



THE EFFECT OF EMOTIONAL LABOR ON PHARMACISTS' JOB SATISFACTION AND THE MEDIATING ROLE OF EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION

DUYGUSAL EMEĞİN ECZACILARIN İŞ TATMİNİ ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ VE DUYGUSAL TÜKENMİŞLİĞİN ARACILIK ROLÜ

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study investigates the complex interplay among emotional labor strategies, emotional exhaustion, and job satisfaction, with a specific focus on examining the mediating role of emotional exhaustion. The primary objective of the research is to empirically evaluate the mediating influence of emotional exhaustion on the relationships between pharmacists' emotional labor behaviors (surface acting and deep acting) and their job satisfaction.

Material and Method: The data for the study was collected through a survey of 186 pharmacists employed in various organizations in Karabük, Türkiye. The research hypotheses were tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), a robust analytical technique suited for examining complex multivariate relationships.

Result and Discussion: The findings of the study reveal that deep acting, whereby pharmacists genuinely express their true emotions, has a direct negative effect on emotional exhaustion and a direct positive effect on job satisfaction. In contrast, the results indicate that surface acting, in which pharmacists suppress their authentic emotions and display artificial emotional responses, has a significant positive effect on emotional exhaustion, while its direct impact on job satisfaction is insignificant. Importantly, the study demonstrates that emotional exhaustion plays a partial mediating role in the relationships between both surface acting and job satisfaction, as well as between deep acting and job satisfaction. This suggests that the depletion of pharmacists' emotional resources is a crucial mechanism through which their emotional labor strategies influence their job satisfaction levels.

Keywords: Deep Acting, emotional exhaustion, emotional labor, job satisfaction, surface acting

ÖZ

Amaç: Bu çalışma, duygusal emek stratejileri, duygusal tükenme ve iş tatmini arasındaki karmaşık ilişkileri, özellikle duygusal tükenmişliğin aracılık rolü kapsamında araştırmaktadır. Araştırmanın amacı, duygusal tükenmişliğin eczacıların duygusal emek davranışları (yüzeysel rol yapma ve derin rol yapma) ile iş tatminleri arasındaki ilişkiler üzerindeki aracılık etkisini ampirik olarak değerlendirmektir.

Gereç ve Yöntem: Çalışma kapsamında veriler, Karabük ilindeki farklı eczanelerde çalışan 186 eczacıya uygulanan bir anket aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Araştırma hipotezleri, karmaşık çok

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değişkenli ilişkileri incelemek için uygun bir teknik olan Kısmi En Küçük Kareler Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesi (PLS-SEM) kullanılarak test edilmiştir.

Sonuç ve Tartışma: Çalışmanın bulguları, eczacıların gerçek duygularını samimi bir şekilde ifade ettikleri derin rol yapmanın duygusal tükenmişlik üzerinde doğrudan negatif, iş tatmini üzerinde ise doğrudan pozitif bir etkiye sahip olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Bunun aksine, sonuçlar, eczacıların gerçek duygularını bastırdığı ve yapay duygusal tepkiler sergilediği yüzeysel rol yapmanın duygusal tükenmişlik üzerinde önemli bir pozitif etkiye sahip olduğunu, ancak iş tatmini üzerindeki doğrudan etkisinin anlamsız olduğunu göstermektedir. Daha da önemlisi, bu çalışma duygusal tükenmişliğin hem yüzeysel rol yapma ile iş tatmini arasındaki hem de derin rol yapma ile iş tatmini arasındaki ilişkilerde kısmi bir aracılık rolü oynadığını belirlemektedir. Bu durum, eczacıların duygusal emek stratejilerinin duygusal kaynaklarının tükenmesi üzerinden iş tatmini düzeylerini etkileyen önemli bir mekanizma olduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Derin rol yapma, duygusal emek, duygusal tükenmişlik, iş tatmini, yüzeysel rol yapma

INTRODUCTION

Employees' emotions and job responsibilities are interwoven in today's changing work environment. Employees are increasingly required to manage their emotions professionally in order to fulfill their job duties more efficiently, in addition to completing tasks utilizing their technical abilities. Consequently, employees are no longer viewed as just cogs in a machine, but rather as critical components of an organization's total success. Because of its crucial role in establishing pleasant relationships and improving customer experiences, the notion of emotional labor has arisen as an important subject of study that has piqued the interest of scholars, practitioners, and policymakers [1,2].

The concept of emotional labor was first introduced by sociologist Arlie Hochschild in 1983. It refers to the “process of managing and regulating one’s emotions in accordance with the expectations of the job role” [1]. Emotional labor involves managing and displaying emotions to fulfill the emotional requirements of a job [2]. This concept suggests that employees should regulate their emotions to meet organizational expectations and satisfy the emotional needs of service recipients, customers, or colleagues [3].

Pharmacists are frequently seen as hidden heroes in the healthcare industry, providing not just clinical skill but also empathy, compassion, and assistance to patients in need [4]. A study by Rahme et al. [5] highlighted that pharmacists often engage in significant emotional labor during patient interactions, which is essential for effective communication and patient care. Therefore, emotional labor has an undeniable value for pharmacists, whose job requires them to balance human emotions with medical science. Emotional labor for pharmacists requires not only dispensing medicines accurately, but also interacting with patients and their families in moments of vulnerability, distress, and sometimes deep joy. It is important for pharmacists to use their emotional intelligence to connect with patients, offering comfort and guidance on their healthcare journey [6-9].

Emotional labor is a crucial aspect of the healthcare industry, as the quality of interaction between pharmacists and patients can significantly impact medication adherence, treatment outcomes, and overall satisfaction with the healthcare experience [10]. Therefore, the emotional labor behavior exhibited by pharmacists is not only a tool but also the foundation of patient-centered care.

However, beneath the surface of these emotionally charged interactions, pharmacists face a complex array of emotional experiences that they must navigate. Balancing their own emotions while addressing the diverse emotional needs of patients can take a toll on their well-being. This strain often manifests as burnout, characterized by emotional exhaustion, fatigue, and a depletion of emotional resources [11,12]. It is increasingly recognized by researchers that emotional exhaustion is a prevalent issue in contemporary workplaces and has significant implications for both individual well-being and organizational effectiveness. A study by Katsogiannis et al. [13] emphasized that high levels of emotional exhaustion among pharmacists correlate with decreased job satisfaction and emotional well-being.

The application of emotional intelligence by pharmacists in establishing rapport with patients and providing them with comfort and guidance throughout their medical journey is of utmost importance

[14-19]. In this context, various studies have demonstrated that emotional exhaustion significantly affects several employee attitudes and behaviors, including job performance [20], employee engagement [21], and turnover intention [22]. However, emotional exhaustion affects one of the crucial organizational factors, namely job satisfaction, which is regarded as the foundation of employee well-being and organizational achievement [23-25].

Job satisfaction is a critical employee attitude that reflects the contentment with the role and may impact motivation and overall performance [26,27]. In the case of pharmacists who are responsible for their patients' health and well-being, job satisfaction is a crucial indicator of their ability to provide consistent, high-quality care. Satisfied pharmacists are more likely to exhibit organizational commitment and lower turnover intentions, which are crucial for maintaining a stable workforce in healthcare settings [28-30]. Accordingly, a crucial question arises: How does emotional exhaustion, resulting from emotional labor, impact pharmacists' job satisfaction?"

Based on the mentioned rationale, this study examines the complex relationship between emotional labor, emotional exhaustion, and job satisfaction with a particular focus on the mediating role of emotional exhaustion. The study aims to determine the mediating role of emotional exhaustion in the impact of pharmacists' emotional labor behaviors on job satisfaction. This study explores the less-explored facets of a pharmacist's professional life, shedding light on the emotional labor inherent in their duties, which can yield both positive and negative outcomes. By scrutinizing the interrelationships among emotional labor, emotional exhaustion, and job satisfaction within the realm of pharmacy practice, this study seeks to enhance our understanding of the challenges that pharmacists encounter and the strategies that can be employed to enhance their job satisfaction. Additionally, it provides valuable insights for healthcare institutions and organizations to offer the necessary support and resources to pharmacists, fostering an environment where they can excel in their critical role while safeguarding their emotional well-being.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Hypotheses Development

Employee job satisfaction is a critical facet of organizational well-being and productivity. Job satisfaction pertains to an individual's general attitude towards their job, encompassing affective and cognitive components [31]. Various factors contribute to job satisfaction, including personality [32], perceived organizational support [33], leader-member exchange [34] and work-life balance [35]. One of the factors affecting job satisfaction is thought to be emotional labor strategies employed by individuals in the workplace [23-25]. On the other hand, it was determined that the effect of emotional labor on job satisfaction was bidirectional. Studies show that surface acting and depth acting, which constitute the two dimensions of emotional labor, affect job satisfaction in different directions.

Surface acting involves the outward display of emotions that are not genuinely felt. The Conservation of Resources Theory posits that persistent threats to valued resources, like job security, can negatively impact work quality. This can lead to emotional dissonance, where individuals engage in surface acting (faking emotions) to conceal their true feelings. This dissonance depletes personal resources and requires increased emotional effort, hindering the replenishment of intrinsic emotional resources. Ultimately, this can result in decreased job satisfaction and performance [36].

Studies highlight the potential downsides of surface acting. Hochschild [37] argued that suppressing genuine emotions and displaying inauthentic expressions can lead to emotional dissonance and exhaustion, ultimately decreasing job satisfaction. In particular, jobs with high emotional demands and low control over emotional expressions have been found to contribute to decreased satisfaction and increased burnout [23]. In a study by Hülshager et al. [25], employees who engaged in frequent surface acting reported lower levels of job satisfaction compared to those who expressed genuine emotions at work. Furthermore, Grandey et al. [38] found that surface acting can lead to emotional dissonance, where employees experience a misalignment between their displayed emotions and inner feelings. This incongruence has been linked to lower job satisfaction and increased burnout. Hence, existing literature provides empirical support for the notion that surface acting is associated with decreased levels of job satisfaction among employees. This suggests that the emotional toll of suppressing one's own feelings

while adhering to expected displays can outweigh the positive aspects of emotional labor. Therefore, it was hypothesized that pharmacists' surface acting behaviors would be negatively related to job satisfaction.

H1: Surface acting has a negative effect on job satisfaction

In contrast to surface acting, depth acting involves the authentic experience and expression of emotions. Depth acting comprises aligning one's internal feelings with the organization's desired emotional display by altering personal interpretations of emotional situations. This alignment can create a state of psychological balance and harmony, potentially even generating genuine positive emotions. Consequently, depth acting can enhance individual emotional resources and lead to increased job satisfaction [39].

Studies have indicated a positive association between emotional labor and job satisfaction. For example, a study by Xu and Fan [40] on nurses found a positive correlation between emotional labor and job satisfaction, mediated by the quality of nurse-patient relationships. Similarly, Lee [41] demonstrated a positive link between emotional intelligence, which facilitates effective emotional labor, and job satisfaction among public service employees. Hochschild [37] proposed that depth acting, when employees genuinely feel and express emotions congruent with organizational expectations, may lead to positive outcomes such as enhanced job satisfaction. This suggests that possessing the skills to manage emotions and project positivity can enhance job satisfaction, particularly in service-oriented roles. Research by Huang et al. [42] supports the positive relationship between depth acting and job satisfaction. In their study, employees who engaged in depth acting reported higher levels of job satisfaction over time compared to those who relied on surface acting. This suggests that the genuine expression of emotions in the workplace is conducive to a more satisfying work experience. Additionally, Humphrey [43] found that depth acting is associated with a sense of authenticity and emotional congruence, leading to higher levels of job satisfaction. The findings indicate that when individuals are able to express their true emotions at work, they experience greater job satisfaction and well-being. Therefore, it was hypothesized that pharmacists' surface acting behaviors would be positively related to job satisfaction.

H2: Depth acting has a positive effect on job satisfaction

Many researchers have identified that emotional labor of employees within the context of organizational norms can affect individual well-being [43,44]. More specifically, emotional labor was closely related to emotional exhaustion, which is defined as a lack of energy and a feeling that one's emotional resources are depleted [14,16,19]. Emerging research has revealed that emotional labor, the act of regulating emotions to meet job demands, can lead to emotional exhaustion [43, 45-47]. Notably, the manner in which emotions are displayed plays a crucial role. Studies suggest that surface acting, where employees feign desired emotions while suppressing their true feelings, carries a significantly higher risk of exhaustion compared to deep acting, where genuine emotional alignment with the job occurs [37,39,48].

The reasoning behind this disparity lies in the inherent demands of each strategy. Surface acting, like putting on a performance, requires sustained effort and cognitive resources to maintain a facade, leading to emotional dissonance – the conflict between displayed and genuine emotions. This persistent discrepancy creates a psychological strain, depleting emotional reserves and ultimately contributing to exhaustion [11].

The existing body of research further substantiates the detrimental consequences of surface acting. In their comprehensive meta-analysis, Hülsheger and Schewe [44] found that when employees engage in surface acting, they are more likely to experience emotional dissonance – a psychological state characterized by the incongruence between their felt emotions and the emotions they are required to express. This emotional dissonance creates a significant strain, which ultimately leads to emotional exhaustion. Moreover, surface acting demands substantial psychological effort from the individual, as they must comply with organizational display rules and suppress their authentic emotions. This effortful emotional labor, coupled with the emotional dissonance experienced, depletes the individual's emotional resources, contributing to the development of depersonalized relationships and, consequently, emotional

exhaustion [11]. Building on this, Martínez-Iñigo et al. [49] suggested that the excessive expenditure of mental and emotional energy associated with surface acting is a key contributor to job burnout among employees. Similarly, a study by Kim et al. [50] demonstrated that surface acting amplifies emotional dissonance, directly leading to emotional exhaustion. Informed by these empirical findings, the current study hypothesizes that pharmacists' engagement in surface acting behaviors will be positively associated with their level of emotional exhaustion.

H3: Surface acting has a positive effect on emotional exhaustion

Depth acting, in contrast, fosters a greater sense of congruence between internal and displayed emotions. By genuinely embracing the desired emotional state, employees experience less inner conflict and expend less energy on emotional regulation [11]. This alignment facilitates emotional well-being and helps mitigate the risk of exhaustion [25]. Grandey [48] argued that while depth acting, where individuals genuinely adopt the desired emotional state, requires effort to manage negative emotions, it generates minimal emotional dissonance. This dissonance arises from the conflict between felt and displayed emotions. Depth acting aligns internal feelings with outward expressions, minimizing the effort needed and potential for exhaustion. This aligns with empirical findings demonstrating a negative association between depth acting and emotional exhaustion [43,49,51-54]. Therefore, it was hypothesized that pharmacists' depth acting behaviors would be negatively related to emotional exhaustion.

H4: Depth acting has a negative effect on emotional exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion has been posited to mediate the relationship between various job demands (including emotional labor) and job outcomes like job satisfaction [55]. The negative impact of emotional exhaustion on job satisfaction is well-documented, suggesting that diminished emotional resources can lead to a less favorable evaluation of one's job [25,56]. Furthermore, the strain experienced from prolonged emotional labor, particularly surface acting, can deteriorate job satisfaction by depleting emotional resources, aligning with the Conservation of Resources Theory [36].

Janssen et al. [57] investigated the specific relationships between job demands, job resources, and psychological outcomes, highlighting the mediating role of negative work-home interference in the context of emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. Karatepe [58] examined the effects of work overload and work-family conflict on job embeddedness and job performance, finding that emotional exhaustion fully mediates these relationships, underscoring the detrimental effects of emotional labor on job satisfaction. Lin and Chang [59] explored the relationship between emotional labor and job performance among physicians, identifying emotional exhaustion as a mediator that significantly impacts job satisfaction and performance. Bakker et al. [60] delved into the daily ripple effects of emotional labor, demonstrating that work-related exhaustion partially mediates the relationship between surface acting at work and at home, further affecting relationship satisfaction.

The aforementioned studies collectively support the hypothesis that emotional exhaustion mediates the relationship between surface acting and job satisfaction. This mediation underscores the importance of managing emotional labor in the workplace to mitigate the adverse effects on employee well-being and job satisfaction. Therefore, it was hypothesized that pharmacists' emotional exhaustion would mediate the relationship between surface acting and job satisfaction.

H5: Emotional exhaustion mediates the relationship between surface acting and job satisfaction

Deep acting, a form of emotional labor wherein individuals strive to align their internal emotional states with outward expressions, stands in contrast to surface acting, which entails adjusting external emotional displays without corresponding changes in internal feelings [37]. Scholars posit that deep acting is less detrimental to psychological well-being compared to surface acting because it involves authentic emotion regulation [48]. Additionally, deep acting necessitates proactive efforts from individuals to manage their emotions, requiring the active transformation of emotional perceptions, cognitions, and perspectives [11,25]. Over time, employees come to perceive the display of positive emotions in their professional roles as natural, effectively mitigating negative emotions by internalizing positive outlooks and cognitions [43,54]. This process has the potential to reduce emotional exhaustion,

consequently contributing indirectly to increased job satisfaction.

Research has shown that emotional exhaustion can mediate the relationship between emotional labor and relevant outcome variables. For instance, Zhao et al. [61] demonstrated that depth acting exerted its effect on task performance and customer loyalty through the mediating effects of emotional exhaustion. In the hotel and catering industry in China, Peng and Li [62] found that customer service employees' emotional exhaustion played a fully mediating role in the relationship between depth acting and employees' withdrawal behavior. Huang et al. [42] found that deep acting was less emotionally exhausting for service providers when they viewed their tasks as challenging, suggesting that the context of emotional labor significantly influences its outcomes on emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. Therefore, it was hypothesized that pharmacists' emotional exhaustion would mediate the relationship between depth acting and job satisfaction (Figure 1).

H6: Emotional exhaustion mediates the relationship between depth acting and job satisfaction

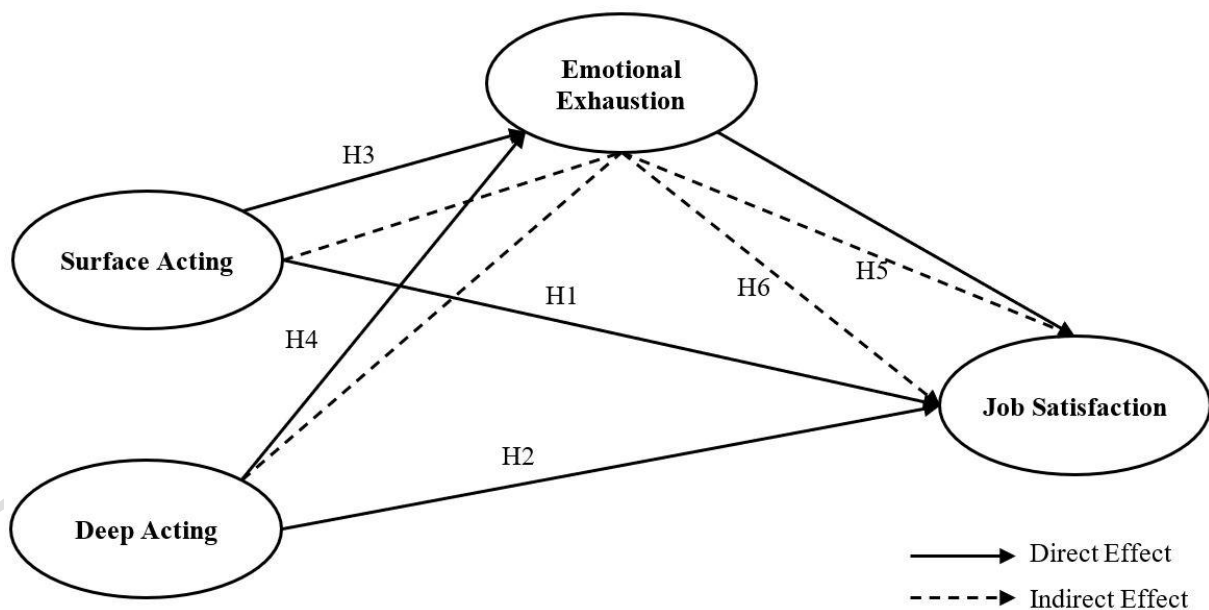


Figure 1. Research model

Respondents

This research study focuses on investigating the prevalence of emotional labor in the service industry, specifically in the pharmacy sector in Karabuk, Turkey. The participants of the study were employees who directly interacted with customers in the pharmacy industry. All pharmacists with customer contact were invited to take part in the survey.

According to information gathered from the Kastamonu Chamber of Pharmacists Karabuk Representative Office, there are 78 pharmacies in Karabuk, employing a total of 273 individuals. The primary population for this study comprises these 273 employees. Due to various factors, including response rates, willingness to participate, time constraints, and budget limitations, a convenience sampling method was employed. The minimum sample size required to accurately represent the primary population of 273 individuals, considering a 5% margin of error, was established as 162 participants [62]. Consequently, 228 employees were interviewed face-to-face and invited to complete an online questionnaire in Turkish via the Google Forms platform. To ensure the reliability and confidentiality of the collected data, the purpose of the survey was clearly explained to the participants, emphasizing that the questionnaire information would be used solely for research purposes and would be treated as strictly confidential. Data collection was conducted in November 2023.

A total of 186 valid questionnaires were collected for analysis and the demographic distribution

of the participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic distribution

Variable	Category	N	%	Variable	Category	N	%
Gender	Male	106	57.0%	Job Tenure	5 and under	53	28.5%
	Female	80	43.0%		6-10 years	59	31.7%
Marital Status	Married	112	60.2%		11 and over	74	39.8%
	Single	74	39.8%	Education	High school	48	25.8%
Age (Average=37)	30 and under	46	24.7%		Associate degree	38	20.4%
	31-40 years old	87	46.8%		Bachelor's degrees	80	43.0%
	41 and over	53	28.5%		Postgraduate degree	20	10.8%

Among the participants, 106 were male (57.0%) and 80 were female (43.0%). In terms of marital status, 112 were married (60.2%) and 74 were single (39.8%). Regarding age distribution, 46 respondents (24.7%) were under 30 years old, 87 (46.8%) were between 31 and 40 years old, and 53 (28.5%) were above 40 years old. The age range of the participants varied from 22 to 72 years, with an average age of 37. Concerning job tenure, 53 participants (28.5%) had less than 5 years of experience, 59 (31.7%) had 6 to 10 years of experience, and 74 (39.8%) had over 10 years of experience. In terms of educational background, 48 participants (25.8%) had a high school degree, 38 (20.4%) had an associate degree, 80 (43.0%) held bachelor's degrees, and 20 (10.8%) held postgraduate degree.

Measures

In the study, all the variables were assessed using established scales, ensuring the reliability and validity of the measurements. The questionnaire design employed a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," with assigned values of 1 to 5, respectively.

Emotional Labor

The measurement of emotional labor utilized the scale developed by Diefendorff et al. [3]. Emotional labor was assessed through two dimensions: surface acting and deep acting. Surface acting was evaluated using a seven-item scale, which included statements such as "I put on a 'show' or 'performance' when interacting with customers." and "I show feelings to customers that are different from what I feel inside." The reliability of the surface acting scale, as indicated by Cronbach's alpha, was found to be 0.920. Deep acting, on the other hand, was measured using a four-item scale. Sample items included "I make an effort to actually feel the emotions that I need to display toward others." and "I work at developing the feelings inside of me that I need to show to customers." The deep acting scale demonstrated high internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.934. The scale has been adapted into Turkish by Basim and Begenirbas [63]. The internal consistency of the scale was determined to be $\alpha=0.844$ for the surface acting dimension and $\alpha=0.863$ for the deep acting dimension.

Emotional Exhaustion

The assessment of employees' emotional exhaustion in this study employed a nine-item scale developed by Maslach and Jackson [19]. The scale is unidimensional, meaning it measures emotional exhaustion as a single construct. The adaptation of the emotional burnout scale into Turkish was carried out by Ergin [64]. The reliability coefficient for the scale was established at $\alpha=0.930$. The specific items used in the scale included statements such as "I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job." and "I feel emotionally drained from my work." The internal consistency of the scale, determined by Cronbach's alpha coefficient, was found to be 0.941 in the present study.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction in this study was assessed using a five-item scale developed by Hackman and Oldham [27]. The Turkish adaptation of the job satisfaction scale was conducted by Şeşen [65]. The reliability value for the scale was determined as $\alpha=0.840$. The scale represents a unidimensional measure, focusing on overall job satisfaction. Sample items from the scale include statements such as

“In general, I am satisfied with my work.” and “I think I am happier in my work than many other people.” The internal consistency of the scale, as measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficient, was found to be 0.934 in the current study.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for this study was conducted using SPSS Statistics and SmartPLS software programs. Demographic characteristics of the participants were summarized using SPSS Statistics, and descriptive statistics were calculated. For reliability and validity analyses of the variables, as well as hypothesis testing, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed using the SmartPLS 3 program.

PLS-SEM is a statistical modeling technique used to analyze the relationships between latent variables in a model, similar to Covariance-Based Structural Equation Modeling (CB-SEM) [66]. However, PLS-SEM differs from CB-SEM in that it performs variance-oriented calculations instead of covariance-oriented calculations. It is considered a component-based estimation method [67].

There are two stages in the PLS-SEM. The first stage includes the evaluation of the measurement model, and the second stage includes the evaluation of the structural model [67-70]. The first stage of the measurement model includes analyses of construct validity (factor analysis), convergent and discriminant validity and reliability. The structural model, which is the second stage, includes path analysis. Path analysis includes analyses related to the hypotheses to be tested in the research.

PLS-SEM offers several advantages to researchers. Firstly, it is particularly suitable for studies that adopt a predictive modeling approach. Therefore, it is an appropriate method when the research aims to explain relationships between variables. Secondly, PLS-SEM provides robust predictions even when the data used in the study does not meet certain assumptions for analysis, such as a small sample size or non-normal distribution of the data [68,69,71]. In this study, the PLS-SEM method was chosen due to the suitability of the data structure for structural equation modeling, and the limited sample size that couldn't be increased due to population constraints.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Factor Analysis (Construct Validity)

The concept of construct validity concerns the extent to which the results obtained from the use of a measurement instrument are consistent with the underlying theoretical construct that the instrument is intended to capture [72]. A key method of assessing construct validity is to examine the factor loadings of individual measurement items [68].

The premise is that all items designed to measure a particular theoretical construct should show strong factor loadings on the target construct when subjected to factor analysis. Conversely, if an item is found to load more strongly on a construct other than the one it was designed to reflect, this suggests that the item may not be a reliable indicator of the intended construct. In such cases, the recommended course of action is to remove or eliminate the problematic item from the measurement instrument [68]. This helps to ensure that the remaining items more accurately capture the essence of the target construct, thereby strengthening the overall construct validity of the measurement approach.

Establishing robust construct validity is crucial as it provides evidence that the measurement is actually assessing the theoretical concept it was designed to measure, rather than something else entirely [72].

Table 2. Factor loadings and cross loadings

	Surface Acting	Deep Acting	Emotional Exhaustion	Job Satisfaction
surf_act1	0.701**	0.039	0.324	-0.121
surf_act2	0.919**	0.082	0.433	-0.083
surf_act3	0.780**	0.145	0.368	0.007
surf_act4	0.813**	0.090	0.378	-0.087
surf_act5	0.868**	0.074	0.403	-0.113
surf_act6	0.765**	0.017	0.376	-0.042
deep_act1	0.063	0.912**	-0.236	0.565
deep_act2	0.038	0.892**	-0.239	0.553
deep_act3	0.147	0.779**	-0.203	0.469
deep_act4	0.090	0.939**	-0.279	0.562
exhaust1	0.350	-0.249	0.833**	-0.362
exhaust2	0.260	-0.321	0.768**	-0.344
exhaust3	0.439	-0.245	0.915**	-0.352
exhaust4	0.355	-0.174	0.721**	-0.281
exhaust5	0.285	-0.251	0.683**	-0.267
exhaust6	0.387	-0.249	0.811**	-0.293
exhaust7	0.410	-0.113	0.735**	-0.273
exhaust8	0.435	-0.138	0.791**	-0.290
exhaust9	0.448	-0.218	0.907**	-0.352
safisf1	-0.041	0.577	-0.327	0.905**
safisf2	-0.034	0.469	-0.317	0.774**
safisf3	-0.061	0.507	-0.326	0.829**
safisf4	-0.098	0.534	-0.349	0.883**
safisf5	-0.147	0.531	-0.368	0.901**

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; N=186

The factor loadings for all latent variables in the analysis are greater than 0.70, and the cross-loadings are below the 0.70 threshold. This indicates the measurement scales used in the study have demonstrated construct validity [68,73].

Convergent and Discriminant Validity Analysis

For convergent and discriminant validity, average variance extracted (AVE), square root of AVE, and correlation values are needed. All values are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. AVE's and correlations

Constructs	AVE	Correlation			
		1	2	3	4
1.Surface Acting	0.657	(0.811)^a			
2.Deep Acting	0.780	0.093	(0.883)^a		
3.Emotional Exhaustion	0.639	0.471**	-0.272**	(0.800)^a	
4.Job Satisfaction	0.740	-0.090	0.610**	-0.393**	(0.860)^a

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; N=186; AVE: Average variance extracted

Note: Values denoted by "a" are square root values of AVE

The analysis of the AVE values shown in Table 2 indicates that all constructs have AVE measures that exceed the recommended threshold of 0.50. This indicates that the scales used in the measurement model have sufficient convergent validity, meaning that the items strongly converge to represent the intended latent constructs [68,74-76].

Furthermore, analysis of the correlations between constructs compared to the square root of each construct's AVE indicates that the square root of the AVE for each construct is greater than its

correlations with all other constructs. This pattern of results supports the discriminant validity of the measurement scales, suggesting that the constructs are distinct and that items are more strongly associated with their own constructs than with other constructs in the model [75,76].

Overall, the convergent and discriminant validity assessments based on AVE and interconstruct correlations provide strong evidence that the measurement scales used in this study have the necessary validity to accurately capture the intended latent constructs.

Reliability Analysis

The reliability of the measurement model was evaluated using both Cronbach's alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR) metrics, as presented in the findings shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Cronbach alfa (α) and composite reliability (CR)

Constructs	Cronbach Alfa (α)	Composite Reliability (CR)
1.Surface Acting	0.920	0.919
2.Deep Acting	0.934	0.934
3.Emotional Exhaustion	0.941	0.941
4.Job Satisfaction	0.934	0.934

The analysis results reveal that the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values for all the variables under examination surpass the recommended threshold of 0.70. The high internal consistency reliability, as evidenced by the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability scores, suggests the scale items are closely interrelated and effectively capture the underlying constructs they are intended to measure. This finding indicates that the measurement scales employed in the study demonstrate strong reliability [68,77].

Path Analysis

PLS-SEM approach involves a two-step process. The first step is to validate the measurement model, ensuring the reliability and validity of the constructs. Once the measurement model is accepted, the second step is to test the structural model. Within the structural model, path analysis is conducted to evaluate the hypothesized relationships between the constructs. The path analysis provides a visual representation of the structural model and allows for the testing of the proposed hypotheses. The general view of the path analysis applied with the SmartPLS program is given in Figure 2.

The initial step in the structural model analysis involves assessing whether multicollinearity exists among the exogenous (independent) variables. To test for multicollinearity, the variance inflation factor (VIF) is evaluated. According to Hair et al. [68], if the VIF values are 5 or less, it can be concluded that multicollinearity is not a concern. An examination of the VIF values from the analysis reveals the following: surface acting has a VIF of 1.376, deep acting has a VIF of 1.118, and Emotional exhausting has a VIF of 1.474. Since all of these VIF values are less than the recommended threshold of 5, it can be inferred that there is no issue of multicollinearity among the predictor variables [68].

The path analysis conducted within the structural model framework provides insights into the explained variance (R^2), standardized regression coefficients (β), and dimensional effects (f^2) of the exogenous (independent) variables on the endogenous (dependent) variable. These findings are then utilized to interpret the results of the hypothesis testing. Regarding the interpretation of the R^2 values, Chin [74] suggests that an R^2 of 0.67 is considered high, 0.33 is medium, and 0.19 is low. Similarly, for the f^2 values, Cohen [78] proposes that 0.35 is a large effect, 0.15 is a medium effect, and 0.02 is a small effect.

The specific findings from the path analysis are presented in Table 5 of the study. These results provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between the exogenous and endogenous variable, which is then used to draw conclusions about the hypotheses tested within the structural model.

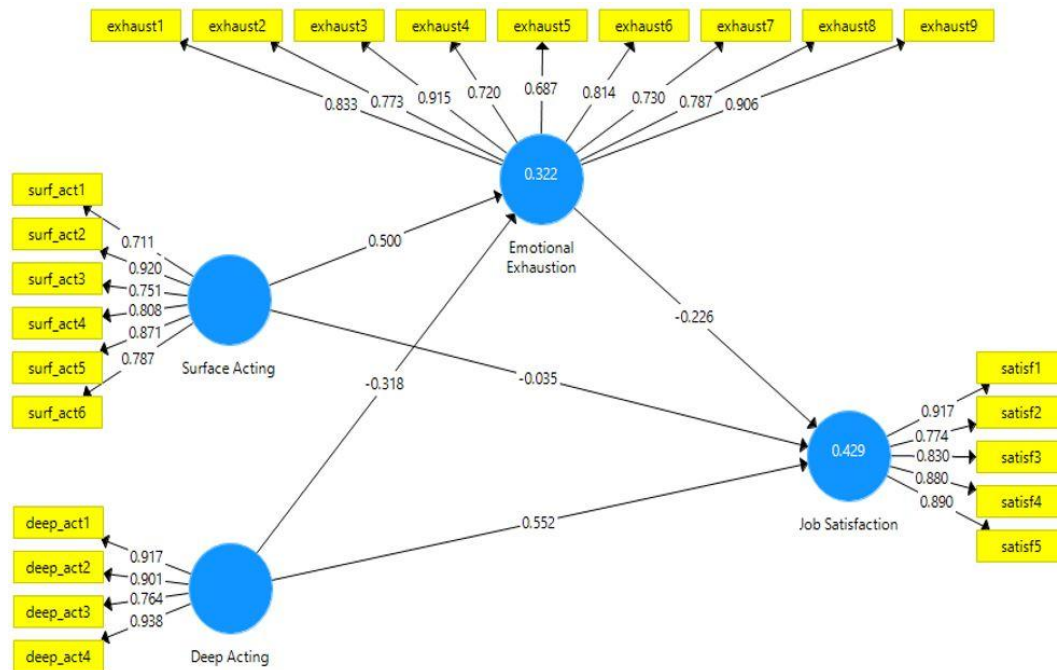


Figure 2. Structural model

Table 5. Findings of path analysis

Hypotheses	β	Std. Error	p	t-value	R ²	f ²	VIF	Decision
H1 Surface acting → Job Satisfaction	-0.035	0.098	0.725	0.352	0.429	0.002	1.376	Not Supported
H2 Deep acting → Job Satisfaction	0.552**	0.072	0.001	7.630		0.461	1.158	Supported
Emotional Exhaustion → Job Satisfaction	-0.226*	0.112	0.043	2.022		0.061	1.474	Not Hypothesized
H3 Surface acting → Emotional Exhaustion	0.500**	0.077	0.001	6.525	0.322	0.365	1.008	Supported
H4 Deep acting → Emotional Exhaustion	-0.318**	0.060	0.001	5.322		0.148	1.008	Supported

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; N=186

The path analysis results, as presented in Table 5, reveal several key findings regarding the hypotheses tested within the structural model. First, the effect of surface acting on job satisfaction, although negative, is not statistically significant (H1: $\beta = -0.035$, $p > 0.05$). In contrast, deep acting was found to have a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction (H2: $\beta = 0.552$, $p < 0.01$). Based on these results, hypothesis H1 is rejected, while hypothesis H2 is accepted. Additionally, the analysis indicates that emotional exhaustion has a significant and negative effect on job satisfaction.

The path analysis further demonstrates that both surface acting (H3: $\beta = 0.500$, $p < 0.01$) and deep acting (H4: $\beta = -0.318$, $p < 0.01$) have a significant impact on emotional exhaustion. Specifically, surface acting is positively related to emotional exhaustion, while deep acting is negatively associated with emotional exhaustion. Consequently, hypotheses H3 and H4 are accepted.

In summary, the findings suggest that while surface acting does not significantly influence job satisfaction, deep acting has a positive effect on job satisfaction among pharmacists. Additionally, emotional exhaustion is found to have a negative impact on job satisfaction. Furthermore, surface acting behaviors contribute to increased emotional exhaustion, whereas deep acting behaviors are associated

with reduced emotional exhaustion.

Mediation Analysis

This study established a serial mediation analysis, examining the path from surface acting to job satisfaction via emotional exhaustion, as well as the path from deep acting to job satisfaction via emotional exhaustion. The study utilized the bootstrapping method proposed by Preacher and Hayes [79] to assess the indirect effects of the variables, examining these effects across 5,000 samples. The variance accounted for (VAF) approach, which is considered one of the best methods for testing mediation effects in PLS-SEM was utilized to examine the mediation effect [68, 69]. The VAF value is calculated by dividing the indirect effect by the total effect. A VAF value greater than 0.80 indicates full mediation, a VAF value between 0.20 and 0.80 suggests partial mediation, and a value less than 0.20 represents no mediation [68]. The mediation paths and their respective VAF values are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Findings of mediation analysis

Hypotheses				Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	Std. Error	P	t-value	VAF Value	Decision
H5	Surface acting	→ Emotional Exhaustion	→ Job Satisfaction	-0.035	-0.113*	-0.148*	0.055	0.041	2.051	0.764	Partial Mediation
H6	Deep acting	→ Emotional Exhaustion	→ Job Satisfaction	0.552**	0.172*	0.724**	0.036	0.046	2.002	0.238	Partial Mediation

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; N=186

The fifth hypothesis investigates the effect of surface acting on job satisfaction through the role of emotional exhaustion. Although the direct effect of surface acting on job satisfaction is insignificant, the effect of surface acting on job satisfaction with the mediating effects of emotional exhaustion is found to be significant with the VAF value of 0.764 and confirms the partial mediation effects between surface acting and job satisfaction (H5: $\beta = -0.113$, $p < 0.05$). Thus hypothesis H5 is accepted.

The sixth hypothesis investigates the effect of deep acting on job satisfaction through the role of emotional exhaustion. The results of mediation analysis are positive and significant with the VAF value of 0.238, which is a partial mediating effect on their relationship (H6: $\beta = -0.172$, $p < 0.05$). Thus, the hypothesis H6 is also confirmed.

This study examines the complex interplay between emotional labor, emotional exhaustion, and job satisfaction among pharmacists. Specifically, it investigates the direct effects of two types of emotional labor - surface acting and deep acting - on pharmacists' job satisfaction, as well as the mediating role of emotional exhaustion in these relationships. The researchers collected survey data from 186 pharmacists in the Karabuk province and analyzed the data to uncover these dynamics.

Firstly, the analysis revealed that while surface acting (i.e., hiding true emotions while displaying customer-oriented behaviors) had a negative effect on pharmacists' job satisfaction, this effect was not statistically significant. This finding diverges from previous research that has shown surface acting to directly reduce job satisfaction, as it creates an internal dissonance for employees [23,25,37]. It is suggested that this contradictory finding may be attributed to the unique characteristics of the pharmacy profession. Specifically, Diefendorff et al. [3] posit that if employees are more experienced in surface acting, this behavior may not negatively impact their job satisfaction. In professions where customer service is paramount, such as pharmacy, employees may be more accustomed to surface acting and therefore it does not diminish their job satisfaction. The current study's findings indicate that for pharmacists, surface acting does not directly translate to reduced job satisfaction, unlike what has been reported in the broader literature on emotional labor.

The analysis also revealed that deep acting (i.e., pharmacists aligning their true emotions with the required emotional display) had a positive and statistically significant effect on their job satisfaction. This finding aligns with previous research [7,39,40,42,43], which indicates that when employees engage in deep acting, they are able to provide more genuine and empathetic service to customers. This, in turn,

enhances their own job satisfaction. For pharmacists, the ability to reflect their authentic emotions while serving customers appears to increase their job satisfaction. By engaging in deep acting, pharmacists can establish more empathic interactions with patients, which positively contributes to their overall satisfaction with their work. This contrasts with the non-significant effect found for surface acting, suggesting that for pharmacists, aligning internal feelings with outward emotional displays is more impactful on job satisfaction than merely hiding their true emotions.

The analysis further revealed that surface acting had a positive and significant effect on pharmacists' emotional exhaustion. This finding aligns with prior research [8,9,11,43,44,47,50], indicating that the display of inauthentic emotional behaviors towards customers, where pharmacists hide their true feelings, depletes their emotional resources over time. This suggests that the artificial emotional labor required in surface acting negatively impacts the emotional and psychological well-being of pharmacists.

In contrast, the analysis determined that deep acting decreased pharmacists' emotional exhaustion. When pharmacists are able to align their genuine emotions with the required emotional display, it enables them to preserve their emotional capacity. This finding aligns with prior studies [9,11,43,49,51-54]. Reflecting true empathy and care when interacting with customers appears to mitigate the risk of emotional exhaustion for pharmacists, in contrast to the depleting effects of surface acting.

The analysis also revealed that while the direct effect of surface acting on job satisfaction was not statistically significant, emotional exhaustion was found to play a partial mediating role in this relationship. This finding suggests that emotional exhaustion is an important factor in the decrease of job satisfaction stemming from pharmacists' display of artificial emotional behaviors towards customers. In line with prior research [37,48], surface acting indirectly decreases job satisfaction by increasing pharmacists' levels of emotional exhaustion. The act of suppressing their true emotions and exhibiting inauthentic emotional responses takes a toll on pharmacists over time, leading to heightened feelings of emotional exhaustion, which in turn negatively impacts their job satisfaction.

Conversely, the analysis determined that deep acting decreases pharmacists' emotional exhaustion and increases their job satisfaction. When pharmacists are able to genuinely activate and exhibit their real emotions during customer interactions, they can engage in a more authentic manner. This reduces their feelings of emotional exhaustion and, as a result, enhances their overall job satisfaction. This finding aligns with previous studies [11,43] on the beneficial effects of deep acting for employees' wellbeing and positive work outcomes.

Theoretical Implications

This study makes an important contribution to the limited body of research examining the relationships between emotional labor, job satisfaction, and emotional exhaustion among pharmacists. The key findings provide valuable insights that extend the existing literature in several ways.

Firstly, the insignificant direct effect of surface acting on job satisfaction, coupled with the partial mediating role of emotional exhaustion, offers a new perspective on the inconsistent results reported in prior studies. This suggests that the detrimental impact of surface acting on job satisfaction is primarily channeled through its ability to increase pharmacists' feelings of emotional exhaustion.

Secondly, the finding that deep acting positively influences job satisfaction and reduces emotional exhaustion provides evidence supporting the beneficial consequences of displaying authentic emotions among service sector employees, such as pharmacists. This aligns with and extends the validity of emotional labor theories proposed by Grandey [48] and Morris and Feldman [2] by demonstrating their applicability in the context of pharmacists' work experiences.

Overall, this study contributes to the limited research on the emotional labor dynamics of pharmacists, revealing the divergent effects of surface acting and deep acting on their job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion. These findings hold important implications for understanding and promoting the emotional well-being and positive work outcomes of pharmacists in the healthcare service industry.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study suggest that pharmacy managers should consider pharmacists' emotional labor strategies and provide appropriate support to enhance their well-being and

organizational performance. Specifically, the results indicate that pharmacy managers should take proactive measures to address the adverse consequences of pharmacists' surface acting behaviors.

First, the study reveals that pharmacists' surface acting, whereby they suppress their true emotions and display artificial emotional responses to customers, increases their emotional exhaustion, which in turn indirectly decreases their job satisfaction. Consequently, pharmacy managers should implement supportive interventions to protect pharmacists' emotional resources. This could involve providing emotional intelligence training, developing burnout coping strategies, and implementing mentoring programs to help pharmacists reduce their reliance on superficial role-playing and instead encourage the use of deep acting.

Conversely, the study finds that when pharmacists are able to genuinely reflect their true emotions while providing services to customers, it not only increases their job satisfaction but also reduces their emotional exhaustion. Therefore, pharmacy managers should strive to cultivate an organizational climate that supports and motivates pharmacists to engage in deep acting behaviors. This may involve implementing policies, practices, and leadership approaches that enable and empower pharmacists to authentically express their emotions during customer interactions.

By adopting these evidence-based strategies, pharmacy managers can effectively address the emotional labor challenges faced by pharmacists, ultimately enhancing their job satisfaction, reducing emotional exhaustion, and improving overall organizational performance.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study acknowledges several limitations that warrant consideration when interpreting its findings and implications. Firstly, the research was conducted solely on pharmacists employed in the Karabuk province, which may constrain the generalizability of the results. It is possible that conducting similar investigations in different organizational contexts or with more diverse samples of service employees could yield varying findings.

Secondly, the cross-sectional design of the study, whereby data was collected at a single point in time, restricts the ability to draw definitive conclusions about the causal relationships between the examined variables. To provide more compelling causal evidence, future research could benefit from adopting a longitudinal approach or implementing experimental research designs.

These limitations underscore the need for cautious interpretation of the current study's findings and highlight opportunities for further research to expand the knowledge base in this area. Investigations that replicate and extend the current study across different settings, populations, and methodological approaches would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the emotional labor dynamics and their impacts on job-related outcomes among service professionals, such as pharmacists.

By acknowledging these limitations upfront, this study demonstrates a commitment to methodological rigor and set the stage for subsequent studies to build upon the existing knowledge in a systematic and robust manner. Addressing these limitations through future research can help refine and strengthen the theoretical and practical implications derived from the present study.

In summary, the key findings of this study reveal the distinct impacts of pharmacists' surface acting and deep acting behaviors on their job satisfaction, as well as the mediating role of emotional exhaustion in these relationships. Notably, the insignificant direct effect of surface acting on job satisfaction, coupled with the partial mediation by emotional exhaustion, suggests that the depletion of pharmacists' emotional resources plays a critical role in diminishing their job satisfaction when they engage in inauthentic emotional displays towards customers.

Conversely, the study demonstrates that when pharmacists are able to genuinely reflect their true emotions (deep acting), it positively influences their job satisfaction and, importantly, reduces their emotional exhaustion. These findings underscore the importance of pharmacy managers taking proactive measures to protect their employees' emotional well-being and facilitate the adoption of deep acting strategies.

Collectively, the results of this investigation highlight the need for pharmacy managers to prioritize the implementation of interventions and policies that support pharmacists' emotional resources and encourage the expression of their authentic emotions when interacting with customers. By doing so, they can foster improved job satisfaction among pharmacists, which is essential for enhancing overall

organizational performance and service quality.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Concept: N.Ç.Ş., O.B.; Design: N.Ç.Ş.; Control: O.B.; Sources: N.Ç.Ş.; Materials: N.Ç.Ş., O.B.; Data Collection and/or Processing: N.Ç.Ş., O.B.; Analysis and/or Interpretation: O.B.; Literature Review: N.Ç.Ş., O.B.; Manuscript Writing: N.Ç.Ş., O.B.; Critical Review: O.B.; Other: -

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no real, potential, or perceived conflict of interest for this article.

ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

Karabuk University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee granted approval for the questionnaire application. This approval was documented in a decision dated June 23, 2022, and numbered 2022/05-4.

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