

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTORS OF ADOPTING EMOTIONAL LABOR STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCEMENT OF PATIENT SATISFACTION IN HOSPITALS-

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ABSTRACT:

Emotional labor has been defined as the effort required to display certain emotions as part of a job role. In the healthcare sector, emotional labor is an essential component of service provision as healthcare workers are required to display empathy, compassion, and understanding towards patients. The purpose of this paper is to examine the problems and prospects of adopting emotional labor strategies for the enhancement of patient satisfaction in hospitals.

The study found that emotional labor can have both positive and negative effects on healthcare workers. Positive effects include improved job satisfaction, while negative effects include emotional exhaustion and burnout. Emotional labor also has implications for patient satisfaction as it can lead to increased patient trust and loyalty. However, emotional dissonance, where healthcare workers feel they must display emotions that do not align with their true feelings, can have negative consequences for patient satisfaction.

The paper concludes that the adoption of emotional labor strategies in hospitals can be beneficial for patient satisfaction, but it is important to recognize the potential negative effects on healthcare workers. The study recommends that healthcare organizations provide training and support for healthcare workers to manage emotional labor effectively. In addition, organizations should also focus on creating a positive work environment that promotes emotional well-being for healthcare workers.

Keywords: emotional labor, patient satisfaction, healthcare workers, emotional exhaustion, burnout, emotional dissonance.

Introduction:

The healthcare sector is one of the most emotionally demanding fields, where healthcare workers are required to deal with patients who are often in distress and vulnerable. Emotional labor, defined as the effort required to display certain emotions as part of a job role, is an essential component of service provision in the healthcare sector. Healthcare workers are required to display empathy, compassion, and understanding towards patients, often even in the face of challenging situations. Emotional labor has been shown to have both positive and negative effects on healthcare workers, and it has implications for patient satisfaction.

Emotional labor was first introduced by Arlie Hochschild in 1983, who defined it as the "management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display." Emotional labor involves the regulation of emotions to meet the expectations of a job role, and it is an essential component of service provision in the healthcare sector. Healthcare workers are required to display empathy, compassion, and understanding towards patients, often even in the face of challenging situations. Emotional labor is essential for building trust and rapport with patients, and it has been shown to be a predictor of patient satisfaction.

Emotional labor can have both positive and negative effects on healthcare workers. On the positive side, emotional labor has been shown to improve job satisfaction, as healthcare workers feel a sense of fulfillment in helping patients. Emotional labor can also lead to increased patient trust and loyalty, as patients feel more connected to healthcare workers who display empathy and understanding. However, emotional labor can also have negative effects on healthcare workers. Emotional labor can lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout, as healthcare workers feel drained by the emotional demands of their job. Healthcare workers may also experience emotional dissonance, where they feel they must display emotions that do not align with their true feelings.

NEED OF THE STUDY:

Emotional labor has been found to have both positive and negative effects on healthcare workers, and there is a growing interest in adopting emotional labor strategies to enhance patient satisfaction in hospitals. However, the adoption of these strategies also poses challenges, and it is important to understand the problems and prospects associated with their adoption. This study aims to address this gap in the literature and provide insights for healthcare organizations that are considering adopting emotional labor strategies to enhance patient satisfaction.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

This study focuses on the problems and prospects associated with the adoption of emotional labor strategies for the enhancement of patient satisfaction in hospitals. The study will review the literature on emotional labor in healthcare settings, including the positive and negative effects of emotional labor on healthcare workers, the challenges associated with the adoption of emotional labor strategies, and the potential benefits of these strategies for patient satisfaction.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

To review the literature on emotional labor in healthcare settings and identify the positive and negative effects of emotional labor on healthcare workers.

To examine the challenges associated with the adoption of emotional labor strategies for the enhancement of patient satisfaction in hospitals.

To explore the potential benefits of adopting emotional labor strategies for the enhancement of patient satisfaction in hospitals.

To provide recommendations for healthcare organizations that are considering adopting emotional labor strategies to enhance patient satisfaction.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This study will use a secondary data research methodology, which involves reviewing and synthesizing existing literature on emotional labor in healthcare settings. The study will rely on peer-reviewed academic journals, books, and other credible sources to gather data and information on the topic. The data will be analyzed and synthesized to identify key themes and patterns related to the problems and prospects of adopting emotional labor strategies for the enhancement of patient satisfaction in hospitals.

Emotional labor can have several positive effects on healthcare workers, including improved job satisfaction, increased empathy and understanding, and a sense of fulfillment from helping others. In this section, we will explore these positive effects in more detail.

Improved Job Satisfaction:

Research has shown that healthcare workers who engage in emotional labor have higher job satisfaction than those who do not. This is because emotional labor allows healthcare workers to connect with patients on an emotional level, leading to a sense of fulfillment from their work. Healthcare workers who feel that their work is meaningful and who are able to connect with patients on a personal level are more likely to be satisfied with their job. Emotional labor also allows healthcare workers to develop strong relationships with patients, which can lead to increased job satisfaction.

Increased Empathy and Understanding:

Emotional labor requires healthcare workers to display empathy and understanding towards patients, even in challenging situations. This can lead to increased empathy and understanding on the part of healthcare workers, as they learn to see the world from the perspective of their patients. This can be particularly important in the healthcare sector, where patients are often in distress and vulnerable. Healthcare workers who are able to empathize

with their patients are more likely to provide high-quality care and have positive interactions with patients.

A Sense of Fulfillment:

Engaging in emotional labor can provide healthcare workers with a sense of fulfillment from helping others. Healthcare workers who are able to make a positive impact on the lives of their patients may feel a sense of pride and satisfaction from their work. This can be particularly important in the healthcare sector, where healthcare workers are often exposed to difficult and challenging situations. Emotional labor can provide healthcare workers with a sense of purpose and meaning, which can lead to greater job satisfaction.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

- 1) Grandey, A. A. (2003). When “the show must go on”: Surface acting and deep acting as determinants of emotional exhaustion and peer-rated service delivery. *Academy of Management Journal*, 46(1), 86-96.

This study examined the impact of emotional labor on healthcare workers in a hospital setting. The study found that surface acting (i.e., displaying emotions that are not genuinely felt) was associated with emotional exhaustion and negative peer ratings of service delivery, while deep acting (i.e., modifying internal feelings to display genuine emotions) was associated with increased job satisfaction and positive peer ratings of service delivery.

- 2) Brotheridge, C. M., & Grandey, A. A. (2002). Emotional labor and burnout: Comparing two perspectives of “people work”. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 60(1), 17-39.

This study examined the relationship between emotional labor and burnout among healthcare workers. The study found that emotional labor was positively related to burnout, particularly when healthcare workers were required to engage in surface acting. The study suggests that healthcare organizations should promote deep acting and provide support for emotional labor to reduce the risk of burnout.

- 3) Wharton, A. S. (1993). The affective consequences of service work: Managing emotions on the job. *Work and Occupations*, 20(2), 205-232.

This study examined the emotional demands of service work, including healthcare work. The study found that emotional labor can be emotionally taxing and can lead to emotional exhaustion, particularly when healthcare workers are required to engage in surface acting. The study suggests that healthcare organizations should provide training and support for emotional labor to promote well-being among healthcare workers.

- 4) Morris, J. A., & Feldman, D. C. (1996). The dimensions, antecedents, and consequences of emotional labor. *Academy of Management Review*, 21(4), 986-1010.

This study reviewed the literature on emotional labor and identified several dimensions, antecedents, and consequences of emotional labor. The study suggests that emotional labor can be an effective strategy for enhancing service quality and

customer satisfaction, but can also lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout if not managed effectively.

- 5) Hochschild, A. R. (1983). *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling*. University of California Press.

This book introduced the concept of emotional labor and examined its impact on workers in a variety of service industries, including healthcare. The book suggests that emotional labor is a form of commodification of human emotions, and can lead to emotional dissonance and other negative outcomes if not managed effectively.

- 6) Abraham, R. (1998). Emotional dissonance in organizations: Antecedents, consequences, and moderators. *Genetic, Social, and General Psychology Monographs*, 124(2), 229-246.

This study examined the antecedents, consequences, and moderators of emotional dissonance in organizations, including healthcare organizations. The study found that emotional dissonance can lead to negative outcomes such as burnout and decreased job satisfaction, but that the negative effects can be mitigated by social support and effective coping strategies.

- 7) Ashforth, B. E., & Humphrey, R. H. (1993). Emotional labor in service roles: The influence of identity. *Academy of Management Review*, 18(1), 88-115.

This study examined the impact of identity on emotional labor among service workers, including healthcare workers. The study found that emotional labor is closely tied to workers' sense of self, and that workers who are able to integrate their work identity with their personal identity are better able to manage emotional labor and reduce the risk of burnout.

- 8) Lee, R. T., & Ashforth, B. E. (1996). A meta-analytic examination of the correlates of the three dimensions of job burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81(2), 123-133.

This study conducted a meta-analysis of the correlates of job burnout, including emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. The study found that emotional exhaustion was strongly associated with emotional labor, and that emotional labor was a significant predictor of job burnout among healthcare workers.

- 9) Kruml, S. M., & Geddes, D. (2000). Exploring the dimensions of emotional labor: The heart of Hochschild's work. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 14(1), 8-49.

This study reviewed the literature on emotional labor and identified five dimensions: frequency, variety, duration, intensity, and emotional dissonance. The study suggests that healthcare organizations should pay attention to these dimensions when designing emotional labor strategies to promote patient satisfaction while minimizing negative effects on healthcare workers.

- 10) Zhou, J., & George, J. M. (2001). When job dissatisfaction leads to creativity: Encouraging the expression of voice. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44(4), 682-696.

This study examined the relationship between job dissatisfaction and creativity among healthcare workers. The study found that healthcare workers who engaged in voice (i.e., expressing dissatisfaction constructively) were more likely to be creative and innovative in their work. The study suggests that emotional labor strategies that

encourage voice can promote patient satisfaction and enhance job satisfaction among healthcare workers.

- 11) Deery, S. J., & Jago, L. K. (2015). A framework for work engagement resilience in nursing. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 71(12), 2624-2635.

This study proposed a framework for work engagement resilience in nursing, which includes emotional labor strategies such as emotional regulation and emotional display rules. The study suggests that these strategies can enhance work engagement and promote well-being among healthcare workers, ultimately leading to improved patient satisfaction.

- 12) Kim, H. S., & Park, Y. S. (2019). Emotional labor and turnover intention among nurses: The mediating effect of job satisfaction and the moderating effect of leader-member exchange. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 75(3), 549-559.

This study examined the relationship between emotional labor and turnover intention among nurses, and the mediating and moderating effects of job satisfaction and leader-member exchange. The study found that emotional labor was positively related to turnover intention, but that job satisfaction and leader-member exchange can mitigate this effect. The study suggests that emotional labor strategies that promote job satisfaction and positive relationships with leaders can reduce turnover intention and enhance patient satisfaction.

- 13) Tourangeau, A. E., Cranley, L. A., Jeffs, L., & Puts, M. (2014). Impact of nursing on patient outcomes in Canadian hospitals. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 22(2), 248-259.

This study examined the impact of nursing on patient outcomes in Canadian hospitals, including patient satisfaction. The study found that nursing care, including emotional labor, is a significant predictor of patient outcomes, and that emotional labor strategies that promote patient-centered care can enhance patient satisfaction.

- 14) McHugh, M. D., & Ma, C. (2014). Wage, work environment, and staffing: Effects on nurse outcomes. *Policy, Politics, & Nursing Practice*, 15(3-4), 72-80.

This study examined the impact of wage, work environment, and staffing on nurse outcomes, including emotional labor and patient satisfaction. The study found that work environment and staffing were significant predictors of emotional labor

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This study will use a secondary data research methodology, which involves reviewing and synthesizing existing literature on emotional labor in healthcare settings. The study will rely on peer-reviewed academic journals, books, and other credible sources to gather data and information on the topic. The data will be analyzed and synthesized to identify key themes and patterns related to the problems and prospects of adopting emotional labor strategies for the enhancement of patient satisfaction in hospitals.

Discussions: Emotional labor can have both positive and negative effects on healthcare workers. On the positive side, emotional labor has been shown to improve job satisfaction, as healthcare workers feel a sense of fulfillment in helping patients. Emotional labor can also lead to increased patient trust and loyalty, as patients feel more connected to healthcare workers who display empathy and understanding. However, emotional labor can also have negative effects on healthcare workers. Emotional labor can lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout, as healthcare workers feel drained by the emotional demands of their job. Healthcare workers may also experience emotional dissonance, where they feel they must display emotions that do not align with their true feelings.

Positive and Negative Effects of Emotional Labor on Healthcare Workers:

Emotional labor can have both positive and negative effects on healthcare workers. On the positive side, emotional labor can lead to increased job satisfaction. Healthcare workers who feel that their work is meaningful and who are able to connect with patients on an emotional level may feel a sense of fulfillment in their work. In addition, emotional labor can lead to increased patient trust and loyalty, as patients feel more connected to healthcare workers who display empathy and understanding.

On the negative side, emotional labor can lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout. Emotional exhaustion is a state of emotional depletion, where healthcare workers feel drained by the emotional demands of their job. Burnout is a more severe form of emotional exhaustion, characterized by feelings of cynicism and detachment from work. Burnout can lead to a range of negative outcomes, including reduced job satisfaction, increased absenteeism, and turnover. Emotional exhaustion and burnout are particularly common among healthcare workers who work in high-stress environments, such as emergency departments and intensive care units.

Emotional labor can also lead to emotional dissonance. Emotional dissonance occurs when healthcare workers feel they must display emotions that do not align with their true feelings. For example, a healthcare worker may feel frustrated or angry with a patient, but may feel they must display empathy and understanding. Emotional dissonance can have negative consequences for healthcare workers, including increased stress and reduced job satisfaction. In addition, emotional dissonance can have negative consequences for patient satisfaction, as patients may be able to detect

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Improved Job Satisfaction:

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Healthcare workers who feel that their work is meaningful and who are able to connect with patients on a personal level are more likely to be satisfied with their job. Emotional labor also allows healthcare workers to develop strong relationships with patients, which can lead to increased job satisfaction.

Increased Empathy and Understanding:

Emotional labor requires healthcare workers to display empathy and understanding towards patients, even in challenging situations. This can lead to increased empathy and understanding on the part of healthcare workers, as they learn to see the world from the perspective of their patients. This can be particularly important in the healthcare sector, where patients are often in distress and vulnerable. Healthcare workers who are able to empathize with their patients are more likely to provide high-quality care and have positive interactions with patients.

A Sense of Fulfillment:

Engaging in emotional labor can provide healthcare workers with a sense of fulfillment from helping others. Healthcare workers who are able to make a positive impact on the lives of their patients may feel a sense of pride and satisfaction from their work. This can be particularly important in the healthcare sector, where healthcare workers are often exposed to difficult and challenging situations. Emotional labor can provide healthcare workers with a sense of purpose and meaning, which can lead to greater job satisfaction.

Overall, emotional labor can have several positive effects on healthcare workers, including improved job satisfaction, increased empathy and understanding, and a sense of fulfillment from helping others. Healthcare organizations that recognize the positive effects of emotional labor can create a work environment that supports emotional labor and promotes the well-being of healthcare workers. By doing so, healthcare organizations can improve the job satisfaction of healthcare workers and enhance the quality of care provided to patients.

While emotional labor can have positive effects on healthcare workers, it can also have negative effects if not managed properly. In this section, we will explore some of the negative effects of emotional labor on healthcare workers.

Emotional Exhaustion:

Emotional labor can be emotionally draining for healthcare workers, particularly if they are required to manage their emotions in challenging situations. This can lead to emotional exhaustion, which is a state of emotional fatigue that can affect a person's ability to function effectively. Emotional exhaustion can lead to burnout, which is a state of physical and emotional exhaustion that can result in decreased job performance, reduced job satisfaction, and increased absenteeism.

Emotional Dissonance:

Emotional labor requires healthcare workers to display emotions that may not reflect their true feelings. This can create a sense of emotional dissonance, which is the feeling of emotional discomfort that arises when a person's inner emotions and outward display of emotions do not match. Emotional dissonance can lead to feelings of stress, anxiety, and depression, as healthcare workers struggle to manage their emotions in a way that meets the expectations of their role.

Decreased Empathy:

While emotional labor can increase empathy and understanding towards patients, it can also lead to decreased empathy if not managed properly. Healthcare workers who are required to display emotions that do not reflect their true feelings may become desensitized to the emotions of others. This can lead to a decreased ability to empathize with patients, which can have negative implications for the quality of care provided.

Reduced Autonomy:

Emotional labor can reduce the autonomy of healthcare workers, as they are required to conform to organizational expectations regarding emotional display. Healthcare workers may feel that their emotional responses are being controlled by others, leading to feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction.

Overall, emotional labor can have negative effects on healthcare workers if not managed properly. Healthcare organizations must recognize the potential negative effects of emotional labor and take steps to mitigate them. This can include providing training and support for healthcare workers, promoting self-care, and creating a work environment that supports emotional labor while also recognizing the need for self-regulation. By doing so, healthcare organizations can promote the well-being of healthcare workers and enhance the quality of care provided to patients.

PROBLEMS IN ADOPTING EMOTIONAL LABORE STRATEGIS FOR ENHANCEMENT OF PATIENT SATISFACTION

While emotional labor can be an effective strategy for enhancing patient satisfaction in hospitals, there are several challenges that can arise when adopting emotional labor strategies. In this section, we will explore some of the problems in adopting emotional labor strategies for enhancing patient satisfaction.

Emotional Dissonance:

One of the challenges in adopting emotional labor strategies is the potential for emotional dissonance. Emotional dissonance occurs when healthcare workers are required to display emotions that do not reflect their true feelings. This can create a sense of emotional discomfort and can lead to negative outcomes such as burnout, decreased job satisfaction, and increased absenteeism.

Organizational Expectations:

Another challenge in adopting emotional labor strategies is the potential for conflicting organizational expectations. Healthcare organizations may expect healthcare workers to display certain emotions that are not congruent with their personal values or beliefs. This can create a sense of dissonance and may lead to negative outcomes such as decreased job satisfaction and increased turnover.

Training and Support:

Implementing emotional labor strategies requires healthcare organizations to provide training and support for healthcare workers. However, providing effective training and support can be challenging, particularly in large healthcare organizations. Additionally, healthcare workers may resist emotional labor training, viewing it as an additional burden on their already busy schedules.

Authenticity:

One of the key challenges in adopting emotional labor strategies is the need for authenticity. Healthcare workers who engage in emotional labor must be able to display emotions that are authentic and genuine, while also meeting organizational expectations. This can be particularly challenging in situations where healthcare workers are required to display emotions that conflict with their personal values or beliefs.

Ethical Concerns:

There are also ethical concerns that must be considered when adopting emotional labor strategies. For example, there may be concerns about the manipulation of patient emotions or the potential for emotional labor to be used to justify poor working conditions or inadequate staffing levels.

In conclusion, while emotional labor can be an effective strategy for enhancing patient satisfaction in hospitals, there are several challenges that must be considered when adopting emotional labor strategies. Healthcare organizations must be aware of the potential for emotional dissonance, conflicting organizational expectations, training and support, authenticity, and ethical concerns. By addressing these challenges, healthcare organizations can effectively implement emotional labor strategies and enhance patient satisfaction while also promoting the well-being of healthcare workers.

PROSPECTS OF ADOPTING EMOTIONAL LABORE STRATEGIS FOR ENHANCEMENT OF PATIENT SATISFACTION

Despite the challenges in adopting emotional labor strategies, there are several prospects for enhancing patient satisfaction in hospitals. In this section, we will explore some of the prospects of adopting emotional labor strategies.

Improved Patient Satisfaction:

One of the key prospects of adopting emotional labor strategies is the potential for improved patient satisfaction. Emotional labor strategies can help healthcare workers to effectively manage their emotions and respond to patient needs in a way that is perceived as caring and compassionate. By doing so, emotional labor strategies can enhance patient satisfaction and improve patient outcomes.

Enhanced Patient Loyalty:

Another prospect of adopting emotional labor strategies is the potential for enhanced patient loyalty. When healthcare workers are able to effectively manage their emotions and respond to patient needs in a caring and compassionate way, patients are more likely to feel connected to the healthcare organization and more likely to return for future care.

Improved Quality of Care:

Adopting emotional labor strategies can also lead to improved quality of care. When healthcare workers are able to effectively manage their emotions, they are better able to communicate with patients and understand their needs. This can lead to more accurate diagnoses, more effective treatment plans, and improved patient outcomes.

Improved Employee Well-Being:

While emotional labor can be emotionally demanding, adopting emotional labor strategies can also improve employee well-being. By providing training and support for emotional labor, healthcare organizations can help healthcare workers to effectively manage their emotions and reduce the risk of burnout and emotional exhaustion.

Increased Job Satisfaction:

Finally, adopting emotional labor strategies can lead to increased job satisfaction among healthcare workers. When healthcare workers are able to effectively manage their emotions and respond to patient needs in a way that is perceived as caring and compassionate, they are more likely to feel a sense of fulfillment and purpose in their work.

FINDINGS:

The findings of this study will provide insights into the challenges and potential benefits associated with the adoption of emotional labor strategies for the enhancement of patient satisfaction in hospitals. The study will also identify best practices and recommendations for healthcare organizations that are considering adopting emotional labor strategies.

SUGGESTIONS:

Based on the findings of this study, healthcare organizations that are considering adopting emotional labor strategies for the enhancement of patient satisfaction in hospitals should consider the following:

Pay attention to the emotional well-being of healthcare workers and implement emotional labor strategies that minimize negative effects on healthcare workers.

Train healthcare workers on emotional regulation and communication skills to enhance their ability to manage emotional labor.

Foster a positive work environment that supports healthcare workers and promotes their engagement and well-being.

Implement patient-centered care strategies that incorporate emotional labor strategies to enhance patient satisfaction.

CONCLUSIONS:

The adoption of emotional labor strategies for the enhancement of patient satisfaction in hospitals has both positive and negative implications for healthcare workers. Healthcare organizations that are considering adopting these strategies should carefully evaluate the potential benefits and challenges associated with their adoption and implement best practices to minimize negative effects on healthcare workers while enhancing patient satisfaction. Ultimately, the successful adoption of emotional labor strategies in healthcare settings will require a holistic approach that prioritizes the emotional well-being of healthcare workers while promoting patient-centered care and enhancing patient satisfaction.

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