

Emotional Labour and Locus of Control in Call Center Employees: Mediating Effect of Work Motivation

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims at studying the mediating relationship of work motivation on the relationship of locus of control and emotional labour among call center employees. A cross-sectional design was used for the same. Standardised questionnaires were sent to call center agents working in the out-bound sector in tier-1 cities. The final sample size used for analysis was 223. The results revealed a significant correlation between internal locus of control and both deep acting and surface acting, which are established components of emotional labor. Call center agents with a higher internal locus of control demonstrated a greater tendency to engage in both forms of emotional labor. This suggests a potential link between internal locus of control and a higher inclination of employees to regulate emotional expressions and responses in accordance with organizational requirements. The study, however, did not provide evidence supporting a significant mediating role of work motivation in the relationship between locus of control and emotional labor. These findings can help the managers of call center employees in taking major leaps in the area of performance improvement and hence their organisational commitment. This can be achieved by helping the employees focus more on their performance and focusing less on emotional regulation by displaying deep acting and surface acting.

Keywords: *Emotional Labour, Locus of Control, Work Motivation, Deep acting, Surface Acting*

In emerging economies, call center sector is growing at a rapid pace because of the availability of cheaper labour. The main task of call center agents is to communicate with the customers using integrated telephonic and computer solutions (Wegge et al., 2006). There are mainly two types of call centers that exist-inbound and outbound. An inbound call center is one where the call center agents receive calls from customers regarding the product or service provided by the company (Indeed Editorial Team, 2023). On the other hand, outbound call centers are one where the call center representatives reach out to the potential customers to expand the reach of the company (Indeed Editorial Team, 2023). The present study focuses on the inbound call center employees.

Even if customers are rude, call centre operators are typically trained to be upbeat, energetic, courteous, and helpful (Grandey et al., 2004; Totterdell & Holman, 2003). This leads to the

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employees having to present emotions which are often contradictory to what they are actually feeling (Wegge et al., 2006). This is referred to as emotional dissonance, which stems from emotional labour.

The concept of emotional labour was introduced by Hochschild (1983) in her book “The Managed Heart”. In simple terms, it refers to the act of regulating one’s emotions to fit the organisational standards (Lu et al., 2019). Two strategies are among the most discussed ones in the area of emotional labour, these are, surface acting and deep acting.

According to Zapf (2002), deep acting is when the person consciously tries to regulate their inner feeling in order to bring them in line with the organisational expectations. Whereas, surface acting is at a more surface level and is triggered at the level of more flexible action patterns. It does not require conscious changes in the feelings.

Call center agents also usually have a very low level of control over their work because they are required to stick to a script provided by the organisation while interacting with the customers (Wegger et al., 2006). This often leads to low work motivation because of the monotonous nature of the job (Wieland & Timm, 2004). Research has found evidence of the fact that the actual performance of a job may vary based on the desire and motivation of the employee at stake (Jeon et al., 2022).

Motivation can be majorly divided into two categories, namely, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation is when people are motivated to engage in some behaviour because of external rewards or avoidance of punishment. Whereas, intrinsic motivation is when a person engages in a behaviour because they find it internally rewarding. The behaviour is rewarding in itself (Cherry, 2022). Motivation can be used as a predictor of behaviour as well.

Work motivation can also be linked to locus of control. Locus of control is described as a generalised expectation of perceived internal or external control or the extent to which a person believes that his or her actions or other relatively permanent characteristics, which are presumed to be more or less stable under different circumstances, are responsible for how things turn out (Rotter, 1966).

Locus of control (LoC) plays an important role in work performance (Phares, 1976; Partridge & Johnston, 1989). Lefcourt (1982) found that externals appear to have a greater need for task structure before and during task performance; that they do not readily question the need or reason for carrying out tasks; and that as a result, they may not participate in task performance with enthusiasm until they learn about the advantages of their task. Individuals with an internal locus of control are more likely to be loyal to their organisation than those with an external locus of control (Spector, 1982; Kinicki & Vecchio 1994).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The global economy is constantly evolving from a product and manufacturing based economy, to a service based economy, which in turn increases the need for call centers (Couture, 2001).

In the past, very few people have studied the relationship between emotional labour, work motivation and locus of control.

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Locus of Control

The concept of control has been studied extensively in psychology. A few examples of theories that center around the concept of control include Rotter's (1954) social learning theory, Seligman's (1975) theory of learned helplessness, Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory and Weiner's (1986) attributional analysis of motivation and emotion. The concept of Locus of Control, however, was given by Rotter (1975).

Individuals who believe that the outcomes of their actions can be controlled by their own abilities, efforts, skills and characteristics are said to have an internal locus of control and are usually referred to as 'internals'. Whereas, the people who believe that the outcomes of their actions are based mostly on external forces such as luck, fate and powerful others are believed to have an external locus of control and are referred to as 'externals' (Thakre & Roche, 2016).

In a study by Carrim et al. (2006), the relationship between job satisfaction and locus of control was studied in a South African call center environment. Results indicated that call center agents with an internal locus of control tend to experience more general, extrinsic and intrinsic job satisfaction, compared to the externals. Further, it was found that gender did not seem to play a role in deciding the levels of intrinsic or extrinsic motivation.

Research has also found that locus of control plays an important role in work performance (Phares, 1976; Partridge & Johnston, 1989). Lefcourt (1982) found that people with an external LoC, seem to have more need for task structure compared to the internals. As a result, they may not take part in job performance as enthusiastically, without receiving the entire information. People with an internal LoC are also more likely to be more committed to their organisation (Spector, 1982; Kinicki & Vecchio, 1994), because they are more intrinsically motivated. Another study suggested that there was a significant positive correlation between the learner's motivation and internal locus of control (Hajmohammadi & Aghayani, 2022).

Emotional Labour

The term emotional labour was first given by Hochschild (1983) and refers to "the management of feelings to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display". In customer facing industries, the purpose of emotional labour is to induce a pleasant state of mind in the customers so that the quality of service and customer satisfaction are enhanced, leading to the creation of a positive image about the organization and its customer service (D'Cruz & Noronha, 2008). In a call center, specifically, the focus is primarily on communicating appropriate emotions via verbal cues, which is sometimes more challenging than face-to-face communication (Van Jaarsveld & R Poster, 2013). Putting in emotional labour might also lead to emotional dissonance, which is defined as the discrepancy between required and felt emotions (Indregard et al., 2018).

Hochschild (1983) came up with three criteria that make up for an emotionally laborious job. These include:

- a. Face-to-face or voice-to-voice interaction with the public
- b. Employees altering the customer's emotional state as a part of their job.
- c. Employers exerting control over the employees' training and supervision.

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The call center work meets all these criteria and thus makes up for an emotionally laborious job. Employees working in a call center learn to “smile down the phone”, i.e. they learn how to convey positive emotions through their voice tone (Marshall & Richardson, 1996, 1855) because they are under more pressure to express fewer negative emotions (Zapf et al., 2003). Along with a high level of control in the call centers, the employees also interact with the customers more frequently as compared to other occupations involving emotional labour (Frenkel et al., 1998; Holman, 2003) (for instance flight crew).

Lewig and Dollard (2003) found that emotional exhaustion brought on by role performance resulted from emotional dissonance rather than from the need to appear or be sensitive. The study further revealed that to increase satisfaction and decrease this dissonance, rewards, autonomy and support (from supervisors and co-workers) can be given to the employees.

Studies have also shown that aggression from customers (Hülshager and Schewe, 2011; Molino et al. 2016) in the call center is not the not only factor that generates negative reactions from the employee that they cannot express, the amount of pressure of work and lack of support from supervisors is also a factor (Taylor & Bain, 1998; Callaghan & Thompson, 2002; Lewig & Dollard, 2003; Molino et al. 2016; Mwendwa 2017).

In a study by Narlı and Akdemir (2018), it was found that women’s concentration in the call centers and the added gender norms present more challenges for females, eventhough the same conditions of work apply to all the employees, irrespective of their gender.

Work Motivation

The concept of work motivation has been studied extensively in the past. It refers to a set of forces that originate, both within and outside an individual, to initiate work-related behaviour and to determine its intensity, direction and duration (Pinder, 1998). It can thus be said that motivation is a psychological process that results from the interaction between internal and external forces.

Studies have shown that there exists a positive relationship between motivation and locus of control, i.e., people with an internal locus of control are more motivated to work (Spector, 1992, 1986; Rotter, 1966; Anderson et al., 2005).

A positive relationship has also been established between motivation and service quality among service employees (Mallin & Pullins, 2009). Additionally, studies have also found that emotional dissonance (which happens in part because of emotional labour) in call center employees, also results in a higher job stress, burnout and psychological frustration (Bakker and Heuven 2006), which ultimately leads to lower intrinsic motivation (Jeon et al., 2022). Intrinsic motivation of call center employees is also found to be low, especially when they are experiencing emotional dissonance (Jeon et al., 2022). However, the employees in a call center are expected to regulate their emotions regardless of what they are feeling, which leads to emotional dissonance, which ultimately leads to exhaustion of emotional resources (Bakker and Heuven 2006; Heuven and Bakker 2003; Kenworthy et al. 2014; Zapf et al. 2001). Intrinsic motivation of employees, may thus be reduced or absent depending upon the degree of perception of emotional dissonance (Jeon et al., 2022).

Further, Grandey et al. (2013) in their study, reported that extrinsic motivation enhances the motivation from surface acting, but it fails to do so for deep acting. Deep acting on the other

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hand, was found to mediate the relationship between autonomous motivation (which comprises of intrinsic motivation and identified motivation) and surface acting and surface acting was found to mediate the relationship between controlled motivation (which is comprised of extrinsic motivation and introjected motivation) and service performance (Hur et al., 2020).

Research Gaps

Upon reviewing the literature available on all three variables and the relationship between them, the following gaps in research were identified:

1. There hasn't been much research on the relationship between all three variables together.
2. The existing literature pertaining to the relationship among these variables lacks specific focus on the Indian context.
3. Insufficient research has been conducted to investigate the direct impact of emotional labour on other variables within the context of existing literature. The predominant focus in the literature primarily centres around emotional dissonance, which emerges as a consequential outcome of emotional labour.

Rationale and Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to study the mediating effect of work motivation on locus of control and the emotional labour displayed by the employees working in a call center.

The present topic was chosen because there is a lack of research in the area. Most of the available literature in the field does not focus on the relationship between all three factors being studied, which piqued my interest in the same.

Statement of Problem

To study the mediating effect of work motivation on locus of control and emotional labour displayed by call center employees.

Objectives of the Study

Following are the objectives of the present study:

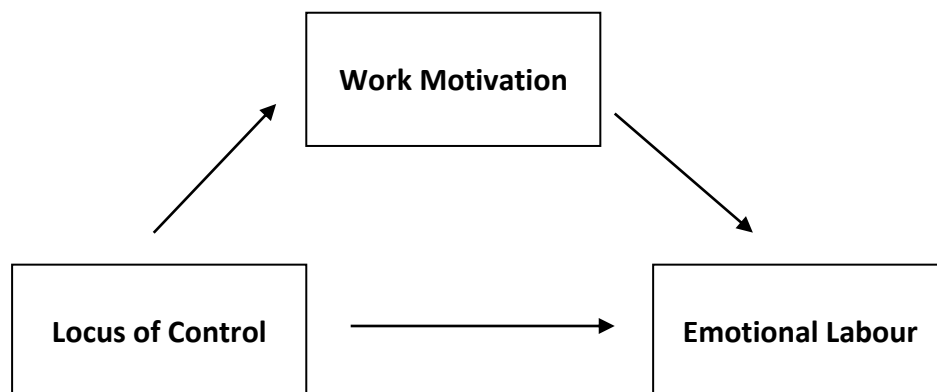
1. To study the relationship between LoC and emotional labour factors.
2. To study the mediating effect of work motivation on LoC and emotional labour factors.

Hypotheses

- H₁: There is a relationship between LoC and Emotional Labour.
- H_{1a}: There is a relationship between internal LoC and Deep Acting.
- H_{1b}: There is a relationship between internal LoC and Surface Acting.
- H_{1c}: There is a relationship between external LoC and Deep Acting.
- H_{1d}: There is a relationship between external LoC and Surface Acting.
- H₂: Work motivation will have a mediating effect on the relationship between locus of control and emotional labour experienced by call center employees.
 - H_{2a}: Work motivation will have a mediating effect on the relationship between locus of control and deep acting experienced by call center employees.
 - H_{2b}: Work motivation will have a mediating effect on the relationship between locus of control and surface acting experienced by call center employees.

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Figure 1 Mediating Effect of Work Motivation on Locus of Control and Emotional Labour



METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample consists of 223 employees working in the call center industry, irrespective of the sexes. The participants should be residents of tier-1 cities of India. Snowball sampling method will be used for data collection.

The confidence level while calculating the sample size was 95% and margin of error was 5%. The participants fall in the age range of 25-60 years. Convenience sampling method was used to collect the data.

Inclusion criteria: The participants should be Indian residents and should have a minimum experience of 2 years.

Exclusion criteria: We will exclude the participants which work in a call center providing inbound services.

Operational Definitions

1. Locus of Control (LoC): LoC can be defined as an individual's perception about the underlying main cause of events in their life (Rotter, 1996). It has two components:
 - External LoC: An individual thinks that fate, luck or other components outside of themselves control their behaviour (Zimbardo, 1985).
 - Internal LoC: An individual believes that their behaviour is guided by their own decisions and efforts (Zimbardo, 1985).
2. Emotional Labour: Emotional labour is generally defined as the act of expressing organizationally desired emotions during service transactions (Morris and Feldman 1996).
3. Motivation: Motivation is a psychological process resulting from the interaction between the individual and the environment (Thakre & Roche, 2016).

Research Design

The cross-sectional research design will be used in this study, which is descriptive in nature. This design is being used as there are no variables being manipulated for the purpose of this study and standardised scales are being used.

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Tools Used

The participants were assessed using three different tools:

1. Levenson Multidimensional Locus of Control Scale (1973)

Levenson's (1973) Multidimensional Locus of Control Scale was developed to combat the unidimensionality of Rotter's I-E scale. This scale consists of three dimensions of expectancy, namely, Internal (I), Powerful Others (P) and Chance (C).

The I Scale measures the extent to which people believe that they have control over their own lives. The P Scale measures the extent to which people consider powerful others while taking a decision and the C Scale deals with the perceptions of chance control.

To score the items on this scale, subject's responses to each item are added, which range from strongly disagree (-3) to strongly agree (+3). Then a constant of 24 is added to scores in order to eliminate the negative values. The range of each scale is from 0-48.

Reliability. The split-half reliabilities (Spearman-Brown) for the I, P and C scales were .62, .64 and .66 respectively. Internal reliability for an adult sample (N= 115) was found to be .51, .72 and .73 respectively for the I, P and C scales by Wallston, Wallston, and DeVellis (1978). In the context of the present study, the Cronbach's alpha for the Internal Locus of Control, Chance and Powerful Others subscales is 0.89, 0.91 and 0.91 respectively.

Validity. The validity of all three scales was established by convergent and discriminant methods (Campbell & Fiske, 1959).

2. Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale (WEIMS) (Tremblay et al., 2008)

The Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale developed by Tremblay et al. (2008) consists of 18 items. They are divided into 6 sub-scales, corresponding to the six types of motivation given by the Self-Determination Theory, namely, Intrinsic Motivation (IM), Integrated Regulation (IR), Identified Regulation (IDEN), Introjected Regulation (INTRO), External Regulation (EXT) and Amotivation (AMO).

Reliability. The reliability of the scale is 0.7 to 0.9.

In the context of the present study, the Cronbach's alpha for the subscales were determined. Intrinsic Motivation (IM) ($\alpha=0.87$), Integrated Regulation (IR) ($\alpha=0.88$), Identified Regulation (IDEN) ($\alpha=0.84$), Introjected Regulation (INTRO) ($\alpha=0.89$), External Regulation (EXT) ($\alpha=0.85$) and Amotivation (AMO) ($\alpha=0.86$).

Validity. The validity of the scale is 0.73.

3. Emotional Labour Scale (Brotheridge & Lee, 1998)

The Emotional Labour Scale developed by (Brotheridge & Lee, 1998) will be used for the purpose of this study. This scale consists of 6 sub-scales that measure 6 dimensions of emotional labour. The average number of customer interactions and the average duration of each interaction is assessed by subjective questions. The other items on the scale use a 5-point Likert system (1=never and 5=always).

A higher score on each sub-scale represents a higher level of dimension being assessed.

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Reliability. Reliability for each of the sub-scale was measured using Cronbach's alpha. The reliability score for the frequency, intensity and variety sub-scale was .71 and the score for the deep acting and surface acting sub-scales was .89 and .86. respectively.

In the context of the present study, the Cronbach's alpha for the frequency, intensity, variety, deep acting and surface acting subscale was 0.77, 0.72, 0.82, 0.84 and 0.83 respectively.

Procedure

The questionnaires will be sent to the participants by creating an online form. The first form will have basic demographic information of the participants such as their age, work experience etc., followed by the validated questionnaires. Based on the information collected, a test of normalcy will be done to decide whether to do a parametric or non-parametric test.

Then, data analysis will be done based on the answers collected from the questionnaires.

Data Analysis

After gathering the data, the first step is cleaning the data. After the data has been cleaned, basic descriptive statistical analysis was done using SPSS and Jamovi software. For hypothesis testing, correlation and mediational (regression) analysis was used to establish the relationship between the variables.

RESULTS

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for Emotional Labour Scale (Deep Acting)

N	223
Missing	0
Mean	10.8
Median	11
Standard deviation	3.41
Minimum	3
Maximum	15
Kurtosis	-0.812
Shapiro-Wilk p	< .001

Table 1 indicates that the mean scores on the Deep Acting subscale of the Emotional Labour Scale (Brotheridge & Lee, 1998) for the sample (n=223) were (M=10.8, SD=3.41). The data is not normally distributed since the p value is less than 0.05 (p<.001).

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics for Emotional Labour Scale (Surface Acting)

N	223
Missing	0
Mean	10.6
Median	10
Standard deviation	3.49
Minimum	3
Maximum	15
Kurtosis	-0.832
Shapiro-Wilk p	< .001

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Table 1 indicates that the mean scores on the Surface Acting subscale of the Emotional Labour Scale (Brotheridge & Lee, 1998) for the sample (n=223) were (M=10.6, SD=3.49). The data is not normally distributed since the p value is less than 0.05 (p<.001).

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics for Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale (WEIMS)

N	223
Missing	0
Mean	2.77
Median	0
Standard deviation	11.6
Minimum	-29
Maximum	47
Kurtosis	1.86
Shapiro-Wilk p	< .001

Table 3 indicates that the mean scores on the WEIMS (Tremblay et al., 2008) for the sample (n=223) were (M=2.77, SD=11.6). The data is not normally distributed since the p value is less than 0.05 (p<.001).

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics for Levenson's Multidimensional Locus of Control Scale (MLC)

N	223
Missing	0
Mean	100
Median	96
Standard deviation	34.2
Minimum	0
Maximum	144
Kurtosis	-0.359
Shapiro-Wilk p	< .001

Table 4 indicates that the mean scores on the MLC (Levenson, 1973) for the sample (n=223) were (M=100, SD=34.2). The data is not normally distributed since the p value is less than 0.05 (p<.001).

Table 5 Correlation Between Internal LOC and Deep Acting

		Deep Acting	Internal LoC
Deep Acting	Pearson's r	—	
	p-value	—	
	N	—	
Internal LoC	Pearson's r	0.602***	—
	p-value	< .001	—
	N	186	—

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

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To test the H_{1a} hypothesis, a correlational analysis was done using the scores of the Internal LOC subscale from Levenson’s Multidimensional Locus of Control Scale (1973) and the Deep Acting subscale scores from the Emotional Labour Scale (1998).

Results indicated that there is a moderately significant correlation between Internal Locus of Control and Deep Acting ($p < .001$) (see Table 5). This means that employees with internal LOC will display more deep acting. Thus, we fail to reject the H_{1a} hypothesis.

Table 6 Correlation Between Internal LOC and Surface Acting

		Surface Acting	Internal LoC
Surface Acting	Pearson's r	—	
	p-value	—	
	N	—	
Internal LoC	Pearson's r	0.568***	—
	p-value	< .001	—
	N	186	—

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

To test the H_{1b} hypothesis, a correlational analysis was done using the scores of the Internal LOC subscale from Levenson’s Multidimensional Locus of Control Scale (1973) and the Surface Acting subscale scores from the Emotional Labour Scale (1998).

Results indicated that there is a moderately significant correlation between Internal Locus of Control and Surface Acting ($p < .001$) (see Table 6). This means that employees with internal LOC will display more surface acting. Thus, we fail to reject the H_{1b} hypothesis.

Table 7 Correlation Between External LOC and Deep Acting

		Deep Acting	External LoC
Deep Acting	Pearson's r	—	
	p-value	—	
	N	—	
External LoC	Pearson's r	0.414*	—
	p-value	0.011	—
	N	37	—

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

To test the H_{1c} hypothesis, a correlational analysis was done using the scores of the Internal LOC subscale from Levenson’s Multidimensional Locus of Control Scale (1973) and the Surface Acting subscale scores from the Emotional Labour Scale (1998).

Results indicated that there is a significant correlation between External Locus of Control and Deep Acting ($p < .05$) (see Table 7). This means that employees with an external LOC

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will display less deep acting compared to the employees with an internal LoC. Thus, we fail to reject the H_{1c} hypothesis.

Table 8 Correlation Between External LOC and Surface Acting

		Surface Acting	External LoC
Surface Acting	Pearson's r	—	
	p-value	—	
	N	—	
External LoC	Pearson's r	0.485	**
	p-value	0.002	—
	N	37	—

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

To test the H_{1d} hypothesis, a correlational analysis was done using the scores of the Internal LOC subscale from Levenson's Multidimensional Locus of Control Scale (1973) and the Surface Acting subscale scores from the Emotional Labour Scale (1998).

Results indicated that there is a moderately significant correlation between External Locus of Control and Deep Acting ($p < .05$) (see Table 8). This means that employees with an external LOC will display less surface acting compared to the employees with an internal LoC. Thus, we fail to reject the H_{1c} hypothesis.

Table 9 Mediation of Work Motivation on the Relationship Between Locus of Control and Deep Acting

Effect	Label	Estimate	SE	Z	p	% Mediation
Indirect	a × b	0.0292	0.0751	0.388	0.698	0.770
Direct	c	-3.7623	0.5553	-6.775	< .001	99.230
Total	c + a × b	-3.7331	0.5600	-6.666	< .001	100.000

Path Estimates

			Label	Estimate	SE	Z	p
I/E LoC	→	Work motivation Total	a	-0.8275	2.0891	-0.396	0.692
Work motivation Total	→	Deep Acting Total	b	-0.0353	0.0178	-1.982	0.047
I/E LoC	→	Deep Acting Total	c	-3.7623	0.5553	-6.775	< .001

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A mediation analysis was performed to assess the mediating role of Work motivation on the relationship between Locus of Control and Deep Acting (a subscale of Emotional Labour) of Call Center Employees, to test hypothesis H_{2a}. The results (Table 9) revealed that the total effect of Locus of Control on Deep Acting was significant (H₁: β = -3.7, t = -6.6, p <.001). With the inclusion of the mediating variable (Work Motivation), the impact of Locus of Control on Deep Acting was still found significant (β = -3.7, t = -6.7, p <.001). The indirect effect of Locus of Control on Emotional Labour through Work Motivation was found insignificant (β =0.029, t =0.38, p =0.698). This shows that the relationship between Locus of Control and Deep Acting is not mediated by work motivation. Thus, we reject the H_{2a} hypothesis.

Table 10 Mediation of Work Motivation on the Relationship Between Locus of Control and Surface Acting

Effect	Label	Estimate	SE	Z	p	% Mediation
Indirect	a × b	0.0162	0.0437	0.371	0.711	0.473
Direct	c	-3.4100	0.5827	-5.852	< .001	99.527
Total	c + a × b	-3.3938	0.5839	-5.812	< .001	100.000

Path Estimates

			Label	Estimate	SE	Z	p
I/E LoC	→	Work motivation Total	a	-0.8275	2.0891	-0.396	0.692
Work motivation Total	→	Surface Acting Total	b	-0.0196	0.0187	-1.048	0.295
I/E LoC	→	Surface Acting Total	c	-3.4100	0.5827	-5.852	< .001

A mediation analysis was performed to assess the mediating role of Work motivation on the relationship between Locus of Control and Surface Acting (a subscale of Emotional Labour) of Call Center Employees, to test hypothesis H_{2a}. The results (Table 10) revealed that the total effect of Locus of Control on Surface Acting was significant (H₁: β = -3.9, t = -5.8, p <.001). With the inclusion of the mediating variable (Work Motivation), the impact of Locus of Control on Deep Acting was still found significant (β = -3.4, t = -5.8, p <.001). The indirect effect of Locus of Control on Emotional Labour through Work Motivation was found insignificant (β =0.016, t =0.37, p =0.711). This shows that the relationship between Locus of Control and Surface Acting is not mediated by work motivation. Thus, we reject the H_{2b} hypothesis.

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to study the mediating effect of Work Motivation on the relationship between Locus of Control and Deep Acting as well as Surface Acting (subscales of Emotional Labour) in call center employees. This study has contributed to the literature on the topic because this is one of the very few studies that look at the relationship between emotional labour, work motivation and locus of control. Since this is one of the few studies that focuses solely on the out-bound call center services in India, it has also contributed towards bridging that gap.

To obtain data for this study, a snowball sampling method was used. The sample size was 252. After cleaning, 223 responses were used for the further analysis.

The results indicated that there is a more significant correlation between Internal Locus of Control and Deep Acting as well as Surface Acting, as compared to External Locus of Control and Deep Acting and Surface Acting. These findings suggest that employees with an internal locus of control, i.e., those who believe that they are directly responsible for their own actions, tend to display more surface acting and deep acting, i.e., while they do change the way they feel about their jobs on a surface level, they also tend to change their internal feelings in order for them to align with the organisational requirements.

A mediational analysis was also done to check the mediating effect of Work Motivation on the relationship between Locus of Control and Emotional Labour Factors, the results indicated that work motivation does not have a mediating effect on the relationship between locus of control and deep acting or surface acting. These results were also in line with the results of the correlational analysis which depicted a strong correlation between LoC and deep acting as well as surface acting. Unlike past research (Narlı & Akdemir, 2018), our study revealed that gender was not a factor in determining the level of emotional labour being displayed by the employees. Thus, no significant difference was found in the mediating effect of work motivation on the relationship between locus of control and emotional labour factors in either of the genders.

According to the findings of the study, we can also conclude that employees with an internal locus of control are more motivated to display surface acting and deep acting. This is evident by the higher correlational values seen in Table 5 and Table 6. These results are also in line with the findings of a research by Hajmohammadi and Aghayani (2022).

Keeping these results in mind, the managers of the call center employees can help the employees with an internal locus of control in performance improvement by increasing their organisational commitment (Pambuena, 2022). This will further help the employees in working more efficiently by helping them focus more on performance improvement, rather than spending their emotional resources on regulating their emotions by engaging in deep acting and surface acting.

This study also opens doors for future researchers to expand the scope of research to in-bound call centers and then to other industries as well. Intervention studies can also be conducted by the researchers and then by conducting a pre-post test, it can be determined whether these interventions are actually helping with performance improvement.

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Conflict of Interest

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