



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

International Journal of Hospitality Management

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/ijhosman

Effects of organizational/occupational characteristics and personality traits on hotel manager emotional exhaustion

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Hotel
Personality traits
Emotional exhaustion
Burnout

ABSTRACT

Emotional exhaustion is a type of burnout and a state of mental weariness. It is an important issue for hospitality organizations because customer contact employees and hospitality managers function in an environment that is particularly susceptible to the creation of the antecedents of burnout. Further, emotional exhaustion itself is costly to hospitality organizations and individuals because it has been shown to result in depersonalization, detachment, decreased service quality and job performance, and increased turnover. Using a sample of 544 hotel managers from 36 hotels located throughout the United States, this study examines whether emotional exhaustion is a function of organizational and occupational characteristics, including job demands, quality orientation, pressure to produce, and need for “face time.” In addition, this study analyzes whether personality traits of the managers themselves, including extroversion and neuroticism, are predictors of emotional exhaustion. This study found emotional exhaustion of hotel managers to be a function of not only job and organizational characteristics, but also personality characteristics.

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1. Introduction

With round-the-clock guest service demands, hospitality industry managers must perform their jobs in a frequently stressful environment. As a result, many talented, young managers – managers who industry executives do not want to lose – leave the industry at the first opportunity because they feel emotionally exhausted and burned out. Historically, reasons that hospitality managers have cited for leaving the industry have included long working hours including nights and weekends, and stress from demanding duties and supervisors (Pavesic and Brymer, 1990). More recent research has subsumed these factors and focused on burnout (Kim et al., 2007). The focus of this paper is on burnout, as well, and specifically, this paper focuses on the emotional exhaustion of managers in the hotel industry. Hotel managers may be under particular stress because of the 24/7 nature of the hotel business, and their emotional exhaustion and turnover may be of particular concern to hotel owners and executives because the recruitment, training, and retention of hotel managers is difficult, time-consuming, and costly.

2. Literature review

2.1. Emotional exhaustion/burnout: background

Burnout is a metaphor commonly used to describe a state of mental weariness (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). It is defined as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion from one's work in response to chronic organizational stressors (Maslach and Jackson, 1981), especially to the emotional strain of dealing extensively with other people (Ledgerwood et al., 1998). Employees feeling emotional exhaustion adversely influence organizational outcomes with decreases in job satisfaction and performance, increases in turnover, and negative personal outcomes such as alcohol and drug use, physical and mental illness, and disturbance in family and social lives (Maslach et al., 2001; Cameron et al., 1994).

The burnout syndrome is prevalent among individuals who do ‘people-work’ of some kind (Maslach and Jackson, 1981, p. 99), such as the hospitality industry. Consequently, the main focus of burnout research, especially in its initial stage, has been on human service providers. In the late 1990s, the concept of burnout was broadened to occupations beyond pure human service, and was broadened to managers, as well (Maslach et al., 2001; Maslach and Leiter, 1997).

‘Emotional exhaustion’ is argued to be at the core of the burnout syndrome (Maslach, 1982). Employees experience increased feelings of emotional exhaustion when they gain a sense that their emotional resources are drained (Maslach and Jackson, 1981),

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which leads to a loss of feeling, concern, trust, and interest in others (Ledgerwood et al., 1998), and may then develop into 'depersonalization'. Psychologically exhausted employees attempt to maintain distance from others and distance themselves emotionally and cognitively from their work by developing indifference and/or a cynical attitude. While depersonalization is essentially negative feelings regarding one's client, diminished personal accomplishment refers to negative evaluation about oneself (Maslach, 1982). Psychologically strained employees tend to feel unhappy about themselves and dissatisfied with their accomplishments on the job (Maslach and Jackson, 1981). In summary, there appears to be general consensus in the literature that emotional exhaustion is the key or core aspect of burnout (Maslach et al., 2001; de Rijk et al., 1998; Green et al., 1991; Gaines and Jermier, 1983; Maslach, 1982; Maslach and Jackson, 1981).

Emotional exhaustion not only represents employees' general loss of feeling and concern, trust, interest, and spirit (Maslach, 1982), but also involves feelings of fatigue, being used up, irritability, frustration, and being worn out (Maslach and Jackson, 1981). Emotional exhaustion has long been considered to be similar to chronic fatigue because of its pervasive and enduring nature (Griffith et al., 1950).

Gaines and Jermier (1983) posited that emotional exhaustion can be extended from front-line workers dealing directly with customers to employees in managerial positions who may not have direct or frequent contact with customers. In the hospitality industry, managers face constant challenges from a dynamic and unpredictable environment, including seasonality, availability of labor, commodity shortage, mechanical failure and dependence on suppliers, which increases levels of stress (Krone et al., 1989). The fatiguing work conditions in the hospitality industry may make managers be emotionally strained, even if they do not often interact with customers directly.

The characteristics of job/role are considered to be significant predictors of emotional exhaustion (Erickson and Ritter, 2001; Maslach et al., 2001; Janssen et al., 1999; de Rijk et al., 1998; Lee and Ashforth, 1996; Krone et al., 1989). Literature has shown that both quantity of work demands, such as hours worked, work overload, and time pressure, and also quality of work demands, including role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload, are important contributors to emotional exhaustion. Janssen et al. (1999) found that work overload, in particular, has a significant positive correlation with emotional exhaustion.

Karasek (1979) identified two categories of jobs based on job demands and job control; high strain jobs versus active jobs. High strain jobs refer to jobs with high job demands but low job control, whereas active jobs are those with high job demands and also high job control. Karasek (1979) hypothesized that high strain jobs generally lead to physical and psychological strain while active jobs typically result in well-being, learning, and personal growth. There are a number of studies that found significant interaction effects of job demands and job control (e.g., Karasek, 1979; Karasek et al., 1981; Kauppinen-Toropainen et al., 1983), but other studies that found interaction effects insignificant (e.g., de Rijk et al., 1998; Fletcher and Jones, 1993). The nature of occupations also appears to be related to emotional exhaustion. When an occupation requires more frequent and intensive interaction with people, one's physical and psychological strain increases (Erickson and Ritter, 2001; Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002; Cordes and Dougherty, 1993). For instance, occupations that more frequently deal with interpersonal relations, such as service representatives, are more likely to have higher employee emotional strain (Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002). Furthermore, employees are more likely to experience emotional exhaustion in such jobs that require emotional control (Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002). When employees are forced to manage their emotions and expressions, hiding their actual feelings to meet work

demands, they feel emotionally exhausted (Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002). Customer contact positions are known to require frequent emotional control.

2.2. Organizational climate

Work environment plays a crucial role in directing the attitudes and behaviors of an organization's employees, and organizational climate is one of the most widely used ways to characterize work environment (Tracey and Tews, 2004). Organizational climate views the organization through the perspective of employees (Schneider and White, 2004). While most researchers conceptualize climate as employees' shared perceptions of organizational events, practices, and procedures (Patterson et al., 2005), at the individual level of analysis, these perceptions represent how work environments are cognitively appraised and represented in terms of their meaning to and significance for individual employees in organizations (James and Jones, 1980; Patterson et al., 2005).

A number of previous studies in various industries have revealed links between organizational climate and important outcome measures at the individual, group, and organizational levels, such as turnover intentions (Rentsch, 1990), service quality (Schneider and Bowen, 1985), organizational commitment (Morrison and Milliken, 2000), job satisfaction (James and Jones, 1980), individual job performance (Brown and Leigh, 1996), and organizational performance (Patterson et al., 2004).

Patterson et al. (2005) posited that organizational climate is composed of multiple dimensions, including how hard employees work, i.e., effort; organizational emphasis on quality; and pressure to meet goals and targets, i.e., pressure to produce. Manning et al. (2004) argued that organizational climate is particularly relevant in service industries, such as the hospitality industry, in which the employees represent the interface between the organization and the customer. The environment created by hospitality management for employees directly affects the environment created by employees for the customers. Although literature has established links between organizational climate and organizational performance, such as service quality and productivity, investigations are needed to further examine the effects of organizational climate on additional variables (Davidson et al., 2001; Tracey and Tews, 2004).

2.3. Face time

According to Brubaker et al. (1999), "face time" is an employee's physical time at the workplace that is observed by co-workers, supervisors and/or customers. The hotel industry is known for having a "culture of face time" (Munck, 2001). Previous research suggests that, partially due to its 24/7 nature, there is an expectation that hotel managers need to be physically present regardless of the actual necessity of them being there (Mulvaney et al., 2006; Cleveland et al., 2007). Mulvaney et al. (2006) suggested that, if career dedication and employee value are measured by hours present at work, employees will be reluctant to leave early or take time off for family reasons, and in the long term, this situation results in low commitment, low productivity, and/or turnover.

The potential negative effects of face time have been increasingly realized and means of reducing face time have been sought by some academics and practitioners. By actively encouraging and demonstrating an important change in attitude about the need for face time from its top management, Marriott succeeded in reducing the average amount of time their managers spent at work, while maintained a high quality of guest service and avoided adverse effects on financial performance (Munck, 2001).

Cooper (1998) has identified this same phenomenon as "presenteeism," which he describes as an overwhelming need to put in more hours or, at the very least, appear to be working very long

hours. Face time and presenteeism are considered an expression of commitment to the job or to the company (Bailyn, 1993; Thompson et al., 1999) or as a way for employees to distinguish themselves from peers and signal to management that they are valuable employees.

Regardless of whether this phenomenon is referred to as face time or presenteeism, there has been little research on its effects. Literature on this topic has primarily focused on general descriptions based on qualitative studies drawn from cases and interviews, while no well-known measurement scales have been developed, nor have face time effects been quantitatively investigated.

2.4. Personality traits and emotional exhaustion/burnout

A majority of burnout/emotional exhaustion studies have focused on occupation-related characteristics (Cordes and Dougherty, 1993). Although a number of empirical studies have found significant influences of occupational stressors on employees' experience of emotional exhaustion, these studies have not yet provided explanations for individual differences in emotional exhaustion levels given the same kinds and intensity of occupation stress (Zellars et al., 2000). That is, within the same occupational context, some employees may experience lower or higher levels of emotional exhaustion than others.

A number of studies explained these individual differences in burnout/emotional exhaustion levels using demographics (e.g., age) as significant determinants of emotional exhaustion (Gaines and Jermier, 1983; Maslach and Jackson, 1981). Industry psychologists have reported that personality traits make a difference in coping with work stress (Maslach et al., 2001; Tokar et al., 1998; Vollrath and Torgersen, 2000). However, the relationship between personality and emotional exhaustion has not received significant attention (Kahill, 1988), especially in the hospitality industry (Kim et al., 2007).

2.5. Big Five personality model

The five-factor model (FFM) has been recognized as a useful and meaningful taxonomy for organizing and understanding personality traits. The FFM implies that personality consists of five dimensions of individual differences: extroversion (being sociable, gregarious, assertive, talkative, and active), neuroticism (being anxious, depressed, angry, embarrassed, emotional, worried, and insecure), agreeableness (being courteous, flexible, trusting, good-natured, cooperative, forgiving, soft-hearted, and tolerant), conscientiousness (being hardworking, achievement-oriented, persevering, careful, and responsible), and openness to experience (being imaginative, cultured, curious, original, broad-minded, intelligent, and having a need for variety, aesthetic sensitivity, and unconventional values) (McCrae and John, 1992; Barrick and Mount, 1991; McCrae and Costa, 1991; Digman, 1990).

Neuroticism has been described as the primary source of negative affectivity (Watson and Hubbard, 1996). Because of their essentially negative nature, individuals high in neuroticism experience more distress than do individuals low in neuroticism (George, 1992), and therefore, may experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion.

While neuroticism is associated with negative life events, extroverts are predisposed to experience positive emotions (Costa and McCrae, 1992). Thus, extroversion is the primary source of positive affectivity. Extroverts tend to exhibit optimism that things will work out. Because of their tendency to be optimistic about the future, extroverts are expected to experience lower levels of emotional exhaustion.

Agreeable individuals have greater motivation to achieve interpersonal intimacy, which tends to be related to happiness

(McCrae and Costa, 1991). Conscientious individuals are efficient, competent, hardworking, ambitious, and dependable (Block, 1961). Individuals open to experience tend to experience both the good and bad more intensely (Costa and McCrae, 1984). Recent empirical research has reported that agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience have no significant relationship with emotional exhaustion, but neuroticism and extroversion are statistically related to emotional exhaustion (Kim et al., 2007).

3. Hypotheses

Based on the previously discussed literature, we propose that emotional exhaustion is associated with the Big Five personality characteristics (i.e., extroversion and neuroticism), job demands, face time, and organizational climate (i.e., effort, quality, and pressure to produce). Specifically, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 1. Extroversion is negatively associated with emotional exhaustion perceived by hotel managers.

Hypothesis 2. Neuroticism is positively associated with emotional exhaustion perceived by hotel managers.

Hypothesis 3. Job demands are positively associated with emotional exhaustion perceived by hotel managers.

Hypothesis 4. Face time is positively associated with emotional exhaustion perceived by hotel managers.

Hypothesis 5. Organizational climate – effort – is positively associated with emotional exhaustion perceived by hotel managers.

Hypothesis 6. Organizational climate – quality – is positively associated with emotional exhaustion perceived by hotel managers.

Hypothesis 7. Organizational climate – pressure to produce – is positively associated with emotional exhaustion perceived by hotel managers.

4. Methods

4.1. Sample

This study is a component of the Hotel Work & Well Being research project, funded by grants from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and the National Institutes of Health. The Hotel Work & Well Being project aims to explore work-family issues at multiple levels in the hotel industry through interviews with corporate executives, general managers, department managers, and hourly employees. While different data collection techniques have been applied to different levels of employees, we first interviewed in person hotel general managers who were identified via referrals from an Advisory Council of the Hotel Work & Well Being project, and the American Hotel & Lodging Association. After onsite, face-to-face interviews with 36 full-service hotel general managers, we obtained their support in contacting and surveying the other managers employed in their hotels, i.e., departmental managers. Full-service hotels were the subject of this study because we desired to focus on hotel properties where numerous departmental managers were employed. Other than general managers, departmental managers ranged from hotel executive committee members (such as food & beverage directors) to hourly supervisors (such as front desk supervisors).

The data regarding emotional exhaustion, job demands, face time, organizational climate, Big Five personality characteristics (extroversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, conscientiousness, and agreeableness) of 544 hotel department managers from

36 hotels across the United States were collected via telephone surveys. A summary of the descriptive statistics of the respondents is provided in Table 2.

4.2. Measurement

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to test the research hypotheses. Emotional exhaustion was the dependent variable, and the Big Five personality characteristics (H1 and H2), job demands (H3), face time (H4), and organizational climate (H5–7) were the independent variables in the multiple regression analyses. The measurements of emotional exhaustion, job demands, organizational climate and Big Five personality traits used in this study were adopted from well-recognized sources. We chose to focus on emotional exhaustion because it is widely regarded as the primary component of and at the core of burnout (e.g., Lee and Ashforth, 1996), as previously discussed. To measure organizational climate, as discussed in the literature review, we adopted the Organizational Climate Measure scale most recently developed by Patterson et al. (2005). The reason we chose this scale was because it has been proven as a well-validated, multi-dimensional measure of organization-level climate. The validation of the scale has consisted of over 6000 employees in over 50 organizations. The scale has demonstrated the ability to discriminate between organizations on the various subscales and has converged with qualitative interviews and organizational practices. Specifically, we chose three subscales from the original Organizational Climate Measure: effort, quality, and pressure to produce. These three subscales were all adopted from the external focus and control-oriented domain of organizational climate, our domain of interest. Specifically, “effort” refers to how hard employees work to achieve organizational goals, “quality” refers to the organizational emphasis given to quality procedures, and “pressure to produce” refers to the extent to which employees feel pressure and demands to meet goals and targets. The subscale(s) (if applicable), the total number of items, the Cronbach's alpha value, and the sources of the dependent variable (emotional exhaustion) and all independent variables are provided in Table 1. The three-factor organizational climate scale and the five-factor Big Five personality traits scale were well supported by the data, and the reliability coefficients were all at an acceptable level except for the alpha value of the variable “conscientiousness”, which was not of interest in this study. Detailed items and a scale codebook are available on request.

4.3. Analysis

In a pilot study of the subject project, several themes emerged regarding the culture of the hotel industry. Particularly, when

being asked about hotel culture, numerous participants indicated that the hotel industry was known for its “face time.” Based on the pilot study, review of literature, and in-depth discussions with industry executives, two Co-Principal Investigators of the Hotel Work & Well Being research project developed a four-item “face time” scale to assess perceptions that managers need to be visible in the hotel and put in long hours to display commitment. These four items include: (a) senior management in this hotel pays close attention to when people are not working enough hours, (b) senior management in this hotel really notices if people leave early, (c) sometimes managers in this hotel feel they have to come to work early or leave late just so senior management thinks they work hard, and (d) you are considered a more valuable employee in this hotel if senior management sees you working long hours. In the survey, the participants were requested to answer each question with a five-point scale (1: strongly disagree and 5: strongly agree). For this scale, Cronbach's coefficient alpha was 0.77, indicating an acceptable level of reliability (Rosenthal and Rosnow, 1991).

In addition, previous research regarding hospitality employees suggests that workload is a widely accepted burnout/emotional exhaustion antecedent (Kim et al., 2007). Therefore, we included a variable of the work hours per week reported by the hotel DMs to control for the effects of workload. Moreover, we also collected the participants' age and income information to control for any age or income effects on perceived emotional exhaustion.

5. Results

5.1. Descriptive statistics

Table 2 summarizes descriptive statistics regarding the respondents. The sample represents all U.S. regions and several different hotel location types, including city (47.7%), suburb (15.2%), airport (15.2%), and resort (21.9%). Most major hotel companies, including Marriott, Hilton, Hyatt, InterContinental, Starwood, Kimpton, Fairmont, and Wyndham were included in this study, including both franchised and corporate-managed units. The departmental managers came from various departments, including food and beverage (27.9%), rooms, (19.2%), marketing (17.9%), general management (17.3%), accounting (7.4%), human resources (3.4%), recreation (2.5%), engineering (1.5%) and others (2.9%).

5.2. Correlation analysis

The correlations between the independent variables are provided in Table 3. While correlations were found among some variables, our diagnostics did not reveal evidence of significant violations of multicollinearity because, as shown in Table 4, the

Table 1
Summary of measures.

Construct (DV or IV)	Subscales (if any)	Items	Cronbach's alpha	Source
Emotional exhaustion	–	5	0.90	Wharton, 1993
Job demands	–	7	0.79	Karasek (1979)
Face time	–	4	0.77	Developed for subject study
Organizational climate	3	13		Patterson et al. (2005)
Effort		4	0.83	
Quality		4	0.79	
Pressure to produce		5	0.69	
Big Five personality traits	5	25		Goodwin and Friedman (2006)
Neuroticism		4	0.67	
Extroversion		5	0.74	
Openness		7	0.71	
Conscientiousness		4	0.52	
Agreeableness		5	0.72	

Table 2
Partial descriptive statistics of the respondents.

	Mean	Median	S.D.	Minimum	Maximum
Age	38	37	8.44	26	60
Work hours per week	56.40	55.00	9.40	5.00	110.00
Annual Gross Income	\$63,263	\$58,000	\$29,985	\$20,000	\$400,000
Tenure in the hotel (years)	5.01	3.00	5.40	0.02	30.50
Tenure in the industry (years)	13.62	12.50	7.73	0.8	36.00
Number of rooms in the hotel	715	638	379	224	1908
Number of managers in the hotel	66	65	46	6	200
Number of employees in the hotel	479	405	254	105	1000

Table 3
Correlation matrix.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1 Work hours per week	1												
2 Gross income	0.027	1											
3 Age (years)	0.005	0.243**	1										
4 Job demands	0.270**	-0.001	-0.109**	1									
5 Organizational climate – effort	-0.05	0.132	0.012	-0.188**	1								
6 Organizational climate – pressure to produce	0.174**	0.067	-0.083*	0.516**	0.027	1							
7 Organizational climate – quality	0.0137	-0.028	-0.026	-0.110**	0.480**	0.039	1						
8 Face time	0.065	-0.051	-0.143**	0.293**	-0.264	0.301**	-0.128**	1					
9 Big Five – neuroticism	0.058	-0.108*	-0.154**	0.277**	-0.152**	0.208**	-0.031	0.164	1				
10 Big Five – extroversion	-0.059	-0.061	-0.069	-0.078	0.131**	-0.056	0.176**	-0.056	-0.063	1			
11 Big Five – openness to experience	0.053	-0.065	-0.004	-0.05	0.028	-0.041	0.042	0.008	-0.130**	0.515**	1		
12 Big Five – conscientiousness	0.058	0.046	0.069	0.01	0.170**	0.017	0.127**	-0.014	-0.196**	0.059	0.146**	1	
13 Big Five – agreeableness	-0.075	-0.118**	-0.002	-0.059	0.066	-0.069	0.097*	0.007	-0.102*	0.439**	0.371**	0.123**	1

* $p < 0.05$.
** $p < 0.01$.

highest variance inflation factor (VIF) was less than 1.6, which is well below the widely accepted cut-off value of 10 (Neter et al., 1996; Ott and Longnecker, 2001).

5.3. Regression analysis

As shown in Table 4, Hypotheses 1–4 were all supported. Overall, the model for emotional exhaustion was significant, $F(13,544) = 39.660, p < .001$, explaining a total of 49.1% of the variance. Consistent with Kim et al. (2007), hotel department managers' (DMs') perceived emotional exhaustion was negatively associated with extroversion (H1), and positively related to neuroticism (H2). The other three personality traits, including openness to experience, conscientiousness, and agreeableness were not statistically related to emotional exhaustion. In addition, job demands (H3) had a positive influence on hotel DMs' emotional

Table 4
Regression results (dependent variable: emotional exhaustion).

Hypothesis	Independent variable	Beta	VIF
	Work hours per week	0.007	1.093
	Gross income	-0.115**	1.121
	Age (years)	-0.086**	1.126
H1	Big Five – extroversion	-0.092*	1.194
H2	Big Five – neuroticism	0.207**	1.556
	Big Five – openness to experience	-0.029	1.518
	Big Five – conscientiousness	-0.036	1.099
	Big Five – agreeableness	0.006	1.340
H3	Job demands	0.293**	1.574
H4	Face time	0.152**	1.245
H5	Organizational climate – effort	-0.160**	1.534
H6	Organizational climate – quality	-0.129**	1.375
H7	Organizational climate – pressure to produce	0.122*	1.476

* $p < 0.01$.
** $p < 0.001$.

exhaustion, which was also positively related to the DMs' perceived need for face time (H4). Regarding the three hypotheses on the effects of organizational climate measures, only H7 was supported, as hotel DMs' perceived pressure to produce was positively related to their emotional exhaustion. However, their perceived need for effort and the hotel quality orientation had negative effects on emotional exhaustion. Therefore, H5 and H6 were not supported in the hypothesized direction. Interestingly, while age was negatively correlated with emotional exhaustion, we found no correlation between hours worked per week and emotional exhaustion.

6. Discussion, implications, and directions for future research

Consistent with previous research, we found particular aspects of hotel manager personality to be related to emotional exhaustion, with extroverted individuals appearing to be largely buffered from emotional exhaustion. On the other hand, neurotic people appear to be susceptible to emotional exhaustion. This research suggests there are organizational and individual benefits of extroverted people being employed in hotel organizations, and for practitioners, this finding should offer guidance in the employee selection process.

We also found work characteristics to be related to emotional exhaustion. Specifically, higher job demands were correlated with higher emotional exhaustion. While we found a positive correlation between job demands and emotional exhaustion, previous research suggests that negative effects of high job demands may be minimized when employees have greater control over their jobs. Future research should explore whether emotional exhaustion can be minimized in the hospitality industry when employees possess greater control.

Face time is a relatively new academic concept evolving from the same, ubiquitous term commonly used in the hospitality industry. The scale we developed for face time displayed both

acceptable reliability and positive correlation with emotional exhaustion. Future academic research should explore the relationships between face time and other individual and organizational dependent variables of interest. Practitioners should take note, particularly during challenging economic times like the present, employees (particularly managerial employees) are likely to feel induced to be present and visible for the sake of job security, but such face time has negative and costly implications for both individuals and organizations, such as symptoms of emotional exhaustion like depersonalization and detachment. Further, since emotional exhaustion and turnover have been previously correlated in the academic literature, practitioners should be concerned that employees who feel manipulated into face time, but do not display emotional exhaustion in the workplace, are still susceptible to leaving the organization as soon as the economy improves and alternative opportunities present themselves – and these employees may be exactly the ones hospitality industry executives do not want to lose.

Pressure to produce, as a component of organizational climate, showed a similar relationship to emotional exhaustion as did face time. However, pressure to produce is different from face time because face time implies that employees – particularly managers – are spending time at work when they are not highly productive. Pressure to produce, on the other hand, suggests productivity almost by definition. This issue is also important during difficult economic times like the present because hotel companies are reported to be laying off managerial employees, and those employees who remain are presumably being asked to do more with less, i.e., to produce. The potential negative result is similar to that caused by face time: when the economy improves, costly turnover of prized and valuable managers may increase.

Interesting, though counter-intuitive results were found between organizational climate – effort and quality – and emotional exhaustion. Though we expected that the perceived need for effort and the orientation towards quality in the hotel would result in increased emotional exhaustion, exactly the opposite occurred. These results suggest that hotel managers relish exerting true effort, and may find real challenges to be satisfying. Future research should quantitatively and qualitatively investigate the types of challenges in hotels that have such positive effects on managers' well-being. Similarly, we were pleasantly surprised to discover that the hotel's orientation towards quality appears to reduce the likelihood of managers experiencing symptoms of emotional exhaustion. Perhaps a hotel's quality orientation is a positive mechanism functioning as a source of energy and as a linking mechanism among managers, and possibly acutely so for extroverted managers due to their gregarious, talkative, and active nature.

Interestingly, age was negatively correlated with emotional exhaustion. This finding suggests that all other factors being equal, maturity may be a valuable commodity for hospitality managers because among other things, it could buffer or desensitize hotel managers from negative ramifications of emotional exhaustion. This finding also suggests that more mature managers may be less likely to turn over due to feeling burned out. This discovery should be considered as good news for practitioners, though it may be explained by the older managers in our sample being survivors who have remained employed in the hotel industry after many of their younger colleagues have left the field. In other words, many older employees who are vulnerable to emotional exhaustion may simply no longer be employed in the hotel business. Moreover, it is worthy of noting that, as shown in the correlation table, hotel manager age and income are positively correlated. It is reasonable to expect that, as they age, hotel managers tend to rise to more senior positions. Therefore, there is a possibility that the negative relationship between age and emotional exhaustion may be due to older managers having higher level positions and greater control

over their jobs. Karasek et al. (1981) revealed that increased control reduces the negative effects of job demands. Similarly, increased control may reduce emotional exhaustion, as well. While it is beyond the scope of this study to further investigate the relationship between hotel managers' control and emotional exhaustion, future research on this topic may further improve our understanding of emotional exhaustion.

7. Conclusions and limitations

As with any research, the results of this study should be interpreted with limitations. First, this study only includes employee self-reports regarding emotional exhaustion. Direct observation was not feasible, and furthermore, direct observation is prone to researcher bias. In addition, to recruit a sufficient number of employees from each hotel, employees of limited-service hotels were not included in this study. As limited-service hotels may have different demands, pressures, and climate than full-service hotels, the results of this study may not be generalizable to the limited-service segment. Lastly, the subject study is limited to the United States. While it is beyond the scope of this study, future research regarding emotional exhaustion should include non-American culture and could compare the results in different cultural settings.

In conclusion, we found emotional exhaustion of American hotel managers to be a function of not only job and organizational characteristics, but also personality characteristics. Specifically, job demands, pressure to produce, and the need for face time lead to increased emotional exhaustion. Further, extroverted managers appear to be relatively insulated from emotional exhaustion, while neurotic managers are susceptible to becoming burned out. Emotional exhaustion is important because of its negative and costly implications for both hospitality organizations and individuals. Such negative implications include depersonalization, detachment, decreased service quality and job performance, and increased turnover.

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