

Spiritual Intelligence, Emotional Labour and Work-Related Burnout: Investigating the Complex Relationships

Nurul Hasnie Hassiza W Hassan¹, Naresh Kumar Samy²

¹Faculty of Entrepreneurship and Business, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia

²Malaysian Graduate School of Entrepreneurship and Business, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia

^{1,2}City Campus, 16100 Pengkalan Chepa, Kota Bharu, Kelantan, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Human resource (HR) managers shoulder numerous workforce restructurings to mitigate escalating problems before and after the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure business performance stability. Like other functional managers, HR managers undergo pressures that push them to high work stress, leading to work-related burnout (WBO). Although the issues are essential, the lack of highlights in media reduces research attention and fact reporting. This study explores the function of spiritual intelligence (SQ) and emotional labour strategies (deep and surface acting) in mitigating HR managers' WBO. **Methods:** A stratified random sampling method and a validated self-administered online survey enabled the voluntary participation and analysis of 311 HR managers from ISO 9001-certified manufacturing companies in Malaysia. **Results:** The results suggest that SQ increases emotional labour deep-acting (ELDA) and limits surface-acting (ELSA), significantly reducing WBO. Testing for the indirect effects reveals that ELDA and ELSA mediate the association between SQ and WBO, which signifies the importance of emotional labour strategies. **Conclusion:** The findings benefit manufacturing industry management by helping them better understand the role of SQ and emotional labour strategies in reducing the escalation of WBO among HR managers. Managing directors can utilise the present study to evaluate their company's procedures, make necessary reforms, improve workplace culture, and provide better support for the HR managers who can shoulder significant staffing management without getting into burnout. Implications for relevant industries and future research directions are proposed.

Keywords: deep acting, emotional labour, HR managers, spiritual intelligence, surface acting, work-related burnout

Corresponding Author:

Naresh Kumar Samy
Email: naresh@umk.edu.my
Telephone: +60193402420

INTRODUCTION

Work-related burnout (WBO) is an increasingly studied phenomenon in many industries and professions due to its severe consequences for individuals and organisations (Moon, O'Brien and Mann, 2023). WBO is a disposition of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion caused by persistent or too much stress, depicted by a mental state of cynicism, separation, and incompetence (Maslach and Leiter, 2022; Vansoeterstede *et al.*, 2022). WBO's immediate effects are depression, anxiety, and insomnia (Richardson, 2023). Too much workload and responsibility would lead to unbearable stress and WBO (Jomuad *et al.*, 2021),

culminating in increased turnover rates and risk of mental health problems (Khalid *et al.*, 2020; Tulili, Capiluppi and Rastogi, 2023).

In the manufacturing industry, scholars have continuously stressed that WBO is prevalent and has caused a significant decrease in job satisfaction, increased turnover intention and decreased organisational commitment (Hwang, Song and Ko, 2022; Saleh *et al.*, 2022). The manufacturing industry is known for its high demands and fast-paced nature, with strict quality control requirements and tight deadlines (Kessler and Arlinghaus, 2022). Manufacturing industries have contributed to 16.24% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) growth (The World Bank, 2023); given that this industry plays a substantial role in the GDP and the expectations from the workforce, including the managers, it is crucial to analyse the current occurrence of WBO among employees carefully.

Cite this as: Hassan, N. H. H. W. and Samy, N. K. (2025) 'Spiritual Intelligence, Emotional Labour and Work-Related Burnout: Investigating the Complex Relationships', *The Indonesian Journal of Occupational Safety and Health*, 14(1), pp. 37-47.

Moreover, emotional regulation across borders and within the manufacturing industry may facilitate the identification of outstanding antecedents that cause WBO (Ayachit and Chitta, 2021).

Human resource (HR) managers are pivotal contributors to restructuring the workforce to achieve the company's performance and overall success. Companies with effective human resource practices tend to have lower turnover rates and higher employee engagement levels (Wang and Chen, 2022). HR managers oversee a sizable workforce and must ensure compliance with labour laws and regulations while implementing HR policies to achieve business objectives. However, these responsibilities can be challenging, with multiple internal demands and the provision of time-consuming solutions, leading to extraordinary tension and WBO (Maslach and Leiter, 2022). The WBO of HR managers may indicate that they have been coping with elevated stress levels and emotional labour for the long haul.

Emotional labour involves the endeavour, provision, and regulation compulsory to handle emotions to meet the demands of a role or job (Cottingham, 2022; Wang and Chen, 2022). A common emotional labour strategy is emotional labour-deep acting (ELDA), which signifies intentionally modifiable individual emotions to align with organisational norms and expectations, even if they conflict with one's feelings. Employees often use this technique to display positive emotions and create a positive workplace environment (Adams and Mastracci, 2020; Lartey *et al.*, 2020; Jeung and Chang, 2021). Meanwhile, emotional labour-surface acting (ELSA) implies suppressing or pretending an individual's genuine emotions to exhibit emotions that align with the circumstances. Managers often use this technique to hide negative emotions and create a positive workplace environment.

HR managers may be required to handle a wide range of emotions and issues while remaining calm and empathetic, which can be emotionally draining (Trullen, Bos-Nehles and Valverde, 2020; Maslach and Leiter, 2022). HR managers may experience WBO if they feel that they are not making a meaningful impact on the organisation or if their efforts are not recognised and appropriately rewarded (Collings *et al.*, 2021; Wang and Chen, 2022).

The current emphasis in addressing WBO is on factors within the company, encompassing situational and environmental elements. However, few studies

emphasise personal differences in mitigating WBO (Roloff *et al.*, 2022). Spiritual intelligence (SQ) is an individual attribute that potentially alleviates WBO (Pishghadam *et al.*, 2022). As a result, there is a noticeable gap in understanding the factors contributing to reducing WBO. Skrzypińska (2020) defined SQ as the ability to sense, comprehend, and access the divine source of guidance and wisdom that transcends the physical realm. They contend that employees with elevated stages of SQ are well-prepared to deal with pressure and adversity, which can lower the likelihood of WBO. Vasconcelos (2020) states that SQ can provide people with inner strength, resilience, and hope, which can aid them in managing stress and adversity at work. Employees with elevated SQ are better at regulating their emotions, maintaining a positive outlook, and using coping strategies like prayer or meditation to manage stress. Anas and Hamzah (2022) found that people who perceive their jobs as significant and associated with their convictions and beliefs are more prone to experience fulfilment and satisfaction, even in the face of challenges.

Pishghadam *et al.* (2022) discovered that individuals with elevated levels of SQ are inclined to feel a sense of connection to something greater than themselves, which correlates with lesser stages of WBO. Hwang, Song and Ko (2022) discovered that a person's emotional disposition is allied to how they exhibit their emotions in the workplace rather than their explicit efforts to modify their emotional state. Skrzypińska (2020) proposed that individuals possessing high SQ tend to encounter positive emotions more frequently, which may decrease their reliance on ELSA and enhance their inclination to ELDA. Conversely, people with minimal levels of SQ tend to encounter negative emotions more frequently, which raises their inclination for ELSA and diminishes the probability of openly expressing their authentic emotions. Moreover, few studies have suggested that SQ positively impacts a personnel's cognition, emotional wellness, actions, and overall job contentment ((Ogunsola, Fontaine and Jan, 2020a, 2020b; Pishghadam *et al.*, 2022). Based on the points raised in the literature, we can anticipate a positive relationship between SQ and ELDA and a negative one between SQ and ELSA.

When HR managers engage in ELSA, they may experience emotional conflict, the stress which arises when genuine emotions conflict with the emotions shown (Theodosius *et al.*, 2020; Yang and Jang, 2022), leading to WBO (Maslach and Leiter, 2022).

Riforgiate, Howes and Simmons (2021) demonstrate that ELSA requires more cognitive effort than ELDA and thus has stronger associations with WBO than ELDA. Kim and Leach (2021) found a predictive link between ELSA and employee well-being. Others who have supported similar claims are Bodenheimer and Shuster (2019) and Zaghini *et al.* (2020). The findings validate the positive link between ELSA and WBO, aligning with previous studies across disciplines (Contreras, Espinosa and Esguerra, 2020; Clari *et al.*, 2022; Correia Leal, Ferreira and Carvalho, 2022). Past studies found that ELDA has mitigated the WBO effects on employees (Adams and Mastracci, 2020; Lartey *et al.*, 2020; Jeung and Chang, 2021). Hence, a negative relationship exists between ELDA and WBO.

Individuals with higher levels of SQ are better equipped to carry out ELDA, resulting in a sense of emotional mastery and reduced WBO. Elevating SQ aids in reducing ELSA and leads to a significant decrease in WBO. Zapf *et al.* (2021) suggest that the ELSA prompts negative perceptions regarding one's job. Moreover, Gu and You (2019) solidify and enhance the current literature, supporting that ELSA impacts an individual's well-being and contributes to reduced work satisfaction. In the context of ELSA, a job requirement that obliges employees to display emotions they do not genuinely experience poses a particular challenge for individuals who do not possess the SQ needed to manage their emotions effectively. Consequently, individuals may experience emotional fatigue and depletion, potentially resulting from their professional roles and responsibilities (Ogunsola *et al.*, 2020a; Nurochim *et al.*, 2022).

Analysing the mediating effects of ELDA and ELSA on the relationship between SQ and WBO, with particular attention to HR managers in the manufacturing industry, is vital to verifying the claims in the literature and modifying HR managers' essential role and support. They are among the core employees of a company. They must handle WBO at all times, and their stability helps sustain the employees' welfare and well-being.

This study focuses on the emotional contagion theory (ECT), which suggests that emotions can be transferred or transmitted from one individual to another, particularly in social interactions, resulting in similar emotional experiences (Hatfield *et al.*, 2014; Lischetzke *et al.*, 2019). Research has shown that emotional contagion can contribute to burnout in various work settings (Petitta and Jiang, 2020;

Petitta *et al.*, 2020). Interactions among individuals can lead to emotional contagion, resulting in synchronised behaviour. Another study found that emotional contagion from colleagues was a significant predictor of WBO among employees in various professions (Petitta and Jiang, 2020; Petitta *et al.*, 2020). Thus, ECT can provide insight into how emotions spread in social interactions, including in the workplace, and how this can impact individual well-being and WBO.

METHOD

Sampling and Data Collection

The sampling frame for this study is 3,016 manufacturing companies with ISO 9001 standards within the Malaysian manufacturing industry. According to the G* Power sample size calculation (Kang, 2021), 341 samples were deemed appropriate. Nevertheless, the sample was increased by 25% to ensure a sizeable response, resulting in an adjusted sample size of 426. Manufacturing companies in Malaysia are geographically dispersed. Thus, the respondents were chosen using a disproportionate stratified random sampling method, considered the most appropriate. The online self-administered questionnaire yielded 311 valid responses, with a response rate of 73%.

Instruments

The SQ construct was measured using the Spiritual Intelligence Self Report Inventory (SISRI 24), a 24-item scale (King and DeCicco, 2009). The Emotional Labour Scale (ELS) was used to measure ELDA (3 items) and ELSA (3 items) (Brotheridge and Lee, 2003). The Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) was used to measure WBO, using a 7-item scale specifically for WBO (Kristensen *et al.*, 2005). A five-point Likert Scale, '1' representing "strongly disagreeing" and a scale of '5' expressing "strongly agree", was used to score the responses. Permission to use was received from the original creators of the instruments. Three experts thoroughly reviewed the final survey forms to ensure their precision and extensiveness. The panel of experts assessed and confirmed the precision of the survey by ensuring the questions were clear, specific, and unambiguous, with consistent terminology and appropriate response options. They evaluated the extensiveness by confirming that the survey comprehensively covered all relevant aspects of the study without

omitting important aspects or overwhelming respondents. These included balancing the scope and ensuring a logical flow of questions in the survey questionnaire.

Analysis of PLS-SEM

Partial least squares-structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) using the SmartPLS 4 examines the connections between the constructs. It can model latent constructs even when sample sizes are limited and work under non-normal settings (Ringle *et al.*, 2018).

The measuring items utilised in this study were derived from preceding empirical research and have shown reasonably high Cronbach's alpha values. However, conducting a pre-test and pilot study was still deemed necessary. During the pre-testing phase, the experts were generally satisfied with the survey items but recommended improving the survey questionnaire's instruction section for clarity. For the pilot test of this study, 30 HR managers from manufacturing companies located in the state of Selangor participated. They were not part of the actual study. This group served as a convenient representation of the actual survey respondents. The results (pilot study data) of the reliability coefficients for every construct (Cronbach's alpha) range from 0.849 to 0.855, exceeding the acceptable standard value of 0.70, indicating the survey instrument is best in its current form. Data were collected, and PLS-SEM was used to evaluate the direct and indirect effects.

This study's model was developed from multi-item components, reflecting measures rather than formative ones. The constructs were inter-correlated, unidimensional, and have high internal consistency. The research outcomes were based on a two-step procedure, initially evaluating the measurement model and then estimating the structural model.

The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) ranges between 1.651 and 1.722, within the acceptable threshold value of less than 5.0; thus, there are no multicollinearity issues. Significant paths in the model are determined using p-values (below 0.05), standardised path coefficients, and critical ratios (CR) greater than 1.96. The bootstrapping technique was also helpful in confirming the stability of significant paths—only statistically substantial paths were included in the final structural model.

Ethical Considerations

The research was presented and approved by Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (reference number: UMK.A01.800-5/2/1 JLN 3-66). The survey contains no sensitive issues and aims to establish associations between variables. Participation in the survey is voluntary. The survey questionnaire contains information informing the respondents that all responses are confidential and that anonymity is guaranteed.

RESULT

Research Participants

In this study, 180 (58%) male and 131 (42%) female HR managers voluntarily participated in the survey. At this juncture, it shows that males within Malaysia's manufacturing industry slightly dominate the HR manager position. Most of the HR managers in this survey were in the age group 31-40 years ($n=109$; 35%) and 41-50 years ($n=118$; 38%). All the respondents have attended higher education and have various awards (diplomas, degrees, PhDs, and professional certifications). The respondents exhibited significant employment in the present company in the survey form. Respondents' work experiences helped to justify a fair response to the survey. Forty-seven of them worked in the current company for more than 10 years; 146 managers reported working for the company between 6-10 years, followed by 109 between 3-5 years. Only a small number (9 HR managers) seem to be new and have been servicing the company for less than two years.

Common Method Bias

The study did not enquire about the respondents' identity, and, thus, the anonymity was well-ensured. As a result, there was less fear of negative social judgment and an increase in the level of genuine responses in the survey. Secondly, there is no request for the company's secrecy or sensitive information, which may reduce the common method variance (CMV).

The survey questionnaire uses clear, neutral, and specific questions to help reduce response bias. Leading questions were not in the survey to ensure the respondents were free from ambiguity, which

helped obtain more accurate responses. Indeed, pilot tests of the survey questionnaire confirmed no potential biases or unclear questions before distributing the final survey questionnaire to the respondents. The survey uses a five-point Likert scale and multiple items to measure a single construct to mitigate the impact of individual biases by averaging across responses. These techniques help reduce the biases inherent in self-reported data and improve the accuracy and reliability of survey results.

In addition, exploratory factor analysis through Harman's single-factor evaluation discovered the

initial factor contributed to just 23.19% of the variability. Therefore, CMV did not contaminate the study, as no single factor explained more than 50% of the variance. The VIF scores (see Table 2) pass the recommended threshold value of less than 5 points and thus are another plus point to ensure the non-existence of common method bias.

Measurement Model

The assessment of construct validity considered all requirements. An indicator loading greater than 0.70 was considered acceptable in this analysis. All 24 items related to SQ, six items of ELDA

Table 1. Results of Constructs Reliability, Convergent and Discriminant Validities

Construct	Reliability (CA & CR) Convergent Validity (AVE)			Discriminant Validity: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)		
	CA	CR	AVE	ELDA	ELSA	SQ
ELDA	0.855	0.913	0.778			
ELSA	0.849	0.909	0.770	0.757		
SQ	0.897	0.928	0.764	0.793	0.550	
WBO	0.927	0.941	0.694	0.636	0.768	0.543

Note: CA= Cronbach's Alpha; CR=Composite Reliability; AVE=Average Variance Extracted;

HTMT=Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio

Table 2. Models Fit Test

Exogenous Construct	R-square Endogenous Construct	F-square Effect Size	Q-square Endogenous Construct
SQ	ELSA (0.225: Moderate)	0.000 (no effect)	ELSA (Q2=0.171) Good predictive relevance
SQ	ELDA (0.494: Moderate)	0.000 (no effect)	ELDA (Q2=0.377) Good predictive relevance
ELSA	WBO (0.538: Moderate)	0.000 (no effect)	WBO (Q2=0.335) Good predictive relevance
ELDA		0.017 (small effect)	

Table 3. Results of Direct and Indirect Effects

Path Relationship	Std. Beta (β)	σ	t-value	p-value	LL	UL	VIF	Decision
Direct Effects								
ELDA→WBO	-0.218	0.046	4.712	0.001	-0.291	-0.141	1.722	Accept
ELSA→WBO	0.573	0.041	14.035	0.001	0.504	0.635	1.722	Accept
SQ→ELDA	0.703	0.03	23.561	0.001	0.645	0.747	1.651	Accept
SQ→ELSA	-0.474	0.052	9.196	0.001	-0.551	-0.382	1.651	Accept
Indirect Effects								
SQ→ELDA→WBO	-0.154	0.035	4.361	0.001	-0.210	-0.094	-	Accept
SQ→ELSA→WBO	-0.272	0.035	7.815	0.001	-0.328	-0.215	-	Accept

Note: bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval for upper level (UL), bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval for lower level (LL)

and ELSA, and seven items of WBO fulfilled the measurement model assessment requirements, refer to Table 1. Thus, the PLS-SEM analysis covered all survey items without any omissions. Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) criteria helps determine discriminant validity. The HTMT criterion is a more rigorous indicator for identifying potential discriminant validity between the latent variables than the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Table 1 shows that all HTMT values remained below 0.90, thereby confirming the successful fulfilment of the discriminant validity analysis.

Structural model

R-square values of endogenous constructs are robust if they are equal to or greater than 0.75. On the other hand, if it is ≥ 0.50 and < 0.75 then it is moderate; otherwise weak if ≥ 0.25 and < 0.50 . Regarding the statistics obtained from SmartPLS 4.0, the model fit outcomes report is shown in Table 2. SQ significantly contributed to the observed variance of ELSA (22.5%) and ELDA (49.4%). In return, ELSA and ELDA jointly contributed 53.8 % of the observed variance in WBO. The effect size is determined using the f^2 values with the following guide: small effect if $f^2 \geq 0.02$ and < 0.15 , medium if ≥ 0.15 and < 0.35 , and lastly, substantial if ≥ 0.35 . None of the constructs affected WBO except ELDA, which was observed to affect slightly. The Q-square values of the endogenous constructs from the blindfolding analysis indicated the models had good predictive relevance ranging from 0.171-0.377.

Before further testing the direct and indirect effects, it was essential to confirm there was no issue with multicollinearity. In ensuring the research data are accessible from the multicollinearity dispute, the variance inflated factor (VIF) is assured not to exceed 5 points. Since VIF values were under the prescribed thresholds, multicollinearity was not an issue. Table 3 shows the paths and multicollinearity values. There was no instance where the confidence interval between the lower level (LL) and upper level (UL) contained a zero value. It indicates all the direct paths are significant and similarly suggests the presence of mediation effects. Bootstrapping techniques were employed, with 5000 retests and the complete model PLS algorithm. Path coefficients for direct and indirect relationships are shown in Table 3. It was confirmed that a positive relationship exists between SQ and ELDA ($\beta = 0.703$, $t = 23.561$, $p < 0.001$) and a negative relationship between SQ and ELSA ($\beta = -0.474$, $t = 9.196$, $p < 0.001$). On

the other hand, a negative relationship between ELDA-WBO ($\beta = -0.218$, $t = 4.712$, $p < 0.001$) and a positive relationship between ELSA- WBO ($\beta = 0.573$, $t = 14.035$, $p < 0.001$) was found from the analysis. Through the bootstrapping (5000 subsamples) at the 95% CI, both ELDA ($\beta = -0.154$, $t = 4.361$, $p < 0.001$) and ELSA ($\beta = 0.272$, $t = 7.815$, $p < 0.001$) mediate the relationship between SQ and WBO. The observed direct and indirect effects are statistically significant. Bias-corrected bootstrap confidence further supports the decisions for indirect relationships.

DISCUSSION

The research findings revealed that SQ and emotional labour strategies (ELDA and ELSA) significantly affect WBO among HR managers in the Malaysian manufacturing industry. Besides, SQ also substantially impacts HR managers' ELDA and ELSA directly. Hence, the finding was consistent with the earlier research by Pishghadam *et al.* (2022) which supports the significant effect of SQ in influencing the option for ELSA. Individuals with high SQ are better at recognising and regulating their own emotions, which can help them cope with stressors more effectively. Employees with elevated SQ tend to use adaptive coping strategies when encountering stressors, such as seeking divine support, problem-solving, and positive reframing; thus, they opt for ELDA (Arnout, 2019). At the same time, Gabay and Weinstein (2022) state that individuals with a strong sense of SQ exhibit greater resilience when it comes to the effects of choosing ELSA.

Consequently, employees with elevated levels of SQ demonstrate a heightened ability to manage and express their emotions genuinely. Ogunsola, *et al.* (2020b) added that employees with high SQ tend to exhibit more remarkable dedication to their job performance, resulting in reduced focus on trivial matters in their surroundings. Therefore, they do not precisely count on engaging themselves in ELDA or ELSA as emotional labour strategies are only trivial matters for them.

By default, the HR manager profession flows with immense emotional labour. Perhaps an increase in ELDA and restriction in ELSA were crucial in mitigating WBO among HR managers who participated in the survey. Studies have indicated that, when utilised appropriately, ELDA can effectively enhance performance outcomes without

contributing to WBO. The study by Kim (2019) examined the function of emotional regulation approaches, including ELDA, in the association between emotional labour and WBO. The research observed that ELDA had a controlling role in the connection between emotional labour and WBO. Specifically, it reduced the detrimental impact on WBO, indicating that individuals practising ELDA experienced lower levels of WBO. It suggests that engaging in ELDA can be a protective element against WBO, particularly in occupations with high emotional demands, such as human relations professions. A review by Lee and Jang (2019) observed that ELDA can have optimistic impacts on WBO, mainly when individuals can synchronise their emotional expressions with their values and goals. Thus, it suggests that when ELDA is managed consistently with an individual's differences and values, it can be a positive and sustainable emotional regulation strategy. Therefore, ELDA is a valuable strategy for managing emotions and is a compelling emotional regulation strategy that does not contribute to WBO. While emotional labour, in general, can be challenging and demanding, organisations need to impart support to help employees develop and use effective emotional regulation strategies such as ELDA. More than two decades ago, Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) discovered that emotional labour positively correlates with emotional exhaustion, a key component of WBO, but only when individuals engage in ELSA, which suppresses genuine emotions to display an appropriate emotional response. Indeed, the present study's findings prove the claim that high deployment of ELSA induces WBO. The HR managers responded that ELDA and ELSA reacted oppositely in measuring WBO during this research period. HR managers feel they need to surface act in multiple aspects of their work-life, and with the support of SQ, they can eventually reduce significant amounts of stress. Indeed, HR managers' daily working lives and other employees in different roles will undergo ELSA, taking it as a possible workplace instance benefit, and learning from that experience will be an exceptional way to grow in the workplace. In any case, SQ works well, making emotional labour strategies a much more positive experience at work and minimising many adverse effects.

HR managers are traditionally involved in administrative work; however, in today's industrial trend, they participate actively as strategic enterprise partners. The provision of opportunity to perform

their roles professionally with empowered conditions allows reasonable leeway for expressing emotion with less or without WBO compared to decades ago (Trullen, *et al.*, 2020; Maslach and Leiter, 2022; Cayrat and Boxall, 2023). It appears that managing directors of manufacturing sectors are becoming aware of the importance of providing HR managers with appropriate autonomy to prevent emotional conflict at work by going above and beyond the organisation's standards and acting consistently with their own experiences (Wang and Chen, 2022). These trends may be suitable in future work settings and equally applicable across industries, and other functional managers besides HR managers may benefit from them. The availability of several instruments for measuring emotional labour makes it possible for manufacturing enterprises to readily evaluate ELSA and ELDA dimensions pertinent to human resource positions and consider the organisation's safety and health as well as business and management requirements (Lim and Moon, 2024).

HR managers have options during service encounters to choose ELDA, which requires a conscious choice, or ELSA to go along with unconscious regulation of emotions and this may directly affect their primary duties and responsibilities due to the wrong selection of emotion strategy, leading to WBO. As an additional point of interest, Malaysian HR managers who participated in the survey tend to rely on ELSA and ELDA regarding extended interpersonal encounters with internal stakeholders. It lends further credence that HR managers in this study duly respect the principles of a collectivist society, which places a higher value on community requirements than an individual's. They place great significance on kinship; thus, highly valued group cohesion and people tend to collaborate to achieve harmony.

Utilising ELDA and ELSA as emotional labour strategies impacts the SQ of HR managers and, subsequently, their susceptibility to WBO is a plausible argument. Mindfulness and meditation workshops focus on techniques for mindfulness, self-reflection, and presence, which contribute to SQ and emotional regulation. These practices help HR managers manage their emotions and maintain composure when engaging in emotional labour or deep acting under challenging situations. Examples of popular programs are Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), a program that helps develop mindfulness to manage stress and enhance

emotional awareness, and Search Inside Yourself (SIY), fashioned by Google, in which this workshop enhances emotional intelligence and mindfulness skills, focused on personal and leadership growth. Besides, SQ development programs, such as the Spiritual Intelligence Self-Assessment and HeartMath Training, integrate values like compassion and integrity into decision-making, help HR managers navigate ethical dilemmas and manage complex emotional situations. Deep acting and emotional labour training, including workshops like Emotional Labor in the Workplace and Positive Psychology and Resilience Training, teach HR managers how to manage emotions authentically while preventing emotional burnout. Leadership development programs like the Compassionate Leadership Program focus on emotional and SQ to help HR managers lead with empathy and create positive work environments. Additionally, cultural competence and diversity training, such as Global Leadership and Diversity Programs, equip HR managers with the tools to navigate cultural differences in emotional expressions, enhancing their ability to manage ELDA in diverse settings. Together, these programs help HR managers strengthen their leadership capabilities, foster inclusive environments, and manage emotional challenges with greater resilience and authenticity.

Nevertheless, although we cannot definitively establish the causality of the effects, the model presented receives support from previous theoretical considerations. Thus, advocating for additional research investigating causal relationships is advisable rather than making conclusive claims. Other study designs, such as longitudinal studies or randomised controlled trials, can be put forward to explore causation in greater depth. Moreover, it is worth noting that all respondents in the study were exclusively selected from the manufacturing industry, reducing the applicability of the results to different sectors. Hence, the findings may not apply to HR and non-HR managers in non-manufacturing sectors, as the demands for SQ and emotional labour strategies may vary across different job roles and responsibilities. Hence, future studies may involve other managers in various industries. Then, this study is quantitative; therefore, employing qualitative and mixed-methods approaches could be valuable in triangulating the findings and enhancing the overall robustness of the study. The emotional contagion theory (ECT) suggests that emotions can be transmitted from one to another in

social interactions, resulting in similar emotional experiences (Lu and Hong, 2022; Lim and Moon, 2024). It is well worth utilising as a theoretical foundation for research. Ultimately, constant research efforts contribute significantly to the body of knowledge.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the significant role of SQ in influencing emotional labour strategies (ELDA and ELSA) and their impact on WBO among HR managers in Malaysian manufacturing companies. The findings emphasise that while surface acting in emotional labour increases stress and burnout, deep acting, which involves authentic emotional regulation, is linked to lower levels of WBO, promoting a healthier work environment. The study advocates for training that fosters deep-acting emotional regulation and resilience, suggesting activities like group discussions, mindfulness practices, and self-reflection exercises. Additionally, it underscores the need for further empirical research to solidify the relationship between SQ, emotional labour, and WBO, particularly in non-Western contexts, and the potential benefits of SQ training for HR managers to enhance emotional well-being, job performance and organisational success.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are thankful to the HR managers from the Malaysian manufacturing industry who have voluntarily participated in completing the online survey.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

The authors contributed equally to the research concept, design, intellectual content, review of literature, data collection, data analysis, and manuscript writing. Nurul Hasnie Hassiza organised approval and distributed the survey. Naresh Kumar proofread the final manuscript. Authors are accountable at each stage of the research and approve the concluding version of the paper to be published.

REFERENCES

- Adams, I.T. and Mastracci, S.H. (2020) 'Contrasting Emotional Labor and Burnout in Civilian and

- Sworn Law Enforcement Personnel', *Policing: An International Journal*, 43(2), pp. 314–329. <https://doi.org/10.1108/pijpsm-06-2019-0094>
- Anas, I. and Hamzah, S.R. (2022) 'Predicting Career Adaptability of Fresh Graduates through Personal Factors', *European Journal of Training and Development*, 46(3/4), pp. 302–316. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJTD-02-2020-0023>
- Arnout, B.A. (2019) 'A Structural Equation Model relating Unemployment Stress, Spiritual Intelligence, and Mental Health Components: Mediators of Coping Mechanism', *Journal of Public Affairs*, 20(2). <https://doi.org/10.1002/pa.2025>
- Ayachit, M. and Chitta, S. (2021) 'A Systematic Review of Burnout Studies from the Hospitality Literature', *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 31(2), pp. 125–144. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2021.1957743>
- Bodenheimer, G. and Shuster, S.M. (2019) 'Emotional Labour, Teaching and Burnout: Investigating Complex Relationships', *Educational Research*, 62(1), pp. 63–76. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2019.1705868>
- Brotheridge, C.M. and Grandey, A.A. (2002) 'Emotional Labor and Burnout: Comparing Two Perspectives of "People Work"', *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 60(1), pp. 17–39. <https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.2001.1815>
- Brotheridge, C.M. and Lee, R.T. (2003) 'Development and validation of the Emotional Labour Scale', *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 76(3), pp. 365–379. <https://doi.org/10.1348/096317903769647229>
- Cayrat, C. and Boxall, P. (2023) 'The Roles of the HR Function: A Systematic Review of Tensions, Continuity and Change', *Human Resource Management Review*, 33(4), p. 100984. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2023.100984>
- Clari, M. *et al.* (2022) 'Multi-level Analysis of Individual and Work Environment Factors Associated with Nurses' Perceived Emotional Exhaustion', *Applied Nursing Research*, 63, p. 151514. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apnr.2021.151514>
- Collings, D.G. *et al.* (2021) 'Strategic Human Resource Management and COVID-19: Emerging Challenges and Research Opportunities', *Journal of Management Studies*, 58(5), pp. 1378–1382. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12695>
- Contreras, F., Espinosa, J.C. and Esguerra, G.A. (2020) 'Could Personal Resources Influence Work Engagement and Burnout? A Study in a Group of Nursing Staff', *SAGE Open*, 10(1), p. 215824401990056. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019900563>
- Correia Leal, C., Ferreira, A.I. and Carvalho, H. (2022) "'Hide Your Sickness and Put on a Happy Face": The Effects of Supervision Distrust, Surface Acting, and Sickness Surface Acting on Hotel Employees' Emotional Exhaustion', *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 44(6), pp. 871–887. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2676>
- Cottingham, M.D. (2022) *Practical Feelings: Emotions as Resources in a Dynamic Social World*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197613689.001.0001>
- Gabay, N. and Weinstein, S. (2022) 'The Conjoint Effect of Workplace Spirituality and Emotional Labour on Service Providers' Well-being: A Moderated Mediation Model', *Journal of Human Values*, 28(2), pp. 115–128. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09716858221082705>
- Gu, Y. and You, X. (2019) 'Recovery Experiences Buffer Against Adverse Well-being Effects of Workplace Surface Acting: A Two-Wave Study of Hospital Nurses', *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 76(1), pp. 209–220. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.14236>
- Hatfield, E. *et al.* (2014) 'New Perspectives on Emotional Contagion: A Review of Classic and Recent Research on Facial Mimicry and Contagion', *Interpersona: An International Journal on Personal Relationships*, 8(2), pp. 159–179. <https://doi.org/10.5964/ijpr.v8i2.162>
- Hwang, J., Song, E.K. and Ko, S. (2022) 'Relationships among Basic Psychological Needs, Organisational Commitment, Perceived Authentic Leadership and Turnover Intention in Korean Nurses: A Cross-sectional Study', *Journal of Nursing Management*, 30(7), pp. 2176–2184. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jonm.13546>
- Jeung, D.-Y. and Chang, S.-J. (2021) 'Moderating Effects of Organizational Climate on the Relationship between Emotional Labor and Burnout among Korean Firefighters', *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(3), p. 914. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18030914>
- Jomoad, P.D. *et al.* (2021) 'Teachers' workload in relation to burnout and work performance', in. Available at: <https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:249635338>

- Kang, H. (2021) 'Sample Size Determination and Power Analysis using the G*Power Software', *Journal of Educational Evaluation for Health Professions*, 18, p. 17. <https://doi.org/10.3352/jeehp.2021.18.17>
- Kessler, M. and Arlinghaus, J.C. (2022) 'A Framework for Human-centered Production Planning and Control in Smart Manufacturing', *Journal of Manufacturing Systems*, 65, pp. 220–232. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmsy.2022.09.013>
- Khalid, A. *et al.* (2020) 'The Impact of Occupational Stress on Job Burnout Among Bank Employees in Pakistan, With Psychological Capital as a Mediator', *Frontiers in Public Health*, 7. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2019.00410>
- Kim, H. and Leach, R.B. (2021) 'Mitigating Burnout Through Organisational Justice: Customer Support Workers' Experiences of Customer Injustice and Emotional Labor', *Management Communication Quarterly*, 35(4), pp. 497–517. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08933189211012040>
- Kim, J. (2019) 'Emotional Labor Strategies, Stress, and Burnout Among Hospital Nurses: A Path Analysis', *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 52(1), pp. 105–112. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jnu.12532>
- King, D.B. and DeCicco, T.L. (2009) 'A Viable Model and Self-Report Measure of Spiritual Intelligence', *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 28(1), pp. 68–85. <https://doi.org/10.24972/ijts.2010.28.1.68>
- Kristensen, T.S. *et al.* (2005) 'The Copenhagen Burnout Inventory: A New Tool for the Assessment of Burnout', *Work & Stress*, 19(3), pp. 192–207. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02678370500297720>
- Lartey, J.K.S. *et al.* (2020) 'Emotional experiences and coping strategies of nursing and midwifery practitioners in Ghana: a qualitative study', *BMC Nursing*, 19(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12912-020-00484-0>
- Lee, M. and Jang, K.-S. (2019) 'Nurses' Emotions, Emotional Labor, and Job Satisfaction', *International Journal of Workplace Health Management*, 13(1), pp. 16–31. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijwhm-01-2019-0012>
- Lim, J. and Moon, K.-K. (2024) 'The Effect of Emotional Labor on Psychological Well-Being in the Context of South Korean Firefighters: The Moderating Role of Transformational Leadership', *Behavioral Sciences*, 14(3). <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14030167>
- Lischetzke, T. *et al.* (2019) 'Are Those Who Tend to Mimic Facial Expressions Especially Vulnerable to Emotional Contagion?', *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, 44(1), pp. 133–152. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10919-019-00316-z>
- Lu, D. and Hong, D. (2022) 'Emotional Contagion: Research on the Influencing Factors of Social Media Users' Negative Emotional Communication During the COVID-19 Pandemic', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.931835>
- Maslach, C. and Leiter, M.P. (2022) *The Burnout Challenge: Managing People's Relationships with Their Jobs*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. <https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674287297>
- Moon, Y.-K., O'Brien, K.E. and Mann, K.J. (2023) 'The role of extraversion in the Great Resignation: A burnout-quitting process during the pandemic', *Personality and Individual Differences*, 205, p. 112074. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2022.112074>
- Nurochim, N.A. *et al.* (2022) 'Investigating the Relationship between Spiritual Intelligence, Emotional Regulation and Stress Coping Strategies in the Russian Education Industry', *International Journal of Work Organisation and Emotion*, 13(3), p. 212. <https://doi.org/10.1504/ijwoe.2022.126952>
- Ogunsola, K.O., Fontaine, R. A. H. and Jan, M.T. (2020a) 'Enhancing Service Personnel's Emotional Labour Techniques: An Empirical Case for Spiritual Intelligence', *International Journal of Islamic Business Ethics*, 5(2), p. 125. <https://doi.org/10.30659/ijibe.5.2.125-144>
- Ogunsola, K.O., Fontaine, R. A. Harvey and Jan, M.T. (2020b) 'Impact of Surface Acting and Deep Acting Techniques on Teachers' Organisational Commitment', *PSU Research Review*, 4(1), pp. 61–79. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PRR-10-2019-0031>
- Petitta, L. *et al.* (2020) 'Economic Stress, Emotional Contagion and Safety Outcomes: A Cross-Country Study', *Work*, 66(2), pp. 421–435. <https://doi.org/10.3233/wor-203182>
- Petitta, L. and Jiang, L. (2020) 'How Emotional Contagion Relates to Burnout: A Moderated Mediation Model of Job Insecurity and Group Member Prototypicality.', *International Journal of Stress Management*, 27(1), pp. 12–22. <https://doi.org/10.1037/str0000134>
- Pishghadam, R. *et al.* (2022) Interplay of Psychological Reactance, Burnout, and Spiritual Intelligence: A Case of Iranian EFL Teachers', *Revista de*

- Psicodidáctica (English ed.)*, 27(1), pp. 76–85. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psicoe.2021.06.002>
- Richardson, S.D. (2023) ‘Reimagining Quiet Quitting’, in Ng, E.S. (Ed.), *Palgrave Studies in Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigenization in Business*. Springer International Publishing, pp. 105–117. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-29211-8_8
- Riforgiate, S.E., Howes, S.S. and Simmons, M.J. (2021) ‘The Impact of Daily Emotional Labor on Health and Well-Being’, *Management Communication Quarterly*, 36(3), pp. 391–417. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08933189211041352>.
- Ringle, C.M. *et al.* (2018) ‘Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling in HRM Research’, *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 31(12), pp. 1617–1643. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2017.1416655>.
- Roloff, J. *et al.* (2022) ‘How Strongly is Personality Associated With Burnout Among Teachers? A Meta-analysis’, *Educational Psychology Review*, 34(3), pp. 1613–1650. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-022-09672-7>.
- Saleh, T.A. *et al.* (2022) ‘The Impact of Ethical Leadership on Employees Turnover Intention: An Empirical Study of the Banking Sector in Malaysia’, *Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 9(2), pp. 0261–0272.
- Skrzypińska, K. (2020) ‘Does Spiritual Intelligence (SI) Exist? A Theoretical Investigation of a Tool Useful for Finding the Meaning of Life’, *Journal of Religion and Health*, 60(1), pp. 500–516. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-020-01005-8>.
- The World Bank (2023) Manufacturing, value added (Percentage of GDP), Manufacturing, value added (Percentage of GDP)., Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NV.IND.MANF.ZS> (Accessed: 9 September 2023).
- Theodosius, C. *et al.* (2020) ‘Collegial Surface Acting Emotional Labour, Burnout and Intention to Leave in Novice and Pre-retirement Nurses in the United Kingdom: A Cross-sectional Study’, *Nursing Open*, 8(1), pp. 463–472. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nop2.649>.
- Trullen, J., Bos-Nehles, A. and Valverde, M. (2020) ‘From Intended to Actual and Beyond: A Cross-Disciplinary View of (Human Resource Management) Implementation’, *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 22(2), pp. 150–176. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12220>.
- Tulili, T.R., Capiluppi, A. and Rastogi, A. (2023) ‘Burnout in Software Engineering: A Systematic Mapping Study’, *Information and Software Technology*, 155, p. 107116. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.infsof.2022.107116>.
- Vansoeterstede, A. *et al.* (2022) ‘A Systematic Review of Longitudinal Changes in School Burnout among Adolescents: Trajectories, Predictors, and Outcomes’, *Journal of Adolescence*, 95(2), pp. 224–247. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jad.12121>.
- Vasconcelos, A.F. (2020) ‘Spiritual Intelligence: A Theoretical Synthesis and Work-life Potential Linkages’, *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 28(1), pp. 109–134. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijoa-04-2019-1733>.
- Wang, Y. and Chen, H. (2022) ‘Are Human Resource Managers with Good Listening Competency more Likely to Avoid Job Burnout?’, *BMC Public Health*, 22(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-022-12618-x>.
- Yang, K. and Jang, H. (2022) ‘Mechanisms Linking Emotional Labour and Emotional Exhaustion: Combining Two Different Perspectives’, *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 25(4), pp. 688–700. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajsp.12530>.
- Zaghini, F. *et al.* (2020) ‘The role of Occupational Stress in the Association between Emotional Labor and Burnout in Nurses: A Cross-sectional Study’, *Applied Nursing Research*, 54, p. 151277. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apnr.2020.151277>.
- Zapf, D. *et al.* (2021) ‘Emotion Work: A Work Psychology Perspective’, *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 8(1), pp. 139–172. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-012420-062451>.