Between surface and deep acting: a strategy to get a good feeling at workplace

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Abstract. Emotional variables have been considered as a significant practice for organization. However, there is still need empirical confirmation to indicate how these emotional variables have a role in the workplace specially to interact with customer. This study aims to examine the influence of emotional intelligent on employee performance through the following mediator variables: surface acting, deep acting, work engagement and work burnout. Data collected from 121 employees of an insurance companies in Semarang City, Indonesia were empirically tested using WarpPLS 6.0. Respondents completed measures of the variables through questioner with the Likert scale. The findings revealed that emotional intelligent was mediated surface acting, deep acting, work engagement and work burnout in which it can increase employee performance.

1. Introduction
Competitive advantage is necessarily needed as the realization of evaluation and motivation for the increase of work performance. Further, it is used for knowing to what extent a company can meet the market demand in producing the goods and services and maintain the increase of company revenue and employee income. The competitive advantage is influenced by external and internal factors, emerge at a company so that a precise strategy should be implemented [1]. The competition usually occurs at the insurance company is in giving the services. They try to provide service excellent by giving extra services on the ease and convenience for customers. The excellent service should be supported by the availability of tough and professional employees as they play important roles when interacting with the customers. The employee is demanded to have more output or at least they can performance of each employee is crucial as they work at insurance companies that focus achieved the targeted output determined by the company. Having the target, a company needs to evaluate the work performance of its employees. Many companies often have low work performance of their employees as there is not any work engagement to their works [2]. The work engagement refers to the feeling and thought condition that does not only focus on an object, events, individual or behaviour, but also the condition that relates to the emotional intelligent aspect to improve the work performance. The employees with work engagement will have high engagement and great enthusiasm for their works and the success of the company. For providing excellent services, the employees are demanded to hide or suppress negative and express positive emotions.

Employee emotion has two dimensions; they are deep acting and surface acting. Judge et al [3] found that surface acting has more impact that can disturb the welfare of employees than deep acting. The changes in employee emotion can result in detrimental effect such as making the employee passive in working and the employee’s work performance decrease. When an employee expresses their surface acting, they experience emotional dissonance because of the differences between expression and feeling. Unfortunately, this can cause the employee’s work engagement low and it pushes the employee’s work burnout increase [4]. Thus, implementing surface acting on emotional dissonance enhances lower work engagement. However, the existence of a deep acting dimension which is in line with one’s expression can have less
cognitive than surface acting [5]. Kim [6] suggested that the emotion dimension of employee functions mainly as a partial mediator in a certain situation, specifically on service companies that have more chances to have bigger neurotic and burnout. Recently, a shifting paradigm led to the positive psychology perspective and a positive organizational behaviour. The research focuses more on work engagement as the opposite of work burnout [7]. This study is interested to be tested since it uses emotional intelligent and work engagement variables. Moreover, the emotional conditions benefit the organization by helping it gain a competitive advantage. While both of two variables of surface and deep acting have a role as partial mediators between emotional intelligent and work engagement have not been explored previously.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1. Intelligence Theory
The implementation and the use of science have important roles in the life of human activities. Physically, a human can meet his desire and needs systematically in the last hundred years [8]. However, it has not been sufficient yet as human also has others needs which have not been met yet. As modern science and technology are always updated, a human should have the ability to be adaptable and tough. Then, intelligence, characters, and skills are required for understanding, controlling, and leading their activities to achieve his goals of life. Those become the reasons for Thorndike to have research about how a human explores himself and exploits his ability so that he knows to maintain and manage his intelligence in working.

2.2. Emotion Regulation Theory
Emotion regulation as an ability owned by someone to assess, manage, and express the precise emotion to have the emotional balance. The high ability in managing the emotion will enable one to face stress in his life. Spector [9] explained that emotion regulation theory can be managed from two different points during one is interacting at the workplace; those points focus on antecedent, namely deep acting and response, namely, surface acting. Deep Acting occurs when an employee tries to change his perception about a situation both to lead attention or re-assess a situation to arise the desired emotion based on the rules [10]. While surface acting occurs when an employee tries to modify pretended emotion. Actually, he does not feel the emotion [11].

2.3. The JD-R Model (Job Demands-Resources Model)
The concept of work engagement is developed from the combination of JD-R model with the assumption that states all aspects in the work environment can be categorized as job demands and job resources. Those categories can have positive and negative impacts on work engagement [7]. Initially, the JD-R model is initiated from the emergence of the Demand Control Model theory, proposed by Karasek [12]. He stated that health problems on mental and physical can occur at the workplace when there are many high demanded works at the same time. Then, the control of work is low. The JD-R model was getting developed and developed in 2004. It was explored and developed by Schaufeli and Bakker. They also gave psychology nuances positively for the JD-R model. This means that the revision of the JD-R model does not only try to explain the negative psychology condition, such as work burnout, but also the positive one such as work engagement.

Nguyen et al. [13] stated that surface acting causes negative impact or high risk for an employee as it can threaten his self-image relate to skills, interests, and values [13]. Surface acting involves the changes of outward display of emotion so that the desired emotion can be expressed without significantly modifying the feelings of emotions to be different. Then, it can be a mediator for emotional intelligent and employee performance (Han et al., 2017).

H1: surface acting can mediate the correlation between emotional intelligent and employee.
The impact of deep acting for customers is the existence of satisfactory feeling from customers because of the employee services and they can be seen from their attitude and emotion. The emotion changes of the employee will result in detrimental effect and it can make the employee more passive and his performance dropped [15]. Besides, [16] and [17] argued that emotional intelligent has positive influence on deep acting dimension; then it also raises the performance of employee (Leventhal, 1976; Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Kim, Beehr, & Prewett, 2018).

**H2:** deep acting can mediate the correlation of emotional intelligent and employee performance.

The influence of emotional intelligent on work engagement correlates with the theory of behaviour activation. It views that if one’s behaviour or character is suitable in a situation, it will result in beneficial behaviours, such as having a positive response to an organization and giving better performance [18]. Work engagement that refers to a feeling condition and thought and focuses on an object, event, individual or behaviour should correlate with emotional intelligent and employee performance. An employee with his work engagement will have high involvement and enthusiasm for his works and the success of his company (Zhu et al., 2015).

**H3:** work engagement can mediate the correlation of emotional intelligent and employee performance.

Work burnout comes up because of stress relates to work and psychosocial at the work place [20]. An employee with overload work will influence him in providing his services to the customers [13]. Because this will impact on the drop of service quality and the interaction with customers, so in managing the emotion, an employee should have good emotional intelligent. In fact, it also has a role to decreases the work burnout and finally, the employee performance at the workplace can be maintained [21].

**H4:** work burnout can mediate the correlation between emotional intelligent and employee performance.

### 3. Method

The samples of this study were 121 respondents. In obtaining the samples, a probability sampling technique was implemented. Next, the methods to collect the data were used questioners with the Likert scale, 1-5, observation and interview. Those methods were for the employees. The instruments used the validity test with the loading factor ≥ 0.30 and discriminant by comparing the loading factor > cross-loading. The reliability test with the coefficient of composite reliability > 0.70 and the coefficient of alpha Cronbach > 0.60 could be stated as reliable. From 75 items of the test instrument, there were 75 questions, there were 3 items that were not valid with the combination of loading and cross-loading values < 0.30 so that the questions were not used. Then, after having the reliability test, it was stated that all the questions were reliable. The hypothesis test used was the resampling method and it was conducted by implementing T-Test in WarpPLS 6.0.

Surface acting was measured by using five items with the indicators were adapted from Diefendorff et al. (2005). The examples are: “I have a strategy to serve the customer precisely”, “I only express the emotion needed at the work office when facing the customers”, “and I express a good feeling when interacting with customers”. Next, the deep acting variable has four items with the indicators were adapted from Diefendorff et al. (2005). The examples are “I try to really express the emotion that should be expressed to the customers”, “I try hard to really feel the emotion needed when serving the customers”, “I try hard to feel the emotion that must be expressed to customers.”
Emotional intelligent was measured with 15 items from Wong and Law (2002) study. The examples are “I can manage my mind well”, “I always know my friends’ emotion from their behaviours”, “I always have goals for myself and try best to achieve them.” Work burnout was measured with nine items from Chan (2006) study. The example questions are “I feel exhausted after finishing my works”, “I feel tired when I get up in the morning and do my works at the following day”, “I do not have sympathy for others such as friends, relatives, and family because of my works.”

4. Results and Discussion
The respondents were male mostly (63%) with the age of 27 up to 30 years old. Their educational background was from under graduated program (59.5%) and 28.1% of respondents have worked for from 1 up to 4 years. The mean, deviation standard, and correlation are shown in table 1. The correlation between emotional intelligent and other variables are from 0.603 to 0.250 (ρ < 0.01) with the highest value of emotional intelligent (M = 60.32) and the highest scale of work performance of employee (23.94). Emotional intelligent has the highest score because the working time of respondents is less than 5 years. Also, the other variables that are: surface acting has a score of 17.12, deep acting has a score of 16.67, work engagement has a score of 56.67 and work performance has a score of 23.94.

Table 1. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Correlation among Variable

| Variable            | Mean | s.d. | EI | SA    | DA    | WE    | WB         | EP         |
|---------------------|------|------|----|-------|-------|-------|------------|------------|
| 1 Emotional intelligent | 60.32| 5.02 | 1  |       |       |       |            |            |
| 2 Surface Acting    | 17.12| 2.29 | 0.250|       |       |       |            |            |
| 3 Deep Acting       | 16.67| 1.91 | 0.574| 0.332 |       |       |            |            |
| 4 Work Engagement   | 56.67| 6.29 | 0.603| 0.257 | 0.486 | 1     |            |            |
| 5 Work Burnout      | 24.36| 2.30 | (0.037)| 0.055 | (0.067)| 0.028 | 1          |            |
| 6 Employee Performance | 23.94| 2.20 | 0.600| 0.093 | 0.479 | 0.680 | (0.162)    | 1          |

Table 2 shows that the fit model test and quality indices are done for knowing whether the model under study is fit. The criteria of the fit model and quality indices is rule of thumb so that the test result is not rigid and absolute. Then, table 2 illustrates that the Goodness of Fit Model has a good result to explain the correlation between latent variables and their assumption; then the next test that is hypothesis test can be done.

Table 2. The Fit Model Test and Quality Indices

| Fit Model and Quality Indices                  | Ideal | Analysis Results |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------|------------------|
| Average path coefficient (APC)                | p < 0.05 | P < 0.001       |
| Average R-squared (ARS)                       | p < 0.05 | P < 0.001       |
| Average adjusted R-squared (AARS)             | p < 0.05 | P < 0.001       |
| Average block VIF (AVIF)                      | ≤ 3.3 | 1.312           |
| Average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF)         | ≤ 3.3 | 1.981           |
| Tenenhaus GoF (GoF)                           | ≥ 0.1, | 0.355           |
| Sympss’s paradox ratio (SPR)                  | 1     | 1.000           |
| R-squared contribution ratio (RSCR)           | 1     | 1.000           |
| Item | Factor loading | AVE | Cronbach’s alpha | CR  |
|------|----------------|-----|------------------|-----|
| EI   |                |     |                  |     |
| EI1  | 0.751          | 0.570 | 0.840   | 0.870 |
| EI2  | 0.747          |     |                  |     |
| EI3  | 0.681          |     |                  |     |
| EI4  | 0.606          |     |                  |     |
| EI5  | 0.329          |     |                  |     |
| EI6  | 0.415          |     |                  |     |
| EI7  | 0.221          |     |                  |     |
| EI8  | 0.534          |     |                  |     |
| EI9  | 0.377          |     |                  |     |
| EI10 | 0.489          |     |                  |     |
| EI11 | 0.564          |     |                  |     |
| EI12 | 0.602          |     |                  |     |
| EI13 | 0.610          |     |                  |     |
| EI14 | 0.648          |     |                  |     |
| EI15 | 0.669          |     |                  |     |
| SA   |                |     |                  |     |
| SA1  | 0.593          | 0.585 | 0.518   | 0.721 |
| SA2  | 0.676          |     |                  |     |
| SA3  | 0.575          |     |                  |     |
| SA4  | 0.522          |     |                  |     |
| SA5  | 0.549          |     |                  |     |
| DA   |                |     |                  |     |
| DA1  | 0.847          | 0.824 | 0.843   | 0.895 |
| DA2  | 0.819          |     |                  |     |
| DA3  | 0.822          |     |                  |     |
| DA4  | 0.808          |     |                  |     |
| WE   |                |     |                  |     |
| WE1  | 0.759          | 0.623 | 0.876   | 0.897 |
| WE2  | 0.751          |     |                  |     |
Table 3 depicts the results of the convergent validity test of variables’ statements. The table also illustrates that there are 4 items of question are not valid because of factor loading ≤ 0.30. Knowing the result, those 4 items are dropped. Fortunately, that decision does not create any problem as there are still other valid questions that represent the variables. And can measure the problems understudy with the real condition. The reliability test can provide a consistent concept measurement without any bias. However, the criteria of Composite reliability coefficients and Cronbach’s alpha coefficients above 0.5 should be filled. Table 3 shows that the instrument in the study has met the criteria of reliability test and the root value of the same AVE variable is higher than the root value of another AVE variable.

This research tests the mediation mechanism of emotional intelligent on employee performance through surface acting, deep acting, work engagement and work burnout with the confidence level of 5%. Based on the calculation of WarpPLS 6.0, if the accepted hypothesis value is p < 0.05, the research model can be written as follow:
The results of the table show that the direct influence of emotional intelligence to employee performance is positive and significant with $\beta = 0.17$, and $p = 0.03$; emotional intelligence to surface acting is positive and significant with $\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$; and surface acting to employee performance has $\beta = -0.01$, and $p = 0.45$. Then, the mediation analysis with involvement of surface acting can yield $\beta = 0.616 < 0.17$ (direct influence), $p < 0.001$. $H_1$ is supported. This means that surface acting can a mediator of emotional intelligence and employee performance. Wu dan Shie (2017) stated that surface acting can be a mediator for emotional intelligence and work performance. In other words, an employee with emotional intelligence and the involvement of surface acting can increase employee performance. Thus, surface acting can increase work performance (Pearce et al., 2006; Wu & Hu, 2013; Bratnicka, 2015; Xu et al., 2015).

Next, the findings also show that the direct influence of emotional intelligence to employee performance is positive and significant with the score of $\beta = 0.17$, and $p = 0.03$; emotional intelligence to deep acting is positive and significant with the score of $\beta = 0.53$, and $p < 0.001$; and deep acting to employee performance is positive and significant with the score of $\beta = 0.19$, $p < 0.00$. Moreover, the mediation analysis with the involvement of deep acting can have $\beta = 0.271 > 0.17$ (direct influence), $p < 0.001$. Thus, $H_2$ is supported. This means deep acting can be a mediator of emotional intelligence to employee performance. In fact, it is necessary to have not only the dimension of surface acting, but also deep acting to make the work performance of employee rise. An employee who can serve a customer by using deep acting, means that he can have emotional intelligence. Then, that intelligence can rise work performance (Jung & Yoon, 2014; Mineo, 2014; Xu et al., 2015).

Table 4. The Summary of Findings

| No | Explanatory Variable | Mediator variable | Respond Variable | DirectEffect Coef | P-Value | Remarks |
|----|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------|---------|
| 1  | EI                   | SA                | EP              | 0.616             | < 0.001 | Mediator |
The emotional intelligent influence employee performance positively and significantly with $\beta = 0.17$, and $p = 0.03$; there is positive and significant influence between emotional intelligent and work engagement with $\beta = 0.52$, and $p < 0.001$; the work engagement influences employee performance positively and significantly with $\beta = 0.36$, and $p < 0.001$. Next, the mediation analysis with the involvement of work engagement yields $\beta = 0.357 > 0.17$ (direct influence), $p < 0.001$. Thus, $H_3$ is supported. This means that work engagement can be a mediator variable for emotional intelligent employee performance. An employee with high emotional intelligent can rise his work performance with the existence of work engagement. This means that an employee with the ability to maintain his emotion through emotional intelligent will have convenience and work engagement so that the work performance can increase [24,27,28].

The direct influence of emotional intelligent to employee performance is positive and significant with $\beta = 0.17$, and $p = 0.03$; the emotional intelligent influences work burnout positively and significantly with $\beta = -0.41$, and $p < 0.001$; work burnout also influences employee performance positively and significantly with $\beta = -0.27$, and $p < 0.001$. Next, the mediation analysis that involves work burnout has the result of $\beta = 0.191 < \beta = 0.17$ (direct influence), and $p < 0.001$. Thus, $H_4$ is supported. This means that work burnout can be a mediator variable for emotional intelligent to employee performance. The emotional intelligent owned by the employee can help him to maintain his emotion so that the work burnout emerge can be dropped and finally, his work performance can rise [6,13,20].

5. Conclusion
Based on the analysis done, emotional intelligent can be mediated by surface acting, deep acting, work engagement and work burnout to increase work performance. The realization of that finding for the employee of state-owned enterprises can be done by encouraging them to have high emotional intelligent so that their work performance is increasing. Further, it will be higher if there is the involvement of surface acting, deep acting, work engagement and work burnout. Besides, the company leadership system should encourage the increase of emotional intelligent of employee. This can be done by providing a training such as a teamwork training (a training for having togetherness).

Then, the goal is for training someone to understand others’ feeling and thought. The next future research should explore the dimension of emotional intelligent such as surface acting and deep acting. Further to test the consistency of these research findings, the research on other services companies with greater samples should be done. Then a generalization can be achieved.

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