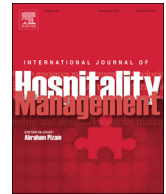




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Frontline employees' passion and emotional exhaustion: The mediating role of emotional labor strategies

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to apply a dualistic model of passion to explore how frontline employees with different types of passion for work use emotional labor strategies, and how this affects emotional exhaustion. The research surveyed samples of 260 in the restaurant industry and employed Structural Equation Model for analysis and testing. The results show that harmoniously passionate frontline employees tend to adopt a deep acting strategy when confronted with emotional labor, and then protect themselves from emotional exhaustion, whereas frontline employees with obsessive passion tend to employ a surface acting strategy, and are in turn more likely to exhausting their emotional energy. Further, finding of mediation analysis confirms the partially mediating role of emotional labor strategies in the relationship between dualistic passion for work and emotional exhaustion. Finally, this study proposes managerial implications and suggestions for future research.

1. Introduction

Frontline employees in service industries, especially the tourism and hospitality sector, act as the contact point between customers and the organization, and are frequently viewed as the source of service differentiation or competitive advantage for companies (Tsauro and Tang, 2013). Frontline employees need to perform not only intellectual and physical labor, but also emotional labor (EL). In the context of EL, Grandey (2000) points out emotional labor as “the process of regulating both feelings and expressions for organizational goals”. The employees have to make sincere efforts to experience and display the appropriate emotions (i.e., deep acting) (Hwa, 2012) and adhered to the organization’s emotional display rules (Johnson and Spector, 2007; Zapf and Holz, 2006). Frontline employees are expected to be polite, warm and friendly to internal and external stakeholders, and not express anger and frustration (Smollan, 2006). In this process, EL becomes a source of job stress (Hochschild, 1983). Frontline employees need to constantly regulate their emotions and interact with customers, and therefore experience a higher level of emotional exhaustion (EE) than other employees (Kim et al., 2012). EE is a state of physical or mental depletion, which is often accompanied by a high turnover rate, poor employee performance and low organizational effectiveness. Therefore, hospitality researchers are paying increasing attention to the potential antecedents of EE (Li et al., 2017).

In an EL context, employees are expected to display “appropriate”

emotions and suppress “inappropriate” ones to attain specific goals of the organization, and therefore adopt EL strategies (Brotheridge and Lee, 2002). Previous research has identified two distinct acting strategies that frontline employees typically use to meet the requirements for emotional expressions. These strategies are surface acting (SA) (i.e. faking the expected emotions) and deep acting (DA) (i.e. actually experiencing the desired emotions) (Hochschild, 1983). Researchers have found that SA is more likely than DA to associate with EE (Li et al., 2017), while DA may bring numerous positive effects (Pugh et al., 2011). However, the factors determining whether employees respond by faking emotions, or with deeper-level regulation, need further investigation. Allen et al. (2010) recommend considering individual differences in motivational tendencies among frontline employees when examining antecedents of the use of EL strategies.

Among theories about motivation, the self-determination theory (SDT) developed by Deci and Ryan (2000) may offer a potentially useful framework for studying the antecedents of EL strategies (Sisley and Smollan, 2012). In SDT, Deci and Ryan (2000) identified two categories of motivations, namely, autonomous and controlled. Sisley and Smollan (2012) found that SA is driven more by controlled than by autonomous motivations. Conversely, DA is driven by more autonomous, identified and integrated motivations. Passion is also related to motivations (Vallerand et al., 2003). Previous research found that employees with passion for work may increase positive emotions, well-being and job performance through greater involvement in their work (Baum and

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Locke, 2004; Baum et al., 2001). However, Vallerand (2010) found that passionate employees may also experience EE. Lavigne et al. (2012) suggests that previous studies that only considered passion as a one-dimensional construct could not elucidate why two employees can love their work equally but have different psychological outcomes.

Scholars have proposed a dualistic model of passion for work based on SDT. This model distinguishes between harmonious passion (HP) and obsessive passion (OP) for work (Philippe et al., 2010; Vallerand and Houffort, 2003). HP for work refers to an autonomous internalization that leads individuals to internalize work that they like into one's identity, and thus perceive it as important and enjoyable (Forest et al., 2011; Ho et al., 2011; Vallerand et al., 2003). In contrast, OP for work represents a disproportionate significance given to work in the context of one's identity and uncontrollable drive to partake in work (Caudroit et al., 2011; Forest et al., 2011; Lavigne et al., 2012). Obsessive passion for work develops when employees love work because of contingencies that come to control them (Vallerand et al., 2003).

Given the necessity in tourism and hospitality sector to have certain emotional display rules in place to ensure service excellence and the differential impacts of different emotional labor strategies, it is important to understand how a frontline employee can foster the use of more effective EL strategies (Liu et al., 2008). Previous empirical studies have examined situational factors (Goldberg and Grandey, 2007; Grandey et al., 2004), as well as individual difference factors (Pugh, 2002; Liu et al., 2008) as predictive of employees' reactions to emotional demands on the job. However, there has been no investigation of antecedents of EL strategies from the view of motivational factors. To bridge the gap in the EL literature, the current study focuses on individual motivational tendencies as an antecedent of EL strategies. We argue that the dualistic model of passion for work developed with SDT as a foundation can probably more effectively explain the antecedents of use of EL strategies among frontline employees and also offer an insight into how EE occurs. Therefore, the main purpose of this study was to offer an integrated approach for understanding the antecedent of EL strategies and to examine the theoretical and empirical evidence on the causal relationships among passion for work, EL strategies, and EE.

This study has many contributions to the academic field. First, SDT and the dualistic model of passion for work are employed to validate the proposition that passion for work may be the antecedent of the use of EL strategies when confronted with EL. Despite strong interest in exploring the antecedents of EL strategies adopted, previous research has not applied an integrated theory to guide the exploration. This investigation utilizes the dualistic model of passion for work to provide a novel direction of thinking. Additionally, the concept of passion for work helps determine how EL leads to EE among frontline employees, by considering the whether all employees with passion for work are likely to experience EE, or whether any other passion is more likely to trigger the feeling of EE in frontline employees. Finally and most importantly, this work re-examines the relationship between EL strategies and EE, and also explores the mediating role of EL strategies in the relationship between passion for work and EE.

2. Literature review and hypotheses

2.1. Frontline employees

In both academia and practice, service employees who come into direct contact with customers either face-to-face or voice-to-voice as part of a job, and fulfill the needs of customers, are referred to as frontline employees (Hochschild, 1983). The restaurant industry is now a very important and challenging sector of the service industry throughout the world. Therefore, since customer retention increases profitability, restaurant managers must focus on creating customer satisfaction and retaining a pool of profitable loyal customers (Karatepe and Aleshinloye, 2009), and accordingly must ensure that the attitudes and behaviors of frontline employees are consistent with the

expectations of management and customers (Hartline and Ferrell, 1996). Indeed, frontline employees form the most important link in the service process (Karatepe and Aleshinloye, 2009). However, since frontline employees dealing directly with customers are tasked with satisfying and retaining customers, their work is more likely to cause particularly high levels of EE (Li et al., 2017).

2.2. Emotional exhaustion

Freudenberger (1974) refers to the excessive energy, strength or resource requirements on individuals, which cause individuals to fail, wear out or become exhausted as burnout. Maslach and Jackson (1984) observed that burnout is a state of physical and psychological exhaustion. Maslach's theory divides burnout into three dimensions. The first dimension is "emotional exhaustion", which refers to the organization's excessive emotional demands on the individual during interpersonal interaction, which the individual is unable to manage, leading to exhaustion of emotional resources. The second is "depersonalization" dimension, where individuals lose feelings toward customers. That is, the employees either pay no heed to the customers, or view them as objects, producing indifference or emotional distance. The final dimension is the "reduced personal accomplishment" dimension, where individuals lose their motivation for their jobs, significantly reducing feelings of competence or a sense of professional accomplishment (Maslach and Jackson, 1981; Schaufeli and Buunk, 2003; Wu and Cheng, 2003). Scholars frequently discuss EE from a psychological point of view. When workers show signs of EE, their psychological resources have been exhausted, and they can no longer make their own contributions (Ambrose et al., 2014).

Existing literature divides EE into psychological and physical stress (Cox et al., 1984). EE can reflect a wide range of issues. Since EE is the core feature of burnout (Schaufeli and Taris, 2005), people describing themselves or others as experiencing burnout most frequently mention the experience of EE (Schaufeli et al., 2009). Compared to the other two dimensions of burnout, EE has a stronger relationship with job related outcomes (Lee and Ashforth, 1996) and has been shown to be the best indicator of burnout (Piko, 2006; Donahue et al., 2012). In addition, With respect to the psychological and behavioral outcomes of EL strategies, EE is one of the most frequently cited negative consequences of EL strategies (Bono and Vey, 2005; Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002; Maslach, 1982). Therefore, when exploring the work-related outcomes of passion and EL strategies, only EE will be used in the present research.

EE is a state of physical and psychological depletion (Li et al., 2017), and is one of the most dysfunctional attitudes in the contemporary high-stress work environment (Schaufeli and Salanova, 2007). It may result in negative outcomes at both individual and organizational levels. Many studies on hospitality sector have considered the problems of EE (Kim, 2008; Lee and Ok, 2012), with its accompanying high rates of absence (Deery et al., 2002) and poor job performance (Cropanzano et al., 2003).

2.3. Relationship between passion for work and emotional exhaustion

Passion is a strong inclination toward an individual's preferred self-defining activity, which the individual regards as important (or high value), and is willing to invest a lot of time and effort into (Vallerand et al., 2003). Vallerand (2010) argued that if an individual believes that a job has value, enjoys the job, and is willing to make a continued investment in the job, then the job has become a part of the individual's own identity, producing a passion for the job, namely passion for work. Although passion ensures willing participation, it may underpin both positive and negative outcomes depending on the type of passion exhibited (Curran et al., 2011). In line with this perspective, this has led scholars to present a dualistic model of passion for work (Philippe et al., 2010; Vallerand and Houffort, 2003).

Based on SDT, the dualistic model of passion argues that individuals internalize activities in two ways (autonomous or controlled), and that the type of internalization determines the passion that develops (Vallerand et al., 2003). In the autonomous internalization process, employees select the works that are important to them autonomously, and integrate their work because it is fun or developmental. This passion generated by an employee's autonomous internalization of works is called HP for work. Conversely, partial or controlled internalization leads to the development of OP (Vallerand, 2008). Indeed, empirical studies also support a dualistic model of passion (Vallerand, 2008, 2010). In general, HP for work follows autonomous internalization, and integrates the work into the person's self-concept. This self-concept is stable and strong, since its foundations are in the individual's control. Obsessive passion for work follows controlled internalization, and causes work to be identity-consuming, as it renders little room for other identities. This self-concept is fragile, as its foundations are contingent upon assets that are outside the individual's control (Ho et al., 2011; Mageau et al., 2011).

Few studies have examined the relationship between passion and EE in frontline employees). However, research has supported the contention that HP and OP are likely to have distinct motivational consequences (Vallerand, 2008; Vallerand et al., 2010). According to SDT, people have different personal motivations for doing their jobs. SDT distinguishes between controlled and autonomous forms of motivation to engage in a specific activity or set of activities. Autonomous work motivation relates to various positive work-related outcomes, while controlled motivation is linked with negative consequences for workers (Van de Berghe et al., 2013).

As mentioned above, in the conceptualizations, HP could correspond with the descriptions of autonomous motivation, and has been found to be positively related to a variety of positive work-related outcomes, including flow & concentration (Vallerand et al., 2003), organizational commitment and positive affect (Forest et al., 2011), well-being (Trépanier et al., 2014), and negatively associated with burnout (Carbonneau et al., 2008; Shani et al., 2014; Lavigne et al., 2012; Trépanier et al., 2014) and EE (Donahue et al., 2012; Fernet et al., 2014). In contrast, the definition of OP seems to correspond with the definition of controlled motivation, and is thought to lead to a range of negative outcomes such as excessive work rumination (Donahue et al., 2012), role conflict (Thorgren and Wincent, 2013), work/family conflict (Caudroit et al., 2011), burnout (Carbonneau et al., 2008; Shani et al., 2014; Lavigne et al., 2012; Trépanier et al., 2014) and EE (Donahue et al., 2012; Fernet et al., 2014). Therefore, this study posits that the two types of passion for work differentially predict EE, such as the first and second hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. Frontline employees' HP for work is negatively linked with EE.

Hypothesis 2. Frontline employees' OP for work is positively linked with EE.

2.4. Relationship between passion for work and emotional labor strategies

Previous literature on EL strategies has not paid much attention to individual motivational tendencies (Allen et al., 2010). Recent research has indicated that goal-driven motivational processes (e.g., control theory) and personality traits (e.g., Big Five) play a significant role in how employees regulate emotions at work (Diefendorff and Richard, 2003; Gosserand and Diefendorff, 2005). Based on this, Diefendorff et al. (2005) revealed that differences in personality traits, such as extraversion and agreeableness, determine an employee's EL strategies (Diefendorff et al., 2005).

Additionally, in the context of EL, Cossette (2014) recently argued that employees who can internalize emotional display rules are more likely to express their felt emotions naturally, and therefore tend to use

DA rather than SA. Conversely, employees who are less inclined to internalize display rules tend to use more SA to avoid being criticized by their supervisors (Cossette and Hess, 2015). This means that EL strategies could be perceived as motivated acts (Cossette, 2014). More specifically, SDT posits two categories of motivation, namely controlled motivation and autonomous motivation (Gagné et al., 2010; Kim et al., 2002). According to Cossette (2014) and Sisley and Smollan (2012), considering these different motivations (either autonomous or controlled motivation) helps to understand why employees adopt different EL strategies.

Since the dualistic model of passion can capture the dual nature of passion, researchers can clearly distinguish the type of passion, and help assess its consequences. HP derives from an autonomous process of the activity internalization into one's self, and enables individuals to live in harmony with their other life activities (autonomous internalization) (Vallerand, 2010). Conversely, OP comes from a controlled process of the internalizing passionate activity into one's self, and leads individuals to a permanent status of conflict with their other life activities (controlled internalization) (Vallerand, 2010).

Some direct evidence supports SDT as a relevant framework for explaining how employees adopt EL strategies to regulate their emotions at work (Cossette and Hess, 2015). These investigations provide specific evidence for the existence of autonomous and controlled motivation to regulate emotions at work. Based on SDT, the dualistic model of passion posits that OP for work results from a controlled internalization process, while HP for work originated from an autonomous internalization of the work in identity. Therefore, to summarize the above, we believe that SA is characterized by less autonomous, more controlled internalization process (OP for work), while DA is motivated by a more autonomous internalization (HP for work). Accordingly, we propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3. Frontline employees' HP for work is negatively associated with the use of SA.

Hypothesis 4. Frontline employees' HP for work is positively associated with the use of DA.

Hypothesis 5. Frontline employees' OP for work is negatively associated with the use of DA.

Hypothesis 6. Frontline employees' OP for work is positively associated with the use of SA.

2.5. Relationship between emotional labor strategies and emotional exhaustion

Emotional labor is traditionally regarded as a source of negative psychological outcomes such as EE, low job satisfaction, job stress and depression (Johnson and Spector, 2007). Specifically, Lv et al. (2012) noted that while SA contributed to the employees' EE, DA reduced their sense of emotional depletion. The studies of Augustine and Joseph (2008), Kim (2008) and Lam and Chen (2012) among frontline employees in the hotel industry also derived similar results.

Hobfoll's (1989) Conservation of Resources theory posits that people have a basic motivation to acquire, retain, protect and enhance their psychological resources. Individuals experience stress when they are threatened with resource loss, actually lose resources, or fail to gain resources after resource investment. Individuals confronted with stress attempt to minimize the net loss of their resources by investing in other resources. Individuals without stress strive to develop resource surpluses, which, in turn, promote well-being (Hobfoll and Shirom, 2000).

Since EL is viewed as a source of job stress (Hochschild, 1983), and the EL strategy is the most significant factor determining the effects of EL (Johnson and Spector, 2007; Zapf and Holz, 2006), some investigations have applied Conservation of Resources theory to explore psychological outcomes of EL strategy adopted by hospitality

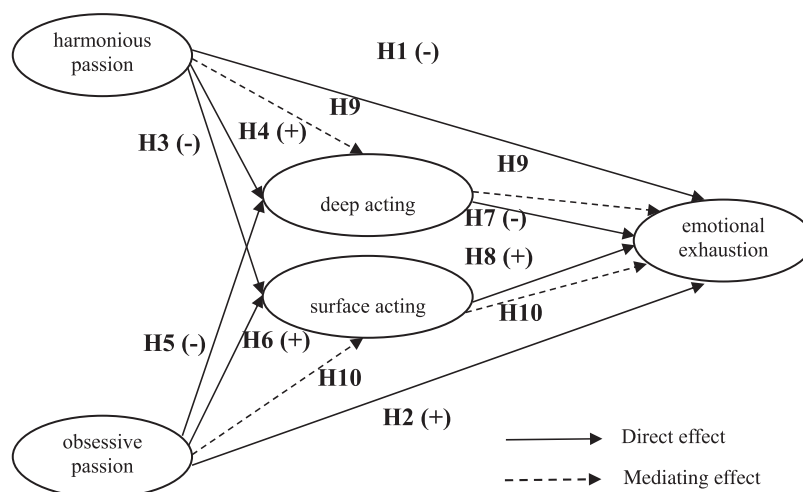


Fig. 1. Research model.

employees (Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002; Grandey, 2003).

In terms of conservation of resources, SA is concerned with the external emotional expression, irrespective of the individual's true feelings. SA is a temporary emotional disguise that consumes emotional energy, and therefore is likely to lead to EE. Conversely, DA focuses on the individual's behavior and intrinsic emotion through the positive psychological process; makes the internal and external expression of emotion consistent, and enhances the employees' sense of accomplishment. DA is a resource acquisition process, and thus reduces EE. Hence, this study believes that SA and EE are positively correlated, while DA and EE are negatively correlated. Based on the above, the present work argues:

Hypothesis 7. The use of DA by frontline employees is negatively associated with EE.

Hypothesis 8. The use of SA by frontline employees is positively associated with EE.

2.6. The mediating role of emotional labor strategies

In existing literature, aside from testing the direct relationship between passion for work and EE, Vallerand et al. (2010) argue that other mediating variables may also affect the relationship between passion for work and EE, such as time and work (Caudroit et al., 2011), basic psychological needs (11), flow experience (Lavigne et al., 2012) and rumination & recovery (Donahue et al., 2012). In particular, those studies focus on the mediating role of psychological factors "after regular work hours" in the relationship between passion and EE. However, they do not explore the mediating role of psychological factors "during regular work hours", such as EL strategies.

Past studies have demonstrated that HP for work seems to protect employees from EE directly (Donahue et al., 2012) or by the mediating effect of flow (Lavigne et al., 2012). Conversely, an OP has been found to have a direct relation with EE (Donahue et al., 2012; Lavigne et al., 2012). In the context of EL, employees in the passionate work experience emotional dissonance when they attempt to regulate their emotional displays in order to meet organizational norms (Ashforth and Humphrey 1993). Chen et al. (2012) point that one of the key characteristics of hospitality work that causes stress is the level of emotional labor expended by employees (Duncan et al., 2013). To regulate their emotions employees engage in either SA or DA (Hochschild, 1983). Indeed, Härtel et al. (2002) have shown that emotional dissonance mediates the relationship between EL strategy and EE.

SA is typically presented as a maladaptive strategy, in that it raises emotional dissonance and is associated with EE (e.g., Grandey, 2003).

In contrast, DA decreases emotional dissonance by bringing feelings in line with expressions and organizational expectations. Thus, DA is theoretically supposed to prevent EE (e.g., Hochschild, 1983). Therefore, we believe that the employees with high levels of HP will achieve an autonomous process when confronted with EL, and adopt a DA strategy to regulate emotions, thus avoiding the threat of EE. Conversely, SA in employees with high levels of OP results from the controlled internalization of work into one's identity, raising emotional dissonance, so increasing the likelihood of experiencing EE. Restated, SA and DA may potentially serve as mediators in the relationship between passion for work and EE in service settings. Given the preceding arguments, we test the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis 9. DA plays a mediating role in the relationship between HP and EE.

Hypothesis 10. SA plays a mediating role in the relationship between OP and EE.

3. Methodology

3.1. Questionnaire development

Fig. 1 depicts a path diagram for the research model, and is based on a literature review. This study principally adopted a survey, for which a questionnaire was designed. The questionnaire design was based on previous research findings in the literature and the related measurement scales, constructing a measurement scale consistent with the themes of the study. Apart from the demographic data of frontline employees which are measured using nominal scales, the remaining items use a seven point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" (one point) to "strongly agree" (seven points). The passion for work construct employs the passion scale developed by Vallerand and Houliort (2003), including two sub-dimensions: HP (7 items) and OP (7 items). The EL strategy construct adopted the scale created by Grandey (2003), with two sub-dimensions, DA strategy (6 items) and SA strategy (5 items). As the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Maslach et al., 1996) is the most widely accepted measure of burnout (i.e., it was being used in over 90% of the empirical publications on burnout) (Schaufeli and Enzmann, 1998) and some researchers have also used only EE (the core component of burnout) to examine the relationships between various variables and EE (Kristensen et al., 2005; Bekker et al., 2005), the current study used only the EE subscale (nine items) of the MBI. This subscale was reported to have high internal consistency reliability (Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002; Hwa, 2012).

3.2. Sampling design and data collection

Participants in this work were frontline employees from 60 mid-size restaurants (at least 100 spaces or seats for customers) in the Kaohsiung and Pingtung area of Taiwan. The researchers first contacted the managers, who then allowed a research team to administer surveys to their customer service employees. The questionnaires were sent to the managers, who then distributed them to all frontline service employees in several divisions (e.g. food and beverage, front desk) of the restaurant. A total of 360 questionnaires were distributed, and 320 questionnaires were returned (response rate was 320/360 = 88.89%). Based on the suggestions of the past literature, the sample size for factor analysis should be at least 5–10 times the number of questionnaire items (Kerlinger and Lee, 2000). Thus, the present study aimed to accumulate between 170 and 340 valid samples (5–10 times the 34 question items). The final number of valid questionnaires, after excluding incomplete and incorrectly completed questionnaires was 260 (Sample 1). In terms of the distribution of the sample population, the gender breakdown was 68.5% female and 31.5% male; for age distribution, the 21–30 age group (46.2%) made up the largest number of respondents; for years in the job, the majority (53.1%) had been employed for more than a year.

4. Reliability and validity analyses

4.1. Reliability and validity analysis

The present study adopted confirmatory factor analysis to test the scale reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), as shown in Table 1, demonstrates that the factor loadings (range from 0.69–0.94) of the 34 observed variables are significant (t value > 1.96), and each are greater than the 0.5 criterion, indicating the model-data is a good fit (Joreskog and Sorbom, 1996). Additionally, composite reliability (CR) is in the range 0.94–0.99, and the average variance extracted (AVE) is in the range 0.75–0.90, higher than the standard values of 0.60, respectively, recommended by Bagozzi and Yi (1988). This indicates that the internal consistency of the research model can be broadly accepted. Thus, the scale items exhibit reliability and convergent validity.

Following analysis, a low correlation between the two constructs implies that the two constructs have discriminant validity (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). This study adopted the criterion proposed by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), that the correlation coefficients between different constructs should be less than the square root of the AVE for that construct. In the present study, the square root of the AVE for each of the constructs was in the range 0.87–0.95 (see Table 1), greater than the correlation coefficient between each of the constructs. Each construct thus met the required criteria, meaning that the scale had discriminant validity.

Table 1
CFA, reliability and validity analysis.

Construct	Nit ^a	SFL ^a (min ~ max)	α ^a	CR ^a	AVE ^a	Correlation coefficient				
						A	B	C	D	E
A. Harmonious passion	7	0.90 ^{*,c} ~ 0.93 [*]	0.97	0.97	0.83	0.91^b				
B. Obsessive passion	7	0.92 [*] ~ 0.93 [*]	0.98	0.98	0.86	0.03	0.93			
C. Deep acting	6	0.92 [*] ~ 0.94 [*]	0.97	0.98	0.87	0.19 [*]	-0.22 [*]	0.93		
D. Surface acting	5	0.69 [*] ~0.94 [*]	0.93	0.94	0.75	-0.02	0.28 [*]	-0.00	0.87	
E. Emotional exhaustion	9	0.92 [*] ~ 0.94 [*]	0.99	0.99	0.90	-0.15 [*]	0.35 [*]	-0.24 [*]	0.40 [*]	0.95

^a : Nit = number of item; SFL = Standardized factor loading; α = Cronbach's α; CR = Composite Reliability; AVE= Average Variance Extracted.

^b : Diagonal elements (bold) are the square roots of AVE. Off-diagonal elements are correlations between constructs.

^c : * denotes p < 0.05, the SFL or correlation coefficient is statistically significant.

4.2. Structural model and hypotheses testing

The simultaneous maximum-likelihood-estimation procedures were employed to examine the hypothesized relationships among passion for work, EL strategy and EE. Fig. 2 shows that the structural model exhibited a good fit with the data, with the goodness-of-fit indicators $\chi^2/df = 0.053$ (less than the maximum value of 3 suggested by Bagozzi and Yi (1988)), NFI = 0.957, NNFI = 0.998, CFI = 0.998, RFI = 0.953, IFI = 0.998 (greater than the cut-off value of 0.9 suggested by Hair et al. (2006)), and RMSEA = 0.014, which is less than 0.08 (Hair et al., 2006). Additionally, both the PNFI and PGFI were greater than 0.5 at 0.883 and 0.777, respectively (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988; Hair et al., 2006).

Table 2 and Fig. 2 also illustrate the path coefficients for the model and their significance. Regarding the hypothesis tests, aside from H3 which was not significant, others of the hypothesized relationships were supported for the estimated structural model. HP significantly and positively affected DA ($\gamma_{HP-DA} = 0.20, t = 3.31$), and negatively affects EE ($\gamma_{HP-EE} = -0.14, t = -2.55$). OP significantly and positively affected SA ($\gamma_{OP-SA} = 0.28, t = 4.55$) and negatively affected DA ($\gamma_{OP-DA} = -0.24, t = -3.83$), and positively affected EE ($\gamma_{OP-EE} = 0.22, t = 3.70$). Furthermore, DA also significantly and negatively affects EE ($\gamma_{DA-EE} = -0.16, t = -2.83$), whereas SA significantly and positively affects EE ($\gamma_{SA-EE} = 0.35, t = 5.90$). Hence, H1, H2, H4, H5, H6, H7 and H8 are supported.

The mediating effect of DA strategies in the relationship between HP and EE was then investigated. The path coefficient was -0.032 (0.20×-0.16), and the Z value of the Sobel test was -2.15. As Sobel test | Z | value > 0.96, the indirect effect was significant. If the 95% confidence interval does not include zero, then the indirect effect is not zero, and the variable thus exerts a mediating effect (Sobel, 1982). Therefore, the analytical results indicate that DA strategies have a significant mediating effect, supporting H9. This result shows that frontline employees with HP can effectively reduce EE by employing a DA strategy (mediator). Secondly, the mediating effect of SA strategies in the relationship between OP and EE was investigated. The path coefficient was 0.098 (0.28×0.35), and the Sobel test Z value was 3.62, which is larger than the standard value of 1.96. This finding indicates that SA strategies have a significant partial mediating effect. Therefore, H10 is supported. In other words, frontline employees with OP tend to adopt an SA strategy, in turn lead to higher occurrence of EE.

4.3. Model replication

Because the original model was respecified to better fit the data, it is possible that features unique to Sample 1 were responsible for its fit. To test the generalizability of the research model, we evaluated the fit in a second, independent sample (Sample 2). Differing from Sample 1, Sample 2 selects another sampling location (at Taichung City in Taiwan) to validate the replication of the research model. In addition, comparing to Sample 1, the measure variables in Sample 2 is same as

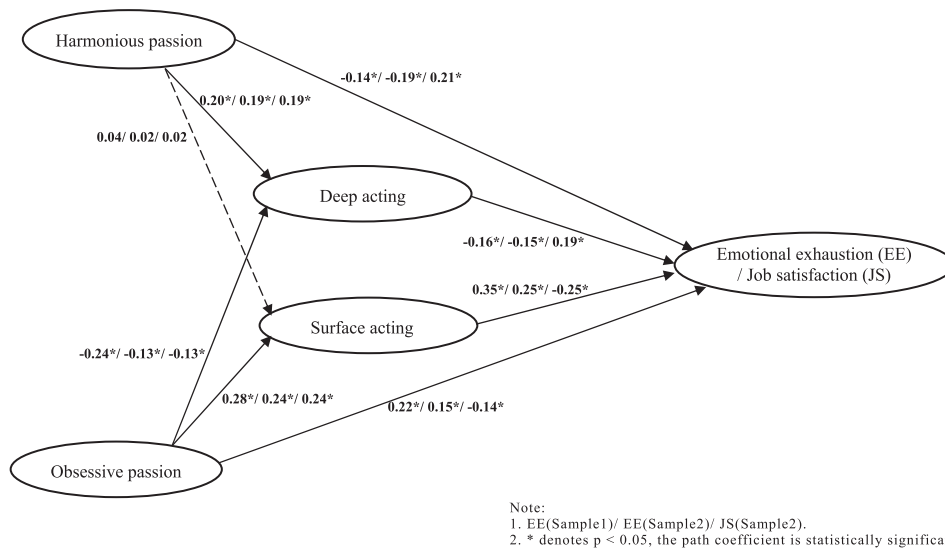


Fig. 2. Path diagram for the research model.

Table 2
 Path analysis for the research model.

Parameter	Path coefficients	t value	Hypothesis are supported Yes or No
Harmonious Passion → Emotional Exhaustion	-0.14 ^a	-2.55	H1 Yes
Obsessive Passion → Emotional Exhaustion	0.22 [*]	3.70	H2 Yes
Harmonious Passion → Surface Acting	0.04	0.66	H3 NO
Harmonious Passion → Deep Acting	0.20 [*]	3.31	H4 Yes
Obsessive Passion → Deep Acting	-0.24 [*]	-3.83	H5 Yes
Obsessive Passion → Surface Acting	0.28 [*]	4.55	H6 Yes
Deep Acting → Emotional Exhaustion	-0.16 [*]	-2.83	H7 Yes
Surface Acting → Emotional Exhaustion	0.35 [*]	5.90	H8 Yes

^a: * denotes $p < 0.05$, the path coefficient is statistically significant.

Sample 1 except adding a new positive outcome variable (job satisfaction, JS) to test the stability of mediating effect (EL strategies). The job satisfaction measure was adapted from the Greenhaus et al. (1990) scale and includes 5-items gauging frontline employees' job satisfaction. A total of 316 responses were returned from 80 mid-size restaurants in Taichung city of Taiwan. After removing 18 incomplete and invalid responses, the remaining 298 usable responses were included in Sample 2. Furthermore, the Pearson Chi-square test did not show significant difference between the two samples in the distribution of demographic variables (except marital status), which indicated the homogeneity of the two study samples.

First, the research model proved to be an acceptable fit in Sample 2. It produced an RMSEA of 0.018 (standardized RMR = 0.026; $\chi^2 = 568.544$; $df = 518$; $p = 0.061$). Then, maximally rigorous test of the equivalence of model fit for both samples, the research model was tested simultaneously in Samples 1 and 2 using a multi-group analysis (Jöreskog, 1971). We assessed a single χ^2 goodness-of-fit statistic to contrast the model for the two samples simultaneously. The difference between fully free model (with all path coefficient estimated for each group separately) and the fully fixed model (with all path coefficient estimates constrained to be equal) was computed. The Chi-square test showed that there were no significant differences across the two samples ($\Delta\chi^2(8) = 6.31$, $p > 0.05$, ns, see the second row of Table 3). This means that the research model fitted equally well to the data for both samples, which further validates the generalizability and replication of the research model. Path coefficients for both samples are shown in Fig. 2.

Once support for the replication of the research model had been confirmed, the next step was to include the suggested moderator variables into the model in order to gain further insights. Since the two

Table 3
 The result of multi-group analysis.

Control variables	χ^2		$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	significant
	free model	fixed model			
data set	1114.117	1120.430	6.313	8	no significant difference ^a
gender	1147.328	1152.266	4.938	8	no significant difference
age	1099.622	1113.617	13.995	8	no significant difference
marital status	1144.306	1156.629	12.323	8	no significant difference
education	1130.292	1144.334	14.042	8	no significant difference
company tenure	1115.926	1123.458	7.532	8	no significant difference

^a $\Delta df = 8$, $\Delta\chi^2 \geq 15.507$, the differences will be statistically significant.

models (fully free and fully fixed model) are not significantly different, then the two samples (Sample 1 and Sample2) are considered equivalent and, therefore, could be combined (Turnley et al., 2003). Furthermore, multi-group analysis were calculated in a hierarchical approach comparing two sub-samples which were selected according to five demographic variables- gender, age, marital status, education, and company tenure. The results are showed as Table 3. For five demographic variables, there was all no significant difference between the overall fit of the model when all path coefficients estimates were constrained to be equal compared with when they were estimated separately. Therefore, the moderating effect of the five demographic variables is no significant. Results confirmed the generalizability of the

research model again.

Finally, we replace the dependent variable (EE) with job satisfaction in the original research model to test the stability of mediating effect (EL strategies) in Sample 2. The substitute model proved to be an acceptable fit in Sample 2. It produced an RMSEA of 0.018 (standardized RMR = 0.027; $\chi^2 = 436.048$; $df = 396$; $p = 0.081$). Path coefficients are shown in Fig. 2. The indirect effects of DA strategies between HP and JS was 0.036 (0.193×0.186), and the Z value of the Sobel test was 2.354 (> 0.96). Therefore, the analytical results indicate that DA strategies have a significant mediating effect between HP and JS. Furthermore, the indirect effect of SA strategies between OP and JS was -0.060 (-0.060 (0.238×-0.254), and the Sobel test Z value was -3.008 , $|Z|$ value > 0.96 . This finding indicates that SA strategies have a significant mediating effect. Therefore, the data (Sample 2) prove that the mediating effect of EL strategies significantly exist and is stability in the substitute model.

5. Conclusion, implication and limitations

5.1. Conclusion and discussion

an integrated model of the relationships among passion for work, EL strategies and EE. The current study corroborates and extends the extant literature by conceptualizing and empirically testing the mediating role of EL strategies on the link between passion for work and EE. The analytical results support the relationships postulated in Fig. 2, in that frontline employees with HP tend to adopt a DA strategy when confronted with EL, and then protect themselves from EE, whereas frontline employees with OP tend to employ a SA strategy, and are in turn more likely to exhausting their emotional energy. The analytical results further reveal that EL strategies partially mediated the relationship between types of passion and EE.

5.1.1. Passion for work and emotional exhaustion

Based on previous research showing that autonomous work motivation is typically related to lower EE in employees, this study expected a similar relation among passionate employees. As expected, HP resulting from a process of autonomous internalization was negatively associated with EE. Therefore, if frontline employees autonomously internalize their passionate work, then the work becomes part of their identity without any constraints or contingencies, so are less likely to feel emotionally drained by their profession. These results are in line with previous research (Donahue et al., 2012; Fernet et al., 2014). Further, consistent with previous study showing that controlled motivation relates positively to indicators of ill-being, such as depression (e.g., Altintas and Guerrien, 2009), we found that OP resulting from a process of controlled internalization was positively associated with EE. Obviously, the association for HP was less strong than the association obtained for OP, possibly because frontline employees with OP are easily controlled by their passionate work, and engage in work only to achieve a particular purpose. Therefore, frontline employees “need to” participate in the work, thus probably exhausting their emotional energy (Przybylski et al., 2009). In contrast, HP is autonomous, and can lead frontline employees to participate happily and willingly in a passionate task, thus helping protect them against EE (Przybylski et al., 2009).

Overall, these results indicate that HP predominantly may serve as a buffer against the development of EE, whereas OP is more likely to trigger EE. This conclusion helps explain why two highly invested individuals working in the same environment may have different psychological outcomes (Geneviève et al., 2012; Donahue et al., 2012). Future research needs to confirm whether OP represents a risk factor for the development of EE. One potential reason for the borderline significant relation in the current study is the rather small sample size of participating frontline employees.

5.1.2. Passion for work and emotional labor strategies

Analytical results demonstrate that frontline employees with HP who autonomously internalize emotion norms required at work, and who can perform their jobs autonomously and according to their own needs, are more likely to express their felt emotions naturally and to use DA, but less likely to use SA. Harmoniously passionate frontline employees who have internalized emotion norms are therefore more likely to express the prescribed emotions, because doing so becomes a goal consistent with their values. Inversely, obsessively passionate frontline employees with OP are less inclined to internalize emotion norms, and do so only to achieve a specific purpose, rather than to express autonomous feelings; these employees tend to use SA rather than DA, to avoid being criticized by their supervisors. This result is similar to the study by Cossette (2014) and Sisley and Smollan (2012).

Our results confirm the motivational premise of the EL strategy, and further improve the current state of knowledge, emphasizing the need to consider the psychological qualitative investment of frontline employees, such as forms of passion for work. Obviously, this finding underscores the need to test the quality of psychological investment in an employee's work. Our findings reveal that passion is a motivational factor that explains how passionate frontline workers use EL strategies to manage the risks of EL.

5.1.3. The mediating effect of emotional labor strategies

Finally, the present study confirms the mediating role of EL strategies in the relationship between forms of passion for work and EE. Restated, the results show that frontline employees with HP faced with the emotional norms required by an organization may use a DA strategy with positive thinking to regulate their emotions, thus decreasing their depletion of emotional resources, and therefore protecting from EE. However, frontline employees with OP adopted a SA strategy with negative thinking, leading to continued emotional and psychological exhaustion. In other words, HP associated with performing DA may buffer the negative effects of EL by enabling autonomy. Thus, the profile of the “successful EL employee” in service settings may be an employee with HP. In contrast, employees with OP, which is associated with control, were most likely to use SA to manage their EL, often leading to emotional imbalance in workers due to the dissonance between external emotional expression and inner feelings (Grandey, 2003), and ultimately causing EE.

From the perspective of the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), employees engage in EL according to their job requirements, meaning that they must continuously expend mental energy in order to perform the job. Therefore, employees may view EL as a source of job stress (Hochschild, 1983). Moreover, frontline employees with HP can autonomously internalize sources of stress as personal identity, and then overcome emotional dissonance caused by EL (Van Dijk and Brown, 2006), such that they genuinely feel the emotions that they are required to express. They are thus using DA strategy in response to stress, reducing resource depletion and EE. Conversely, frontline employees with OP do not achieve autonomous internalization, but perform this only to achieve a particular purpose. This purpose generates stress, leading employees to adopt SA to satisfy the organizational requirement to observe emotional expression norms, thus leading to emotional dissonance. If this process continues, then the internal resources of employees are drained, creating the predicament of EE (Grandey, 2000).

5.2. Management implications

This sub-section summarizes the results of the preceding analysis, and discusses management implications for academic research and practitioners. The content is divided into theoretical and practical implications as follows.

5.2.1. Theoretical implications

The present study makes several theoretical contributions. Firstly, it recognizes that the Dualistic Model of Passion (Vallerand et al., 2003) is valuable for gaining a comprehensive understanding of the consequences of passion in an EL context. It helps elucidate why passion in some cases might be considered a resource that provides energy to manage the loading of EL, but in other cases hinder such efforts, in turn exhausting emotional energy. As such, this study encourages future research to apply the Dualistic Model of Passion to research questions that investigate the consequences of passion in organizational contexts. By considering both HP and OP and examining their effects, we can identify differences that determine how passion is internalized into an individual's self-concept (autonomous internalization or controlled).

Secondly, this study contributes to the dualistic model by integrating passion for work with EL strategies. Previous research applying the Dualistic Model of Passion has touched on similar topics by testing and finding that the two types of passion have different effects on flow experience (Lavigne et al., 2012), rumination and recovery (Donahue et al., 2012) and work-family interference (Caudroit et al., 2011). However, the present study is the first to integrate the two types of passion with EL strategies specifically.

Finally, the dualistic passion can significantly predict EE through EL strategies. Therefore, this study suggests that a restaurant can build a supportive service system, allow frontline employees to have autonomy and encourage frontline employees to adopt DA strategies. In other words, the process of autonomous internalization can influence frontline employees' emotional expressions when dealing with customers. Frontline employees will then treat service as a responsibility and will also identify with the job and try to satisfy the customers' needs, in turn protect themselves from EE.

In the context of human resources management, considering the dualistic passion for the personality analysis in the processes of selection and placement, education and performance evaluation can be beneficial to reduce the negative results of emotional labor and emotional exhaustion. This may contribute to the efficiency of the restaurant industries. Thus, it is assessed that the findings of the present study on frontline employees can be beneficial for more effective human resources management processes. We think that this study positively contributes to the literature.

5.2.2. Practical implications

Frontline employees' EE decreases quality of service and worsens organizational performance, thus negatively impacting the operation and management of the enterprise. Therefore, enterprise owners need to pay attention to the emotional change process of frontline employees, and its different levels of influence. The present study is based on previous research and empirical analysis, and offers several management implications for enterprise owners in the context of human resources management.

First, one frequent consideration or assessment criterion during the hiring process or subsequent work of managers, is whether employees have passion. However, passion is dualistic. Therefore, managers should not apply a single dimension of passion to assess the qualities of frontline employees. Changes in dualistic passion during the course of work also need to be understood. Although employees with HP and OP both show a high degree of passion for their work, employees with OP generally perform their work for a particular purpose, such as salary, performance, incentives or positive feedback from co-workers, customers or managers. Therefore, excessive adaptations to satisfy these purposes are likely to result in EE. Managers should therefore help employees to develop positive HP through observation together with theory-based measurement to regularly follow up the passion characteristics of frontline employees, providing timely guidance and training. Moreover, managers should follow Gubman's (2004) recommendation to create a worry-free work environment so that workers retain their passion. This will effectively enable frontline

employees to reduce their EE and continue to place their energies in their job, enhancing service quality and work efficiency, and increasing the competitiveness of enterprises.

Second, restaurants may want to standardize the emotional norms of frontline employees to present a positive image to customers. Because such norms can also have negative effects, they should be carefully designed to minimize the negative effects, and should focus on the relationship between the EL strategy adopted by frontline employees and the EE. In particular, HP should lead frontline employees to apply DA strategy when they experience desirable emotions. A restaurant should develop a system to resolve problems when frontline employees instead choose to use SA as an EL strategy. Although SA in frontline employees improves job performance in the short term, it can deteriorate the organization's overall performance by triggering EE (Lee et al., 2015). For example, one recommendation in redesigning work is to consider an organization can stimulate HP and mitigate OP toward work. Literature on internalization processes (e.g., Deci and Ryan, 2000) recommends increasing autonomous motivation in internalizing work (Liu et al., 2011). As Pelletier et al. (2001) posited, whether the work context is controlling (e.g., rewards, deadlines, surveillance) or supports autonomy (e.g., freedom, being involved in decision-making processes) should be addressed. Work is more likely to be internalized autonomously in a more supportive environment for autonomy. Indeed, the conceptualization of HP builds on this concept.

5.3. Limitations and suggestions for future research

This study was limited by manpower, financial, and time factors, making comprehensive and detailed research it impossible to carry out. We therefore recommend the following research directions for future researchers.

- (1) More in-depth discussion on the results of the present study can be performed, for example, by considering the most effective and sustainable way to increase work passion, and whether the Dualistic Model of Passion produce changes over time. Therefore, follow-up research may address these issues, carrying longitudinal research providing assistance to industry executives and managers.
- (2) The present study did not explore whether the workplace or organizational atmosphere affects the relationship between EL and EE. For instance, when frontline employees are engaging in EL and receive positive feedback, or when organizations provide institutionalized support to workers to help them deal with emotional issues. The conservation of resources theory indicates that feedback or emotional support is a type of resource acquisition. Whether it can reduce the seriousness of EE should also be explored in future research.
- (3) Employees play a pivotal role in creating a perfect service encounter. A number of marketing researchers have thus applied emotional contagion theory to service marketing. Pugh et al. (2011) suggests that employees' display of emotions affects customers in the service encounter, and such display of emotions refers to revelation of inner feelings by employees. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2006) have also confirmed that emotional contagion does exist in the service encounter and pointed out that both the extent of employees' smiling behavior and the authenticity of their emotional labor display influence the transfer of emotions during employees' service interactions with customers. However, with regard to the issue of emotional labor, previous studies have focused mainly on how employees adapt themselves to stress arising from emotional labor or the relationship between display of emotions and customers' emotional experience. More research is needed to explore the emotional interactions between employees and between employees and customers several articles have shown that negative customer emotions can also impact the employee (Du et al., 2011) and identify how such interactions affect employee performance and

customer value.

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