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Emotion Regulation And Turnover Intention: An Empirical Study Among Agents In Moroccan Call Centers

La Regulation Emotionnelle Et L'intention De Quitter : Une Etude Empirique Aupres Des Teleconseillers Dans Les Centres D'appels Marocains.

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ABSTRACT:

The concept of emotional labor refers to the management of emotions during interaction with customers in a service context (Hochschild, 1978, 1983). This concept involves the use of emotion-regulation strategies including: deep acting, surface acting and the expression of naturally felt emotions. Deep acting is a strategy that consists of adjusting feelings through the practice of some cognitive strategies. On the other hand, surface acting refers to faking emotions. The individual simulates positive emotions like empathy and hides or suppresses negative emotions like anger (Grandey and Sayre, 2019). The third emotion regulation involves the spontaneous expression of emotions without any regulatory adjustments. This article sheds light on the effects of emotion regulation strategies on turnover intention among agents in Moroccan call centers. A total of 390 questionnaires were collected online from call center agents located in different cities in Morocco. The model and hypotheses were tested using the Partial Least Square Structure Equation Modeling. The results reveal that both deep acting and surface acting have a positive effect on turnover intention, while the authentic expression of positive emotions has no significant effect on this variable. These findings have interesting theoretical and practical implications with regard to various human resources and management functions including recruitment, employee retention, training, performance, and employee well-being.

KEYWORDS: Emotion regulation, turnover intention, surface acting, deep acting, authentic expression of emotions, call center

1 INTRODUCTION

According to the results of the second quarter of 2023, provided by the Moroccan High Commission for Planning (HCP), the service sector is the leading provider of jobs in Morocco. During this period the sector created 103 000 jobs. The service sector accounts for just over half of the country's GDP and employs more than 44% of the labor force. The daily tasks of a large number of people employed in this sector often require continuous and intense contact with customers. Emotional labor becomes then the daily life of these employees. Indeed, the use of emotions in the workplace has become a prerequisite in many jobs in the service sector. As a result, several employees must show positive facial expressions, adopt a helpful temperament, and provide quality and friendly customer service to customers. Several feelings are emphasized such as empathy, joy, and enthusiasm. Consequently, employees often find themselves obliged to hide and/or suppress negative feelings such as irritation, anger and antipathy in order to comply with the emotional display rules set by the employer (Hochschild 1983; Côté 2005). Employees working in such a context express emotions that they do not feel and suppress spontaneous emotions. The regulation of one's emotions, used by employees in order to conform to social norms, is called emotional labor (Hochschild, 1983).

On the other hand, a frequent struggle faced by organizations in the service sector is the difficulty to retain employees and decrease employee turnover (Al-Suraihi et al., 2021). Literature indicates that hiring and keeping competent employees is crucial to the economic competitiveness of the organization (Chakraborty and Biswas, 2020). Qualified employees contribute tremendously to the organization’s profitability (Aswale, 2017) along with the achievement of the organizational objectives and mission (Rattu and Tielung, 2018). As a result, organisations must seek to examine the reasons that trigger employee turnover (Zainal et al., 2022) and provide a supportive working environment (Naz et al., 2020).

Research on employee retention reports several reasons that cause employee turnover. The turnover intention results from several work-related stressors such as the lack of motivation, restricted promotion possibilities and performance (Zainal et al., 2022). Also, several studies (Rathie et al., 2013; Zito et al., 2018, Lim et Moon, 2023) have shown that emotional labor could be considered as a contributing factor to turnover intention among employees in different sectors and job categories such as the tourism industry and public services. Moreover, previous research (Mikeska et al., 2015; Cho et al., 2017; Lee et Jang, 2020; Xu et Fan, 2023) has supported a positive relationship between emotional labor and the lack of job satisfaction which

leads to the increase of turnover intention. However, there is still a lack of concrete evidence regarding the influence of emotion regulation strategies on turnover intention in the Moroccan call centers sector. The high rate of turnover among agents in Moroccan call centers provides the base for studying the potential relationships between emotional labor and turnover intention.

2 EMOTIONAL LABOR

The concept of emotional labor was first introduced by the sociologist Arlie Hochschild (1983) in her seminal work “the Managed Heart”. She defined emotional labor as “the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display” (p.7) during a face-to-face or voice exchange contact between the employee and the customer. According to Hochschild (1983), emotional labor is sold for a wage and consequently represents an exchange value between the individual and the organization. In her book, Hochschild (1983) introduced the concept of "rules of feelings". This refers to the emotional norms by which the employee must interact with his professional environment (Hochschild, 1983). Employees comply to these rules by exhibiting and acting the required emotions. Literature encompasses more recent definitions that conceptualize emotional labor as a process of managing emotional responses. For instance, Grandey and Sayre (2019) define emotional labor as: “…a process that includes explicit emotional requirements (i.e. display rules) and the effortful strategies needed to meet those requirements (i.e. emotion regulation)” (p.131). Klein (2021) on the other hand, proposes a more integrative and interactional definition of emotional labor. He defines emotional labor as: “ …the management of both felt emotions and emotional display conforming with social norms and organizational rules. This emotion management can consist in: either controlling inner feelings in a theatrical way, i.e. like an actor (deep acting); controlling emotional displays (surface acting); or expressing genuine emotions conforming with the above mentioned norms and rules, which concern both felt and displayed emotions.” (p.668).

2.1 EMOTION REGULATION STRATEGIES

In literature, it is noted that there are three forms of emotional labor considered as distinct strategies used to manage emotions, namely: 1) deep acting, 2) surface acting and 3) the authentic expression of emotions. These strategies play two major roles. First, they enable the individual to conform with the emotional display rules predefined by the employer. Second, they help the individual manage his own emotions. According to Sutton (2004) individuals may use one, two or even all three strategies depending on the situation. Deep acting is a strategy

that calls for adjusting feelings through the practice of some cognitive strategies in order to change how the individual feels. For example, relocating attention from one thing to another like when the employee takes into consideration the perspective of a difficult client to demonstrate interest (Grandey and Sayre, 2019). Consequently, deep acting reduces the impact of negative emotions on the employee. By changing their internal state, employees attempt to feel the emotions they need to express in their professional environment (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Hochschild, 1983).

On the other hand, surface acting refers to faking emotions. According to Grandey and Sayre (2019), the individual simulates positive emotions (e.g. kindness, friendliness and empathy) and hides or suppresses negative emotions (e.g. anger, frustration and indifference). Thus, only the expression of emotions and observable signs such as posture, voice intonation and facial expressions are managed by the individual (Grandey, 2000). According to Gross (1998) surface regulation is only concerned with modifying emotional responses.

The third emotion regulation strategy is the authentic expression of emotions. Walsh (2019) pointed out that the authentic expression of emotions is different from the two previous strategies as it involves the spontaneous expression of emotions without any regulatory adjustments. For Glomb and Tews (2004) individuals may engage in the process of emotional labor by expressing positive or negative genuine emotions. However, in the context of customer service, the emotional display rules involve expressing positive emotions and suppressing negative emotions (Picard, Cossette and Morin, 2018). Since, in this context of customer relationship management, it is positive emotions that are expected from employees, in the rest of our article, the natural expression of emotions refers to the natural expression of positive emotions.

3 TURNOVER INTENTION

According to Al-Jabari and Ghazzawi (2019), turnover is the process through which the employee gets separated from his employer, whether the employee is going to find employment elsewhere or remain unemployed. Many authors have identified two distinct types of turnover: 1) voluntary turnover and 2) involuntary turnover (Park et al., 2014; Robbins et al., 2015; Zheng et al., 2021). The first type of turnover is initiated by the employee and refers to the employee's desire to leave the company where he works (Presbitero et al., 2019; Nur et al., 2022). On the opposite, the second type of turnover refers to an action instructed by the organization and not

by the employee. This turnover is usually caused by a lack of employee performance or an economic situation that forces the company to reduce its workforce (Park et al., 2014). Turnover intention, on the other hand, is defined as the employee's intention to withdraw from a company because he can no longer identify with his work and organization (Bothma and Roodt, 2013). Turnover intention is generally defined in literature as the idea of leaving the organization and seeking a new hiring solution (McInerney et al., 2015; Kaur and Randhawa, 2020). Previous research has indicated that turnover intention is an excellent predictor of actual employee behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977; Cohen et al., 2016). Turnover intention as a variable is linked to several antecedents and consequences. The factors that can predict turnover intention include the leadership style adopted by the organization and the line manager. Some researchers (Puni et al., 2016; Siew, 2017) linked the autocratic style of leadership to a high level of turnover intention, in contrast they noticed that the turnover intention decreased with the transformational and/or transactional leadership style. The work of Caillier (2020) indicated that the turnover intention is also influenced by aggression at work, stress at work, the meaning of the job, and employee dissatisfaction. Several studies have also established a negative relationship between turnover intention and organizational performance, organizational culture, organizational climate (Belete, 2018), job satisfaction (Al-Sabei et al., 2020), employee motivation (Malik et al., 2020), and organizational commitment (Callado et al., 2023). Consequently, turnover intention turns out to be a major concern of contemporary organizations who seek to retain its qualified workforce (Ayari and Al-Hamaqi, 2021).

4 EMOTIONAL LABOR AND TURNOVER INTENTION IN CALL CENTERS

Call centers are business units designed to establish a close relationship with the organization's clients (Holman, 2003). Working as a call center agent requires performing many redundant tasks while being emotionally invested (Picard, Cossette and Morin, 2018). Call center agents are expected to produce appropriate behaviors prescribed by management in order to increase customer satisfaction (Mainhagu and Moulin, 2014). Call center agents must provide quality service, in particular by regulating their emotions in such a way as to express those that conform to the emotional display rules defined by the organization (e.g. courtesy, empathy and patience), even if they do not necessarily feel them (Hochschild, 1983). This process of emotion regulation illustrates the concept of "emotional labor" introduced by Hochschild (1983).

The consequences of emotional labor are numerous and vary according to the type of strategy adopted, each strategy entails different efforts from the employee (Cossette, 2014; Hülsheger

& Schewe, 2011). Emotional dissonance and turnover intention are consequences of emotional labor. According to Jansz and Timmers (2002) emotional dissonance is a feeling of discomfort that arises when someone assesses an emotional experience as a threat to his or her identity. Several psychological health-related problems among service workers are explained by emotional dissonance caused by emotional labor (Goussinsky, 2011).

According to numerous studies, emotional dissonance is a stressor that leads to the depletion of the employee's energy (Wong et al., 2017). This creates a lack of employee satisfaction as well as an increase in the willingness to change jobs and take sick leaves (Flint, Haley, & McNally, 2013). Zito et al. (2018) showed, following a study conducted among call center agents, that emotional dissonance caused by emotional labor has a negative relationship with job satisfaction and a positive relationship with turnover. In the same vein, Zebre (2000 cited by Klein, 2021) demonstrated that emotional labor is directly related to turnover intention. More precisely, Cho et al. (2017) as well as Lim and Moon (2023) indicated that surface acting is positively correlated with turnover intention, while deep acting seems to have a negative relationship with this variable.

Moreover, Humprey et al. (2015, p. 750) concluded that deep acting and the authentic expression of emotions represent the "bright side" of emotional labor, because of the positive repercussions that these two strategies can have in a work environment (e.g. well-being, job satisfaction, customer satisfaction, etc.), while surface acting symbolizes the "dark side" of emotional labor because of its negative and sometimes harmful consequences on the employee's performance and psychological health. Based on the above, the impact of emotional labor strategies on turnover intention among call center agents can be formulated into the following hypotheses:

H1: Surface acting (SA) impacts positively turnover intention (TI) among agents in Moroccan call centers

H2: Deep acting (DA) impacts negatively turnover intention (TI) among agents in Moroccan call centers

Regarding the third emotion regulation strategy, the authentic expression of positive emotions, few studies have been conducted to understand the consequences of this strategy. At this stage, the relationship between the authentic expression of positive emotions and turnover intention remains entirely exploratory. However, since this strategy is considered as a positive emotion

regulation strategy (Humprey et al., 2015), we assume that it promotes the development of positive behaviors at work. Therefore, the following hypothesis is developed to test the authentic expression of positive emotions and turnover intention relationship in this study:

H 3: The authentic expression of positive emotions (AEPE) impacts negatively turnover intention (TI) among the agents in Moroccan call centers

Based on the hypotheses developed above, a conceptual model is illustrated in figure 1

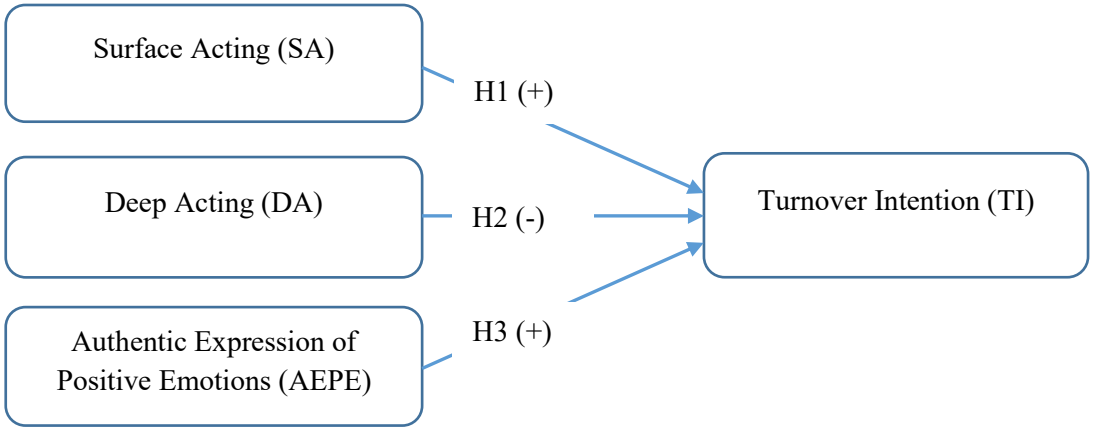

Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework of the Research.

5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To investigate the relationship between the three forms of emotion regulation strategies and turnover intention and test the above-mentioned hypotheses, data were collected among 390 agents in the Moroccan call centers. The next section will provide more details about the research methodology employed.

5.1 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

According to Hair et al. (2022) data characteristics such as minimum sample size requirements, nonnormal data and scales of measurements represent the most cited reasons for applying PLS-SEM. As stated by these authors, PLS-SEM achieves high levels of statistical power with small sample sizes; while larger sample sizes increase the precision of PLS-SEM estimations. In order to measure the minimum sample size needed for the study, we used the often-cited 10 times

rule (Barclay, Higgins, & Thompson, 1995), which suggests the sample size should be equal to 10 times the maximum number of arrow-heads pointing at a latent variable in the PLS path model. In our case, the minimum sample size required using the 10 times rule would be (3 x10) = 30. While this method offers a rough guideline, as suggested by Hair et al. (2022), we need to consider the statistical power of the estimates. Therefore, we used the G*Power free to use software to estimate statistical power (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009). Using an effect size f^2 =0.15, an error probability α=0.05, a power (1-β) = 0.95, and 3 as a number of predictors, we obtained a minimum total sample size of 119. As suggested by Hair et al. (2022), to obtain a more reliable minimum sample size estimate, the sample size provided by the G*Power software needs to be multiplied by 2 or 3. As a result the minimum sample size needed is (119x3) = 357.

The data collection was conducted using an online questionnaire distributed to many call center supervisors located in different cities in Morocco. Data collection was held over a 6-month period. This resulted in 430 responses. After eliminating incomplete questionnaires, we retained 390 complete responses to be used for further analysis.

Table 1 illustrates the summary of the demographic profile of the 390 respondents. In the gender categories, the majority of respondents were female (67%, n=262), while males represent (33%, n=128). With regard to age, the majority of respondents were aged between 25 and 30 years, followed by 20-25 years of age (19%, n=71), while in the minority were the 40 years and above age group (1%, n=4) and the below 20 years age group (2%, n=9). In the length of service categories, the majority of respondents worked for 2-3 years (35%, n=135), followed by those who worked for 1-2 years (33%, n=130). A minority group of call center agents worked for less that 1 year (9%, n=34) and more than 5 years (7%, n=29).

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	262	67%
	Male	128	33%
Age	< 20	9	2%
	20 - 25	71	19%
	25 - 30	242	64%
	30 - 35	29	8%
	35 - 40	23	6%
	> 40	4	1%
Seniority	< 1y	34	9%
	1 - 2 y	130	33%
	2 - 3 y	135	35%
	3 - 4 y	51	13%
	4 - 5 y	11	3%
	> 5 y	29	7%

5.2 MEASUREMENT SCALES

Emotional labor. The different emotional regulation strategies were measured by the Emotional Labor Scale (ELS) developed by Brotheridge and Lee (2003). The conceptualization of scale fits perfectly with the definition used in our research. This measure includes a total of nine items. Six of them measure surface acting, while the remaining three items measure deep acting. This scale, originally developed in English, has been widely used in several research projects (e.g., Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002; Diefendorffet et al., 2005; Cheung and Tang, 2009). In our study we used the French version of the scale developed by Lee, Lovell and

Brotheridge (2010) (α.= 0.87 for deep acting; α.= 0.77 for emotions simulation and α.= 0.71 for emotions suppression).

Concerning the third emotion regulation strategy: the authentic expression of positive emotions, we used the items developed by Diefendorff et al. (2005) and translated into French by Cossette (2008) (α.= 0.72). These items complement the Emotional Labor Scale to include the three emotional regulation strategies. To sum up, the final scale used in the study contains twelve items: six measuring surface acting, three measuring deep acting, and three measuring authentic expression of positive emotions. To assess the items, we used a 5-point Likert scale, which suggests that respondents express their opinion in terms of attitude frequency, ranging from 1 "never" to 5 "always."

Turnover intention. Following the comparison and analysis of numerous scales, we opted for the scale of Hom and Griffeth (1991) and Jaros (1997). The scale is made up of two items: “I intend to look for a job in another organization in the coming year” and “I often think about leaving the organization that employs me”. The measurement scale, originally designed in English, was translated into French by Gillet et al. (2015) using the translation-retranslation method based on the work of Brislin (1980) and Vallerand (1989) and in accordance with the instructions of the International Test Commission (Hambleton, 1993). The internal consistency analysis conducted by Gillet et al. (2015) yielded a Cronbach's Alpha equal to 0.92. Respondents indicated their level of agreement with the statements using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1"strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree."

5.3 DATA ANALYSIS

To evaluate the measurement model and the structural model, and test the research hypotheses we adopted the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach. As suggested by Roldan and Sanchez-Franco (2012), this choice is based on the objectives of the study, the characteristics of data collected and research design. Thus, and as explained by Hair et al. (2022), the PLS-SEM approach was applied because the analysis of our data is concerned with testing a theoretical framework from a prediction perspective. Our study aimed to predict factors that could influence turnover intention among agents in the Moroccan call centers. In addition to this, the structural model does not contain any circular relationships between the variables. Moreover, the normal distribution of data is not respected and the sample size of our

research is quite large, which increases the accuracy of the PLS-SEM estimates. To perform the PLS-SEM the SmartPLS 3.0 software was used.

6 RESULTS

In order to evaluate the results of the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), two steps must be followed: 1) the analysis and evaluation of the measurement model and 2) the analysis and evaluation of the structural model (Henseler et al., 2009 cited by Ringle et al., 2020).

6.1 ASSESSMENT OF MEASUREMENT MODEL

This section aims to present the criteria necessary to confirm the reliability and validity of our measurement model. The measurement model of our study is a reflective model. The latent variables: surface acting, deep acting, the authentic expression of positive emotions and turnover intention, exist independently of their manifest variables (items). Indeed, the items of each latent variable have identical content and share the same theme. The elimination of an item should not change the conceptual domain of the variable (Gavard-Perret et al., 2018). Finally, causality moves from the latent variable to the items. According to Hair et al. (2022), in order to evaluate a reflective measurement model, the researcher must calculate a set of indicators, namely: The reliability of the measuring instrument and the internal consistency of the items (Chronbach's Alpha which should be > 0.60 according to Evrard et al., 1993), the composite reliability (CR which should be >0.70 according to Evrard et al., 2003), the convergent validity (factor loading should be >0.70 and the Average Variance Extracted AVE > 0.50 according to Hair et al.,2022) and the discriminant validity (Cross loading and the Fornell-Larcker matrix).

Table 2 presents the results of the evaluation of measurement model. The table shows acceptable values of the composite reliability and Cronbach's Alpha of all constructs of the study. Furthermore, all item loadings were greater than the required threshold 0.70 (Hair et al.,2022) except for two items (Reg_surf5 and Reg_surf6) that were removed due to factor loading below 0.70. All constructs had an AVE above 0.50, which indicates an acceptable degree of convergent validity except for "Surface Acting".

Table 2. Results of Measurement Model Assessment

Latent variable	Items	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Turnover Intention	Int_quit1	0,874	0,614	0,724	0,837
	Int_quit2	0,823			
Surface Acting	Reg_surf1	0,778	0,723	0,814	0,484
	Reg_surf2	0,849			
	Reg_surf3	0,880			
	Reg_surf4	0,872			
	Reg_surf5	0,166			
	Reg_surf6	0,131			
Deep Acting	Reg_prof1	0,893	0,875	0,923	0,799
	Reg_prof2	0,904			
	Reg_prof3	0,885			
Authentic Expression of Positive Emotions	Exp_emoti1	0,899	0,863	0,916	0,785
	Exp_emoti2	0,884			
	Exp_emoti3	0,874			

AVE, Average Variance Extracted

Table 3 indicates the results after removing the two problematic items (Reg_surf5 and Reg_surf6), the results of the analysis of the measurement reliability indicate that after the removal of the two problematic items, all latent variables of our model give satisfactory Cronbach Alpha values. These results show that the scales used to measure the variables in the model offer good internal consistency as well as satisfactory measurement reliability.

Table 3. Results of Measurement Model Assessment after Item Suppression

Latent variable	Items	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Surface Acting	Reg_surf1	0,779	**0,868**	**0,910**	**0,717**
	Reg_surf2	0,850			
	Reg_surf3	0,880			
	Reg_surf4	0,873			

The next step is the analysis of discriminant validity which is based on two matrices: the Fornell-Larcker Criterion matrix and the matrix of cross-loadings. The Fornell-Larcker Criterion matrix presents the correlation between all the variables of the model. It compares the square root of the AVE values with the latent variable correlations. The theoretical principle is that the correlation of each variable with oneself must be greater than the correlation value of that variable with the other variables (Hair et al., 2022). **Table 4** shows that each group of items is best able to explain the variable in which it is placed and no other variable, because the highest correlation coefficient is recorded at the intersections of each variable with itself. These results indicate that every variable is unique and captures phenomena not represented by other variables in the model. As explained by Hair et al. (2022), every variable shares more variance with its associated items than with any other variable.

Table 4. Testing of Discriminant Validity using Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	AEPE	TI	DA	SA
AEPE	**0,886**			
TI	0,418	**0,849**		
DA	0,621	0,580	**0,894**	
SA	0,576	0,594	0,768	**0,847**

AEPE, Authentic Expression of Positive Emotions; SA, Surface Acting; DA, Deep Acting; TI, Turnover Intention

We were able to record the same results for the assessment of cross-loadings. According to this criterion, an item's outer loading on the associated variable should be greater than any of its cross-loadings on other variables (Hair et al., 2022). **Table 5** shows that the items give their highest correlation values with their respective variables. The correlations between items and other variables remain relatively lower. These results indicate that we have a good discriminant validity of the items, and that the measurement scales remain distinct from each other.

Table 5. Testing of Discriminant Validity using Cross-Loadings

Items	**AEPE**	**SA**	**DA**	**TI**
Exp_emoti1	**0,899**	0,485	0,526	0,724
Exp_emoti2	**0,886**	0,514	0,561	0,706
Exp_emoti3	**0,873**	0,533	0,564	0,640
Reg_surf1	0,424	**0,778**	0,617	0,646
Reg_surf2	0,483	**0,849**	0,667	0,724
Reg_surf3	0,504	**0,879**	0,667	0,706
Reg_surf4	0,532	**0,876**	0,649	0,527
Reg_prof1	0,527	0,671	**0,891**	0,580
Reg_prof2	0,580	0,700	**0,904**	0,558
Reg_prof3	0,558	0,687	**0,887**	0,559
Int_quit1	0,559	0,688	0,561	**0,876**
Int_quit2	0,560	0,689	0,564	**0,821**

AEPE, Authentic Expression of Positive Emotions; SA, Surface Acting; DA, Deep Acting; TI, Turnover Intention

6.2 ASSESSMENT OF STRUCTURAL MODEL

According to Ringle et al. (2020) the structural model allows the researcher to establish the links between the different variables in the research. It makes it possible to capture the direct, indirect and interaction relationships between the different research constructs. In our model, the relationships between the three emotion regulation strategies and turnover intention are direct. In order to assess the structural model, we respected the four-step process suggested by Hair et al. (2022): 1) Assessing the structural model for collinearity issues; 2) Evaluating the significance and relevance of the structural model relationships; 3) Assessing the model's explanatory power and 4) Evaluating the model's predictive power.

To ensure that collinearity has no substantial effects on the structural model we applied the measure of variance inflation factor (VIF). **Table 6** shows that all inner VIF were below 3 as suggested by Hair et al. (2022), which indicates the absence of collinearity issues in our structural model.

Table 6. Testing of Collinearity-Variance Infaltion Factor

Items	**VIF**
Exp_emoti1	2,418
Exp_emoti2	2,158
Exp_emoti3	2,129
Reg_prof1	2,381
Reg_prof2	2,465
Reg_prof3	2,249
Reg_surf1	1,689
Reg_surf2	2,138
Reg_surf3	2,413
Reg_surf4	2,428
Int_quit1	1,244
Int_quit2	1,244

In order to verify the significance and relevance of the structural model relationships, we assessed the path coefficients using p-values and the effect size using "standardized beta β". We assumed a significance level of 5%, the *p* value in this case must be smaller than 0.05 to conclude that the relationship under investigation is considered significant at a 5% level. The hypotheses testing was conducted using the Bootstrap method with 5000 resamples as suggested by Hair et al. (2017). **Table 7** and **figure 2** summarize the results obtained after running the PLS-SEM algorithm. The results show positive and direct effect of surface acting (β= 0,220, t=2,083, p<0.05) and deep acting (β= 0,152, t=2,083, p<0.05) on turnover intention, while the authentic expression of positive emotions does not have any significant relationship with turnover intention (β= 0,030, t=0,470, p= 0,639). Therefore, H1 was confirmed while H2 and H3 were not confirmed.

Table 7. Results of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	**Relationship**	**Std. Beta (β)**	**Std. Dev**	**T-Value**	**P-value***	**Rlationship Significance**	**Supported**
H 1	*SA-->TI*	*0,220*	*0,073*	*3,014*	*0,003*	*Yes*	***Yes***
H 2	*DA-->TI*	*0,152*	*0,073*	*2,083*	*0,038*	*Yes*	***No***
H 3	*AEPE-->TI*	*0,030*	*0,063*	*0,470*	*0,639*	*No*	***No***

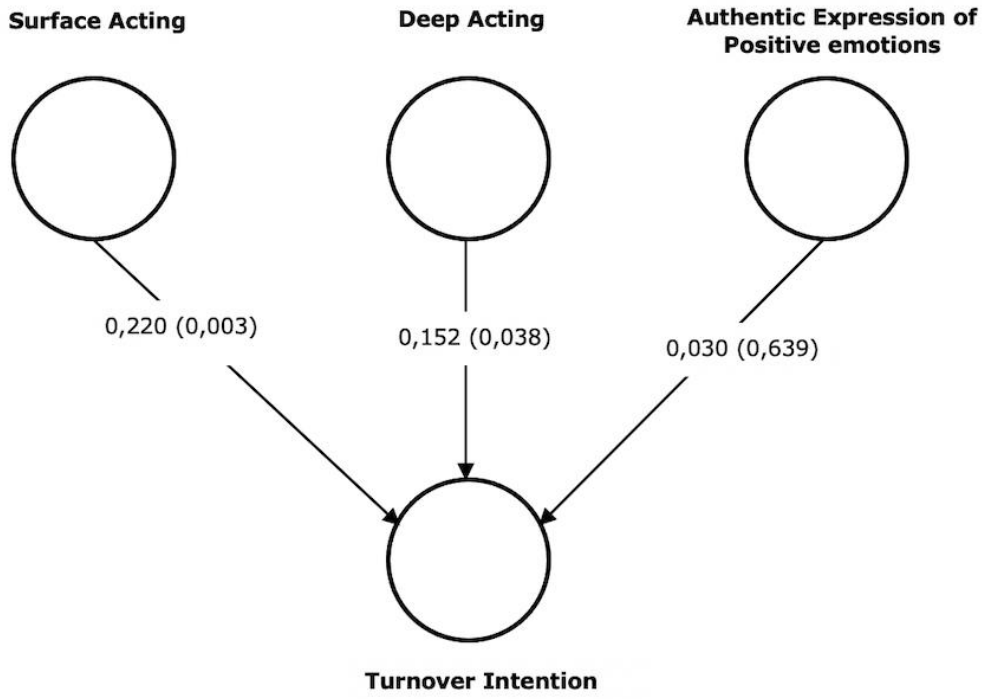

Fig. 2 Results of Assessment of Structural Model

The next steps in assessing the structural model are the evaluation the model's explanatory power and the assessment of the model's predictive power (Hair et al., 2022). The model's explanatory power was tested using the coefficient of determination (R^2) value of the endogenous latent variable (turnover intention). The R^2 value ranges from 0 to 1, higher levels indicate higher levels of explanatory power (Hair et al., 2022). Our results indicate R^2=0,503, suggesting that R^2 50,3% of the variance for turnover intention can be explained by the three forms of emotion regulation strategies which is moderately high since the values of R^2=0,726 of employee retention is considered very high in behavioral studies (Hair et al., 2017 cited by Zainal et al., 2022). The model's predictive power was tested using the Stone-Geisser's Q^2 measurement which should be greater than 0 to indicate predictive relevance (Hair et al.,2017). Our results show that the value of Q^2 for turnover intention is 0,257, which is considered acceptable to assess the predictive reliance of the structural model.

7 DISCUSSION

Within call centers, the development of turnover intention may be increased by many factors such as working conditions, quality of life at work, employee attitudes, and general labor market conditions. Some of these factors can be affected by emotional dissonance and stress caused, specifically, by emotional labor. The main goal of this study is to investigate whether emotion

regulation strategies (surface acting, deep acting and the authentic expression of positive emotions) impact turnover intention in the customer relationship management sector in Morocco. The findings of the present study reveal that two emotional regulation strategies can promote the development of turnover intention among agents in the Moroccan call centers. The strongest predictor of turnover intention is the surface acting regulation strategy followed by the deep acting regulation strategy. With respect to the strategy of authentic expression of positive emotions, we did not find any significant value to justify the impact of this strategy on turnover intention.

Regarding our first finding pertaining to the positive relationship between surface acting and turnover intention, they corroborate those of previous studies by Zito et al. (2018). These researchers reported, following a study conducted with agents in call centers, that emotional dissonance caused by emotional labor has a negative relationship with job satisfaction and a positive relationship with turnover. Other studies (Cho et al., 2017; Lim and Moon, 2023) indicated that surface acting is positively correlated with turnover intention due to the fact that surface acting leads to a lack of job satisfaction which, in turn, leads to the development of turnover intention (Côté and Morgan, 2002). Isik and Hamurcu (2017) highlighted that emotional regulation is a source of stress for call center agents, particularly when they use surface acting as an emotion regulation strategy. In the same vein, Yürür and Ünlü (2011) as well as Pala and Tepeci (2014) pointed out that surface acting is the strategy that best predicts an employee's turnover intention. The inconsistency between the displayed emotions and internal feelings resulting from surface acting represent a threat to the individual inner resources. As a result, individuals feel depleted from their energy and resources (Grandey, 2000). In the long run, the hypocrite nature of surface acting will push call center agents to experience stress (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013) and show poor job performance (Goodwin, Groth and Frenkel, 2011) which leads them to think about leaving their employer and looking for new employment opportunities.

On the other hand, our findings indicate that the second emotion regulation strategy that predicts turnover intention is deep acting, thus confirming results of previous study by Zebre (2000 cited by Klein, 2021) who demonstrated that emotional labor, encompassing surface acting and deep acting, is directly related to turnover intention. These results could be explained by the Conservation of Resources Theory - COR (Hobfoll, 1998). According to the COR theory, individual's primary motivation is to build, protect, and nurture their resources in order to

protect the self and the social relationships that maintain the self. The theory explains how the individual avoids losing resources, conserves existing resources, and acquires resources essential for engaging in adequate behaviors (Buchwald and Schwarzer, 2010). Deep acting as an emotion regulation strategy represents a threat to the individual resources; as call center agents may have the impression to be emotionally invested while interacting with clients. Constantly adjusting feelings in order to conform to the call center rules of emotion display could be emotionally tiring and demanding for the agents, which leads them to think about changing jobs.

Regarding the last emotion regulation strategy: the authentic expression of positive emotions, the findings showed that this variable has no impact on turnover intention among agents in Moroccan call centers. These results are surprising since it was expected that this strategy would contribute to a certain well-being, which would further encourage the call center agent to maintain her employability relationship with the call center. These results could be explained by the nature of work in call centres, that leaves little room for spontaneous emotions. As indicated by Sadik (2019), the production process in call centers is designed to standardize tasks, minimize innovation and closely control the quality of service through an unannounced listening system that aims to improve performance and align it to the rules of emotion display. Under these conditions, the call centre agent may not consider the use of spontaneous emotion expression as a possible emotion regulation strategy. Consequently, the use of this strategy is not taken into consideration when assessing the professional situation and is not taken into account when the call center agent is considering the possibility of maintaining her job or seeking a new one.

8 CONCLUSION

This study aims to investigate the impact of the three emotional regulation strategies on turnover intention among agents in Moroccan call centers. A quantitative study was conducted with a sample of 390 call center agents located in different cities in Morocco. The model and hypotheses were tested using the Partial Least Square Structure Equation Modeling. The results have shown a direct relationship between the use of emotion regulation strategies and turnover intention. More precisely, the results indicate that the predominant emotion regulation among agents is surface acting. Also, this strategy seems to be the first predictor of turnover intention followed by deep acting. On the other hand, the authentic expression of positive emotions does not seem to have an impact on turnover intention.

Concerning the managerial implications, the understanding of the relationship between the different emotion regulation strategies and turnover intention, allows the call center managers to better adapt their practices to maintain good working conditions, develop commitment, and improve the psychological health of the agents. By investing in training and improving working conditions, call centres can attract and retain top talent, which in turn will allow them to maintain their growth and competitiveness internationally.

This study has some limitations, several of which present opportunities for future research. The first limitation is related to the lack of data on Moroccan call centers. While conducting our research, we were confronted with a serious lack of data in relation to the call center sector despite its importance to the Moroccan government in terms of investments and jobs creation. The second limitation is the coverage bias, it represents a limitation in the sense that certain populations were excluded from the sample. The research was conducted online, which consequently eliminates candidates who do not have access to the internet. Additionally, this research was limited to the customer relationship management sector. Future research could focus on different industries where emotional labor is at the center of employee tasks such as health care services, education, and banking. Moreover, other organisational and personal factors that may influence emotional labor such as organisational support and personality traits could be investigated in future research. Adding more variables to the model will probably provide a better understanding of the antecedents and consequences of emotional labor.

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