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Fake it till you make it: Emotional labor, burnout, and the mediating role of perceived organizational support among school teachers in coastal Karnataka

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<https://doi.org/10.55889/2582-7979.1289>

Abstract

Introduction: Burnout, which occurs as a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal pressures on the job, is becoming more common in human service professions such as teaching. All of these human service jobs have one thing in common: continuous interpersonal contact. This direct contact with people leads to the performance of emotional labor, which is defined as the regulation of feelings in the workplace in order to conform to organizational regulations, which contributes to employee burnout. Perceived organizational support, according to Job Demands and Resources Theory, can be a protective factor for employees by acting as a job resource that buffers the negative effects of numerous job demands, such as emotional labor, and minimizes burnout. **Objective:** To study emotional labor, burnout, and the mediating role of perceived organizational support among teachers. **Method:** The descriptive, correlational, cross-sectional study was conducted among 101 school teachers, from Mangaluru between the age groups of 25-45 years, including both men and women. The study was done using a questionnaire approach and the scales used were the Emotional Labor Scale, Oldenburg Burnout Inventory, and Survey of Perceived Organizational Support. **Results:** The result of the study suggests that there is a significant negative relationship between deep acting and burnout among teachers ($r = 0.202$; $p\text{-value} = 0.043$) and between surface acting and burnout ($r = -0.211$; $p\text{-value} = 0.034$). Perceived organizational support is partially mediated between surface acting and burnout as well as deep acting and burnout among teachers. No significant differences in the usage of surface acting or deep acting emerged with respect to work experience and gender. **Conclusion:** This study sought to bring awareness to emotional labor as an integral part of teaching and how it can contribute to burnout. It aids in understanding the antecedents of burnout and how school management can mobilize organizational resources to improve employees' perceptions of organizational support, which will help in dampening the negative impact of burnout.

Keywords: Burnout, deep acting, emotional labor, perceived organizational support, surface acting, teachers.

Introduction

Burnout is described by Maslach, Leiter, and Schaufeli (2001) as “a psychological syndrome that arises as a

prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job”. The prevalence of burnout has become common among employees due to a global shift in focus from the manufacture of high-quality products to the provision of good customer service. It is a frequent occurrence among human service providers because of the nature of their work, which necessitates regular face-to-face interactions with people, both other employees and customers. As such, employment demands a deep and ongoing interpersonal connection between the employee and clients, burnout research has primarily been undertaken in the care and service industries. Demerouti, the inventor of the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory, found burnout to occur because of demanding job characteristics such as time constraints, a negative work environment, and unsupportive

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Manuscript received: 07 July 2023

Revision accepted: 29 September 2023.

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How to cite this article: Sarkar, O., N.S., Reshma, N.S., Mahesh, B.S. (2023). Fake it till you make it: Emotional labor, burnout and the mediating role of perceived organizational support among school teachers in coastal Karnataka. *Manipal Journal of Nursing and Health Sciences*, 9(2). 10-20.