Abstract

Researchers define Emotional Labour (EL) as the effort associated with meeting the emotional requirements of the job, yet nobody has ever directly tested this effort. Building on classic stress and ego depletion theory, this study develops the Emotional Effort Scale (EEF). Methods: In Study 1, exploratory (N = 197) and confirmatory factor analysis (N = 182) were conducted with a British sample. In Study 2, the instrument was adapted to Spanish and measurement invariance was tested (N = 304). In Study 3, (N = 185), we tested convergent and divergent validity with the EL strategies (i.e., surface acting and deep acting) and the relationship between EEF and emotional exhaustion. Results: The final scale is a two-dimensional measure (explicit and implicit emotional effort) with good reliability levels in all samples (N = 818). Additionally, it shows adequate convergent, divergent and nomological validity. Conclusions: The Emotional Effort construct adds unique value to the literature. Thus, explicit effort seems to be the mechanism that explains the association between EL and exhaustion. Additionally, this study adapts and translates the measure to two of the most used languages in the world, enabling the emergence of cross-national studies in the field of emotions at work.

Keywords

Emotional labour, surface acting, emotional effort, emotional exhaustion, instrumental study.