Power of person-job fit: emotional labour for salespeople and its relation to job satisfaction

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Abstract: This study focused on the effect of person-job fit on the relationship between emotional labour and job satisfaction among salespeople in Turkey. Using survey data obtained from 204 salespeople working in different sectors, we analysed job satisfaction, person-job fit and three components of emotional labour, which are deep acting, surface acting and naturally felt emotions. We found that job satisfaction has a significant relationship positively with naturally felt emotions and negatively with surface acting. Although no significant moderation effect has been found for person-job fit, we found that person-job fit significantly mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and naturally felt emotions as well as the one between job satisfaction and surface acting.

Keywords: emotional labour; job satisfaction; person-job fit; salesperson; Turkey.


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1 Introduction

Even though emotions have huge effects throughout our lives especially in terms of our thoughts, motivations and behaviours; and have long been studied by researchers [Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993; Diefendorff et al., 2005; Thoits as cited in Morris and Feldman (1996)], this area of study has not been widely explored as one of the key contributions to the dynamics within organisations. Workplaces have been defined as professional environments that only require rationality, so emotions have, for the most part, been ignored (Fisher, 1997; Grandey, 2000). As the field has grown, work environments have begun to be seen as containing different emotions such as fear, hate, envy and compassion besides work-related tasks; however, there are, still misunderstandings in the role of emotions therein (Shuler and Sypher, 2000).

During the past several years, the dynamics of the workplace have changed in accordance with the increased emphasis on the importance of skilled competencies and communications instead of just physical labour, so that the emotions in organisations have begun to receive attention and exploration by researchers (Erickson and Ritter, 2001; Grandey, 2000; Morris and Feldman, 1996).

Emotional labour focuses on managing or regulating emotions on the basis of the workplace and/or job needs. There are basically two strategies that are used while managing emotions. The first is deep acting, which means that the individual modifies inner feelings to match required expressions, and the second is surface acting, which means that the individual suppresses felt emotions and fakes the desired ones (Chen et al., 2012). Most researchers mention that there is either a positive or negative relationship between emotional labour and a number of work related concepts like job satisfaction, job performance, mood and burnout depending on the strategy that is used (e.g., Grandey, 2003; Erickson and Ritter, 2001; Judge et al., 2009; Goodwin et al., 2011).

In this study, we focus on the role of person-job fit, in the relationship between emotional labour, and job satisfaction as a positive key organisational behaviour. In terms of the relationship between job satisfaction and emotional labour, most studies mentioned that the higher the surface acting, the lower job satisfaction (e.g., Grandey, 2000, 2003; Morris and Feldman, 1997). Whereas Morris and Feldman (1997) explained this mechanism as the increased satisfaction of an employee leading to a less need to put on act with customers. Grandey (2000) stated that the reason for this kind of relationship is surface acting’s suppressing the employees’ real emotions and he also mentioned that as the deep acting increases the personal sense of accomplishment, there is a positive relationship between it and job satisfaction. Yet, newer studies showed that there is, actually, not such a precise relationship between emotional labour and job satisfaction;
there are actually a number of factors that can generate and/or change the dynamics of this relationship in various ways. Jiang et al. (2013) mention that although job satisfaction is negatively related to surface acting and positively to deep acting, different job characteristics moderate this relationship, for example the low level of monotonous tasks may help to improve job satisfaction of employees with surface acting. There are also other studies that found the mediating factors of the relationship between emotional labour strategies and job satisfaction. Adil et al. (2012), for example, indicate that negative emotions at work fully mediate the negative relationship between surface acting and job satisfaction. So, in this study, we aimed to explore the moderating and mediating effect of another work-related factor on the relationship between emotional labour and job satisfaction: person-job fit. Firstly the theoretical background for this relationship will be presented.

2 Emotions at service sector

After Hochschild’s (1983) seminal work on emotional labour, a number of researchers were inspired to explore areas related to different subjects on emotions at work (Fisher and Ashkanasy, 2000). In 1987, for example, Rafaeli and Sutton worked on emotional expressions as part of the work role. They focused on the causes and consequences of the emotional expressions of which they classified as positive/negative and esteem enhancing/degrading that lead to fulfil the expectations of the organisations. After 1990s, most researchers (e.g., Morris and Feldman, 1996; Grandey, 2000) began using quantitative approaches to further analyse and understand the dynamics of emotional labour. Different field studies such as the ones with fast-food employees [Linder as cited in Chu et al. (2012)], wait staff [Adelman as cited in Chu et al. (2012)] and the amusement park employees (van Maanen and Kunda, 1989) flourished the studies on emotions and inspired other researchers about the way of emotion regulation and management. In 1991, Isen and Baron’s work on positive affect related to organisational behaviour contributed to an increase in research on emotions at work. In their study, they focused on pleasant feelings and their dynamics combined with techniques for inducing them in the organisational context. In 1993, Fineman (2000) defined organisations as emotional arenas in his book, *Emotion in Organizations*. According to Fineman, emotion work is a very important social regulation and helps the organisation stay organised. He mentioned that organisations focusing on rationality cannot think and act effectively all the time through their interactions with other organisations; but emotions are less problematic and make impossible decisions possible and help to solve tiebreaks.

The main driver of this perspective change on workplace emotions relies on the trends in the competitive climate throughout the world. Especially, together with the increasing number of service sectors in the USA and European countries and their crucial roles in the global economy, and along with the increased competition between these service providers, a focus began on the nature of these services. The economy, from that time, was affected by the delivery of services of the goods instead of just production of those goods (Morris and Feldman, 1996; Chen et al., 2012; Güngör, 2009; Wharton, 2009).

All these changing dynamics in business life lead to situational changes for employees; a focus on the employee competencies, especially the ones in the service
sector, was initiated. With expansion of the service sector and as the number of working people increases, the importance of their emotions in relation to performance and productivity also increases. A difference in service sector as compared to other industries is that the employees’ workload mostly relies on communications with customers and the quality of these interactions are vital for the organisational success and profit (Hülsheger and Schewe, 2011; Chen et al., 2012; Wharton, 1993). Similarly, Totterdell and Holman (2003) mentioned in their study that in such roles, attitudes and emotion regulation strategies of the employees can effect the quality of their interactions with the customers, which in turn, effecting customers to buy the product and to remain loyal to the organisation.

Ashkanasy and Daus (2002) stated that the importance of service employees’ performance is that the perception of the customers is correlated with employees’ attitudes. For example, if a service employee behaves inappropriately towards the customer, the perception of the customer becomes negative both for that employee and for the organisation at which the employee works, which means damage for organisational revenue. Not only the perception of the customer toward the organisation changes, but also the customer’s evaluation of the service quality, demand and willingness to share positive comments to friends may be affected, too (Mishra et al., 2012). Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) also mention in their study that as service transactions often involve face-to-face interactions, service employees’ displayed feelings are critical for the customers’ perceptions of the quality of the product and values of the organisation. To sum up, the emotional effort in the service industry is vital in order to be strong in the competitive world in addition to mental and physical efforts (Biron and van Veldhoven, 2012).

There are a number of examples of employees who are in frequent contact with customers in service sectors such as customer services, teachers, call centre workers, health sector employees and salespeople (e.g., Bhave and Glomb, 2009; Lu et al., 2013; Wharton, 1993).

2.1 Sales as an emotional work

In terms of changing dynamics in business, sales are regarded to be one of the key contributors in determining company success. Ultimately, sales representatives play a crucial role as subjects of I/O psychology, organisational behaviour and managerial studies (e.g., Lloyd and Newell, 2001; Mishra et al., 2012; Mulky, 2012). Salespeople are critical resources for all organisations as they are seen and evaluated as the basic elements for the total revenue. Consequently, their impact is very significant as it is seen throughout all the activities within organisations. Jones et al. (2007) emphasise in their study that the salesperson’s role has become more demanding and complex year by year.

Along with the emerging competencies and different management skills, and with the increased competition between service providers, organisations began to focus on the employees’ behaviours towards their customers as the perceived quality of the service. This quality of service is mostly determined by the customer’s impression of the salesperson; indeed, from the interactions and pressure to ‘put on a happy face’ in spite of whatever their true feelings may be (Morris and Feldman, 1996; Grandey, 2003; Çelik and Turunç, 2011; Wagner et al., 2014). Front-line employees who are in frequent contact with customers, such as salespeople, are getting more and more attention throughout the years in terms of presenting displaying emotional behaviour (Grandey,
Their responsibilities to display organisationally desired emotions to the customers requires some effort and self-control – what Hochschild called emotional labour, which is the main subject of this study (Chen et al., 2012; Lam and Chen, 2012).

2.2 Emotional labour

Emotional labour, is generally defined as the act of expressing organisationally desired emotions during service transactions, and according to this definition, there are standards that guide how and when emotion should be expressed within organisations (Erickson and Ritter, 2001). Hochschild, in *The Managed Heart* (1983), defined emotional labour as “the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display” (p.7). She viewed emotional labour as the commercialisation of emotion management tactics (Judge et al., 2009). Hochschild labelled these organisational demands as ‘feeling rules’; later researchers used the term ‘display rules’ since organisations can manage just the observable behaviours (Humphrey, 2012).

Employees are expected to manage their emotions in accordance with the company policies and strategies especially while they are serving and/or interacting with customers. They are expected to behave in accordance with those standards through planning, controlling and making efforts to present specific emotions even if they do not actually feel like that (Onay, 2011; Morris and Feldman, 1996). It is important to note that each and every employee requires displaying some emotions through their work on a basic level, however emotional labour refers to a more complicated and constant concept (Güngör, 2009). There are three dimensions of emotional labour that will be explained below: surface acting, deep acting and naturally felt emotions.

2.2.1 Surface acting

Surface acting means employees’ faking or hiding felt emotions; whereas, deep acting means they are trying to experience the desired emotions (Diefendorff et al., 2005; Grandey, 2003). In surface acting, the employees do not have to modify his inner feelings but simply displays; they only regulate their emotional expressions, so it is more likely to experience emotional dissonance in surface acting (Grandey, 2000, 2003; Erickson and Ritter, 2001; Lu et al., 2013).

Although surface acting is typically seen as faking positive emotions together with the suppression of negative emotions (Diefendorff et al., 2005), it can be an attempt to suppress any felt emotions in accordance with the organisational rules so that it lacks authenticity which in turn can lead to damage in organisation-customer relationships (Mishra et al., 2012). Because it involves faking the desired emotions instead of trying to actually feel them, surface acting is regarded as ‘acting in bad faith’ (Grandey, 2003; Chau et al., 2009; Humphrey, 2012).

2.2.2 Deep acting

In deep acting, employees try to modify their inner feelings to match the required displays and they do this consciously (Grandey, 2000, 2003; Erickson and Ritter, 2001; Lu et al., 2013), so that it is considered to be cognitively effortful (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993). In other words, deep acting involves an employee’s altering their own
feelings to have the appropriate ones so it is regarded as ‘acting in good faith’ (Grandey, 2003; Chau et al., 2009). According to Grandey (2000), deep acting involves a strong interest in the customers, which creates empathy in those customers, and in turn leads to a higher quality of service.

2.2.3 Naturally felt emotions

Diefendorff et al. (2005), discuss expressions of naturally felt emotions in the workplaces along with these two strategies, surface and deep acting. According to them, researchers mostly focus on the two strategies to display the required desirable emotions, but employees may simply express spontaneously what they feel and this may also be appropriate for the organisation’s expectations.

In another study, Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) propose the term ‘genuine acting’ to replace the definition of naturally felt emotions which actually has the same meaning. They argued that most of the time, the natural and spontaneous emotions of the employees are in line with the company rules together with social expectations. The authors gave the following example: a nurse who experiences sympathy for an injured child has indeed no need to act as she will express the appropriate feeling. Similarly, Glomb and Tews (2004) mention in their study that there are also genuinely felt displays, besides different forms of acting.

2.2.4 Antecedents of emotional labour

There are a variety of factors that affect emotional labour in various ways; most researchers (Erickson and Ritter, 2001; Chu et al., 2012; Buckner and Mahoney, 2012) categorise them under organisational factors (e.g., job autonomy, supervisor support), and individual differences (e.g., emotional intelligence, gender, affectivity). Although this kind of categorisation is mainly used in emotional labour literature, cultural and job characteristics categories are included as antecedents to cover all factors.

2.2.4.1 Organisational factors

The first critical organisational factor for emotional labour is the display rules in the organisation. The more display rules in an organisation, the more they may lead to emotional labour performances for the employees (Grandey, 2003). In line with this point of view, Grandey (2000) also posits that the more customer interaction that the organisation expects, the higher work role demands in terms of the emotional labour. The frequency and duration of these demands are all important to determine the employee’s tendency to fake expressions or modify feelings.

Other examples of organisational factors that affect emotional labour are job autonomy, commitment to the display rule, and awareness of display rules, supervisor support and co-worker support (Grandey, 2000; Chen et al., 2012).

2.2.4.2 Culture and emotional labour

Emotion Labour literature was criticised in representing dominantly North American culture due to origin of early studies. Cultural differences in emotion extend to the way that the perception of auditory and visual cues may itself be subject to cultural variability (Tanaka et al., 2010). According to affect valuation theory, it is proposed that cultural
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factors shape how people ideally want to feel, their ‘ideal affect’, more than how they actually feel, their ‘actual affect’ (Tsai, 2007).

Display rules, what emotions are appropriate to show in a given situation are shaped by culture (Ekman et al., 1987; Safdar et al., 2009). According to the results of Grandey et al. (2005)’ study the way that emotional labour is enacted by service employees differed between the USA and France. Emotion regulation also varies as a function of cultural context (Butler et al., 2007; Matsumoto et al., 2008). Mesquita and Delvaux (2013) proposed that cultural differences influence emotional labour in terms of emotion-display dissonance, emotion regulation and social reaction to emotion regulations. Mesquita and colleagues (2006) found that Japanese and US respondents use different strategies in offensive situations. While US sample, blaming the offender and trying to distance themselves from the offender; Japanese respondents are trying to understand the offender by taking his /her perspective and letting the situation cool down. And these two points differences in emotional labour strategies and their effects.

Turkey is a collectivist country according Hofstede’s dimensions (Pasa et al., 2001) and emotional labour process differs accordingly. Allen et al. (2014) found that in collectivistic cultures the idea of faking emotions may be perceived inauthentic. Eid and Diener (2001) suggest that, faking might be perceived more disingenuous in a collectivistic culture than do strategies like suppressing or hiding feelings. In a study with Turkish sample, it was found that if the participants perceive the work atmosphere as a fair place they likely display deep acting, and if they perceive them as injustice more likely adopt the surface acting (Yürür et al., 2011).

2.2.4.3 Job characteristics

There are a variety of researchers identified different job characteristics (like responsibility, social interactions, knowledge and skills) related to other work-related factors they studied on. Jiang et al. (2013), for example, focused on three of them while analysing the relationship with emotional labour strategies. These are job routines, job autonomy and skill diversity and they were found to moderate the relationship between emotional labour strategies and job satisfaction.

2.2.4.4 Individual factors

Organisational factors do not always affect employees in the same way because of a variety of individual factors like emotional intelligence, gender, mood and affectivity. All these individual traits and personalities have an effect on the way that employees rely on related emotion management strategies. It was found that age was positively related to deep acting and naturally felt emotions, also negatively related to surface acting. Dahling and Perez (2010) explain these results, stating that older employees have a tendency to give effort for maximising positive feelings and emotional experiences while minimising negative ones.

Other individual factors that were evaluated as the antecedents of emotional labour are affectivity and empathy (Chu et al., 2012). Results showed that employees with higher positive affect tend to experience less emotional dissonance whereas ones with higher negative affect tend to show more effort while acting in emotional labour. In terms of empathy, it was found that employees with high emotional contagion tend to have
more emotional dissonance because they show more effort to create a positive mood in order to be able to meet the customer expectations.

2.2.5 Consequences of emotional labour

Emotional labour has a variety of both positive and negative consequences for employees at work. This variety stems from different emotional labour strategies that employees perform as well as the fact that strategies are also a result of the interaction effects of other work conditions. Several researchers mentioned that withdrawal behaviours as an outcome of emotional labour may occur because of different factors such as stress, physiological arousal and emotional exhaustion. Studies show that emotional labour increases stress, decreases satisfaction and leads to burnout in employees (Pugliesi, 1999; Chau et al., 2009; Grandey, 2000). Some researchers conclude that emotional labour leads to an increase in the intention to leave the company as well as voluntary turnover in organisations mostly because of emotional exhaustion (Lee and Ashforth, 1996; Wright and Cropanzano, 1998).

Chen et al. (2012) found that surface acting is positively related to the high level of burnout combined with emotional exhaustion. They also found that surface acting is negatively related to work performance, while deep acting has a direct positive relationship to it. The employees who engage in surface acting are more likely to experience emotional exhaustion whereas those who engage in deep acting may experience low levels (Chu et al., 2012).

As seen through these examples and as Grandey (2000) suggests, when we look at the consequences of these different types of emotional labour strategies, there are different effects on affective and behavioural outcomes that are connected to all employee-related issues such as job satisfaction, general well-being, burnout, performance and employee engagement (e.g., Grandey, 2003; Jiang et al., 2013; Erickson and Ritter, 2001) according to the specific strategy that is used to display the appropriate emotions.

Generally, surface acting has been consistently evaluated as having negative effects on employees (Wagner et al., 2014) in addition to the fact that it is negatively related to the service performance since it is perceived insincere by customers (Grandey, 2000). Unlike surface acting, deep acting generally seems as not harming employee well-being and, indeed, is positively related to the different job related factors like job satisfaction and customer satisfaction (Humphrey et al., 2015). One of the main reasons for the difference with regard to the affects of deep acting and surface acting is that while surface acting elicits more negative reactions from customers because of its inauthenticity, deep acting can even enhance authentic feelings. Deep acting also helps employees align with the expected displays of emotions so that the emotional dissonance is decreased and make them feel better (Judge et al., 2009).

Surface acting leads to lower job satisfaction and job performance in employees, which in turn leads to increasing rates of emotional exhaustion, burnout and turnover (e.g., Goodwin et al., 2011; Hülsheger and Schewe, 2011; Lam and Chen, 2012). Whereas Lam and Chen (2012) found deep acting lead to higher job satisfaction combined with higher service quality, other researchers did not find a direct link between them. Cheung et al. (2011) showed that naturally felt emotions are negatively related to burnout but positively to job satisfaction. Chen et al. (2012) found that surface acting is positively related to, and deep acting has a negative effect on, turnover intentions. As seen through these findings, surface acting is generally related to negative outcomes
whereas deep acting to positive outcomes although there are conflicting findings in cross-cultural studies (Mesquita and Delvaux, 2013).

2.2.6 Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is one of the most widely studied subjects in organisational behaviour and it is defined as a pleasant emotional state that results from the appraisal of one’s job experiences (Brown and Peterson, 1993). It plays a critical role in employees’ general attitudes, behaviours and emotions as it represents the positive reactions to the job and also affects their perception and interpretation of the different dimensions of their work (Grandey, 2003; Lu et al., 2013).

Mulky (2012) mentions that, especially within marketing-sales literature, job satisfaction has been found to have a significant effect on organisation commitment, life satisfaction, and withdrawal behaviour. According to Barutçu and Sezgin (2012), it is really hard for a salesperson who is not satisfied with his job to show an interest both in the job and customers. So it is important to note that a company’s value job satisfaction as it reflects “employees’ reactions to what they receive” (Wright, 2001).

In terms of the relationship between emotional labour and job satisfaction, Grandey (2003) mentions that employees who feel good and positive about their jobs are less likely to be engaged in modifying their inner feelings because they, indeed, do not need to change. So it is suggested that there is a negative relationship between job satisfaction and emotional dissonance through trying to create faking expressions – which can be also called surface acting. Moreover, Grandey (2000) also found that surface acting is again negatively related to job satisfaction because it suppresses people’s real emotions; and deep acting is positively related to job satisfaction because it promotes a personal sense of accomplishment. Jiang et al. (2013) concluded that surface acting, again, negatively relates to job satisfaction, whereas deep acting relates positively. Chen et al. (2012), also, found in their study that job satisfaction is negatively related to surface acting while positively related to deep acting.

Morris and Feldman (1997) argue that there is an increase in emotional dissonance with surface acting and that this leads to decreased job satisfaction. In terms of deep acting, on the other hand, Rafaeli and Sutton’s (1987) suggestion is that when employees experience a discrepancy between their own emotions and the organisationally desired ones, they try to lessen the gap through deep acting and this would lead them to feel more successful and less phony which in turn makes them more satisfied.

In terms of the relationship between job satisfaction and emotional labour, most studies mention that the higher the surface acting, the lower the job satisfaction (e.g., Grandey, 2000, 2003; Morris and Feldman, 1997). Whereas Morris and Feldman (1997) explain this mechanism as the increased satisfaction of an employee leading to less need to put on act with customers, Grandey (2000) states that the reason for this kind of relationship is that because surface acting is suppressing the employees’ real emotions and as the deep acting increases the personal sense of accomplishment, there is a positive relationship between it and job satisfaction.

Moreover, when we consider naturally felt emotions as the third strategy, and thought that they are already displayed spontaneously by the employees appropriately to the organisations’ expectations; and consider the finding of Cheung and Tang’s (2010) [as cited in Cheung et al. (2011)] study as expression of naturally felt emotion at work was associated with job satisfaction and low psychological distress.
There are limited studies that focused on the moderator and mediator effects for the relationship between emotional labour strategies and job satisfaction. A moderating relation was found for psychological capital such that the negative relationship between surface acting and job satisfaction is weaker when psychological capital is high; whereas the positive relationship of deep acting and job satisfaction is reinforced when psychological capital is high again (Cheung et al., 2011). Jiang et al. (2013) found in their study that different job characteristics, also, moderate the relationship between emotional labour and job satisfaction such as job autonomy. With low job autonomy, employees using surface acting were more dissatisfied with their jobs whereas ones with deep acting were more satisfied with their jobs. Adil et al. (2012), indicate that negative emotions at work fully mediate the negative relationship between surface acting and job satisfaction. Similarly, Judge et al. (2009) found that negative mood was positively associated with surface acting, and had a mediating effect on the association of surface acting with increased emotional exhaustion and decreased job satisfaction.

Person-job fit has an effect both on job satisfaction and emotion management; so its role on the relationship between emotional labour and job satisfaction is worthy of analysis.

2.2.7 Person-job fit

Person-job fit has been defined as the degree to which an individual’s preferences, knowledge, activities, skills, needs and values match the job requirements (Brikich et al., 2002). It is one of the levels or one form of person-environment (P-E) fit together with person-group (P-G) fit and person-organisation (P-O) fit (Ahmad and Veerapandian, 2012). A good person-job fit is probably experienced when an employee likes the work and finds it interesting and enjoyable and when he/she has the necessary characteristics and resources to perform well for that job (Kristof-Brown et al., 2002). Because person-job fit is like the match between employees’ skills, knowledge and abilities (KSA) and the demands of the job, it is regarded as the employees’ capacity to handle the difficulties of that particular job (Babakuş et al., 2011). So, it is generally considered to be positively associated with well-being aspects of the employees including job satisfaction (Warr and İnceoğlu, 2012).

There is a positive relationship between the person-job fit and job satisfaction, which means that the lower the discrepancy between the amount of the individual’s preferences, knowledge, skills, needs and the amount that is desired, the higher the reported job satisfaction (Ahmad and Veerapandian, 2012; Grandey, 2003; Weeks and Fournier, 2010; Fisher and Ashkanasy, 2000). For salespeople, Mulky (2012) studied the impact of person-job fit on job satisfaction and organisation commitment with the participation of pharmaceutical salespersons in India and found again, a strong positive relationship between them. Similarly, Brown and Peterson (1993) worked with salespeople in India and found that person-job fit had a strong positive relationship with job satisfaction together with P-O fit.

In terms of the relationship between person-job fit and emotions, Warr and Înceoğlu (2012) explain that employees with high person-job fit may consider the high levels of work demands as desirable and may not be negatively affected as much as others with low fit. Chu et al. (2012) state that a good fit leads to more emotional harmony rather than dissonance in employees. In a newly study (Humphrey et al., 2015), researchers find that people who have low person-job fit are likely to find their jobs more stressful, and
their experienced emotional labour harms the well-being. Similar to the findings of this study, considering the effect of person-job fit on the emotional factors and the relationship between person-job fit and job satisfaction; we can conclude that a good person-job fit means an employee finds his work enjoyable and has the necessary skills and competencies. So, we can assume that salespeople who have the good person-job fit may not experience at a high level, the effects of emotional labour of frequent contact with customers, and this in turn may increase job satisfaction. With high person-job fit, in which an employee likes his work and finds it enjoyable and has the necessary competencies, he may not experience the negative effects of emotional labour of frequent contact with customers at a high level, and this in turn may lead to fewer negative effects of emotional labour on job satisfaction.

As the aim of this study is to explore the effect of person-job fit on this relationship between emotional labour and job satisfaction through salespeople in Turkey, our first claim is that person-job fit can have a moderating effect on the relationship between emotional labour and job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1 There is a moderating effect of person-job fit on the relationship between surface acting and job satisfaction such that the relationship between surface acting and job satisfaction will be stronger when person-job fit is low compared to when it is high.

Hypothesis 2 There is a moderating effect of person-job fit on the relationship between deep acting and job satisfaction such that the relationship between surface acting and job satisfaction will be stronger when person-job fit is high compared to when it is low.

Hypothesis 3 There is a moderating effect of person-job fit on the relationship between naturally felt emotions and job satisfaction such that the relationship between surface acting and job satisfaction will be stronger when person-job fit is high compared to when it is low.

Given the theoretical possibility that person-job fit might mediate the effect of deep acting, surface acting and naturally felt emotions on job satisfaction, we also hypothesised for the mediation effect. The reason for this assumption is that person-job fit may not function at the same level with deep acting, surface acting or naturally felt emotions with regard to their roles as causal variables. Although this kind of examination is not a frequently used approach, there are some researchers studied in a similar way. Boon et al. (2011), for example, analysed both mediating and moderating effect of person-environment fit on relationship between perceptions of HR practices and organisational commitment in the light of different studies that focused on these roles separately in the literature.

According to Baron and Kenny (1986), a moderator variable should always function as an independent variable whereas a mediator may either effect or cause. Mediators are like intervening variables. Person-job fit, here, may be a factor that does not specify when a certain effect occurs, but may specify how and why such effect occurs. So our last group of hypotheses is as follows:

Hypothesis 4 There is a mediating effect of person-job fit on the relationship between surface acting and job satisfaction.
Hypothesis 5  There is a mediating effect of person-job fit on the relationship between deep acting and job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 6  There is a mediating effect of person-job fit on the relationship between naturally felt emotions and job satisfaction.

In light of all these hypotheses, person-job fit is analysed and measured as both a moderating and mediating variable for the relationship between different emotional labour strategies and job satisfaction.

Figure 1  Research model (see online version for colours)

3  Method

3.1  Sample

A total of 204 participants (male: 130, female: 74) are salespeople working in the medical, pharmaceutical and cosmetics industries in Turkey. The mean age of all participants was 35.57 and standard deviation was 2.65 within the range of 24 and 61.

There is a highly homogeneous distribution in terms of tenure in sales positions; the mean for the years spent at sales is 9.47. A large portion of the participants’ customer segment are from health sectors such pharmacies and doctors (75%, n = 153), whereas only 13.7% (n = 28) are from markets and 11.3% (n = 23) are from other segments. The education level of 66.2% of the participants (n = 135) is undergraduate and the
remainders are either high school (2.5%, n = 5), or associate (7.8%, n = 16) or graduate and doctorate (23.5%, n = 48).

3.2 Measures

3.2.1 Emotional labour

Emotional labour was measured via 14 items collected from Diefendorff et al.’s (2005) study. Participants rated each item using a 5-point Likert scale from 5 as ‘strongly agree’, to 1 as ‘strongly disagree’. The scale has three components: deep acting, surface acting and naturally felt emotions. Sample items are ‘I put on an act in order to deal with customers in an appropriate way’ and ‘I work hard to feel the emotions that I need to show to customers’. The scale adaptation to Turkish was done as translation-retranslation and the validity analysis verified the three factor structure of scale in Turkish (Basım and Beğenirbaş, 2012).

3.2.2 Job satisfaction

In the measurement of job satisfaction, the short version generated by Churchill et al. (1974) of INDSALES – job satisfaction scale for salespeople – (Comer et al., 1989) was used. Four questions related to job satisfaction in the short version questionnaire were selected. Sample items are ‘my work gives me a sense of accomplishment’ and ‘my work is satisfying’. The questions were translated to Turkish by the authors and English teachers. A 5-point Likert scale was used from 5 as ‘strongly agree’, to 1 as ‘strongly disagree’.

3.2.3 Person-job fit

Person-job fit was measured with three items adopted from Donovan et al. (2004) together with two items adopted from Guan et al.’s study (2010). A sample item is ‘my skills and abilities perfectly match what my job demands’. The questions were translated into Turkish by the authors and English teachers. Participants rated each item using a 5-point Likert scale from 5 as ‘strongly agree’, to 1 as ‘strongly disagree’.

A mail survey approach was used; survey includes a consent form and a 6-items demographics form together with emotional labour, person-job fit and job satisfaction scales.

4 Results

4.1 Reliability and correlations

As a first phase of data analysis, reliability tests were completed. Cronbach’s alpha scores for all the scales are satisfactory (‘α’ scores for emotional labour is .860, for job satisfaction is .837 and for person-job fit .890). For emotional labour sub-factors α values are .83 for deep acting and .88 both for surface acting and naturally felt emotions. The reliability of all of them is satisfactory, with α scores of An exploratory factor analysis was carried out for the emotional labour scale; considering the three-factor structure of
emotional labour and assuming that in the Turkish version they were not well understood, two items were removed. They were: ‘I put on a ‘mask’ in order to display the emotions I need for the job’ and ‘I try to actually experience the emotions that I must show to customers’.

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations among all the study variables. The correlations indicate that surface acting is negatively correlated both with job satisfaction ($r = -0.312, p < 0.01$), and with person-job fit ($r = -0.312, p < 0.01$). Naturally felt emotions, on the other hand, positively correlated both with job satisfaction ($r = 0.542, p < 0.01$), and with person-job fit ($r = 0.554, p < 0.01$).

Table 1 Standard deviation and correlations of all measurements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. deviation</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep acting</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>.611**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface acting</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>-668**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturally felt emt.</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job satisfaction</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person-job fit</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.2 Hypotheses testing

Hypotheses related to the moderation effect of person-job fit were tested using a two-step hierarchical regression analysis that includes all the variables together with the product term. The product term is created by multiplying the independent variable and the moderator. In this moderated regression analysis, the first step should involve the dependent variable, independent variable and moderator variable; and the second step should involve all of these variables as well as the product term. If there is a significant increase in the R2 cause of the addition of the product term, then we can say there is a significant moderation affect (Bartram et al., 2012).

As shown in Table 2, the addition of the product-term, which is the multiplication of one of the emotional labour strategies and person-job fit, did not result in a significant increase in the R-square in each of them. Analyses results showed that person-job fit did not have any role as a moderator on the relationship between job satisfaction and surface acting ($\beta: .154, p > .001; \Delta R^2: .001, p > .001$), deep acting ($\beta: .098, p > .001; \Delta R^2: .000, p > .001$), and naturally felt emotions ($\beta: -.163, p > .001; \Delta R^2: .001, p > .001$).

According to Baron and Kenny (1986), moderator variables are generally applied when there is a weak or inconsistent relationship between the independent and dependent variables, whereas mediators are the best options when there is a strong relationship between them. So, it makes sense to evaluate the person-job fit as a mediator for the strong relationship both between job satisfaction and surface acting, and between job satisfaction and naturally felt emotions.

In mediation analysis three regressions are required as described by Baron and Kenny (1986). First, the independent variable (deep acting, surface acting or naturally felt emotions) should predict the dependent variable (job satisfaction). Second, the independent variable should predict the mediator (person-job fit). Third, the mediator
variable should predict the outcome when the initial independent variable is included in the equation, and the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable should be less than in the first model. If the independent variable has a significant effect in model 3, then there is partial mediation. If the independent variable has a non-significant effect in model 3, then there is full mediation (Bartram et al., 2012).

### Table 2: Regression analysis results for the moderating effect of person-job fit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Regression Analysis Results</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$\Delta R^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1 (job satisfaction as DV)</td>
<td>247.66</td>
<td>.711</td>
<td>.711**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface acting</td>
<td>–.055</td>
<td>–1.385</td>
<td>.168</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person-job fit</td>
<td>.825</td>
<td>20.674</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2 (job satisfaction as DV)</td>
<td>165.09</td>
<td>.712</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface acting</td>
<td>–.211</td>
<td>–1.106</td>
<td>.270</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person-job fit</td>
<td>.748</td>
<td>7.510</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product term</td>
<td>.154</td>
<td>.835</td>
<td>.405</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 1 (job satisfaction as DV)</td>
<td>249.629</td>
<td>.713</td>
<td>.713**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep acting</td>
<td>–.066</td>
<td>–1.751</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person-job fit</td>
<td>.838</td>
<td>22.134</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2 (job satisfaction as DV)</td>
<td>165.825</td>
<td>.713</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep acting</td>
<td>–.149</td>
<td>–.776</td>
<td>.438</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person-job fit</td>
<td>.783</td>
<td>5.945</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product term</td>
<td>.098</td>
<td>.439</td>
<td>.661</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 1 (job satisfaction as DV)</td>
<td>254.531</td>
<td>.717</td>
<td>.717**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturally felt c.</td>
<td>.110</td>
<td>2.434</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person-job fit</td>
<td>.781</td>
<td>17.334</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2 (job satisfaction as DV)</td>
<td>169.402</td>
<td>.718</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturally felt c.</td>
<td>.217</td>
<td>1.339</td>
<td>.182</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person-job fit</td>
<td>.856</td>
<td>7.307</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product term</td>
<td>–.163</td>
<td>–.689</td>
<td>.492</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: **$R^2$** is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 represents the results of the regression analysis testing the mediating effect of person-job fit for all three strategies of emotional labour as independent variables. In terms of deep acting, model 1 showed that it did not have a significant effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = –.116$, $t(202) = .100$, $p = .100$) so that it is not necessary to evaluate further results for the mediation, Hypothesis 8 was not supported. In terms of surface acting, models 1 and 2 showed that both surface acting and person-job fit had a significant effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = –.312$, $t(202) = –4.672$, $p = .000$, $\beta = .842$, $t(202) = 22.162$, $p = .000$, respectively). Model 3 showed the last requirement for the mediation effect as the person-job fit had a significance on job satisfaction ($\beta = .825$, $t(202) = 20.674$, $p = .000$) as well as the effect of surface acting was less than in model 1, so Hypothesis 7 was supported. Because the effect of surface acting in model 3 was not significant, we can say that there is a full mediation effect of person-job fit.
In terms of naturally felt emotions, on the other hand, again models 1 and 2 showed that both naturally felt emotions and person-job fit had a significant effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = -.542$, $t(202) = 9.167$, $p = .000$; $\beta = .842$, $t(202) = 22.162$, $p = .000$, respectively). Model 3 showed the last requirement for the mediation effect as the person-job fit had a significant effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = .781$, $t(202) = 17.334$, $p = .000$) as well as the effect of naturally felt emotions was less than in model 1, so Hypothesis 9 was supported. Because the effect of naturally felt emotions in model 3 was significant here, we can say that there is a partial mediation effect of person-job fit on the relationship between naturally felt emotions and job satisfaction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3</th>
<th>Regression analysis results for the mediating effect of person-job (MV) fit between different emotional labour strategies (IVs) and job satisfaction (DV)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1 (IV → DV)</td>
<td>$\beta$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface acting</td>
<td>.312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2 (IV-MV)</td>
<td>491.170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person-job fit</td>
<td>.842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 3 (IV + MV → DV)</td>
<td>247.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface acting</td>
<td>-.055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person-job fit</td>
<td>.825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 1 (IV → DV)</td>
<td>2.735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep acting</td>
<td>-.116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2 (IV-MV)</td>
<td>491.170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person-job fit</td>
<td>.842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 3 (IV + MV → DV)</td>
<td>249.629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep acting</td>
<td>-.066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person-job fit</td>
<td>.838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 1 (IV → DV)</td>
<td>84.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturally felt e.</td>
<td>.542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2 (IV-MV)</td>
<td>491.170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person-job fit</td>
<td>.842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 3 (IV + MV → DV)</td>
<td>254.531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturally felt e.</td>
<td>.110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person-job fit</td>
<td>.781</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Dependent variable: job satisfaction.

As a summary of the findings, as hypothesised, there is a negative relationship between surface acting and job satisfaction and a positive relationship between naturally felt emotions and job satisfaction. On the one hand, there is not any moderating effect of person-job fit on the relationship between different emotional labour strategies and job satisfaction. On the other hand, there is a significant full mediating effect of person-job fit for the relationship between surface acting and job satisfaction and a partial mediating effect of it for the relationship between naturally felt emotions and job satisfaction.
5 Discussion

As the aim of this study was to bridge the person-job fit, job satisfaction and different emotional labour strategies, the effects and possible roles of person-job fit on the relationship between different strategies of emotional labour and job satisfaction were analysed and some significant results were found for its mediating role.

There can be several reasons why we did not find any relationship between deep acting and job satisfaction. One of them is that the effects of deep acting is not so clear as surface acting among researchers as it has both positive sides through the feeling of individual success in addition to its negative sides as it is cognitively effortful (Biron and van Veldhoven, 2012). Similar to our results, Judge et al. (2009) did not find any relationship between them contrary to their hypothesis, which was that there was a significant relationship between deep acting and job satisfaction. They explain this situation in line with Grandey (2003), as job satisfaction is not an outcome of deep acting, but still assert that deep acting may lead to job satisfaction if a variety of factors like individual differences are controlled. Similar to this explanation, Goodwin et al. (2011) mention that although no significant relationship has been found between deep acting and job performance or turnover, it is reasonable to evaluate deep acting as beneficial to employees. They suggest, actually, that even a null relationship is better than a detrimental relationship. Lastly, Thoresen et al. (2003) found and state in their study that job satisfaction is actually slightly more strongly influenced by negative effects than positive ones, and this finding is consistent to ours since we found no relationship with deep acting but significant with surface acting in terms of job satisfaction. If we look at the dynamics of mediators, they act as determining ‘how’ or ‘why’ an independent variable predicts the dependent variable; so, we can evaluate mediators as factors that can explain the relationships between independent variables and dependent variables (Frazier et al., 2004).

In our study, because we did not find any results related to the moderation effect of the person-job fit, we can say that there are no differential effects of various emotional strategies on job satisfaction for employees high and low in person-job fit. Yet, because results showed the mediation effect of person-job fit, we can conclude that the reason for the difference in job satisfaction levels with different emotional labour strategies is, in fact, the effect of person-job fit on these strategies.

With these results and evaluations, we focused on the mediating effect of person-job fit on the relationship between job satisfaction and surface acting together as well as naturally felt emotions. The results of regression analysis confirm that person-job fit has a full mediation effect on the relationship between surface acting and job satisfaction, which means that surface acting affects first person-job fit, which in turn affects job satisfaction of employees. We can conclude with this result that if employees use high levels of surface acting, in other words they do not try to change their feeling but just modify them in terms of emotion display to the customers; they feel more emotional dissonance, which in turn affects their capacity to handle the difficulties of their job. Their skills and capabilities become incompatible with the requirements of their jobs as they waste more and more energy by acting unnaturally. In the end, it is possible to have very low job satisfaction for these employees.

Results also showed that person-job fit has a partial mediation effect on the relationship between naturally felt emotions and job satisfaction. Partial mediation
implies that the mediating variable – person-job fit, here – accounts for some, yet not all, of the relationship between other variables, namely job satisfaction and naturally felt emotions. There is still a significant direct relationship between these two variables, but person-job fit has a significant role, too. We can conclude that although employees with naturally felt emotions already have a high level of job satisfaction, these natural feelings displayed to the customers also lead to an increase in their fit with their jobs’ requirements which lead to a very satisfied group of employees. Similar to our conclusions, Adil et al. (2012) did not find any mediating role of positive effect on the relationship between deep acting and job satisfaction and reasoned for this finding that an employee who feels positive may not need to act but just display their emotions naturally, so that positive emotions may mediate the relationship between naturally felt emotions and job satisfaction. In our study, this can be the reason, as well, for person-job fit to have a mediating effect on the relationship between these two factors.

5.1 Limitations

Although our findings have important implications, there are several limitations so that the findings of this study should be interpreted with caution. The first one is the cross-sectional design of the study. All the data were gathered in one time and causal relationships could not be tested together with a variety of different factors related to the work life. Although surface acting, for example, is defined as leading to the low job satisfaction in the literature of emotional labour generally, most researchers still mention their hypotheses with the indication of non-causal relationships. In future, exact casual relationships should be studied between emotional labour strategies and job-related factors like job satisfaction.

Other limitation is sector differences within the sample of salespeople, which suggests that there can be differences between different sectors in terms of emotional labour. There should be more studies in sales within Turkey as, up to now, most of the emotional labour researches focused generally on teachers and nurses.

We gathered our data with the help of surveys delivered via emails to the participants. This is effective in collecting in a fast and systematic way; on the other hand, it lacks the in-depth understanding of experiences and feelings. In order to understand the role of person-job fit, a qualitative study that focuses on personal experiences both in same and in other sectors would be really beneficial.

Another limitation is whether the findings can be generalised to different samples such as other job groups outside of salespeople in Turkey. There should be more studies related to these findings with participants from different areas and sectors. Furthermore, in replicating the findings of the relationship between emotional labour strategies and emotional labour, it would be valuable to address other possible factors that may affect these relationships together with person-job fit.

5.2 Contributions

Since this study has importance as the first of its kind that examines the dynamics between these three factors in Turkey, it contributes new breadth both in scientific research and practical implications. If we, especially, think about the importance and power of sales employees, the managerial and practical conclusions of our study in addition to the academic findings, play a crucial role for the business. Sales groups
generate a very high proportion of the number of working people. Most of their recruitment processes and orientation programs are progressed without full description and requirements of the jobs, any tests related to their skills and capabilities and emotion-related trainings. So that, although companies pay attention to their sales considering overall success and profit, there are high employee turnover rates. This study aims to highlight these dynamics to increase awareness for emotion management strategies within sales professions.

5.3 Practical implications and future directions

If we take a look at the current human resources (HR) management practices by taking all the results into consideration, the importance of paying attention to the recruitment of salespeople – actually of all positions – at first hand is clear. Recruiters and managers should carefully observe and analyse whether or not the candidates know the requirements of the job, if they are really suitable for those requirements and satisfied with the specific workload of the position (Onay, 2011). So, selecting employees and teams based on their emotional attitudes are of crucial importance as well as trainings related to emotional intelligence skills. Carless (2005) also discusses in his study the importance of accurate job information so that it will be easier both for the organisation and the candidate to evaluate the congruity between those requirements and the KSA of the candidates, namely person-job fit.

Mishra et al. (2012) suggests that HR departments should shift their focus to a more strategic role via internal communication and employer branding to be able to create identification with the organisation for employees. Trainings should also include tips for employees to effectively identify and deal with emotional exhaustion and burnout combined with different relaxation techniques (Ashkanasy and Daus, 2002).

Furthermore, emotional labour should be evaluated not only as the dynamics between the frontline employees and the customers but also as the dynamics between employees and their managers. Thus, the recruitment of and the trainings for managers should be carefully prepared, too. It has also been mentioned in studies that managers high on emotional intelligence are better at regulating their own emotions as well as understanding those of their employees and this leads to a trustworthy and comfortable environment at work (Ashkanasy and Daus, 2002; Humphrey, 2012).

Finally, the dynamics of emotional labour and wellbeing is one of first priority topics (Grandey and Gabriel, 2015) and the role of culture should be understood better. According to Mesquita and Delvaux (2013) emotional regulation for workplace display rules are stressful and exhausting if they are conflicting with daily regulation strategies. As an example, display rules are negatively related to emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation in the Chinese sample but not in the US sample (Allen et al., 2014).

References


Power of person-job fit


