content, i.e. instructions, items and item sequence, the questionnaires were identical. If available, validated English and German versions of the scales were used. If scales were not available in either English or German, items were translated.

Cognitive change

Since no scale for the assessment of cognitive change in the emotional labor context was available in the literature, we constructed a 5-item scale consisting of perspective taking and positive reappraisal items for the purpose of the present study. We combined and adapted previously used items to assess perspective taking in customer interaction contexts (Grandey et al., 2004; Axtell, Parker, Holman, & Totterdell, 2007) and assessed perspective taking with 2 items: *"I tried to see things from the customer's point of view."*; *"I thought about how I would feel in the customer's situation"*. In order to construct items to assess positive reappraisal we built upon an established emotion regulation framework (Mikolajczak et al., 2009) arguing that positive reappraisal involves re-appraising situations by putting things into perspective, looking for the silver lining and infusing situations with positive meaning. Accordingly, we reviewed general emotion regulation scales (Nelis, Quoidbach, Hansenne, & Mikolajczak, 2011) and chose and adapted items for the emotional labor context. Three items were used to assess positive reappraisal: *"I tried to see the positive side of things. I told myself: However difficult the situation/ interaction is, it is an opportunity to learn and grow"*; *"I tried to reinterpret what people said or did so that I don't take their actions personally"*; *"I tried to put things into perspective. I told myself: Even if I feel bad right now, the feeling will eventually*

pass by". Items were answered on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). The item stem referred to the past workday.

Attentional deployment

We constructed a scale consisting of 3 items. A sample item is *"I thought about something enjoyable that was unrelated to the situation and made me feel happy"*; *"I deliberately thought about a happy memory that helped me feel the required emotion"*; *"I directed my attention away from difficult emotional aspects of the interaction in order to actually feel more positive"*. Items were assessed on a 5-point scale (1 = never; 5 = very often). The item stem referred to the past workday.

Because we used newly developed scales to assess cognitive change and attentional deployment, we sought to verify the factor structure of these two scales and their distinctiveness from surface acting. Furthermore, we sought to empirically test whether perspective-taking and positive reappraisal were best subsumed under an overall Cognitive Change factor or should be treated as two separate factors. Considering all emotional labor-related items, we therefore conducted a series of multilevel confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) using Mplus8, following procedures recommended in the literature (Heck, 2001; Heck & Thomas, 2015). Specifically, we tested a one-factor model in which all items (cognitive change, attentional deployment, and surface acting) loaded onto the same factor (confirmatory factor analysis [CFI] = .63; Tucker–Lewis index [TLI] = .57, standardized root mean square residual [SRMR] within-person .13, SRMR between-person .22), a two-factor model with cognitive change and attentional deployment loading on one and surface acting items on the other factor (CFI = .81; TLI = .77; SRMR within-person .06, SRMR between-person .12), a three-factor model (Cognitive Change, Attentional Deployment, and Surface Acting; CFI = .85; TLI = .82; SRMR within-person .06, SRMR between-person .13), and a four-factor model (Reappraisal, Perspective-taking, Attentional Deployment, and Surface Acting; CFI = .92, TLI = .90, SRMR within-person .04, SRMR between-person .10). As only the four-factor model provided an acceptable fit, we treated perspective-taking and positive reappraisal as separate constructs.

Mental fatigue

We used five items adapted from the State Self-Control Capacity Scale (Ciarocco, Twenge, Muraven, & Tice, 2007; adopted to German by Bertrams, Unger, &

Dickhäuser, 2011). A sample item is *"I feel mentally exhausted."* Items were answered on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Items referred to participants' momentary experiences at the time of filling in the survey. Items referred to participants' momentary experiences at the time of filling in the survey, thereby capturing individuals' mental fatigue after work resulting from the resources invested throughout the workday.

Self-authenticity

Self-authenticity was measured with two items adopted from English and John (2013), and Erickson and Ritter (2001). Items were *"I didn't feel I could be myself when interacting with others."* and *"I felt artificial in my interactions with others."* on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). These two items were reverse coded before conducting analyses. Items were answered with reference to the past workday.

Rewarding relationship

Rewarding relationship was assessed with three items adapted from Brotheridge and Lee (2002). A sample item is *"I 'gave' a lot but didn't 'get much' in return."* Items were answered on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Items were answered with reference to the past workday.

Control Variables

We controlled for customer-related social stressors, a potential confounder of the relationship between deep acting strategies and employee outcomes, because research has documented that employees are more likely to engage in emotional labor during stressful encounters (Grandey, Foo, Groth, & Goodwin, 2012; Rupp et al., 2008; Rupp & Spencer, 2006). Observed emotion regulation– outcome relationships may therefore reflect effects of not only the emotion regulation strategy itself but also the situation that drove employees to regulate their emotions (Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011). Furthermore, we controlled for surface acting, which has been found to be highly correlated with deep acting (Gabriel & Diefendorff, 2015).

Customer-related social stressor

Customer-related social stressor was assessed with 16 items adapted from the study by Dudenhöffer and Dormann (2013). A sample item is *"I had to deal with*

customers who argued with me." Items were answered on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). Items were answered with reference to the past workday. Customer-related social stressor items capture stressful demands that are frustrating, impede goal attainment, and can therefore be considered to be hindrance stressors using the challenge–hindrance–stressor framework (LePine, Podsakoff, & LePine, 2005).

Surface acting

Surface acting was measured with the six-item Surface Acting subscale of the Emotional Labor Scale developed by Brotheridge and Lee (2003; updated by Lee & Brotheridge, 2011 and adapted to German by Hülshager, Lang, & Maier, 2010). A sample item is *"I pretended to have emotions that I do not really have."* Items were answered on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). The item stem referred to the past workday.

Distinctiveness of predictor and outcome variables

To confirm the empirical distinctiveness of predictor and outcome variables, we ran a full multilevel CFA including all emotional labor (i.e., perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, attentional deployment, and surface acting) and outcome variables (i.e., mental fatigue, rewarding interactions, and self-authenticity), with items loading on their respective factors. The seven-factor model resulted in acceptable to good fit (CFI = .92, TLI = .90, SRMR within-person .04, SRMR between-person .09).

Measurement invariance

Because we collected data with a German and an English version of the questionnaire, we ran multigroup multilevel CFAs testing for measurement invariance for every measure used in our study. Following recommendations in the literature (Vandenberg & Lance, 2000), we tested a series of invariance models of increasing strictness per construct: configural, metric, scalar, and invariant uniqueness. Overall, analyses confirmed measurement invariance (scalar or invariant uniqueness) for all constructs with CFI values ranging from .91 (Customer-related Social Stressors and Surface Acting) to .98 (Perspective-taking, Attentional Deployment, and Mental Fatigue) and SRMR within-person values ranging from .01 (Perspective-taking) to .06 (Mental Fatigue, Surface Acting). One exception was self-authenticity with a CFI value of .83. However, the SRMR value at the within-person level was good (.03). A full table of results can be obtained from the authors.

Analytical Procedure

Considering the multilevel structure of our data with daily measures nested within individuals, we conducted multilevel path analyses using a multilevel structural equation modeling framework in Mplus8 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2017). Using this approach, variance is decomposed into within- and between- person variance corresponding to an implicit latent person-mean centering of the predictor variables at the within-person level (Muthén & Muthén, 2017). Due to the dynamic nature of emotions and emotion regulation, our main focus was on studying relationships between emotion regulation strategies and outcome variables at the within-person level of analysis. However, as diary studies yield data at the within- and between-person level of analysis, we chose to report relationships at the between-person level as a supplementary analysis. As data can be analyzed simultaneously at the within- and between-person level using multilevel structural equation modeling, findings at both levels of analysis are reported in Table 3. At the between-person level, predictor variables were grand mean centered. Estimates at Level 1 thus inform about relationships at the within-person level, that is, how a person's daily deviations from their own mean level of, for example, attentional deployment relate to outcome variables. Estimates at Level 2 inform about relationships at the between-person level, that is, how a person's average level of, for example, attentional deployment across days relates to average levels of outcome variables.

The final analysis relied on 999 observations stemming from 244 individuals. The intraclass correlations ranged between .52 and .67 (Table 1), indicating that within-person variation ranged from 33% (surface acting) to 48% (rewarding interactions), demonstrating that all variables varied substantially at the within-person level and suggesting that studying relationships at the within-person level is suitable. In fact, within-person variation of deep acting regulation strategies and surface acting was highly similar to previous findings (Schreurs, Guenter, Hülshager, & van Emmerik, 2014; Uy et al., 2017) and higher than within-person variation found for surface and deep acting in other diary studies on emotional labor (Scott & Barnes, 2011).

Results

First, we calculated basic descriptive statistics for the assessed variables. Specifically, means, standard deviations, intraclass correlations, and internal consistencies of

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, Cronbach Alpha Coefficients and ICCs among Study Variables

		Cronb. Alpha	M	SD	ICC	Occupational context	
						Caring (N=127)	Service (N=108)
						M (SD)	M (SD)
1	Perspective taking	.77	3.53	.81	.63	3.57 (.82)	3.49 (.78)
2	Positive reappraisal	.76	2.60	.87	.65	2.59 (.83)	2.63 (.92)
3	Attentional deployment	.80	1.88	.75	.66	1.80 (.67)	1.98 (.84)
4	Surface acting	.92	2.10	.77	.67	2.02 (.77)	2.19 (.77)
5	Mental fatigue	.85	2.65	.77	.62	2.65 (.79)	2.65 (.75)
6	Self-authenticity	.60	3.97	.74	.58	4.07 ^a (.71)	3.84 ^a (.76)
7	Rewarding relationships	.66	3.53	.66	.52	3.55 (.66)	3.49 (.66)
8	CRSS	.92	1.96	.58	.61	2.00 (.57)	1.90 (.60)

Note. CRSS = Customer-related social stressors. Cronbachs Alpha was calculated individually for every day and then averaged across the 7 days. (N = 244). ^a Significant difference between the two occupational groups.

Table 2. Correlations among Study Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Perspective-taking	-	.15***	.11***	-.03	.03	-.02	.10*	.10*
2. Positive reappraisal	.51***	-	.35***	.21***	.23***	-.09*	-.10*	.27***
3. Attentional deployment	.22**	.67***	-	.21***	.22***	-.11*	-.11*	.22***
4. Surface acting	.08	.41***	.53***	-	.39***	-.40***	-.30***	.46***
5. Mental fatigue	.01	.32***	.36***	.60***	-	-.31***	-.33***	.35***
6. Self-authenticity	.01	-.37***	-.57***	-.77***	-.59***	-	.29***	-.29***
7. Rewarding interactions	.20**	-.23**	-.31***	-.46***	-.58***	.63***	-	-.25***
8. CRSS	.22**	.49***	.50***	.60***	.47***	-.54***	-.50***	-

Note. CRSS = Customer-related social stressors. Correlations below the diagonal represent correlations at the between-person level ($N = 244$); day-level measures have been aggregated to the person level. Correlations above the diagonal represent correlations at the within-person level ($N = 244$). The average number of days per person was 4.14. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$ (two-tailed)

Table 3. Multilevel Model Predicting Mental fatigue, Self-authenticity and Rewarding Interactions from Perspective Taking, Positive Reappraisal, Attentional Deployment and Surface Acting

	Psychological effort		Self-authenticity		Rewarding interactions	
	Estimate (SE)		Estimate (SE)		Estimate (SE)	
Within-person level						
CRSS	.25*** (.06)		-.18*** (.05)		-.19* (.06)	
Perspective taking	-.00 (.04)		-.02 (.03)		.11*** (.04)	
Positive reappraisal	.09* (.04)		.03 (.04)		-.02 (.04)	
Attentional deployment	.10† (.05)		-.06 (.05)		-.05 (.05)	
Surface acting	.29*** (.06)		-.38*** (.05)		-.25*** (.05)	
Residual variance	.25*** (.02)		.28*** (.02)		.29*** (.02)	
R ²	.20*** (.03)		.18*** (.03)		.12** (.03)	
Between-person level						
Intercept	2.64*** (.04)		3.97*** (.03)		3.53*** (.04)	
CRSS	.23* (.11)		-.12 (.08)		-.44*** (.09)	
Perspective taking	-.11 (.07)		.10 (.06)		.31*** (.06)	
Positive reappraisal	.11 (.10)		.03 (.06)		-.13 † (.07)	
Attentional deployment	-.03 (.10)		-.24*** (.07)		.03 (.08)	
Surface acting	.48*** (.09)		-.57*** (.07)		-.17* (.07)	
Residual variance	.31*** (.03)		.16*** (.03)		.21*** (.03)	
R ²	.40*** (.06)		.65*** (.07)		.40*** (.06)	
Contextual effects						
Perspective taking	-.11 (.08)		.12 (.07)		.20* (.08)	
Positive reappraisal	.02 (.11)		-.01 (.08)		-.11 (.09)	
Attentional deployment	-.13 (.13)		-.18 (.10)		.08 (.10)	
Surface acting	.19 (.10)		-.19* (.09)		.09 (.09)	

Note. CRSS = Customer-related social stressors. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; † $p < .10$ (two-tailed)

Table 4. Relationship differences in the prediction of mental fatigue

	Within (level 1)	Between (level 2)
	Estimate (SE)	Estimate (SE)
Attentional deployment > perspective taking	.10 (.06)	.08 (.12)
Attentional deployment > positive reappraisal	.01 (.08)	-.14 (.18)

the variables included in the current study are reported in Table 1. The bivariate correlations among the study variables at the within-person level and the between-person level are presented in Table 2.

We then tested our specific hypotheses using multilevel path analysis, predicting mental fatigue, self-authenticity and rewarding interactions with perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, and attentional deployment, controlling for surface acting and customer-related social stressors. Results are presented in Table 3. We will first report findings on the relationships at the within-person level because this was our main focus.

Hypotheses 1a/b and 2 referred to relationships of perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, and attentional deployment with mental fatigue. Results revealed that positive reappraisal was positively related to mental fatigue (estimate = .09, $p < .05$), whereas perspective-taking was unrelated to mental fatigue. Attentional deployment was positively related to mental fatigue (estimate = .10), but this relationship was only marginally significant with a p value of .07. Hypotheses 1a/b and 2 were thus partly supported.

In Hypothesis 3a/b, we expected that attentional deployment is more strongly related to mental fatigue than the cognitive change strategies of perspective-taking and positive reappraisal. To test this hypothesis, we used the model constraints command in Mplus8 to test the statistical significance of the difference between (a) the perspective-taking–mental fatigue and the attentional deployment–mental fatigue relationships and (b) the difference between the positive reappraisal–mental fatigue and the attentional deployment–mental fatigue relationships. For the sake of readability, we present results of these comparisons in a separate table, that is, Table 4. Results showed that the relationship of attentional deployment with mental fatigue was not significantly stronger than relationships of perspective-taking and positive reappraisal with mental fatigue. Hypothesis 3 was therefore not supported.

Hypotheses 4 a/b and 5 referred to relationships of perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, and attentional deployment with self-authenticity. Both cognitive change strategies (i.e., positive reappraisal and perspective-taking) and attentional deployment were not associated with self-authenticity at the within-person level, failing to support Hypotheses 4a/b and 5.

Hypotheses 6 a/b and 7 referred to relationships of perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, and attentional deployment with rewarding interactions. Perspective-taking was indeed positively related to rewarding interactions (estimate = .11, $p < .001$). In contrast, positive reappraisal and attentional deployment were not significantly related to rewarding interactions. Hypothesis 6a was thus supported, whereas Hypotheses 6b and 7 were not supported.

Supplementary Analyses

To test the robustness of our findings and to make full use of the data, we ran a series of supplementary analyses. Below, we provide them.

Homology of relationships at the within- and between-person levels of analysis

Research in the field of emotional labor typically focuses on either the within-person (Judge et al., 2009) or the between-person level of analysis (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). However, emotion regulation varies meaningfully between as well as within individuals, and both levels of analysis provide meaningful and important information. At the between-person level, one captures a person's typical or chronic level of engagement in emotion regulation strategies and how it relates to well-being outcomes. At the within-person level, one captures day-to-day deviations from an individual's typical level of engagement in emotion regulation strategies and links this to day-to-day variations in well-being outcomes. As Judge, Hulin, and Dalal (2012) noted, relationships may differ in direction or magnitude across different levels of analysis. Researchers have therefore argued that rather than assuming homology, researchers should explicitly test whether relationships and processes at one level are consistent with analogous relationships and processes at the other level (Chen, Bliese, & Mathieu, 2005). Doing so advances our understanding of multilevel constructs and theories: Finding homology adds to the parsimony of theoretical models and speaks to their generalizability; finding differences in relationships points to the necessity to refine theories and consider boundary conditions (Chen et al., 2005).

Results of findings at the between-person level are reported in the lower part of Table 3. Overall, the pattern of relationships at the between-person level was largely similar to findings at the within-person level reported in the main Results section: Similar to findings at the within-person level, perspective-taking was positively related to rewarding interactions at the between-person level (estimate = .31, $p <$

.001), whereas positive reappraisal and attentional deployment were not significantly related to rewarding interactions. However, there were also some differences: In contrast to findings at the within-person level, attentional deployment was negatively related to self-authenticity (estimate = $-.24$, $p < .001$), and positive reappraisal was not significantly related to mental fatigue at the between-person level. Notably, these differences concerned predominantly the size and not the direction of effects.

One may therefore wonder whether apparent differences in the size of relationships between the between- and the within-person level are statistically significant or not. Therefore, to directly compare our findings at the between- and within-person level of analysis, we ran a series of homology tests. We explicitly tested this by introducing nine new parameters to our multilevel model, specifying the difference of each regulation strategy–outcome relationship between the two levels (Muthén & Muthén, 2017). Results are reported as contextual effects in Table 3. None of these differences was significant except for the relationship between perspective-taking and rewarding interactions. It was significantly stronger at the between-person level compared with the within-person level (estimate = $.20$, $p < .05$). Apart from this exception, results thus suggest homology of our hypothesized relationships across levels.

Analyses without controlling for customer-related social stressors

As outlined in the Method section, we controlled for customer-related social stressors in assessing the relationships between the emotion regulation strategies and outcome variables in our main analysis. As a supplementary analysis, we re-ran analyses without controlling for customer-related social stressors. The pattern of results and significance levels remained the same.

Customer-related social stressors as a moderator of the relationships between deep acting strategies and outcomes

Considering previous research showing that employees' appraisal of customer-related demands interacted with deep acting in predicting exhaustion (Huang, Chiaburu, Zhang, Li, & Grandey, 2015), one may wonder whether customer-related social stressors interacted with specific deep acting strategies in predicting outcome variables. Such an interaction would imply that the relationship between deep acting strategies and employee outcomes is contextualized because the relationship would be different for low- versus high-level stress situations. We examined this possibility

but found no evidence for an interaction of perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, or attentional deployment with customer-related social stressors in predicting outcome variables (Perspective-Taking \times Customer Stressors: for mental fatigue: estimate = .03, p = .66; for self-authenticity: estimate = -.05, p = .31; for rewarding interactions: estimate = -.02, p = .45; Positive Reappraisal \times Customer Stressors: for mental fatigue: estimate = -.01, p = .85; for self-authenticity: estimate = .02, p = .61; for rewarding interactions: estimate = -.00, p = .92; Attentional Deployment \times Customer Stressors: for mental fatigue estimate = .01, p = .83; for self-authenticity estimate = .01, p = .78; for rewarding interactions estimate = .02, p = .65).

Occupational context as a moderator of the relationships between deep acting strategies and outcomes

Another potential moderator of the hypothesized relationships could be occupational context (coded dichotomously as service = 1 vs. caring profession = 2) because occupations may vary in overall emotional labor requirements as well as in usage of emotional labor strategies (Bhave & Glomb, 2016). We therefore examined the effect of occupational context on the intercepts and random slopes of the within-person relationships between deep acting strategies and the three employee outcomes in Mplus8. Our moderation analysis revealed that occupational context was not a significant cross-level moderator of the relationships between deep acting strategies and outcomes: Perspective-Taking \times Occupational Context: for mental fatigue: estimate = .01, p = .83; for self-authenticity: estimate = -.00, p = .91; for rewarding interactions: estimate = .01, p = .85; Positive Reappraisal \times Occupational Context: for mental fatigue: estimate = -.09, p = .17; for self-authenticity: estimate = .10, p = .12; for rewarding interactions: estimate = -.00, p = .99; Attentional Deployment \times Occupational Context: for mental fatigue: estimate = .09, p = .25; for self-authenticity: estimate = -.08, p = .29; for rewarding interactions: estimate = .01, p = .88.

Occupational context differences in deep acting strategies and outcomes

Because previous research has shown differences in the usage of emotional labor strategies between occupational groups, we also examined whether there were significant occupational differences in study variables.

Means and standard deviations are depicted in Table 1. A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was used to test for occupational differences in perspective-

taking, positive reappraisal, attentional deployment, surface acting, mental fatigue, self-authenticity, rewarding interactions, and customer-related social stressor. The two occupational groups differed only in self-authenticity, $F(1, 233) = 5.91, p = .016$. Employees in the caring sector ($M = 4.07, SD = .71$) reported slightly higher self-authenticity than employees in the service sector ($M = 3.84, SD = .76$).

Discussion

The aim of the present study was to advance our understanding of the relationship between deep acting strategies and proximal employee outcomes (i.e., mental fatigue, self-authenticity, and rewarding interactions), focusing primarily at the within-person level of analysis. For this purpose, we used a granular approach decomposing deep acting into attentional deployment and two cognitive change strategies (i.e., perspective-taking and positive reappraisal). Our findings suggest value in examining deep acting as a multidimensional construct, with different deep acting strategies being differentially related to employee outcomes.

Our findings revealed that perspective-taking is an especially adaptive strategy when engaging in emotional labor. In particular, when employees adopted perspective-taking on a particular day more than they usually do, they reported greater rewarding interactions without suffering any cost in terms of mental fatigue or diminished self-authenticity. In contrast, neither positive reappraisal nor attentional deployment were positively associated with rewarding interactions, and both these alternative deep acting strategies were found to be mentally exhausting (even though the relationship for attentional deployment was only marginally significant).

The finding that using more perspective-taking than one habitually does is positively associated with rewarding interactions may be due to the connection between perspective-taking and proactivity in helping customers (Axtell et al., 2007; Totterdell & Holman, 2003). It has been shown that perspective-taking may result in helping behavior (Axtell et al., 2007). The customer may reciprocate the responsiveness of employees by developing a favorable interaction, as suggested by the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964).

The finding that perspective-taking, unlike attentional deployment and positive reappraisal, is not associated with mental fatigue may be due to perspective-taking being more frequently used. The more often a strategy is used, the more likely it is to become automatized and to require less mental resources. This explanation is consistent with the results of the present study showing that perspective-taking was the most frequently adopted strategy among the set of strategies examined.

Relatedly, our study provided further evidence for a resource-based perspective on emotional labor. Consistent with previous theorizing (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002), ineffective emotion regulation (positive reappraisal or attentional deployment) draws on and threatens employees' resources, whereas effective strategies (perspective-taking) are more likely to prevent resource loss or generate new resources (e.g., rewarding experience).

The observed differences in consequences of deep acting strategies underscore the importance of approaching deep acting as a multifaceted construct. For example, although previous research showed that daily deep acting measured as a unidimensional construct was unrelated to indicators of resource depletion such as exhaustion (Judge et al., 2009; Uy et al., 2017), our study expanded previous findings by demonstrating that some forms of deep acting (positive reappraisal and to a lesser extent attentional deployment) can be demanding on a daily basis. The current study also complements previous research on the relationship between deep acting and rewarding interactions. For instance, Brotheridge and Lee (2002) did not find a significant link between deep acting and rewarding interactions. However, the current study suggests that this might not be the case for all subtypes of deep acting because perspective-taking was found to be positively related to rewarding interactions in the present study.

Previous mixed findings about the consequences of deep acting may therefore be explained by the nonspecific nature of deep acting measures, assessing attempts and motivation to align required and felt emotions but not capturing the actual strategies individuals use to achieve that goal. Previous findings suggesting that positive reappraisal (Niven, Sprigg, & Armitage, 2013) and attentional deployment (Andela, Truchot, & Borteyrou, 2015) may not be adaptive, whereas perspective-taking may be adaptive (Rafaeli et al., 2012) in an emotional labor context back our argument and are in line with our findings.

Our supplementary between-level analysis further emphasizes the importance of approaching deep acting as a multifaceted construct. For instance, in contrast to previous research (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002) showing that deep acting is associated with increased self-authenticity, we found that employees who chronically tend to engage in the deep acting strategy of attentional deployment felt less sincere. In our supplementary analysis, we followed repeated calls to explicitly test for homology, that is, whether relationships between variables are the same across levels of analysis (Chen et al., 2005; Judge et al., 2012). To this end, we introduced contextual effects, formally testing whether the strength of relationships at the within-person level differed from the strength of the relationship at the between-person level (cf. Bliese, Maltarich, & Hendricks, 2018). Results suggested that with one exception, all relationships between deep acting strategies and outcomes were similar across levels, confirming homology. Thus, any differences that may appear from eyeballing and comparing within- and between-person results and significance levels (e.g., the positive reappraisal–mental fatigue relationship or the negative attentional deployment–self-authenticity relationship) are indeed not statistically significant and should not be interpreted to be an indicator of differences in relationships across levels.

A significant contextual effect regarding the perspective-taking–rewarding interactions relationship suggests that the relationship is significantly stronger at the between-person level. It thus appears that long-term, chronic engagement in perspective-taking especially benefits rewarding interactions.

Practical Implications

The findings of the present study are important for employee training and selection procedures. Unlike previous recommendations for emotional labor training programs (Deng, Walter, Lam, & Zhao, 2017; Scott & Barnes, 2011), we recommend perspective-taking as a good regulation strategy fostering the benefits of employees, customers, and organizations. Although previous emotional labor training programs have combined attentional deployment and cognitive change strategies (Hülshéger et al., 2015), the present findings suggest that it may be more beneficial to only focus on perspective-taking instead. Accordingly, programs may point employees to the benefits of perspective-taking (Axtell et al., 2007) and provide tools to be empathic and build a friendly relationship with customers. Moreover, as people differ in trait

levels of perspective-taking (Davis, 1983), it might also be advisable to select people with high perspective-taking skills for jobs with strong interpersonal emotional challenges.

Limitations and Future Directions

The present study advances our understanding of the consequences of emotional labor strategies. However, a number of limitations have to be mentioned. First, our data do not allow for strong causal conclusions. Future studies using an experimental approach are needed to follow up on the present findings. Second, self-authenticity and rewarding interactions scales did not yield high reliabilities. Future conceptual replications of this study can include different measures and other-rated (e.g., customer) or dyadic (e.g., both employee-rated and customer-rated) scales to measure rewarding interactions and authenticity. Third, an asset of the present study is that we controlled for customer-related stressors in our analysis, but other contextual features were not taken into account. Consistent with calls to include situational features in the study of emotion regulation (Aldao, Sheppes, & Gross, 2015; Bonanno & Burton, 2013), future studies are needed to identify possible situation characteristics that may moderate the present findings. For instance, perspective-taking might be more likely chosen in interactions with regular customers because employees may lack sufficient information to properly engage in perspective-taking during a first interaction with a customer. Fourth, experience-sampling studies involving multiple measurement occasions per day can be beneficial to differentiate long- and short-term consequences of emotional labor strategies and investigate lagged relationships. Fifth, we focused on four different ways of regulating emotions at the workplace. However, employees may have an even wider repertoire of strategies that they resort to during customer interactions (Diefendorff et al., 2008; Grandey, 2000). Future research examining other strategies than cognitive change and attentional deployment (e.g., situation modification) are needed to identify the possible differential impact of these strategies and their possible interplay. Sixth, a natural extension of the present study would be to measure more distal outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction and performance) of emotional labor and examine proximal outcomes (mental fatigue, rewarding interactions, and self-authenticity) as mediators. Relatedly, future research may also examine the relationships between subtypes of deep acting and performance-related or customer outcomes (e.g., service delivery). Seventh, although we controlled for customer-related social stressors that mainly

target hindrance stressors, future research may adopt a broader conceptualization of stressors and also consider challenge-stressors (Huang et al., 2015). Doing so may better reveal the importance of controlling for customer-related social stressors because in the present study, results were highly similar regardless of whether customer-related social stressors were controlled for. Finally, although the present findings warn us about the multifaceted nature of deep acting, there is still room to consider other possibilities about its mixed effect on employee outcomes. For instance, it has been argued that deep acting items might assess employees' effort (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003) or motivation (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015) to modify emotions. Indeed, Totterdell and Holman (2003) demonstrated that deep acting strategies used in a given event might be guided by employees' level of emotion regulation motivation (i.e., the motivation of employees to modify their emotions or to express required emotions) in the same event. We therefore encourage researchers to extend the present study by focusing on alternative explanations about what shapes deep acting outcomes.

Conclusion

Emotional labor is a key component of an increasing number of professions. The relationship between deep acting and employee outcomes is complex and depends on the specific deep acting strategy adopted. Perspective-taking was overall found to be the most optimal deep acting strategy, being positively related to rewarding interactions without draining employees' mental resources.

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Unpacking deep acting: An experiment on the intra-and interpersonal effects of three deep acting strategies

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Abstract

Employees engage in deep acting when they regulate their feelings to experience the emotions required by their job (Grandey, 2000). Deep acting encompasses three regulation strategies: perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, and attentional deployment. First evidence is available that these regulation strategies are differentially related to how employees feel and perform. However, experimental evidence on their causal effects is lacking. The aim of the present study is to test causal effects of perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, and attentional deployment on both intrapersonal (i.e., positive/negative affect, resource depletion, and self-authenticity) and interpersonal outcomes (customer-perceived authenticity and service appraisals). Participants ($n = 55$) took part in a travel agency simulation where they were confronted with a difficult customer and were instructed to engage in perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, or attentional deployment. A manipulation check revealed that participants in the attentional deployment condition engaged more often in attentional deployment distraction compared to participants in the other two conditions but perspective taking and positive reappraisal were not successfully manipulated. Post-hoc correlational analyses revealed that perspective-taking and positive reappraisal were linked to higher levels of positive affect and self-authenticity and lower levels of resource depletion. In contrast, attentional deployment was related to a lower level of positive affect (albeit marginally significant). Challenges in designing experimental studies on deep acting are discussed.

Keywords: attentional deployment, deep acting, positive reappraisal, perspective taking

In today's competitive service industry, job demands are not only physical or cognitive but also emotional in nature. These emotional demands typically involve the expression of appropriate emotions in service encounters. For example, call center employees are expected to talk in a friendly manner also when customers are rude, cashiers are expected to keep smiling towards customers even at the end of a long fatiguing day, and teachers should stay calm even when there is chaos in the classroom. To deal with these emotional challenges, employees must regulate their emotions. Such emotion regulation in organizational settings is known as emotional labor (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983).

During the past two decades, researchers have focused on two classes of emotional labor strategies: surface acting and deep acting. When employees engage in surface acting, their emotional expressions adhere to organizational display rules but their underlying feeling state remains unaltered. In contrast, deep acting involves efforts to both feel and express organizationally desired emotions (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983). When engaging in surface acting, employees typically suppress felt emotions or fake emotions they do not feel (Grandey, 2000; Gross, 1998). Surface acting has been robustly linked to undesirable outcomes for employees (e.g., lower well-being) and customers (e.g., lower customer satisfaction, for a review, Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). In contrast, when engaging in deep acting, employees typically resort to perspective-taking (i.e., taking the customer's perspective), positive reappraisal (i.e., re-evaluating the situation in a more positive manner), or attentional deployment (i.e., selectively directing attention on matters unrelated to the situation) to not only show but also feel the emotions that are expected from them (Grandey, 2000; Gross, 1998). Unlike surface acting, the consequences of deep acting are less clear (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). For example, some studies suggest a positive impact of deep acting on well-being (e.g., Scott & Barnes, 2011) and task performance (e.g., Mesmer-Magnus, DeChurch, Wax, 2012), while other studies suggest there is no significant relationship between deep acting and well-being (e.g., Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002) or task performance (e.g., Hülshager & Schewe, 2011).

This inconsistency in previous findings may result from how deep acting has been studied and measured (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Alabak, Hülshager, Zijlstra, & Verduyn, 2020). The frequently used deep acting scale (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003) assesses employees' efforts to change their inner feelings

without taking into account the specific strategies employees adopt for doing so (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Alabak et al., 2020). For example, items such as *"I try to actually experience the emotions that I must show"* (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003) are mute regarding the specific regulation strategy adopted (i.e., perspective taking, positive reappraisal, or attentional deployment) to change felt emotions (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). This is troublesome as first correlational evidence is available that specific deep acting strategies are differentially related to employee outcomes (Alabak et al., 2020; Andela, Truchot, & Borteyrou, 2015). Compared to positive reappraisal and perspective taking, attentional deployment was found to be more detrimental for employees' well-being. Specifically, while attentional deployment is related to higher levels of burnout, positive reappraisal is negatively related to burnout (Andela et al., 2015). Likewise, while attentional deployment is related to lower levels of self-authenticity, perspective-taking and positive reappraisal did not undermine employees' feeling of authenticity (Alabak et al., 2020).

However, similar to emotional labor research in general, prior research on the relationship between specific deep acting strategies and employee outcomes was correlational in nature (Alabak et al., 2020; Andela et al., 2015). This is troublesome as correlational studies do not allow making causal claims on the impact of deep acting strategies. For example, although theoretical arguments suggest that attentional deployment is effortful and thereby leads to resource depletion and exhaustion (Andela et al., 2015), there are alternative explanations for the observed positive correlation between attentional deployment and exhaustion. For instance, employees may resort to attentional deployment when feeling exhausted (reversed causality) or aversive situations may result in both increases in attentional deployment and feelings of exhaustion (third variable explanation; Sheppes, Scheibe, Suri, & Gross, 2011). To overcome the shortcomings of prior correlational research on emotional labor consequences and better understand the causal role of specific deep acting strategies on employee well-being, it is necessary to use an experimental approach.

The aim of the present study is to examine the causal impact of specific deep acting strategies on a set of key employee outcomes. Specifically, we will experimentally manipulate deep acting strategies (i.e., perspective taking, positive reappraisal, and attentional deployment) in a simulated customer service setting and investigate the

consequences of this manipulation on both intrapersonal (i.e., positive/negative affect, resource depletion, and self-authenticity) and interpersonal outcomes (i.e., perceived-authenticity and service quality appraisals). These outcomes have been chosen as they have been theoretically and empirically connected to deep acting (Cote, 2005; Holman, Martinez-iñigo, & Totterdell, 2008; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). Furthermore, these outcomes are proximal emotional labor outcomes that are, in turn, related to important downstream organizational outcomes. For example, depletion has been shown to increase turnover (Chau, Dahling, Levy, & Diefendorff, 2009), while perceived-authenticity has been shown to increase customer satisfaction (Grandey, Fisk, Mattila, Jansen, Sideman, 2005).

With this study, we seek to make several contributions to the emotional labor literature. First, we empirically test repeated speculations that deep acting is a multi-dimensional construct that subsumes distinct regulation strategies that have differential causal consequences for well-being and performance outcomes (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). This is a critical step in building a theoretical model on the nature of deep acting and associated outcomes. To date, only a few (unpublished) experimental studies have been conducted to understand the causal impact of emotional labor strategies but these studies are characterized by important limitations. Basoglu's (2015) manipulation was not successful as their manipulation check did not show a significant difference between the groups (deep acting and surface acting) on self-reported deep acting. McKibben (2008) found that deep acting caused more emotional exhaustion when dealing with a non-angry customer than dealing with an angry customer. However, no distinction was made between specific deep acting strategies obscuring the possible differential impact of attentional deployment, positive reappraisal and perspective taking on key employee outcomes.

Second, we contribute to the development of experimental manipulations to examine the causal impact of specific deep acting strategies. Prior experimental research on emotion regulation outside the emotional labor domain is typically conducted in context-poor lab environments where participants are exposed to general emotional stimuli (e.g., pictures or videos). In contrast, emotional labor requires personally relevant emotion-inducing stimuli presented in a socially complex context. Therefore, emotion regulation manipulations adopted in the fundamental emotion regulation literature cannot be simply transferred to the emotional labor domain.

In the present study, we aimed to develop an experimental protocol to manipulate deep acting strategies in an ecologically appropriate manner. Future experimental studies on emotional labor can make use of our experimental protocol (easing direct comparison of future findings across studies) or build on our protocol to extend and improve the methodological arsenal to examine the causal consequences of deep acting. Such experimental protocols might also inform the development of improved emotional labor training programs aimed at developing those deep acting strategies that are especially helpful for employees to fulfill their emotional labor goals.

In the next sections, we first outline and elaborate the different strategies underlying the deep acting construct. Then, we provide an overview of prior correlational research on the relationship between deep acting strategies and the employee outcomes examined in the present study. Finally, we articulate our hypotheses.

Different forms of Deep Acting: Perspective Taking, Positive Reappraisal and Attentional Deployment

Deep acting is an umbrella term encompassing more specific emotion regulation strategies used to align felt emotions with organizationally desired emotions. According to Grandey (2000), deep acting can be considered as antecedent-focused emotion regulation (Gross, 1998), in which an employee attempts to manage her appraisals (e.g., cognitive change) or attention (e.g., attentional deployment) before the emotion fully develops. Employees can target their appraisals by using two cognitive change strategies (Grandey, 2000; Alabak et al., 2020). Cognitive change via perspective-taking encourages employees to see the situation from the customer's point of view (Axtell, Parker, Holman, & Totterdell, 2007), which helps them feel the organizationally desired emotions. For example, by understanding the customer's perception of the situation, employees can re-evaluate the unpleasant situation more objectively (Rupp, McCance, Spencer, & Sonntag, 2008). Another cognitive change strategy is positive reappraisal (Gross, 1998; Grandey, 2000). It refers to attempts to see the more positive meanings of the situation, which in turn increases positive feelings (Gross, 1998; Gross, 2015). For example, a stressful encounter might be re-construed as a challenge (Grandey, 2000) or an opportunity for improvement (Keng, Smoski, & Robins, 2016). In contrast to cognitive change strategies, attentional deployment implies that employees try to turn their focus away from the situation to

more positive thoughts (Grandey, 2000; Gross, 1998). For example, employees may think of enjoyable moments with friends when dealing with a difficult customer to feel more positive (Mikolajczak, Tran, Brotheridge, & Gross, 2009).

Although cognitive change strategies and attentional deployment are conceptually and practically different, they are theoretically subsumed under the category of “deep acting” (Grandey, 2000). Treating deep acting as a single category may blur unique causal effects of cognitive change and attentional deployment strategies on the observed outcomes, resulting in inconclusive findings. In the following parts, we derive hypotheses regarding the possibly diverging effects of cognitive change (i.e., perspective-taking and positive reappraisal) and attentional deployment on intrapersonal (positive/negative affect, resource depletion, felt-authenticity) and interpersonal outcomes (perceived-authenticity, and service quality appraisals).

Prior correlational work on the consequences of deep acting strategies

Several cross-sectional and daily-diary studies have examined the relationship between deep acting strategies and key employee outcomes. We will discuss these results by outcome in the next paragraphs.

Deep Acting Strategies and Affect

Deep acting is used to decrease negative emotions or maintain positive emotions when dealing with difficult customers (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Scott & Barnes, 2011). Surprisingly, however, only a few studies (e.g., Judge, Woolf, & Hurst, 2009; Scott & Barnes, 2011) have empirically examined affective states experienced by employees after engaging in deep acting and these studies have yielded contradictory results. Judge et al. (2009) found that deep acting was associated with *decreased positive affect* whereas Scott and Barnes (2011) found that deep acting was related to *increased positive affect*.

These conflicting findings may be due to not differentiating between specific deep acting strategies. Research on possible differential effects of attentional deployment, positive reappraisal and perspective taking on affect are largely lacking but research conducted in the field of fundamental emotion regulation provides first insights. Perspective taking and positive reappraisal have been shown be more effective than attentional deployment in reducing negative affect and increasing positive affect

as these cognitive change strategies prompt employees to reappraise customer interactions as more neutral or positive. These reappraisals may provide a stable solution when dealing with a negative event. In contrast, attentional deployment only provides a temporary solution (Kross & Ayduk, 2008; Troy, Saquib, Thal, & Ciuk, 2019). This is consistent with neuroimaging studies showing that positive reappraisal causes a stronger reduction in negative affect than attentional deployment in the short-term (McRae et al., 2010) and, especially in the long-term (Hermann, Kress, & Stark 2017). A recent daily diary study (Troy et al., 2019) also found that attentional deployment was associated with decreased positive affect and increased negative affect when confronted with real-life stressors. In contrast, positive reappraisal was associated with greater positive affect and reduced negative affect when facing real-life stressors (Troy et al., 2019).

Hypothesis 1: Individuals feel more positive and less negative in the perspective-taking and positive reappraisal conditions than in the attentional deployment condition.

Deep Acting Strategies and Resource Depletion

During deep acting, employees use their resources (e.g., effort) to manage their emotions effectively. However, resources are limited and deep acting may result in resource depletion (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). In particular, resource depletion occurs when there is an imbalance between resource investment (e.g., effort) and new resource acquisition (e.g., positive affect; (Hobfoll, 1989, 2011).

Both theory and research suggest that different emotion regulation strategies involved in deep acting may differentially affect employees' resource depletion. Specifically, perspective-taking and positive reappraisal may have more resource replenishing qualities than attentional deployment. For example, the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 1998; 2001) identifies positive emotions as an important source to rebuild one's resources. As outlined above, perspective-taking and positive reappraisal can help employees feel more positive, facilitating resource recovery. In fact, supporting this theory, considerable evidence in the fundamental literature showed that instructed perspective-taking and positive reappraisal increased positive affect (Webb, Miles, & Sheeran, 2012).

In contrast, attentional deployment may not allow sustainable resource gain to compensate for resource loss as attentional deployment results in positive emotions that are short-lived. Moreover, these short-term benefits may only hold in non-social contexts as typically studied in the fundamental emotion literature (see, e.g., Sheppes et al, 2011; Sheppes et al., 2014). However, emotional labor requires continued attention to the customer to some extent (one cannot simply fully ignore the customer), due to which attentional deployment in an emotional labor context may be associated with switching costs, which deplete resources (e.g., alternating between a distracting thought and engaging in a conversation with the client). Consistently, first correlational evidence is available that suggests that attentional deployment is more mentally costly than perspective-taking (Alabak, et al., 2020) and positive reappraisal (Andela et al., 2015) in the context of emotional labor.

Hypothesis 2: Individuals experience less resource depletion in perspective-taking and positive reappraisal conditions than in the attentional deployment condition.

Deep Acting Strategies and Authenticity

In theory, deep acting should help to maintain self-authenticity defined as the consistency between one's feelings and self-expression (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Holman et al., 2008; Kernis & Goldman, 2006) as employees act in line with their feelings (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Holman et al., 2008). However, specific deep acting strategies may differentially relate to self-authenticity.

Perspective-taking may be the best suited to feel authentic in customer interactions. When employees adopt customers' perspective on the situation, their emotion regulation efforts reflect their genuine concerns regarding the situation (e.g., the customer is right to be disappointed). However, positive reappraisal may decrease employees' awareness of the customers' concerns (e.g., the situation is not that bad), and attentional deployment leaves the appraisal of the situation unaffected. While decreasing employees' awareness of the current situation, positive reappraisal and attentional deployment may increase employees' awareness of emotion regulation. According to Anderson, Chen, and Ayduk (2020), emotion regulation awareness, "the degree to which people are conscious of having changed their own natural emotional responses" (p. 592), decreases felt-authenticity. For example, the authors

found that when participants were explicitly encouraged to change their emotions (e.g., thinking about ones' emotions in a different way to change them), they felt less authentic than participants who were asked to change their perspective on the emotional stimuli (e.g., seeing the situation from a third-person perspective). Given that positive reappraisal and attentional deployment are likely to make employees aware that they are changing their feelings to show the required emotions, it can be challenging to preserve authenticity. In fact, recent correlational evidence suggests that employees who frequently use attentional deployment feel less authentic in customer encounters (Alabak et al., 2020).

Hypothesis 3: Individuals experience greater self-authenticity in perspective-taking condition than positive reappraisal and attentional deployment conditions.

This (in)authenticity cannot only be experienced by the employee but it can also be perceived by customers (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006). According to the social interaction model of emotion regulation (Cote, 2005), the perceived authenticity of expressions involved in deep acting is indeed key to understand effects on customers as customers want to be treated honestly (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006). Yet, perspective-taking and positive reappraisal may be more advantageous than attentional deployment in yielding (perceived) authentic impressions because employees genuinely feel the expected emotions and their organizationally appropriate expression is directly rooted in the encounter with the customer (rather than an unrelated event as is the case when engaging in attentional deployment). For example, perspective-taking may signal that the employee exerts effort to handle a customer's complaint in an empathetic way. Similarly, positive reappraisal may signal that the employee faces a difficult situation with optimism and confidence. This positive information may strengthen the perception that the employee is genuine in her interaction with the customer. In contrast, customers may doubt employees' authenticity during attentional deployment because they may perceive the (organizationally desired expression of the) employee as carefree or disoriented, which may lead to the perception that the employee is not sincere.

Hypothesis 4: Individuals in perspective-taking and positive reappraisal conditions are perceived as more authentic than individuals in the attentional deployment condition.

Deep Acting and Perceived Service Quality Appraisal

Service quality appraisal is another important interpersonal outcome of deep acting. It reflects the degree to which employees provide a friendly and efficient service (Grandey, 2003; Barger & Grandey, 2006; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1985). Survey research has linked deep acting to high service appraisals (Grandey, 2003), but the relative impacts of the subtypes of deep acting on service quality have remained unexplored.

Building on the social interaction model of emotion regulation (Cote, 2005) and the EASI model (Van Kleef, 2009), we expect that different deep acting strategies impact customers' service appraisals differently. First, as suggested above, perspective-taking and positive reappraisal attempts are more likely to be perceived as authentic by customers which may positively contribute to perceived service quality. In contrast, attentional deployment attempts may be perceived as insincere, which negatively affects customers' service appraisals. Second, positive feelings resulting from perspective-taking and positive reappraisal may be noticed by customers leading to more favorable judgments about employees' service performance. It has been suggested that employees' nonverbal positive displays (e.g., voice) can be transferred to customers via emotional contagion (Cote, 2005; Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994; Pugh 2001). For example, customers may catch employees' friendly tone and unconsciously imitate this friendly attitude. Thus, this positive interpersonal process may increase customers' positive feelings and, in turn, can trigger positive service appraisals (Cote, 2005, Pugh 2001). In contrast, attentional deployment may send inconsistent emotional cues. As a result, emotional contagion may be weaker. Third, once employees manage to generate a more positive interpretation of the situation, they can focus more on the task at hand. In contrast, attentional deployment may harm employees' task performance. In fact, previous research has consistently shown that engaging in task-unrelated thoughts impairs task performance (for a review, Randall, Oswald, & Beier, 2014). As a result, customers may give higher performance ratings to employees who engage in perspective-taking or positive reappraisal.

Hypothesis 5: Customers have more favorable service quality appraisals for individuals in perspective-taking and positive reappraisal conditions than those in the attentional deployment condition.

Method

Participants

A power analysis reveals that 159 participants are necessary to detect medium effects. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to stop our data collection before reaching the targeted number of participants. In total, we recruited 55 undergraduate and masters' students (20 males). Forty-seven undergraduate students participated in the study in exchange for course credit, and eight masters' students received chocolate bars as a reward for their participation. The average age of the participants was 22.05 ($SD = 2.5$). Twenty-six participants reported that they previously worked in a service job.

Procedure

We designed a travel agency simulation in which participants played the role of a travel agent. Participants' main responsibility was to help a customer to book a holiday trip. Similar settings have been used in previous experimental studies on emotional labor (e.g., Gabriel & Diefendorff, 2015; Goldberg, & Grandey, 2007). As a cover study, participants were told that the experiment investigates the dynamics of the interaction between customers and customer-service employees.

Each experimental session consisted of six phases: pre-manipulation questionnaire, travel agency training, emotion regulation training, practice call, main call, and post-manipulation measures. In the first phase, participants completed an online questionnaire on a computer. The questionnaire contained demographic questions (i.e., age, gender, prior work experience).

In the second stage, the experimenter explained the materials presented to them on a desk that would be of relevance in the subsequent task: a brochure of summer holiday packages, a phone-call guideline, and a customer registration form. The brochure included various vacation packages. The phone-call guideline provided step-by-step directions on how to conduct a call with a customer. Finally, the registration form was used to complete the booking of the preferred holiday package. Participants were instructed to help the customers plan their holiday using the brochure and the guideline, and then complete a reservation using the registration form. After participants reviewed these supporting materials for 5 minutes, the experimenter allowed them to ask any questions about the materials.

In the third phase, participants received a short training in the respective emotion regulation strategy they were assigned to. This training was presented on a computer. Participants completed it on their own. Depending on experimental condition, participants received a training in perspective-taking, positive reappraisal or attentional deployment.

In the fourth phase, participants did a practice call. They were aware that the call was for practicing and orienting themselves to their task. During this call, the customer (female confederate) was initially neutral. She was then slightly disappointed with the participants' answers so that participants could practice applying their trained emotion regulation strategy.

In the fifth phase, participants answered the main call. During this call, the customer (male confederate) was more negative and skeptical about the participants' offers. His tone was demanding. The calls lasted 10 minutes, on average. The confederates were blind to the emotion regulation conditions. In the final phase, participants completed a set of post-manipulation measures containing manipulation check, positive-negative affect, effort, and self-authenticity questionnaires on a computer. Subsequently, they completed the objective effort measure, which was presented in a paper-pencil format. The entire experimental session lasted approximately 60 minutes.

Materials

Emotion Regulation Manipulation

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the three deep acting conditions: perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, and attentional deployment. In each condition, participants were instructed to follow positive display rules. We adopted the following instruction from Goldberg and Grandey's (2007, p. 307) study.

"Our organization has a climate of enthusiasm and friendliness, you will be evaluated on your ability to be outgoing and enthusiastic and show positive emotion to your customers. Thus, it is important that you do the task well, as well as express friendliness, warmth and enthusiasm and show positive emotion. Some customer service organizations demand their employees provide "service with a smile" despite circumstances, also in difficult circumstances—this is the

requirement here, as well. Our organization thinks it is important that their employees being very friendly and outgoing. To accomplish this, it is important that you try to really feel and experience these positive emotions, even if your potential customer acts rude, stresses or irritates you.” (Goldberg & Grandey, 2007, p. 307).

Conditions varied in the manipulation of the three deep acting strategies. The content of each training consisted of a description of an emotion regulation strategy and two exercises to implement the strategy. During these exercises, participants practiced how they could use their assigned strategy in hypothetical challenging customer encounters. We used the same hypothetical scenarios across the three conditions.

The instructions and the training of perspective-taking were adapted from three sources (Basoglu, 2015; Breedon, 2015; Keng, Smoski, & Robins, 2016). In the perspective-taking condition, after participants had completed perspective-taking training, they received the following information:

*In order to maintain a genuine positive attitude even in difficult moments, try to understand the customer by putting yourself in his or her shoes. **Try to see the situation from the customer’s point of view:** Imagine that there are various reasons why the customer is dissatisfied or rude and these have nothing to do with you as a person. For instance, the customer may be irritated and rude because of personal problems at home. The customer may be difficult because he/she has a lot of stress at work. Try to think about it and imagine such alternative viewpoints.*

As a further reminder to engage in perspective taking, participants were presented with a reminder written: “Put yourself in the shoes of the customer” on the screen during the two calls.

The instructions and the training of positive reappraisal were adapted from four sources (Keng et al., 2016; Schartau, Dalgleish, & Dunn, 2009; Shiota & Levenson, 2009; Troy, Shallcross, Brunner, Friedman, & Jones, 2018). In the positive reappraisal condition, after participants had completed positive reappraisal training, they received the following information:

*In order to maintain a genuine positive attitude even in difficult moments, while you are dealing with your customer, please **try to think about positive aspects of what you are experiencing with the customer.** Try to think about what you are dealing with in a more positive light. For example, you might think about the good things you might learn from this experience.*

As a further reminder, participants were presented with a reminder written: "Try to find positive meaning in the situation" on the screen during the two calls.

The instructions and the training of attentional deployment were adapted from four sources (Breedon, 2015; Harvey & Payne, 2002; Kohl, Rief, & Glombiewski, 2013; Sheppes, Catran, & Meiran, 2009). In the attentional deployment condition, participants were asked to think of a positive memory. After completing the training, they received the following information:

*In order to maintain a genuine positive attitude even in difficult moments, keep on interaction with the customer but try at the same time to **think about the memory** you have just described to feel positive.*

As a further reminder, participants were presented with a reminder written: "Try to think about your positive memory" on the screen during the two calls.

Measures

Manipulation check

Immediately after participants ended their second call, they rated the degree (1 = never, 5 = very often) to which they used perspective-taking (2 items), positive-reappraisal (3 items) and attentional deployment (3 items) during the second call. Items were derived from Alabak and colleagues (2019). A sample perspective-taking item is "I tried to see things from the customer's point of view". A sample positive reappraisal item is "I tried to see the positive side of things." A sample attentional deployment item is "I thought about something enjoyable that was unrelated to the situation and made me feel happy." Cronbach's α values were .81, .76 and .71, respectively.

Positive/negative affect

Participants' positive affect and negative affect after the second call were assessed using the Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (Diener et al., 2009). The scale included six positive feelings (e.g., positive) and six negative feelings (e.g., negative) and participants rated the extent to which they currently experienced these feelings. Items were answered on a 5-point scale (1 = very slightly or not at all, 5 = extremely). Positive affect's Cronbach's α was .82 and negative affect's Cronbach's α was .78.

Self-authenticity

Participants were asked to indicate the degree to which they felt authentic during the second call by using two items adapted from Alabak et al. (2019). Two items: "I didn't feel I could be myself when I interacted with the customer; I felt artificial in my interaction with the customer". Items were rated on a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). We reverse-coded the items so that a higher mean reflects higher self-authenticity. Cronbach's α was .81.

Subjective resource depletion measure

Participants' resource depletion was measured using the State Self-control Scale (Twenge, Muraven, & Tice, 2004). It included 25 items rated on a 5-point scale (1 = very slightly or not at all, 5 = very much). A sample item is "I feel mentally exhausted." Cronbach's α was .94.

Objective resource depletion measure

At the end of the experiment, we asked participants to answer arithmetic problems to assess the extent of resource depletion. This method has been frequently used to assess self-control (Vohs et al., 2014; Vohs & Heatherton, 2000). In the current experiment, we gave participants 50 two-digit plus two-digit addition problems, and asked them to solve these problems without any time restriction. It was a paper-pencil task. Spending more time on the task reflects less available resources, meaning more resource depletion.

Customer-rated authenticity

Immediately after the second call, the customer (confederate) evaluated participants' authenticity. By using the modified version of the self-authenticity scale, he indicated the authenticity of the participant during the call. The two items are: "I did not feel

this person could be himself/herself when he/she interacted with the customer; I felt this person was artificial in his/her interaction with the customer.” They were rated on a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). We used reverse-coded items. Cronbach’s α was .64.

Service quality appraisals

The same customer (confederate) evaluated the quality of service provided by participants. In line with previous emotional labor studies (e.g., Barger & Grandey, 2006), we used a 5-item scale adapted from Parasuraman et al. (1985). A sample item was “*This person was efficient*”. Cronbach’s α was .76.

Results

Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations between study variables can be found in Table 1.

Manipulation Check

To examine whether participants successfully implemented the trained deep acting strategy, we performed a MANOVA on the emotion regulation measures using condition as the independent variable. As can be seen from Table 2, the use of attentional deployment varied across the three experimental conditions ($F(2, 54) = 5.23, p < .01$). Follow-up contrasts using a Bonferroni correction revealed that participants in the attentional deployment condition ($M = 2.90, SD = 1.02$) used significantly more attentional deployment than participants in the perspective-taking condition ($M = 2.09, SD = 0.59$) and in the positive reappraisal condition ($M = 2.16, SD = 0.92$). The use of perspective taking also varied across the three experimental conditions but the effect was only marginally significant ($F(2, 54) = 2.67, p = .08$). Follow-up contrasts using a Bonferroni correction showed that participants in the perspective-taking condition ($M = 4.42, SD = 0.58$) tended to use more perspective-taking than participants in the positive reappraisal condition ($M = 3.90, SD = 0.85$) but this difference was only marginally significant with $p = .09$. Participants in the attentional deployment condition ($M = 4.08, SD = 0.61$) used less perspective-taking than participants in the perspective-taking condition, yet the difference was not statistically significant ($M = 4.42, SD = 0.58$). The use of positive reappraisal did not vary across the three experimental conditions ($F(2, 54) = 1.14, p = .33$).

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Bivariate Correlations among Study Variables

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Perspective-taking	4.15	.69	-									
2. Positive reappraisal	3.85	.66	.60**	-								
3. Attentional deployment	2.41	.93	-.08	.09	-							
4. Positive affect	3.39	.67	.28*	.33*	-.24†	-						
5. Negative affect	1.37	.45	-.23†	-.18	.20	-.33*	-					
6. Resource depletion (self-report)	2.06	.10	-.26†	-.39**	.18	-.50**	.30**	-				
7. Resource depletion (objective)	353.99	122.91	-.10	-.35**	-.01	-.18	.06	.31*	-			
8. Self-authenticity	3.29	1.11	.34*	.28*	.08	.19*	-.35**	-.32*	-.25†	-		
9. Customer-rated authenticity	3.80	.97	-.02	.09	-.05	.19	.01	-.11	-.15	-.03	-	
10. Service quality appraisal	3.96	.68	-.08	-.19	.10	-.02	.21	-.04	.17	-.17	.31*	-

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; † $p < .10$ (two-tailed). Depletion (objective) = Math task completion time in seconds. Positive affect, negative affect, resource depletion and self-authenticity were self-report. Customer-rated authenticity and service quality appraisal were customer-rated.

Table 2. Group Differences in Deep Acting Strategies

Variable	Perspective-taking condition		Positive reappraisal condition		Attentional deployment condition		ηp^2
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Perspective-taking	4.42	0.58	3.90	0.85	4.08	0.61	2.67 [†]
Positive reappraisal	3.97	0.58	3.64	0.56	3.90	0.77	1.14
Attentional deployment	2.09	0.59	2.16	0.92	2.90	1.02	5.23**

Note. ** $p < .01$; [†] $p < .10$ (two-tailed).

Table 3. Multiple Regression Analyses for State Emotion Regulation Predicting Outcomes

Variables	Positive affect		Negative affect		Depletion (self-report)		Depletion (objective)		Self-authenticity		Customer-rated authenticity		Service quality appraisal	
	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β
Perspective-taking	.08	.08	-.11	-.16	.00	.01	27.69	.16	.44	.28	-.20	-.15	.08	.08
Positive reappraisal	.31	.30 [†]	-.07	-.10	-.37	-.42*	-83.66	-.45**	.17	.10	.28	.18	-.27	-.25
Attentional deployment	-.19	-.26 [†]	.10	.20	.14	.22	5.52	.04	.10	.08	-.08	-.07	.09	.12

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; [†] $p < .10$ (two-tailed).

Overall, our experimental manipulation did not succeed. First of all, the three experimental conditions did not differ in positive reappraisal and only marginally differed in perspective taking. Moreover, the instructed regulation strategy was often not the dominant strategy in each experimental condition. For example, in the positive reappraisal and in the attentional deployment conditions, participants engaged mainly in perspective taking. As the manipulation failed, we did not proceed to examine the impact of the manipulation on the outcome variables (positive/negative affect, resource depletion, self-authenticity, customer-rated authenticity and service quality appraisals).

Post-hoc Analyses

The failed manipulation check suggests that our experimental manipulation was not strong enough to overrule participants' habitual use of emotion regulation strategies. We could therefore not proceed with testing our focal hypotheses about differences in well-being and performance outcomes depending on experimental condition. However, participants naturally differed in their use of deep acting strategies across conditions. Participants' self-reported use of deep acting strategies may therefore be used to assess correlational relationships with the examined intra- and interpersonal outcome variables. We therefore collapsed the data across conditions and examined how use of perspective taking, positive reappraisal and attentional deployment related to the assessed outcome variables.

Inspection of the correlations in Table 1 revealed that perspective-taking was positively correlated with positive affect ($r = .28, p < .05$) and self-authenticity ($r = .34, p < .05$), and negatively related with negative affect ($r = -.23, p = .10$) and self-reported depletion ($r = -.26, p = .06$), although the latter two relationships were marginally significant only. Positive reappraisal was positively correlated with positive affect ($r = .33, p < .05$) and self-authenticity ($r = .28, p < .05$) while it was negatively correlated with depletion (self-report measure, $r = -.39, p < .01$; objective measure ($r = -.35, p < .01$). In contrast, attentional deployment was marginally significantly negatively correlated with positive affect ($r = -.24, p = .09$).

To account for inter-correlations between deep acting regulation strategies, we ran multiple regression analyses predicting each outcome by the three self-reported emotion regulation strategies simultaneously (see Table 3). Positive reappraisal and

attentional deployment were, respectively, positively ($\beta = .30, p = .07$) and negatively ($\beta = -.26, p = .05$) related to positive affect, even though effects were only marginally significant. Positive reappraisal was also found to be negatively related to both depletion measures (self-report measure, $\beta = -.42, p < .05$; objective measure, $\beta = -.45, p < .01$).

Discussion

Despite more than twenty years of research on the topic, the consequences of deep acting are still not fully understood. The main reason for this ambiguity could be that previous studies have mostly treated deep acting as a unitary construct despite its multidimensional nature (Alabak et al., 2020; Andela et al., 2015; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). Furthermore, experimental studies manipulating emotion regulation strategies in the emotional labor literature are extremely scarce. The present study therefore aimed to shed more light on the causal effects of specific deep acting strategies (Alabak et al., 2020; Andela et al., 2015; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011) by comparing the effects of three deep acting strategies (perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, and attentional deployment) on important intrapersonal (positive/negative affect, resource depletion, and self-authenticity) and interpersonal (customer-rated authenticity, and service quality appraisal) outcomes using an experimental design.

Although our travel agency simulation seemed to trigger emotion regulation, our emotion regulation manipulations failed to lead to significant differences in the self-reported emotion regulation measures. As the manipulation check failed, we did not proceed with testing effects of the manipulation on our outcome variables. Nevertheless, the present study provides important theoretical and methodological contributions to the emotional labor literature. From a theoretical perspective, our post-hoc correlational analyses support the theoretical arguments that deep acting is multidimensional and that perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, and attentional deployment are distinct deep acting strategies (Alabak et al., 2020; Andela et al., 2015; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). These three strategies were differently associated with outcomes including resource depletion, positive affect, and self-authenticity. From a methodological perspective, this experiment was the first attempt to manipulate specific deep acting strategies and compare their effects on emotional labor outcomes. Therefore, the current results are informative for future studies that

aim to improve our experimental manipulation of emotion regulation strategies in a highly interactive emotional labor context. In the following paragraphs, we elaborate on these implications.

Theoretical Implications

The current correlational relationships between the studied deep-acting strategies and outcome variables offer some novel theoretical insights. Although they are largely consistent with previous correlational findings (Alabak et al., 2020; Andela et al., 2015), they need to be interpreted with caution considering our study's low power. First, the findings confirmed that deep acting is multifaceted as the three sub-strategies of deep acting were uniquely related to important outcomes. More specifically, positive reappraisal was negatively related to (subjective and objective) measures of resource depletion. Moreover, it was positively related to positive affect and self-authenticity. Perspective-taking was also related to a higher level of positive affect and self-authenticity, while it was related to a lower level of negative affect and self-report resource depletion (although the latter relationships were only marginally significant). However, as expected, attentional deployment did not show similar relationships with those outcomes. It was even negatively related to positive affect (albeit marginally significant). Overall, this pattern of results suggests that the two cognitive change strategies (perspective taking and positive reappraisal) have similar (but not identical) adaptive consequences while attentional deployment was found to lack positive consequences.

In contrast to intra-personal consequences, no significant correlational relationships were observed between the deep acting strategies and interpersonal outcomes (i.e., perceived authenticity and service quality appraisal). This may be due to three different reasons. First, the observed null relationships may be simply related to a lack of power. Second, the null findings could be due to our confederate customer not providing immediate social feedback that might have informed participants about the interpersonal impact of their regulation attempts. The customer was rude regardless of the emotion regulation strategy adopted by the participant. Participants might have thought that their regulation attempts were not effective to achieve their interpersonal goal (i.e., satisfying the customer) which further prevented them to fine-tune their instructed regulation strategy to optimize interpersonal outcomes. This lack of customer feedback might even have led some participants not sticking

to their assigned strategy, switching between strategies instead. Consequently, any interpersonal effects of the deep strategies may have not been evident to the customer. Third, the confederate might not be ideally positioned to evaluate the participant's performance. Even though the confederate did not know to which condition participants were assigned, they were role playing and their perception may not correspond with the perception of an outside or fully naïve customer. Future experimental studies investigating the interpersonal outcomes of emotional labor would benefit from measuring interpersonal outcomes by external observers.

Second, our correlational findings give an indication why previous findings on the deep acting-wellbeing relationship have been mixed (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). Deep acting sub-strategies showed diverse relationships with important proxies of well-being (e.g., positive affect, depletion, and authenticity). For instance, we found that deep acting may result in improved well-being when it consists of perspective-taking or positive reappraisal. On the other hand, it might negatively affect well-being when it includes attentional deployment. This different and even opposite pattern of relationships with well-being indicators might have been masked in past studies using a unidimensional measure of deep acting (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). Therefore, a more fine-grained approach should be considered in the theory and measurement of deep acting. Such an approach can paint a more detailed picture of the relationships between deep acting and well-being outcomes.

Methodological Implications

Despite the continued interest in new methodologies in the field (e.g., an event-based profile approach; Diefendorff, Gabriel, Nolan, & Yang, 2019), the current emotional labor literature still lacks guidance on how to effectively manipulate emotional labor strategies in the lab. Our findings provide critical insights into understanding how individuals comply with emotion regulation instructions and how researchers can further optimize the manipulation of emotion regulation strategies in the context of emotional labor. First, simple emotion regulation manipulations (e.g., short instructions consisting of a few sentences) used in non-interactive experimental designs (e.g., passively watching videos; Webb et al., 2012) may not be directly transferrable to manipulating emotion regulation strategies in a highly interactive emotional labor setting. In such a setting, the emotional stimuli were more complex, socially demanding and they changed over time, which substantially complicates

participants' task to (consistently) use a particular regulation strategy throughout the encounter with the customer. With this in mind, we trained participants using scenarios and a trial call before having them enter an emotional labor task (i.e., calling and helping an angry customer while expressing positivity). Moreover, we used reminders during the main call. Yet, our manipulation still failed which reflect the difficulty of manipulating specific deep acting strategies in an ecologically valid setting.

Second, an inspection of self-reported levels of perspective taking, reappraisal and attentional deployment in the three conditions provides further insights into the possible reasons for this failed manipulation. In particular, participants predominantly relied on perspective-taking across all three conditions, i.e. not only in the perspective-taking but also in the positive reappraisal and the attentional deployment condition. This finding suggest that our emotion regulation manipulation may not have been sufficiently strong to inhibit participants employing other strategies, including their habitual emotion regulation strategy. This usage of other strategies could have limited the strength of our emotion regulation manipulation. For example, a habitual perspective-taker in the attentional deployment condition may have used perspective-taking before implementing attentional deployment because using a familiar strategy is easier in an emotionally demanding situation. Alternatively, participants may have given up after ineffective implementation of the instructed emotion regulation strategy and switched back to their habitual strategy to be able to accomplish their tasks. Therefore, in future experiments, participants should receive more intensive emotion regulation training to override their habitual reactions to emotional situations. If deep acting strategies become more automatic with longer sessions of training (e.g., Denny & Ochsner, 2014; Hülshager, Lang, Schewe, & Zijlstra, 2015), participants can do what is expected from them more easily.

Another possibility is that the nature of the customer-service context has triggered perspective-taking in all participants, overruling the manipulations of positive reappraisal or attentional deployment. Perspective-taking might have been an inevitable strategy in our travel agency simulation because the core task of customer service employees is to understand customer's requests and concerns. Participants might have put themselves in the difficult customer's shoes to perform their task even they were not explicitly told to do so. This explanation is consistent with

previous studies showing that perspective-taking was more frequently used than the two other deep acting strategies in real life customer encounters (Alabak et al., 2020). Therefore, future designs may consider adding a feedback section after practicing the assigned strategy on a trial call. Participants can reflect on whether/how they used their instructed emotion regulation strategy and an experimenter can help improve participants' expertise in the specific strategy.

Limitations and Future Directions

We should note several limitations of the current study and avenues for future research. First, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we could not reach our target number of participants. A lack of power may be one reason for unsuccessful emotion regulation manipulation. Furthermore, this may have led to null and marginally significant correlational results. Therefore, our design should be replicated with a larger sample.

Second, although we showed important short-term correlates of specific deep acting strategies by holding situational factors constant in the lab, these correlational findings need to be interpreted cautiously. Critically, we cannot draw causal inferences from these correlations. For example, it may be that differences in participants' spontaneous use of regulation strategies might reflect other constructs (e.g., personality) which act as confounding variables in the observed correlational relationships between deep acting strategies and the studied outcomes.

Third, future experimental studies are needed to examine the dynamic nature of emotional labor. Our findings showed that people might engage in multiple specific strategies within a single interaction. Researchers may consider developing more sophisticated experimental paradigms to be able to test why and how individuals switch to other emotion regulation strategies (e.g., when the situation is escalated).

Finally, we focused on three antecedent-focused emotion regulation strategies in this experiment because they are theoretically linked to deep acting (Grandey, 2000). However, individuals may engage in other antecedent-focused strategies (e.g., situation modification; Diefendorff, Richard, & Yang, 2008) beyond what we measured here. For example, trying to solve customers' problems may serve as emotion regulation (Diefendorff et al., 2008). Therefore, future experimental studies

can benefit from broadening the repertoire of emotional labor strategies to advance our understanding in the field.

Practical Implications

For practitioners, our findings offer insights that might benefit the design of deep acting training programs. Currently, theory-informed deep acting training programs teach employees various deep acting tactics (i.e., perspective-taking, positive reappraisal and attentional deployment). Yet, these trainings have not considered possible differential consequences of these tactics which may explain why these trainings have often not generated the intended positive consequences (e.g., Schaefer, 2019). We recommend promoting perspective-taking and positive reappraisal rather than attentional deployment. (Alabak et al., 2020). Additionally, we recommend organizations to develop interventions to decrease employees' distractions during customer encounters because attentional deployment seems not to be an ideal strategy for service employees' wellbeing. For example, mindfulness-based trainings can encourage employees to focus their attention to their customer interactions (Hülshager, Alberts, Feinholdt, & Lang, 2013).

Conclusion

The current study has crucial implications for deep acting theory and measurement. The traditional view of deep acting treats it as a unitary construct. However, our findings suggest that specific deep acting strategies (i.e., perspective-taking, positive reappraisal and attentional deployment) should not be combined under the deep acting construct as they have different associations with employee outcomes. Compared to attentional deployment, perspective-taking and positive reappraisal are more likely to result in desirable outcomes. Manipulating deep acting strategies was found to be a challenge but future studies can build on our work to provide evidence on the causal consequences of emotional labor strategies which is currently lacking in this research domain.

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Going beyond deep and surface acting: A bottom-up investigation of emotional labor strategies

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Abstract

Research on emotional labor has primarily focused on the antecedents and consequences of three emotional labor strategies: deep acting, surface acting, and automatic emotion regulation. However, do these three strategies fully cover the emotional labor domain, or do employees also adopt other strategies? We investigated this in two studies. In Study 1, we conducted interviews in the Netherlands and in Turkey to collect a comprehensive list of employee-generated emotional labor strategy statements. We found that a substantial number of these statements (Netherlands: 39.5%; Turkey: 36.4%) could not be categorized as exemplars of deep acting, surface acting, or automatic emotion regulation. In Study 2, we asked a new sample of participants to sort the Study 1 strategy statements into categories based on their similarity. Hierarchical cluster analysis showed that employees engage in emotional labor using deep acting and surface acting. However, employees also engage in emotional labor by influencing customer's cognitions, influencing customer's feelings, solving the problem at hand, adopting a wait-and-see approach, avoiding the problem, or engaging in deviance in good faith. These results are consistent with current theoretical frameworks on emotional labor, but also extend them by providing a bottom-up taxonomy of the wide range of emotional labor strategies.

Keywords: bottom-up taxonomy, emotional labor

The service sector is a key component of modern economies. Accordingly, in member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), more than half of the employees are working in service jobs (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020; The World Bank, 2020). These service employees often need to engage in emotional labor, which involves managing their own and others' emotions to meet emotional job requirements and conform to organizational expectations (Grandey, 2000; Grandey & Melloy, 2017; Hochschild, 1983). Having implications for employees and organizations in terms of well-being, health, job satisfaction, interpersonal and task performance, emotional labor is a topic that lies at the heart of organizational research (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015).

What do people do in such emotionally challenging situations? Grandey (2000) suggested two classes of emotional labor strategies: deep acting and surface acting. When engaging in deep acting, employees modify their own inner emotions such that their emotional expression is aligned with their underlying feeling state. When engaging in surface acting, employees modify their emotional expression but without altering their feeling state, resulting in a mismatch between emotional experience and expression. More recently, automatic regulation has been proposed as a third emotional labor category (Martinez-Inigo, Totterdell, Alcover, & Holman, 2007). Automatic regulation involves a naturally occurring regulation process resulting spontaneously in authentic and appropriate emotional expressions. While a number of studies have been conducted on automatic regulation (e.g., Hülshager, Lang, Schewe, & Zijlstra, 2015; Martinez-Inigo et al., 2007), most emotional labor research has focused on deep and surface acting.

A wide range of studies have investigated the distinction between deep and surface acting, demonstrating the unique antecedents and consequences of these emotional labor strategies (for reviews and meta-analyses see Grandey & Melloy, 2017; Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013). These studies have found that deep acting and surface acting relate to key individual and organizational outcomes, including emotional exhaustion/burnout, job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and performance (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013; Mesmer-Magnus, DeChurch, & Wax, 2012). Compared to surface acting, deep acting has been shown to be a more adaptive strategy for employees' health and performance (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013).

There is no doubt that the identification and distinction of deep and surface acting has made a major contribution to research on emotional labor, but the focus on deep and surface acting might be too narrow to do justice to the full scope of emotional labor strategies employees may engage in. For instance, while emotional labor is performed for interpersonal goals and includes management of one's own and other's emotions (Grandey & Melloy, 2017; Grandey, et al., 2013), deep and surface acting only capture intrapersonal strategies while overlooking interpersonal ones targeting other's emotions. Indeed, a number of studies have hinted at the possibility that employees may actually have access to a wider range of emotional labor strategies (e.g., Diefendorff, Richard, & Yan, 2008; Hayward & Tuckey, 2011). However, no study has attempted to systematically map the full range of strategies used by employees based on information directly provided by employees who engage in emotional labor on a regular basis (i.e., a bottom-up approach).

From a theoretical perspective, the lack of a complete bottom-up taxonomy of emotional labor strategies is troublesome. The most popular taxonomy of emotional labor strategies (i.e., deep acting, surface acting, and automatic regulation) is based on a top-down, theory-based approach (Grandey, 2000; Gross, 1998). The same holds for extensions or alternatives to this taxonomy (e.g., Diefendorff et al., 2008). While theory driven taxonomies are highly valuable, it should be tested whether these taxonomies do full justice to the complexity and variety of the emotional labor strategies employees actually engage in on a daily basis. A bottom-up approach is ideally suited to rule out the possibility that major parts of the emotional labor domain are overlooked, it allows to extend theoretical frameworks on emotional labor and may provide a new impetus for further theoretical work on possible novel emotional labor strategies.

The lack of a bottom-up test to assess the completeness of current emotional labor taxonomies is also problematic from an applied perspective. For example, within an assessment context, people should not only be selected or evaluated on their capacity to engage in deep or surface acting, but also on their ability to engage in possible other emotional labor strategies that may be more predictive of their success in emotionally demanding jobs. This is not possible if we have not yet captured the full range of emotional labor strategies. Similarly, if the taxonomy of emotional labor strategies is too narrow, a wide range of training opportunities to develop other relevant strategies may be overlooked.

To address these issues, the goal of the current study is to create a bottom-up taxonomy of the emotional labor strategies employees engage in during their work. To that end, we asked employees themselves to describe recent encounters during which they engaged in emotional labor and describe the emotion regulation strategies they used. To ensure that our results would not only pertain to a limited number of jobs in Western countries, we recruited employees from a variety of jobs involving interactions with the public in both the Netherlands and Turkey. This resulted in an extensive bottom-up list of employee-generated emotional labor strategy statements. We subsequently used this list for two related purposes. First, we examined the extent to which current theoretical taxonomies of emotional labor strategies capture the list of bottom-up collected strategy statements. For this purpose, expert-coders assigned the bottom-up generated strategy statements to the main emotional labor categories currently described in the literature. The number of strategy statements that could not be assigned to any category reflects the degree to which the currently most popular theoretical taxonomy (i.e., deep acting, surface acting, and automatic regulation) on emotional labor categories is incomplete. Second, we created a new bottom-up taxonomy of emotional labor strategies. For this purpose, we first asked non-experts to assess the similarity between the generated strategy statements. Next, we used cluster analyses to derive sets of categories explaining these similarity data and providing a full-scale description of the bottom-up generated data. This approach aligns with bottom-up investigations that have been conducted in the field of fundamental emotion regulation (Livingstone & Srivastava, 2012; Niven, Totterdell, & Homan, 2009; Parkinson & Totterdell, 1999) and coping research (Ayers, Sandler, West, & Roosa, 1996; Walker, Smith, Garber, & Van Slyke, 1997).

The present study makes important theoretical contributions to the emotional labor literature. Recent scholarly reviews of the emotional labor literature have pointed to the need to expand knowledge beyond surface and deep acting, arguing that employees are likely to use a much broader variety of emotion regulation strategies (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Grandey & Melloy, 2017). These alternative emotion regulation strategies have, to date, not yet been fully uncovered. Grandey and Melloy (2017) argued that identifying them “may require new methods of assessment” (p. 4). With the present study, we directly respond to these calls by assessing employees’ actual use of emotional labor strategies using a bottom-up approach.

Expert categorizations of the collected emotion regulation strategy statements will unravel the extent to which these go beyond the established emotional labor categories of deep acting, surface acting, and automatic regulation. Non-expert ratings of similarities between strategy statements and a subsequent cluster analysis will supplement expert coding and yield a full-scale bottom-up categorization of emotional labor strategies. Taken together, this approach will provide a systematic and comprehensive account of the many ways in which employees regulate their emotions in daily interactions with customers. The resulting taxonomy will refine and expand theoretical models of emotional labor (e.g. Grandey & Melloy, 2017) that consider a rather narrow range of theoretically derived emotional labor strategies. In doing so, our work lays the foundation for future research to explore the previously overlooked ways in which employees deal with the demands of emotional labor and how this impacts individual and organizational outcomes.

Current perspectives on emotional labor: Three dominant categories

Emotional labor refers to *“emotion regulation performed in response to job-based emotional requirements in order to produce emotion toward – and to evoke emotion from – another person to achieve organizational goals”* (p. 18, Grandey, Diefendorff, Rupp, 2013). Emotional labor has been studied from several theoretical perspectives (Grandey et al., 2013) but the most dominant approach in work and organizational psychology is Grandey's (2000) conceptualization (Grandey et al., 2013). The core proposition of this framework is that emotional labor is a specific type of emotion regulation. Grandey (2000) connected research on emotional labor to Gross' fundamental model of emotion regulation (Gross, 1998) by relating deep acting and surface acting to antecedent- and response-focused strategies, respectively. According to Gross' process model of emotion regulation (1998), the main difference between antecedent- and response-focused strategies is when the strategy affects the emotional response, either before the emotion is fully developed (antecedent-focused) or after the emotion is in full swing (response-focused).

When engaging in deep acting, employees align their internal emotions with the required emotional expression, which can be achieved via two antecedent-focused strategies: cognitive change or attentional deployment (Grandey, 2000). Cognitive change involves a reinterpretation of the situation. For example, when talking with an angry passenger, a flight attendant may try to understand the passenger's perspective

(perspective-taking), see the situation as a learning opportunity (positive reappraisal) or accept the current situation being a part of her job (acceptance; Mikolajczak, Tran, Brotheridge, & Gross; 2009; Webb, Miles, & Sheeran, 2012). Attentional deployment involves focusing attention on non-emotional aspects of the situation or shifting attention away from the situation entirely. For example, a flight attendant may think about an upcoming holiday (attentional deployment) to facilitate a positive emotional expression during the interaction with an angry passenger. In both cases (i.e., attentional deployment or cognitive change), the key principle is that employees attempt to change their own inner feelings such that they match the desired emotional expression.

When engaging in surface acting, employees focus on their emotional expression such that they display an appropriate expression regardless of what they actually feel (Grandey, 2000). For example, flight attendants can simply hide their irritation about an arrogant customer or can fake positive emotions without actually feeling them. In both cases, however, there is a mismatch between the emotional expression and the underlying feeling state.

The distinction between deep acting and surface acting has resulted in a large corpus of research findings which have deepened our understanding of the organizational implications of emotional labor. Specifically, it has been shown that compared with deep acting, surface acting has more detrimental consequences for employees and organizations (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Nguyen, Groth, & Johnson, 2016) since it is more mentally demanding and results in less authentic expressions (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003; Grandey, 2003). More recently, the categories of deep acting and surface acting have been complemented by the strategy of automatic regulation. This regulation strategy pertains to the effortless expression of organizationally-desired emotions (Diefendorff et al., 2005; Martinez-Inigo et al., 2007). Automatic regulation may be an especially adaptive emotional labor strategy. In positive display contexts, it has been shown to be more beneficial for employees' well-being than either deep or surface acting, it was associated with less work withdrawal and more customer satisfaction (Hülshager et al., 2015; Scott, Lennard, Mitchell, & Johnson, 2019). However, automatic regulation has attracted considerably less empirical attention than deep and surface acting.

Going beyond three emotional labor categories

Inspired by theoretical work in sociology (Hochschild, 1983) and management (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993), emotional labor research largely converged on the conclusion that deep acting, surface acting, and automatic regulation constitute the three main emotional labor categories. Consistently, most research in the domain of emotional labor has focused on the prevalence, antecedents, mechanisms, and consequences of these regulation categories. However, considering contemporary definitions of emotional labor (Grandey & Melloy, 2017; Grandey et al., 2013), these three emotional labor categories may not provide a full picture of all the strategies that employees may resort to when dealing with emotional labor challenges.

There are various theoretical grounds to suspect that the current dominant taxonomy of emotional labor strategies (i.e., deep acting, surface acting, and automatic regulation) does not encompass the full range of emotional labor strategies. First, emotional labor can take place during the actual encounter with the customer but also when employees prepare for a future encounter. For example, when a teacher anticipates his students to misbehave during a future class activity, he may deal with this emotional labor challenge by adapting the nature of the class activity to prevent the misbehavior to take place (Chang & Taxer, 2020; Taxer & Gross, 2018). Similarly, a female waiter may ask a male colleague to serve an infamously sexist customer. Such strategies fall into the situation-targeted class of strategies of the emotion regulation model of Gross (1998). According to this model (Gross, 1998) situation selection and modification are two key regulation strategies people use in their everyday life. Situation selection involves selecting the emotion-eliciting situations one is involved in, while situation modification involves directly modifying aspects of an emotion-eliciting situation in order to change one's feelings. Despite the fact that Grandey's conceptualization of emotional labor is directly connected to Gross' emotion regulation model, Grandey (2000) did not consider situation selection/modification as emotional labor strategies arguing that customer service employees may have a "lack of options to choose or modify the situation" (p. 98). However, initial evidence suggests that this assumption might not hold true. Diefendorff and colleagues (2008) asked employees to rate the extent to which they applied a range of predefined emotion regulation strategies in their interactions with clients. Results revealed that employees not only used cognitive change, attentional deployment, and surface acting but also situation selection and modification. These findings suggest

that situation selection/modification may be strategically adopted to guarantee optimal client service and regulate one's own emotions during interactions with clients. Yet, apart from this study, situation selection and modification have been largely overlooked in the emotional labor literature and their role within the broader framework of already identified and unidentified emotional labor strategies remains uncharted.

Second, according to contemporary definitions, emotional labor is performed in an interpersonal context with interpersonal goals. It involves not only the management of one's own emotions but also the management of the interaction partner's emotions (Grandey & Melloy, 2017; Grandey, et al., 2013). Yet, surface, deep acting and automatic regulation only capture the intrapersonal emotion regulation part while leaving interpersonal emotion regulation (i.e. management of interaction partner's emotions) unaddressed. Inter-personal emotion regulation theories (English & Eldesouky, 2020; Dixon-Gordon, Bernecker, & Christensen, 2015; Williams, Morelli, Ong, & Zaki, 2018; Zaki & Williams, 2013), suggest that the current dominant taxonomy of emotional labor overlooks a set of strategies that are primarily targeted at the customer's rather than the employees' emotions. Deep acting, surface acting and automatic regulation are intra-personal strategies primarily targeting the emotional experience or expression of the employee. The customer's emotional experience may eventually also be impacted by these regulation strategies but this is not the primary target of the regulation attempt. Interpersonal emotion regulation, defined as achieving or maintaining emotional goals using the presence of others (English & Eldesouky, 2020; Dixon-Gordon et al., 2015; Williams et al., 2018; Zaki & Williams, 2013) changes the order around. Rather than primarily targeting their own emotional experience or expression, employees can also primarily target customer's emotions, in order to conform to the display rules of their employer themselves. For example, it might be easier to smile to an angry customer following a regulation attempt to get the customer in a better mood. Theories on interpersonal emotion regulation make a further distinction between extrinsic interpersonal regulation, defined as regulating someone else's feelings, and intrinsic interpersonal regulation, defined as regulating one's own feelings through others (Zaki & Williams, 2013). The definition of intrinsic interpersonal regulation clearly reflects the relevance of these strategies for the domain of emotional labor. Initial evidence suggests that employees indeed occasionally regulate their customers' emotions (e.g., Little, Kluemper, Nelson, &

Ward, 2013; Niven, Totterdell, Holman, & Headley, 2012) but research on intrinsic interpersonal emotion regulation in an emotional labor context is missing.

Finally, the current dominant taxonomy exclusively resulted from top-down theoretical approaches, thereby overlooking additional emotional labor strategies used in the field. To get a complete overview of the range of emotional labor strategies employees actually engage in, it is of pivotal importance to directly ask service workers how they deal with the emotional labor challenges in their job. Such a bottom-up approach may reveal strategies that have been overlooked in previous top-down theoretical work. For example, a qualitative study conducted with nurses (Hayward & Tuckey, 2011) revealed that nurses use emotional boundary management strategies. This study demonstrates that a bottom-up approach has the potential to unravel novel emotion regulation strategies. Yet, it was restricted to a selective group of specialized emotional labor workers (i.e., nurses) and was not intended to unravel the broad range of strategies employed by emotional labor workers in a wider range of occupational contexts and branches.

Research Overview

The overall goal of the present studies is to create a complete bottom-up taxonomy of emotional labor strategies, defined as any form of emotion regulation during customer interactions (Grandey & Melloy, 2017). Using semi-structured interviews with Dutch and Turkish employees, we created a list of emotional labor strategy statements (Study 1, phase 1). Next, expert-coders allocated the Dutch and Turkish strategy statements to the main emotional labor categories currently distinguished in the field (Study 1, phase 2), allowing us to quantify the degree to which these categories cover employees self-reported emotional labor strategies. Finally, we asked non-expert participants to assess the similarity between strategy statements both for the Dutch and Turkish data (Study 2, phase 1) and ran a cluster analysis on these similarity ratings to obtain a bottom-up classification of emotional labor strategies (Study 2, phase 2).

Even though the present studies were inevitably largely exploratory, a number of hypotheses could be formulated. First, we expect (Study 1) that a significant number of Dutch and Turkish emotional labor strategy statements do not fall within any of

the main emotional labor categories currently distinguished in the field. Second, we expect (Study 2) that both the Dutch and Turkish bottom-up classification will include deep acting, surface acting and automatic regulation. Third, we expect (Study 2) that the Dutch and Turkish bottom-up taxonomy will include regulation categories that have been formulated in the fundamental emotion regulation literature but are rarely studied in the field of emotional labor. These include situation selection, situation modification, and interpersonal emotion regulation.

Study 1

The overall aim of Study 1 was to collect bottom-up data on emotional labor strategies and assess to what extent the current dominant taxonomy of emotional labor describes this set of strategies.

Phase 1: Bottom-up harvesting of emotional labor strategies

The aim of Phase 1 of Study 1 is to collect a list of emotional labor strategies. To ensure that our results do not only pertain to a limited number of jobs in Western countries, we recruited employees from a variety of jobs in the Netherlands and in Turkey. Both countries have a service-based economy (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020; Hofstede, Hofstede, Minkov, 2010) but compared to the Netherlands, Turkey is a more collectivistic and hierarchical society (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Method

Participants

To take part in the study, participants needed to work in a job that required direct interaction with customers broadly defined (Grandey, Fisk, & Steiner, 2005) for at least 20 hours per week.

Dutch sample

The Dutch sample included 77 Dutch employees (29 male; 48 female) from a variety of ages who voluntarily participated. More than half of the participants (55.8%) were employed in service jobs demanding welcoming emotional expressions, such as waitresses, receptionists, salespeople, flight attendants, hairdressers, or taxi drivers (Humphrey, Pollack, & Hawver, 2008). A major part of the other employees (29.9%) were

employed in caring occupations where employees are expected to be sympathetic, such as teachers, nurses, or doctors (Humphrey et al., 2008). The remainder of the employees (14.3%) worked in social control jobs that require employees to stay calm and patient in emotionally intense situations, such as firefighters (Scott & Myers, 2005).

Turkish sample

The Turkish sample included 103 Turkish employees (54 male; 49 female) from a variety of ages who voluntarily participated in the study. The majority of participants (88.5%) were employed in service jobs and the others were employed in caring jobs (Humphrey et al., 2008).

Procedure

Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews on emotional labor strategies were conducted in Dutch or Turkish. The exact time and place were planned at the convenience of the participant. We designed the interview protocol to prompt participants to think about their emotion regulation experiences during customer interactions. The term "customer" was replaced by the term "student" when interviewing teachers, and by the term "patient" when interviewing nurses and doctors. Participants were first asked to describe their job and to explain whether they have customer interactions as a part of their job. Next, the interviewer explained that many jobs require certain emotional displays and provided some examples of common display rules (e.g., a waiter is expected to behave in a friendly way when interacting with customers). Subsequently, the interviewer asked participants to describe a recent challenging situation requiring emotional labor: *Can you think of any recent challenging situations where you were supposed to express certain emotions towards a customer/student/patient without actually feeling those emotions, or situations where you were supposed to stay calm and neutral while actually feeling very emotional?* Then, participants were asked to report the strategies they adopted to display the required emotions: *I understand that you were angry/upset.....but you were expected to show a positive/negative/neutral expression. I am interested in what you did or thought to achieve to display a positive/negative/neutral expression during the interaction. Can you tell me what you did or thought?*

The interviewer avoided using terms like “emotion regulation”, “emotion management”, and “emotional labor” in order not to influence participants’ answers. Once the participant shared an emotional labor episode, the interviewer asked them whether they would like to share another episode. If the participant answered yes, the interviewer asked again the same questions described above. If the participant answered no, the interview ended. All interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the participants. The duration of the interviews ranged from 5 to 15 minutes. The study was approved by the local ethical review board.

Data processing

The Dutch interviews were transcribed and translated to English by the Dutch interviewer who speaks both Dutch and English fluently. Similarly, the Turkish interviews were transcribed and translated to English by the original Turkish interviewer who speaks both Turkish and English fluently. Subsequently, we extracted emotion regulation strategy statements from participants’ responses. Responses including multiple strategies were broken down into sub-statements. Next, to ensure a consistent format, each single statement was rephrased in the simple present tense. Finally, we looked for duplicates with close to identical wording (e.g., breathe deeply, take a deep breath) and only kept one of them in the list. This approach resulted in 147 distinct statements from the Dutch sample and 165 statements from the Turkish sample

Phase 2: Matching bottom-up data with theory-based categories

The aim of phase 2 was to match the bottom-up generated strategy statements in phase 1 with the dominant taxonomy of emotional labor strategies. The number of statements that could not be assigned to any category distinguished in the dominant taxonomy of emotional labor reflects the extent to which that taxonomy does not fully reflect the emotional labor domain.

Method

Coders

Three persons coded the Dutch and Turkish statements. The coders were experts in the domain of emotional labor and coded the statements independently using the coding scheme described below.

Coding scheme

We created a coding scheme based on the emotional labor strategies described in the literature and their associated sub-strategies. As can be seen from Table 1, the first three categories pertained to deep acting and included cognitive change, attentional deployment and an overall unspecified deep acting category (Grandey, 2000; Gross, 1998). The next three categories pertained to surface acting and included faking, hiding and an overall unspecified surface acting category (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003; Grandey, 2000). The seventh category captured automatic regulation (Martínez-Iñigo et al., 2007, p. 284). The eighth category covered emotional deviance, showing the genuine display of inner feelings disregarding organizational display rules (Rafaeli and Sutton (1987), to identify instances during which employees deviated from organizational display rules. Finally, the ninth category covered strategies that could not be captured by any of the categories mentioned above (1-8). Using this coding scheme, the coders coded all statements in the Dutch and Turkish data set and achieved substantial agreement with Fleiss' Kappa (Fleiss, 1971) being .78 for the Dutch data and .80 for the Turkish data. Statements that were initially classified differently by the coders were ultimately also assigned to a particular category following a discussion between the coders.

Results

Table 1 (left panel) contains the coding results for the Dutch data. Deep acting was used often by employees, with 27.9% of the statements being assigned to categories one to three. Interestingly, in the majority of those cases, employees relied on cognitive change rather than attentional deployment to change their inner feelings. Employees also engaged in other subtypes of deep acting strategies (11.6%) to regulate their emotions which were coded in category 3. For instance, participants reported adjusting their breathing and to slow down their speech to feel calm, or reminding themselves not to treat others in a way they do not want to be treated.

Surface acting was also well-represented in the data, with 19.7% of the statements being assigned to categories four to six. When engaging in surface acting, people relied more often on faking than on hiding. Interestingly, faking and hiding provided a complete description of the surface acting category. The category surface acting–other/unspecified remained empty. Automatic regulation (5.4%), and emotional

Table 1. Emotional labor strategies across the Dutch sample and the Turkish sample

Categories	Number	Description	Dutch (N = 147) (% of strategies)	Turkish (N = 165) (% of strategies)
Deep acting				
Cognitive change	1	Changing the appraisal of the situation to be able to feel the required emotions	27.9	34.5
Attentional deployment	2	Directing attention away from the situation or thinking about events that will lead to feel the required emotions	15.6	26.7
Deep acting unspecified	3	Modifying one's underlying emotional state without explicit mentioning of cognitive change or attentional deployment	0.7	3
Surface acting				
Faking	4	Displaying unfeelt emotions	11.6	4.8
Hiding	5	Hiding true emotions	19.7	18.8
Surface acting unspecified	6	Modifying one's outward expressions without changing the underlying emotion, and without explicit mentioning of faking or hiding	15.6	12.1
Automatic regulation	7	The automatic display of an organizationally desired emotion derived from an emotion that is spontaneously felt	4.1	6.7
Emotional deviance	8	Expressions or behaviors failing to meet display rule	0	0
Other	9	Strategies that could not be captured by any of the categories mentioned above	5.4	1.8
			7.5	8.5
			39.5	36.4

deviance (7.5%) were also represented in the list of statements, but less frequently than deep acting and surface acting.

Critically, the largest category was category nine (39.5%), consisting of strategy statements that could not be assigned to any of the categories recognized in current theoretical frameworks on emotional labor.

Table 1 (right panel) summarizes the coding results for the Turkish data. Overall, the pattern is very similar to the Dutch data with category nine "other" (36.4%) also being the largest category. To compare the category distribution between the Turkish and Dutch samples, we ran a series of chi square tests. For each test, we focused on one of the categories (e.g., deep acting) compared to the other categories lumped together. The test results were not significant for deep acting vs other categories': $\chi^2(1, N = 312) = 2.78, p = .09$, 95% CI for odds ratio (OR) [.41, 1.07]; for surface acting vs other categories': $\chi^2(1, N = 312) = .43, p = .51$, 95% CI for OR [.69, 2.09]; for automatic regulation vs other categories': $\chi^2(1, N = 312) = 3, p = .08$, 95% CI for OR [.81, 11.94]; for emotional deviance vs other categories': $\chi^2(1, N = 312) = .11, p = .75$, 95% CI for OR [.38, 1.99].

Brief Discussion of Study 1

Taken together, these results suggest that the dominant taxonomy of emotional labor strategies, encompassing deep acting, surface acting, and automatic regulation, only partially captures the full breadth of emotion regulation strategies used by employees. In fact, almost half (Netherlands: 39.5%; Turkey: 36.4%) of strategy statements made by employees could not be assigned to any of these categories. This reinforces the need to extend current emotional labor taxonomies and consider strategies that go beyond deep and surface acting and automatic regulation (Grandey & Melloy, 2017). Although this is an important finding in and of itself, Study 1 did not provide any insights into the nature of these additional strategies. To address this shortcoming, we conducted Study 2.

Study 2

The aim of this study was to expand on prior work on emotional labor by establishing a broader taxonomy capturing all bottom-up derived strategies in our Dutch and Turkish sample. Rather than taking a top-down approach in identifying new emotional

labor strategies, we followed procedures used in other fields of research (e.g. Niven et al., 2009) and adopted a bottom-up approach in establishing a taxonomy by asking laypeople to assess the similarity between regulation strategy statements.

Phase 1: Rating the similarity between emotional labor strategies

In the first phase of this study, we assessed the similarity between the emotional labor strategy statements derived in Study 1. As the eventual taxonomy of emotional labor strategies might be different in both countries, we assessed the similarity between the collected strategy statements separately for the Dutch and Turkish dataset. Specifically, naïve participants, who were not familiar with any theory-based emotional labor strategy categories, assessed similarity between the emotional labor strategy statements derived in Study 1 using a card sorting task.

Method

Participants

Participants were psychology students at a European university who had not yet taken any courses on the topic of emotional labor. They assessed the similarity between the strategy statements derived from the Dutch data in one session and from the Turkish data in another session. The two sessions were separated by one week in a counter-balanced order (i.e., they assessed either the similarity between the Dutch strategy statements or between the Turkish strategy statements first). Participants were compensated with course credit. The study was approved by the local ethical review board.

Similarity of Dutch strategy statements

A total of 122 participants assessed similarity between the Dutch strategy statements. The final sample consisted of 95 participants (24 male; 71 female) after excluding 22 students who had prior knowledge on emotional labor (i.e., scored 3 or higher on the emotional labor knowledge question) and 5 students who failed an attention check (control card) during the similarity rating (card sorting) task. The average age of participants was 21.6 ($SD = 3.00$). More than half of participants (58.9%) worked in a customer service job.

Similarity of Turkish strategy statements

A total of 125 participants assessed similarity between the Turkish strategies. The final

sample included 101 participants (19 male; 82 female) after excluding 22 students who had some knowledge on emotional labor and 2 students who failed the attention check. The participants' average age was 21.50 ($SD = 2.96$). A high percentage of participants (63.4%) worked in a customer service job.

Procedure

Participants first provided demographic information (gender, age, nationality and work experience) and reported their knowledge of emotional labor (i.e., 1=no prior knowledge at all, 4=I already know a lot about emotional labor). Next, participants took part in a card-sorting task online (Cardsorting.net; Blanchard, Aloise, & Desarbo, 2017).

During the card sorting task, all Dutch or Turkish strategy statements were presented in random order. Participants were instructed to group strategy statements (cards) based on their similarity by adding similar strategies to the same pile, creating as many piles as they thought fit. Moreover, participants were asked to name each pile. To check whether participants performed the task carefully, we inserted a control card, which included text asking participants to sort it in a separate category. To make sure that participants understood the procedure, they were given a video demonstration of a card-sorting task, and were explained that each card represented an emotional labor strategy statement.

Phase 2: Clustering the similarity data

The aim of phase 2 of this study was to create a bottom-up taxonomy of emotional labor strategies by running cluster analyses on the similarity data obtained in Phase 1 of Study 2.

Analytical Procedure

In order to create a taxonomy of emotional labor strategies, we employed hierarchical cluster analysis using the "cluster" package in R (Maechler, Rousseeuw, Struyf, Hubert, & Hornik, 2015). In hierarchical clustering, the goal of the algorithm is to form groups by sequentially merging similar clusters (Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1984; Kassambara, 2017). It is a suitable approach to analyze the data in a bottom-up manner as it does not rely on a pre-defined number of clusters (Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1984;

Kassambara, 2017). Among the hierarchical cluster algorithms, we opted for Ward's (1963) hierarchical agglomerative cluster method using Euclidean distance because it outperforms other agglomerative cluster methods (e.g., complete linkage, average linkage) in generating homogeneous groups (Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1984; Milligan, 1980). Euclidean distance was used as a dissimilarity measure.

To determine the optimal number of clusters, we followed several procedures recommended in the clustering literature (Kassambara, 2017). Specifically, we combined the elbow method (i.e., choosing the cluster solution such that increasing the number of clusters does not markedly improve the total intra-cluster variation; Thorndike, 1953), average silhouette method (i.e., choosing the cluster solution with maximal average silhouette value, indicating that the strategies are well-matched to their clusters; Rousseeuw, 1987), and the gap statistic (i.e., choosing the cluster solution with maximal gap statistic, indicating that the clustering structure of the data is the strongest compared to a reference distribution with no clustering structure; Tibshirani, Walther, Hastie, 2001). In addition to these statistics, we also took the interpretability of the cluster solution into account.

In addition to correctly estimating the appropriate number of clusters, it is important to evaluate and then improve the quality of the final cluster solution (Kaufman & Rousseeuw, 2005; Rousseeuw, 1987). An important challenge of any hierarchical cluster algorithm is that poor cluster assignments are not improved throughout the analysis because objects are grouped sequentially and irrevocably (Everitt, Landau, Leese, & Stahl, 2011; Ketchen & Shook, 1996). As in previous research (e.g., Solymosi, 2019), we followed the recommended procedure to check and improve poor placements in clusters, and in turn reach the optimum cluster solution in the data. Specifically, we improved cluster solutions based on individual silhouette values of strategy statements (i.e., re-assigning strategy statements with poor silhouette index to the closest neighboring cluster).

For potential cluster solutions, we obtained silhouette values for the current and closest neighboring clusters of each strategy (Rousseeuw, 1987). Silhouette values allowed us to assess to what extent each strategy fits the cluster to which it was assigned. The silhouette value stands between -1 and 1 (Rousseeuw, 1987). Values closer to 1 indicate a good fit while values closer to -1 indicate misfit (Rousseeuw,

1987). Following Kaufman and Rousseeuw (2005), we reassigned poorly fitting strategies (i.e., strategies with negative silhouette values) to their closest neighboring cluster if they were a better match for the final cluster solutions both statistically and theoretically. It should be noted that we reassigned poorly fitting strategies only if they theoretically fit the newly assigned cluster.

Results

Number of clusters in Dutch data.

The elbow method suggested seven clusters, while the average silhouette method and the gap statistic both suggested a nine-cluster solution. The nine-cluster solution was therefore retained. However, cluster 2 had a negative average silhouette index, reflecting the presence of poorly assigned strategies. To further optimize the nine-cluster solution, as suggested by Kaufman and Rousseeuw (2005), we reassigned poorly fitting strategy statements with a negative silhouette index ($n = 14$) to their closest neighboring cluster, but only when this was theoretically meaningful. After these reassignments, the average silhouette index of cluster 2 became positive, increasing from -0.0061 to 0.006 .

Number of clusters in Turkish data.

The elbow method proposed a five-cluster solution, the average silhouette method proposed that any solution between five and ten clusters could be retained, and the gap statistic method proposed ten as the ideal number of clusters. We therefore next carefully examined cluster solutions with 5 to 10 clusters. The ten-cluster solution was the most interpretable and was therefore retained. As all cluster had a positive average silhouette index, we did not reassign any strategies.

Interpreting the cluster solutions

The full cluster solution containing all individual regulation strategies can be found in appendix. An overview of all bottom-up clusters is presented in Table 2. We first discuss clusters that directly match the categories of the current dominant taxonomy of emotional labor strategies: deep acting (attentional deployment and cognitive change), surface acting (faking and hiding), and automatic regulation. Subsequently, we discuss the clusters containing strategies that have been overlooked by the current dominant taxonomy of emotional labor strategies. It should be noted that

Table 2. Bottom-up derived Emotional Labor Categories

Categories	Description	Example
Categories of the Dominant Taxonomy		
Surface acting	Modifying outward emotional expression	Fake my emotions and smile
Deep acting-Perspective-taking	Taking customer's perspective	Put myself in a customer's shoes
Deep acting-Positive reappraisal	Reinterpreting the situation in a more positive way	Think that I am not the only one who is responsible for the situation
Deep acting-Acceptance	Accept the situation as it is	Accept difficult encounters as part of my job
Novel Categories		
Cognitive interpersonal	Changing customers' appraisals of the situation	Ask the customer to put him/herself in my shoes by saying "Would you make such a decision if you were me?"
Affective interpersonal	Changing customers' feelings about the situation	Make jokes to make things positive
Solution-oriented	Attempting to solve the customers' problems	Try to come up with a solution as fast as possible
Waiting	Waiting for the situation to unfold without actively intervening in the situation	Count till 10
Avoidance	Avoiding having to deal with the situation	Stay away from the situation
Outcome-oriented Categories		
Being professional	Expressing one's professional identity	Stay professional
Being positive	Expressing one's positivity to the customer	Be extra friendly and try to make extra eye contact
Deviance Categories		
Deviance in good faith	Protecting one's boundaries with self-protective and assertive behaviors	Tell a patient "Now, you are crossing the line. We are not continuing with this."
Deviance in bad faith	Deviating from display rules	Serve without smiling and perform my job at a minimum level.

our cluster labels reflect the majority of the cluster member strategy statements. As non-experts tend to create groups with high within-group variability (Fincher & Tenenbergh, 2005), not each single individual cluster member may be equally well represented by the cluster label.

Clusters consisting of strategies recognized in the dominant taxonomy of emotional labor

A number of the clusters of our bottom-up taxonomy consisted of either surface acting or deep acting. The existence of these clusters provides support for the current dominant taxonomy of emotional labor strategies capturing a significant part of the emotional labor domain. We discuss these clusters first.

Surface acting by hiding or faking

Both the Dutch (cluster one) and Turkish (cluster eight) cluster solution contained a surface acting by hiding or faking category. For example, statements like *try not to show my emotions* (Dutch data) or *do not show that I am annoyed* (Turkish data) are typical examples of hiding, while statements like *fake my emotions and smile* (Dutch data) or *wear my mask and try to be friendly* (Turkish data) are typical examples of faking. If this category indeed reflects surface acting, we might expect that it would mainly consist of strategy statements coded as hiding or faking in Study 1. This was the case, with the large majority of strategy statements in this cluster (84.2% in Dutch data and 81.8% in Turkish data) being coded as hiding or faking in Study 1 by expert raters.

Deep acting – cognitive change by perspective taking

Both the Dutch (cluster seven) and Turkish (cluster four) cluster solution contained a cognitive change category consisting mainly of perspective taking statements. For example, statements like *put myself in customer's shoes* or *stay friendly and think that this is the first time, and for a student it is all scary* (Dutch data) and *try to empathize with the customer* or *put myself in customers' shoes* (Turkish data). Consistently, 84.6% of Dutch strategies and 86.9% of Turkish strategy statements in these clusters were coded as "cognitive change" by the experts in Study 1.

Deep acting – cognitive change by positive reappraisal

The Turkish cluster solution contained a cognitive change category consisting mainly of positive reappraisal statements (cluster five). For example, statements like *think*

that I am not the only one who is responsible for the situation or think that I cannot make every customer satisfied. Consistently, a high number of statements in this cluster (87.5%) were coded as "cognitive change" by the experts in Study 1.

Deep acting – cognitive change by acceptance

The Turkish cluster solution contained a cognitive change category consisting mainly of acceptance statements (cluster six). For example, *accept the situation as it is or see customer problems as part of my job.* Consistently, a high number of strategies in this cluster (91.7%) were coded as "cognitive change" by the experts in Study 1.

Clusters consisting of strategies that are not recognized in the dominant taxonomy of emotional labor

The cluster analysis also revealed a number of categories that are not captured by the dominant taxonomy of emotional labor. An overview of these novel categories can be found in Table 2.

Cognitive interpersonal strategies

Both the Dutch (cluster six) and the Turkish (cluster one) cluster solution contained a category of strategy statements that described attempts to induce cognitive change in the customers. As such, unlike deep acting-cognitive change, employees primarily target their customers' rather than their own appraisals of the situation. Examples include *try to calmly explain both sides of a problem or explain to a student how his behavior affects others* (Dutch data) and *ask the customer to empathize with me by asking questions "If I requested the same thing how would you react?; How would you feel if I made this request?"* (Turkish). Employees thus stimulate perspective taking or reappraisal in their customers, which may indirectly calm down the customer and may make it easier for employees to display organizationally expected emotions. As this strategy does not belong to the current dominant taxonomy of emotional labor, one would expect this strategy to be coded as "other" by experts in Study 1. This was the case, with 89.2% Dutch and 95.7 % Turkish strategy statements belonging to this category being assigned to the "other" category by experts in Study 1.

Affective interpersonal strategies

Both the Dutch (cluster nine) and the Turkish (cluster three) cluster solution contained a category of statements describing attempts to change the feelings of the customers.

Similar to the cognitive interpersonal strategies, these strategies primarily target the customer, but rather than changing the customers' perception, these strategies aim to target the customer's emotions directly. Examples include *make jokes to keep things positive* or *try to make a customer feel loved and welcomed because she is in a pitiable situation* (Dutch data), and *offer a free meal, dessert or drink to decrease customer's negative emotions* or *focus on saving my relationship with the customer by making the customer feel he is important for us* (Turkish data). These strategies may restore customers' positive emotions, and thereby help employees to subsequently display organizationally expected emotions. As this strategy does not belong to the current dominant taxonomy of emotional labor, one would expect this strategy to be coded as "other" in Study 1. This was the case, with 100% Dutch and 100% Turkish statements belonging to this cluster being assigned to the "other" category by experts in Study 1.

Solution-oriented strategies

Both the Dutch (cluster five) and the Turkish (cluster two) cluster solution contained a category of strategy statements aimed at solving the problem at hand. Examples include *try to come up with a solution as fast as possible* or *think about how to solve a customer's problem* (Dutch), and *propose a quick compromise to solve the problem* (Turkish) or *focus on possible solutions* (Turkish). These strategies may diminish the negative impact of the situation on both the employee and the customer, making it easier for employees to display appropriate emotions during the interaction. This strategy is not part of the dominant taxonomy of emotional labor strategies and consistently 100% (Dutch data) and 100% (Turkish data) of statements belonging to the solution-oriented cluster were coded as "other" by the experts in Study 1.

Waiting strategies

Both the Dutch (cluster four) and the Turkish cluster (cluster nine) solution contained a category of statements that consisted of a wait-and-see approach. In contrast to solution-oriented strategies, strategies included in this cluster described behavior where employees refrained from actively approaching the situation, but instead waited until it was all over. Examples include *count till 10* or *just let it go* (Dutch data), and *count to 20* or *say a very short prayer in my head* (Turkish data). This strategy may mainly contribute to not complicating the situation and waiting until it is all over or for a solution to present itself. As this approach is not explicitly recognized in the

current dominant taxonomy of emotional labor strategies, one might expect that most of these statements were coded as “other” in Study 1. This was the case (57.9% in Dutch data and 50% in Turkish data).

Avoidance

The Turkish cluster solution contained a cluster (cluster ten) consisting of behaviors aimed at avoiding directly dealing with the situation. Examples include *divert my attention away from the situation* or *walk away from the interaction and approach other customers*. Attentional deployment is one way to disengage from the situation and a subset of the strategies belonging to this cluster (23.07%) were categorized as such by the experts in Study 1. However, most strategies were coded as “other” (46.15%) by the experts in Study 1. Several of these other strategies pertain to avoidance such as *stay away from the situation* or *stay away from the situation and take 10 minutes break*.

Outcome oriented clusters

Two clusters contained employee strategy statements which stressed the desired outcome of the regulation attempt but without specifying the specific regulation tactic. These clusters do not reveal new emotional labor strategies but we briefly discuss them below to fully interpret our cluster solution.

Being positive

The Dutch (cluster eight) solution contained a category of strategy statements that consisted of emotional labor strategies aimed at conveying positivity to the client. Examples include *stay very polite* or *be extra friendly and try to make extra eye contact* (Dutch data). In many cases, it was not fully clear whether these positive expressions were fake (surface acting) or accompanied by actual positive feelings (deep acting). Consistently, strategies in this cluster were mainly categorized as unspecified deep acting or faking (80%) in Study 1.

Being professional

The Dutch cluster solution (cluster two) included statements that reflected emotional labor strategies aimed at expressing a professional identity and showing corresponding role consistent behavior. Examples include *maintain the business picture* or *stay professional*. In many cases, it was not fully clear whether these professional

expressions were fake (surface acting) or whether they were accompanied by neutral or positive feelings (deep acting). Consistently, strategies in this cluster were mainly categorized as unspecified deep acting or faking (80%) in Study 1.

Emotional deviance clusters

Emotional deviance is showing felt emotions that deviate from display rules (Holman, Martinez-Inigo, Totterdell, 2008; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987; von Gilsa, Zapf, Ohly, Trumpold, & Machowski, 2014). As such, it may not qualify as an emotional labor strategy performed in an attempt to comply with organizational display rules. Yet, it has been acknowledged as a way employees may deal with emotionally demanding situations (Hayward & Tuckey 2011; von Gilsa et al. 2014). Interestingly, the present study revealed two distinct deviance clusters.

Deviance in bad faith

The Turkish cluster solution contained a cluster (cluster seven) consisting of behaviors that deviated from emotional display rules. For example, *provide my service scornfully* or *shake a customer's coke just before serving it to take revenge*. Consistently, 100% of these Turkish strategy statements were categorized in the deviance category by the experts in Study 1.

Deviance in good faith

The Dutch cluster solution contained a cluster (cluster three) consisting mainly of behaviors that deviated from emotional display rules but that can also be seen as an act of self-protection, assertiveness, or boundary management. For example, *think that I do still have some self-respect that I won't allow this misbehavior* or *tell the patient that now you are crossing the line; we are not continuing with this*. While strictly speaking these statements describe emotional deviance, some of them might be better captured by a term like boundary management. The majority of strategy statements in this group were categorized in the deviance (66.7%) category by the experts in Study 1.

Discussion

The aim of this research was to extend the focus on surface and deep acting in the emotional labor literature by providing a comprehensive account of the variety of emotional labor strategies used by employees in their day-to-day interactions with customers. In doing so, we adopted a bottom-up rather than a theoretical top-down approach. This ensured that we comprehensively captured the strategies employees actually use in real life interactions with customers. Specifically, we first gathered a wide range of emotional labor strategies by conducting structured interviews with employees. We subsequently derived a taxonomy by asking laypeople to assess the similarity between these strategy statements. Given the global growth in the service sector (Kim & Wood, 2020; The World Bank, 2020), we did so across two culturally diverse settings: the Netherlands (a Western setting) and Turkey (a non-Western setting) to ensure robust theoretical and practical contributions across different cultural contexts.

Findings revealed that employees use a broad array of emotional labor strategies. These include deep acting and surface acting, confirming the importance of these two strategies identified in early conceptual work on emotional labor (Grandey, 2000). Importantly however, our investigation also revealed that employees make extensive use of additional strategies, including, affective and cognitive interpersonal, solution-oriented, waiting, and avoidance strategies. Below, we discuss the key theoretical and practical contributions of our findings.

Theoretical Contributions

The primary contribution of this study lies in mapping a full range of emotional labor strategies, including well-established (i.e., deep acting and surface acting) and previously unrecognized strategies (e.g., interpersonal strategies).

First, our findings confirmed that employees make extensive use of deep and surface acting, reinforcing the practical value of this distinction. However, while we found a surface acting cluster subsuming hiding and faking in both countries, the cluster analysis did not yield a unitary deep acting cluster. Instead, three separate clusters for sub-strategies pertaining to deep acting emerged: perspective taking, positive reappraisal, and acceptance. This paints a more fine-grained picture of deep acting,

and confirms earlier speculations that deep acting may not be one unitary construct, but rather consists of distinct strategies with the common goal of changing felt emotions (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). This finding also aligns with a recent emotional labor study, which took a top-down approach and showed that cognitive reappraisal and perspective taking items loaded onto separate factors and differentially related to emotional labor outcomes (Alabak et al., 2020).

Interestingly, no separate attentional deployment cluster emerged in our study, although early work suggested attentional deployment to be a way of achieving deep acting (Grandey, 2000). However, attentional deployment statements (e.g. divert my attention away from the situation) grouped together with overt behavioral avoidance (e.g. stay away from the situation and take a 10-minute break) to form an overall avoidance cluster that will be discussed below. This is theoretically comprehensible, as attentional deployment describes a form of internal avoidance.

Importantly, our study identified acceptance as another strategy that is related to deep acting (Mikolajczak et al., 2009). Although it is well-recognized in the general emotion regulation literature (Webb et al., 2012), acceptance has, to date, been largely overlooked as an emotional labor strategy. Yet, it is an important strategy to consider, given that it may not only benefit employee performance, but also well-being. This is suggested by a longitudinal study of Bond and Bunce (2003), which showed that customer service employees' habitual use of acceptance positively predicts their well-being and performance measured one year later.

Taken together, these findings underscore recent recommendations to focus on specific rather than broad emotional labor strategies to study emotional labor (e.g., Alabak et al., 2020; Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). Our findings offer a variety of ways to do so by considering perspective taking, positive reappraisal, and acceptance instead of using omnibus deep acting scales that capture employees' *attempts or efforts to align felt and required emotions*, rather than the actual regulation strategies employed (Alabak et al., 2020; Grandey & Gabriel, 2015).

Second, our findings revealed new strategies that have rarely or never been considered in the study of emotional labor. Although emotional labor researchers have mostly speculated that there may be little opportunity for situation modification

in the context of emotional labor (Grandey, 2000), the present work revealed that employees do engage in strategies to modify the situations they are in. Previous emotional labor research on situation modification did not clearly distinguish different forms this strategy apparently entails: problem-solving (i.e., taking actions to make an impact on a situation) and behavioral disengagement (i.e., withdrawing from an immediate situation; Allen & Windsor, 2019; Diefendorff et al., 2008; Gross, 2015; Hayward & Tuckey, 2011). For example, previous research assessed situation modification with items like, *"I try to solve the problem"*, *"I remove myself from the situation"* (Diefendorff et al., 2008). However, the present data suggest that situation modification may not be a homogenous strategy in the emotional labor context. Specifically, we identified the solution-oriented category, which represents the problem-solving form of situation modification. Using solution-oriented strategies, employees changed the situation by trying to solve the customer's problem. This helps them to regulate their emotions in an indirect way, as the customer may be more satisfied, which leads to a rewarding interaction for both the customer and the employee (Cote, 2005).

We also identified behavioral disengagement strategies, yet in another cluster. Specifically, the avoidance cluster included behavioral disengagement strategies, such as walking away from the interaction, staying away from a difficult situation and taking a break. Such active disengagement from the situation helps employees manage their emotions, but employees may miss the chance to improve the situation for both parties. Therefore, there is value in differentiating disengagement strategies from solution-oriented strategies as they are fundamentally different. Behavioral disengagement strategies limit interaction with a customer, while solution-oriented strategies achieve the opposite. Supporting this, emotion regulation researchers outside the organization sciences have started to suggest that disengagement strategies should be separated from problem-solving strategies (e.g., Van Bockstaele, Atticciati, Hiekkaranta, Larsen, & Verschuere, 2019). In fact, the coping literature has long disentangled problem-solving strategies and disengagement strategies (Endler & Parker, 1990).

We also observed a more passive form of disengagement. The waiting cluster included passive attempts to hold oneself back from the situation. Employees may strategically use these waiting strategies to protect remaining resources or

recharge resources by not exerting further effort in difficult encounters. These strategies resemble passive avoidance coping (e.g., "I wait and see what will happen"; Andreassen, Hetland & Pallesen, 2012, p. 284) that has been identified in different contexts outside the emotional labor literature. For example, Andreassen et al. (2012) found that employees may engage in passive avoidance coping at work, and it is negatively related to their work involvement.

Third, our findings revealed that emotional labor strategies were not limited to intra-personal strategies, but also included interpersonal strategies. Although emotional labor always occurs in an interpersonal context, interpersonal strategies have received little attention in the emotional labor literature. The emergence of two clusters in our data revealed that employees sometimes choose to primarily regulate their clients' emotions, which subsequently may impact their own emotional responses and ease to express organizationally desired emotional expressions. Stated differently, rather than attempting to change their own emotions directly, they did so indirectly by changing the customer's cognitions, affect, and behavior which can lead to a more rewarding interaction for both parties. While cognitive interpersonal strategies are aimed at modifying customers' cognitions, affective interpersonal strategies are aimed at modifying customers' feelings. These strategies constitute an important regulatory tool for service employees, especially when the interaction cannot be ended, or when a client cannot be avoided. While emotional labor is inherently an interpersonal challenge, it is striking that prior research focused primarily on intra-personal regulation strategies (deep acting and surface acting). While these intra-personal strategies may eventually impact the cognitions or emotions of the customer, inter-personal strategies reverse the temporal order as these strategies primarily target the cognitions and emotions of the customer which may feedback into organizationally desired emotional experiences and expressions of the employee.

Fourth, drawing a parallel to Rafaeli and Sutton's (1987) distinction between surface acting as faking in good vs. bad faith, one may argue that emotional deviance has traditionally been conceptualized as deviance in bad faith in the literature: emotional displays deviate from display rules as a result of poor regulation skills or negligence and bad will. Statements reported in the Dutch deviance cluster, however, do not match this view. Rather than acting in bad faith, employees seem to engage in boundary management in order to de-escalate a difficult situation and protect themselves. This

may help them to regulate their own emotions and to ultimately meet emotional labor demands and benefit the organization. We therefore propose this to be a form of emotional deviance performed in good faith, which may ultimately help employees to regulate their emotions in the face of adverse situations. This view is in line with previous studies suggesting that emotional labor can be achieved with boundary management strategies (Hayward & Tuckey, 2011). In contrast, the Turkish cluster deviance contained behavior that was outright deviant and reflected an inability or unwillingness to comply with organizational display rules as described in the literature (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). Such strategies can be more culturally congruent than deviance in good faith strategies for relatively more collectivistic Turkish employees. They are not easily noticeable (e.g., secretly sabotaging a service encounter) by customers due to which employees can still keep harmony in customer relationships.

Practical Implications

The present study highlights the wide variety of strategies employees may use when engaging in emotional labor. This has several important practical implications. First, our findings suggest that there is a need to extend training programs aimed at enhancing employees' communication skills during difficult encounters with customers. Employees may not only benefit from engaging in deep acting but extending training to teach employees to engage in interpersonal or solution-oriented strategies may also help them to reach their regulatory goals. Future research on the antecedents and consequences of these novel strategies is needed to corroborate these claims, but a recent study by Itzchakov (2020) already showed that training interpersonal listening skills decreases service employees' anxiety during difficult encounters. Therefore, organizations can consider communication skill programs to empower their employees further.

Second, organizations may benefit from realizing that employees may occasionally engage in deviant behaviors to meet their jobs' emotional demands. While deviance in good faith may conflict with the motto of the customer being king, organizations should consider the trade-offs between emotional labor strategies' potential rewards (e.g., relieving tension, preserving the employees' self-esteem and well-being) and costs (e.g., reducing customer satisfaction) for employees and organizations. One strategy could be protecting employees against uncivil treatment with strong policies or practices, such as zero-tolerance toward abusive customers (van Jaarsveld, Walker,

& Skarlicki, 2010), or assuring employees that their well-being is more important than following display rules. These protective actions can decrease deviance that will harm organizations' reputation, as employees will be less likely to be involved in escalated unpleasant encounters.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

As with any study, the present study has a number of limitations. First, as we conducted interviews to collect data on emotional labor strategies, memory bias may have impacted our data. However, it should be noted that none of our participants experienced any problem recalling their reported customer encounters and emotional labor strategies. Second, the interviewed employees mainly had to display positive emotions to meet their job requirements. Possibly, employees who are required to display negative emotions (e.g., social control jobs, bill collectors) may use additional strategies not included in the present taxonomy. Future research is needed to complement and expand the present taxonomy by including this group of employees. Third, during interviews, we were only able to capture emotional labor strategies that are consciously accessible. As a result, the present study could not provide information about automatic emotional labor strategies. Future research should consider alternative assessment methods to explore more implicit forms of emotional labor. Fourth, our research was descriptive, and future research is needed to explore the predictors and outcomes of the novel emotional labor strategies identified in the present study. Regarding predictors, one may consider examining personality traits. For example, extraverted employees may be more likely to engage in interpersonal strategies, while shy people may prefer a wait and see approach. Regarding outcomes, it would be informative to examine the new categories' relationships with key emotional labor outcomes. For example, proximal outcomes such as psychological effort, felt authenticity, and rewarding interactions with customers may be considered alongside downstream well-being and performance-related outcomes (Alabak et al., 2020; Martínez-Iñigo, et al., 2007). Finally, our work can stimulate the development of theories of emotion regulation beyond the work context. Recently, English and Eldesouky (2020) have called for more research to uncover various forms of intrinsic interpersonal emotion regulation strategies. Our new interpersonal categories inform how intrinsic interpersonal regulation occurs in an employee-client context. We believe that cognitive and affective (intrinsic) interpersonal strategies can also be observed in other types of social contexts (e.g., romantic).

Conclusion

Which strategies do employees use when engaging in emotional labor? The present study confirms previous research by demonstrating that deep acting and surface acting are two key regulation strategies. However, we expanded on this work by illustrating that employees make use of a broader range of strategies, including interpersonal strategies (impacting the feelings or thoughts of customers), solution-oriented strategies, disengagement strategies (by adopting a wait-and-see approach or avoiding the situation) and deviance in good faith (engaging in boundary management).

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General discussion

Emotional labor is an inseparable part of many jobs. A large number of studies have been conducted that increased our understanding of emotional labor (for reviews, Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Grandey & Melloy, 2017). However, research on emotional labor has also been characterized by empirically unsupported theories, mixed findings, and methodological limitations. As discussed in Chapter 2, we identified three important research questions that have remained unanswered: (1) Does the traditional treatment of deep acting as a unitary construct (partly) explain why mixed findings have been obtained on the relationship between deep acting and emotional labor outcomes? (2) How do specific deep acting strategies (perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, and attentional deployment) causally impact emotional labor outcomes? (3) What are other emotional labor strategies employees resort to when engaging in emotional labor besides deep and surface acting?

The primary goal of the present dissertation was to address these research questions. This final chapter is organized as follows. First, based on the findings of the three empirical chapters of this dissertation, I will discuss these three research questions that are at the core of the present dissertation. Subsequently, I will discuss an overview of the theoretical, methodological and practical contributions of the current dissertation. Finally, I will present future research opportunities that can further improve the present state of knowledge on emotional labor.

Main Findings

To address the first research question regarding the unitary or multidimensional nature of deep acting, *Chapter 3* investigated the relationship between three specific deep acting strategies (perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, and attentional deployment) and three key proximal employee outcomes (resource depletion, self-authenticity, and rewarding interactions with customers) using a daily diary approach. Our findings suggest that treating deep acting as a unitary construct is suboptimal. In line with our expectations, the three fundamentally different deep acting strategies were indeed differentially related to these key outcomes at both between and within-person levels. Compared to the other two strategies, perspective-taking was linked to more desirable outcomes, such as higher rewarding interactions without suffering from resource depletion (observed at both levels of analysis). In contrast, positive reappraisal was found to be depleting at the within-person level. If employees use positive reappraisal more than they typically do so on a particular day, they may feel

more depleted. Positive reappraisal was also related to less rewarding interactions at the between-person level (albeit marginally significant). Finally, attentional deployment appeared to be a non-optimal strategy. It was positively related to resource depletion at the within-person level (albeit marginally significant) and employees who frequently used attentional deployment experienced lower self-authenticity at the between-person level.

The second research question addressed in this dissertation was: Do specific deep acting strategies causally impact key emotional labor outcomes? In *Chapter 4*, we conducted a customer-service simulation to compare the regulatory effect of perspective-taking, positive reappraisal and attentional deployment on resource depletion, negative affect, positive emotions, self-authenticity, perceived authenticity and service performance. Overall, our emotion regulation manipulation was not successful in creating the expected differences in the self-reported emotion regulation measures. Even though the manipulations consisted of clear instructions to use a particular strategy, participants also used other strategies (especially perspective-taking). As such, our emotion regulation manipulation may not have been sufficiently strong to override participants' habitual emotion regulation tendencies in a demanding social interaction. Participants may have resorted to their habitual emotion regulation strategies regardless of regulation instructions with the passing of time. For example, a habitual perspective-taker assigned to the attentional deployment condition, may have used attentional deployment at the start of the customer interaction but eventually resorted back to perspective taking due to regulation habits. Alternatively, the participant might have automatically used perspective-taking at the start of the interaction before recalling that he was supposed to engage in attentional deployment. Although our experimental manipulation failed, the correlational findings were still informative and again demonstrated the value of treating deep acting as a multidimensional construct. More specifically, we found that perspective-taking and positive reappraisal were associated with higher positive affect and self-authenticity and lower resource depletion. In contrast, attentional deployment was related to decreased positive affect (albeit marginally significant) without any beneficial links with other outcomes.

The third question we addressed in this dissertation was: What are additional emotional labor strategies beyond deep and surface acting? In *Chapter 5*, adopting

a bottom-up approach, we first collected a broad array of emotional labor strategies and then grouped them based on their similarities. As we anticipated, we found that there are indeed more emotional labor strategies that are used by employees than previously acknowledged in the literature. These additional strategies include cognitive interpersonal (reframing customers' perspective of the situation), affective interpersonal (changing customers' undesirable feelings), solution-oriented (fixing customers' problems), waiting (adopting a wait and see approach), and avoidance (avoiding dealing with the situation) strategies.

Implications

This dissertation confirms, but also challenges, previous theorizing and research on emotional labor. Therefore, the results of the three empirical chapters contribute to the study of emotional labor in several important ways. In the following paragraphs, I will elaborate on the novel insights that can be drawn from the findings of the three empirical chapters.

Theoretical Implications

A multidimensional view of deep acting

The first main contribution of this dissertation is to demonstrate that deep acting is not a unidimensional emotional labor strategy as previous research typically assumed. Top-down (Chapter 3 and 4) and bottom-up (Chapter 5) findings provided converging evidence that deep acting is best viewed as a multidimensional construct. Specifically, findings reported in Chapter 3 and 4 clearly showed that deep acting encompasses different specific emotion regulation strategies (i.e., perspective-taking, positive reappraisal and attentional deployment) that each have unique associations with key employee outcomes. The bottom-up taxonomy of emotional labor strategies reported in Chapter 5 further validated the multi-dimensional nature of deep acting. We found evidence that perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, and attentional deployment are used as emotional labor strategies. In addition to these strategies, we found evidence for an important yet understudied sub-strategy of deep acting: acceptance, which refers to accepting the situation as it is (Webb, Miles, & Sheeran, 2012). However, while perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, and acceptance strategy statements were represented in separate categories, the attentional deployment strategy statements were subsumed under the avoidance

category. This is actually not surprising given that attentional deployment is used to disengage from the situation (Sheppes & Meiran, 2008).

This multidimensional fine-grained approach to study emotional labor is consistent with recent emotion regulation theories that have been put forth in the fundamental (non work-related) emotion regulation literature (McRae, Ciesielski, & Gross, 2012; Uusberg, Taxer, Uusberg, & Gross, 2019; Webb et al., 2012). For example, cognitive reappraisal, which refers to managing emotions by changing the meaning of the situation, is conceptualized a broad emotion regulation category covering specific strategies (e.g., perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, and acceptance). It has been argued that these strategies are not well represented by a uniform construct (McRae et al., 2012; Uusberg et al., 2019; Webb et al., 2012) and focusing on reappraisal as a broad category may obscure specific outcomes of different subtypes of cognitive reappraisal (McRae et al., 2012; Uusberg et al., 2019; Webb et al., 2012). Our findings support this theorizing in the work context. For instance, we found that positive-reappraisal, but not perspective-taking, was related to greater resource loss in a daily diary study. It seems that taking a customer's perspective protects employees' resources more than adopting a positive perspective, perhaps because of the social benefits of perspective-taking (i.e., rewarding interactions with customers).

Overall, it seems that adopting a multidimensional approach in deep acting research provides a richer understanding of the deep acting construct. When not doing so, researchers would operationalize deep acting as a unitary emotional labor strategy, which would lead to mixed conclusions about its consequences. However, by focusing on the unique impact of specific deep acting strategies, researchers can make more precise predictions about deep acting.

The outcomes of deep acting

The multidimensional view of deep acting does not only increase our understanding of the construct itself but also advances our understanding of deep acting outcomes. Prior to this dissertation, it was theoretically and empirically unclear how deep acting relates to employee and organizational outcomes. For example, the theoretical framework of emotional dissonance argues that deep acting decreases emotional dissonance by changing inner feelings, resulting in beneficial well-being outcomes (Grandey, & Gabriel, 2015). Yet, other theoretical frameworks proposed that deep

acting leads to both resource losses (e.g., effort) and resource gains (e.g., rewarding interactions with customers), resulting in an overall null relationship between deep acting and well-being outcomes (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Grandey, & Gabriel, 2015).

What is lacking in these theories, and what this dissertation shows, is that the relationship of deep acting with employees' well-being and performance depends on the specific deep acting strategy adopted. Specifically, perspective-taking can benefit employees in terms of well-being and potentially also performance because it appears to be not energy-consuming. Moreover, perspective taking is overall adaptive as it was found to be associated with increased positive affect, self-authenticity and rewarding interactions. These findings align with previous studies showing that perspective-taking was positively related to service employees' psychological health and customer-oriented behaviors (helping towards customers; e.g., Arnold & Walsh, 2014; Axtell, Parker, Holman, & Totterdell, 2007).

The results regarding positive reappraisal were more complex. In our daily diary study, we found that when employees used positive-reappraisal on a particular day more than they usually do, they experienced more resource depletion. Additionally, positive reappraisal was related to less rewarding interactions with customers at the between-person level (although this relationship was marginally significant only). Yet, in the experiment, positive reappraisal was associated with less resource depletion and higher positive affect and self-authenticity. These seemingly contradictory findings may be explained by two reasons. First, the nature of stressors might have been different across the two different contexts (real life encounters versus lab). Deployment of reappraisal may be more taxing in the complex context of daily life because it may be more difficult to override the existing interpretations of the situation in more demanding situations (Sheppes & Meiran, 2007, 2008; Troy, Shallcross, Brunner, Friedman, Jones, 2018). Moreover, positive reappraisal might be more likely to be associated with beneficial outcomes in the lab, as it may be less effortful in a lab context. For example, our participants might have approached their experimental task as an interesting experience or challenge, which facilitates positive reappraisal. Our experimental findings on reappraisal are indeed in line with previous experimental findings in the fundamental emotion regulation literature. Participants instructed to engage in positive reappraisal in response to stressors

(e.g., video) experienced more positive emotions without significant mental cost (Richards & Gross, 2000; Shiota & Levenson, 2012). A second possible explanation for the different findings observed in our diary and lab study is that positive reappraisal may have trade-offs for employees. Even though it may help employees feel better and authentic in the short term, it may not promote beneficial outcomes when used frequently. It may come with costs in the long term, such as less rewarding interactions, which, over time, may be resource depleting. For example, when employees often use reappraisal, they may start to underestimate their customers' concerns or problems (e.g., it is not that bad, it is not a big deal), decreasing the quality of their social interactions.

Attentional deployment appears to be a suboptimal way of emotional labor. Paradoxically, although employees think about positive memories, attentional deployment may decrease their positive emotions. It showed a negative association with positive affect in the lab (although it was marginally significant). Moreover, chronic use of attentional deployment was related to decreased authenticity, a robust predictor of well-being and performance. These findings are particularly important because the potential negative impact of attentional deployment in the emotional labor context has been rarely acknowledged (e.g., Andela, Truchot, & Borteyrou, 2015). Attentional deployment has been mostly investigated in the lab in response to non-social stimuli and has been effective in decreasing negative affect, at least in the short term (Webb et al., 2012). However, it may not be an adaptive strategy in an interpersonal setting like customer-service because it prevents continued monitoring of the social interaction, which may eventually be linked to non-favorable outcomes. Compared to other deep acting strategies (i.e., perspective-taking and positive reappraisal), it showed different relationships with our studied outcomes. It may be theoretically and practically meaningful to separate attentional deployment from the broad construct of deep acting. Our novel taxonomy in Chapter 5 may better characterize attentional deployment as an avoidance strategy, considering that employees divert their attention away from the interaction.

The bottom-up taxonomy of emotional labor strategies

The bottom-up taxonomy presented in this dissertation provides a comprehensive map of emotional labor strategies. Here, we can draw an analogy between the novel taxonomy of emotional labor strategies and a travel map. Just as a comprehensive

travel map helps travelers explore more about new destinations, a comprehensive taxonomy of emotional labor strategies helps researchers learn more about emotional labor.

What can we learn about emotional labor from the novel bottom-up taxonomy? We identified six new, not previously examined categories of emotional labor strategies. These categories include cognitive interpersonal, affective interpersonal, solution-oriented, waiting, avoidance, and deviance in good faith strategies. When using cognitive interpersonal strategies, employees alter the way the customer evaluates the situation, which eventually regulates employees' own emotions. For example, a service employee may offer new interpretations or facts about the current problem to change the customer's perspective on it, thereby decreasing the customer's negative feelings and subsequently also his own negative emotions. As with cognitive interpersonal strategies, affective interpersonal strategies are aimed at the customer. However, such strategies aim to change the customers' emotions or emotional reactions, without necessarily changing the customers' cognitions of the situation. For example, a flight attendant may draw an unsatisfied customer's attention away from the situation by offering coffee. By doing this, she can improve the customer's affect and in turn her own affect. In solution-oriented strategies, employees aim to solve the current problem, which can have regulatory effects for both client and employee. For example, a math teacher may use educational games in his class to decrease students' math anxiety and improve their enthusiasm. Such a strategy solves the underlying problem (i.e., noisy students) and makes it easier for the math teacher to stay calm. In contrast to these proactive strategies, during waiting strategies, employees remain passive and wait for the situation to end. For example, a waiter may take a deep breath without intervening in a problematic situation. Similar to waiting, during avoidance strategies, employees do not engage with the situation and even withdraw themselves from the situation. In this case, employees avoid having to deal with the present situation. For example, a teacher may end her course early when her students are not paying attention. Finally, when engaging in deviance in good faith, employees attempt to gain more control over the situation by deviating from display rules. Such deviance-like behavior is aimed at protecting oneself. For example, a service employee may inform a rude customer that he will end the interaction if the customer continues to misbehave.

This new taxonomy can be an important starting point for further theory development in the emotional labor domain. Although current theoretical models in the emotional labor literature (e.g., Grandey, 2000) are informative to understand emotional labor strategies, they do not adequately account for the wide range of strategies used by employees. Indeed, our bottom-up taxonomy resulted in the identification of previously unrecognized emotional labor strategies in addition to commonly-studied strategies.

Broadening the scope of emotional labor research may aid in addressing the individual and organizational challenges of emotional labor. In fact, an important aim of many recent emotion regulation interventions in the non work-related emotion regulation literature is to improve interpersonal skills such as problem-solving and interpersonal reappraisal to improve well-being (e.g., Arbel, Khouri, Sagi, & Cohen, 2020; Doré, Morris, Burr, Picard, & Ochsner, 2017). For example, a very recent intervention study of Arbel and colleagues (2020) found that individuals who were trained in interpersonal reappraisal (i.e., helping others engage in reappraisal to decrease Covid-19 related worries) but not individuals who were trained in self-reappraisal (i.e., using reappraisal to decrease one's own Covid-19 related worries) showed a decrease in Covid-19 related worries. It may be that interpersonal emotion regulation provides opportunities for emotion regulation practice and enhance one's own emotion regulation skills (Alber et al., 2020). Thus, it can be easier than self-reappraisal (Alber et al., 2020). This favorable outcome of interpersonal emotion regulation is consistent with the resource-based perspective of emotional labor (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). Rewarding interactions with others (i.e., clients) can generate new resources and boost well-being (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Hobfoll, 1989). Therefore, our new taxonomy can be a basis of similar intervention attempts in the context of emotional labor as it revealed that employees engage in interpersonal emotion regulation strategies (e.g., cognitive interpersonal, solution-oriented) to deal with emotional labor demands.

Methodological Implications

A fine-grained assessment of emotional labor strategies

Chapter 3 and 4 made explicit that a unidimensional measure of deep acting is not ideal for studying deep acting. Previous research has predominantly used a unidimensional

scale (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003) to measure deep acting, resulting in mixed findings. This dissertation recommends measuring specific emotion regulation strategies rather than broad strategy categories. Possible confounds of the unidimensional measure would then also be less likely. For example, when reporting deep acting use with broadly worded items (e.g., *"I try to actually experience the emotions that I must show"*; Brotheridge & Lee, 2003), employees may refer to their motivation to feel the necessary emotion rather than a particular strategy they use (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). Thus, using a fine-grained measure, researchers can develop more nuanced predictions about deep acting and test them. For example, deep acting is likely to be linked with rewarding interactions with customers if it involves perspective-taking. This hypothesis would not be apparent and testable without a multidimensional measure of deep acting.

The bottom-up taxonomy reported in Chapter 5 is also important to obtain a better measurement of emotional labor. Existing emotional labor measures do not capture a wide array of emotional labor strategies that go beyond deep and surface acting. The bottom-up taxonomy provides a framework to develop a more comprehensive measure of emotional labor strategies. Such a measure is essential to gain a more comprehensive understanding of emotional labor.

Manipulating emotional labor strategies

Chapter 4 reported the first experiment that manipulated perspective-taking, positive reappraisal and attentional deployment in the context of emotional labor. Moreover, it adds to the limited research investigating the effectiveness of instructed emotion regulation in an interpersonal setting. A large body of fundamental emotion regulation research examined the effect of perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, and attentional deployment in response to non-social stimuli (for meta-analyses, Augustine & Hemenover, 2009; Webb et al., 2012). In these studies, participants were typically instructed to implement a particular strategy while watching a video clip. In contrast to standard film-viewing paradigms, only a few experiments were conducted in an interpersonal context (Butler et al., 2003; Richards, Butler, & Gross, 2003). In this case, participants received a brief instruction on emotion regulation (i.e., positive reappraisal or suppression) before discussing upsetting topics with their partner or a stranger. However, their findings were unclear. The authors did not use manipulation checks to ensure that participants applied the assigned strategy, and they did not find

a main effects of instructed emotion regulation strategies on individual outcomes (e.g., emotions, blood pressure).

In our experimental study, we trained participants in using particular emotion regulation strategies (perspective taking, positive reappraisal, or attentional deployment) and used reminders during the session to strengthen our instructions. However, the manipulation checks showed that experimentally manipulating emotion regulation strategies in the context of emotional labor is challenging. We did not find a significant effect of the emotion regulation manipulations on the self-reported emotion regulation measures. Instead, we found a similar pattern of emotion regulation across the three conditions, with perspective-taking being most often used and attentional deployment being the least often used strategy.

What can researchers learn from these results? First, the highly interactive nature of emotional labor is not particularly compatible with non-interactive paradigms that have been typically used in emotion regulation research. Emotional labor creates additional cognitive burdens for participants. They have to perform a work-related task while being involved in dynamic social interactions and managing their emotions. Moreover, emotional labor typically involves positive display rules, which requires continued monitoring. In such a context, following emotion regulation instructions may be more complex than in (typically non-social) experimental settings used in the fundamental emotion literature.

Second, to overcome these challenges, researchers may consider improving participants' expertise in the use of emotion regulation strategies with more intense training. With repeated practice, the three deep acting strategies may become more natural, which may override participants' habitual reactions to emotional stimuli. In fact, studies conducted in non-work settings have shown that individuals get more proficient in using perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, and attentional deployment with longer sessions of training (e.g., Denny & Ochsner, 2014; Volkaert, Wante, Van Beveren, Vervoort, & Braet, 2020). As a certain emotion regulation strategy becomes more automatic, it can also be more accessible during client interactions (Hülshager, Lang, Schewe, & Zijlstra, 2015; Totterdell & Parkinson, 1999).

Practical Implications

Novel insights from this dissertation should not simply motivate more research on emotional labor, but also encourage new applied practices. By focusing predominantly on deep and surface acting, previous studies have potentially overlooked important practical implications of emotional labor. The current findings suggest that there are many strategies to manage one's emotions in client interactions. Based on this wider repertoire, practitioners should integrate (a range of) adaptive strategies into selection, training and intervention programs about emotional labor. For example, individuals differ in their tendency to use both intrapersonal (John & Gross, 2007) and interpersonal emotion regulation strategies (Williams, Morelli, Ong, & Zaki, 2018). Based on our findings, habitual perspective-takers may be preferred for jobs with high emotional labor demands. Similarly, employees with high intrinsic interpersonal tendencies may be a better fit for emotionally demanding jobs (e.g., health care) because both employees and customers can benefit from these strategies. According to Williams and colleagues' (2018) study, the more individuals use intrinsic interpersonal strategies, the more likely they are to be prosocial towards others.

Critically, when designing training or interventions, practitioners should be conscious of the multidimensional nature of deep acting. Informed by previous research, they might have overlooked that different subtypes of deep acting may lead to different outcomes. Given the positive consequences of perspective taking, its engagement should be encouraged. It is also important that these programs minimize attentional deployment and other potential maladaptive strategies (e.g., avoidance). There is already empirical evidence in the fundamental emotion regulation literature showing that avoidance is detrimental to psychological health (e.g., De Castella, Platow, Tamir, & Gross, 2018). Attentional deployment and avoidance strategies may also prevent employees from learning from negative encounters with their clients. Practitioners therefore, may design mindfulness-based training to help employees better focus on the present interaction (e.g., Hülshager, Alberts, Feinholdt, & Lang, 2013). For example, Hülshager and colleagues (2013) found that a two-week mindfulness intervention decreased employees' surface acting and emotional exhaustion. Likewise, mindfulness-based interventions may reduce the usage of other maladaptive emotional labor strategies.

Limitations and Future Directions

The main focus of this dissertation was to increase our understanding of emotional labor. In what follows, I will consider some possible limitations of the current research and discuss future research directions.

Validating the bottom-up taxonomy

This dissertation showed that emotional labor is more than deep acting and surface acting. Future research is necessary to develop a comprehensive scale that measures and validates the novel emotional labor strategies identified in the present dissertation. Using such a novel measure, researchers can shed more light on the nature, frequency, antecedents and consequences of these strategies.

The nature of the novel strategies may encourage researchers to go beyond self-ratings only. Intrapersonal emotional labor strategies are assessed by self-report measures because it is difficult to truly capture the internal regulation process with observation. However, all new additions (cognitive interpersonal, affective interpersonal, solution-oriented, deviance in good faith, waiting and avoidance) can be easily noticed by customers. Obtaining customer-ratings of these strategies may reveal more about the interpersonal nature of emotional labor.

Polyregulation

One aspect of emotional labor that we have not addressed in this dissertation and that may be important to move the field forward is polyregulation. It refers to “adopting multiple regulation strategies within a given episode” (Ford, Gross, & Gruber, 2019; p. 198). There is a growing recognition in the emotional labor and emotion regulation literature that individuals may deploy multiple strategies to regulate their emotions in a single episode (Diefendorff, Gabriel, Nolan, & Yang, 2019; Gabriel & Diefendorff, 2015).

Future research can embrace this polyregulation perspective to better understand emotional labor. When do employees use multiple emotional labor strategies? Do they use strategies in sequence, simultaneously or flexibly? And, how does polyregulation affect employees' health and performance over time? For example, affective-interpersonal strategies may be initially used to decrease customer's negative feelings, so that cognitive interpersonal strategies can be more successful.

Given the very dynamic nature of emotional labor, contextual factors should be taken into account when examining polyregulation in the emotional labor context, such as customers' reactions and the duration of the interaction. Future theorizing may combine polyregulation with the resource-based perspective of emotional labor (Brotheridge & Lee 2002). Likewise, empirical research should examine whether polyregulation is more depleting than using a single strategy. It is also possible that adopting more strategies help employees regain resources.

More experiments

The literature is sparse on causal evidence on the link between emotional labor strategies and employee outcomes. Although our experiment reported in Chapter 4 was an important step in the direction of testing the causal effects of specific deep acting strategies, we could not establish cause and effect. Due to the failed experimental manipulation, the observed relationships remained correlational in nature, and strong claims about the impact of deep acting strategies on employee outcomes cannot be made.

Our experimental study showed that testing the impact of emotional labor strategies in the lab may require more sophisticated paradigms than used in the fundamental emotion regulation literature. Researchers should consider how to strengthen the impact of emotion regulation manipulations in the context of emotional labor settings. For example, participants' expertise in the use of emotion regulation strategies may be improved using extensive training. They can be first trained with non-interactive stimuli (e.g., video) and then with scenarios. We used scenarios and a trial call for emotion regulation practice. It may be more effective to precede this by a training with non-social stimuli. Participants may gain more confidence in the use of a particular strategy, as it may be easier to first implement that strategy without having to interact with another person. There is also value in collecting continuous ratings (Gabriel & Diefendorff, 2015) to observe the dynamic nature of emotional labor.

In future research, it is also necessary to conduct high-powered studies. Our experiment in Chapter 4 lacked the power to observe the expected impacts of manipulated deep acting strategies on outcomes. In future studies with more participants, researchers may consider applying our training materials in multiple

training sessions to test the effects of specific deep acting strategies e.g., Denny, & Ochsner, 2014; Hülshager, Lang, Schewe, & Zijlstra, 2015).

Conclusion

The present dissertation constitutes a critical step to further advance the study of emotional labor both theoretically and methodologically. I began with a literature review that shows that past emotional labor research is limited in three respects: a lack of understanding of (a) the nature and consequences of deep acting, (b) the causal impact of deep acting strategies, and (c) emotional labor strategies that go beyond deep and surface acting. Three empirical studies were conducted to address these critical research gaps. First, our findings suggested that deep acting is a multidimensional construct that involves different emotion regulation strategies. Treating it as a unitary construct may mask the unique impacts of underlying strategies, resulting in mixed findings on employee outcomes. Second, our findings revealed the challenges associated with experimental manipulation of emotional labor strategies. Finally, this dissertation advanced the emotional labor literature by going beyond the traditional focus on deep acting-surface acting and by revealing new strategy categories, each of which might have a unique impact on employee and organizational outcomes.

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Appendix

Summary

With the rapid rise of service-based economies, emotional labor has been critically involved in individuals' work-life. For example, in the current Covid-19 pandemic, you might have noticed that a welcoming smile is an integral part of cashiers, baristas, or waiters' work. Although their smiles are not visible under their face masks, they regulate their emotions to express positivity towards their customers.

In the past 20 years, research on emotional labor has grown and predominantly investigated two main emotional labor strategies: surface acting (modifying only external expressions) and deep acting (modifying inner feelings). Theoretical models have been developed to describe the relationships between these strategies and employees' well-being and performance. Cross-sectional and daily diary studies have examined the underlying proxies that explain these relationships.

Yet, despite this progress, three key questions remained unexamined. 1) Why does research on the consequences of deep acting produce inconsistent findings? Is it due to ignoring its multidimensional nature? 2) How do different deep acting strategies causally relate to emotional labor outcomes? 3) What are other emotional labor strategies besides deep and surface acting?

Chapter 1 elaborates on these three questions, and how the present thesis addresses them.

Chapter 2 presents an up-to-date view of the emotional labor literature by synthesizing what is presently known in the literature and how the field can be further advanced. In this review, we particularly focus on two traditional strategies (surface acting and deep acting). Several recommendations from this review have been obtained: the need to examine a) the multidimensional nature of deep acting, b) the causal effect of specific deep acting strategies on well-being and performance indicators, c) a comprehensive taxonomy of emotional labor strategies.

Chapter 3 provides a finer-grained investigation of deep acting. We argued that considering deep acting as a uniform strategy overlooks fundamental differences among deep acting strategies (perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, and attentional

deployment), which complicates understanding the consequences of deep acting. We predicted that three specific deep acting strategies are differently associated with proximal emotional labor outcomes (resource depletion, self-authenticity, and rewarding interactions with customers). Using a daily diary study, we supported our prediction. More specifically, compared to the two other strategies, perspective-taking seemed to be a particularly adaptive way of deep acting. It was positively associated with rewarding interactions at both within-person and between-person levels. In contrast, positive reappraisal was negatively related to rewarding interactions with customers at the between-person level (albeit marginally significant). Positive reappraisal was also energy depleting for employees. They felt more depleted when they used positive reappraisal than they typically do so on a particular day. Similarly, attentional deployment appeared to be less adaptive than perspective-taking for employees' well-being. It was linked to more resource depletion at the within-person level (albeit marginally significant). Furthermore, employees who frequently used attentional deployment reported lower self-authenticity at the between-person level.

Building on Chapter 3, **in Chapter 4**, we examine the potential causal impacts of the three deep acting strategies on resource depletion, negative affect, positive emotions, self-authenticity, perceived authenticity, and service performance. We experimentally manipulated these three strategies in a travel agency simulation. However, our manipulation failed to lead to the expected differences in the engagement of emotion regulation. In particular, participants predominantly engaged in perspective-taking regardless of the experimental condition they were assigned to. Nevertheless, this chapter offers important theoretical and methodological insights. Theoretically, the correlational findings confirmed that perspective-taking, positive reappraisal, and attentional deployment are different strategies. We found that perspective-taking and positive reappraisal were related to higher positive affect and self-authenticity, while they were related to lower resource depletion. In contrast, attentional deployment was linked to less positive affect (albeit marginally significant). Methodologically, this experiment informs us that manipulating emotion regulation in the context of emotional labor may require a more sophisticated design. For example, participants may need more intense training on emotion regulation to improve their expertise in the use of emotion regulation.

Chapter 5 argues that the current emotional labor literature is constrained to two broad emotional labor strategies. Using a bottom-up approach, we interviewed employees to collect a comprehensive list of emotional labor strategies. As expected, we found evidence for a wide range of emotional labor strategies beyond what is theoretically suggested. More specifically, we observed six novel strategy categories: cognitive interpersonal (changing the way the customer evaluates the situation), affective interpersonal (changing the customer's emotions), solution-oriented (solving the customer's problem), waiting (passively waiting for the situation to be over), avoidance (staying away from the situation) and deviance in good faith (deviating from display rules to protect one's self-esteem).

Finally, **Chapter 6** discusses how these findings can advance the current theoretical, methodological, and practical understanding of emotional labor. It also acknowledges the possible limitations of the empirical studies reported in this dissertation and provides future research questions.

Bottom-up emotional labor strategies (Chapter 5)

Dutch Sample

Cluster 1-Surface acting

Wear a mask and say "Good day, how are you?"

Fake my emotions and smile

Try to think that I have to behave normally

Continue my conversation with a customer as if everything was normal

Put aside my feeling and do what is good for situation

Try to look neutral and not show that I am mad

Place my frustration aside

Do my best not to show my emotions

Do not respond emotionally

Switch off my emotions and react according to customer's behavior

Switch off my emotions

Try not to show my emotions

Approach a customer the way I am without actually having emotions because I do it every day with so many people

Stay polite but very detached

Make sure that my tone is neutral

Try to take a step back from my emotions and observe the situation to get a sense what really happened

Put aside any skepticism and negative experiences from the past

Try to keep my composure

Feel very neutral and respond neutrally

Cluster 2-Being Professional

Focus on my breathing

Stay calm because I am inherently calm

Benefit from my posture to get in my role

Put all my effort in to pay attention on what I am doing, on my mimicry and with everything

Stay true to myself and believe in my work abilities

Stay conscious on the role I find myself in and think consciously in which role I take in

Maintain the business picture

Approach a situation professionally and neutrally
Stay professional
Stay calm and professional

Cluster 3-Deviance in good faith

Indicate a client that visiting hours are over and if he/she does not leave, security will assist him/her
Tell a patient "Now you are crossing the line. We are not continuing with this."
Tell a customer that "you are being very rude to me; I am going to take a step back because I won't help you further."
Call security
Think that I do still have some self-respect that I won't allow this misbehavior
Think that "dick buy it" but do not say it
Say "Jesus, dick, stop yelling at me. God, what a dick." in my mind
Become somewhat tenser
Be not that friendly anymore
Find very difficult to control myself
My genuine emotions change automatically depending on the situation
With my uniform I tell things with an authority figure

Cluster 4-Waiting

Think that it is often about salary
Think that it is not personal but business
Think that "There is one good thing about this job. In a bit, passengers will leave this flight and I will probably never see these people again. And if I do have them on-board again, then I probably won't recognize them and they won't remember me for sure."
Remind myself that keep going it is almost the end of a day
Think that in a bit they are gone and I forget about it
Think that "okay, he will go away by himself"
Think that I am not the one causing the problem
Think that "okay never mind, just let it go"
Just let it go
Tend to stay in the background and think "Have fun!"
Take myself out of a situation and go for a walk

Be distant from a situation
Switch my task with a colleague
Ask a colleague to take over my customer
Distance myself mentally
Finish my task as fast as possible to get rid of a customer
Count till 10
Think that "Okay, just think for a second, stay calm, just chill."
Be not solution-oriented but be closing-oriented

Cluster 5-Solution-oriented

Think that I cannot do anything about a problem anymore and try to neutralize a problem
Think that it is better to handle a situation now, then I won't have to think about it anymore
Think how I can come through the current situation
Think that how I can approach a situation constructively as possible
Think about how to solve a customer's problem
Think that the most important is to come to a good solution
Immediately address a customer problem before it escalates
Try to come up with a solution as fast as possible
Analyze a situation
Appease a situation

Cluster 6-Cognitive interpersonal

Genuinely tell a customer I am not able to give this service and mention other options
Explicitly say that "I understand you are angry and frustrated, I would have the same. But I cannot do anything for you right now. The only thing I can advise you to do is to follow these steps and report your complaint with the right person." (55)
Tell a customer that "Yeah sorry, but it is the idea that we both come out of it to reach a solution"
Explain that I cannot do anything about it
Try to convince the customer by telling that "Hey sir, I am also only doing my job. Look I haven't asked for that or that. So I am just doing my job. I am trying to do it as best as I can. You are maybe not happy with the price. Yeah, but yeah, I did not make those prices. That is what it is."

Stay honest about the customer's problem, don't beat around the bush

Be direct

Hold on to my point, be direct and don't say too much

Push customers to a certain direction

Keep arguing for my explanation but stay friendly

Create silence and ask questions

Try to stay calm and explain what the problem is

Honestly explain the reasons of a problem by showing my vulnerable side a bit

Try to calmly explain the both sides of a problem

Explain things and get mutual understanding

Try to explain why a situation occurs

Explain the cause of a situation

Try to explain why a situation is the way it is by giving examples if necessary

Explain to the student how their behavior affects others

Give an explanation about a client's problem and let him/her think about it

Explain what the problem is, what a customer did wrong, and what he/she can do better the next time

Give explicit and step by step instructions to a student

Try to listen to a student, but also try to make the student listen to me

Try to find a middle ground with a customer because I will do business with him/her later

Try to summarize like, "Is it correct this is what I heard and is this what I understand?"

"And then I try to reach a sort of compromise

Suggest to organize a meeting at a later date to be able to discuss my customer's problem better

Stay very factual

Discuss a situation with my colleagues to see what I can do best

Cluster 7-Perspective Taking

Respect a student's values and opinions

Be empathetic of a customer's situation and act accordingly

Try to empathize

See a customer as a person who has emotions

Put myself in a customer's shoes

Understand how a customer feels

Try to understand a customer's view

Understand that it is a difficult situation for a customer

Understand that a client is sick and he/she has worries

Remind myself not to treat others in a way I don't want to be treated

Think that "yeah the customer is probably really busy"

Stay friendly and think that this is the first time, and for a student it is all scary

Think that a customer is not evil, so I have to maintain my calmness

Adjust my breathing and slow down my words to feel calm

Ask myself "How bad is it actually what he is doing? It is not that bad because it is going well. And even if it was not going well, how bad is it? Not that bad."

Switch my emotions to match up with a customer's emotion

Cluster 8-Being Positive

Genuinely be friendly

Be automatically friendly

Find it easy to stay friendly

My interaction with a customer unconsciously goes well

Keep smiling

Be friendly and polite

Act friendly

Look friendly

Stay very polite

Try to stay friendly

Stay polite

Stay friendly

Stay positive because I want to be fair for everyone

Try to keep smiling because I think a smile can usually have de-escalating effects

Act as a patient nurse

Talk to a client as if he/she was a kind client

Look at a student in a friendly way

Be extra friendly and try to make extra eye contact

Stay calm

Thank for feedback and go on

Cluster 9-Affective interpersonal

Create a bit of bond with the customer by showing empathy to convince the customer what I want to do

Be concerned with making the customer feel comfortable

Fulfill customers' wishes to keep them as happy as possible

Try to keep the customer as calm as possible

Try to fulfill the client's concern

Use humour

Make jokes to keep an atmosphere fun

Make jokes to make things positive

Try to make the customer feel loved and welcomed because he/she is in a pitiable situation

Put my arm around the customer or take his/her hands

Call the patient by his/her first name to be approachable

Turkish sample

Cluster 1-Cognitive Interpersonal

Tell a customer that "Sorry, there is nothing I can do, this is not allowed" because his/her request is against the company rules."

Try to calmly explain the reasons of why a customer's request is unreasonable

Calmly explain why the customer is not right

Try to explain why I am performing a particular task in a nice way

Try to explain the reason of my slow service

Try to find other ways to explain the company rules that seem unreasonable to the customer to comfort him/her

Explain why the customer has to wait

Calmly explain that the mistake is not related to my company

Guide the customer with correct questions

Attempt to explain what I think about the situation to avoid misunderstanding in the situation

Explain the issue with simpler examples so students can understand

Ask the customer to empathize with me by asking questions "If I requested the same thing how would you react? ; How would you feel if I made this request?"

Push a customer to empathize with me by saying "Please put yourself in my shoes, what would you feel? I should be fair towards each customer about product

exchange. I am happy to assist you to choose another dress for you.”

Ask the customer to put him/herself to my shoes by saying “Would you make such a decision if you were me?”

Create awareness of the uncooperative attitude and behavior of the customer towards me by explaining things from my perspective

Try to make myself understood by the customer

Let a customer knows that I cannot perform my job properly under his/her pressure

Show a customer that the current argumentation is pointless by saying “if we continue to argue, I cannot serve other customers. As you see, they are waiting to be served and we are wasting their time. We disrespect other customers.”

Try to convince a customer that his/her claims are not correct

Tell the customer his/her expectation is not realistic

Explain the customer why he/she should wait while saying bad things about him/her in my mind

Tell a customer “if you do not like your hair, you can try other hair dressers next time”

Ask annoying customers to leave the restaurant because I think that if they don’t leave I might lose other customers, and that I need to think of the restaurant’s reputation

Cluster 2-Solution-oriented

Try to find a compromise with the customer even it takes hours

Suggest a solution for the benefit of both me and a customer

Propose a quick compromise to solve the problem

Devote my energy to fixing a customer problem because if I sincerely help the customer, he/she becomes kind to me in return

Be solution-oriented

Focus on possible solutions

Change the subject of the conversation, as a result there is no problem anymore

Try to divert the customer’s attention to the main problem

Try to divert the customer’s attention from negative things to positive things in the project

Pass the customer to my more experienced colleague

Double check my answer with my colleague

Put on background music

Direct my attention to a task which makes me feel successful at my job

Cluster 3-Affective Interpersonal

Show affection

Try to sound and look as enthusiastic as possible

Be friendly and respectful

Be sympathetic and friendly

Try to be warm and friendly

Be customer oriented

Focus on saving my relationship with the customer by making the customer feel he/she is important for us

Focus on how to make a customer satisfied

Try to make the customer to feel more positive

Offer free meal, dessert or drink to decrease the customer's negative emotions

Try to eliminate the customer's frustration

Lie to the customer to comfort his/her

Flatter the customer

Make a customer feel right about the situation because I think customers get pleasure to feel superior than waiters

Try make the customer feel right by apologizing

Try to analyze the customer's personality based on his/her reactions and then behave accordingly

Analyze the customer's personality and tell him/her what he/she wants to hear

Relate to customers so that they see me as a friend/sister

Get the customer to sympathize with me

Cluster 4-Perspective taking

Do not take the patient's anger personally because I know that she goes through a difficult process

Be aware that everyone does not see the same thing

Be aware of the fact that a customer sees the situation different than I see

Think that if I were a customer, I might think similarly

Try to empathize with the customer

Try to understand what a customer thinks and wants

Put myself on the customer's shoes

Think about the possible reasons of a customer attitude, and then behave accordingly

Think about why a customer does a particular behavior

Think that a customer may have different understanding and standards than mine
Think that these naughty and loud behaviors are normal in that age group; I was like them when I was a kid

Think that "the reasons of students' poor performance might be that math is a difficult subject, and all students are not good at maths rather than they are lazy"

See my students as my kids

Imagine customer as a baby who has no knowledge about products

Cluster 5-Positive reappraisal

Think that I need to protect my mood

Give myself self-encouragement by telling inside I am good at my job

Tell myself that I will handle this issue just like I did before

Think that I will take a break after the current interaction

Think that come on! Why am I getting annoyed by such a stupid customer?

Tell myself "be patient, the day will almost end"

Think that I did what I have to do; so I should not worry more

Attribute the customer's rudeness to his/her unhappiness in life rather than my performance

Think that the customer just wants to vent his/her anger

Think that the customer looks for someone in a lower status to vent his/her frustration on

Think that I am not the reason for the customer's frustration; he/she is the reason his/her frustration

Think that the customer is indeed disappointed with my company regulations; not with me

Think that I am not the only one who is responsible of the situation

Think that the customer does not have to like everything

Think that I cannot make every customer satisfied

Think that people have more terrible problems than my problem with the customer

Cluster 6-Acceptance

Accept the situation as it is

Accept difficult encounters as part of my job

See customer problems as part of my job

See customer as money

Think that if my customers are not happy with me, I cannot make money

Think that if a customer likes my service, I can make more money

Think that "I work to make money; if I earn the customer's trust, I could make more money."

Think that I will earn money if I convince the customer to buy the product

Think that being polite always leads to better outcomes than being aggressive and internalize this thought

Be patient as patience brings good things

Think that my potential negative reaction will get worse treatment in return

Think that if I relieve my true feelings, I will regret it later

Think that I should not make the students understand my sadness as they may get sad

Be aware that if I approach a negative customer negatively, I exacerbate the problem

Think that if I say bad things right now, the student may lose her interest in my course

Think that how I can make my job better

Sincerely think about how I can apply the customer's feedback to my job

Consider each passenger as a person who is flying in my company airplane for the first time and try to ensure that the customer will choose my company again

Plan in my mind the next steps as the customer was talking

Think that indeed, the customer is right

Think about how I can make the customer less angry

Think that I need to be agreeable otherwise I may lose my job

Think that this is my duty; therefore I have to do it

Think that this is my job; I need to show one last effort

Cluster 7-Deviance in bad faith

Make eye contact and waited a little bit to see whether the student realizes his/her misbehavior

Show with my facial expression that I do not approve the student's behavior

Slightly raise my voice to show that I get angry at a student's behavior

Let the customer see that I feel offended

Be aloof towards the customer

Take things personally and could not control my emotions

Serve without smiling and perform my job at a minimum level

Not try to be so friendly

Be not friendly with the customer
Be not friendly, stop smiling and do not laugh at customer's jokes
Laugh ironically and lightly
Provide my service scornfully
Shake a customer's coke just before serving it to take revenge

Cluster 8-Surface acting

Try to look not angry
Look strong and not reflect my negative mood
Hide that I am annoyed
Do not show that I am annoyed
Try to not vent my emotions
Control my emotions
Think that I should not show my anger
A little bit suppress my anger
Suppress my anger
Show neutral facial expressions
Serve with a neutral face while hiding my true feelings
Try to have a poker face
Try to look calm while saying bad words inside my head
Swear at the customer in my mind but smile at him/her
Wear my mask and try to be friendly
Only laugh, I do not show my genuine thoughts
Disconnect with my emotions and focus on only my task
Be aware that my emotions do not improve my performance; instead, they weaken my performance so I put my emotions away
Think that the customer is not my friend; I need to be professional. I cannot reveal my true feelings
Try to look professional because I care about my reputation at work
Be serious and modest
Keep in my anger

Cluster 9-Waiting

Stay calm
Try to keep calm

Try to stay calm as much as possible

Pray the God for help (in my head)

Say a very short pray in my head

Breathe deeply and think that this is my job; I have to serve the customer

Count to 20

Take a deep breath

Cluster 10-Avoidance

Stay away from the situation and take a 10-minute break

Divert my attention away from the situation

Walk away from the interaction and approach other customers

Stay away from the situation

Calm down without feeling a need to do something to stay calm

Without doing anything my negative emotions go away

Do not mind the situation

I did not do or think anything

Pretend like nothing happened after the customer complained about me

Try to ignore the customer's annoying attitude

Let it go because the customer will not get my point

Think that "Never mind, I am wasting my time"

Think that the customer will not understand me; I should do my job quickly to get rid of him

Impact paragraph

Successfully managing one's emotions at work should help maintain well-being and social functioning (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). Given this evident importance of emotion regulation, I will discuss how the findings of the current dissertation can benefit science and society in this paragraph. In particular, I will focus on two points: 1) shifting from broad categories to specific emotion regulation categories, 2) considering a broad range of strategies.

The first key message that can be taken from this dissertation is that researchers and practitioners should focus on specific emotional labor strategies rather than broad categories. Failing to do so may lead to an incomplete understanding of emotional labor. To date, research on emotional labor has mainly studied two broad categories. In particular, theoretical and practical recommendations regarding deep acting have remained limited. This dissertation showed that differentiating specific strategies under the broad category of deep acting can provide richer scientific understanding and, in turn, societal implications. Such a finer-grained approach is relevant to studying emotion regulation in the context of emotional labor and outside of the work context. A long-term goal of this approach should create more robust theories that can be applied to improve the use of adaptive emotion regulation strategies. The current findings recommend perspective-taking as a particularly optimal strategy for employees' well-being and performance.

Second, it is important to understand a diverse set of emotional labor strategies that employees use to move emotional labor science forward. Our findings suggest that traditionally-studied emotional labor strategies only tell one part of the story. Having a narrow focus on emotional labor strategies would result in a limited understanding of the consequences of emotional labor and, in turn, suboptimal interventions. Instead, understanding the nature of a broader range of strategies can facilitate the development of more efficient programs for employees' health.

Reference

Grandey, A. A., & Gabriel, A. S. (2015). Emotional labor at a crossroads: Where do we go from here? *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 2, 323–349. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032414-111400>

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Thank you, Dank je, Tesekkurler 😊

Merve.

Curriculum Vitae

Merve Alabak was born on September 6, 1991, in Edirne, Turkey. She obtained her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology at Isik University, Istanbul, Turkey, in 2014. She then received her Master's of Arts degree in Psychology with a specialization in Industrial and Organizational Psychology at Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey, in 2016. In 2017, she moved to Maastricht, where she currently resides. She worked as a PhD student in the Work and Social Psychology department at Maastricht University between May 2017 and August 2021. As of September 2021, Merve is working in the same department as a postdoctoral researcher and teacher.

