

## แรงงานทางอารมณ์ในวิชาชีพการพยาบาล

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### บทคัดย่อ

แรงงานทางอารมณ์นับว่าเป็นส่วนสำคัญส่วนหนึ่งสำหรับวัฒนธรรมทางการพยาบาล ในการปฏิบัติการพยาบาลพยาบาลอาจจะมีประสบการณ์ที่เกี่ยวข้องกับปัญหาด้านอารมณ์ เช่น วิตกกังวล ซึมเศร้า เครียด และไม่สามารถควบคุมอารมณ์ได้ในระหว่างการมีปฏิสัมพันธ์กับผู้ป่วยญาติผู้ป่วย และเพื่อนร่วมงาน ปัญหาเหล่านี้สามารถส่งผลกระทบต่อถึงคุณภาพของการพยาบาลและการขาดประสิทธิภาพในการติดต่อสื่อสารระหว่างบุคคล การจัดการและการตอบสนองทางอารมณ์สามารถบูรณาการให้เข้ากับการปฏิบัติการพยาบาลประจำวัน ซึ่งเป็นสิ่งสำคัญในการพัฒนาวิชาชีพการพยาบาลและการจัดการทางสังคม บทความนี้นำเสนอแนวคิดใหม่ที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการจัดการทางอารมณ์ ซึ่งเรียกว่า แรงงานทางอารมณ์ และแนวคิดนี้ถูกนำมาใช้ประโยชน์ในวิชาชีพการพยาบาล ในส่วนแรกเป็นการอธิบายถึงหลักการและแนวคิดแรงงานทางอารมณ์ รวมทั้งความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างแนวคิดนี้กับการเกิดสุขภาวะทางอารมณ์ ส่วนที่สองเป็นการนำเสนอผลการวิจัยที่เกี่ยวข้องกับแรงงานทางอารมณ์ซึ่งมีการอภิปรายอย่างกว้างขวางในแขนงต่างๆ ส่วนที่สามเน้นถึงความสำคัญและการประยุกต์ใช้แนวคิดแรงงานทางอารมณ์กับการทำงานในวิชาชีพการพยาบาล

คำสำคัญ: แรงงานทางอารมณ์ การพยาบาล

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## **Emotional Labor in Nursing: A Review**

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### **Abstract**

Emotional labor was described as a vital part of the culture of caring and how nurses care in a particular situation. To work in the healthcare system, nurses may experience a lot of emotional difficulties such as anxiety, depression, stress and losing temper in dealing with patients, their families and colleagues. These problems can result in poor-quality nursing care and ineffective interpersonal communication. Emotional management and responses as an integral routine part of care is important for all nurses to have their own professional development and socialization. This paper demonstrates a new concept related to emotional management, namely emotional labor utilized in the area of nursing. The first section explains what emotional labor is about and why it relates to individual's emotional well-being. A number of studies on emotional labor are discussed in the second section. The third section focuses on how the concept of emotional labor takes place in nursing areas and the importance of emotional labor for nursing activities

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### What is emotional labour?

Emotion is an interactional accomplishment underpinned by influential social forces, and its development may be encouraged in several ways. The way individuals respond to given situations is the result of their emotional experiences.<sup>1</sup> The term ‘emotional labour’ was first used by a sociologist, Hochschild.<sup>2</sup> She was interested in emotion and self-identity. This concept was influenced by the symbolic interactionism theories and focused on the respective influences of culture and identities which “represent commitment to social roles”.<sup>3</sup>

Emotional labour was defined as the act of trying to evoke and suppress emotions or feelings in order to have appropriate expression of emotions in a given situation.<sup>2,4</sup> The focus of evocation is an individuals’ attempt to create an image of desired feelings into their minds, and the focus of suppression is the attempt to decrease undesirable feelings or to prevent from expressing them.<sup>4</sup> Emotional labour integrates personal perspectives with social regulation,<sup>5</sup> and it is placed on the desirability of expressing individuals’ feelings caused by his/her own emotional experiences.<sup>6</sup> The concept of emotional labour highlights the process of doing emotional labour instead of its outcome.

Emotional labour takes place when individuals have an emotional misfit in a specific situation and make an effort to achieve an emotional reaction accepted by social norms. According to the Hochschild’s<sup>1</sup> notion, emotional labour particularly illustrates three characteristics as follows: the worker has continued contact with the public either face-to-face or voice communication; the worker is required to express an

emotional state in another; the acceptable emotional expressions of workers are imposed by the employer’s policies.<sup>7</sup> Emotional labour is divided into surface acting and deep acting.<sup>1,8</sup>

1. Surface acting is the way individuals consciously changing external expression to mask or hide their actual feelings which may or may not match an outer presentation. Surface acting leads to a faked display of socially appropriate emotions. Individuals realize what they feel and what they should feel in a given situation. They try to adopt outward appearances in order to induce a correspondence between inward feelings and outward appearances or the strategy to regulate feelings from outside to inside.

2. Deep acting is an appropriate expression of feelings which results from regulating inner feelings. The individuals attempt to produce a proper state of emotions by changing the state of mind from inside to outside. This strategy produces a display of genuinely felt emotions.<sup>9-10</sup> Hochschild identified cognitive, bodily and expressive techniques required for managing one’s feelings which may then be used together in practice.<sup>2</sup> Cognitive techniques involve altering image, ideas or thoughts in relation to emotional experience. Bodily techniques are to make physiological change of feeling. Expressive techniques refer to an endeavour to change external expression of feeling. All techniques are an attempt to change one’s own feelings directly.<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, emotional labour is the emotional management process by which individuals evoke and suppress feelings through the use of emotional labour techniques, namely surface acting and deep acting.

Emotional labour techniques are part in the process of emotional labour which is a way of making an effort with their feelings and emotional expression during interpersonal interaction. The process involves self-presentation and the influence of feeling rules. Firstly, the self-presentation through socialization can be learned through interactions with others. People can work on and create their inner feelings in order to portray an acceptable expression in a given situation.

Secondly, the process of emotional labour includes not only the personal ways in which individuals experience emotion management, but is also determined by feeling rules. Feeling rules refer to the appropriateness of feelings in an expectation of any situation-specific scripts which concern duration, direction and intensity influenced by personal beliefs, social norms and cultures.<sup>1</sup> Some feeling rules may be identified as global rules. Some rules may exist in particular groups. From these perspectives, emotional labour may go unseen through various routine works involved with ordering everyday life which may affect emotional well-being.

### **Research on emotional labour**

Emotional labour is part of work regulation demanding people behaving pleasantly in public. A number of researchers have examined emotional labour of workers in various types of organisations,<sup>12</sup> e.g. teachers in primary and secondary schools, store employees and managers, service employees, bank tellers, flight attendants, hairstylists, family support workers and employees in service sectors.<sup>1,9,13-16</sup> These

studies highlight negative consequences of performing surface acting emotional labour strategies such as physical and psychological strain, stress, burnout and emotional exhaustion.<sup>15</sup>

Contrary, the engagement in deep acting emotional labour strategies may affect employees' emotional well-being in the workplace. Previous studies reported positive outcomes of emotional labour. For example, Philipp and Schüpbach<sup>13</sup> reported that teachers who used deep acting felt less emotional exhaustion than teachers who performed surface acting after a one year period. Cheung and Tang<sup>16</sup> found that a person who undertook deep acting for understanding and managing their own and others' emotions was likely to develop high level of emotional intelligence.<sup>14</sup>

### **Emotional labour and nurses**

Emotional labour has also been applied to nursing research studies.<sup>17</sup> The image of nursing is still seen as women's work and a natural female quality.<sup>7,18</sup> Smith<sup>7</sup> was the original researcher who applied the idea of emotional labour to nursing studies. She explored the study of emotional labour in nursing students and the role of lecturers and mentors in effectively supporting students to learn to care.<sup>19</sup> Emotional labour becomes "an important part of the role of health-care professionals".<sup>20</sup> The notion of emotional labour is taught and integrated into nursing work so that nurses provide holistic care rather than services for patients. For nurses, emotional labour is part of both personal and professional development and vital to nursing practice and the creation of care. Nurses can be encouraged to learn

managing complex emotions which are a link between their personal and social identity.<sup>21</sup>

Research on emotional labour in nursing shows enormous potential for the development of caring practices in nursing.<sup>12</sup> Emotional labour is a vital part of the quality of care among nurses, healthcare professionals as well as students.<sup>18</sup> Numerous studies have attempted to explain the relationship between emotional labour and nurses' work. For example, nurses used emotional labour for managing their own emotions and supporting others' emotions, so that they can maintain relationships with patients and their relatives, and also colleagues.<sup>17-18</sup> Ross and Glass<sup>22</sup> reported that nurses identified emotional labour as the energy required for providing quality in palliative care. Emotional labour is described as a requirement of professional standards for nurses who care for families in the intensive care unit.<sup>23</sup> Huynh, Alderson and Thompson<sup>24</sup> found that the positive consequences of emotional labour in nursing studies involve increases in the sense of personal and professional accomplishment, the improvement of nurse-patient relationships and job satisfaction. On the contrary, the negative consequences are job-related stress, emotional strain, self-estrangement, burnout and depersonalisation. Therefore, it is necessary for nurses to have a supportive environment to enable discussion about emotional labour issues.

Emotional labour is valued and recognized as one of the caring components of nursing which include the social and psychological aspects of care.<sup>19</sup> The findings of previous nursing studies in emotional labour illustrated that surface acting produces a more

deleterious effect on well-being than deep acting.<sup>9</sup> The performance of deep acting showed the positive effects of emotional labour on emotional well-being. For example, the surface acting form and the act of negative suppression of emotions led to job dissatisfaction and the predictive outcomes of negative health and psychological well-being among South Australian hospital nurses.<sup>10</sup> Haycock-Stuart, Kean and Baggaley<sup>25</sup> found that community nurse leaders reported the experience of stressors as emotional injury when they failed to manage their emotion. They undertook emotional labour to maintain good relationships with patients and colleagues. Huynh, Alderson and Thompson<sup>24</sup> reported a concept analysis of emotional labour in nursing in which the adoption of a work persona is seen as part of the process of performing emotion work during encounters with patients. It is shown that undertaking deep acting can gain greater emotional well-being which drives nurses to have the ability to understand their emotions and to manage them in effective ways during work.

## Conclusion

Emotional labour is commonly used to describe activities which have used value and took place in organisation as a way to convey the appropriate facial expressions and behaviours expected by clients and organizations.<sup>1,2,8</sup> Nurses are expected to manage their emotions during interaction with patients, relatives and colleagues. Emotional labour may go unseen through various caring tasks among nurses.<sup>17-19</sup> Undertaking emotional labour is often reserved for nurses on account of its association with the nature of nursing care

activities. Nurses work hard on emotional labour within work environments guided by nurses' feeling rules involved with the organisation's rules and regulations lead how nurses ought to feel and behave in a particular situation. Nurses must maintain their professional face as a job requirement. Emotional labour is also a resource in sustaining interpersonal relationships. Nurses have to face emotional labour as an unavoidable part of working life. If nurses cannot properly regulate their feelings and emotions, suffering burn-out and having a hidden conflict may be the long-term effects of emotional labour on them. However, nurses also derive benefits from performing emotional labour as deep acting in everyday working life. It could be said that emotional labour may affect nurses' emotional well-being. Nurses should understand the concept of emotional labour and should be trained to undertake emotional labour in an effective way in order to avoid dissonant feelings in working environments. According to prior studies, the explicitness of emotional labour has been shown with regard to nursing profession. The value of emotional labour should be in the same class as physical labour. Emotional labour needs to be codified and integrated into health's policies.

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