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Burning down the House: Emotional Labor, Burnout and Real Estate Sales Professionals

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BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE: EMOTIONAL LABOR, BURNOUT AND
REAL ESTATE SALES PROFESSIONALS

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Communication
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

By
Laura Cooley Rawlins
August 2008

**BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE: EMOTIONAL LABOR, BURNOUT, AND
REAL ESTATE SALES PROFESSIONALS**

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of emotional labor on instances of burnout by specifically focusing on real estate sales professionals. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2008) cites the purchase or sale of a home as one of the most substantial and complicated financial events most people ever experience, thereby magnifying the challenges of work and communication in the real estate sales profession and providing a rich framework for understanding the concepts of emotional labor and burnout. A three part questionnaire focused on emotional labor and burnout was distributed to 450 real estate sales professionals in early March, 2008. Linear regression analyses were conducted to evaluate the predictive values of emotional labor components with burnout components. Findings in this study indicated that real estate sales professionals may rarely be *required* to display feelings in prescribed ways due to the autonomous nature of real estate sales work. Various implications and suggestions related to identification and empathy surfaced in the discussion chapter as components of emotional labor and burnout were considered in the context of the real estate sales profession.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Increased attention regarding the impact of emotional interactions within work environments has advanced the study of organizational concepts such as emotional labor and burnout. Previous organizational research has rarely linked the performance of emotional labor with the experience of burnout, however, both of these concepts coincide with intimate human work interactions. Emotional labor, commonly misconstrued as simply work behaviors filled with emotion, instead refers to the displays of certain feelings or emotions that are required in the workplace (Hochschild, 1983; Kruml & Geddes, 2000). The management or regulation of emotion displays typically requires some form of acting as workers perform job tasks involving emotional labor (Hochschild, 1983). The purpose of this study is to explore the role of emotional labor within a specific group of sales professionals, real estate agents, and instances of burnout among this population.

The unique dynamics of the real estate sales profession create an engaging context for organizational communication learning as its practitioners frequently encounter emotional labor and burnout.

In some professions you can leave your business concerns at the office at the end of the day, but that is just not the case in real estate. You will be under incredible self-imposed pressure to work late and put in extra time on weekends and holidays...the more successful you become (the more sales in progress, the more listings) the greater will be the number of phone calls to you at home during your off hours. 'Burnout' is a term that

has come into vogue in recent years, but the phenomenon was common in real estate long before there was a name for it (Edwards, 1997, p. 140).

Popularized in the late 1970s by academics and practitioners alike, the term burnout is often explained with generalized and assumptive definitions. Maslach, Jackson and Leiter (1996) define burnout as “a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment” (p. 4). Similar to emotional labor, burnout occurs most commonly among those who work intimately and frequently with other people as part of their daily jobs.

Communication inquiries focusing on emotional labor and burnout can develop pragmatic applications for improved organizational functioning and personal well-being. This thesis explores the following research question:

RQ1: What is the influence of emotional labor on the experience of burnout among real estate sales professionals?

Two hypotheses regarding the relationship between emotional labor and burnout emerged and are introduced during the review of literature in Chapter Two. Examining the complex relationships presented in the research question requires the measurement of several separately defined components. Emotional labor consists of two major components described as emotive dissonance and emotive effort. The three major components of burnout include emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. These components of emotional labor and burnout are thoroughly defined in the review of literature.

Significance of Topic

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2008) cites the purchase or sale of a home as one of the most substantial and complicated financial events most people ever experience, thereby magnifying the challenges of work and communication in the real estate sales profession. The intimate and personalized nature of real estate sales work, in which sales professionals autonomously conduct business in the clients' present and future homes, provides a rich framework for investigating the concepts of emotional labor and burnout. Unlike many other areas of human service work, real estate sales professionals operate independently and must motivate and direct themselves with flexible, inconsistent work hours. As self-employed professionals, real estate sales agents function with little or no supervision and choose how to conduct themselves in business settings. Autonomous work decisions may include choices such as: when to work in the office versus at home versus in the field, when and how many hours to work, what attire is appropriate, and how to contact potential and existing clients (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008; Edwards, 1997).

Studies contributing to the body of emotional labor research have examined the role of emotions in various service level jobs such as customer service representatives, nurses, waiters/waitresses, receptionists, and store clerks (Abiala, 1999; Fiebig & Kramer, 1995; Hochschild, 1983). While many scholars agree that common service level workers experience emotional labor, little research exists considering other occupations such as the sales profession. The management of emotion proves essential for sales professionals as they seek to perform in ways that will earn business from their clients; failure to manage emotions and act appropriately in the sales context may exacerbate

professional failure, jeopardize future career prospects, and abate income growth potential for the sales professional (Belschak, Verbeke & Bagozzi, 2006; Evans & Kleine, 2000). Exploring research in the areas of emotional labor and burnout within the context of the real estate sales profession provides information that may fill existing gaps in organizational research.

Prior organizational research that has focused on sales work illustrated some ways in which the job expectations and practices of the sales profession could reflect the performance and management of emotions (Abiala, 1999; Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Brown, Cron & Slocum, 1997; Feibig & Kramer, 1998; Franke & Park, 2006; Leathers, 1988). While researching social support and burnout among sales professionals, Sand and Miyaski (2000) concluded that “although salespeople cannot discontinue stressful encounters with their customers, they can take advantage of various coping resources that appear to reduce the propensity for burnout” (p. 15). Despite the seemingly unavoidable nature of emotional labor, sales professionals can utilize research findings to manage emotions and perform job expectations more effectively so that burnout may occur with less frequency and severity. Organizations could utilize this increased knowledge of emotional labor effects and preventative measures for burnout to improve efficiency and worker satisfaction as well as decrease employee turnover.

Method Overview

This thesis considers the relationship between emotional labor and burnout among real estate sales professionals by evaluating emotion-oriented situations derived from their work experiences. Gauging self-reported information of these sales professionals provides insights concerning “attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions” (Baxter & Babbie,

2004, p. 103). To do this, a survey instrument was employed to measure emotional labor and burnout among the sample of real estate agents in this study.

Survey results reflected the varied perspectives of real estate sales professionals in a standardized format conducive to measuring both emotional labor and burnout variables. The measures utilized in this study were previously developed and extensively tested by other researchers (Kruml & Geddes, 2000a, b; Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996; Miller & Koesten, 2008). The validation provided by prior use of these surveys in other research projects ensured reliability and provided appropriate tools for answering the research question.

Preview of Chapters

Chapter Two consists of a thorough review of literature pertaining to emotional labor and burnout, and then commences to draw connections between these concepts. The research question and two hypotheses are also introduced and justified within Chapter Two. The conclusion of Chapter Two reviews the associations of emotional labor and burnout concepts within the context of the sales profession. Chapter Three elucidates the methodological approach exercised in the investigation of the research question. Chapter Four provides an analysis of emotional labor concepts and burnout indicators that emerged from the data. A discussion of research conclusions and future implications unfolds as Chapter Five merges theoretical considerations with practical applications.

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study investigates the relationship between emotional labor and burnout among a population of real estate sales professionals. A review of influential literature from emotional labor research ensues with thorough definitions and explanations of emotional labor concepts. Then, a literature review pertaining to burnout research follows to provide a separate understanding of burnout concepts. Following the review of literature, this chapter develops connections between emotional labor and burnout. Finally, a discussion of emotional labor and burnout among sales professionals concludes this chapter.

Emotional Labor

The foundational work of Hochschild (1983), *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*, instigated development of the field of research known presently as emotional labor. Findings by Hochschild and subsequent research from other scholars (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Kruml & Geddes, 2000; Shuler & Sypher, 2000) has increased awareness of emotional labor concepts with regard to human service work. Hochschild defined emotional labor as a type of work which “requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others...this kind of labor calls for a coordination of mind and feeling” (p.7). Kruml and Geddes (2000b) defined emotional labor by emphasizing the performance aspects of some jobs, including human service or ‘people-work’ which require employees to feel or at least pretend to feel certain emotions during work related interactions. The definition provided by Hochschild, and by Kruml and Geddes,

established a framework for understanding the concept of emotional labor throughout this study.

Deep Acting and Surface Acting

Hochschild (1983) identified emotional labor as a form of acting. The term “deep acting” related to the worker’s attempt to align personal feelings with the portrayal of emotions required by the organization (Hochschild, 1983). When engaging in deep acting, the worker actually attempts to internalize the feelings that he/she must externally convey. Hochschild explained deep acting as “deceiving oneself as much as deceiving others” (p.33). She also suggested that deep acting becomes intrinsic, meaning that the worker may pretend so thoroughly that they actually alter themselves internally and begin to genuinely feel these work-required emotions. On the contrary, Hochschild used the term “surface acting” in reference to the outward show of emotions not truly reflective of inner feelings. Hochschild (1983) explained that surface acting causes workers to “deceive others about what we feel, but we do not deceive ourselves” (p.33). Surface acting, which often leads to feelings of phoniness, simply requires a disguising of personal feelings and then pretending as though we feel things we do not (Hochschild). While deep acting helps eliminate feelings of phoniness, Hochschild found that internalizing the expected emotional displays might lead workers to alter their natural personalities and emotional behaviors, thus becoming susceptible to identity confusion. Upon the internalization of prescribed emotional displays through deep acting, a worker no longer perceives their management of emotions as acting, but rather as authentic parts of their persona.

Positive vs. Negative Outcomes

Although interpretations of Hochschild (1983), and work from successive scholars, typically suggest negative effects as a result of emotional labor, some studies emphasize possible constructive outcomes, as did Hochschild in some situations (Fiebig & Kramer, 1998; Shuler & Sypher, 2000; Wharton, 1996). Contrary to the majority of emotional labor scholarship, studies supporting the positive effects of emotional labor indeed raise interesting questions. Wharton (1996) provided an applicable example of positive emotional labor outcomes in a study of women working in residential real estate sales. Findings indicated that residential real estate sales professionals, despite their emotionally charged work environments, enjoyed helping clients discover new homes and thus experienced many positive emotional outcomes. However, the real estate agents studied by Wharton did mention the challenge of working on an emotional “roller coaster” (p. 229) as they often lacked control in their business dealings due to elements such as a volatile housing market, shifts in mortgage business and the fickle nature of clients. Further supporting a propensity for positive emotional labor outcomes, survey research on emotion work conducted by Fiebig and Kramer (1998) found that respondents experienced agreeable events and positive emotions at work more often than negative experiences. Shuler and Sypher (2000) also supported the likelihood of positive outcomes among workers performing emotional labor with empirical evidence; 911 emergency dispatchers touted the positive feelings associated with this particularly intense occupation, despite the obvious demands of emotional labor. Emergency service workers interviewed by Shuler and Sypher described their work as enjoyable but recounted the occupation as “exciting, exhilarating, unpredictable and even scary” (p.

84). Divergent views arguing the positive versus negative effects necessitate further inquiry into various emotional labor occupational studies.

Emotive Effort and Emotive Dissonance

Emotive dissonance, one component of emotional labor, refers to the conflict between externally expressed emotions and emotions actually felt by the individual (Kruml and Geddes, 2000). Kruml and Geddes (2000a) hypothesized and then found support for a positive correlation between emotive dissonance and surface acting. As surface acting contributes to feelings of in-authenticity or “phoniness” (Hochschild, 1983), the worker’s perception of dissonance or disagreement may simultaneously increase. In addition, Hochschild’s initial research suggested that surface acting not only elevates emotive dissonance but potentially leads to dissatisfaction and lowered self esteem. Findings by Kruml and Geddes (2000a) indicated that workers suffer more personal distress when engaged in less authentic activities. Further, they also found a connection between the faking of emotions, which increased dissonance, with negative effects such as burnout and exhaustion. Literature on emotive dissonance leads to a proposal of the following hypothesis in this thesis:

H1: Increased emotive dissonance leads to an increase in instances of burnout.

Emotive effort, another component of emotional labor, refers to the exertion put forth as individuals attempt to closely align internal feelings and beliefs with the emotional displays expected of them. Kruml and Geddes (2000a) found that increased emotive effort lowered the likelihood for negative outcomes such as emotional exhaustion or burnout. Deep acting actually provides an explanation for the connection between increased emotive effort and lowered negative outcomes. Deep acting requires

more emotive effort in order to attain an alignment between internal and external emotions. Produced by the exertion of increased emotive effort, deep acting encourages workers to feel more authentic and genuine by creating a harmonious agreement between internal and external emotions. The harmony created by the alignment of feelings thereby decreases the likelihood of negative outcomes. Literature related to emotive effort leads to the proposal of a second hypothesis for this study:

H2: Increased emotive effort leads to a decrease in instances of burnout.

While contradictory to original postulations by Hochschild (1983) regarding deep versus surface acting, Kruml and Geddes (2000a) concluded that surface acting contributes to an increase of emotive dissonance and therefore results in more instances of exhaustion, while an increase of emotive effort relates to deep acting and encourages genuine authenticity and therefore results in fewer instances of burnout. Final conclusions by Kruml and Geddes proposed emotional labor as either beneficial or detrimental to workers depending on factors of frequency and intensity in the emotional displays required. Thus, organizations that encourage workers to reveal and convey authentic feelings may predispose workers toward more positive and healthy outcomes.

Burnout

Maslach, Jackson and Leiter (1996) defined burnout as “a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with people in some capacity” (p.4). Defining burnout more specifically, Pines, Aronson and Kafry (1981) described the condition as a “state of mind that frequently afflicts individuals who work with other people (especially but not exclusively in the helping professions) and who pour in much more than they get back

from their client, superiors and colleagues” (p.3). Three components of burnout, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of personal accomplishment (originally evolved from extensive research by Maslach et. al) provide a framework for this study of burnout.

Components

Emotional exhaustion refers to the reduction of emotional resources as workers feel psychologically drained and can invest little emotion or feeling in their work (Maslach et. al, 1996). Babakus, Cravens, Johnston and Moncrief (1999) characterized emotional exhaustion as a lack of energy and the feeling of an empty emotional ‘tank’. As a particular type of fatigue, emotional exhaustion occurs most often in “highly demanding, people oriented situations, such as the ones in which most salespeople find themselves” (Babakus et. al, 1999, p. 58). Depersonalization, another component of burnout, references the development of “negative, cynical attitudes and feelings about one’s clients” (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996, p. 4). While depersonalization and emotional exhaustion often subsist simultaneously these components of burnout remain independent. The reduction of personal accomplishment, as a final key component of burnout alludes to negative evaluations of one’s own work, particularly with client interactions. Workers with reduced personal accomplishment may not only feel frustrated with their accomplishments but may also experience personal discontent (Maslach et. al, 1996). The core burnout components of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduction of personal accomplishment encapsulate many burnout symptoms. A range of symptoms serve to further explain and characterize the concept of burnout in the forthcoming section.

Symptoms

Highlighting burnout symptoms, as described by Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998), incorporates multiple indicators from various affective, cognitive, physical, behavioral and motivational symptomatic categories. Affective indicators involve emotional lows and emotional exhaustion. Similarly, burnout may involve cognitive symptoms such as incidences of hopeless, powerless, or helpless feelings. Cognitive symptoms may also include a lack of concentration or a decrease in mental abilities. Physical symptoms often surface as burnout indicators such as headaches, nausea, muscle pain and most commonly, chronic fatigue. Behavioral symptoms, such as impulsiveness or procrastination, frequently surface in cases of burnout. Finally, motivational burnout symptoms often become noticeable, including a loss of zeal, enthusiasm, interest, or idealism.

Acknowledging various burnout symptoms furthers the understanding of burnout although some scholars complain of the vast array of indicators as inflating the subject of burnout until a loss of concrete meaning transpires (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). The complication of multiple symptomatic factors contributes to the difficulty of diagnosing burnout as a syndrome. Condensing the assortment of symptoms for diagnosis and research may improve clarity and provide burnout measurement tools. For the purpose of this study, specific symptoms of burnout prove influential during the data collection phase with the use of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) survey instrument (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996). The complexity of recognizing symptomatic burnout indicators allows for confusion between the detection of burnout versus the identification of depression or stress.

Differentiating: Burnout vs. Depression vs. Stress

The idea of burnout developed and became a buzzword in the late 1970s as concerns grew regarding the implications and propensity of the burnout condition within organizational settings (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). Burnout symptoms often coexist with depression symptoms, thereby making differentiations between the two concepts challenging yet essential. As a clinical syndrome, depression encompasses all aspects of one's personal life while on the contrary burnout relates specifically to occupational issues and resides as a work crisis in which one can still function effectively in other aspects of life (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998).

Similar to the notable differences between depression and burnout, contrasting differences between occupational *stress* and burnout proves helpful. While some literature has almost interchangeably combined the terms burnout and occupational stress (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998), the concept of burnout remains independent for several reasons. While burnout characterizes a particular type of occupational stress and therefore shares symptoms and commonalities (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998), the conditions also deserve separate definitions based on individual expectations. Schaufeli and Enzmann explained that "someone who has high goals and expectations and is strongly committed to their job can experience burnout while those with no expectations would simply experience job stress" (p.38). High levels of intense involvement suggest the development of burnout, rather than only reflecting a situation of occupational stress (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996).

Consequences

Burnout produces negative attitudes associated with work and often involves detrimental feelings such as having nothing to contribute at work, judgmental perceptions of clients, disappointment with personal accomplishments, and ultimately negative evaluations within the organization. The consequences of burnout may also include basic functional problems such as turnover, absenteeism, and low morale, or can become serious concerns for workers, clients and their organizations (Barnett, Brennan & Gareis, 1999; Pines, Aronson & Kafry, 1981). Cases of burnout typically involve many negative associations such as reports of mental and physical exhaustion, illness, increased use of drugs and alcohol, family problems and psychological concerns (Koeske & Koeske, 1989; Maslach & Jackson, 1982).

Dougherty and Drumheller (2006) referenced the negative outcomes associated with emotional control by looking beyond simple burnout and advancing that “organizational violence in the United States has destroyed numerous lives and even has its own name based on a wave of workplace violence at the U.S. Postal Service: ‘going postal’ ” (p. 235). While discussions of physical violence rarely associate with discourse on burnout, the radical notion of “going postal” possibly reflects a rather extreme version of burnout.

Burnout at work eventually influences and shapes family relationships and friendships. Maslach (1982) stated that “when work drains all your emotional energy, you are less able and willing to give to others outside work” (p.82). The mental and physical exhaustion encountered during burnout not only leads to poor performance but also a failure to do work at all (Maslach). Obviously, a lack of motivation or ability to

work imparts negative challenges on most any type of worker, thus furthering the negative implications associated with burnout.

Connecting Emotional Labor and Burnout

Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998) suggested that “the notion of emotional labor is potentially important for our understanding of burnout since it captures an essential aspect of the professional-recipient relationship” (p. 124). Relationship dynamics experienced by those involved in ‘people work’ or emotional labor may significantly connect to instances of burnout. Maslach (1982) noted that the “exhaustion of burnout escalates when you get overly involved with people” (p. 94).

Maslach (1982) stated that during instances of burnout workers often “feel under pressure to be different from their normal selves and to bottle up their true feelings” (p. 28). The ‘bottling up’ of feelings associates with both emotional labor and burnout dynamics; as workers manage emotions and ‘bottle-up’ feelings they may inadvertently contribute to the severity and propensity of experiencing burnout. Organizations encourage the management of feelings as mentioned by Dougherty and Drumheller (2006) in that “by creating carefully crafted emotional displays, organizations hope to increase the (rational) success of the organization” (p. 218).

Hochschild (1983) described burnout in the context of emotional labor as losing touch with feeling. Burnout occurs when professionals no longer seem able to separate work roles from personal identities (Maslach, 1982). Loss of feeling and a lack of identity separation connect to the notion of deep acting; as workers internalize required emotional displays they may de-sensitize their feelings. By fusing their work, personal and home identities workers may not only encounter a loss of feeling, but also develop

identity confusion. Hochschild suggested, although did not offer empirical evidence, that over-identifying with a work role by internalizing feelings through deep acting may increase the risk of stress and burnout. Workers engaged in deep acting no longer consider the display of required emotions on the job as ‘acting’ because they have internalized the requisite feelings. Once required emotional displays become internalized workers more frequently involve themselves personally with clients. Subsequently these workers may experience higher stress and burnout levels by taking rejection or negativity as personal insult (Hochschild, 1983). Workers who internalize emotional tasks seem most likely to experience job “spill over” which refers to the lack of division between personal life and work responsibilities (Maslach, 1982). When employees mix work with personal time they weaken their abilities to manage stress. The constant emotional management involved with the intermingling of work and personal life appears to increase instances of burnout (Maslach, 1982).

Contradictory to concerns regarding over-identification with emotional work expectations, workers who withdraw from emotional and feeling oriented experiences risk becoming emotionally “dead” (Hochschild, 1983). The reduction of feelings may spare the worker from burnout in the short term, but the subsequent numbness and loss of feeling may eventually have negative results as well. Hochschild (1983) concurred that “when we lose access to feeling, we lose a central means of interpreting the world around us” (p. 188).

Maslach (1982) referenced the significance of emotional control among service workers as a factor linked to burnout experiences. The regulation and control of emotions relates to the role of acting as workers abide by behavioral rules. The influence

of emotional control remains significant in connecting burnout and emotional labor as “burnout can be affected by the sorts of rules that govern the contact between provider and recipient” (Maslach, 1982, p.28). Maslach also proposed the lack of personal control as an aspect of human service work that contributes to frustration and burnout.

Occupations which necessitate the performance of emotional labor involve some lack of personal control as workers must alter themselves to display expected emotions. The levels of control in work environments contribute to factors of burnout (Maslach, 1982) and suggest a connection to emotional labor as workers manage feelings and emotional displays.

Sales Professionals

Studies contributing to the body of emotional labor research have examined the role of emotions in various service level jobs such as customer service representatives, nurses, waitpersons, receptionists, and store clerks (Abiala, 1999; Fiebig & Kramer, 1995; Hochschild, 1983). With the exception of a few studies by Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) and by Wharton (1996), the sales profession rarely gains attention as a subject for emotional labor research. Research focused on burnout among sales professionals does surface occasionally (Babakus et. al, 1999; Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Sand & Miyazaki, 2000), but many research gaps remain regarding burnout in the sales profession. This thesis attempts to fill some existing research gaps in the areas of emotional labor and burnout by developing an enhanced understanding of the relationship between emotional labor in sales professions and their propensity toward burnout. Franke and Parke (2006) state that “understanding the characteristics of effective salespeople has been a long-standing goal of managers and researchers” (p. 693). This

study specifically investigates real estate sales professionals by focusing on aspects of emotional labor and the connection to burnout.

Wharton (1996) found that despite the emotional highs and lows experienced on the job, women in the real estate sales profession expressed overall job satisfaction. Emotional labor surfaced in Wharton's study as a potentially positive aspect experienced by women in real estate sales. The positive association with emotional labor roles clearly deviated from a majority of scholarship in the area of emotion, as most research concentrates on negative effects of emotional labor. Whether outcomes surface as dominantly positive or negative for sales professionals, this study examines the impact of positive and negative emotional labor outcomes in connection to burnout.

While reviewing four varying occupational categories in the context of emotional labor, Abiala (1999) labeled one category as *persuasive selling*. Abiala suggested that the frequent customer interactions necessitating emotional labor among sales persons may likely cause harmful effects for sales workers. As emotional labor workers manage feelings and emotional displays by acting, Abiala found that participants in the persuasive selling category were twice as likely as the other category participants to have learned special words or gestures (as forms of acting) in order to perform their work duties. According to Abiala, sales people in the persuasive category engaged more frequently in surface acting than other categories of workers.

Abiala (1999) found that sales people place a high value on training - perhaps as formalized preparation for acting or performing effectively - as the main reason they secured their positions; sales training helps the worker improve performance skills as they learn to portray the appropriate image and emotion to clients. The emphasis on

performance and image among sales professionals also may link to the response by sales people in Abiala's study who said that appearance and personality strongly contributed to the hiring decision. Similarly, owners of real estate sales companies often judge potential sales agents based on image and attitude (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008). Hiring decisions based on external image, such as personality and appearance, encourage surface acting techniques; Abiala suggested that the value on external image projection may produce negative personal effects by contributing to increased feelings of in-authenticity. The emphasis on trained performances and carefully projected images by sales professionals relate to acting and performing aspects of emotional labor.

Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) also included sales occupations as a category of workers in which to study emotional labor and burnout. Brotheridge and Grandey developed little empirical evidence relating to sales professionals particularly, as the occupational categories were divided into broad generalizations. Due to the amalgamation of "service/sales" (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002) as one general category, no evidence relating specifically to sales professionals surfaced in their study. Future studies assessing various occupational categories should account for the disparity among broad categories thereby differentiating between the many different types of service and sales occupations. The present study intentionally avoids generality by specifically investigating emotional labor and burnout in the narrow category of sales professionals, particularly focused on the real estate sales profession.

The management of emotion proves essential for sales professionals as they seek to perform in ways that will earn the business of their clients. Franke and Park (2006) focused on adaptive selling as a business approach which allows sales professionals to

customize messages to match the needs and preferences of customers. The use of an adaptive sales approach ties to emotional labor as adaptive selling entails a form of acting in order to alter and customize messages for clients. The continued need for adaptation inherent in the sales profession may possibly confuse individual identities and lead to burnout as the workers tire of these constant portrayals.

Maslach (1982) noted that the “impact of burnout is the change in people’s work performance” (p. 77). Failure to manage emotions and act appropriately in the sales context decreases success and inevitably affects the paycheck and future career path of the sales professional (Belschak, Verbeke & Bagozzi, 2006; Evans & Kline, 2000). Real estate sales professionals, due to the commission-only income structure, mainly prosper when maintaining high personal performance (Edwards, 1997). Since burnout links to low performance (Maslach, 1982), sales professionals encountering burnout may experience severely negative outcomes due to the performance based foundation of their occupations. To better understand the relationship between emotional labor, burnout and sales professionals, this study poses the following research question:

RQ1: What is the influence of emotional labor on the experience of burnout among real estate sales professionals?

As the above research question unfolds within this thesis, other factors influencing the experience of burnout must be addressed. For example, co-workers may contribute to instances of burnout as people compete within organizations (Maslach, 1982). The influence of competition becomes especially pertinent among sales professionals as they interact with other sales persons, both formally and informally, within their own organizations and the field in general. Real estate agents, usually

working with commission-only incomes, face rigid competition when emerging as new sales professionals in a market already controlled by existing agents (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008). Competition among sales persons increases the need for emotion management as the sales professionals interact on a regular basis with each other. Implications of emotional labor become more salient for sales professionals as they not only perform for clients but must also act appropriately during competitive exchanges with other sales professionals. Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998) mentioned that “because of fierce competitiveness, employees are forced to continuously display ‘consumer friendly’ attitudes, in ways that contradict the expression of their genuine feelings” (p.14).

Sales organizations generally encounter high turnover rates, yet seldom endeavor to diagnose reasons provoking attrition (Darmon, 1990). While reasons for high turnover rates may vary, organizations should consider the impact of emotions and burnout among the sales force members as turnover increases fiscal loss and employee demoralization (Darmon). Specific demands faced by real estate sales professionals that could increase burnout and subsequent turnover include receiving phone calls at varying times, including nights and weekends with requests for instantaneous service and the constant pressure to seek new clients, even when supposedly out for leisure time (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008; Edwards, 1997). Vacations also prove challenging as real estate sales professionals rarely have someone who can easily fill-in during absences (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008; Edwards, 1997)

Emotional labor and burnout converge on the point of occupational work involving interactions with people. Sales professionals must unavoidably maneuver

themselves through frequent, often high-pressure work situations involving human contact. Enhanced understandings regarding the impact of emotional labor and connections to burnout provide opportunities for increased awareness and subsequently improved organizational experiences.

Chapter Three

METHOD

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of emotional labor on the experience of burnout among sales professionals. The first hypothesis predicts that one component of emotional labor, known as emotive dissonance, is likely to increase the prevalence of burnout factors, including emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of personal accomplishment. The second hypothesis for this study predicts that another element of emotional labor, emotive effort, likely decreases the development of burnout factors.

To consider the influence of emotional labor on instances of burnout, this study specifically focused on real estate sales professionals. The intimate and personalized nature of real estate sales work, in which sales professionals autonomously conduct business in the clients' present and future homes, provides a rich framework for investigating the concepts of emotional labor and burnout. This study did not consider any other factors influencing burnout among real estate sales professionals, but instead concentrated only on the dynamics of performing emotional labor. Data collected during the research portion of this study was limited to these factors of emotional labor and burnout as explained in this chapter.

In order to gather necessary data from the appropriate sample, this study utilized a survey questionnaire. Baxter and Babbie (2004) explain that survey methods use self-reports from participants to discover "attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions" (p. 103). Utilizing a survey method for this study was appropriate for several reasons. First, the research question sought to collect information that described aspects of emotional labor

and burnout among real estate sales professionals. For the purposes of this study, a real estate sales professional was any person working consistently as a real estate sales agent with the goal of assisting clients with the buying and selling of real estate properties. Second, this survey allowed the population under study (real estate sales professionals) to self-report the descriptive information (work attitudes, beliefs and perceptions) needed to investigate the research question. Third, emotional labor and burnout studies developed by other scholars have produced reliable results by utilizing survey methods (Abiala, 1999; Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Fiebeg & Kramer, 1998; Kruml & Geddes, 2000; Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996; Miller & Koesten, 2008).

Participants and Procedures

A three part questionnaire was sent to 450 real estate sales professionals through an email request. These 450 real estate sales professionals were registered members in one of two real estate associations in a U.S. southern state. Potential participants in this study received the first email briefly explaining the significance of the research and the academic value of their participation (see Appendix A). The first email request, sent to all potential participants on March 2, 2008 generated 68 participants within the first week. A second email (see Appendix B) was distributed again on March 9, 2008 to all potential participants one week after the initial email request. This follow-up email began by expressing gratitude to anyone who had already participated, and then encouraged more participation. The second email request contributed to the collection of an additional 37 survey responses for a total of 105 respondents. Recipients of the email requests were prompted within the emails to click a link redirecting them to the online survey hosted by Western Kentucky University. The online survey format preserved

participant confidentiality and anonymity, thereby eliminating some problems related to social desirability as responses regarding emotions and burnout were more likely with the maintenance of anonymity.

Administration through individual email contacts with each real estate agent proved effective, rather than contacting potential participants through the association or particular real estate offices. Contacting individuals directly allowed for a large dispensation to potential participants, but also strengthened the anonymity and confidentiality of the research. The logic of contacting participants outside of their organizational structures was supported by Kruml and Geddes (2000a) as they realized an organizational limitation in their study; they found that a company's receptiveness to the concept of surveys involving emotional labor possibly reveals the degree of control taking place in those worksites. Thus it is possible that the process of finding companies that would actually agree to participate might skew the data, as those companies that rejected the survey may be the very environments imposing stronger emotional expectations (Kruml & Geddes). Therefore, since managers are not always willing to allow participation, utilizing the individual contact method through direct participant requests may have proved advantageous.

Additional efforts were made to increase the response rate by distributing all email requests through an accredited university email account. This was considered important in hopes that potential participants might feel more comfortable, due to the university email address, when opening an email from an unknown sender. Similarly, potential participants were emailed in small groups of nine addressees per message to avoid blockages with bulk mail filtering. For example, if the addresses of all 450

potential participants were typed into one large email distribution, these messages might have filtered into a bulk email folder where 'junk' mail resides, therefore gaining less attention. All email addresses were typed into the blind carbon copy (bcc) box to ensure that the potential participants could not view the addresses of any other potential participants upon receipt of the emails. Therefore, the main recipient of the email was addressed with the sender's email address.

The entire questionnaire took about 15-20 minutes to complete. While the participant interest in electronic sampling methods sometimes produces low response rates (Miller & Koesten, 2008) the response rate on this survey was quite satisfactory with 105 participants out of 450 possible participants (23% response rate). Obtaining over 100 participants met the desired minimum sample size and aligned with the Maximum Likelihood Estimate (MLE) requirement of having 100 participants as suggested by Kruml and Geddes (2000a). Over-abundant sample size from the Kruml and Geddes (2000a) study was considered a limitation of their past research. Kruml and Geddes explained that an inflated MLE perhaps made their results excessively sensitive by the larger samples they used of more than 300 participants. Thus, they recommended that a collection of 100 participants should prove most effective in future studies utilizing their scale.

The first four questions of this survey (see Appendix C) collected basic demographic information focused on gender, age, yearly income and length of real estate work experience (see Table 1). Gender representation was well balanced between females and males with 47% female participants (n = 49) and 53% male participants (n = 56). A majority of participants were over the age of 50, comprising 53.4% of the studied

population. Participants between the ages of 30 and 49 equaled 39% of this population and only 7.6% were under the age of 30. A wide range of annual incomes from real estate sales were reported among the participants. For the low range, 12.4% of participants reported earnings under \$10,000 per year while the high range was represented by 20% of participants who reported earnings over \$100,000 per year. Participants who reported between \$10,000 and \$40,000 per year in earnings comprised 33.4% of the population for this study. Participants who reported between \$40,000 and \$99,000 per year in earnings comprised 32.4%. The ranges reported for length of employment were well distributed. Participants who had worked in real estate sales for 20 or more years comprised 20% of the studied population. Participants who reported between 10 and 20 years of employment length were 21% and those with 5 to 10 years comprised 21.9% of the population. Participants with 5 years or less of real estate sales experience comprised 37.1%.

Table 1 Demographic and Organizational Information for Sample

Sex	Female: 49 (46.7%) Male: 56 (53.3%)
Age	18-29: 8 (7.6%) 30-39: 18 (17.1%) 40-49: 23 (21.9%) 50-59: 32 (30.5%) 60+: 24 (22.9%)
Time in real estate sales business	0-2 years: 12 (11.4%) 2-5 years: 27 (25.7%) 5-10 years: 23 (21.9%) 10-20 years: 22 (21%) 20+ years: 21 (20%)

Yearly income from real estate sales	\$0-\$9000: 13 (12.4%)
	\$10,000-\$19,000: 13 (12.4%)
	\$20,000-\$29,000: 11 (10.5%)
	\$30,000-\$39,000: 11 (10.5%)
	\$40,000-\$59,000: 17 (16.2%)
	\$60,000-\$79,000: 11 (10.5%)
	\$80,000-\$99,000: 6 (5.7%)
	\$100,000+: 21 (20%)

Measures

Emotional Labor Measure

To measure Emotional Labor, this study employed the Kruml-Geddes Emotional Labor Scale (Kruml & Geddes, 2000) (see Appendix C) utilizing a five-point Likert-type scale with reverse coding as needed for analysis. The emotional labor scale has been found to have adequate reliability in previous studies (Kruml & Geddes, 2000; Miller & Koesten, 2008), ranging from emotive effort reliabilities of .75 (Miller & Koesten, 2008) to .76 (Kruml & Geddes, 2000b) and emotive dissonance reliabilities of .72 (Kruml & Geddes, 2000b) to .87 (Miller & Koesten, 2008). Questions focused on relevant and specific areas of emotional labor that participants may experience in the work environment. Aspects of emotional labor measured by this scale concentrated on the categories of emotive dissonance and emotive effort. Emotive dissonance was analyzed through the following series of questions measured on a five-point scale with responses ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree:”

1. I show the same feelings to customers that I feel inside.
2. The emotions I show the customer match what I truly feel.
3. I have to cover up my true feelings when dealing with customers.

4. I try not to show customers the emotions I truly feel inside.

Emotive effort was analyzed through the following series of questions measured on a five-point scale with responses ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree:”

1. I try to talk myself out of feelings that I really feel when helping customers.
2. I work at “conjuring up” the feelings I need to show customers.
3. I try to change my actual feelings to match those that I must express to customers.
4. When working with customers, I attempt to feel certain emotions that my company wants me to express

Burnout Measure

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996) was implemented to measure burnout concepts (see Appendix C). The MBI survey has been used in many studies since originally developed in 1981, including recent research examining connections between emotional labor and burnout (Kruml & Geddes, 2000a, b; Miller & Koesten, 2008). The MBI uses a seven-point Likert-type scale with response choices ranging from “never” to “everyday.” Reverse coding was used as needed for analysis. The MBI scale has been found to have high reliability in previous studies (Kruml & Geddes, 2000; Miller & Koesten, 2008), ranging from emotional exhaustion reliabilities of .88 (Miller & Koesten, 2008) to .91 (Kruml & Geddes, 2000a) and depersonalization reliabilities of .75 (Miller & Koesten, 2008) to .78 (Kruml & Geddes, 2000a) and lack of personal accomplishment reliabilities of .68 (Miller & Koesten, 2008) to .72 (Kruml & Geddes, 2000a). The three main aspects of burnout measures were categorized as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal

accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion was analyzed through the following series of questions measured on a seven-point scale with responses ranging from “never” to “everyday:”

1. I feel emotionally drained from my work.
2. I feel used up at the end of the workday.
3. I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.
4. Working with people all day is really a strain for me.
5. I feel burned out from my work.
6. I feel very energetic.
7. I feel I’m working too hard on my job.
8. I feel frustrated by my job.
9. Working with people directly puts too much stress on me.
10. I feel like I’m at the end of my rope.

Depersonalization was analyzed through the following series of questions measured on a seven-point scale with responses ranging from “never” to “everyday:”

1. I feel I treat some recipients (clients) as if they were impersonal objects.
2. I’ve become more callous toward people since I took this job.
3. I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally.
4. I don’t really care what happens to some recipients (clients).
5. I feel recipients (clients) blame me for some of their problems.

Perceived lack of personal accomplishment was analyzed through the following series of questions measured on a seven-point scale with responses ranging from “never” to “everyday:”

1. I can easily understand how my recipients (clients) feel about things.
2. I deal very effectively with the problems of my recipients (clients).
3. I feel I’m positively influencing other people’s lives through my work.
4. I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with my recipients (clients).
5. I feel exhilarated after working closely with my recipients (clients).
6. I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.

Questions specifically focused on emotive dissonance were analyzed in three separate tests to examine the relationship of dissonance to emotional exhaustion, then depersonalization and finally to the lack of personal accomplishment. Likewise, questions focused on emotive effort were analyzed in relationship to the same questions regarding emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of accomplishment.

Chapter Four

RESULTS

While examining the influence of emotional labor on the experience of burnout among real estate sales professionals, this study tested two hypotheses. The research question and hypotheses were tested through linear regression analyses to determine correlations. The two components of emotional labor, emotive dissonance and emotive effort, were tested as the independent variables in relationship to burnout. The three dependent variable components of burnout were emotional exhaustion, perceived lack of personal accomplishment and depersonalization. Hypothesis one predicted that higher reports of emotive dissonance would relate to higher reports of burnout components. Hypothesis two predicted that higher reports of emotive effort would relate to lower reports of burnout components.

Emotive Dissonance

Emotional exhaustion

A linear regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the predictive value of emotive dissonance for the emotional exhaustion for real estate sales professionals (see Table 2). The regression equation for predicting emotional exhaustion is

$$\textit{Emotional exhaustion} = .236 \textit{ emotive dissonance} + 2.100$$

The 95% confidence interval for the slope, .019 to .453, does not contain the value of zero, and therefore emotional exhaustion is significantly related to emotive dissonance.

As predicted in hypothesis one real estate sales professionals with higher emotive dissonance tended to have higher emotional exhaustion reports: $F(1,103) = 4.636, p < .05$. Accuracy in predicting emotive dissonance was moderate. The correlation between

emotional exhaustion and emotive dissonance was $r = .208$. Approximately 4.3% of the variance of emotive dissonance was accounted for by its linear relationship with emotional exhaustion.

Table 2 Results of Regression Analyses for Emotive Dissonance

Dependent variable	Squared correlation coefficient (R^2) for equation	F value for equation	Standardized beta for emotive dissonance (t value in parentheses)
Emotional exhaustion	.043	4.636*	.208* (2.153)
Reduced personal accomplishment	.024	5.556	-.156 (-1.599)
Depersonalization	.011	1.165	.106 (1.079)

*Significant value, $p < .05$

Lack of personal accomplishment

A linear regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the predictive value of emotive dissonance for the lack of personal accomplishment for real estate sales professionals (see Table 2). The regression equation for predicting lack of personal accomplishment is

$$\text{Lack of personal accomplishment} = -.150 \text{ emotive dissonance} + 6.660$$

The 95% confidence interval for the slope, $-.335$ to $.036$ does contain the value of zero, and therefore lack of personal accomplishment is not significantly related to emotive dissonance. Contrary to hypothesis one, real estate sales professionals with higher emotive dissonance tended to have lower lack of personal accomplishment reports: $F(1,103) = 2.556, p > .05$. The correlation between lack of personal accomplishment and emotive dissonance was $r = -.156$.

Depersonalization

A linear regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the predictive value of emotive dissonance for the depersonalization for real estate sales professionals (see Table 2). The regression equation for predicting depersonalization is

$$\text{Depersonalization} = .092 \text{ emotive dissonance} + 1.373$$

The 95% confidence interval for the slope, -.077 to .262 does contain the value of zero, and therefore depersonalization is not significantly related to emotive dissonance.

Contrary to hypothesis one real estate sales professionals with higher emotive dissonance tended to have lower depersonalization reports: $F(1,103) = 1.165, p > .05$. The correlation between depersonalization and emotive dissonance was $r = .106$.

Emotive Effort

Emotional exhaustion

A linear regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the predictive value of emotive effort for the emotional exhaustion for real estate sales professionals (see Table 3). The regression equation for predicting emotional exhaustion is

$$\text{Emotional exhaustion} = .249 \text{ emotive effort} + 2.008$$

The 95% confidence interval for the slope, .001 to .498 does not contain the value of zero, and therefore emotional exhaustion is significantly related to emotive effort.

Contrary to hypothesis two real estate sales professionals with higher emotive effort tended to have higher emotional exhaustion reports: $F(1,103) = 3.96, p < .05$. Accuracy in predicting emotive effort was weak. The correlation between emotional exhaustion and emotive effort was $r = .192$. Approximately 3.7% of the variance of emotive effort was accounted for by its linear relationship with emotional exhaustion.

Table 3 Results of Regression Analyses for Emotive Effort

Dependent variable	Squared correlation coefficient (R^2) for equation	F value for equation	Standardized beta for emotive effort (t value in parentheses)
Emotional exhaustion	.037	3.963*	.192* (1.991)
Reduced personal accomplishment	.054	5.837*	-.232* (-2.416)
Depersonalization	.032	3.409	.179 (1.846)

*Significant value, $p < .05$

Lack of personal accomplishment

A linear regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the predictive value of emotive effort for the lack of personal accomplishment for real estate sales professionals (see Table 3). The regression equation for predicting the lack of personal accomplishment is

$$\text{Lack of personal accomplishment} = -.254 \text{ emotive effort} + 6.994$$

The 95% confidence interval for the slope, -.462 to -.045 does not contain the value of zero, and therefore lack of personal accomplishment is significantly related to emotive effort (see Table 3). Contrary to hypothesis two real estate sales professionals with higher emotive effort tended to have higher lack of personal accomplishment reports: $F(1,103) = 5.837, p < .05$. Accuracy in predicting emotive effort was moderate. The correlation between lack of personal accomplishment and emotive effort was $r = -.232$.

Approximately 5.4% of the variance of emotive effort was accounted for by its linear relationship with lack of personal accomplishment.

Depersonalization

A linear regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the predictive value of emotive effort for depersonalization for real estate sales professionals (see Table 3). The regression equation for predicting depersonalization is

$$\text{Depersonalization} = .178 \text{ emotive effort} + 1.104$$

The 95% confidence interval for the slope, -.013 to .369 does contain the value of zero, and therefore emotional exhaustion is not significantly related to emotive effort. As predicted in hypothesis two real estate sales professionals with higher emotive effort tended to have lower depersonalization reports: $F(1,103) = 3.409, p > .05$. The correlation between depersonalization and emotive effort was $r = .179$.

Summary

The research question for this study asked if emotional labor influences burnout among real estate sales professionals. The analysis results indicated that some components of emotional labor did influence some components of burnout, thereby providing partial support for both hypotheses. Emotive dissonance was found to be positively correlated to emotional exhaustion. Hypothesis one was supported by this finding as this hypothesis predicted that emotive dissonance would positively correlate to burnout. However, emotive dissonance was found to be negatively correlated to perceived lack of personal accomplishment and depersonalization thereby failing to support hypothesis one. Emotive effort was found to be positively correlated to emotional exhaustion and perceived lack of personal accomplishment. Hypothesis two was not supported by these two findings as this hypothesis predicted that emotive effort

would have a negative correlation to burnout. However, emotive effort was found to be negatively correlated to depersonalization, thereby supporting hypothesis two.

Chapter Five

DISCUSSION

Emotional labor, as a form of managed and altered feelings among workers, is an important element of jobs which rely on interactions with other persons. However, existing research has minimally examined the potential effects of emotional labor on cases of burnout. Prior research has typically examined emotional labor in the context of particular human service roles, such as those studies focused on common service level jobs (Abiala, 1999; Fiebig & Kramer, 1995; Hochschild, 1983). Additionally, few studies have compared emotional labor and burnout (Kruml & Geddes, 2000; Miller & Koesten, 2008). In response to this gap in literature, the current study examined the influence of emotional labor on instances of burnout among a seldom studied group of emotion workers—real estate sales professionals.

Specifically, this study described and tested the components of emotional labor defined as emotive dissonance and emotive effort in relation to their relative influence on burnout. The burnout components of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a lack of personal accomplishment functioned as dependent variables in relation to the emotional labor components. The study advanced one research question and two hypotheses with results providing both support and challenges to the hypotheses. This chapter addresses major findings and implications of this study.

From a review of the literature, one research question was advanced. The research question investigated the influence of emotional labor on the experience of burnout. Hypothesis one predicted that higher levels of emotive dissonance would correspond with higher levels of burnout. In order to test hypothesis one emotive

dissonance was examined in relationship to each component of burnout – emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment. Hypothesis two predicted that higher levels of emotive effort would correspond with lower levels of burnout. In order to test hypothesis two emotive effort was examined in relationship with each component of burnout. Findings indicated that emotive dissonance and emotive effort each influence burnout in some, but not all, relationships. A more detailed discussion of the findings from this study pertaining to the relationships between emotional labor and burnout ensues. The discussion begins with general discourse regarding emotional labor among real estate sales professionals, then transitions to the specific implications regarding emotive dissonance, and finally, reviews specific implications regarding emotive effort. Communication theories related to identification and empathy surface throughout the discussion.

Emotional Labor

Literature pertaining to emotional labor emphasizes the necessity of acting and assumes that workers are *required* to display certain feelings (Hochschild, 1983; Kruml & Geddes, 2000 a, b). Interestingly, the findings in this study indicate that real estate sales professionals may rarely feel *required* to display feelings in prescribed ways. This finding might be explained by the autonomous nature of real estate sales work. Real estate sales professionals work independently and must motivate and direct themselves with flexible, inconsistent work hours. As self-employed, independent contractors real estate sales professionals operate with little or no supervision and choose how to conduct themselves professionally. Autonomous work decisions may include choices such as: when to work in the office versus at home versus in the field, when and how many hours

to work, what attire is appropriate, how to contact potential and existing clients (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008; Edwards, 1997). The independent employment status of real estate sales professionals alters the emotional labor experience; studies exploring other types of sales professions might find widely varying results. Although emotional labor may not appear in the form of strict or pronounced requirements, findings indicate that real estate sales professionals do experience emotional labor as they manage and project appropriate emotions during the maintenance of client relationships.

Hochschild (1983) described emotional labor as a type of acting characterized by either deep acting or surface acting. Deep acting suggests that feelings are internalized by the worker as they strive to truly feel necessary emotions; the concept of deep acting subsequently became connected to emotive effort (Hochschild, 1983; Kruml & Geddes, 2000). Again, due to the independent nature of the real estate sales profession, emotional displays of the real estate sales person may align more closely with their true feelings, as contrasted with workers in more structured occupations. Therefore, since strict requirements for emotional expectations are not mandated by management, real estate sales professionals may simply need to regulate emotions at their own personal discretion rather than adopting and internalizing prescribed emotional display rules. When personally choosing how to display emotions, real estate sales professionals may have greater opportunities to enact more authentic feelings. Implications relating to the choice and flexibility of emotional displays align with recent findings from a study on financial planners (Miller & Koesten, 2008). Miller and Koesten view financial planners as less “controlled” than service workers previously studied in terms of emotional labor because

the planners surveyed reported more autonomy with client contacts and business relationships.

The autonomous circumstances associated with the real estate sales profession serve to differentiate this study from previous emotional labor research. Very few studies on emotional labor have explored a population of workers with high autonomy and professional latitude such as real estate sales professionals, thus prompting a need for future inquiries among various types of independent workers and sales professionals. A discussion follows of the findings related to both emotive dissonance and emotive effort.

Emotive Dissonance

Predicting a positive correlation between emotive dissonance and burnout, hypothesis one was partially supported by the positive correlation between emotive dissonance and emotional exhaustion—one component of burnout. However, hypothesis two lacked support for the predicted connection between emotive dissonance and depersonalization as well as the lack of personal accomplishment—the other two components of burnout. Therefore, these findings suggest that emotive dissonance (and surface acting) may encourage the prevalence of some, but not all components of burnout. The prediction in this study pertaining to emotive dissonance and burnout was largely based on connections supported by the work of preceding researchers. Kruml and Geddes (2000) found that workers who use surface acting were more likely to feel phony or inauthentic, thereby contributing to increased negative emotional experiences. In the context of emotional labor, the notion of surface acting considers the outward expression or display of emotions portrayed by workers who do not actually feel the emotions themselves. Kruml and Geddes found that workers involved in surface acting were

predicted to have higher levels of burnout due to the influence of emotive dissonance.

Dissonance, as previously discussed, relates to surface acting as it occurs when workers feel inauthentic or phony (Kruml & Geddes, 2000a,b).

The connection found in this study between emotive dissonance and emotional exhaustion suggests that the conflicting feelings experienced while displaying inauthentic emotions increase burnout as defined by exhaustion, at least emotionally if not also physically, for real estate sales professionals. This finding supports results found by Kruml and Geddes (2000a) which indicated that workers suffer more personal distress when engaged in less authentic activities. The positive correlation between emotive dissonance and emotional exhaustion suggests that real estate sales professionals encounter more internal discord when portraying feelings they do not actually possess.

Conflicting or dissonant feelings may become problematic for real estate sales professionals due to the highly personalized nature of their work; real estate sales professionals often value their work interactions and view the profession as helping people (Wharton,1996). Workers involved in helping professions often utilize empathy while interacting with clients (Miller, Stiff & Ellis, 1988). Real estate sales professionals may feel obliged to enact empathetic understandings with their clients. Empathy is the “capacity to feel what someone else feels” (Harris, 2002, p. 319). Griffin (2006) described empathy as the skill of “temporarily laying aside our views and values and entering into another’s world” (p. 32). The sheer attempt to empathize with clients and the sense of an obligatory need for empathy on the job may contribute to increased levels of emotive dissonance among real estate sales professionals. Although the real estate sales professional may try to empathize with the client, the sales professional may

struggle to honestly comprehend the feelings or world-views of the client. Therefore if the real estate sales professional views empathy as an essential part of client interaction, then the failure or inability to enact adequate empathetic understanding could amplify feelings of internal conflict or dissonance. Negative emotions may surface for the real estate sales professional after failed attempts to empathize as the sales professional strives to help the client with critical personal decisions. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2008) cites the purchase or sale of a home as one of the most substantial and complicated financial events most people ever experience. Assuming that many real estate sales persons view their work as crucial to helping clients with major life choices (i.e., the purchase/sale of a home), the conflict of internal versus external emotions might easily heighten emotionally exhaustive experiences.

Wharton (1996) found that “the realtor must separate her personal feelings from her professional demeanor, and manage the emotion-charged experiences of clients” (p. 227). Emotive dissonance directly relates to the separation of personal and professional feelings. Furthermore, Wharton goes on to note that “the need to manipulate clients, or the knowledge that the public perception of realtors includes this element, may make the salesperson feel dishonorable” (p. 227). Considering that real estate sales professionals encounter perceptions of negative attributes such as manipulation and dishonor, the link between emotive dissonance and emotional exhaustion becomes explicable.

Identification theory lends support to the potential danger of working in a professional role that entails a negative public image. Hogg and Terry (2000) maintain that social identity theory links organizational and social identities with one’s sense of self. As the real estate sales professional identifies with the perceptions and images

ascribed to their profession they must accept or reject identities as appropriate to their personal sense of self. If the real estate sales professional feels dissatisfied with his/her professional identity they may experience increased dissonance. Regardless of the actual integrity of individual real estate sales professional, conflicting feelings along with and the knowledge of negative public perceptions can increase emotive dissonance and thereby escalate emotional exhaustion.

Another explanation of the positive correlation between emotive dissonance and emotional exhaustion might suggest that by surface acting the real estate sales person weakens awareness of their own personal/internal feelings. Hochschild (1983) proposed that workers who withdraw from emotional and feeling experiences risk becoming emotionally “dead.” Sales professionals who extensively suppress internal or personal feelings as they surface act may lose some ability to experience genuine emotions. Just as becoming too closely identified with a particular role entails emotional risks, the lack of identification can result in emotional withdrawal or identity confusion (Ashforth & Humphry, 1993). As similarly noted by Hochschild, the reduction in feelings might seem to spare the worker from burnout in the short term, but the subsequent numbness and loss of feeling may eventually lead to emotional exhaustion. Hochschild concurred that “when we lose access to feeling, we lose a central means of interpreting the world around us” (p. 188). A loss of emotional awareness might contribute to the explanation of the relationship between dissonance and emotional exhaustion.

Contrary to hypothesis one, no significant relationships were reported between emotive dissonance and the other two burnout variables of depersonalization and the lack of personal accomplishment. The inherent and recognized performance requirements

associated with sales professions may account for the lack of relationship. The sales profession involves work requiring good interpersonal skills, “impression management” (Leathers, 1988), “adaptive selling behavior” (Franke & Park, 1996; McFarland, Challagalla & Shervani, 2006), “influence tactics” (McFarland et. al, 2006), and various other performance-related expectations. The accepted image of sales work as a sort of performance or acting role might suggest that while emotive dissonance is present among sales professionals, the surface or external displays of emotions establish fewer negative outcomes for sales professionals as opposed to other types of workers. Since sales professionals recognize the importance and prevalence of acting and portraying appropriate emotions during sales situations, they may be more comfortable with the required management and display of emotions.

Authenticity while managing emotion leads to decreased feelings of emotive dissonance. Hochschild (1983) explained that emotive dissonance refers to the conflict of feelings between what is expressed externally and what is believed internally. Real estate sales professionals, while they still reported some levels of dissonance in this study, may experience less conflict between internally and externally expressed feelings due to the inherent autonomy of their professional choices. Since real estate sales professionals individually make choices regarding professional conduct and client interactions they may feel more authentic in professional encounters than other types of human service workers, thereby decreasing emotive dissonance.

Emotive Effort

Based largely on previously supported research findings, hypothesis two predicted a negative correlation between emotive effort and burnout variables. Previous research

indicated that workers who develop and actually internalize feelings considered appropriate for their jobs were likely to have more positive emotional experiences (Hochschild, 1983; Kruml & Geddes, 2000 a, b). The notion of deep acting ties to the internalization of feelings necessary for work roles and was associated with emotive effort because workers must exert effort in order to subsume the required feelings as their own. Workers involved in deep acting were predicted in past studies to have lower levels of burnout as an influence of emotive effort, due to the disassociation with dissonance, where workers feel inauthentic or phony (Kruml & Geddes, 2000 a,b). However, hypothesis two, which predicted a negative correlation between emotive effort and burnout, was not supported in this study. Instead, the real estate sales professionals in this study reported emotive effort as having a positive correlation between two burnout variables – emotional exhaustion and lack of personal accomplishment.

The connection between emotive effort and emotional exhaustion suggests that the effort exerted to internalize and display appropriate feelings on the job increases burnout as defined by exhaustion, at least emotionally if not also physically, of real estate sales professionals. This correlation indicates that some real estate sales professionals invest themselves so emotionally with clients and sales projects that they are more prone to experiencing emotional exhaustion. Empathetic efforts to understand or feel the experiences and emotions of the client may account for some of the positive correlation between emotive effort and emotional exhaustion. Miller et. al (1988) found that the use of empathetic concern contributes to predictions of burnout in human service occupations. Although deep acting, as an extended effort to feel and display more authentic emotions, may direct real estate sales professionals toward more genuine and

honest encounters, the increased exertion to feel appropriately prescribed emotions may deplete professional energy. Wharton (1996) identified the “rollercoaster” of feelings experienced by real estate professionals, a notion which could lend support to the logical connection between strong exertions of effort and instances of exhaustion.

Another explanation for the positive correlation between emotive effort and emotional exhaustion implies that by deep acting the real estate sales person weakens the professional separation protecting them from intimate interactions with the client. Hochschild (1983) proposed that workers who become overly attached to clients may experience higher stress and burnout because rejections and negativity may be viewed as personally injurious. The intimate and personalized nature of real estate sales work, in which sales professionals work in the clients’ home and also assist in searching for the clients’ future home, may provide further insight for proposals which connect strong interpersonal interactions with increased exhaustion among real estate sales professionals.

Emotional labor, and the manipulation of the personal self by the experience of enacting expected emotions, connects to identification theory as emotions often reflect an individual’s core identity (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). Furthermore, Ashforth and Humphrey explain that emotional reactions mainly help people connect with others and make sense of situations, thereby strengthening identification. Furthermore, Ashforth and Humphrey warn that “deep acting may distort these (emotional) reactions and impair one’s sense of authentic self” (p. 97). Eventually, personal identity confusion may not only result in a loss of self-understanding but also an inability to experience authentic emotion.

Job “spill-over” refers to the lack of division between personal life and work responsibilities (Maslach, 1982). Maslach suggests that the continuous effort involved with an intermingling of work and personal life appears to increase instances of burnout. As real estate sales professionals combine personal and professional identities through job spill-over they can weaken stress management abilities. For example, the real estate sales professional inadvertently combines personal/professional identity as they constantly seek new clients and sales opportunities, even when supposedly engaged in non-work tasks (Edwards, 1997). The relentless emotional management involved with the intermingling of work and personal life appears to increase instances of burnout (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993).

The interconnectedness between personal and professional life of the real estate sales person may account for the negative correlation between emotive effort and depersonalization found in this study. For example, as the professional exerts more effort toward managing emotional encounters with clients, they can indeed forge personal, sometimes meaningful relationships. The development of personal relationships and friendships in work settings may balance other negative emotions and therefore minimize depersonalization.

The reported positive correlation from this study between emotive effort and the lack of personal accomplishment presents an interesting consideration in the context of sales professionals because unlike other human service workers, personal accomplishment is often measured simply in terms of sales numbers and commission checks. The measurement of personal accomplishment for other types of people-oriented occupations might consider accomplishments in terms of the quality of human

interactions, as opposed to sales numbers. Granted, quality human interactions may also lead to higher sales numbers and commission checks for the sales professional, but these workers invariably measure performance based on numeric outcomes (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008; Edwards, 1997). An explanation for the positive correlation between emotive effort and the lack of personal accomplishment might emphasize the numeric context of accomplishment measures for sales professionals. Although a real estate sales professional might exert large amounts of effort toward appropriate emotional displays, they may be dissatisfied with their sales numbers and commission checks and therefore report a lack of personal accomplishment. In terms of identification theory, the real estate sales professional identifies personal success with increased sales numbers. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) note that “identification, however, carries an emotional risk: It may psychologically bind one to the role such that one’s well-being becomes more or less yoked to perceived successes *and* failures in the role” (p. 107). A lack of personal accomplishment based on perceived failure with sales goals, contrasted with the interpersonal measures assumed in previous emotional labor research regarding human service work, might account for the reported lack of accomplishment more readily than primarily attributing this dimension of burnout to emotional labor. However, the emotional displays of the real estate sales professional so closely reflect his/her interpersonal competencies as well as an individual’s appropriate ‘acting’ behaviors in such a way that numeric sales success is ultimately an interwoven and interdependent association.

Practical Implications

The principal inferences of this study may advocate a sort of ‘emotional equilibrium’ among sales professionals. Emotional labor appears to influence and increase emotional exhaustion in terms of both emotive dissonance (paired with surface acting) and emotive effort (paired with deep acting) among real estate sales professionals. One practical recommendation centers on the avoidance of extreme ends of the continuum of emotional labor variables. For example, often times the sales professional risks increased emotional exhaustion from either direction by experiencing an excess of dissonance or exerting too much effort. Admittedly, the idea of emotional equilibrium is highly subjective so professionals must personally determine their own healthy levels of emotion management. Kruml and Geddes (2000b) note that “in accordance with Hochschild, various job and personal characteristics influence how one performs emotion labor, which furnishes additional validity evidence for emotive dissonance and emotive effort” (p.184). Career advice directed specifically to real estate sales professionals recommends maintaining “psychological balance” (Edwards, 1997) and warns against burnout. The risk of identifying too strongly with the professional role, or intertwining and confusing professional and personal identities, also aligns with the recommendation of an emotional equilibrium as sales professionals manage multiple identities. As workers realize the connection between emotional labor variables and emotional exhaustion they may become more self-aware and adopt some preventative behaviors. Similarly, organizations can use enhanced understandings about emotional labor and burnout in an effort to encourage emotional equilibrium.

Sales professionals often undergo extensive training to learn effective sales techniques as improvement through training is believed to enrich interactions with clients and enhance sales numbers (Beginners, 2001; Leathers, 1988). Organizations and individuals should consider the implementation of training designed to establish emotional equilibriums in reference to emotion management surrounding client interactions. By improving emotional aspects of the work experience, sales professionals would likely notice lower indications of emotional exhaustion offering benefits such as increased sales success, longer careers, greater focus and creativity.

Previous research supports the suggestion of an emotional equilibrium. Hochschild (1983) and then Kruml and Geddes (2000b) claim that the healthiest workers are those who can effectively utilize both deep *and* surface acting. As an emphasis on healthy living and healthcare in both personal and organizational settings continues to rise, workers and businesses should consider strategies for creating an emotional equilibrium. By averting some of the negative psychological and physiological complications associated with emotional labor and subsequently emotional exhaustion, sales professionals and various types of workers might live and work more fruitfully.

Limitations and Future Research

Despite the noteworthy considerations contributed by this study, some limitations must be illuminated. First, data was collected through self-reported survey methods. The standardized items often used in survey research, while attempting to reach a very wide base of respondents, may actually cause the researcher to miss what is most appropriate to a particular population (Baxter & Babbie, 2004). For example, one of the emotional labor survey items said “I work at ‘conjuring up’ the feelings I need to show customers”

(see appendix C). The notion of ‘conjuring up’ feelings was apparently deemed inappropriate to the participants in this study as was evidenced by a low reliability related to this question. The objectionable aspects of this particular question in the context of real estate sales professionals reflects the autonomous nature of the profession—perhaps independent sales professionals do not experience, or at least do not admit to, feelings of falsehood or ‘conjuring up.’ While the overall questions included in this survey were tested with adequate reliabilities in previous research (Kruml & Geddes, 2000a,b; Miller & Koesten, 2008), the question suitability and model fit were doubted occasionally during the course of this study.

Limitations regarding sample size may have weakened the accuracy of statistical testing in this study. Rather than the 105 participant sample size of this study, future studies should consider collecting a sample of 200 participants. Conversely, Kruml and Geddes (2000a,b) explained that an inflated MLE of over 300 participants perhaps made their emotional labor scale results excessively sensitive. Therefore, a compromise between the approximate 100 participants in the current study and the 300 participants in the Kruml and Geddes study may prove most effective in future research.

A further limitation of the self-reported survey pertains to the social desirability of disclosing information on an emotion topic. Although the surveys were confidential and anonymous, participants are often hesitant to report any negative feelings related to their professions. Similarly, the electronic distribution of surveys along with simple volunteer-based participation might have limited the type of respondents who chose to participate. For example, the sales professionals who are indeed struggling with aspects of emotional labor or burnout may choose to ignore the survey, therefore limiting the sample to

participants currently comfortable with their work situations. Future studies of this nature should consider collecting surveys at office meetings or trainings where the researcher could offer an incentive for immediate paper-based participation. By attending meetings or trainings the researcher would have access to all levels of workers, including those who may be struggling at work, and might then collect a more accurate set of responses.

Economic dynamics occurring during the time of survey distribution may also impact questionnaire responses. This survey was administered to real estate agents in early March 2008, a time when real estate markets were declining nationwide as compared to the previous years. Existing homes sales in 2007 were at the lowest reported level since 2002 (CBS News, 2007). Despite hopeful outlooks from real estate organizations, economists predicted that 2008 will also yield weak sales numbers and falling prices with worsening problems if the economy sinks into recession (CBS News, 2007). Survey results may vary widely in future real estate sales research studies based on the stability of housing markets and economic situations.

Future investigations of emotional labor and burnout among sales professionals should include additional demographic information during the survey collection and for use in testing. Additional demographic questions might include: hours worked per week, levels of training for the job, size and structure of the organization, home environment (i.e. marital and family status, dual income household). Analyzing demographic information in connection to both emotional labor and burnout variables might provide more in-depth explanations for outcomes. Similarly, future research should consider the influence of gender in regards to emotion topics.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of emotional labor on the experience of burnout among sales professionals. Hypothesis one predicted that emotive dissonance, as a component of emotional labor, was likely to increase the prevalence of burnout. Hypothesis two predicted that emotive effort, as a component of emotional labor, would decrease the prevalence of burnout. Although only partial support was found for each of the hypotheses in this study, this investigation led to increased understandings regarding the relationship between emotional labor and burnout among real estate sales professionals.

Notably, this study found a positive correlation between *both* emotional labor components, emotive dissonance and emotive effort, with the burnout component of emotional exhaustion. Based on the findings of previous studies and the data collected during this study, the concept of emotional equilibrium was advanced as a proposal for avoiding burnout while performing emotional labor. The recommendation of emotional equilibrium stems from the findings linking emotive dissonance (and surface acting) as well as emotive effort (and deep acting) to emotional labor and burnout, thereby revealing a need for balance rather than a preference for one component over another. For example, the conclusions suggest that emotional equilibrium can help those workers engaged in emotional labor by avoiding extremes of either in-authenticity (as linked with emotive dissonance) or over-exertion (as linked with emotive effort) during emotional encounters. These findings and suggestions provide broad implications for other sales professions and various types of autonomous work. Future studies in the area of

emotional labor will provide valuable organizational and occupational insights as researchers continue to fill research gaps through the development of this complex topic.

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Appendix A
Email Request to Participants

Subject: Brief participation requested

Hello! My name is Laura and I am a graduate student in communication at WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY. I am conducting academic research about the daily work of REAL ESTATE SALES AGENTS. This research project is for my Master's Thesis and I need to collect as many surveys as possible! Your participation as a Real Estate Agent is very important to the project. Please take a moment to fill out this survey – click link below - it takes about 15 minutes and all results are anonymous & confidential. The first part of the survey provides an official 'informed consent' document as required by the university. Please contact me or my advising professor with any questions!

CLICK BELOW >

<http://atech.wku.edu/phpESP/public/survey.php?name=RealEstateSurvey>

Thanks so much!!

Laura Rawlins

M.A. Student

Western Kentucky University

859-699-6769

laura.rawlins934@wku.edu

Jenifer Lewis, Ph.D.

Advising Professor

270-745-6578

jenifer.lewis@wku.edu

Appendix B
Follow-up Email Request to Participants

Subject: Last request – brief participation

Hello! Thanks so much to those who have already participated! Please just disregard if you have filled out this survey...My name is Laura and I am a graduate student in communication at WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY. I am conducting academic research about the daily work of REAL ESTATE SALES AGENTS. This research project is for my Master's Thesis and I need to collect as many surveys as possible! Your participation as a Real Estate Agent is very important to the project. Please take a moment to fill out this survey – click link below - it takes about 15 minutes and all results are anonymous & confidential. The first part of the survey provides an official 'informed consent' document as required by the university. Please contact me or my advising professor with any questions!

CLICK BELOW >

<http://atech.wku.edu/phpESP/public/survey.php?name=RealEstateSurvey>

Thanks so much!!

Laura Rawlins

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Appendix C Survey

This research project is focused on the emotional aspects of work for Real Estate Sales Professionals. An OFFICIAL explanation is provided in question 47 (WKU requires informed consent with participation in a survey). Contact Laura Rawlins with any questions at laura.rawlins934@wku.edu. Please answer questions honestly.

ALL SURVEYS ARE ANONYMOUS & CONFIDENTIAL.

What is your gender?

Female Male

Which age category best applies?

18 to 29 years old	30 to 39 years old	40 to 49 years old	50 to 59 years old	60 + years old
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How long have you worked as a Real Estate agent?

0 to 2 years	2 to 5 years	5 to 10 years	10 to 20 years	20+ years
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What is your average yearly income from Real Estate sales?

\$0	\$10,000	\$20,000	\$30,000	\$40,000	\$60,000	\$80,000	\$100,000
to	to	to	to	to	to	to	and
\$9,000	\$19,000	\$29,000	\$39,000	\$59,000	\$79,000	\$99,000	above

I try to talk myself out of feelings that I really feel when helping customers.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree

I work at “conjuring up” the feelings I need to show to customers.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree

I try to change my actual feelings to match those that I must express to customers.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree

When working with customers, I attempt to feel certain emotions that my company wants me to express.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree

I show the same feelings to customers that I feel inside.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree

The emotions I show the customer match what I truly feel.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree

I have to cover up my true feelings when dealing with customers.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree

I try not to show customers the emotions I truly feel inside.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree

I keep my relationship with customers strictly professional.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree

I get to know my customers personally.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree

I feel close to my customers.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree

I know each of my customers well.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree

The customers I deal with are pleasant.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree

The customers I deal with show emotions like anger and disgust.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree

I would describe my customers as neither pleasant nor unpleasant.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree

The customers I deal with are often frustrated and upset.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree

I am not given the latitude to speak to customers in ways I think are appropriate.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree

I am free to speak to customers in ways I think fit the situation.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree

I am not supposed to use my own judgment in deciding which emotions to show the customer.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree

I have the freedom to “tell it like it is” to the customer.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree

I feel emotionally drained from my work.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

I feel used up at the end of the workday.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

I can easily understand how my recipients feel about things.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

I feel I treat some recipients as if they were impersonal objects.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

Working with people all day is really a strain for me.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

I deal very effectively with the problems of my recipients.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

I feel burned out from my work.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

I've become more callous toward people since I took this job.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

I feel very energetic.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

I feel frustrated by my job.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

I feel I'm working too hard on my job.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

I don't really care what happens to some recipients.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

Working with people directly puts too much stress on me.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with my recipients.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

I feel exhilarated after working closely with my recipients.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

I feel like I'm at the end of my rope.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

In my work, I deal with emotional problems very calmly.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

I feel recipients blame me for some of their problems.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Project Title: An Investigation of Emotive Dissonance and Emotive Effort- Sales Professionals and Emotional Labor Investigator: Laura Rawlins, M.A. Student, WKU Department of Communication, 859-699-6769 You are being asked to participate in a

project conducted through Western Kentucky University. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to participate in this project. The investigator, Laura Rawlins, can explain to you in detail the purpose of the project, the procedures to be used, and the potential benefits and possible risks of participation. You may ask her any questions you have to help you understand the project. A basic explanation of the project is written below. Please read this explanation and email/call the researcher any questions you may have. If you then decide to participate in the project, please click on the electronic confirmation button to signify your consent as this is an electronic survey. You may print a copy of this form to keep.

1. Nature and Purpose of the Project: This survey collects information from sales professionals regarding their work roles and ways in which they perceive the management of emotion. The goal of this project is to obtain a clearer understanding of how sales professionals manage emotions and potential gain insight into the effects of emotion management in the work of sales professionals.
2. Explanation of Procedures: The online survey provided here asks questions regarding your work roles. Most questions are formatted with options ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. All data remains confidential and anonymous.
3. Discomfort and Risks: Survey questions are designed for simplicity and to collect honest answers while avoiding any potential discomfort. Due to the anonymous format of the online survey, you may complete this questionnaire at a time and place convenient to your situation without the knowledge or supervision of employers, co-workers, family members or the investigator.
4. Benefits: The collection of this information increases understandings about the role of emotions in the workplace. Your participation is important for developing accurate conclusions that may help employers and workers in the sales profession better understand work roles dealing with emotion management.
5. Confidentiality: All information collected via survey is anonymous and confidential. The data will be synthesized with other survey findings to generate some general conclusions.
6. Refusal/Withdrawal: Refusal to participate in this study will have no effect on any future services you may be entitled to from the University. Anyone who agrees to participate in this study is free to withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty. Please click the “I agree” icon to provide your consent or “I decline” icon if you choose not to participate. Please note that clicking “I agree” indicates also that you understand that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in an experimental procedure, and you believe that reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the known and potential but unknown risks.

THE DATED APPROVAL ON THIS CONSENT FORM INDICATES THAT THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY THE WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW BOARD
Sean Rubino, Compliance Manger TELEPHONE: (270) 745-4652 APPROVED: 1/11/08
EXPIRES: 5/15/08

This academic survey requires official informed consent as seen above. Do you agree to participate in this survey? Please select "Yes, I agree" or "No, I decline" then conclude by clicking "SUBMIT SURVEY".

Yes, I agree No, I decline