

Effect of Emotional Labor on Entrepreneurial Work Engagement: A Mediating Role of Burnout

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Abstract

This research sought to investigate the effects of emotional labor on job engagement of entrepreneurs working in informal business sector of Peshawar, Pakistan. It also examines the interceding role of burnout amid emotional labor and work engagement. A total of 135 respondents were selected from Peshawar's entrepreneurial sector. By means of simple regression and mediation analysis, the outcomes reveal that for entrepreneurs residing in Peshawar emotional labor doesn't negatively affect their work engagement. Additionally, no mediating effect of burnout was found amongst emotional labor and work engagement. Besides, in order to earn the maximum benefit, entrepreneurs could perhaps implement the results of this particular study in their everyday routines. They need to be more informed as to how their emotions influence their quality of work. They also should understand more about adverse repercussions of involving in extreme emotional labor. Lastly, in order to be highly engaged, entrepreneurs should certainly learn to regulate their emotions constructively.

Keywords: *emotional labor, burnout, work engagement*

Introduction

Today's world is extremely competitive and globally connected and organizations are relentlessly competing with one another to be innovative and delivering the best customer services in order to attain sustainable competitive advantage. According to Pandey & David (2013) distinctive workforce is essential to achieve this goal and it can be obtained only if workers are completely immersed in their work and have strong emotional commitment with their organization.

Emotions of employees plays a vital role while dealing with the customers. According to Grandey (2000), an art of dealing with emotions for the purpose of fulfilling the work role demands to express certain expressions while dealing with the customers is termed as emotional labor. One of the major causes of employee turnover is emotional labor (Cho & Song via Choi et al., 2015). Emotional labor results in burnout that leads to turnover. Burnout is a state where individuals experience physical and mental weariness (Kristensen et al. 2005, p. 197). Work engagement is the

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antithesis of burnout it is a constructive phenomenon that includes high level of physical and emotional involvement, high energy level and feeling of higher productivity at work (Maslach and Leiter, 2016). Between emotional labor and work engagement there exist substantial association. High amount of emotional labor results in decreasing the work engagement and job satisfaction (Saleem et al. via Ogbonna and Harris, 2004).

In the entrepreneurship context there is very limited study conducted to discover the connection amid emotional labor, work engagement and burnout. For entrepreneurs, job demands are different from those of salaried workers. Elements of job demand includes; handling greater degree of ambiguity, accountability & risks, and a substantial the amount of work. As reported by Dijkhuizen et al., (2014), for entrepreneurs these factors lead towards work-related strain. The following research examines the link amongst emotional labor, work engagement, and burnout in order to figure out how the display of sentiments affects Peshawar-area entrepreneurs' work engagement and the coping strategies they employ. Moreover, to determine whether emotional labor and entrepreneurial work engagement are partially, completely, or not at all mediated by burnout.

Literature Review.

The Job Demand & Resource (JD-R) Model

The JD-R model's fundamental assumption is that, while every profession possesses various risk aspects linked to job stress, such facets can be categorized in two broad groups (i.e. job demands & job resources), hence establishing an underlying framework which can be applied to numerous work contexts, whatever the specific demands and resources present. Physiological and/or psychological costs are associated with job demands, which are those aspects of a job that call for significant physical and/or psychological (cognitive and emotional) exertion or abilities. Examples include workplace stress, an unfavorable environmental characteristic, and emotionally taxing client interactions. Although job demands are not always undesirable, they can convert into job stressors when meeting those demands necessitates a substantial amount of exertion from which the employee has not properly managed to recover. In contrast, job resources are those physical, physiological, social, or organizational aspects of a occupation that are either useful in attaining work objectives, reducing job demands and the physiological and psychological costs that come with them or encouraging personal development, learning, and growth (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007).

The JD-R model suggests, high levels of job-demands cause strain, which results in negative work outcomes, whereas high levels of job resources have a motivating result, resulting in positive work outcomes. This study is based on the first category of the JD-R model, which focuses on the link between job demands and work aftermaths, and thus attempts to determine how emotional labour, which is one of the core Job demands, affects entrepreneurial work engagement.

Emotional Labor and Its Role in the Workplace

For the very first-time notion of emotional labor was coined by a sociologist Arlie Hochschild in her book, *the managed heart* (1983). She interprets this term as the manipulation of emotion in order to make a publicly visible face and bodily presentation. Hochschild defined two main features related to emotional labor i.e. surface acting & deep acting. Surface acting signifies exhibition of fake emotions in other words it is more like expressing an emotion without feeling it. While deep acting refers to more natural and true emotional displays. As a result, deep acting is a much more difficult process than surface acting.

Surface acting usually results in negative outcome. Negative outcomes comprise of inauthenticity at personal level, decreased level of affective delivery, emotional fatigue, discontent, and burnout. On the contrary, deep acting has constructive outcomes such as personal genuineness, individual achievement, and increased satisfaction with job and high performance because in this strategy individuals transform their felt emotions to achieve the emotional demands of the job.

In accordance with Silbaugh (2018) association amongst Emotional intelligence (EI) & the surface acting technique of emotional labor is significantly negative. Burnout and surface acting have a positive correlation, whereas EI and burnout have a substantial negative relationship. In contrast, the association between EI and deep acting is strongly positive.

Staffs who are constantly busy in surface acting become exhausted emotionally which leads to negative thoughts related to job withdrawal and the end results are that such employees mostly quit from their jobs. Previous researches done on emotional dissonance supports the association that exists among surface acting and turnover intention. However, deep acting does not result in withdrawal thoughts and employees do not quit their jobs because deep acting has a positive job outcome and while practicing deep acting employee doesn't face any emotional exhaustion and conflict in managing felt emotions and displayed emotions (Chau et al., 2009).

It is not necessary that emotional labor will always result in negative consequences. Pugliesi, (1999) stated that emotional labor has positive outcomes when it is perceived as a self-improvement process and workforces have control over their emotions. In case of managing emotions of others, sense of pride in a worker's skill is enhanced (Pugliesi via C. Wharton, 1996). When employees are highly involved in their jobs and interact with the public, their feelings of positivity toward their work are increased and their sense of inauthenticity is diminished (Erickson and Wharton, 1997). Also, workers' level of job autonomy, their self-monitoring abilities and job inclusion alleviates the negative effects of emotional labor (Wharton, 1993).

Burnout and Its Role in the Workplace

Concept of burnout was introduced in 1970's. Since then it remained the most important topic of research. Exhaustion, cynicism, and professional inefficacy are the three main components that define burnout. Exhaustion refers to the state when an individual gets emotionally and physically drained. Cynicism describes the negative and hostile response to the job which is developed when an individual experiences increased level of emotional exhaustion and one feels detached from his/her job. Professional inefficacy refers to a state when a person feels decline in their competency and productivity at work. Workplace outcomes has a close relationship with burnout, such as problems related to health, and performance shortfalls. Work related strain results in burnout. It is the "amount of physical and emotional weariness and exhaustion that is experienced by an individual" (Kristensen et al. 2005, p. 197). Burnout results in fatigue, non-involvement and loss of efficiency (Pandey & Singh, 2016 via Leiter, 2010).

Emotional labor performs a major role in causing burnout. Study conducted on women community health workers from India revealed a negative association amongst the strategies of emotional labor and burnout. With burnout, surface acting is having a negative relationship which leads to positive relationship with job satisfaction. Between deep acting and burnout there existed a positive relation and a negative association with job satisfaction. For the efficient and effective work roles performance, community health care workers found surface acting to be a more desirable strategy (Pandey & Singh, 2016).

Burnout has a relationship with emotional intelligence and emotional labor. The association between burnout, emotional intelligence and emotional labor was investigated by Kwon and kim (2016) among psychological nurses. Results revealed that the burnout is negatively correlated with EI and has a positive correlation with emotional labor.

Laschinger, Finegan, and Wilk (2009) investigated the impact of working environment, civil working relationships, and empowerment over burnout faced by nurses as they begin their nursing career immediately after getting graduated. The results of the study highlighted the significance of working environment that empower new graduates to implement whatever they are taught in their institutes. Along with working environment the results showed that how friendly and interconnected working conditions has a positive impact over new graduate burnout in which nurses respect others and avoid uncivil behaviors in their day to day work. Laschinger et al., (2009) suggested that to cope with burnout in fresh graduates they should be given an opportunity to work in high-quality work environments that engross them with their work. This way an organization can increase its retention rate as well.

Langelaan, Bakker, Van Doornen, and Schaufeli (2006) investigated how personality and temperament differentiate amongst burnout and its antipode i.e. work engagement. Among personality traits, increased neuroticism and low level of extraversion was expected to describe burnout whereas low neuroticism and high extraversion was thought to explain engagement. Furthermore, burnout was forecasted to have a negative relationship with the traits of temperament which consists of strength of excitation, strength of inhibition, and flexibility while work engagement was thought to have a positive correlation. Results supported the hypothesis and exhibited that burnout is characterized with high neuroticism while work engagement is characterized by low neuroticism in addition with greater level of extraversion and mobility.

Shepherd, Marchisio, Morrish, Deacon and Miles (2010) conducted research to investigate the precursors and consequences of entrepreneurial burnout. They discovered that burnout plays a very important role in discovering or establishing attractive economic opportunities, assessing those opportunities and making decisions on the taking advantage of opportunities

Work Engagement and Its Role in the Workplace

Work engagement is a constructive, gratifying, affective-motivational state of job-related welfare that that is regarded as by vigour, dedication, and Absorption (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, and Taris, 2008). Employees that show enthusiasm and increased amount of energy are presumed as fully engaged in work.

Vigor is described as the effort one is willing to invest in work and how persistence a person can be even in the times of complications; dedication denotes sense of meaningfulness, eagerness, encouragement, pride and challenge experienced by being fully involved in work;

absorption is the state in which one feels completely captivated in work and it becomes hard to disengage oneself (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá and Bakker, 2002).

JD-R is the commonly used model to understand work engagement and work-associated strain. These two concepts are opposite of each other. Work engagement denotes the connection of an individual with his job and how he views himself of being capable of fulfilling the demands of job (Dijkhuizen et al. via Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). Work-related strain means long standing frustration, fatigue and losing concentration in the work being done (Dijkhuizen et al. via Leiter et al., 2014).

For long term health and sustainability of the company the only thing that matter is the workforce. To achieve the competitive advantage, distinctive workforce is required and it can be obtained only if the employees of an organization are completely captivated with their work and have emotional attachment with their firm (Pandey & David, 2013). The concept of work engagement also comes from literature related with burnout and it describes work engagement as a solution for burnout. Pandey and David (2013) conducted research in IT and pharma industries to identify drivers of work engagement. Key findings suggested that 3 factors which include career growth opportunities, job enrichment and satisfactory work environment can lead towards positive employee engagement.

Using JD-R model, impact of job resources over work engagement was investigated (Altunel, Kocak and Cankir, 2015). Altunel et al. (2015) conducted their study on academicians of Turkish universities and their findings proposed that job resources are positively interrelated with work engagement. By giving more autonomy, better support of the society, training, opportunities for individual growth and awareness related to significance of task to academicians can increased their work engagement level and it would result in better quality of education.

Innovation is considered to be way out for the financial crisis. European policies are focusing on increasing the innovative behavior within employees. A study discovered that job autonomy has a constructive association with innovative work behavior via job engagement (De Spiegelaere, Van Gyes, De Witte, Niesen, & Van Hootegem, 2014).

Tims, Bakker, and Xanthopoulou (2011) probed whether leadership style of supervisors has an impact over daily work engagement of followers. Based on theories related to leadership and JD-R model, Tims et al., (2011) suggested that transformational leaders help in

enhancing employee work engagement therefore organizations should focus on developing effective leadership styles.

The Role of Burnout as a Mediator amid Emotional Labor and Work Engagement

There exist a significant association among emotional labor and work engagement. Excessive emotional labor results in reduced work engagement because some negative consequences of emotional labor have been such as emotional exhaustion and loss of dedication to perform work. Several researches have been done to study this association. Some of them are discussed below.

Salem, Iqbal, Sandhu and Amin (2018) conducted a study to find out the relation amid empowerment, emotional labor and teacher's overall work engagement within teaching profession. From the analysis of correlation coefficient values, a negative weaker association amongst emotional labor and employee work engagement exists whereas positive stronger relationship between teacher's empowerment and work engagement.

Philipp and Schüpbach (2010) performed a longitudinal study to observe the consequences that emotional labor has on teacher's emotional exhaustion and dedication. Outcomes revealed that deep acting has more health beneficial results as compared to surface acting and they feel less exhausted while following that strategy whereas teachers use surface acting strategy of emotional labor once they felt emotionally exhausted. In case of dedication, results indicated that highly dedicated teachers were not following any strategy of emotional labor. It means highly dedicated teachers do not experience emotional labor and they are more affianced in their work.

To prevent teachers from getting emotionally exhausted, development of interventions should be done to promote health-beneficial emotional labor. By nurturing deep acting, emotional exhaustion can be decreased over longer periods of time (Philipp & Schüpbach, 2010).

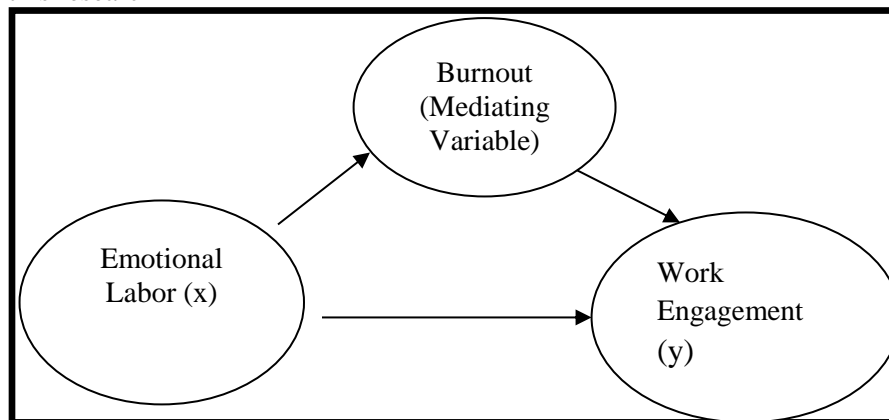
Work engagement is associated with emotionally taxing work situations and personal assets such as optimism and self-efficacy. A two-wave study directed by Xanthopoulou, Bakker & Fischbach (2013) showed that when self-efficacy is low however not the optimism there exist an indirect relationship between emotional demand/ dissonance and work engagement. Also, Self-efficacy has a direct relationship with work engagement when emotional demands and dissonance are high. This indicated that high self-efficacy leads to elevated levels of workplace engagement in the presence of emotionally demanding situations.

Key job demand in public service delivery is responsiveness i.e. ability to react positively and quickly. Lu and Guy (2014) conducted a research on government employees in China to find out the factors that affect responsiveness. Responsiveness is affected by three things that includes emotional labor, job engagement, and ethical leadership. Results exhibited that in terms of emotional display of workers, authentic emotional display is linked positively with job engagement while faking the emotions results in negative relationship. Ethical leadership acts as a mediator between job engagement and pretending. High level of ethical leadership mitigates the effect of pretending in emotional display.

For entrepreneurs, job demands are different from those of salaried workers. Elements of job demand includes; dealing with a high degree of ambiguity, accountability and risks, and increased work load. For entrepreneurs these factors lead towards work-related strain (Dijkhuizen et al., 2014). Entrepreneurs go through emotional conflict on daily basis. They have to choose between either faking out their emotions or displaying emotions that they actually feel. This struggle of constantly doing surface acting and deep acting leads to emotional exhaustion which has an impact over their work engagement. Therefore, the key motivation behind this study is to investigate how entrepreneurs can cope with emotional dissonance and burnout to improve their work engagement.

Research Framework

Hence on the basis of the above discussion this is the model of this research



Using burnout as a mediating variable, this framework proposes the impact of emotional labor on work engagement.

Research Hypotheses

Hochschild (1983) concentrated on the negative side of the association between work and emotions. Based on Hochschild study and above framework following are the deduced hypothesis for this study.

- H1: emotional labor has a negative effect on entrepreneurial work engagement.
- H2: burnout mediates the direct effect of emotional labor on entrepreneurial work engagement.

Methodology

It is a quantitative, cross-sectional study that follows deductive logic. Total 135 respondents were taken from informal entrepreneurial sector of Peshawar, Pakistan to examine the consequence of emotional labor on their work engagement through burnout. Data was gathered using a structured questionnaire and an online survey created with Google Forms.

Population and Sampling

For this study the population selected is the informal entrepreneurial sector of Peshawar Pakistan. Informal entrepreneurs are those who owns/manages a business that is legal in all other respects but business monetary transactions are not reported to the state for tax or labor law purposes. (Williams, 2017).

In the developing countries, informal businesses are considered as an important factor that contributes to employment and this sector represents a significant proportion of all businesses (Anderson et al. 2013). In Peshawar, majority of the informal entrepreneurs are running home-based businesses that are operating at a very low scale by utilizing existing business models with a touch of creativity in it. There are two forms of home-based businesses: one is where the whole work is performed from home, and the other is where home plays a role of administrative base while work is performed away from the home (Mason et al. 2011). Informal entrepreneurs in Peshawar are found in vast majority therefore, the exact population is unknown due to the unavailability of accurate and updated data of entrepreneurs in this region of Pakistan.

Since the exact population size was unknown, convenience sampling under non-probability sampling methods was used and sample size chosen for this study was 135 entrepreneurs. Ismail (2012) in his study used this sampling technique due to unavailability of accurate data base of SME's in South Eastern region and kept his sample size equal to 121 entrepreneurs. Therefore, with reference to his study we followed the same sampling technique and kept our sample size close to 121 respondents.

Measurement and Data Collection

In order to assess respondent's responses on emotional labor the inventory by Brotheridge & Lee (1998) was used. It comprises 6 questions predicting the tendency of a respondent to regulate emotions and responses were obtained by using a 5-point Likert scale where 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree.

To measure respondent's responses on work engagement the inventory by Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova (2006) was used. It is made up of 9 questions that predict how much captivated a person is in his/her work and responses were obtained by using a 5-point Likert scale where 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree.

In order to measure respondent's responses on burnout the inventory by Shirom (2003) was used. It comprises 14 questions predicting the physical and mental exhaustion and responses were obtained by using a 5-point Likert scale where 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree.

The questionnaire for this study was divided into two sections using both valid and pre-tested instruments. Demographics (Gender, Age, and Qualification) comprised Section 1 while the emotional labour inventory by Brotheridge & Lee, the work engagement inventory by Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, and the burnout inventory by Shirom were combined to form Section 2.

Study Limitations

The main drawback of the study is that it was cross-sectional, therefore the impact of variables on work engagement will not be examined over time. Another drawback was that the data was only collected in Peshawar. Because it does not cover any other location, the results may differ in other areas.

Analysis and Results

Reliability of the Instrument

Table 1

Reliability of the Instrument

S.no	Research Instruments	No of items	Cronbach alpha α
1.	Emotional Labor	6	.678
2.	Work Engagement	9	.649
3.	Burnout	14	.897

* $\alpha \geq 0.6$ hence, instruments are reliable.

For the instruments to be considered reliable, Cronbach value should be greater than 0.6. Table 1 above displays the test's reliability for each of the three instruments, which is greater than 0.6. Therefore, interpretation of all the instruments is reliable.

Demographic Profiles of the Respondents

The profiles of the respondents are shown in Table 2. It is clear from the data presented in Table 2 that out of 135 respondents 66.7% were male and 33.3% were females. Majority of the respondents have done bachelors and fall in the age category of 25-35 years.

Table 2
Demographic Profiles of the Respondents

	Mean Value	Frequency (%)	
Gender	1.33	Male	66.7
		Female	33.3
Age	1.91	Below 25	24.4
		25-35	62.2
		36-45	11.9
		46-55	0.7
Qualification	3.33	Matric	2.2
		FA/FSC	8.1
		Bachelors	53.3
		Master	28.9
		MS	5.2
		PHD	2.2

Regression Results

Regression diagnostics were performed, and the results revealed no evidence of Multicollinearity in the set of data. The Breusch Pagan test confirmed the data set's heteroscedasticity. This research examines the impact of emotional labor on entrepreneurial work engagement. It also investigates the burnout mediation effect on the emotional labor and work engagement. It is in the context of Peshawar, Pakistan as there has not been any research in the past that has tested the effect of these variables.

Table 3
Results of Regression Analysis

Dependent Variable	Y	Work Engagement						
Independent Variable	X	Emotional Labor						
Mediator Variable	M	Burnout						
Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	(P≤0.05)	(β)	T	(P≤0.05)
(Yx)	0.029	0.00	-0.007	0.114	0.736	-0.02	-0.33	0.73
(Ym.X)	0.226	0.05	0.037	4.03	0.03	-0.144	-2.63	0.009
Sobel			Value				(P≤0.05)	
			-1.73				0.082	

To test the first hypothesis, simple linear regression with one independent (Emotional labour) and one dependent variable was used (Work engagement). Table 3 presents regression analysis results. The R-square value represents the percentage of variation in the dependent variable (WE) that can be explained by the independent variable (EL) is only 0.1% which is very low. It is highly insignificant model (F=0.114, p=0.73) this demonstrates that it cannot be used to forecast the outcome variable. The sign and trends of beta value (Beta= -0.02) shows that hypothesis 1 is not accepted and the emotional labor is not having significant effect on entrepreneurial work engagement. Hence on the basis of the above-mentioned findings, our first hypothesis proves to be false.

To put the second hypothesis of this study to the test, mediation analysis was done by taking in to account the transmittal approach which conducts mediation analysis through testing indirect effects (Memon, Cheah, Ramayah, Ting, & Chuah, 2018). Results of indirect effect (Ym.X) shows that after the insertion of the mediator (BO), the indirect effect is significant (p-value=0.009) however, the Sobel test was used to determine the significance of the mediation effect. Many researchers have discussed the performance of this test because of its statistical power (MacKinnon & Dwyer, 1993; MacKinnon, et al., 2001; MacKinnon, et al., 2002, Stone & Sobel, 1990). Table 3 displays the results of the Sobel test. Through negative T- statistics value i.e. -1.73 and p-value 0.082 that is more than 0.05 we found that this path is actually insignificant. Meaning that there is no mediation.

Discussion

The study's findings indicate that emotional labor has no negative impact on work engagement of entrepreneurs. Also, burnout has no mediation role between emotional labor and entrepreneurial work engagement.

Based on literature there can be various reasons for emotional labor to not produce any negative consequences but the major reason lies under one of its strategy. Hochschild (1983) distinguished two forms of emotional labor tactics: surface acting & deep acting. It was discovered that deep acting has positive organizational effects as opposed to surface acting, which produces negative consequences. Furthermore, according to research by Lu and Guy (2014), showing emotions honestly has a positive correlation with job engagement, whereas fake emotions lead to adverse relationship. Deep acting has positive effects, as discovered by Philipp and Schüpbach (2010), and study participants reported a smaller amount of emotional exhaustion. Emotional intelligence (EI), a psychological notion, could also be contributing factor in lowering the negative consequences of emotional labour. EI and deep acting approaches of emotional labor are positively correlated and thus produces positive outcomes (Silbaugh, 2018). It is thought to be one of the factors that can improve employee engagement (Zuh et al., 2015). There is also a negative correlation with burnout (Kwon & Kim, 2016). Researchers have also identified a different psychological concept known as self-efficacy, which promotes high levels of work engagement in spite of emotionally taxing situations (Xanthopoulou et al., 2013). Self-efficacious people are found to be more driven to accomplish their goals and put in extra effort to accomplish their tasks (Schunk, 1990).

Last but not least, having a high degree of job autonomy, being engaged at work, and having self-monitoring skills help to lessen the negative effects of emotional labour (Wharton, 1993). Compared to an employee who works for somebody else, an entrepreneur has a significantly greater level of independence. Additionally, a study supports the idea that people who work for themselves have higher levels of autonomy, flexibility, and job security as a result of which they are more content with their jobs (Hundley, 2001).

Conclusion and Recommendation

Thus, it is concluded that entrepreneurs in Peshawar might be using deep acting strategy, and they might also be emotionally intelligent and would also have a greater level of self- efficacy and autonomy while running their businesses. That is why they might be fully engaged in their

work despite much emotional labor relevant to the performance of their job.

For future researchers, it is recommended that in the presence of emotional labor, burnout and work engagement empirical data should be collected on entrepreneur's emotional intelligence. The same study can be done nationwide by taking a larger sample size in order to investigate whether emotional labor has negative impact over work engagement of entrepreneurs by taking in to account the emotional intelligence and burnout at the same time mediators in the model. Another recommendation is to conduct a comparative study by focusing on gender of respondents to investigate how each gender responds to emotional labor and how it impacts their work engagement via burnout. Also, it is suggested to conduct a longitudinal research on the same variables and hypothesis where the data would be gathered repeatedly over a period of time to see the association between variables. In this research only four factors i.e. Deep acting strategy, Emotional intelligence, Self-efficacy and Job autonomy are identified through literature for having an alleviating effect on emotional labor therefore for future research, it is suggested that more variables should be identified that alleviates the adverse consequences of emotional labor on work engagement of the entrepreneurs.

Moreover, for entrepreneurs it is recommended that they should apply the findings of this study in their practical life to achieve maximum benefits. Furthermore, through this study they should get awareness regarding the role of their emotions over work performance. They should get insight into the negative outcomes of indulging into excessive emotional labor. Lastly, entrepreneurs should learn to manage their emotions in a constructive way in order to remain committed to their jobs.

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