

# COLLABORATIVE EFFECT OF EMOTIONAL LABOR STRATEGIES AND POSITIVE RESOURCES VERSUS AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT

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## ABSTRACT

*Committed employees are source of competitive advantage in any organization. This study seeks to investigate the impact of emotional labor on affective commitment among employees. This study will focus on the moderating role of cultural intelligence and pride in work as positive resources between emotional labor and affective commitment. The proposed model will be tested through quantitative method approach in light of Conservation of Resources Theory (COR). The data collected from 520 employees from hotel sector under multistage sampling technique will be analyzed. The gathered data will be examined through statistical techniques, are estimated to prove the proposed relationships. The study will be beneficial for industry practitioners, managers and leaders who can take advantage from the study and make strategies to minimize the negative effects of emotional labor in their respective organizations.*

**Keywords:** Emotional Labor, Affective Commitment, Surface Acting, Deep Acting, Cultural Intelligence, Pride in Work.

## INTRODUCTION

Committed employees are source of competitive advantage in any organization (Koronios et al., 2019). Individuals' emotions, way of expressing emotions and emotional display are of significant importance in any customer service industry as it directly have an impact on workers' performance at job (Dashper, 2019). The increased competition in hospitality industry forced its employees to "service with smile" so that they may increase service quality and client satisfaction. Emotional labor is the process of managing feelings and expressions to fulfill the emotional requirements of a job (Moreo et al., 2019). Emotional labor is a critical phenomenon fluctuated from employee emotions to commitment (Grandey, 2003; Lam & Chen, 2012). The clients of hotel sector actually draw an image about the set norms and standards of the serving pattern in their mind and they visualize the services accordingly (Walsh, 2019). Therefore, the employees of this sector have to perform their duties as per the image perceived by the clients and it needs an extra emotional effort by the employees (Grandey & Sayre, 2019).

It is true that emotional labor produces an extra ordinary positive consequences but it affects the employees in negative term as well (Chen et al., 2019). It can create emotional dissonance, job stress and burnout among employees (Beierle et al., 2019). Hereafter emotional labor can destroy the emotions and inner mood of the employees which is really deteriorating for the industry (Walsh, 2019). At present, many hotel managers fail to recognize the emotional labor and they ignore the intrinsic emotions of hotel employees (Yao et al., 2019). Hence it can

strongly effect the organizational commitment (Kong & Jeon, 2018) among employees (Alola et al., 2019). Conservation of resources (COR) theory is an important framework in this context as it focuses on the value and ranking of the resources and how they are strengthened by personal experiences, cultural factors and environment changes (Hobfoll, 2001). Resources may be anything which can help in objective attainment. It may be objective, personal, conditional or energy resources. The resources gain can enhance the motivational process that can lead to organizational commitment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Hobfoll, 2001). Pride in work or sense of pride is the feeling of deep pleasure or satisfaction which comes from one's achievements. Taking pride in one's work is a massively important role for any professional (Jin & Guy, 2009). Cultural intelligence is an emerging dimension. Cultural intelligence (CI) is the capability and skills of the employees to handle multicultural settings. This is gaining a valuable importance since its introduction (Ng, Van, & Ang, 2012; Ott & Michailova, 2018).

As to address this gap in literature, researcher will apply Conservation of resources theory (COR) and consider cultural intelligence and pride in work as the positive resources (mental and emotional) of the individuals while anxiety as negative state (mental) of employees which affects the organizational commitment of employees in the hospitality industry (Hobfoll, 2001). This study will examine the affective commitment as the ultimate outcomes and will study the dynamic relationship among preceding variables. The current study will consider pride in work and cultural intelligence as positive resources as moderators for the relationships between emotional labor acting strategies and affective commitment.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional labor means managing one's emotions in order to monitor the set rules which are necessary to perform in the organization irrespective of one's personal emotions (Grandey, 2003). Surface acting is the coping strategy in which employees manage their extrinsic feeling while keeping the intrinsic emotions unchanged. That's why it experiences more emotional dissonance exists between the inner expressions and external feelings during the interaction with client (Zapf, 2002). Other strategy of Hoch child's concept is deep acting. In this type of strategy employees try to perform their tasks in the way what they actually feel (Zapf, 2002).

Organizational commitment is a significant factor for goals attainment. Low organizational commitment will result into intention to leave, absenteeism and delay in working activities (McElroy et al., 2001). Positive and negative resources have impact on organizational commitment (Zahedi & Ghajarieh, 2011). In the perspective of COR theory, one has a limited number of resources and the loss of such resources affects the job tasks and its sub-tasks (Hobfoll, 2001). If these are the valid assumptions, then surface acting will consume more energy and resources in order to modify the true feelings than deep acting which expresses the true emotions and will require fewer resources (Hobfoll, 2001). Empirical evidence supports this theoretical proposition (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). *"Employees experience stress when they face threats that may come from a risk of resource loss, actual resource loss, or the insufficient return of supplementary resources on investments of resources"* (Hobfoll, 2001). This pressure will lead employees toward reduced affective commitment. Employees may have feelings about their resources as insufficient to meet job demands after such a great investment on work. Once employees have such feelings of less emotional resource, they are unable to perform their job effectively.

Surface acting is an unauthentic way of expressions while deep acting is naturally felt emotions to meet job demands. There exists a positive connection between emotional labor and

affective commitment (Lee & Ashforth, 1993). Surface acting is a fake mode of articulating emotions and deep acting is a sincere mode of emotional display. Grandey (2000; 2003) confirmed a negative relation between surface acting and affective commitment and positive relation between deep acting and affective commitment. Surface acting remains unable to pleased customers while deep acting is more aligned with inner true felt emotions therefore supposed to convince and satisfied the clients (Grandey, 2003). Prentice et al. (2013) argue that deep acting is positively linked to affective commitment whereas surface acting is positively associated with emotional exhaustion. Furthermore, in the perspective of COR theory, positive resources are require and the effect of negative resources have to be minimized. Usually organizations prefer those employees who have adoptable behavior and attitude in adverse conditions than those who are only better in routine proficiency because when unstructured problem arises while communicating with client, then routine proficiency does not provide any benefit (Kozlowski & Bell, 2012). Therefore, following can be built as hypotheses:

*H<sub>1</sub> Surface acting is negatively associated with affective commitment.*

*H<sub>2</sub> Deep acting is positively associated with affective commitment.*

Pride in work or sense of pride is the feeling of deep pleasure or satisfaction which comes from one's achievements. Taking pride in one's work is a massively important role for any professional (Jin & Guy, 2009). It is the positive resource of the employees. In the perspective of COR, resources gain are noticeable in context of resources loss (Hobfoll, 2001). Similarly, (Jin & Guy, 2009) also hold same opinion that high level of pride in work can develop positive attitude like commitment, devotion, creativity, collaboration, hard work etc. Under COR premises, all these qualities/characteristics are positive resources which are essential for employees to happily stay somewhere. On the basis of above arguments, it seems that pride in work supports adoption of deep acting strategy instead of surface acting strategy with true emotions (Kensbock et al., 2016). If employees will have high level of pride in work, they can moderate the relationship between emotional labor and emotional exhaustion and affective commitment. All those workers" who score high on pride in work try their best to deliver what is demanded from them and in doing so they experience deep acting which helps them perform better on their jobs at the same time reduces emotional exhaustion associated with performing emotional labor and increasing affective commitment (Grandey et al., 2018). So, it may hypothesize that:

*H<sub>3</sub> Pride in work may moderate negative relationship between surface acting and affective commitment such that this relationship may weaken when pride in work is high and strengthened when pride in work is low.*

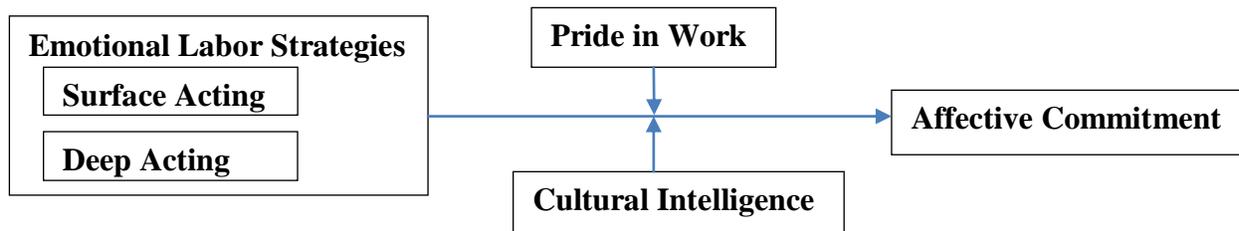
*H<sub>4</sub> Pride in work may moderate positive relationship between deep acting and affective commitment such that this relationship may further strengthen when pride in work is high and weakened when pride in work is low.*

Cultural intelligence is the capability of the individuals to act affectively in culturally diverse working environment. CI is similar to the cultural competency approaches but it differs in intelligence specific research (Livermore, 2011). It is vital that organizational commitment and cultural intelligence can enhance the worker's performance. The results of previous studies show that commitment also enhances if employees cultural intelligence is increased (Ang & Van Dyne, 2015). Dolatshah & Hosseini (2015) proved in their study that knowledge is the strongest

factor contributes towards organizational commitment. Khani et al. (2011) concluded that cultural intelligence is a part of more efficient group. Cultural intelligence is a positive resource under COR premises and it helps the employees not to waste their other resources and strengthen more your positive resources. As per COR theory, personal resources are considered positive self-evaluations which are more salient and help individuals to control and impact the environment successfully with their ability (Hobfoll, 2001). The frontline employees of service industry like hotels who will have low level of CI and will try to handle the aggressive customers with fake emotions as surface acting coping strategy will suffer them high level of reduced affective commitment (Ott & Michailova, 2016). On the other hand, employees with high level of CI may engage themselves in true emotions with deep acting strategy while handling in difficult situations which can result in increased affective commitment (Nakagawa et al., 2017). Therefore, on the basis of above arguments following may be hypothesized:

- H<sub>5</sub> Cultural intelligence may moderate negative relationship between surface acting and affective commitment such that this relationship may weaken when cultural intelligence is high and strengthened when cultural intelligence is low.
- H<sub>6</sub> Cultural intelligence may moderate positive relationship between deep acting and affective commitment such that this relationship may further strengthen when cultural intelligence is high and weakened when cultural intelligence is low.

Based on literature review, following model in Figure 1 is proposed.



**FIGURE 1**  
**PROPOSED MODEL**

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The nature of the study was deductive, explanatory based on quantitative approach. Already developed questionnaires were used to collect the response on five point Likert scale. The study was time lag. Multistage sampling allowed the researcher to choose a suitable sample from a large population. The actual sample size was selected from only 32 hotels which were listed as four star and five star hotels on [www.pha.org.pk](http://www.pha.org.pk). Tanaka (1987) explained that in the item response theory, 10 responses are sufficient for one item (10:1). A total of 520 questionnaires were distributed to the hotels as per item response theory. However the researcher received 464 responses. The latest version of SPSS 23 and AMOS 23 was used to statistically analyze the gathered data.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The data shows that male respondents are more than female respondents by 56.4%. Age group of respondents shows that more respondents were between twenty to thirty years. Data shows that number of married respondents was more than unmarried. If we discuss about the education level, majority of respondents belong to the third category that is graduation class that represents the forty four percent (44%,  $n = 204$  of total share).

### Descriptive Statistics

Constructs	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Surface Acting (SA)	0.88	4.57	2.91	0.779
Deep Acting (DA)	0.93	4.19	2.86	0.643
Affective Commitment (AC)	0.88	4.52	2.7	0.806
Cultural Intelligence (CI)	0.59	2.69	1.89	0.403
Pride in Work (PIW)	0.87	4.32	3.13	0.733

The descriptive statistics are shown in Table 1 which shows the lowest and highest values for all the variables, the average value and its standard deviation i.e., dispersion from mean.

### Correlation Analysis

Table 2 depicts the correlation analysis.

	1	2	3	4	5
SA	1				
DA	0.865**	1			
AC	-0.368**	0.280**	1		
PIW	0.356**	0.568**	0.192*	0.1	
CI	0.523**	0.710**	0.291**	0.638**	1

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

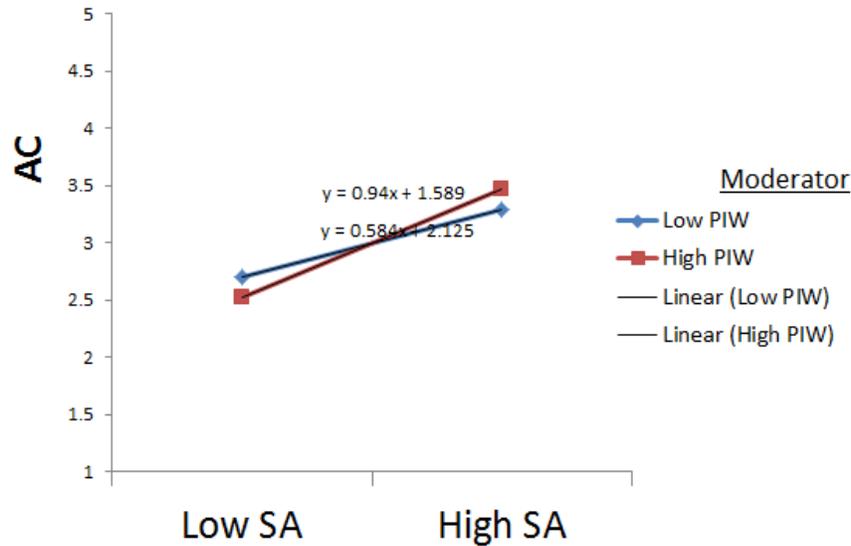
\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). Note. SA & 1 = Surface Acting, DA & 2 = Deep Acting, AC & 3 = Affective Commitment, PIW & 4 = Pride in Work, and CI & 5 = Cultural Intelligence

Deep acting, pride in work and cultural intelligence have weak positive relationship with the dependent variables which is affective commitment, and the values of correlation coefficient are  $r = 0.280, 0.192, \& 0.291$   $p < 0.01$ . Surface acting has weak negative relationship with affective commitment and the values of correlation coefficient is  $r = -0.386$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . Hence it proved the first two hypotheses (H1 and H2).

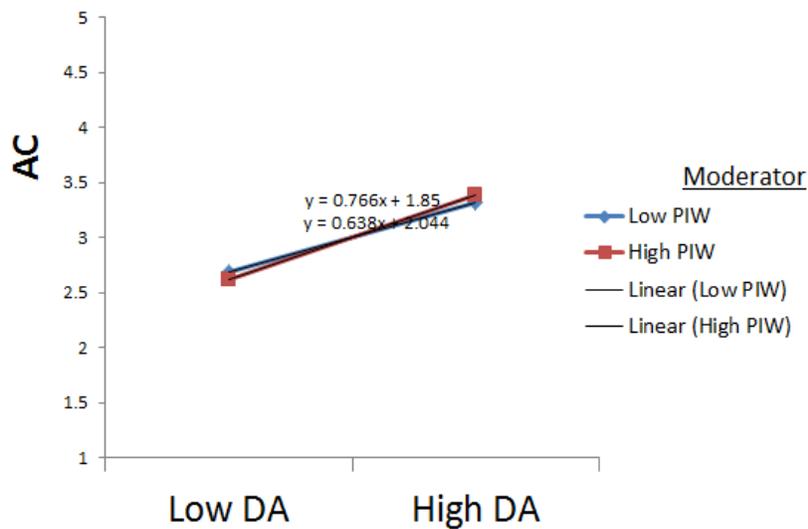
### Moderation 1 & 2: PIW Moderates between SA/DA and AC

The presented graph in Figures 2 & 3 has drawn to test the effect of moderation 3 & 4 and it has portrayed by getting the unstandardized regression coefficients (i.e., B) of independent variables that is surface acting and deep acting, moderator that is pride in work, and interaction that is product of IV and moderator. The outputs of linear regression analyses have delivered the  $B_1 = 0.381$  ( $p < 0.001$ ),  $B_2 = -0.001$  ( $p < 0.001$ ), and  $B_3 = 0.089$  ( $p < 0.001$ ) of surface acting,

pride in work, and interaction respectively and the outputs of linear regression analyses have delivered the  $B_1 = 0.351$  ( $p < 0.001$ ),  $B_2 = -0.001$  ( $p < 0.001$ ), and  $B_3 = 0.032$  ( $p < 0.001$ ) of deep acting, pride in work, and interaction respectively. Results revealed that pride in work strengthen the relationship between surface acting/Deep acting and affective commitment.



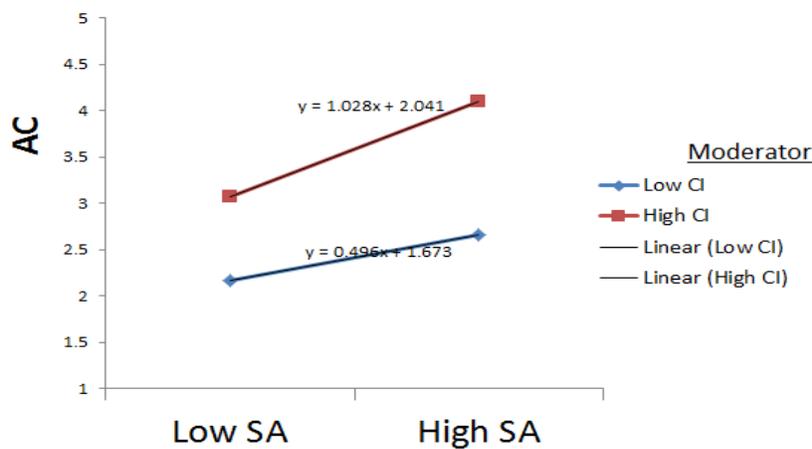
**FIGURE 2**  
**THE RELATIONS BETWEEN SURFACE ACTING AND AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT AT THE HIGH AND LOW LEVELS OF PRIDE IN WORK**



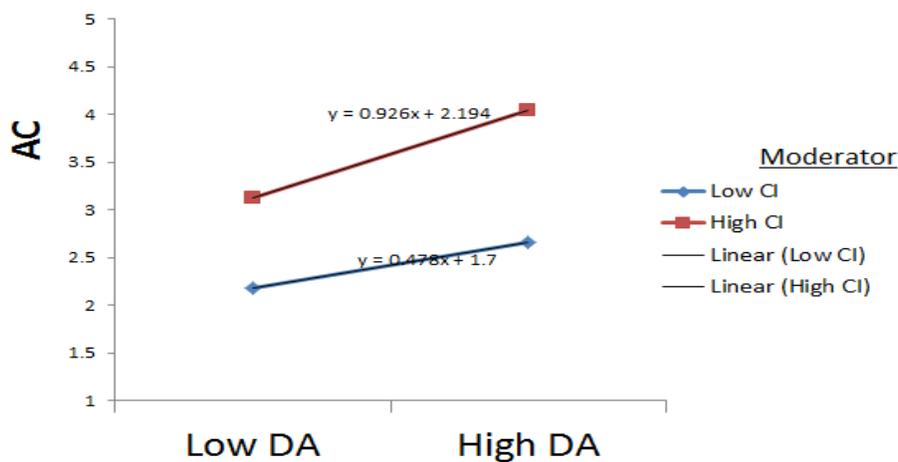
**FIGURE 3**  
**THE RELATIONS BETWEEN DEEP ACTING AND AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT AT THE HIGH AND LOW LEVELS OF PRIDE IN WORK**

**Moderation 3 & 4: CI Moderates between SA/DA and AC**

The presented graph in Figures 4 & 5 has drawn to test the effect of moderation 6 and it has portrayed by getting the unstandardized regression coefficients (i.e., B) of independent variable that is surface acting, moderator that is cultural intelligence, and interaction that is product of IV and moderator. The outputs of linear regression analyses have delivered the  $B_1 = 0.381$  ( $p < 0.001$ ),  $B_2 = 0.583$  ( $p < 0.001$ ), and  $B_3 = 0.133$  ( $p < 0.001$ ) of surface acting, cultural intelligence, and interaction respectively and the outputs of linear regression analyses have delivered the  $B_1 = 0.351$  ( $p < 0.001$ ),  $B_2 = 0.583$  ( $p < 0.001$ ), and  $B_3 = 0.112$  ( $p < 0.001$ ) of deep acting, cultural intelligence, and interaction respectively. Results revealed that cultural intelligence strengthens the relationship between surface acting/Deep acting and affective commitment.



**FIGURE 4  
THE RELATIONS BETWEEN SURFACE ACTING AND AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT AT THE HIGH AND LOW LEVELS OF CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE**



**FIGURE 5  
THE RELATIONS BETWEEN DEEP ACTING AND AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT AT THE HIGH AND LOW LEVELS OF CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE**

## DISCUSSION

H1 and H2 have posited that shows the relationship between surface acting/Deep acting and affective commitment. The value of correlation coefficient is ( $r = -0.368$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) that has explained a strong negative relationship between surface acting and affective commitment. Standardized regression weights are calculated by the structural equation modeling that has indicated a negatively significant relationship between surface acting and affective commitment which is reflected through the statistical value of ( $\beta = -0.223$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The value of correlation coefficient is ( $r = 0.280$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) that has explained a strong positive relationship between deep acting and affective commitment. Standardized regression weights are calculated by the structural equation modeling that has indicated a positively significant relationship between deep acting and affective commitment which is reflected through the statistical value of ( $\beta = 0.153$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Thus, the interpretation of results has indicated that the surface acting influences on affective commitment of hotel sector negatively significant and deep acting as positively.

The results of the study show negative relationship between surface acting and affective commitment. Previous studies also confirm the same relationship. Surface actors are not good performers as they express their fake emotions so their facial display is not supporting their inner feelings. The same results are supported by Diefendorff et al., (2005) and Austin et al. (2008) who also argued that surface acting has negative association with affective commitment. The results depicted that deep acting has positive association with affective commitment. Deep actors changed their inner feelings also so they regulate their emotions easily and they remain happy and positive. This strategy is more suitable to perform such jobs where face to face interaction is required (Barrick, 2005).

The results of the study depicted that pride in work and cultural intelligence moderated the relationship between surface acting/Deep acting and organizational commitment. The current study is unique in the sense that it indicates that cultural intelligence of employees of 4 and 5-star hotels of Pakistan is so significant that employees have all cultural awareness and they undergo relevant strategy while practicing their emotional display. The results show that pride in work and cultural intelligence are positive resource which can be used by the employees. The results are consistent with previous studies that CI is a considerable, personal and valuable resource. It can strengthen the employees to successfully regulate their emotions in culturally diverse organizational settings. The results are consistent with previous studies proving that whenever the emotional exhaustion is increased the cultural intelligence is reduced. Stokes (2013) also proved that significant relationship exists between cultural Intelligence, transformational leadership and burnout.

## CONCLUSION

The study proves that surface acting is negatively correlated with affective commitment. The study concluded that deep acting is positively correlated with affective commitment. The results of the study supported under COR perspective; positive resources can help in increasing the commitment with appropriate use of emotional labor strategy. It proved that pride in work moderate the relationship between emotional labor and affective commitment. The results of the study supported that cultural intelligence moderate the relationship between emotional labor and affective commitment. The results depicted that individuals who use deep acting as emotional labor strategy are more productive. So training regarding appropriate adoption of emotional labor strategy can be helpful in this connection.

## Managerial Implications, Limitations and Future Research

The outcomes of the study will be helpful to the hotel management in creating an environment where employees play their genuine emotions instead of fake emotions which will positively impact on organizational outcome and productivity. Managers can enhance the emotional resources of employees with suitable training and can indulge the sense among frontline employees that emotional labor and demand of clients is a challenge for them instead of threat (Schneider, 2004). The current study cannot be generalized on other countries as it has been conducted in Pakistani context in accordance with the Pakistani culture. The sampling technique was stratified-proportionate-convenience sampling for the current study. Thus the sample size was limited. In order to get better results and comprehensive information, large and more diverse sample can be taken into account. The main limitation is that researcher collected data from only 32 hotels listed and registered on Pakistan hotel association website. i.e., [www.pha.org.pk](http://www.pha.org.pk). In future, more hotels can be included as sample. Another limitation is that it has not investigated the emotional labor antecedences and only explored its impact which restricted the researcher to explore other relationships between independent and dependent variables and it only included pride in work and cultural intelligence as moderators in the study. Future opportunity is to include other moderators such as age, gender and marital status and further extend the theoretical framework to investigate the behavioral perceptions of employees. Self-efficacy can also be added as a moderating variable in future model to determine whether it increases or decreases the relationship strength between the independent and dependent variables.

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