

The Moderating Effect of Psychological Capital In The Relation Between Emotional Labor And Work Alienation

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Extensive Summary

1. Introduction:

As a result of the competitive business environment in the service sector, customer satisfaction has attained critical importance for the corporations, a phenomenon which has resulted in the raise of the standards as well as in the customer expectations, due to the presence of many corporations providing similar services. As a result of this, corporations demand their employees who are in direct interaction with the customers; to establish empathy with them, to assume pre-defined roles and even though they do not sincerely believe or do feel in a different manner, and to behave in the way they are expected (Hochschild 1983; Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Güngör, 2009). In short, the corporations demand their employees to put forward their emotional labors, in addition to their physical and intellectual efforts both for their personal and for the corporations' performances.

Emotional labor, as an emotion management process may cause some positive or negative effects on the employees, depending on the relation between the demonstrated emotions and authentically felt ones (Dursun, Bayram ve Aykaç, 2011). These effects that may be caused by the concept of emotional labor have become subject to intense studies, since the first recognition of its concept by Hochschild (1983). Concerning the relevant studies Turkey, since the second half of the 2000s, the relations of the emotional labor with some different variations such as; burnout (Köse, Oral ve Türesin, 2011), intention to quit (Beğenirbaş & Çalışkan, 2014), organizational citizenship behavior (Beğenirbaş & Meydan, 2012), job satisfaction (Keser, 2006; Dursun, Bayram ve Aykaç, 2011), job involvement (Gülova, Palamutçuoğlu ve Palamutçuoğlu, 2013), job performance (Beğenirbaş & Çalışkan, 2014), were examined to some degree.

Work alienation which may be regarded as one of the consequences of emotional labor, is described by Elma (2003) as; “insignificance of the work by the employee; dissatisfaction from the organizational relations; feeling of loneliness, insufficiency and impotency; despair for the future and the perception of himself/herself as an ordinary figure in the play”.

There are limited number of studies empirically dealing with the relation between emotional labor and work alienation. Kaya & Serçeoğlu (2013) have determined as the result of their studies towards the service sector employees, that there is a meaningful and parallel relationship between emotional labor and work alienation.

In the employment conditions, positive psychology gains importance in the psychological conditions in which there are employees, expected to manage their emotions and especially as there are some of them bearing inconsistencies between their emotions to be demonstrated and the ones genuinely felt. Positive psychology therein, implies a holistic concept dealing with the positive emotions and positive personality specifications of people and as well as the institutions creating them (Seligman et al.,2005).

Positive organizational behavior, having developed as a reflection of the positive psychology into the organizational life, can be described as a positively biased application and study of the psychological capacities and the human resource actors, which can be measured, developed and managed in order to develop efficient performances (Luthans, 2002). The psychological capital, which has gained prominence in the positive organizational behavior, while it described as the combination of the positive specifications that a person inherits, to be different from the personality specifications, is emphasized as to be open for development(Erkuş ve Afacan Fındıklı, 2013).

The aim of this study is to determine whether there is a moderating effect of the psychological capital level inherited by the employees in the relation between the emotional capital and the work alienation.

Hypothesis:

H₁: There is a positive way relation between the emotional labor and the work alienation.

H₂: Psychological capital has moderating effect on the relation between the emotional labor and the work alienation.

2. Method :

2.1. Participants:

Population is comprised of the employees of a company operating in the logistics sector and having countrywide network of departments. In the research context a web-based questionnaire form was sent to the employees via corporal intranet and the results gathered from 459 participants participated in the research. 87 % of the participants are males, 66,4 % are married, 84,5 % are non-manager employees, 52,3 % are high school and above level graduate, 74,7 % are below or equal to 40 years of age, 53,6 % are in working life with 1-10 years of experience, 51,2 % are in working life with 5 years of less experience in the company.

2.2. Scales:

2.2.1. Emotional Labor Scale: The scale having been developed by Diefendorff, Croyle & Grosserand (2005) and adapted to Turkish by Basım & Beğenirbaş (2012) was used to measure the labor perceptions of the participants. Scale is comprised of totally three dimensions and 13 statements as; “surface acting (6 statements)”, “deep

acting (4 statements)” “natural emotions (3 statements)” Participants identified their level of participation to the statements defined in the scale in Quintet Likert Scale (1=Never, 5= Always).

2.2.2. Psychological Capital Scale: The scale (PCQ-24) having been developed by Luthans et al. (2007) and adapted to Turkish in multiple studies by (Çetin & Basım, 2012; Erkuş & Afacan Fındıklı, 2013; Özer, Topaloğlu & Özmen, 2013) was used to measure the psychological capital level of the participants. Scale is comprised of totally 24 statements under 4 different dimensions as; optimism (6 statements), psychological resilience (6 statements), hope (6 statements) and self efficacy (6 statements) Participants identified their level of participation to the statements defined in the scale in Sextet Likert Scale (1= Absolutely Agree, 6= Absolutely not agree).

2.2.3. Work Alienation Scale: In the measurement of the alienation to the work the scale having been developed by Hirschfeld & Field (2000) and adapted to Turkish in by Özbek (2011) was used. Scale is comprised of totally 10 statements. The measurements were made by identified their level of participation to the statements defined in the scale in Quintet Likert Scale. (1= Absolutely Agree, 5= Absolutely not agree). It is reiterated that the same scale has been used in the study by Özbek (2011) and some other later studies where in the study of Kanten & Ülker (2014) the scale had a single factor structure.

It is concluded in the studies that the scales are valid and reliable in the sample group.

3. Findings

In the study, correlation analysis was applied in order to understand the existence and the direction of any potential relation among the variants and the hierarchical regression analysis was applied to test the hypothesis. The moderating effect was also tested by the regression curve as well. It is derived as the result of the analysis that;

- ❖ There is no meaningful relation between emotional labor and psychological capital,
- ❖ There is a meaningful and positive direction relation between emotional labor and work alienation,
- ❖ There is a meaningful and negative direction relation between psychological capital and work alienation,
- ❖ There is a moderating effect of the psychological capital in the relation between emotional labor and work alienation.

4. Discussion:

In the lights of the findings attained in the study, it may be suggested that the inclination of work alienation increases in the employees working in the labor intensive areas. However the high level of employees' psychological capital decreases this inclination. Considering that the psychological capital can be developed by time, it is assessed that the programs to increase the psychological capital of the employees are to be developed in order to decrease the level of work alienation of the employees, specifically if an intensive level of emotional labor is expected.

The most prominent limitation of this study is that it was conducted in only one corporation. Therefore it is suggested that this study should be repeated in wider sample

groups, in different geographical locations and in different sectors in order that the results of the study are to be generalized.

This study is the second of its type among the accessible ones in Turkey following the study by Kaya & Serçeođlu (2013) dealing with the relations among the emotional labor and work alienation variants. When conceptually assessed, it is empirically put forward by these two studies that, work alienation is a consequence of emotional labor. In this study, in addition to the study by Kaya & Serçeođlu (2013) it is further understood that the employees' level of psychological capital has a moderating effect in the relation between these two variants. These results of the study are deemed useful for both the corporate managers and for the literature as well.