*In Press in Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*



# Emotional Labor: The Role of Organizational Dehumanization

Nathan Nguyen[1], Théo Besson[2], Florence Stinglhamber[1]

[1]Université catholique de Louvain, Psychological Sciences Research Institute, Belgium

[2]Université Paris Nanterre, Laboratoire Parisien de Psychologie Sociale EA 4386, France

**Correspondence**

Nathan Nguyen, Psychological Sciences Research Institute, Place Cardinal Mercier, 10, L3.05.01, 1348 Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium. E-mail: nathan.nguyen@uclouvain.be. Phone: +32 10 47 30 76. Fax: +32 10 47 37 74.

**Acknowledgments**

This study was funded by the "Fonds Spéciaux de la Recherche" of the Université catholique de Louvain and by ARC under grant n°16/20-071 of the French Community of Belgium. The authors wish to thank the Editor and the two anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments and suggestions on previous versions of this manuscript.

**Authors' note**

All procedures contributing to this work comply with the ethical standards of the Helsinki Declaration of 1975, as revised in 2008. All procedures involving human participants were approved by the ethics commission of the Institute of Research in Psychological Sciences (Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium; approval number Project #2017-01). The ideas and data appearing in the present manuscript have never been presented nor shared elsewhere.

**Abstract**

In a permanent quest for profit, employees can be reduced to a mere function or instrument, dissociated from their quality as individuals for the organization's ends. Experiencing such a feeling as an employee has been called organizational dehumanization. Scholars have recently suggested that organizational dehumanization may play a key role in the development of emotional labor. However, how organizational dehumanization and two main emotional labor strategies (i.e., surface and deep acting) are *causally* related remains unclear in this literature. In the present research, we argue that employees who experience organizational dehumanization and whose self is thus threatened then engage in surface acting to "conserve" their self or in deep acting to "give up" their self in service of the role. Overall, the combined results of three studies offer strong evidence that organizational dehumanization leads employees to perform more surface acting, but not more deep acting. Unexpectedly, our findings also indicate that deep acting reduces the perception of being dehumanized by the organization. In showing this, the present research sheds light on the potential dark side of deep acting, by suggesting that this strategy can change employees' perspective in a way that may encourage them to stay in an organization that treats them as a means to an end.

*Keywords*: organizational dehumanization; emotional labor; surface acting; deep acting; autobiographical recall.

Employees are expected to regulate their emotional displays to show expressions that align with organizational norms through a process called emotional labor. It can be achieved through two strategies, namely surface acting (faking one's emotions) and deep acting (modifying one's inner feelings; Grandey, 2000). Over the past two decades, authors have focused on identifying situational factors involved in the development of emotional labor (Grandey & Melloy, 2017). In particular, scholars found that employees experiencing interpersonal mistreatment stemming from intra- and inter-organizational members (e.g., customers, coworkers, supervisors) are more likely to engage in emotional labor (e.g., Adams & Webster, 2013; Carlson et al., 2012).

Surprisingly, there is a paucity of studies that have considered the potential influence of organizational mistreatment on emotional labor. Yet, the literature on the multi-foci approach indicates that employees distinguish relationships they may have with different entities pertaining to their workplace and, therefore, stresses the importance of testing their distinct effects in the study of any psychological process taking place in a work context (e.g., Lavelle et al., 2007). From this perspective, it is crucial to consider the role that mistreatment emanating from the organization may play in the development of emotional labor. Supporting this view, scholars pointed out that the organization is an entity of prime importance for employees and thus encouraged researchers to continue to examine the relationship that an employee may have with his or her organization (e.g., Eisenberger et al., 2019).

Recently, researchers have integrated these two literatures more closely by examining how employees' use of emotional labor is shaped by a mistreatment perpetrated by the organization, namely organizational dehumanization (Nguyen et al., 2021; Nguyen & Stinglhamber, 2020, 2021). Readers may recall those newspaper articles a few years ago about employees who made the uncomfortable decision to wear adult diapers to work to avoid having to ask to leave the line and risk being punished. Research has shown that, while

fortunately not experiencing such extremes, many employees today feel dehumanized by their organizations (e.g., Christoff, 2014). This organizational dehumanization is defined as "the experience of an employee who feels objectified by his or her organization (...) and made to feel like a tool or instrument for the organization's ends" (Bell & Khoury, 2011, p.168).

While the studies conducted so far on the links between organizational dehumanization and emotional labor show promising initial results, they also suffer from two major weaknesses. First, even though researchers have assumed that organizational dehumanization increases surface acting in particular (e.g., Nguyen & Stinglhamber, 2021), the direction of causality among these variables remains unclear. As the evidence collected so far emerges from cross-sectional studies, it does not allow for causal directions to be established. Although the direction of the relationship that is proposed is entirely consistent with emotional labor models (e.g., Grandey & Gabriel, 2015), the reverse causal pathway could also explain the link between organizational dehumanization and surface acting. Workers performing surface acting may indeed perceive this obligation to comply with organizational display rules as a dehumanizing treatment from their organization. Second, the impact of organizational dehumanization on deep acting remains an underexplored area in the few studies conducted to date. This leaves ambiguity concerning the role of organizational dehumanization in the development of deep acting and the subsequent effects of this relationship on employee well-being.

Therefore, the first objective of this research was to test the causal relationships between organizational dehumanization and both strategies of emotional labor (i.e., surface acting and deep acting). To that end, an experimental study (Study 1) and a longitudinal field study with repeated measures (Study 2) were conducted. The second objective was to examine the consequences of the organizational dehumanization-emotional labor relationship on employee well-being (i.e., job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion). Specifically, we

investigated the mediating role played by surface acting and deep acting in the relationship between organizational dehumanization and the two outcomes, via an experimental study (Study 1) and a three-wave field study controlling for interpersonal mistreatment (Study 3). Overall, the present research thus examined how, beyond interpersonal mistreatment, mistreatment from the distal and abstract entity that is the organization can play a determinant role in the development of emotional labor and its subsequent outcomes.

Through this twofold objective, the present research obviously seeks to answer fundamental and theoretical questions for both the literature on emotional labor and that on organizational dehumanization, but also to provide answers to important questions related to intervention in organizations. First, clarifying the direction of causality helps to know whether organizations should implement human resources policies to decrease perceptions of organizational dehumanization to lessen the use of surface acting (e.g., Caesens et al., 2019), or whether they should offer training aimed at reducing surface acting to mitigate perceptions of organizational dehumanization (e.g., Hülsheger et al., 2015), or both. Second, showing that organizational dehumanization explains emotional labor and then employee well-being, beyond interpersonal mistreatment, helps to fully realize that focusing solely on interpersonal forms of mistreatment as drivers of surface acting certainly overlooks a distinct way to improve employee well-being.

**An Understanding of Interpersonal Mistreatment in the Emotional Labor Process**

Emotional labor is defined as "the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display" (Hochschild, 1983, p. 7) as a requirement of work duties. In particular, employees may rely on two emotional regulation strategies, namely surface acting and deep acting. Surface acting involves faking, suppressing, or amplifying felt emotions so that appropriate emotional displays will follow. Deep acting refers to the modification of felt emotions through attentional deployment or cognitive change, which

leads to the display of genuine emotions. In other words, surface acting and deep acting are compensatory strategies that employees rely on when they are not able to express spontaneously desirable feelings (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015).

As stated above, the quality of the treatment that the employee receives from both internal and external members of the organization is determinant in the emotional labor process (e.g., Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). Scholars mainly rely on Hobfoll's (1989) conservation of resources (COR) theory to explain why interpersonal mistreatment entails emotional labor (e.g., Al-Hawari et al., 2020; Carlson et al., 2012). COR theory postulates that individuals are motivated to protect, maintain, and foster valuable resources and to mitigate any threat or loss of resources. In particular, employees may seek to foster and maintain both pleasant social relationships and a positive self-concept in the workplace, either because they represent a valuable resource for them or because they are essential for achieving other valuable resources (Hobfoll, 2002). On the contrary, being mistreated at work threatens social resources (e.g., Adams & Webster, 2013) and self-concept (Chen et al., 2013). Workers being confronted with interpersonal mistreatment will strive to protect or, at least, minimize the loss of resources. Particularly, coming into conflict with the mistreating person results in a further loss of social resources and "threatens an individual's identity or positive sense of self" (Chen et al., 2013, p. 1199). By engaging in surface acting, employees seek to maintain a good working climate and a positive self-concept, thereby reducing the risk of losing considerable resources. Supporting this view, several authors found that mistreatment stemming from patients or clients (Nguyen & Stinglhamber, 2020), coworkers (Adams & Webster, 2013), and supervisors (Carlson et al., 2012) drive workers to perform primarily surface acting to cope with the abusive treatment.

**Beyond Interpersonal Mistreatment: The Case of Organizational Dehumanization**

Far from being restricted to interpersonal mistreatment, recent research has begun to examine the role that mistreatment from the organization, conceptualized through organizational dehumanization, plays on emotional labor (Nguyen & Stinglhamber, 2021). The concept of organizational dehumanization is rooted in the social psychology literature on dehumanization (Haslam, 2006). Social psychologists defined dehumanization as "a psychological phenomenon whereby people perceive of other human beings as something lesser than, or profoundly different from, themselves; in other words, their human characteristics are being denied" (Väyrynen & Laari-Salmela, 2018, p. 96).

More particularly, Haslam (2006) proposed a dual model including two corresponding forms of dehumanization. On the one hand, in "mechanistic" dehumanization, individuals are assimilated to non-human objects because of the denial of human nature characteristics (e.g., emotional responsiveness, interpersonal warmth) it implies. On the other hand, "animalistic" dehumanization refers to situations where individuals are denied of human uniqueness attributes (e.g., maturity, logic), comparing them as animals. Scholars have suggested that although both forms of dehumanization may exist in organizational contexts, the mechanistic form of dehumanization has a higher likelihood to occur (Bell & Khoury, 2011; Christoff, 2014). For this reason, organizational dehumanization was operationalized by focusing mainly on employees' perceptions of being *mechanically* dehumanized (e.g., Bell & Khoury, 2011; Caesens et al., 2017, 2019).

By definition, organizational dehumanization is a form of mistreatment stemming from the organization. Unlike other kinds of mistreatment, organizational dehumanization is a mistreatment that does not emerge from interpersonal interactions but the quality of the relationship between the focal employee and the organization as a whole. Although it is an intangible entity, employees tend to personify their organization and attribute anthropomorphic characteristics such as benevolent or malevolent intentions to it (Coyle-

Shapiro & Shore, 2007). Organizational dehumanization is thus a mistreatment resulting "from global perceptions and beliefs regarding the extent to which the abstract and distal entity that is the organization considers him/her as a tool or instrument" (Nguyen & Stinglhamber, 2021, p. 833).

Although the source of maltreatment is different from that of interpersonal maltreatment, organizational dehumanization also induces a significant loss of resources (Nguyen & Stinglhamber, 2021). In particular, given its singular nature, organizational dehumanization would primarily induce a threat to the self-concept. Consistent with this idea, empirical studies showed that mechanistic dehumanizing treatments can undermine one's identity as a person (Bastian & Haslam, 2011), organizational-based self-esteem (Demoulin et al., 2021), and positive self-evaluations (Nguyen & Stinglhamber, 2021). Furthermore, researchers have suggested that the experience of being assimilated to a mere robot at the service of the organization can alienate the individual from the self. For instance, Blauner (1964) stated that the industrialized structure of work that places employees in a role limited to a mere instrument function leads to states of alienation, while Bell and Khoury (2011) indicated that organizational dehumanization implies a "forced surrender of control over the act that alienates the individual" (p. 170).

In the present research, we propose that employees who experience organizational dehumanization, and whose self is thus threathened, then engage in surface acting to "conserve" their self or in deep acting to "give up" their self in service of the role. The reason lies in Hochschild's (1983) original work suggesting that when workers become alienated from work (e.g., to feel like a robot at the service of the role), emotional labor may act as an extension of this state of alienation. From this perspective, performing emotional labor can be a strategy of "coordination of self and feelings" (Hochschild, 1983, p. 8) by which employees respond when they perceive that their organization treats them as an object.

However, we cannot rule out the possibility that alternative theoretical explanations might also account for these possible associations. As mentioned above, emotional labor is the management of feelings as a requirement of work duties whose primary purpose is to dictate the emotions that employees should display to achieve organizational goals (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983). On the one hand, by surface acting, that is, by expressing a good mood despite the conflicting emotions, employees may feel that only their performance or their contribution is important, or, even, to be tools dedicated to the success of the organization. It is precisely to perceptions to be used as an instrument to the organization's ends that organizational dehumanization refers (Bell & Khoury, 2011). Consequently, the more employees perform surface acting, the more they may consequently perceive organizational dehumanization.

On the other hand, by deep acting (that is, by modifying their inner emotions to match those that are required), employees may feel pressure from the organization to experience the emotions they must show. As a result, they may feel compelled to distance themselves from who they are, leading them to experience emotional estrangement or alienation (Hochschild, 1983). As mentioned earlier, organizational dehumanization implies a “forced surrender of control over the act” (Bell & Khoury, 2011, p. 170). For this reason, it can also be argued that the use of deep acting may enhance perceptions of being dehumanized by the organization.

We can therefore potentially assume that organizational dehumanization causes emotional labor, that emotional labor causes organizational dehumanization, or the effects are bidirectional. Consistent with the literature on emotional labor (Grandey, 2000), previous researchers have interpreted the organizational dehumanization-emotional labor relationship by supporting the view that, as a mistreatment stemming from the organization, organizational dehumanization increases emotional labor (Nguyen & Stinglhamber, 2020). In line with this theoretical perspective, we thus hypothesize the following:

*Hypothesis 1a*: Organizational dehumanization positively predicts surface acting.

*Hypothesis 1b*: Organizational dehumanization positively predicts deep acting.

**The Mediating Role of Emotional Labor in the Organizational Dehumanization-Outcomes Relationships**

As mentioned above, dehumanizing mistreatments can threaten employees' positive self-concept. COR theory further suggests that self-concept is a valued resource that is essential for individuals' personal growth and that the loss of such a resource can have a profound negative impact on their well-being and leads to states of ill-being (Hobfoll et al., 2018). As a result, employees who feel dehumanized by their organization may tend to score lower (versus higher) on indicators of psychological well-being (versus ill-being). Supporting this view, researchers found that organizational dehumanization leads to job dissatisfaction and emotional exhaustion (e.g., Caesens et al., 2019).

In the present research, we postulate that surface acting and deep acting partially mediate[1] the abovementioned relationships. The rationale for this partial mediation lies in the fact that organizational dehumanization induces a primary resource loss (i.e., a threat to positive self-concept), which elicits coping responses through both surface acting and deep acting. On the one hand, "conserving" the self by surface acting can result in a secondary significant loss of resources because the inauthenticity of faking expressions inherent to surface acting (e.g., Brotheridge & Lee, 2002) further threatens individuals' positive self-concept (e.g., self-worth or sense of self; e.g., Grandey et al., 2012; Uy et al., 2017). According to COR theory, the threat or loss of such a resource leads individuals to feel dissatisfied and exhausted (Hobfoll, 2002). As a result, surface acting may induce less job satisfaction and more emotional exhaustion. Accordingly, meta-analytic studies showed that surface acting is negatively associated with job satisfaction while positively related to

[1] We postulate partial rather than full mediation since organizational dehumanization can influence both job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion through other mechanisms (e.g., needs thwarting; Christoff, 2014).

emotional exhaustion (Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011; Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012). We therefore argue that both job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion are a function of the level of organizational dehumanization, and that the negative effects of the latter on the former can be partially amplified by a secondary resource loss from surface acting. Surface acting would have an indirect effect complementary to the direct effects of organizational dehumanization on both job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion. Such a "complementary mediation" occurs when "mediated effect and direct effect both exist and point the same direction" (Zhao et al., 2010, p. 200).

On the other hand, "giving up" the self by deep acting may result in a net gain of resources because the positive and genuine emotions inherent to deep acting promote pleasant interactions, which lead to obtaining rewarding social relationships (e.g., Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). From the perspective of COR theory, the gain of social resources leads individuals to feel satisfied and less exhausted (Hobfoll, 2002). Deep acting may thus induce more job satisfaction and less emotional exhaustion. Supporting this view, scholars found that deep acting is positively (versus negatively) related to psychological indicators of well-being (versus ill-being; e.g., Cheung & Lun, 2015; Gabriel et al., 2015; Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012; Nguyen & Stinglhamber, 2020). It can thus be assumed that deep acting can partially protect against the negative effects of organizational dehumanization on both job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion. Specifically, we argue that both job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion are a function of the level of organizational dehumanization, but that the negative effects of the latter on the former can be partially counteracted by a secondary resource gain from deep acting. Deep acting would have an indirect effect competing with the direct effects of organizational dehumanization on both job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion. Such a "competitive mediation" occurs when "mediated effect and direct effect both exist and point in opposite directions" (Zhao et al., 2010, p. 200).

Based on the aforementioned rationales, we posit the following:

*Hypothesis 2a*: Surface acting partially mediates the organizational dehumanization-job satisfaction relationship, in that organizational dehumanization increases surface acting which, in turn, is negatively related to job satisfaction.

*Hypothesis 2b*: Deep acting partially mediates the organizational dehumanization-job satisfaction relationship, in that organizational dehumanization increases deep acting which, in turn, is positively related to job satisfaction.

*Hypothesis 3a*: Surface acting partially mediates the organizational dehumanization-emotional exhaustion relationship, in that organizational dehumanization increases surface acting which, in turn, is positively related to emotional exhaustion.

*Hypothesis 3b*: Deep acting partially mediates the organizational dehumanization-emotional exhaustion relationship, in that organizational dehumanization increases deep acting which, in turn, is negatively related to emotional exhaustion.

## Overview of the Studies

The hypotheses of this research were tested through three studies. First, Study 1 is an experimental study where the levels of organizational dehumanization were manipulated to explore its causal effects on emotional labor (Hypothesis 1). This first study also examined the consequences of organizational dehumanization on employees' job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion through emotional labor (Hypotheses 2 and 3). Second, through a longitudinal field study with repeated measures over a 3-month period (i.e., a cross-lagged panel design), Study 2 attempted to confirm the antecedence of organizational dehumanization on emotional labor (Hypothesis 1). Finally, Study 3 used a three-wave design with 6-week intervals between waves to replicate the mediating role played by emotional labor in the relationship between organizational dehumanization and outcomes (Hypotheses 2 and 3) in a work setting. Importantly, this replication was conducted while controlling for

interpersonal mistreatment (i.e., abusive supervision, coworker incivility, and customer incivility) so that these alternative explanations could be ruled out. All procedures contributing to this work comply with the ethical standards of the Helsinki Declaration of 1975, as revised in 2008. All procedures involving human participants were approved by the ethics committee of the Psychological Sciences Research Institute of the Université catholique de Louvain under Project #2017-01.

## Study 1

### Pilot Study

#### *Method*

**Participants and Procedure.** In the present study, we used an autobiographical recall task, which is an approach inviting participants to retrieve real-life memories (McDermott et al., 2009), to induce organizational dehumanization. Specifically, we asked participants to recall (de)humanizing treatments that they would have experienced in the past from their organization. Following McLeod (2017) who claimed that "a pilot study can help the researcher to spot any ambiguities or problems with the task devised", we first conducted a pilot study to check that the autobiographical recall task, aimed at inducing organizational dehumanization (i.e., a mistreatment stemming from the organization), did not induce other perceptions of mistreatment, such as those from supervisors, coworkers, or customers. A total of 236 employees ($M_{age}$ = 37.46, *SD* = 9.67; 58.1% women) participated in the pilot study via a crowdsourcing platform, namely Prolific Academic. To be eligible to participate, the participants had to be native speakers of English, employed, but not self-employed. The participants were offered 1.1£ for their participation.

Participants were invited to participate in a short survey on "employee-employer relationships" in which they were asked to recall and describe two work-related situations. First, participants were randomly assigned to one of our two conditions (i.e., high versus low

organizational dehumanization). In the high organizational dehumanization condition, participants had to detail situations in which they felt used as an instrument devoted to meeting their organization's expectations and felt treated as a number by their organization. In the low organizational dehumanization condition, participants were asked to describe situations where they felt treated as individuals with their own needs, wishes, and feelings by their organization and felt treated as a person rather than a tool devoted to achieving their organization's goals. Then, participants were asked to evaluate the extent to which they felt mistreated by their organization (organizational dehumanization), supervisors (abusive supervision), coworkers (coworker incivility), and customers (customer incivility). All the scales were randomized to control for the order in which they were administered. Finally, we provided a debriefing regarding the aim of the study, and we thanked the participants for their participation.

**Measures.** Except for the abusive supervision measure, all items were rated using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from "1" (Strongly disagree) to "7" (Strongly agree).

***Organizational Dehumanization.*** Participants indicated their perceptions of being mistreated by the organization through the 11-item scale of Caesens et al. (2017, $\alpha = .97$). A sample item was "The only thing that counts for my organization is what I can contribute to it."

***Abusive Supervision.*** Mistreatment from the supervisor was assessed using Tepper's (2000) 15-item scale ($\alpha = .96$). An example item was "My supervisor makes negative comments about me to others." Participants were asked to report how frequently their supervisor engages in each of the suggested behavior, using a 7-point scale ranging from "1" (I cannot remember him/her ever using this behavior with me) to "7" (He/she uses this behavior very often with me).

***Coworker Incivility.*** Mistreatment from coworkers was measured using the 7 items of Cortina et al.'s (2001) Workplace Incivility Scale for coworkers (α = .90). The items included "Coworkers doubted my judgment on a matter over which I have responsibility."

***Customer Incivility.*** Mistreatment from customers was assessed using Burnfield et al.'s (2004) Customer Incivility Scale that is composed of 11 items (α = .95). A sample item was "Customers make comments that question my competence."

***Results***

To examine the effectiveness of the autobiographical memory, we first looked at participants' recalls. The examination of their responses indicated that, in the high organizational dehumanization condition, participants did report situations in which they felt used as a means to achieve their organization's goals. For instance, participants indicated "*It does not matter what my current work load is or what the issue is I am expected to take care of it. Sometimes I feel like another cog in this large machine*" or "*We are always used to achieve speed and sales related goals. We are pushed and pushed (...) with no motivation.*" In contrast, in the low organizational dehumanization condition, participants did describe situations in which they were treated as individuals with needs. For example, participants said "*My organisation gives me autonomy to come up with ideas and pitch it up for execution*" or "*My organisation did not set any KPI or performance goals, but instead let me and others from diverse backgrounds determine what progress would look like.*"

We further examined the effectiveness of the task by performing a series of independent samples Student's t-tests. The results indicated that in the high organizational dehumanization condition, participants displayed higher levels of organizational dehumanization ($M$ = 4.45, $SD$ = 1.69) than in the low condition ($M$ = 3.50, $SD$ = 1.66), $t(234) = 4.32$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.57$. In contrast, the analyses showed that the means for abusive supervision ($M_{low}$ = 1.65, $SD_{low}$ = 0.97; $M_{high}$ = 1.91, $SD_{high}$ = 1.21; $t(234) = 1.85$, $p > .05$),

coworker incivility ($M_{low}$ = 2.08, $SD_{low}$ = 1.03; $M_{high}$ = 2.25, $SD_{high}$ = 0.92; $t(234) = 1.30$, $p > .05$), and customer incivility ($M_{low}$ = 2.60, $SD_{low}$ = 1.25; $M_{high}$ = 2.82, $SD_{high}$ = 1.19; $t(234) = 1.24$, $p > .05$) across experimental conditions were not significantly different. Overall, these results indicate that, as expected, the autobiographical recall task only increases perceptions of organizational dehumanization.

## Main Study

### *Method*

**Participants and Procedure.** Similar to what was done in the pilot study, 240 participants were recruited via Prolific Academic with the same criteria. However, four participants were withdrawn from the data due to wrong answers to at least one attentional check question (e.g., "please tick slightly agree"). Thus, 236 employees composed our final sample. Of these participants, 104 were men, and 131 were women with a mean age of 37.49 years ($SD$ = 10.22). Most of them held a bachelor's degree (42.8%), worked in medium-sized organizations (32.6%), and had an average tenure in their organization of 7.38 years ($SD$ = 6.65).

As in the pilot study, participants were first randomly assigned to the high versus low organizational dehumanization condition and were asked to report situations consistent with the experimental condition to which they were assigned. Then, participants were asked to evaluate the extent to which they felt dehumanized by their organization (manipulation check). Next, participants responded to the items of emotional labor (i.e., surface acting and deep acting) and the items measuring our two dependent variables (i.e., job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion). Finally, we provided a debriefing regarding the purpose of the present study, and we thanked the participants for their participation.

**Measures.**

***Manipulation Check*.** To test the effectiveness of the autobiographical recall task as a manipulation of organizational dehumanization, we used Caesens et al.'s (2017; α = .96) scale as in the pilot study.

***Emotional Labor*.** Seven items from Brotheridge and Lee (2003) and Grandey (2003) were used to measure surface acting (e.g., "Pretend to have emotions that I don't really have"; four items; α = .94) and deep acting (e.g., "Really try to feel the emotions I have to show as part of my job"; three items; α = .93). We asked participants, "how frequently do you engage in these behaviors to do your job effectively?" Participants responded to the items using a 7-point scale ranging from "1" (never) to "7" (always).

***Job Satisfaction*.** Employees' job satisfaction was assessed using the four items (e.g., "All in all, I'm very satisfied with my current job"; α = .92) of Eisenberger et al. (1997). We asked participants to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement using a 7-point scale ranging from "1" (Strongly disagree) to "7" (Strongly agree).

***Emotional Exhaustion*.** Participants indicated to what extent their work was exhausting by using the nine items from the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; e.g., "Working with people all day is really a strain for me"; α = .95) developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981). Participants were asked to rate the frequency with which they experienced the feeling expressed in each statement through a 7-point scale ranging from "1" (never) to "7" (always).

***Results***

Table 1 displays descriptive statistics and the correlations among the variables included in the hypothesized model.

[Insert Table 1 about here]

**Organizational Dehumanization Manipulation Check.** To examine the effectiveness of the autobiographical recall of organizational dehumanization, we, once again, looked at participants' reports. In the high condition, participants did indicate to be treated as

a mere instrument to achieve the organization's goals. In particular, they mentioned "*I feel like I'm used as an instrument to gather information (...) to maintain our organization's goals*" or "*Sometimes we are pushed very hard and not given the breaks we need but it's expected of us to work like machine to achieve our goals at work.*" In the low condition, participants did feel to be treated as individuals with needs. They reported "*Everybody makes mistakes and my organization totally understands that!*" or "*I feel the organization really takes personal and family time into consideration and makes sure their employees have enough time with family at home as well.*"

We further analyzed the effectiveness of the recall of organizational dehumanization by performing an independent samples Student's t-test. The results indicated that in the high organizational dehumanization condition, the participants displayed higher levels of organizational dehumanization ($M$ = 4.77; $SD$ = 1.46) than in the low condition ($M$ = 3.38; $SD$ = 1.39), $t(234) = 7.44$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.97$.

**Measurement Model.** Confirmatory factor analyses were conducted on surface acting, deep acting, job satisfaction, and emotional exhaustion to investigate their distinctiveness. The well-known fit indices (i.e., RMSEA, SRMR, CFI, and TLI) were computed using Mplus 7.4 with its MLR estimator (Muthén & Muthén, 2017). In particular, RMSEA / SRMR below .08 and CFI / TLI greater than .90 indicated adequate fit (Marsh et al., 2004). Table 2 indicates that the four-factor model was significantly better than other alternative models, and fitted the data well ($\chi^2$ (164) = 392.82; RMSEA = .08; SRMR = .05; CFI = .93; TLI = .92). All the indicators loaded reliably on their latent variables, with standardized loadings ranging from .82 to .92 for surface acting, .88 to .93 for deep acting, .79 to .92 for job satisfaction, and .69 to 90 for emotional exhaustion.

[Insert Table 2 about here]

**Structural Model.** We examined a structural equation model in which the organizational dehumanization condition (i.e., "-1" for low organizational dehumanization and "1" for high organizational dehumanization) predicted job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion (in)directly via emotional labor (i.e., surface acting and deep acting). The hypothesized structural model showed a good fit to the data ($\chi^2$ (180) = 418.40; RMSEA = .08; SRMR = .05; CFI = .93; TLI = .92). Figure 1[2] displays completely standardized parameter estimates. The analyses indicated that organizational dehumanization had a direct effect on job satisfaction ($\gamma$ = -.14, $p$ < .05) and emotional exhaustion ($\gamma$ = .12, $p$ < .05). Furthermore, organizational dehumanization was found to have a significant effect on surface acting ($\gamma$ = .18, $p$ < .01), which in turn leads to lower levels of job satisfaction ($\beta$ = -.46, $p$ < .001) and higher levels of emotional exhaustion ($\beta$ = .60, $p$ < .001). To test further the significance of the mediation effects, we used bootstrapping analysis on our latent variables (Cheung & Lau, 2008). The analyses indicated that the indirect effects of organizational dehumanization on job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion via surface acting are both significant (indirect effect$_{\text{job satisfaction}}$ = -.13; BC 95% CI = [-.22; -.05] and indirect effect$_{\text{emotional exhaustion}}$ = .11; BC 95% CI = [.04; .18]). Finally, it should be noted that organizational dehumanization was unrelated to deep acting.

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

## Discussion

In light of the explicit terms used by the participants (e.g., "*used by my organization*", "*cog in this large machine*", "*used as an instrument*", "*feel like a machine or robot*"), the autobiographical recalls indicate that organizational dehumanization refers to the perception of an employee who feels used as a means to an end, which fits Bell and Khoury's (2011)

[2] The structural model without deep acting is provided in the supplemental materials (Figure S1). The results showed that excluding deep acting from the analysis does not change the conclusions that can be drawn from our findings.

original definition of organizational dehumanization. More importantly, these shared dehumanizing experiences point out that being considered as a mere tool in the service of the organization is a common phenomenon in occupational contexts (Christoff, 2014).

This experimental study also brought first evidence for a causal relationship between organizational dehumanization and surface acting, but not between organizational dehumanization and deep acting, which supports Hypothesis 1a but not Hypothesis 1b. Furthermore, this experimental study also corroborated the consequences of organizational dehumanization on employee well-being (i.e., job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion) through surface acting (e.g., Nguyen et al., 2021) but not deep acting, which supports Hypotheses 2a and 3a but not Hypotheses 2b and 3b. While this methodology is supposed to capture the use of emotional labor in one's work environment rather than an "artificial" or "imaginary" behavioral tendency, since it retrieves "real-life memories from peoples' past" (McDermott et al., 2009, p. 2290), it does raise concerns about external validity. Indeed, autobiographical recalls are subject to experimental demand bias and may not perfectly reflect real work experiences (e.g., McDermott et al., 2009). Consequently, Study 2 aimed at replicating Hypothesis 1 by using a cross-lagged panel design, which is a form of quasi-experimental design used to examine causal effects in field studies (Finkel, 1995).

## Study 2

### Method

#### *Participants and Procedure*

Participants were invited, via Prolific Academic, to participate in a survey on the "employee-employer relationships" in which they were asked to give their opinion on a series of statements about their work and to provide their demographic information. Data were collected at two measurement times, three months apart, and all variables were assessed at both times. Although participants were informed that a second measurement time was

planned, they did not know that the questionnaire at Time 2 would be exactly the same as at Time 1. To be eligible, participants had to be native English speakers, employed, not self-employed, and not have participated in Study 1. Each participant received 1.2£ as financial compensation for the time spending on completing the survey at each measurement time. Eight hundred and fifty-two employees fully completed the questionnaire at Time 1, while 636 participants entirely took part in the study at Time 2 (response rate = 74.82%). Participants were withdrawn from the analyses when they indicated that they had changed organizations between Time 1 and Time 2 or when they provided wrong answers to at least one attentional check question at Time 1 and Time 2. After matching responses provided by employees at both times, our sample was composed of 603 participants. Of these participants, 42.8% were men, and 57.2% were women with a mean age of 36.40 years (*SD* = 9.85). Most of them held a bachelor's degree (45.3%), worked in an organization comprising between 50 and 249 employees, and had an average tenure in their organization of 6.39 years (*SD* = 6.22).

***Measures***

We assessed organizational dehumanization ($\alpha_{Time\ 1}$ = .94 and $\alpha_{Time\ 2}$ = .95), surface acting ($\alpha_{Time\ 1}$ = .91 and $\alpha_{Time\ 2}$ = .94), and deep acting ($\alpha_{Time\ 1}$ = .92 and $\alpha_{Time\ 2}$ = .93) at the two measurement times. The scales were identical to those used in Study 1.

**Control Variables.** We followed Becker et al.'s (2016) recommendations to deal with demographic characteristics. Table 3 shows that organizational dehumanization at Time 2 was associated with education ($r$ = -.10, $p$ < .05) and organizational size ($r$ = .17, $p$ < .01), while surface acting and deep acting at Time 2 were correlated to gender ($r$ = .09, $p$ < .05 and $r$ = .12, $p$ < .01, respectively). The inclusion of these control variables in the analyses did not change the interpretation of the findings. Therefore, the analyses were free from any demographic variables to reduce model complexity (Becker et al., 2016).

In addition, conceptual and empirical research on emotional labor has advocated controlling for the potential effects of positive and negative affectivity as they may shape the use of emotional labor strategies (e.g., Brotheridge & Lee, 2003; Carlson et al., 2012; Gosserand & Diefendorff, 2005; Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012). For these reasons, positive and negative affects were controlled in Study 2. The short version of Watson and Clark's (1999) Positive and Negative Affectivity Schedule (PANAS) (Thompson, 2007) was used to assess positive and negative affectivity. The scale consists of five positive (e.g., determined; $\alpha = .90$) and five negative (e.g., upset; $\alpha = .87$) mood-relevant adjectives. Participants reported the extent to which they generally feel each emotion (i.e., on average) on a 7-point scale from "1" (not at all) to "7" (extremely). Table 3 indicates that positive affectivity was negatively related to surface acting ($r = -.29$, $p < .01$) and positively to deep acting ($r = .22$, $p < .01$), whereas negative affectivity was positively associated with surface acting ($r = .41$, $p < .01$).

[Insert Table 3 about here]

**Results**

***Measurement Model***

To examine the distinctiveness of organizational dehumanization, surface acting and deep acting at each measurement time, we performed a series of confirmatory factor analyses. Similar to Study 1, we computed fit indices by using the MLR estimator in Mplus 7.4. At both Time 1 and Time 2, the three-factor models showed a good fit to the data ($\chi^2$ (132) = 513.54; RMSEA = .07; SRMR = .04; CFI = .94; TLI = .93 and $\chi^2$ (132) = 555.45; RMSEA = .07; SRMR= .03; CFI = .94; TLI = .93, respectively), and were significantly better than the two- and one-factor models (cf. Table 4). All the factor loadings of the items were significant, with standardized loadings ranging from .40 to .89 and .42 to 87 for organizational dehumanization

at both Time 1 and Time 2, respectively, from .77 to .90 and .81 to .90 for surface acting, respectively, and from .87 to .95 and .89 to .94 for deep acting, respectively.

[Insert Table 4 about here]

***Measurement Invariance***

To evaluate the measurement invariance of organizational dehumanization, surface acting and deep acting across measurement times, we performed a series of four models corresponding to different levels of factorial invariance (i.e., configural, weak, strong, and strict) using confirmatory factor analyses with the MLR estimator (Little et al., 2007). Table 5 indicates that the configural model in which the factor structure is constrained to be equal across measurement times showed a good fit with the data ($\chi^2$ (561) = 1401.69; RMSEA = .05; SRMR = .03; CFI = .95; TLI = .94). Moreover, all other constrained models, which are the weak invariance model (i.e., factor loadings are equal at both times), the strong invariance model (i.e., intercepts equated in addition), and the strict invariance model (i.e., residual variances of corresponding indicators are set to be equal in addition) did not significantly decrease model fit. Additionally, no partial invariance was found after investigating modification indices for each level of factorial invariance. In sum, organizational dehumanization, surface acting and deep acting were fully invariant.

[Insert Table 5 about here]

***Cross-Lagged Model***

We first investigated the relationship between Time 1 organizational dehumanization and the subsequent temporal change in surface acting and deep acting. In addition, we examined the effects of Time 1 surface acting and Time 1 deep acting on the subsequent temporal change in organizational dehumanization, surface acting, and deep acting. Following Finkel's (1995) recommendations, Time 2 organizational dehumanization, Time 2 surface acting, and Time 2 deep acting error variances were allowed to covary, and the error

covariance of identical indicators over time were allowed to correlate. Figure 2[3] displays the standardized parameter estimates for the cross-lagged model. The hypothesized model displayed a good fit to the data ($\chi^2$ (610) = 1462.52; RMSEA = .05; SRMR = .04; CFI = .95; TLI = .95). The results revealed that Time 1 organizational dehumanization was positively related to the subsequent temporal change in surface acting but was not linked to the subsequent temporal change in deep acting. In contrast, Time 1 surface acting was not related to the subsequent temporal change in organizational dehumanization or in deep acting, while Time 1 deep acting was negatively associated with the subsequent temporal change in organizational dehumanization but was not related to the subsequent temporal change in surface acting. In sum, these findings emphasized that organizational dehumanization leads employees to engage in surface acting, but not in deep acting.

[Insert Figure 2 about here]

**Discussion**

The findings of the present longitudinal study with repeated measures replicate those of the experimental study (Study 1) by indicating that employees' perceptions of being dehumanized by their organization lead them to perform more surface acting, but not more deep acting. In doing so, we bring further evidence for the causal relationship between organizational dehumanization and surface acting, which supports Hypothesis 1a. In contrast, Hypothesis 1b, referring to a possible causal relationship between organizational dehumanization and deep acting is, again, not empirically supported. Interestingly, the results showed that deep acting decreases perceptions of organizational dehumanization beyond positive and negative affectivity. This interesting finding suggests that deep acting can

[3] The cross-lagged model without deep acting is provided in the supplemental materials (Figure S2). The results showed that excluding deep acting from the analysis does not change the conclusions that can be drawn from our findings.

positively alter how we perceive our workplace, whether we tend to experience negative or positive affective states.

Despite its strengths, Study 2 did not control for interpersonal mistreatment, although models on emotional labor have emphasized the importance of considering different sources of mistreatment when studying emotional labor (Grandey & Melloy, 2017), nor did it include consequences. Consequently, Study 3 aimed at replicating the impact of organizational dehumanization on emotional labor while controlling for interpersonal mistreatment (i.e., abusive supervision, coworker incivility, and customer incivility), in a three-wave field study with 6-week intervals between waves. Also, Study 3 was designed to replicate the mediating role of surface acting in the relationship between organizational dehumanization and both job satisfaction (Hypothesis 2a) and emotional exhaustion (Hypothesis 3a) found in the experimental study (Study 1) to tackle concerns regarding ecological validity.

## Study 3

### Method

#### *Participants and Procedure*

Participants took part in the survey via Prolific Academic. To participate, they had to be native English speakers, employed, not self-employed, and not have participated in Study 1 and Study 2. Each participant received 1.2£ as monetary compensation. At Time 1, 665 participants fully completed the survey. Six weeks later (Time 2), 557 participants participated again in the study (response rate = 83.8%). Finally, another six-week period later (Time 3), 491 participants took part in the study for the last time (response rate = 73.8%). Several participants were withdrawn from the analyses because they provided wrong answers to at least one attentional check question at Time 1, Time 2, or Time 3, or because they indicated that they had changed or left their organization between Time 1 and 3. After matching complete responses provided by employees at these three measurement times, the

final sample consisted of 356 employees. Of these participants, 38.3% were men. Their average age was 42.59 years (*SD* = 10.67), and their average tenure in their organization was 8.53 years (*SD* = 7.27). Most of them held a bachelor's degree (48.7%) and worked in medium-sized organizations (33.2%).

***Measures***

We measured organizational dehumanization at Time 1 (α = .95), surface acting (α = .94) and deep acting (α = .94) at Time 2, and job satisfaction (α = .94) and emotional exhaustion at Time 3 (α = .95), with the same scales than those used in Study 1.

**Control Variables.** As in Study 2, we followed Becker et al.'s (2016) recommendations to deal with demographic variables. Because the inclusion of these control variables did not change the meaning of the results, the analyses were free from any demographic variables (Becker et al., 2016).

As mentioned above, positive and negative affectivity are known to shape the development of surface acting (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). Additionally, Thoresen et al.'s (2003) meta-analysis showed that positive and negative affectivity contribute to job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion. Therefore, we also controlled for positive and negative affectivity in Study 3. The measures of positive affectivity (α = .84) and negative affectivity (α = .84) were identical to those used in Study 2 and were completed at Time 1. Table 6 indicates that they were correlated with surface acting and deep acting.

Importantly, as explained above, we also controlled for interpersonal mistreatment, i.e. abusive supervision, coworker incivility, and customer incivility, since they are known to shape the development of emotional labor (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Grandey & Melloy, 2017). The measures to capture abusive supervision (α = .96), coworker incivility (α = .92), and customer incivility (α = .96) were all taken at Time 1, using the same scales as those used in the pilot of Study 1. Table 6 indicates that all interpersonal mistreatments were correlated

with surface acting, job satisfaction, and emotional exhaustion, while only coworker incivility and customer incivility were related to deep acting.

[Insert Table 6 about here]

## Results

### *Measurement Model*

To investigate the distinctiveness of organizational dehumanization, surface acting, deep acting, job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion, we performed confirmatory analyses with Mplus 7.4. As in Study 1 and Study 2, we relied on the MLR estimator to compute fit indices. Due to a large number of parameters to be estimated relative to the sample size, we used the item to construct balance technique (Little et al., 2002) to reduce the number of items for organizational dehumanization and emotional exhaustion to four by creating parcels[4]. This strategy has the advantage of preserving common latent variable variance while minimizing unrelated specific variance (Little et al., 2013). Table 7 indicates that the five-factor model had a good fit with the data ($\chi^2$ (142) = 252.23; RMSEA = .05; SRMR = .03; CFI = .98; TLI = .98) and was significantly better than other more constrained models. All the factor loadings of the items were significant, with standardized loadings ranging from .88 to .96 for organizational dehumanization, .84 to .92 for surface acting, .90 to .93 for deep acting, .87 to .93 for job satisfaction, and .90 to .95 for emotional exhaustion.

[Insert Table 7 about here]

### *Mediation Model*

We tested a structural equation model in which organizational dehumanization (in)directly influences job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion through surface acting and

[4] We also reduced the number of items for abusive supervision, coworker incivility, and customer incivility to four by creating four parcels.

deep acting. Figure 3[5] displays the hypothesized model, which fitted well the data ($\chi^2$ (734) = 1096.01; RMSEA = .04; SRMR = .05; CFI = .97; TLI = .97). The results showed that organizational dehumanization was positively associated with surface acting ($\gamma$ = .13, $p$ < .05) but unrelated to deep acting. Furthermore, surface acting was negatively related to job satisfaction and positively to emotional exhaustion ($\beta$ = -.18, $p$ < .01 and $\beta$ = .36, $p$ < .001, respectively), whereas deep acting was not associated with job satisfaction or emotional exhaustion. We then used bootstrapping analysis on our latent variables (Cheung & Lau, 2008) to test the significance of the mediation effects. The results showed that the indirect effects of organizational dehumanization on job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion through surface acting were both significant (indirect effect$_{\text{job satisfaction}}$ = -.02; BC 95% CI = [-.06; -.01] and indirect effect$_{\text{emotional exhaustion}}$ = .04; BC 95% CI = [.01; .07]).

[Insert Figure 3 about here]

**Discussion**

This study replicates the results found in both Study 1 and Study 2. The findings reinforce our previous evidence that when employees experience being treated as a mere object by their organization, they engage in more surface acting, but not deep acting, which is consistent with Hypothesis 1a but not Hypothesis 1b. The results of Study 3 also provide additional evidence for the mediating role of surface acting but not deep acting, in the relationships between organizational dehumanization and both job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion, thus supporting Hypotheses 2a and 3a but not Hypotheses 2b and 3b. It should be noted that the use of a three-wave design also has some limitations that are worth mentioning. In particular, Law et al. (2016) stated that such a design suffers from two drawbacks: "The correlation among the variables may be spuriously exaggerated and the causal directions

[5] The structural model without deep acting is provided in the supplemental materials (Figure S3). The results showed that excluding deep acting from the analysis does not change the conclusions that can be drawn from our findings.

among variables cannot be tested directly" (p. 323). Nevertheless, the combined results of the three studies offer strong evidence that organizational dehumanization is clearly an antecedent of surface acting, which partially explains the deleterious impacts of the former on employee well-being.

## General Discussion

The purpose of the present studies was to examine the causal relationship between organizational dehumanization and emotional labor, as well as their deleterious effects in terms of employees' job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion. This research is the result of calls for a better integration of the role of the organization in the emotional labor literature focused on mistreatment, which, to date, has been limited to interpersonal interaction. Overall, this research highlights that a mistreatment from an abstract entity, that is, the organization, leads employees to adopt emotional labor strategies that are harmful to them.

First, the main contribution of this research is that it establishes the causal relationship between organizational dehumanization and surface acting. This paper suggests that the more employees are dehumanized by their organization, the more they engage in surface acting. Indeed, the experimental study in which levels of perceived organizational dehumanization were manipulated through autobiographical recalls showed that one's level of organizational dehumanization positively predicts the use of surface acting as an emotional regulation strategy. In addition, by adopting a cross-lagged panel design in a longitudinal field study, we found that a temporal change in organizational dehumanization perceptions are positively associated with a subsequent temporal change in surface acting, while the reverse is not supported. In sum, our findings show that high levels of organizational dehumanization lead to high levels of surface acting through two different methodological approaches so that one can be confident in the causal relationship between organizational dehumanization and surface acting. Importantly, this direction of the causal relationship is in line with most

emotional labor models (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). Further, by showing the positive impact of organizational dehumanization on surface acting while controlling for the effects of abusive supervision, coworker incivility, and customer incivility in the three-wave study, this research highlights that the (mis)treatment stemming from the organization plays an important role in the development of surface acting above and beyond interpersonal mistreatment. Through these findings, our research refines the emotional labor literature focused on mistreatment by considering a new "perpetrator", i.e. the organization itself.

The failure to find a cross-lagged relationship between the temporal change in surface acting and the subsequent temporal change in organizational dehumanization leads to less definitive conclusions. The absence of results does not allow us to rule out the possibility that surface acting has also an impact on organizational dehumanization. As mentioned above, the organizational dehumanization-surface acting relationship might indeed be bidirectional. By surface acting, employees may feel to be instruments devoted to the success of the organization that, in turn, might entail perceptions to be dehumanized by their organizations. We cannot assume that the time required for organizational dehumanization to influence surface acting is the same as that required for the inverse relationship. Scholars indeed suggested that organizational dehumanization may be a chronic phenomenon which implies that the factors inducing the perception of being dehumanized (e.g., treated as an instrument) are frequent, repetitive, and lasting over time (e.g., Bell & Khoury, 2011; Christoff, 2014). In line with this view, it may be that in order to observe a potential effect of the temporal change in surface acting on the subsequent temporal change in organizational dehumanization, the use of surface acting may need to be repetitive and last for long periods. Therefore, future research might in particular examine a longer-term relationship between the temporal change in surface acting and the subsequent temporal change in organizational dehumanization.

The experimental and longitudinal studies indicated that organizational dehumanization is probably not an antecedent of deep acting. These findings are in line with previous research that failed to find a relationship between interpersonal mistreatment and deep acting (e.g., Adams & Webster, 2013; Goussinsky & Livne, 2016). Our results suggest that deep acting is probably not a compensatory strategy used to cope with mistreatment. Surprisingly, the temporal change in deep acting is related to the subsequent temporal change of organizational dehumanization, even when affectivity trait is controlled for. This finding indicates that the more employees modify their inner feelings to express genuine emotions that are congruent with organizational display rules, the less they experience being dehumanized by their organization. This unexpected result may be due to the fact that deep acting implies positive feedback, rewarding social interactions, job performance, or self-efficacy (e.g., Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011); in other words, this strategy may induce the feeling that the environment and working conditions are favorable. By deep acting, employees might thus reduce their perception of being only an instrument at the service of the organization. However, deep acting can be double-edged for employees. Since the experimental study also indicates that deep acting is related to feeling more satisfied with one's job, our results suggest that this strategy can change employees' perceptions in a way that may encourage them to remain in a work environment where they are treated as a means to an end. By revealing a potential dark side of deep acting, this finding is consistent with the idea that deep acting can change a person's perspective and affect, in a way that may ultimately lead him or her to stay in a bad situation (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Grandey & Melloy, 2017).

Finally, this research indicated that surface acting mediates the relationship between organizational dehumanization and employee well-being. In particular, the experimental study showed that employees who have experimentally experienced organizational dehumanization

report performing more surface acting, which leads them to be less satisfied with their job and more exhausted from their work. Further, by replicating in real work settings this mediating role of surface acting in the organizational dehumanization-well-being relationship (cf. Study 3), we anticipate questions on ecological validity issues raised by the use of autobiographical recalls that may not reflect the real-work experiences (McDermott et al., 2009). More importantly, these results replicate findings found in previous studies (Nguyen et al., 2021; Nguyen & Stinglhamber, 2021) while relying on more robust methodologies to reach this conclusion with confidence. In contrast, our results indicated that deep acting does not intervene in the relationship between organizational dehumanization and employee well-being. This finding may be explained by a competing argument to the one usually proposed regarding the role of deep acting on employee well-being. In particular, Hülsheger and Schewe (2011) suggested that deep acting may be unrelated to employee well-being because it "involves opponent process leading to a resource loss and gain at the same time, resulting in no net gain or loss" (p. 367). In other words, since the initial loss of resources induced by the use of deep acting is compensated by a gain of resources resulting from positive interactions, deep acting is neither beneficial nor detrimental to employee well-being. By suggesting no relationship between deep acting and employee well-being, this perspective obviously challenges the mediating role of deep acting in the organizational dehumanization-well-being relationship and is consistent with our results.

**Limitations and Future Research**

Despite its important contributions, several limitations to this research should be acknowledged. First, by assessing the variables included in our theoretical model through self-perceptions (i.e., organizational dehumanization, surface acting, deep acting, job satisfaction, and emotional exhaustion), this research is sensitive to common method variance, which may increase the strength for the identified relationships. To overcome this limitation,

we followed Conway and Lance's (2010) recommendations. First, we relied on several different designs at the methodological level, i.e. an experimental, a longitudinal, and a three-wave design. Second, we assured the anonymity of participants, and we stated at the beginning of the study "there are no right or wrong answers" to lessen social desirability response biases in each study. Third, the experimental conditions in Study 1 were counterbalanced, and we counterbalanced the items of each scale in each study to reduce response order effects that may give more weight to the first items. Fourth, because, by measuring our variables of interest (i.e., organizational dehumanization, surface acting, deep acting, job satisfaction, and emotional exhaustion), we wanted to explore individual employee perceptions and feelings, using self-reported measures was certainly the best way to proceed. In this regard, Conway and Lance (2010) argued that self-reported measured are by far the most appropriate for capturing private events. Finally, Conway and Lance (2010) stated that "one way to rule out substantial method effects is to demonstrate construct validity of the measures used (p. 329). In this respect, our measures showed good internal consistency and good discriminant validity. Overall, all this prevents the argument that the associations between our constructs exist merely due to response biases.

Second, although this research provides strong evidence that organizational dehumanization leads employees to perform more surface acting, it has not empirically explored the reasons for such a relationship. Relying on COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), we suggested that experiencing dehumanizing treatment from the organization drives employees to engage in more surface acting. But other underlying mechanisms may be at stake in the organizational dehumanization-surface acting relationship. For instance, based on the literature on dehumanization, it may be argued that a process of self-dehumanization explains this relationship. According to this literature (e.g., Bastian & Crimston, 2014), employees who feel mechanistically dehumanized by their organization may see themselves as

emotionless or cold, thus dehumanizing themselves. This self-dehumanization may then explain why they finally act like robots and instrumentally display an emotional facade to comply with the organizational display rules and orders. All in all, a fruitful direction for future research would certainly be to examine the role played by self-dehumanization in the organizational dehumanization-surface acting relationship.

Third, although the literature has primarily conceptualized organizational dehumanization as an individual-level perception that may highly vary from one employee to another based on the personal treatment that is provided to the organization and studied it at the individual level, it would reasonable to think that employees within the same organization might share similar levels of organizational dehumanization. In other words, beyond the individual perceptions, there may also be a more or less dehumanizing climate in organizations, so that organizational dehumanization could also be studied at the organizational level. In particular, multi-level analyses would be relevant to examine whether shared perceptions of organizational dehumanization would influence the development of surface acting. Therefore, future research should investigate the relationship between organizational dehumanization at the organizational level and surface acting at the individual level.

Finally, organizational dehumanization was operationalized through the mechanistic form of dehumanization because, according to Bell and Khoury (2011), this form is more likely to occur within work settings than the animalistic form. Nevertheless, animalistic dehumanization that refers to the denial of individuals' maturity, civility, or intelligence and involves situations in which they may feel treated disrespectfully might also be relevant within organizations. In particular, mistreatment at work implies situations in which employees face disrespectful behaviors such as rudeness and insulting comments (Adams & Webster, 2013; Carlson et al., 2012; Grandey et al., 2012). For these reasons, the animalistic

side of organizational dehumanization might also be relevant to the study of emotional labor. Accordingly, it would be worthwhile to investigate the predictive power of each form of dehumanization on emotional labor.

**Practical Implications and Conclusion**

This research provides evidence that organizational dehumanization experiences foster the use of surface acting, which in turn leads to dissatisfaction with one's job and exhaustion from one's work. Thus, organizations should take actions that would reduce perceptions of organizational dehumanization among their staff to improve their well-being. In this regard, Study 1 provides some interesting insights. Beyond describing the feeling of organizational dehumanization as such, participants generally also report the circumstances in which they experienced this dehumanization. This allows us to identify the levers on which organizations can act to avoid such a feeling among their staff. In particular, further analysis of participants' recalls suggested three main categories of determinants and thus levers for reducing employee perceptions of organizational dehumanization.

First, organizational factors such as distributive injustice (e.g., "*we are expected to work beyond our normal working hours (...) and are not offered extra pay or hours back to make up for it*") are important determinants. Organizations should thus be alert to foster fairness in how rewards reflect their personnel's contribution to the organization. Second, leadership factors such as bottom-line mentality of leaders (e.g., "*Higher up managers are always trying to make us work harder for them so they can achieve their yearly bonuses*") or abusive supervision (e.g., "*We got into the meeting my manager took all my ideas for his own and took full credit*") appear to play a role as well. As representatives of the organization, leaders must be aware of their influence on employees. Organizations must therefore encourage the development of their leaders' skills in interacting with their subordinates. Concretely, this means offering training programs that teach supervisors how to build a

healthy relationship with their collaborators (Caesens et al., 2019). Third, job characteristics such as repetitive tasks (e.g., "*Everyday I have to do the same tasks... So boring. I feel like a robot*") are also frequently reported. Organizations could be careful to provide more favorable work conditions, for instance by giving their staff more autonomy in performing their work (Demoulin et al., 2021).

In conclusion, this research suggests that employees engage in surface acting to cope with organizational mistreatment in the belief that it would be beneficial, but is harmful to their well-being. By pointing out that the organizations also have a share of responsibility in the way their staff manages their emotions in a dysfunctional way, this paper recommends that organizations avoid or, to some extent, maintain the feeling of dehumanization at acceptable levels to preserve the well-being of their personnel.

## References


Adams, G. A., & Webster, J. R. (2013). Emotional regulation as a mediator between interpersonal mistreatment and distress. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 22*, 697-710. https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2012.698057

Al-Hawari, M. A., Bani-Melhem, S., & Quratulain, S. (2020). Do frontline employees cope effectively with abusive supervision and customer incivility? Testing the effect of employee resilience. *Journal of Business Psychology, 35*, 223-240. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-019-09621-2

Bastian, B., & Crimston, D. (2014). Self-dehumanization. *TPM: Testing, Psychometrics, Methodology in Applied Psychology, 21*, 241-250. https://doi.org/10.4473/TPM21.3.1

Bastian, B., & Haslam, N. (2011). Experiencing dehumanization: Cognitive and emotional effects of everyday dehumanization. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology, 33*, 295-303. https://doi.org/10.1080/01973533.2011.614132

Becker, T. E., Atinc, G., Breaugh, J. A., Carlson, K. D., Edwards, J. R., & Spector, P. E. (2016). Statistical control in correlational studies: 10 essential recommendations for organizational researchers. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 37*, 157-167. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2053

Bell, C. M., & Khoury, C. (2011). Organizational de/humanization, deindividuation, anomie, and in/justice. In S. Gilliland, D. Steiner, & D. Skarlicki (Eds.), *Emerging Perspectives on Organizational Justice and Ethics* (pp. 167-197). Information Age Publishing.

Blauner, B. (1964). *Alienation and freedom: The factory worker and his industry*. University of Chicago Press.

Brotheridge, C. M., & Lee, R. T. (2002). Testing a conservation of resources model of the dynamics of emotional labor. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 7*, 57-67. https://doi.org/10.1037/1076-8998.7.1.57

Brotheridge, C. M., & Lee, R. T. (2003). Development and validation of the emotional labour scale. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *76*, 365-379. https://doi.org/10.1348/096317903769647229

Burnfield, J. L., Clark, O. L., Devendorf, S. A., & Jex, S. M. (2004, April). *Understanding workplace incivility: Scale development and validation*. Paper presented at the 19th Annual Conference of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Chicago.

Caesens, G., Nguyen, N., & Stinglhamber, F. (2019). Abusive supervision and organizational dehumanization. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, *34*, 709-728. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-018-9592-3

Caesens, G., Stinglhamber, F., Demoulin, S., & De Wilde, M. (2017). Perceived organizational support and employees' well-being: The mediating role of organizational dehumanization. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, *26*, 527-540. https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2017.1319817

Carlson, D., Ferguson, M., Hunter, E., & Whitten, D. (2012). Abusive supervision and work-family conflict: The path through emotional labor and burnout. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *23*, 849-859. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2012.05.003

Chen, Y., Ferris, D. L., Kwan, H. K., Yan, M., Zhou, M., & Hong, Y. (2013). Self-love's lost labor: A self-enhancement model of workplace incivility. *Academy of Management Journal*, *56*, 1199-1219. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2010.0906

Cheung, F., & Lun, V. M. C. (2015). Emotional labor and occupational well-being. *Journal of Individual Differences*, *36*, 30-37. https://doi.org/10.1027/1614-0001/a000152

Cheung, G. W., & Lau, R. S. (2008). Testing mediation and suppression effects of latent variables: Bootstrapping with structural equation models. *Organizational Research Methods*, *11*, 296-325. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428107300343

Christoff, K. (2014). Dehumanization in organizational settings: Some scientific and ethical considerations. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience, 8,* 748. https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2014.00748

Conway, J. M., & Lance, C. E. (2010). What reviewers should expect from authors regarding common method bias in organizational research. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 25,* 325-334. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-010-9181-6

Cortina, L. M., Magley, V. J., Williams, J. H., & Langhout, R. D. (2001). Incivility in the workplace: Incidence and impact. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 6,* 64-80. https://doi.org/10.1037/1076-8998.6.1.64

Coyle-Shapiro, J. A., & Shore, L. M. (2007). The employee–organization relationship: Where do we go from here? *Human Resource Management Review, 17,* 166-179. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2007.03.008

Demoulin, S., Nguyen, N., Chevallereau, T., Fontesse, S., Bastart, J., Stinglhamber, F., & Maurage, P. (2021). Examining the role of fundamental psychological needs in the development of metadehumanization : A multi-population approach. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *60*(1), 196-221. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12380

Eisenberger, R., Cummings, J., Armeli, S., & Lynch, P. (1997). Perceived organizational support, discretionary treatment, and job satisfaction. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 82,* 812-820. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.82.5.812

Eisenberger, R., Rockstuhl, T., Shoss, M. K., Wen, X., & Dulebohn, J. (2019). Is the employee–organization relationship dying or thriving? A temporal meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 104,* 1036-1057. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000390

Finkel, S. E. (1995). *Causal analysis with panel data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gabriel, A. S., Daniels, M. A., Diefendorff, J. M., & Greguras, G. J. (2015). Emotional labor actors: a latent profile analysis of emotional labor strategies. *Journal of Applied*

*Psychology, 100,* 863-879. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0037408

Gosserand, R. H., & Diefendorff, J. M. (2005). Emotional display rules and emotional labor: The moderating role of commitment. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 90,* 1256-1264. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.90.6.1256

Goussinsky, R., & Livne, Y. (2016). Coping with interpersonal mistreatment: The role of emotion regulation strategies and supervisor support. *Journal of Nursing Management, 24,* 1109-1118. https://doi.org/10.1111/jonm.12415

Grandey, A. A. (2000). Emotional regulation in the workplace: A new way to conceptualize emotional labor. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *5,* 95-110. https://doi.org/10.1037/1076-8998.5.1.95

Grandey, A. A. (2003). When "the show must go on": Surface acting and deep acting as determinants of emotional exhaustion and peer-rated service delivery. *Academy of Management Journal, 46,* 86-96. https://doi.org/10.5465/30040678

Grandey, A. A., Foo, S. C., Groth, M., & Goodwin, R. E. (2012). Free to be you and me: A climate of authenticity alleviates burnout from emotional labor. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *17*, 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0025102

Grandey, A. A., & Gabriel, A. S. (2015). Emotional labor at a crossroads: Where do we go from here? *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 2,* 323-349. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032414-111400

Grandey, A. A., & Melloy, R. C. (2017). The state of the heart: Emotional labor as emotion regulation reviewed and revised. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *22*, 407-422. https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000067

Haslam, N. (2006). Dehumanization: An integrative review. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *10,* 252–264. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr1003_4

Hobfoll, S. E. (1989). Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress.

*American Psychologist*, *44*, 513-524. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.44.3.513

Hobfoll, S. E. (2002). Social and psychological resources and adaptation. *Review of General Psychology*, *6*, 307-324. https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.6.4.307

Hobfoll, S. E., Halbesleben, J., Neveu, J. P., & Westman, M. (2018). Conservation of resources in the organizational context: The reality of resources and their consequences. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, *5*, 103-128. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032117-104640

Hochschild, A. R. (1983). *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling*. University of California Press.

Hülsheger, U. R., Lang, J. W., Schewe, A. F., & Zijlstra, F. R. (2015). When regulating emotions at work pays off: A diary and an intervention study on emotion regulation and customer tips in service jobs. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *100*, 263-277. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038229

Hülsheger, U. R., & Schewe, A. F. (2011). On the costs and benefits of emotional labor: A meta-analysis of three decades of research. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *16*, 361-389. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022876

Jallais, C., & Gilet, A. L. (2010). Inducing changes in arousal and valence: Comparison of two mood induction procedures. *Behavior Research Methods*, *42*, 318-325. https://doi.org/10.3758/BRM.42.1.318

Lavelle, J. J., Rupp, D. E., & Brockner, J. (2007). Taking a multifoci approach to the study of justice, social exchange, and citizenship behavior: The target similarity model. *Journal of Management*, *33*, 841-866. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206307307635

Law, K. S., Wong, C. S., Yan, M., & Huang, G. (2016). Asian researchers should be more critical: The example of testing mediators using time-lagged data. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, *33*, 319-341. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10490-015-9453-9

Little, T. D., Cunningham, W. A., Shahar, G., & Widaman, K. F. (2002). To parcel or not to parcel: Exploring the question, weighing the merits. *Structural Equation Modeling, 9,* 151-173. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15328007SEM0902_1

Little, T. D., Preacher, K. J., Selig, J. P., & Card, N. A. (2007). New developments in latent variable panel analyses of longitudinal data. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 31,* 357-365. https://doi.org/10.1177/0165025407077757

Little, T. D., Rhemtulla, M., Gibson, K., & Schoemann, A. M. (2013). Why the items versus parcels controversy needn't be one. *Psychological Methods, 18,* 285-300. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0033266

Marsh, H. W., Hau, K. T., & Wen, Z. (2004). In search of golden rules: Comment on hypothesis-testing approaches to setting cutoff values for fit indexes and dangers in overgeneralizing Hu and Bentler's (1999) findings. *Structural Equation Modeling, 11,* 320-341. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15328007sem1103_2

Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E. (1981). The measurement of experienced burnout. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 2,* 99-113. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.4030020205

McDermott, K. B., Szpunar, K. K., & Christ, S. E. (2009). Laboratory-based and autobiographical retrieval tasks differ substantially in their neural substrates. *Neuropsychologia,* 47, 2290-2298. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuropsychologia.2008.12.025

McLeod, S. A. (2017). Psychology research methods. *Simply Psychology*. https://www.simplypsychology.org/research-methods.html

Mesmer-Magnus, J. R., DeChurch, L. A., & Wax, A. (2012). Moving emotional labor beyond surface and deep acting: A discordance-congruence perspective. *Organizational Psychology Review, 2,* 6-53. https://doi.org/10.1177/2041386611417746

Muthén, B. O., & Muthén, L. K. (2017). *Mplus User's Guide Eighth Edition*. Muthén &

Muthén.

Nguyen, N., Dao, Q. A., Nhan, T. L. A., & Stinglhamber, F. (2021). Organizational Dehumanization and Emotional Labor: A Cross-Cultural Comparison Between Vietnam and the United Kingdom. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *52*, 43-60. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022120972183

Nguyen, N., & Stinglhamber, F. (2020). Workplace mistreatment and emotional labor: A latent profile analysis. *Motivation and Emotion*, *44*, 474-490. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11031-019-09803-8

Nguyen, N., & Stinglhamber, F. (2021). Emotional labor and core self-evaluations as mediators between organizational dehumanization and job satisfaction. *Current Psychology, 40*, 831-839. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-018-9988-2

Tepper, B. J. (2000). Consequences of abusive supervision. *Academy of Management Journal*, *43*, 178-190. https://doi.org/10.5465/1556375

Thompson, E. R. (2007). Development and validation of an internationally reliable short-form of the positive and negative affect schedule (PANAS). *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *38*, 227-242. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022106297301

Thoresen, C. J., Kaplan, S. A., Barsky, A. P., Warren, C. R., & De Chermont, K. (2003). The affective underpinnings of job perceptions and attitudes: A meta-analytic review and integration. *Psychological Bulletin*, *129*, 914–945. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.129.6.914

Uy, M. A., Lin, K. J., & Ilies, R. (2017). Is it better to give or receive? The role of help in buffering the depleting effects of surface acting. *Academy of Management Journal*, *60*, 1442-1461. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2015.0611

Väyrynen, T., & Laari-Salmela, S. (2018). Men, mammals, or machines? Dehumanization embedded in organizational practices. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *147*, 95-113.

https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-015-2947-z

Watson, D., & Clark, L. A. (1999). The PANAS-X: Manual for the positive and negative affect schedule-expanded form. https://doi.org/10.17077/48vt-m4t2

Zhao, X., Lynch, J. G., & Chen, Q. (2010). Reconsidering Baron and Kenny: Myths and truths about mediation analysis. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *37*, 197-206. https://doi.org/10.1086/651257

Table 1

*Study 1: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among Variables*

| | M | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Organizational dehumanization condition[a] | 0.00 | 1.00 | - | | | | |
| 2. Surface acting | 4.30 | 1.40 | .18** | (.94) | | | |
| 3. Deep acting | 3.85 | 1.16 | -.05 | .19** | (.93) | | |
| 4. Job satisfaction | 4.60 | 1.67 | -.22** | -.41** | .08 | (.92) | |
| 5. Emotional exhaustion | 3.73 | 1.30 | .21** | .63** | .18** | -.65** | (.95) |

*Note*. $N = 236$. Reliability alpha values are on the diagonal.

[a]The experimental conditions were coded "-1" for low organizational dehumanization and "+1" for high organizational dehumanization

**$p < .01$.

Table 2

*Study 1: Fit Indices for Measurement Models*

| Model | $\chi^2$ | df | RMSEA | SRMR | CFI | TLI | SCF | $\Delta\chi^2_{SB}$ | $\Delta_{df}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Four-factor model | 392.82 | 164 | .08 | .05 | .93 | .92 | 1.15 | --- | --- |
| 2. Three-factor model (SA-DA = 1 factor) | 866.32 | 167 | .13 | .11 | .80 | .77 | 1.18 | 227.70*** | 3 |
| 3. Three-factor model (JS-EE = 1 factor) | 728.57 | 167 | .12 | .08 | .84 | .82 | 1.18 | 159.29*** | 3 |
| 4. Two-factor model (SA-DA = 1 factor and JS-EE = 1 factor) | 1166.31 | 169 | .16 | .12 | .71 | .68 | 1.20 | 334.21*** | 5 |
| 5. One-factor model | 1609.44 | 170 | .19 | .14 | .59 | .54 | 1.23 | 475.62*** | 6 |

*Note*. $N$ = 236. RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; SCF = scaling correction factor; $\Delta\chi^2_{SB}$ = strictly positive Satorra-Bentler chi-square difference test; SA = surface acting; DA = deep acting; JS = job satisfaction; EE = emotional exhaustion.

***$p < .001$.

Table 3

*Study 2: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among Variables*

| | M | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Organizational dehumanization T1 | 3.91 | 1.50 | (.94) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Surface acting T1 | 4.07 | 1.35 | .54** | (.91) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Deep acting T1 | 3.96 | 1.39 | -.09* | .06 | (.94) | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Organizational dehumanization T2 | 3.97 | 1.49 | .72** | .49** | -.15** | (.95) | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. Surface acting T2 | 4.11 | 1.37 | .46** | .65** | .02 | .56** | (.92) | | | | | | | | |
| 6. Deep acting T2 | 3.95 | 1.35 | -.06 | .02 | .49** | -.09* | .05 | (.93) | | | | | | | |
| 7. Gender | 1.58 | 0.49 | -.02 | .15** | .12** | -.02 | .09* | .12** | - | | | | | | |
| 8. Age | 36.20 | 9.90 | .06 | -.08* | -.09* | -.03 | -.08 | .04 | .03 | - | | | | | |
| 9. Education | 3.74 | 0.98 | -.10* | -.03 | .03 | -.10* | -.03 | .01 | .02 | -.08* | - | | | | |
| 10. Organizational size | 4.81 | 2.67 | .22** | .07 | -.04 | .17** | .02 | -.03 | -.02 | .06 | .09* | - | | | |
| 11. Organizational tenure | 6.36 | 6.39 | .10* | -.05 | .00 | .02 | -.06 | .00 | -.02 | .53** | -.12** | .16** | - | | |
| 12. Positive affectivity T1 | 1.95 | 1.16 | -.50** | -.35** | .30** | -.39** | -.29** | .22** | .08 | .07 | .10* | -.11** | -.02 | (.90) | |
| 13. Negative affectivity T1 | 4.07 | 1.42 | .56** | .52** | -.01 | .43** | .41** | -.02 | .03 | -.08 | -.03 | .04 | -.00 | -.32** | (.87) |

*Note*. $N = 603$. Reliability alpha values are on the diagonal. Gender was coded 1 for male and 2 for female. Education was coded 1 for "did not complete high school," 2 for "high school," 3 for "some college," 4 for "bachelor's degree," 5 for "master's degree," and 6 for "Ph.D." Organizational size was coded 1 for 1-9 employees, 2 for 10-49 employees, 3 for 50-249 employees, 4 for 250-499 employees, 5 for 500-999 employees, 6 for 1000-1999 employees, 7 for 2000-4999 employees, 8 for 5000-9999 employees, 9 for more than 10000 employees.

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Table 4

*Study 2: Fit Indices for Measurement Models*

| Model | $\chi^2$ | df | RMSEA | SRMR | CFI | TLI | SCF | $\Delta\chi^2_{SB}$ | $\Delta_{df}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Time 1** | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Three-factor model | 513.54 | 132 | .07 | .04 | .94 | .93 | 1.20 | --- | --- |
| 2. Two-factor model (OD-SA = 1 factor) | 1441.64 | 134 | .13 | .09 | .80 | .77 | 1.21 | 514.14*** | 2 |
| 3. Two-factor model (OD-DA = 1 factor) | 1738.73 | 134 | .14 | .11 | .75 | .72 | 1.26 | 284.34*** | 2 |
| 4. Two-factor model (SA-DA = 1 factor) | 1758.93 | 134 | .14 | .12 | .75 | .72 | 1.25 | 320.94*** | 2 |
| 5. One-factor model | 2600.76 | 135 | .17 | .14 | .62 | .57 | 1.28 | 568.68*** | 3 |
| **Time 2** | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Three-factor model | 555.45 | 132 | .07 | .03 | .94 | .93 | 1.16 | --- | --- |
| 2. Two-factor model (OD-SA = 1 factor) | 1597.35 | 134 | .14 | .09 | .79 | .76 | 1.18 | 429.85*** | 2 |
| 3. Two-factor model (OD-DA = 1 factor) | 1748.60 | 134 | .14 | .11 | .77 | .74 | 1.24 | 228.83*** | 2 |
| 4. Two-factor model (SA-DA = 1 factor) | 1769.05 | 134 | .14 | .11 | .77 | .73 | 1.23 | 255.74*** | 2 |
| 5. One-factor model | 2701.17 | 135 | .18 | .13 | .63 | .59 | 1.26 | 472.88*** | 3 |

*Note*. $N$ = 603. RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; SCF = scaling correction factor; $\Delta\chi^2_{SB}$ = strictly positive Satorra-Bentler chi-square difference test; OD = organizational dehumanization; SA = surface acting; DA = deep acting.

***$p < .001$.

Table 5

*Study 2: Measurement Invariance*

| Model | $\chi^2$ | df | RMSEA | SRMR | CFI | TLI | Model Comparison | SCF | $\Delta\chi^2_{SB}$ | $\Delta_{df}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Model 1: Configural invariance | 1401.69 | 561 | .05 | .03 | .95 | .94 | --- | 1.12 | --- | --- |
| Model 2: Weak invariance | 1416.66 | 576 | .05 | .04 | .95 | .94 | 2 versus 1 | 1.11 | 10.43 | 15 |
| Model 3: Strong invariance | 1446.87 | 591 | .05 | .04 | .95 | .94 | 3 versus 1 | 1.11 | 42.45 | 30 |
| Model 4: Strict invariance | 1461.78 | 609 | .05 | .04 | .95 | .95 | 4 versus 1 | 1.14 | 56.78 | 48 |

*Note*. $N$ = 603. RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; SCF = scaling correction factor; $\Delta\chi^2_{SB}$ = strictly positive Satorra-Bentler chi-square difference test.

Table 6

*Study 3: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among Variables*

| | M | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Organizational dehumanization T1 | 3.80 | 1.60 | (.95) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Surface acting T2 | 3.89 | 1.43 | .38** | (.94) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Deep acting T2 | 3.86 | 1.30 | .00 | .17** | (.94) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Job satisfaction T3 | 4.76 | 1.71 | -.60** | -.43** | .02 | (.94) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. Emotional exhaustion T3 | 3.50 | 1.36 | .48** | .63** | .12* | -.56** | (.95) | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6. Gender | 1.62 | 0.49 | -.06 | .06 | .11* | .04 | .05 | --- | | | | | | | | | |
| 7. Age | 42.59 | 10.67 | .02 | -.12* | -.08 | -.03 | -.06 | -.01 | --- | | | | | | | | |
| 8. Education | 3.71 | 0.99 | -.08 | .12* | -.04 | .03 | .03 | -.03 | -.15** | --- | | | | | | | |
| 9. Organizational size | 5.31 | 2.67 | .16** | .09 | .09 | .02 | .10 | -.10 | -.08 | .04 | --- | | | | | | |
| 10. Organizational tenure | 8.53 | 7.26 | .04 | -.05 | -.05 | -.07 | .01 | -.10 | .38** | -.14* | .12* | --- | | | | | |
| 11. Positive affectivity T1 | 4.53 | 1.09 | -.34** | -.35** | .06 | .36** | -.39** | .02 | .22** | -.01 | -.08 | .02 | (.84) | | | | |
| 12. Negative affectivity T1 | 1.99 | 0.94 | .37** | .42** | .13* | -.31** | .55** | -.01 | -.02 | .00 | .11* | .00 | -.30** | (.84) | | | |
| 13. Abusive supervision T1 | 1.74 | 1.02 | .48** | .35** | .06 | -.45** | .42** | -.04 | .07 | -.19** | -.10 | .06 | -.22** | .41** | (.96) | | |
| 14. Coworker incivility T1 | 2.01 | 1.01 | .49** | .43** | .14** | -.38** | .48** | .01 | .03 | -.05 | .00 | .02 | -.28** | .51** | .60** | (.92) | |
| 15. Customer incivility T1 | 2.60 | 1.26 | .33** | .41** | .11* | -.29** | .45** | .08 | .01 | -.16** | .10 | .02 | -.23** | .34** | .30** | .41** | (.96) |

*Note*. $N = 356$. Reliability alpha values are on the diagonal. Gender was coded 1 for male and 2 for female. Education was coded 1 for "did not complete high school," 2 for "high school," 3 for "some college," 4 for "bachelor's degree," 5 for "master's degree," and 6 for "Ph.D." Organizational size was coded 1 for 1-9 employees to 9 for more than 10000 employees.

$^{*}p < .05$. $^{**}p < .01$.

**Table 7**

*Study 3: Fit Indices for Measurement Models*

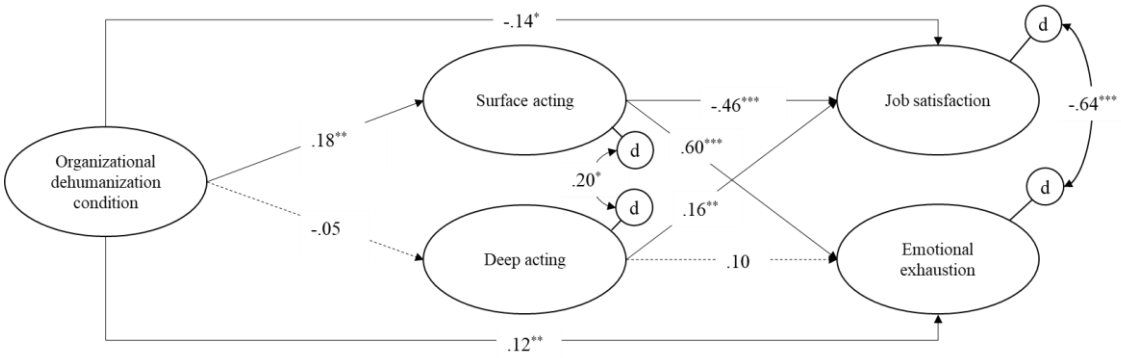
| Model | $\chi^2$ | df | RMSEA | SRMR | CFI | TLI | SCF | $\Delta\chi^2$SB | $\Delta$df |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Five-factor model | 252.23 | 142 | .05 | .03 | .98 | .98 | 1.19 | --- | --- |
| 2. Four-factor model (SA-DA = 1 factor) | 1016.72 | 146 | .13 | .11 | .84 | .82 | 1.23 | 354.15*** | 4 |
| 3. Four-factor model (JS-EE = 1 factor) | 1084.76 | 146 | .13 | .10 | .83 | .80 | 1.21 | 500.45*** | 4 |
| 4. Three-factor model (SA-DA = 1 factor and JS-EE = 1 factor) | 1804.43 | 149 | .18 | .14 | .70 | .66 | 1.25 | 768.96*** | 7 |
| 5. Two-factor model (SA-DA-JS-EE = 1 factor) | 2380.82 | 151 | .20 | .15 | .60 | .54 | 1.27 | 1051.43*** | 9 |
| 5. One-factor model | 3411.25 | 152 | .25 | .17 | .41 | .34 | 1.23 | 2150.39*** | 10 |

*Note*. $N$ = 356. RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; SCF = scaling correction factor; $\Delta\chi^2_{SB}$ = strictly positive Satorra-Bentler chi-square difference test; OD = organizational dehumanization; NE = negative emotions; SD = self-dehumanization; SA = surface acting; DA = deep acting; JS = job satisfaction; EE = emotional exhaustion.

***$p < .001$.

**Figure 1**

*Study 1: Completely Standardized Coefficients for the Hypothesized Model*

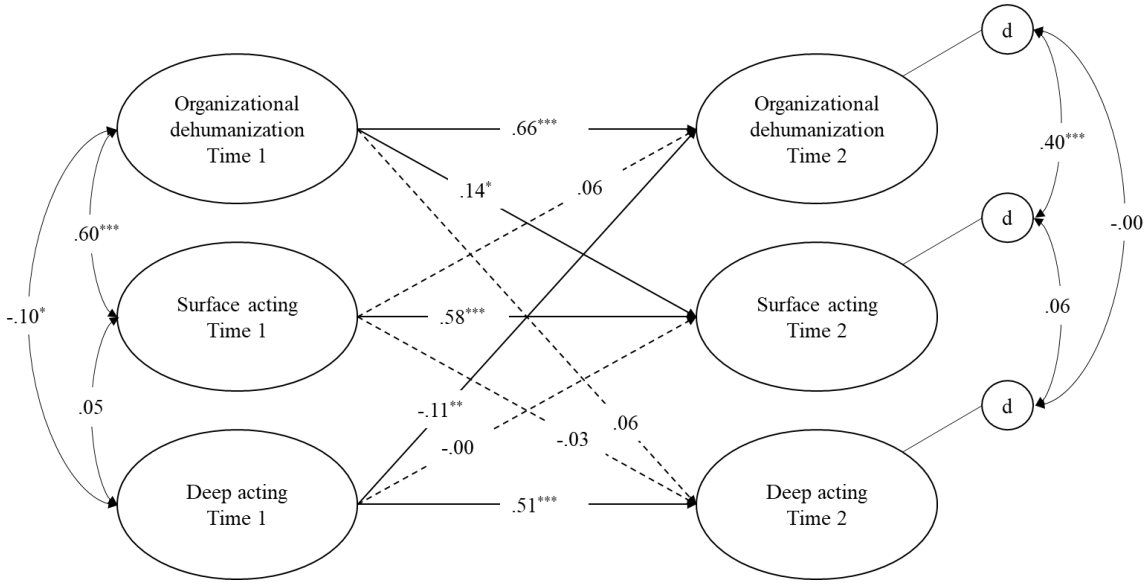



*Note*. $N$ = 236. Dash lines indicate non-significant paths.

$^{*}p < .05$. $^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$.

**Figure 2**

*Study 2: Structural Equation Model of the Relationships between Organizational Dehumanization, Surface Acting, and Deep Acting over Time*

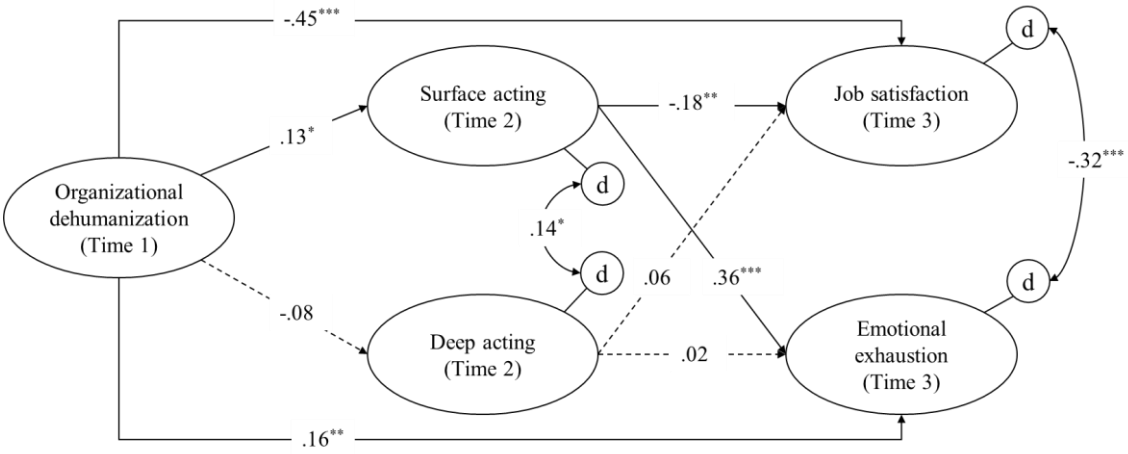



*Note*. $N$ = 603. Non-significant paths are displayed in dashed lines. For the sake of clarity, positive and negative affectivity are not displayed.

$^{*}p < .05$. $^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$.

**Figure 3**

*Study 3: Three-Wave Mediation Model*




*Note*. $N$ = 356. Dash lines indicate non-significant paths. For the sake of clarity, abusive supervision, coworker incivility, customer incivility, positive affectivity, and negative affectivity measured at Time 1 are not displayed.

$^{*}p < .05$. $^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$.