

THE INFLUENCE OF EMOTIONAL LABOR ON JOB STRESS AND SATISFACTION AMONG FLIGHT ATTENDANTS IN FULL-SERVICE AIRLINES BASED IN THAILAND

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Abstract

As frontline employees who interact directly with customers, flight attendants are expected to display proper emotional expression, as required by their jobs. The emotional expression of employees to meet the demand of their jobs is referred to as emotional labor and may affect their job stress and job satisfaction. Thus, the objectives of this study were to examine: 1) the levels of emotional labor, job stress, and job satisfaction among flight attendants working in full-service airlines based in Bangkok, Thailand; and 2) the influence of two forms of emotional labor, namely *surface acting* and *deep acting*, on employees' job stress and job satisfaction. This study encompassed descriptive research utilizing a survey questionnaire. The online questionnaire was distributed to the flight attendants of Thai full-service airlines with a total of 416 valid responses being collected. The results revealed significant influences of emotional labor on both job stress and job satisfaction, including the finding that 1) surface acting has a negative effect on job stress, while deep acting can lead to reducing job stress; and 2) surface acting can lower job satisfaction, while deep acting has a positive effect on job satisfaction. This study contributes to a better understanding of the roles of emotional labor regarding the job stress and job satisfaction of full-service airline flight attendants. Human resource management in airlines should consider effective ways to enhance deep acting among front-line employees as the findings show that this can lead to lower job stress and increased job satisfaction.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the service industry, frontline employees who interact directly with customers have essential roles for the organization in many ways, such as creating customer satisfaction and establishing engagement with customers (Bettencourt, & Gwinner, 1996; Cambra-Fierro et al., 2014). It should be noted that, while customer service roles are found in every service organization, a flight attendant's job has unique characteristics, such as working in a limited area, being on duty during holidays or at night-time, leaving home for a longer time period, and working in reduced air pressure or low oxygen levels (Van den Berg et al., 2019).

Moreover, flight attendants are also required to display proper emotional expression, during service encounters, a task which is known as emotional labor (Ashforth, & Humphrey, 1993). When interacting with passengers, they are expected to be cheerful and enthusiastic, and to remain calm in threatening situations. Flight attendants are not only required to provide services to passengers, but also to perform various safety roles, such as administering first aid, directing evacuations, handling any emergency onboard, and maintaining the safety of all passengers. Thus, being a flight attendant is unquestionably accepted as one of the most emotionally stressful jobs

(Kelleher & McGilloway, 2005; Jamal, 2004).

The importance of emotional labor has been recognized by all types of service organizations for decades as the proper emotional display of service employees is significantly related to the service quality perceived by customers, as confirmed by the research of Pugh (2001), Kim (2010), and Barger and Grandey (2006). For the airline industry, the appropriate emotional expressions of flight attendants are expected from both the perspective of the organization and customers. This is therefore an occupation that requires a high degree of emotional labor.

Since there are two different business models of airline services, including full-service airlines and low-cost airlines, passengers have different expectations due to the characteristics of the services provided. When flying with full-service airlines, passengers tend to expect flight attendants to possess good attitudes, proper expressions, and empathy, more than they do from flight attendants of low-cost airlines. Previous studies have also reported the different expectations of customers regarding full-service airlines and low-cost carriers (Suhartanto & Noor, 2012; Koklic et al., 2017; Wongleedee, 2017). It can be concluded that flight attendants who work in full-service airlines will be emotionally forced by customers' expectations. Thus, this study aimed

to survey flight attendants in full-service airlines, in order to examine their emotional labor, as it is supposed that they are more influenced by emotional labor than those who work in low-cost airlines.

Although emotional labor has been well-known for over 30 years, with many research studies being related to emotional labor in several areas, it can be seen that nowadays, researchers have been continuously interested in studying emotional labor, as both an independent and a dependent variable, in several aspects (Iqbal & Hendarsih, 2016; Lopes & Warriar, 2018; Zou & Dahling, 2017). However, studies focusing on the specific group of flight attendants working in full-services airlines, are still limited.

For the above-mentioned reasons, this research has been conducted to examine the level of emotional labor and its consequences among the flight attendants of Thai full-service airlines. Under the context of this study, it would be beneficial for airline management in full-service airlines to plan emotional development for their front-line operators.

Since emotional labor has become a significant predictor of strain outcomes, such as distress, work-life conflict, and job satisfaction, among employees (Kinman, 2009; Bhave & Glomb, 2016), the influences of emotional labor on job stress and job satisfaction among flight attendants working in full-service airlines should also be examined, forming the key purpose of

this study. Therefore, the main objectives of this study include: 1) the level of emotional labor, job stress, and job satisfaction of flight attendants working in full-service airlines in Thailand, and 2) the influence of emotional labor on job stress and job satisfaction among the participants.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Emotional Labor

The concept of “emotional labor” was first introduced in 1983 by an American sociologist, Arlie Hochschild who wrote the book *Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. Emotional labor was described as the process of managing one’s feelings to comply with the emotional display rules set by the organization (Hochschild, 1983). Moreover, the emotional expression requirements set by service organizations for their own employees were explained by Hochschild (1983) as feeling rules, a key determinant defining the proper expression in the employees’ jobs. For example, flight attendants are expected to be friendly and enthusiastic, while nurses must be empathetic and supportive (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). According to Hochschild’s emotional labor concept, the expected emotional expression according to the feeling rules, can be delivered in two different ways, including surface acting and deep acting. *Surface acting* is the emotional display of employees following job requirements without

the involvement of their actual feelings. Employees who possess surface acting are more prone to face emotional dissonance as they express themselves differently from their genuinely felt emotions. Grandey (2003) explained surface acting simply as modifying facial expressions, while examining surface acting as a predictor of emotional exhaustion and affective service delivery.

Meanwhile, *deep acting* is an expression of genuine emotions that occurs when employees can manage their inner-feelings to abide by the feeling rules when interacting with customers. Grandey (2003) also described deep acting as modifying inner-feelings and reported that deep acting was less deleterious for both stress and service delivery when compared to surface acting. Thus, employees who engage in deep acting are sincerely willing to help and empathize with customers during a service encounter.

In summary, considering the difference between surface acting and deep acting, it can be concluded that surface acting is managing one's emotional expressions to meet organizational display rules without genuine feeling, which may develop emotional dissonance among service personnel, while deep acting is managing one's inner emotions to be truly felt and expressed explicitly according to the display rules required by the organization.

As the concept of emotional labor has been well-known for a few decades, numerous researchers have focused on the influences of these two types of emotional labor: surface acting and deep acting, finding significant consequences on service employees in many aspects such as well-being, job stress, burnout, job satisfaction, and general health (Karimi et al., 2014; Celiker et al., 2019; Yin, 2015; Baruah & Patrick, 2014). A summary of the relevant previous studies is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Summary of The Reviewed Previous Studies Relating to Emotional Labor

Author	Topic studied	Target population	Summary of results
Pugliesi (1999)	The effects of two forms of emotional labor on work stress, job satisfaction, and psychological distress	University workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both surface acting and deep acting have uniformly negative effects on workers by increasing perceptions of job stress, decreasing satisfaction.
Grandey (2003)	Surface acting and deep acting as determinants of emotional exhaustion and peer-	Frontline employees in service organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surface acting was more destructive regarding both stress and service delivery than deep acting, beyond job

Table 1 Summary of The Reviewed Previous Studies Relating to Emotional Labor (Continued)

Author	Topic studied	Target population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of results
	rated service delivery		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • satisfaction and emotional exhaustion.
Chang and Ju-Mei (2009)	The relationship between emotional labor and emotional exhaustion	Taiwanese flight attendants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional labor has a significant positive correlation with emotional exhaustion • Deep emotional masking (deep acting) has a significant predictive effect on emotional exhaustion
Jung Hoon and Chi hyung (2012)	Role of emotional intelligence and emotional labor	Hotel employees in the United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep acting (emotional effort) has a positive indirect effect on job satisfaction • Surface acting (emotional dissonance) was found to have a negative indirect effect on job satisfaction
Okabe (2017)	The relation between emotional labor and job performance	Cabin crew in an Asian airline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The direct affect between deep acting and job performance was not significant • Deep acting has a negative indirect effect on overall job performance
Zou, and Dahling (2017)	The effects of emotional labor on employee well-being	Service workers in the United States and Southern China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a negative relationship between surface acting and well-being • There is no moderating effect on the relationship between deep acting and well-being
Lam, C. W. (2018)	Cultural intelligence and its influence on emotional labor and job satisfaction	Frontline service employees in Hong Kong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep acting (expression of naturally felt emotions) has a direct positive relationship with job satisfaction
Lee et al (2018)	Relationship between emotional labor and customer orientation	Airline service employees in Korea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep acting affects customer orientation positively, while surface acting affects customer orientation negatively
Lopes and Warrier (2018)	Emotional Labor and Occupational Stress	Educational personnel in Bangalore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no significant relationship between emotional labor and occupational stress

2.2 Job Stress and Influence of Emotional Labor on Job Stress

The well-known definition of job stress is described by Parker and De Cottiis (1983) as the feelings of a person which deviate from those which are normal or desirable in their work or workplace, and which may occur as a result of opportunities, limitations, or demands, whereby the related results may be important to the job. Job stress is considered a significant predictor of the performance and productivity of employees. When employees are under stressful circumstances, their efficiency will decrease (Ahmed & Ramzan, 2013). Consequently, organizations make efforts to refrain from imposing work-related stress on their employees, by taking action to discover the factors affecting job stress among employees and resolve them.

There are many sources of work-related stress, such as the job itself, role conflict, organizational structure and environment, and work overload (Al-Aameri, 2003; Yongkang et al., 2014; Abbasi, 2015). For service employees who deal with customers directly, emotional labor has become one of the critical factors causing job stress (Adelmann, 1995). Grandey (2003) examined both forms of emotional labor, as predictors of job stress, finding that there were different consequences of surface acting and deep acting on job stress. Surface acting negatively influenced job stress, while deep acting did not affect stress. Besides this, Huang et al.

(2015) studied the benefit of deep acting specifically, offering support to the idea that deep acting is less emotionally exhausting for service providers. Hence, according to the previous studies mentioned above, the hypotheses for this study are proposed as following.

H₁: Surface acting has a positive influence on the job stress of flight attendants.

H₂: Deep acting has a negative influence on the job stress of flight attendants.

2.3 Job Satisfaction and the Influence of Emotional Labor on Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction was initially defined as the positive or desirable emotional reaction of a person resulting from the evaluation of his/her job role, work situation, or work experience (Locke, 1976; Davis, 1985). Job satisfaction has been discussed for decades and it is widely used as an indicator of employee performance. Most research has revealed that job satisfaction affects organizations in many ways such as, turnover, productivity, and higher sales and profits. Therefore, job satisfaction among employees is an important condition which each organization strives for, as many researchers have confirmed that job satisfaction among employees has an impact directly on organizational performance (Zeffane et al., 2018; Siengthai & Pila-Ngarm, 2016).

In this current study, the topic of job satisfaction is being examined as

one consequence of emotional labor. The correlation between emotional labor and job satisfaction has been discovered in previous research. For example, Iqbal and Hendarsih (2016) studied the emotional labor of Garuda Indonesia Airline's cabin crew, finding a negative relationship between emotional labor and job satisfaction. When emotional labor increased, the job satisfaction of the cabin crew decreased.

When comparing between two aspects of emotional labor, it has been found that surface acting is more likely to lead to negative consequences such as burnout, and job dissatisfaction. For example, Rutter and Fielding (1988) concluded that surface acting or the suppression of genuinely felt emotion in the workplace is negatively relevant to job satisfaction. Moreover, some studies have also showed the different effects of two dimensions of emotional labor on job satisfaction.

Lee and Ok (2012) reported that employees who perform deep acting tend to be more satisfied with their jobs than employees who engage in surface acting. Yang and Chang (2008) concluded that deep acting had a significantly positive correlation with job satisfaction among clinical nurses who were required to express a high level of emotional labor while interacting with patients. According to Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) deep acting is the expression of authentic feelings in treating a customer who deserves sincere emotions from service employees, leading to positive feedback from customers and often higher job satisfaction.

Due to the above evidence, in the current study it is proposed that deep acting has a positive impact on job satisfaction, while surface acting has a negative impact on job satisfaction. Hence, the hypotheses of the correlation between emotional labor

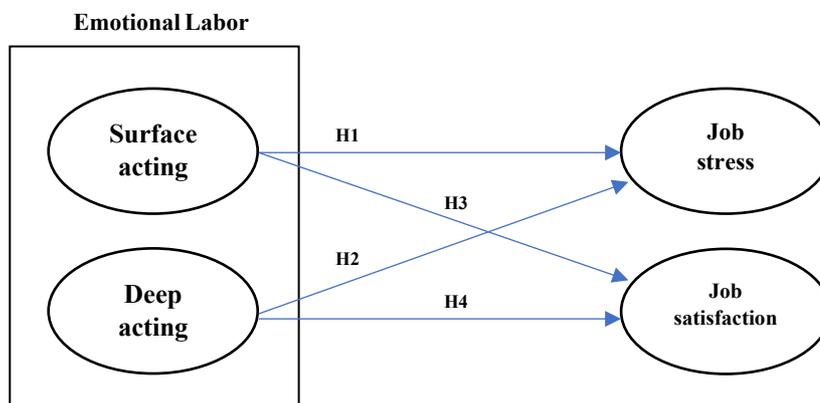


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of this Study

and job satisfaction are as follows:

H₃: Surface acting has a negative influence on the job satisfaction of flight attendants.

H₄: Deep acting has a positive influence on the job satisfaction of flight attendants.

To summarize the above proposed hypotheses, the conceptual framework of this study is presented in figure 1.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sampling

As already mentioned in the introduction, this research focuses on flight attendants working in full-service airlines based in Bangkok, Thailand. In this location, only two carriers are categorized as full-service airlines, namely Thai Airways International and Bangkok Airways. From the data in the airlines' latest annual reports (Thai Airways, 2019; Bangkok Airways, 2019), the total population for this study encompasses 6,597 flight attendants. The sample size required to obtain a 95-percent confidence level was calculated by using Taro Yamane formula. An additional 10 percent was added to the calculated sample size to compensate for the drop-out rate of participants. The total sample size used in this research was 416 respondents.

3.2 Questionnaire Development and Measures

According to the proposed

conceptual framework, a survey questionnaire was developed to acquire the data. The designed questionnaire was divided into 4 sections. The first section contained 4 items regarding the demographic profile of the respondents, including gender, age, working period, and average working hours per month.

The second section consisted of 8 questions used to assess the level of emotional labor presented during the respondents working. The measurement scale of emotional labor developed by Brotheridge and Lee (1998) was adopted to examine the level of emotional labor of the participants, as was used in many earlier pieces of research in the airline industry which studied the emotional labor of flight attendants (Iqbal and Hendarsih, 2016; Jeon, 2016; Okabe, 2018). This measurement has been widely accepted due to its high reliability and validity. The 8 items can be categorized into two components; the first 4 questions reflect *surface acting*, while the later 4 questions represent *deep acting*. The respondents were required to score the frequency of their behavior regarding each item according to a 5-point Likert scale; 1= never to 5 = every time.

The third section of the questionnaire adopted the measurement scales developed by Parker and DeCotiis (1983), which have been widely used to assess overall job stress. It consisted of 13 questions used to evaluate the level of job stress. The respondents were asked to rate each item using a 5-point

Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Finally, the fourth section of the questionnaire contained the questions assessing the flight attendants' level of job satisfaction. In this study, the 15-item Warr-Cook-Wall (WCW) job satisfaction scale (Warr et al., 1979) was selected to measure the level of job satisfaction of the respondents. This section also adopted a 5-point Likert scale, with items scored from 1 to 5, and being described as very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, unsure, satisfied, and very satisfied, respectively.

3.3 Validity and Reliability Testing

The research instrument was assessed for content validity using the item objective congruence (IOC) Index. Five experts working in the field of human resource management in airlines were requested to review all 40 items in the questionnaire, indicating a relevance score of +1, 0, or -1 for each question. On average, all items were rated higher than 0.5, meaning that the questions were acceptably relevant to the study's objectives (Rovinelli & Hambleton, 1977).

In the later step of reliability testing, the questionnaire was distributed to 30 participants to try out. Cronbach's alpha was then used to evaluate the questionnaire's reliability. The value of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the entire questionnaire was 0.903 indicating that the internal consistency of the questionnaire was

highly acceptable (Cronbach, 1951).

3.4 Data Collection

Since the working hours of flight attendants are varied, an online questionnaire was chosen for conducting the study rather than distributing the questionnaire in person. To acquire the data, the online questionnaire was shared through social media platforms for a period of 1 month from January 2020 to February 2020. The first page of the online questionnaire incorporated a clear declaration of the purpose of the research. A total of 448 questionnaires were returned, 416 of which were deemed usable after data cleansing.

3.5 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS statistical software. In the first section of the questionnaire, the demographic profile of the respondents was processed for description using frequency and percentage. The other sections of level of emotional labor, job stress, and the job satisfaction of the respondents were evaluated by mean and standard deviation and interpreted by the commonly used interpretation of mean value whereby each range is calculated to equal 0.80 based on the 5-point Likert scale.

Moreover, to serve the hypotheses of the study, the correlation between the independent and dependent variables was initially tested using a Pearson correlation coefficient. A linear regression

analysis was then used to examine the influence of each independent variable, namely surface acting and deep acting, on the dependent variables, including job stress, and job satisfaction.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

As presented in Table 2, most of the flight attendants who participated in this study were female (73.08%), while male respondents represented only 26.92% of the total sample. The majority of the respondents were aged between 30 and 39 years old,

accounting for 51.92 percent of all respondents, followed by 20-29 years old (34.37%), and 40-49 years old (13.71%) respectively. Moreover, 33.41% of the respondents had worked as a flight attendant for 6 - 9 years, while most (66.83%) were found to have less than 100 working hours per month.

4.2 The Level of Emotional Labor, Job Stress, and Job Satisfaction of the Respondents

As shown in Table 3, based on the 5-point Likert scale, the respondents performed *surface acting* at a high level, with a mean of 3.85 and SD of 0.793, implying that the respondents

Table 2 Demographic Profile of the Respondents (n = 416)

	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	112	26.92
Female	304	73.08
Total	416	100.00
<i>Age</i>		
20 - 29	143	34.37
30 - 39	216	51.92
40 - 49	57	13.71
50 and above	0	0.00
Total	416	100.00
<i>Tenure in the position of flight attendant</i>		
1 - 3 years	62	14.90
3 - 6 years	128	30.77
6 - 9 years	139	33.41
More than 9 years	87	20.92
Total	416	100.00
<i>Working hours per month.</i>		
Less than 100	278	66.83
100 - 150	104	25.00
151 - 200	34	8.17
Total	416	100.00

Table 3 Mean Value and Standard Deviation of All Variables

	N	Mean	SD	Mid-point
Surface acting	416	3.85	0.793	4.25
Deep acting	416	3.58	1.094	4.25
Job stress	416	3.31	0.893	3.35
Job satisfaction	416	2.91	0.915	3.25

Table 4 Pearson’s Correlation for All Variables (n = 416)

Variable	Job stress	Job satisfaction
Surface acting	0.778**	- 0.403**
Deep acting	- 0.803**	0.862**
Job stress	1	- 0.615**

** $p < 0.01$

could express the proper feelings and behaviors when interacting with customers, even though they did not truly feel that way. Meanwhile the respondents also perceived that they performed *deep acting* at a high level with a mean value of 3.58 (SD = 1.094). When comparing between the two dimensions of emotional labor, it could be seen that the respondents were able to perform *surface acting* slightly more than *deep acting*.

Regarding the level of *job stress* among the respondents, the results presented that the respondents carried *job stress* at a moderate level with a mean value of 3.31 and SD of 0.893, while *job satisfaction* was perceived by the respondents to be at a moderate level with a mean of 2.91 and SD of 0.915.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

The result of the correlation

analysis is presented in Table 4 and indicates that *surface acting* was significantly and positively related to *job stress* with $r = 0.778$ at the 0.01 level of significance. This finding is consistent with previous studies which reported that surface acting has a positive correlation with job stress (Mann & Cowburn, 2005). Even so, *surface acting* was found to be negatively correlated with *job satisfaction* ($r = - 0.403$, $p < 0.01$). Meanwhile, *deep acting* was negatively related to *job stress* ($r = - 0.803$, $p < 0.01$). In contrast, *deep acting* had a strong positive relationship with *job satisfaction* ($r = 0.862$, $p < 0.01$). When considering the different relationships of surface acting and deep acting with job satisfaction, it was revealed that deep acting was more likely to correlate with job satisfaction positively. This is consistent with previous studies, which reported a significant positive

correlation between deep acting and job satisfaction (Wen et al., 2019; Hur et al., 2015).

4.4 Regression Analysis

Since the objective of this study was to test the influence of each component of emotional labor, consisting of surface acting and deep acting, on the job stress and job satisfaction of flight attendants, the correlation analyses were followed by further analysis using regression. The findings are described below.

4.4.1 The Influence of Emotional Labor on Job Stress

As presented in Table 4, the influence of *surface acting* on *job stress* was statistically positively significant with $\beta = 0.875$, $p < 0.01$, while *deep acting* had a negative impact on *job stress* ($\beta = -0.656$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, H₁ and H₂ were supported.

It can be described that when surface acting increased, the job stress of the respondents would greatly increase, at 87.5 percent of the increase in surface acting. Besides this, the results also indicated that respondents who increased their deep acting, could decrease their job stress at 65.6 percent of the increase in deep acting. These findings confirmed that surface acting and deep acting are influencers of job stress among flight attendants, but act in opposite ways.

Although this finding is not agreeable with Pugliesi (1999), who concluded that both forms of emotional labor increased the

perceived job stress among employees, it is absolutely consistent with Kim et al. (2013), who found that emotional expression according to norms (surface acting) has a significant positive affect on job stress, but that deep acting has a significant negative affect on job stress.

According to the results, human resource management may consider a possible development plan which aims to transform surface acting into deep acting, in order to manage and reduce the job stress of flight attendants.

4.4.2 The Influence of Emotional Labor on Job Satisfaction

To test H₃ and H₄, linear regression was also used. As shown in Table 5, the two forms of the emotional labor of flight attendants had different impacts on their perceived job satisfaction. The *surface acting* performed by flight attendants had a negative impact on their *job satisfaction* ($\beta = -0.465$, $p < 0.01$). It could be interpreted that when surface acting increases, job satisfaction decreases at 46.5 percent of the increase in surface acting. In contrast, *deep acting* had a positive influence on *job satisfaction* ($\beta = 0.721$, $p < 0.01$). It can be interpreted that if deep acting increases, job satisfaction will also increase at 72.1 percent of the increase in deep acting. Hence, H₃ and H₄ were supported.

From the findings, it was revealed that surface acting and deep acting are both influencers of the job satisfaction of flight attendants, but that they influence this variable in opposite

Table 5 Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis Results

Independent variables	Dependent variables	β	R ²	Hypothesis
Surface acting	Job stress	0.875**	0.605	H ₁ supported
Deep acting	Job stress	- 0.656**	0.645	H ₂ supported
Surface acting	Job satisfaction	- 0.465**	0.162	H ₃ supported
Deep acting	Job satisfaction	0.721**	0.742	H ₄ supported

***p* < 0.01

directions. This result corresponds to previous works (Jung & Chi, 2012; Lee & Ok, 2012; Lam, 2018; Yang & Chang, 2008) that reported a positive significant influence of deep acting on job satisfaction.

Noticeably, most of the previous works mentioned found no significant relationship between surface acting and job satisfaction. Some of them found only an indirect influence through the other mediator variables. Contrastingly, the results of this study found that surface acting has a significantly negative influence on job satisfaction, indicating that if surface acting increases, job satisfaction decreases. However, the present study’s result is similar to the study of Jung Hoon and Chi Hyung (2012), which reported a negative indirect effect of surface acting on job satisfaction. When looking into the characteristics of the respondents, more than 60% of them had been working in the hospitality industry for more than 3 years, which corresponds with this respondents of the present study. The results could be attributed to the fact that many years of encounters with customers may

negatively affect the job satisfaction of the flight attendants.

Moreover, the national or organizational culture of the chosen target population may also affect the results. When compared to Chang and Ju-Mei’s work which surveyed Taiwanese flight attendants in unspecified airlines, the study identified that deep acting can increase job stress, which is inconsistent with the present study. This differing result could emphasize the specific organizational culture of full-service airlines, in which deep acting can lead to reducing job stress. It can be assumed that flight attendants working in different types of airline may be influenced by emotional labor in different ways. Thus, these other variables should be added to further study of the influences of emotional labor in full-service airlines.

Regarding the management implications, deep acting was found to bring beneficial consequences for employees as it had an influence in reducing job stress and increasing job satisfaction among flight attendants. Therefore, human resource

management should consider strategies to enhance deep acting among their service personnel. At the same time, they should find effective ways to limit surface acting, in order to prevent increases in job stress and a reduction in job satisfaction among their flight attendants.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the theory of emotional labor initiated by Hochschild, this study examined the influences of each form of emotional labor, including surface acting and deep acting, on the job stress and job satisfaction among flight attendants working in full-service airlines operating in Thailand. Using data collected online from 416 flight attendants, the results indicated that the respondents perceived that they were able to display surface acting (mean = 3.85, SD = 0.793) slightly more than deep acting (mean = 3.58, SD = 1.094). The perceived job stress among the respondents was at a moderate level with a mean value of 3.31 and SD of 0.893. The job satisfaction of the respondents was also at a moderate level with a mean of 2.91 and SD of 0.915. Moreover, surface acting had a significant positive impact on job stress, while deep acting had a significant negative influence on job stress. In contrast, surface acting had a negative effect on job satisfaction, while deep acting had a positive influence on job satisfaction.

The findings of the study contribute to a better understanding of the role of emotional labor as it was

found that this variable significantly influences the job stress and job satisfaction of flight attendants working in full-service airlines. Regarding management implications, this study points out the essential roles of emotional labor which can lead to reducing job stress and increasing job satisfaction. Therefore, human resource management should pay attention to the deep acting performed by flight attendants as it is a predictor of job satisfaction. In the stage of recruitment, an emotional labor screening test may help select employees who engage in a high level of deep acting. Moreover, it is important for human resource development in airlines to focus on enhancing the deep acting of their service employees, as deep acting is a significant predictor in decreasing job stress and increasing job satisfaction.

Nevertheless, this study has some limitations. Firstly, the participants in this study were flight attendants working in full-service airlines in Thailand and the findings are based on this sample. Certain characteristics of the full-service airlines and cultural factors connected to the location of the sample may affect the results and implications of the study. The generalizability of this study to other countries therefore requires further review. Secondly, this study applied the emotional labor measurement scale developed by Brotheridge and Lee (1998), as well as the works of other researchers that studied emotional labor among airline employees (Iqbal and Hendarsih, 2016; Jeon, 2016; Okabe, 2018).

Applying different scales and measurement tools may provide different results. As there are many available emotional labor scales and measurements proposed by many researchers (Kruml and Geddes, 2000; Chu and Murrmann, 2006; Glomb and Tews, 2004), future research may carefully select the emotional labor scale which is most suitable for this area of study.

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