

Araştırma Makalesi

The Effect of Job Stress and Emotional Labour on Customer Satisfaction and Sales Performance: A Research on Medical Representatives

*İş Stresi ve Duygusal Emegın Müşteri Memnuniyeti ve Satış Performansı Üzerindeki Etkisi:
Tıbbi Mümessiller Üzerine Bir Araştırma*

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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine the effects of job stress and emotional labour levels of medical sales representatives working in the pharmaceutical industry on their sales performance and customer satisfaction. Using quantitative research methods, data collected from participants were analysed through statistical techniques. The findings reveal that emotional labour processes play a significant role in shaping job stress, sales performance, and customer satisfaction. Emotional labour was examined in three dimensions surface acting, deep acting, and natural emotions—and it was determined that surface acting is the primary factor increasing job stress. Deep acting also elevates stress levels, whereas natural emotions do not have a meaningful effect on stress. However, the influence of emotional labour on sales performance exhibits a different pattern: both deep acting and natural emotions enhance sales performance, while surface acting shows no significant impact. Regarding customer satisfaction, only natural emotions were found to have a positive effect, indicating that customers easily perceive authenticity and that genuine emotional expression plays a critical role in satisfaction. Additionally, job stress was not found to influence sales performance, whereas sales performance significantly increased customer satisfaction. Overall, the findings underline that emotional labour processes of medical representatives constitute a strategic organisational component that must be supported at the corporate level.

Keywords: Medical Representative, Emotional Labour, Job Stress, Sales Performance, Customer Satisfaction

Öz

Bu çalışma, ilaç sektöründe görev yapan tıbbi satış mümessillerinin iş stresi ve duygusal emek düzeylerinin satış performansı ile müşteri memnuniyeti üzerindeki etkilerini incelemek amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Nicel araştırma yönteminin kullanıldığı çalışmada, katılımcılardan elde edilen veriler istatistiksel analizler ile değerlendirilmiştir. Bulgular, tıbbi satış mümessillerinin duygusal emek süreçlerinin iş stresi, performans ve müşteri memnuniyeti üzerinde belirleyici bir role sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Duygusal emek yüzeysel rol yapma, derin rol yapma ve doğal duygular olmak üzere üç boyutta ele alınmış; iş stresini en fazla artıran unsurun yüzeysel rol yapma olduğu, derin rol yapmanın da stresi yükselttiği, ancak doğal duyguların stres üzerinde anlamlı bir etkisinin bulunmadığı belirlenmiştir. Buna karşın duygusal emegın satış performansına etkisi farklı bir yapı sergilemektedir: Derin rol yapma ve doğal duygular performansı artırırken, yüzeysel rol yapmanın anlamlı bir etkisi olmadığı görülmüştür. Müşteri memnuniyeti üzerinde ise yalnızca doğal duyguların pozitif

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etkisi tespit edilmiş, bu da müşterilerin samimiyeti kolaylıkla fark edebildiğini ve gerçek duygu aktarımının memnuniyette

kritik bir rol oynadığını ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca iş stresinin satış performansını etkilemediği; buna karşın satış performansının müşteri memnuniyetini anlamlı şekilde yükselttiği görülmüştür. Tüm bulgular birlikte değerlendirildiğinde, tıbbi temsilcilerin duygusal emek süreçlerinin kurumsal düzeyde ele alınması ve stratejik bir yönetim unsuru olarak desteklenmesi gerektiği anlaşılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tıbbi MüMESSİL, Duygusal Emek, İş Stresi, Satış Performansı, Müşteri Memnuniyeti

1. Introduction

In today's healthcare sector, the determinants of success are not limited to medical knowledge and technological infrastructure; the psychological and emotional processes of service providers are also critical elements of organizational efficiency. In this context, emotional labor, job stress, sales performance, and customer satisfaction are fundamental concepts that influence both individual job success and organizational sustainability, and are widely discussed in the literature. Medical representatives, who are at the intersection of these concepts, are the strategic representatives of the pharmaceutical industry in the field and are directly affected by these psychosocial processes due to their intensive communication with physicians and pharmacists, the persuasion process, and customer management (Sezgin, 2013; Özbucak Albar, 2019). Medical representatives convey technical information such as the indication of the drug, dosage, drug interactions, and safety profile, inform healthcare professionals, and manage persuasion processes, which makes this profession highly interactive (Demirkıran and Şahin, 2010; Mikhael, 2014).

Medical representative work involves a highly competitive and performance-driven work environment. The quota system, in which employees' performance is largely evaluated based on the number of drug boxes sold or market share, is cited as one of the most significant sources of stress in the profession (Eren, 2012). In this regard, representatives use various marketing tools such as promotions, samples, brochures, and event support to ensure that the drugs they promote are prescribed, and they exert intense effort to achieve the set targets (Chiu, 2005; Özbucak Albar, 2024; Sezgin, 2013). However, as a result of this goal-oriented structure, employees are expected to constantly display emotional labor; representatives sometimes have to suppress their real feelings and continue to display the emotions expected by the organization (Grandey, 2000). The continuous nature of emotional labor, combined with uncertainty, competition, and performance pressure, can lead to increased job stress and negatively impact employees' psychosocial well-being (Lazarus, 2006).

Medical representatives frequently encounter stressful conditions such as uncertainty, role conflict, and working with limited resources while striving to enhance customer satisfaction, due to the nature of their work (Bande et al., 2015; Ercan and Kazançoğlu, 2019). Job stress is defined as the response employees give to conditions they perceive as threatening physically and emotionally (Jamal, 2005) and has become a critical issue, especially for representatives working under pressure to meet sales targets. Indeed, work stress not only negatively affects employee health, but can also weaken both sales performance and customer satisfaction (Özkalp and Kirel, 2016; Schwepker and Ingram, 2016).

Sales performance is a fundamental measure of success that reflects the extent to which employees achieve the targets set by the company (Wong and Tan, 2016). The literature indicates that emotional labor increases sales performance, particularly through deep acting and natural displays of emotion, while surface acting can negatively affect performance (Grandey, 2000). On the other hand, it has been found that customer satisfaction is largely linked to employees' emotional presentations, relationship management skills, and attitudes in service interactions; therefore, emotional labor is an important determinant of customer satisfaction (Goodwin et al., 2011). Furthermore, the reciprocal positive relationship between customer satisfaction and sales performance reinforces the strategic importance of customer satisfaction in providing sustainable competitive advantage for businesses (Gómez et al., 2004; Oliver, 1999).

In this context, although the relationships between emotional labour, job stress, sales performance, and customer satisfaction have been frequently examined at a bivariate level in the literature (Altuntaş, 2003; Grandey, 2003; Sullivan and Baghat, 1992; Hülshager and Schewe, 2011), studies addressing these four variables simultaneously and holistically under a single model are quite limited.

In this context, the present study aims to reveal the effects of job stress and emotional labour on both sales performance and customer satisfaction by addressing factors such as intense stress, high sales performance expectation and pressure for customer satisfaction in a holistic framework. Therefore, this study offers an original and qualified contribution that aims to both fill the gap in the academic literature and to guide sectoral practices by providing a holistic framework for the business life of medical representatives. In the literature, there is no comprehensive study in which these four variables are analyzed together, particularly for medical representatives, who are a field-based professional group. However, there are studies in which the relationships between the concepts are analyzed at a binary level. A detailed analysis of these relationships is provided below.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1. Emotional Labour and Job Stress Relationship

The concept of emotional labour was first discussed in Hochschild's book "The Managed Heart". According to Hochschild, emotional labour refers to the emotional processes of the employee in the work environment rather than his/her feelings towards work. Emotional labour is the reflection of socially observable emotion management on the face and body. As every labour has a price, emotional labour is sold in return for wages and has an exchange value (Hochschild, 1983). Emotional labour is not the emotional effort shown by the employee due to the interaction between the person and the job due to the conditions of the job performed, but the employee's performing the job with the emotional expression expected from him/her and creating the desired emotional perception in customers in parallel with the expectation of the organisation (Noon and Blyton, 2002). Emotional labour is defined as 'requiring workers to suppress their private feelings in order to show desirable work-related emotions' (Mastracci et al., 2012). In the business environment, it is not always possible for individuals to directly reflect their true emotions, especially in service delivery; businesses expect employees to display a more controlled and professional emotional expression. This situation is becoming more and more important especially in the service sector (Borah et al., 2024; Mann, 1997). Especially with the rise of the service sector, the need for the concept of emotional labour has increased as more employees interact directly with customers and require controlled emotional expressions (Alabak, 2022).

In the early days, the concept of emotional labour was considered in two dimensions as surface behaviour and deep behaviour (Hochschild, 1979; 1983). Later, Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) argued that it should not be ignored that there may be sincere emotions that employees can really feel in business life. Ashforth and Humphrey thus added a third dimension, sincere emotions, to Hochschild's two dimensions (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993). When these dimensions are briefly examined, surface acting behaviour is defined as the behaviour that individuals show in line with expectations by controlling their emotions without changing them even though their real feelings are not so (Grandey, 2003; Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002). Exhibiting surface acting behaviour during service is the emotions desired by the organisation and not really felt by the individual but falsely shown to the customer by the individual (Brotheridge and Lee, 2003). Employees do this to protect the job they have. In in-depth behaviour, the individual tries to change his/her real feelings with the behaviours expected from him/her. The aim is to pretend with good intentions and to look real (Grandey, 2003). In deep acting, it occurs when employees try to harmonise their real feelings with the feelings expected from them. In deep acting, individuals try to feel the emotions they have to display while working (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993). With deep acting, employees use their training or past experiences to help generate appropriate emotions such as empathy or joy for a particular situation. In contrast to surface acting, deep acting involves changing the inner emotion by changing more than the outer appearance. It does this either by directly activating emotions or by using imagination to portray that emotion (Asumah et al., 2019). Natural/Intimate emotions, on the other hand, are the behaviours that arise from the fact that employees already feel the emotions they have to show. Employees do not always need to act while performing their duties. In some cases, real emotions and the emotions to be displayed may be the same (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993). Briefly, the dimension of sincere behaviour is stated as the elimination of role- playing requirements (Diefendorff et al., 2005).

The concept of job stress, which is indispensable today, is the reaction that occurs when the requirements of the job are contrary to the abilities and skills of the employees (Lindholm, 2006) and is generally seen

in situations that force employees to work (Stranks, 2005). According to Yin-Fah et al. (2010), job stress occurs when the individual's personality and abilities do not match what the organisation demands. Medical representatives are among the occupational groups that are under intense stress due to their uncertain work structure and increasing workload with limited resources (Ercan and Kazaçoğlu, 2019). Stress is, in a sense, a reaction to the change in the environment and affects all emotions and thoughts of the person and prepares the ground for the occurrence of physical disorders. The effects of stress can be positive or negative, but can also be both (Paşa, 2007; Dhabhar, 2019). However, research generally shows that job stress cannot be balanced and therefore causes more negative situations for the employee. In this context, job stress can cause many negative effects such as decreased job performance, low job satisfaction and increased burnout (Leiter and Maslach, 1988; Dülgeroğlu and Başol, 2017).

Research on emotional labour and job stress shows that the expectations of organisations from employees in this direction create pressure on employees, and this pressure leads to emotional tension and conflicts, resulting in job stress. When the studies on emotional labour and job stress are examined in the literature, it is seen that many studies have been conducted. Looking at the studies, it is seen that emotional labour has a positive effect on job stress (Altuntaş, 2003; Lazarus, 2006; Yoh, 2009; Yoon and Kim, 2011; Jung and Yoon, 2014; Karimi et al., 2014; Zaghini et al., 2020; Yıldız and Koçoğlu Sazkaya, 2021; Demirel, 2022; Soyer, 2022; Kuo et al., 2024). In some studies, the effects of emotional labour sub-dimensions on job stress were examined and different results were obtained. In the studies, it was determined that surface acting, which is more difficult to maintain and endure over time, increases job stress (Sohn et al., 2018; Scott and Barnes, 2011; Yıldız and Koçoğlu Sazkaya, 2021), while the other sub-dimensions of in-depth behaviour and sincere behaviour have no effect on job stress (Scott and Barnes, 2011; Sohn et al., 2018; Güneş, 2023). In another study, it was determined that there was a positive relationship between emotional labour and job stress (Doğan and Sıgı, 2017; Park and Han, 2013).

The following hypotheses were developed considering the research in the relevant literature:

H₁: Emotional labour affects job stress.

H_{1a}: Surface acting affects job stress.

H_{1b}: Deep acting affects job stress.

H_{1c}: Natural emotions affect work stress.

2.2. Emotional Labour and Sales Performance Relationship

Since the concept of sales performance is a complex and multidimensional concept, it is seen that there are many definitions in the literature. Churchill et al. (1975), who are among the first and most important researchers on the subject, define sales performance as the behaviours of salespeople that contribute to the business; they explain the concept of behaviour as the tasks that salespeople make an effort to do during work. Sales performance is evaluated on the basis of quotas or targets, as it follows the annual performance of the company, starting from sales representatives. Accordingly, sales performance can be defined as increasing the market share of the company, reaching the planned sales volume and sales revenues, and achieving sales targets in new and high-profit-margin priority products (Churchill et al., 1985; Flaherty and Pappas, 2004). In this context, high sales performance of an enterprise also contributes to the positive development of many performance indicators such as sales volume, productivity, efficiency, profitability and customer loyalty (Anees et al., 2020). In this case, it is of great importance for the business (Schultz and Good, 2000) and is placed at the centre of the overall success of the company (Jaramillo et al., 2007). For this reason, the performance of sales representatives is evaluated much more frequently than the employees in other departments in the organisation (Park et al., 2010).

Sales representatives are among the most researched occupational groups because they directly affect the purchasing behaviours and decision processes of customers and exhibit intense emotional labour. Although there is a comprehensive literature on emotional labour, studies examining the effect of emotional labour on sales performance are quite limited (Pu, 2022). In recent years, the nature of this relationship has been explored in the research conducted in recent years, and the findings of the few existing studies reveal contradictory results (Klein, 2021). For this reason, studies on the subject remain

up-to-date and research continues.

In the sector and academic circles, it is generally accepted that emotional labour is an important determinant of organisational behaviour and constitutes one of the basic elements of sales performance (Pu, 2022). It is seen that the studies that conclude that emotional labour has a positive effect on sales performance (Rafaeli and Sutton, 1987; Grandey, 2003; Wong, 2005; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006; Monaghan, 2006; Di Mascio, 2010; Çağlıyan et al., 2013; Yazdanshenas and Khorsandi, 2020) are in the majority. On the other hand, there are studies (Sutton and Rafaeli, 1988; Tice and Bratslavsky, 2000; Gosserand and Diefendorff, 2005; Goodwin et al., 2011; Ghalandari et al., 2012; Beğenirbaş and Çalışkan, 2014; Reyhanoğlu and Balıkçioğlu, 2019; Sevinç Altaş and Özişli, 2021; Demirel, 2022) that found no effect or a negative effect.

To explain both the positive and negative effects of emotional labour, a distinction is made between the sub-dimensions of emotional labour on sales performance in the literature (Ünlü and Yürür, 2011). Surface acting, which is a sub-dimension of emotional labour, negatively affects the performance of sales employees (Rafaeli and Sutton, 1987; Verbeke and Bagozzi, 2000; Tice and Bratslavsky, 2000; Grandey, 2003; Goodwin et al., 2011; Liu et al., 2013; Beğenirbaş and Turgut, 2014; Bursalı et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2017; Pu, 2022); while other studies have revealed that surface acting can positively affect the performance of salespeople under certain conditions (Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002; Barsade and Gibson, 2007; Ünlü and Yürür, 2011). In-depth role-playing has been found to improve service performance and have a positive effect (Grandey, 2000; Onay, 2011; Ünlü and Yürür, 2011; Liu et al., 2013; Beğenirbaş and Turgut, 2014; Kim et al., 2017; Acaray, 2019; Kapu et al., 2020; Özişli and Sevinç Altaş, 2021; Pu, 2022).

The following hypotheses were developed by considering the research in the related literature:

H₂: Emotional labour affects sales performance.

H_{2a}: Surface acting affects sales performance.

H_{2b}: Deep acting affects sales performance.

H_{2c}: Natural emotions affect sales performance.

2.3. Relationship Between Job Stress and Sales Performance

The first study on the effect of stress on performance was conducted in 1908. In the studies conducted in these years, it was determined that stress can have both beneficial and harmful effects on performance. As a result of the studies, it was determined that as stress increases, performance increases, but as the stress level continues to increase, performance will decrease (Artan, 1986). Until today, the concept of work stress has been one of the most widely researched topics in the literature. According to the research, there are four different types of relationship between stress and performance: the positive relationship model, the negative relationship model, the no relationship model and the inverted U-type relationship model (Sullivan and Bahagat, 1992; Tuten and Neidermeyer, 2004; Gümüştekin and Öztemiz, 2005; Yılmaz, 2006; Çelik and Turunç, 2009). Little or high levels of stress do not increase performance. However, when employees are exposed to a normal level of stress, they endeavour to improve their performance (Muse et al., 2003; Gümüştekin and Öztemiz, 2005; Solmuş, 2004). However, this situation may vary from person to person as well as from job to job. In some jobs, low levels of stress may increase performance, while in some jobs, high levels of stress may have positive effects on performance (Korkmazıyrek and Şeşen, 2008).

The level of job stress experienced by employees has a significant effect on their performance. When the studies in the literature are examined, there are different approaches to the effects of job stress on performance. It is seen that job stress is an important determinant of performance. In many studies, it is found to have a negative or positive effect (Beehr and Newman, 1978; Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Sullivan and Baghat, 1992; Cavanaugh et al., 2000; Bakker et al., 2004; Chang et al., 2007; Gilboa et al., 2013; Tekingündüz et al., 2015; Jayathilaka and Subasinghe, 2016; Koca and Yıldız, 2018; Yunita and Saputra, 2019; Kırpık and Doğan, 2020; Karakavuz and Çini, 2023; Yalçın and Yılmaz, 2024), while there are studies (Armağan and Kubak, 2013; Tortumlu and Taş, 2019) that determine that job stress does not affect performance.

The following hypotheses were developed considering the research in the relevant literature:

H₃: Job stress affects sales performance.

2.4. Emotional Labour and Customer Satisfaction

The main purpose of emotional labour, which is defined as employees behaving differently from their real feelings in line with customer and business expectations, is to ensure customer satisfaction (Grandey, 1999; Deadrick and McAfee, 2001). Customer satisfaction arises as a result of the perceived quality and customer expectations being at the same level (Kotler et al., 2002) and largely depends on the attitudes and behaviours of employees (Wharton and Erickson, 1993). In other words, emotional expressions of sales representatives during the purchase are seen as a part of service delivery and affect customer satisfaction levels (Grove and Fisk, 1992; Tsai, 2001).

Emotional labour is important for health services, as stated in the literature (Bagdasarov and Connelly, 2013). The positive emotions that the employee has while doing his/her job and therefore the positive behaviours he/she exhibit return as 'customer satisfaction' (Kulualp and Sarı, 2018). Therefore, organisations want to keep customer satisfaction at the highest level by using the emotions of their employees (Basım and Beğenirbaş, 2012). Grandey (2000) states that emotional labour should be applied successfully to achieve customer satisfaction in service areas that require emotional labour. This situation increases the importance of emotional labour spent by the employees of the organisation towards the service recipients (Beğenirbaş and Turgut, 2014).

When some studies examining the relationship between emotional labour and customer satisfaction in the literature are examined, Hülshager and Schewe (2011) found a positive relationship between emotional performance and customer satisfaction in their study. Studies show that in-depth role-playing increases customer satisfaction, while surface acting decreases customer satisfaction (Groth et al., 2009; Başbuğ et al., 2010; Tang et al., 2010; Kılıç and Baş, 2015).

The following hypotheses were developed by considering the research in the relevant literature:

H₄: Emotional labour affects customer satisfaction.

H_{4a}: Surface acting affects customer satisfaction.

H_{4b}: Deep acting affects customer satisfaction.

H_{4c}: Natural emotions affect customer satisfaction.

2.5. Relationship Between Sales Performance and Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is critical to the success of a business. Businesses that cannot satisfy their customers are likely to lose market share to competitors offering better products and services at competitive prices. Businesses have to increase their customer satisfaction levels in order to survive and compete. Therefore, businesses should know the factors affecting customer satisfaction well and implement them perfectly (Shapiro and Gómez, 2014).

The behaviour of the salesperson who is face-to-face with the customer during the sale plays an important role in the evaluation of the service and affects customer satisfaction. It is desired that sales representatives should not only increase customer satisfaction but also increase their performance (Baldauf and Cravens, 2002: 1367; Brown et al., 2002). Salesperson performance is defined as the evaluation of the salesperson's behaviour in contributing to the achievement of the organisation's goals (Churchill et al., 1985). Customer satisfaction is the standard for evaluating an organisation's success through performance (Hussain et al., 2015). Organisational efforts to achieve customer satisfaction are largely linked to the individual performance of employees (Goodwin et al., 2011). In the literature, there are significant relationships between customer satisfaction and sales performance (Gomez et al., 2004; Gupta et al., 2019; Shapiro and Gomez, 2014).

Considering the research in the relevant literature, the following hypotheses were developed:

H₅: Sales performance affects customer satisfaction.

3. Method

3.1. Purpose and Importance of the Research

The study aims to examine the effects of emotional labour and job stress on sales performance and customer satisfaction of medical representatives who sell pharmaceutical and medical products. Medical representatives have to keep their emotional states in balance due to their duties based on effective communication and persuasion skills, and this intense emotional effort may lead to job stress over time. In addition, since they are a professional group in which emotional labour is intensely experienced and sales performance and customer satisfaction are of critical importance, medical representatives were preferred as the sample in the study.

This study makes important contributions to both the literature and sectoral practices by addressing the job stress and emotional labour processes of medical representatives, together with sales performance and customer satisfaction. While these variables are mostly analysed at the dyadic level in the literature, in this study, four variables are evaluated in a holistic framework and the dynamics specific to the pharmaceutical industry are taken into consideration. Focusing on the psychological processes of representatives working in an intensely competitive environment reveals critical findings in terms of the sustainability of customer satisfaction as well as individual performance. From an academic point of view, examining job stress, emotional labour, sales performance, and customer satisfaction together fills the gap in the literature, while from a practical point of view, it provides guiding contributions to pharmaceutical companies in terms of stress management among their employees, emotional labour awareness, and customer relationship development.

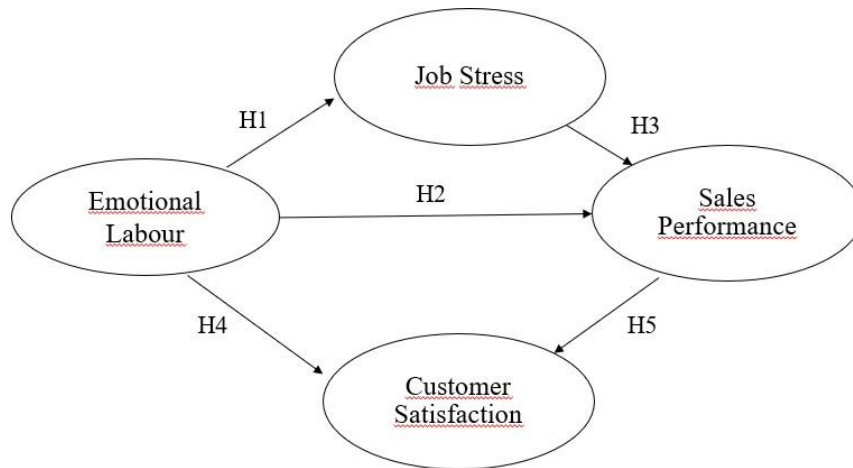


Figure 1. Research Model

3.2. Population and Sample

The research population comprises individuals practising the medical representative profession in Turkey. There is no official institution that officially announces the number of medical representatives in Turkey. However, the Pharmaceutical Industry Employers' Union, in its 2024 report, reported total employment in the pharmaceutical industry as 49.806 people (ieis.org.tr). According to the Turkish Representative Solidarity Association (MUDAD), there were more than 25,000 pharmaceutical representatives in 2020 (mudad.org, 2020). The sample size was calculated as 384 people with a 95% confidence interval and a 5% margin of error.

3.3. Data Collection Tools

An online survey was used as the data collection tool in the study. The survey consisted of four sections. The first part of the survey consisted of six questions on socio-demographic characteristics. The second part included the 13-item "Emotional Labour Scale" to determine employees' emotional labour levels. The third part included the 7-item "Job Stress Scale" to measure job stress. The fourth part included the 4-item "Customer Satisfaction Scale." The final part included the 4-item "Sales Performance Scale."

For the study, Hitit University Non-Interventional Research Ethics Committee ethics committee approval was obtained with decision number 2022-20.

The Emotional Labour Scale; was developed by Basım and Beğenirbaş (2012) to measure participants' emotional labour levels by adapting and developing some items from the emotional labour scales of Diefendorff et al. (2005), Grandey (2003), and Kruml and Geddes (2000). The scale consists of three dimensions and 13 items. These dimensions are surface acting, deep acting, and natural emotions. Participants responded to the scale items using a 5-point Likert scale (scored 1 = Never to 5 = Always). The factor analysis and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient used to determine the validity and reliability of the scale for this study are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Factor, Reliability and Mean Analysis of Emotional Labour Scale

Dimensions	Item Statements	Cronbach's Alpha	Explained Variance (%)	Total Variance (%)
Surface Acting	6	,937	33,930	76,847
Deep Acting	4	,876	57,251	
Natural Emotions	3	,888	76,847	
KMO	0,913			
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	3,784			
df p	78			
	,000			

As a result of factor analysis, the factor loadings of the items of the surface acting dimension, which are the sub-dimensions of emotional labor, were found to be reliable, with an overall reliability coefficient of $\alpha=.937$; the factor loadings of the deep acting items are at the level of reliability, and the general reliability coefficient is $\alpha=.876$; the factor loadings of the natural emotions items are at the level of reliability, and the general reliability coefficient is $\alpha=.888$. The explained variance of the three dimensions of the emotional labour scale is 76,847%. Kaiser Meyer Scale Reliability (KMO: ,913; Chi-Square: 3,784; df: 78; p:,000).

Job Stress Scale: The scale developed by House and Rizzo (1972) and then adapted into Turkish by Efeoğlu (2006), after the development of validity and reliability tests, was used to measure the job stress of the participants. The scale consists of one dimension and 7 items. A 5-point Likert scale (1=Never-5=Always) was used when the participants answered the scale items. The confirmatory factor and reliability analyses conducted for this study are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Factor, Reliability and Mean Analysis of Jop Stress

	Item Statements	Cronbach's Alpha	Explained Variance (%)	Total Variance (%)
Job Stress Scale	7	,882	59,052	59,052
KMO	0,902			
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	1,27303			
df p	21			
	,000			

As a result of the factor analysis, the single-factor structure of job stress is confirmed, the lowest factor loadings of the scale items take the lowest values of ,664 and the highest values of ,841, and the general reliability coefficient is $\alpha=.882$. The explained variance ratio of the single dimension is 59,052. Kaiser Meyer Scale Reliability (KMO: ,902; Chi-Square: 1,27303; df: 21; p:,000).

Sales Performance Scale: Türker and Türker's (2018) study was utilised to measure the sales performance of the participants. The scale consists of one dimension and 4 items. While the participants answered the scale items, a 5-point Likert scale (1=Never- 5=Always) was used. The confirmatory factor and reliability analyses conducted for this study are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Factor, Reliability and Mean Analysis of Sales Performance

	Item Statements	Cronbach's Alpha	Explained Variance (%)	Total Variance (%)
Sales Performance Scale	4	,714	54,264	54,264
KMO	0,726			
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	297,857			
df	6			
p	,000			

As a result of the factor analysis, the single-factor structure of the sales performance scale is confirmed, the lowest factor loadings of the scale items are .657 and the highest factor loadings are .808, and the overall reliability coefficient is $\alpha=.714$. The explained variance ratio of the single dimension is 54,264. Kaiser Meyer Scale Reliability (KMO: ,726; Chi-Square: 297,857; df: 6; p: ,000).

Table 4. Factor, Reliability and Mean Analysis of the Customer Satisfaction Scale

	Item Statements	Cronbach's Alpha	Explained Variance (%)	Total Variance (%)
Customer Satisfaction Scale	4	,778	%62	%62
KMO	0,768			
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	505,995			
df	6			
p	0,000			

As a result of the factor analysis, the single-factor structure of the Customer Satisfaction Scale is confirmed. The overall reliability coefficient is $\alpha = ,778$. The explained variance ratio of the single dimension is 62. Kaiser-Meyer Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO: ,768; Chi-Square: 505,995; df: 6; p: ,000).

4. Findings

In this section of the study, demographic characteristics of the participants, findings and hypothesis analyses are presented.

4.1. Demographic Analysis of the Participants

According to Table 3, 78% (307 people) of the participants were male and 22% (82 people) were female. 73.8% (287 people) of the participants were married, 26.2% (102 people) were single, 44.7% (174 people) were 33-44 years old, 34.7% (50 people) were 25-34 years old. 68.1% of the participants (265 people) have a bachelor's degree. 22% (86 people) of the participants have been working for more than 18 years, 18% (70 people) for 3-6 years. Considering the income level of the participants, 41.9% (163 people) have an income between 40,001-55,000 TL.

Table 5: Demographic Analysis

Age	Number	%	Education	Number	%
18–24 years	3	0,7	Primary Education	17	4,4
25–34 years	135	34,7	High School	–	–
35–44 years	174	44,7	Associate Degree	71	18,3
45–54 years	74	19,2	Bachelor's Degree	265	68,1
55 years and over	3	0,7	Postgraduate	36	9,2
Working Experience	Number	%	Income Level	Number	%
Less than 3 years	36	9,3	25,000 TL or below	4	1
3-6 years	70	18	25.001-40.000 TL	119	30,6
7-9 years	54	14	40.001-55.000 TL	163	41,9
10-12 years	47	12,1	55.001-70.000 TL	70	18
13-15 years	46	11,8	70,001 TL and above	33	8,5
16-18 years	50	12,8	Gender	Number	%
More than 18 years	86	22	Female	82	22
Marital Status	Number	%	Male	307	78
Married	287	73,8			
Single	102	26,2			
(N:389)					

4.2. Findings of the Analyses to Determine the Significant Difference Regarding the Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Before starting the research, the distribution of the data was checked. As a result of the analysis, it was seen that the skewness and kurtosis coefficients of the distribution of the data took values between 1.5 and +1.5. Since the skewness and kurtosis values were found to have a statistically normal distribution (Kalaycı, 2006), it was decided that the use of parametric tests was appropriate. The parametric test results of the participants are given in the table below.

Table 6: Relationship between Demographic Characteristics and Variables

Demographic Characteristics	Emotional Labour			Job Stress	Sales Performance
	Surface Acting	Deep Acting	Natural Emo		
Gender	t = -,088 p ,930	t = -,351 p ,726	t = -1,061 p ,289	t = ,569 p ,576	t = -3,037 p ,003
Marital Status	t = -,985 p ,325	t = ,358 p ,720	t = ,738 p ,461	t = ,297 p ,832	t = ,926 p ,355
Education	F = 1,146 p ,330	F = 2,591 p ,052	F = 2,192 p ,089	F = ,626 p ,598	F = 661 p ,598
Age	F = 1,427 p ,886	F = 1,472 p ,201	F = 624 p ,682	F = 2,564 p ,038	F = 4,949 p ,001
Work Experience	F = ,694 p ,654	F = 1,959 p ,071	F = ,988 p ,433	F = 2,597 p ,018	F = 2,142 p ,048

Table 6 shows the results of t-test and ANOVA analyses for the significant difference between the demographic characteristics of the participants and the variables. When the results of the analyses are examined, it is seen that there is a significant difference between working time and job stress and performance. As a result of the post hoc test, it was seen that the significant difference was due to the fact that employees working less than 3 years had more job stress and better performance than employees working 4-6 years and 9-12 years. There are also significant differences between the age of the

participants and job stress and performance. Age groups between 18-24 years old have higher performance than all age groups. Those aged 55 years and over have less job stress than other age groups.

Table 7: Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation Coefficients of Variables (N=389)

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5
1.Surface Acting	3,08	1,11					
2. Deep Acting	3,17	,952	,402*	1			
3. Natural Emotions	3,53	1,00	,-652	,-135*	1		
4. Job Stress	3,43	,885	,489*	,286*	,-331*	1	
5. Sales Performance	3,76	,662	,002	,027	,149*	,077	1
6. Customer Satisfaction	4,20	,552	-,077	-,020	,193	,003	,321*

Table 7 shows the correlation relationship between variables. As a result of the evaluations made, there is a positive low-level significant relationship between emotional labour dimensions of surface acting, deep acting and job stress ($0,26 < r = ,489 < 0,49$; $p < 0,01$). There is a low level negative relationship between natural emotions and job stress ($0,26 < r = -,331 < 0,49$; $p < 0,01$).

The relationship between natural emotions and sales performance is also positive but quite weak ($r = ,149$; $p < 0,01$).

The relationship between sales performance and customer satisfaction is positive with moderate significance ($r = ,321$; $p < 0,01$).

No significant relationship was found between job stress and sales performance. Since there must be a relationship for there to be an effect, hypothesis H3 was rejected ($r = ,077$; $p > 0,05$).

As a result of the correlation analyses, Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) and tolerance values were first checked for the reliability of the models established for testing the hypotheses, based on the fact that there should not be multiple linear connections between independent variables. Variance inflation factor is used to determine the relationship between one independent variable and another independent variable, and if the VIF value is equal to or greater than 10, it shows us that there is a significant multicollinearity problem (Albayrak, 2005).

Tolerance value is another factor in determining multicollinearity. Tolerance value for independent variables in the established model is calculated by subtracting the coefficient of determination from 1 ($TV = 1 - R^2$). Thus, smaller tolerance means larger VIF value (Albayrak, 2005).

Durbin Watson (DW) statistic is used to test the autocorrelation between the independent variables in the study. Durbin Watson coefficient takes values ranging between 0 and 4 and Durbin Watson value is expected to be between 1.5 and 2.5 (Kalaycı, 2006).

Table 8: The Effect of Emotional Labour Dimensions on Job Stress (Multiple Regression Analysis)

Dependent Variable		
Independent Variables	Job Stress	
Adjusted R ²	0,244	
F	42,670 (p=0,000)	
Durbin Watson	2,035	
Surface Acting (EL)	β	0,412
	p	0,000*
Deep Acting	β	0,114
	p	0,020*
Natural Emotions	β	0,047
	p	0,432

p < ,05 indicates statistical significance

As a result of the analysis, it is seen that the dependent variable of job stress is affected by the independent variable of emotional labour ($R^2=0,244$) ($F=42,670$; $p<0,05$). This result confirms the hypothesis H1. When the significance (p) values are analysed, it is seen that the effect of surface acting and deep acting sub-dimensions is significant according to ' β ' values (regression coefficient). Thus, hypotheses H1a and H1b were accepted. The effect of natural emotions on job stress was not found to be significant. Thus, the H1c hypothesis was rejected.

Table 9: The Effect of Dimensions of Emotional Labour on Sales Performance (Multiple Regression Analysis)

Dependent Variable		
Independent Variables	Sales Performance	
Adjusted R²	0,274	
F	5,092 (p=0,000)	
Durbin Watson	1,888	
Surface Acting	β	0,063
	p	0,448
Deep Acting	β	0,222
	p	0,012*
Natural Emotions	β	0,269
	p	0,003*

p < ,05 indicates statistical significance

As a result of the analysis, it is seen that the dependent variable of sales performance is affected by the independent variable emotional labour sub-dimensions ($R^2=0,274$) ($F=5,092$; $p<0,05$). This result confirms the hypothesis H2. When the significance (p) values are analysed, it is seen that the effect of natural emotions and deep acting sub-dimensions is significant according to ' β ' values (regression coefficient). Thus, hypotheses H2b and H2c were confirmed while hypothesis H2a was rejected.

Table 10: The Effect of Emotional Labour Dimensions on Customer Satisfaction (Multiple Regression Analysis)

Dependent Variable		
Independent Variables	Customer Satisfaction	
Adjusted R²	0,034	
F	5,619 (p=0,000)	
Durbin Watson	1,998	
Surface Acting	β	0,100
	p	0,169
Deep Acting	β	-0,026
	p	0,636
Natural Emotions	β	0,254
	p	0,000*

p < ,05 indicates statistical significance

As a result of the analysis, it is seen that the dependent variable of perceived customer satisfaction is affected by the independent variable emotional labour sub-dimensions ($R^2=0,034$) ($F=5,619$; $p<0,05$). This result confirms hypothesis H4. When significance (p) values are analysed, it is seen that the effect of the natural emotions sub-dimension is significant according to ' β ' values (regression coefficient). Thus, hypothesis H4c is confirmed while hypotheses H4a and H4b are rejected.

Table 11: The Effect of Sales Performance on Customer Satisfaction (Simple Regression Analysis)

Dependent Variable		
Independent Variables	Customer Satisfaction	
Adjusted R ²	0,135	
F	61,653 (p=0,000)	
Sales Performance	β	0,371
	p	0,000*

As a result of the simple regression analysis conducted to determine the effect of the participants' sales performance on customer satisfaction, it was found that sales performance had an effect at the rate of (R²=0,135) (F=61,653; p<0,05). Thus, hypothesis H5 is accepted.

Table 12: Hypothesis accept-rejection table

Hypothesis Code	Definiton of Hypothesis	Statistical Results
H1	Emotional labour affects job stress.	Accepted
H1a	Surface acting affects job stress.	Accepted
H1b	Deep acting affects job stress.	Accepted
H1c	Nature emotions affect job stress.	Rejection
H2	Emotional labour affects sales performance.	Accepted
H2a	Surface acting affects sales performance.	Rejection
H2b	Deep acting affects sales performance.	Accepted
H2c	Nature emotions affect sales performance.	Accepted
H3	Job stress affects sales performance.	Rejection
H4	Emotional labour affects customer satisfaction.	Accepted
H4a	Surface acting affects customer satisfaction.	Rejection
H4b	Deep acting affects customer satisfaction.	Rejection
H4c	Nature emotions affect customer satisfaction.	Accepted
H5	Sales performance affects customer satisfaction.	Accepted

5. Conclusion

As health expenditures continue to rise globally, the pharmaceutical industry has undergone rapid expansion, accompanied by increasing competition and diversification of market actors. In such an environment, pharmaceutical companies must strategically strengthen their communication channels with physicians and pharmacists to ensure effective product promotion and sustainable competitive advantage. This responsibility predominantly falls on medical representatives, who operate under heavy workloads, strict performance targets, and high levels of interaction-based responsibility. The demanding nature of their work results not only in physical intensity but also in substantial psychological strain. Consequently, understanding the psychological mechanisms underlying their work particularly job stress and emotional labour has become crucial for both organisational effectiveness and the sustainability of customer satisfaction.

This study investigates the effects of job stress and emotional labour on customer satisfaction and sales performance among medical representatives. Grounded in the emotional labour framework first conceptualised by Hochschild, the study recognises that representatives frequently engage in surface acting, deep acting, and the display of natural emotions in their daily interactions with healthcare professionals. Given the interpersonal and persuasive nature of the profession, emotional labour

emerges as an integral component of their performance. The findings of this research confirm that medical representatives exhibit above-average levels of emotional labour, reflecting the continual need to regulate emotions, utilise nonverbal communication effectively, and maintain professional composure during interactions.

The study demonstrates that emotional labour significantly predicts job stress. Both surface acting and deep acting were found to increase job stress, whereas natural emotions did not produce a significant effect. These results are consistent with the conservation of resources (COR) theory, which posits that regulating emotions consumes psychological resources and can lead to strain when such regulation becomes excessive, especially when inauthentic (surface acting). The absence of a relationship between natural emotions and stress supports the argument that genuine emotional expression does not drain psychological resources in the same way. These findings parallel previous research (Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002; Karakaş and Gökmen, 2018), thereby reinforcing theoretical assumptions regarding authenticity and emotional congruence.

The influence of emotional labour on sales performance followed a distinct pattern. Deep acting and natural emotions positively affected performance, while surface acting did not yield significant outcomes. This is theoretically meaningful: deep acting fosters congruence between internal feelings and external displays, enhancing sincerity, relationship quality, and persuasive communication—all critical for effective pharmaceutical promotion. Likewise, natural emotions likely enhance trust-building and long-term relational engagement with physicians. These results are consistent with evidence suggesting that authentic or well-internalised emotional displays support service effectiveness (Grandey, 2003; Kim et al., 2014; Man, 2017; Çiçeklioğlu, 2019).

Regarding customer satisfaction, the study found that emotional labour is a significant predictor; however, only natural emotions demonstrated a positive effect. Neither surface acting nor deep acting significantly influenced satisfaction outcomes. These results underscore the centrality of authenticity in customer-facing roles and align with prior studies (Grandey, 2000; Başbuğ et al., 2010) showing that customers are highly sensitive to non-genuine emotional displays. For medical representatives, whose role extends beyond commercial sales to include scientific communication, authenticity is particularly crucial in fostering sustained trust among healthcare professionals.

The study also revealed no significant relationship between job stress and sales performance. This aligns with mixed findings in the literature (Dülgeroğlu and Başol, 2017; Muis et al., 2021) and suggests that medical representatives may develop coping strategies that allow them to maintain performance despite elevated stress levels. Nonetheless, the absence of a direct relationship does not diminish the potential long-term risks of chronic stress, such as burnout, reduced well-being, and turnover intentions factors which may indirectly impair performance over time. Another key finding is the strong association between sales performance and customer satisfaction, highlighting that improvements in relationship quality directly contribute to better performance outcomes. This emphasises the relational, rather than solely transactional, nature of pharmaceutical sales.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to the emotional labour literature by examining all three dimensions of emotional labour simultaneously within the pharmaceutical industry a field where interpersonal influence, scientific knowledge, and emotional regulation intersect uniquely. It extends the understanding of how emotional labour processes operate within high-stakes, science-based commercial settings, offering evidence that natural emotions play a more decisive role in predicting satisfaction and performance than previously recognised. Additionally, the study enriches job stress literature by demonstrating that emotional regulation strategies, rather than stress itself, are more critical determinants of performance in this profession.

From a managerial perspective, the findings highlight the necessity for pharmaceutical companies to support medical representatives through structured emotional labour training, stress-management programmes, and psychological resilience-building initiatives. Organisations may benefit from designing training modules that promote deep acting techniques and foster authentic professional communication styles. Moreover, human resources policies should incorporate counselling services, workload balancing practices, and awareness training to mitigate the detrimental effects of surface acting and job stress. Given the strong link between customer satisfaction and sales performance, strengthening

representatives' emotional competencies becomes an essential strategic investment.

This study has limitations. The sample was restricted to a specific occupational group within a single sector, and the data were collected within a limited time frame, which may constrain the generalisability of the results. Future research should include larger and more diverse samples, cross-cultural comparisons, and longitudinal designs to examine the long-term effects of emotional labour and stress on performance outcomes. Additionally, qualitative research could deepen understanding of the emotional experiences of medical representatives and explore how organisational culture moderates these dynamics.

Overall, the findings underscore the strategic significance of emotional labour and job stress management within the pharmaceutical industry. Emotional labour particularly natural emotional expression emerges as a key determinant of both customer satisfaction and sales performance. In light of these results, pharmaceutical companies are encouraged to embed emotional labour awareness, stress management, and communication training into their corporate development strategies. Strengthening these psychosocial competencies can enhance organisational performance, improve customer relations, and support the long-term well-being of medical representatives.

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Research Article

The Effect of Job Stress and Emotional Labour on Customer Satisfaction and Sales Performance: A Research on Medical Representatives

*İş Stresi ve Duygusal Emegın Müşteri Memnuniyeti ve Satış Performansı Üzerindeki Etkisi:
Tıbbi Mümessiller Üzerine Bir Araştırma*

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Giriş

Günümüz sağlık sektörünün başarısı yalnızca tıbbi bilgi ve teknolojik altyapı ile değil, aynı zamanda bu hizmeti sunan profesyonellerin psikolojik ve duygusal süreçleriyle de doğrudan ilişkilidir. Literatürde sıklıkla ele alınan duygusal emek, iş stresi, satış performansı ve müşteri memnuniyeti gibi kavramlar hem bireysel iş başarısının hem de örgütsel sürdürülebilirliğin temel belirleyicileri olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, ilaç sektörünün sahadaki önemli temsilcilerinden olan tıbbi mümessillerin çalışma yaşamına dair algılarının incelenmesi önem arz etmektedir.

Tıbbi mümessiller, ilaç firmalarının ürünlerini belirli aralıklarla yaptıkları ziyaret sonucu hekim ve eczacılara tanıtımını yapan kişilerdir (Sezgin, 2017; Özbucak Albar, 2019). Bu ziyaretlerde ilacın endikasyonu (kullanım alanı), yeri (kullanılacak dozaj), diğer aktif maddeler ve ilaçlar ile etkileşimleri vb. hakkında doktorlara bilgi vererek insan sağlığına hizmet etmektedir (Demirkıran & Şahin, 2010). Ayrıca tıbbi mümessiller, ilaçların etkinliği, kalitesi ve güvenliği hakkında bilgi sağlayarak ve sağlık profesyonellerini ikna etmektedirler (Mikhael, 2014).

Bu araştırma, tıbbi mümessillerin iş yaşamında karşılaştıkları yoğun stres, yüksek satış performansı beklentisi ve müşteri memnuniyetine yönelik baskı gibi unsurları bütüncül bir çerçevede ele alarak, iş stresi ve duygusal emegın hem satış performansı hem de müşteri memnuniyeti üzerindeki etkilerini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu çalışma, tıbbi mümessillerin iş yaşamına dair bütünsel bir çerçeve sunarak hem akademik literatürdeki boşluğu doldurmayı hem de sektörel uygulamalara yön vermeyi hedefleyen özgün ve nitelikli bir katkı sunmaktadır. Literatürde bu dört değişkenin birlikte analiz edildiği ve saha temelli bir meslek grubu olan tıbbi mümessiller özelinde gerçekleştirilen kapsamlı bir araştırmaya rastlanılmamıştır. Ancak kavramlar arasındaki ilişkilerin ikili düzeyde incelendiği çalışmalar bulunmaktadır. Bu ilişkilerin detaylı incelemesi aşağıda verilmiştir.

Amaç ve Önem

Bu çalışma, tıbbi mümessillerin iş stresi ve duygusal emek süreçlerini satış performansı ve müşteri memnuniyeti ile birlikte ele alarak hem literatüre hem de sektörel uygulamalara önemli katkılar sağlamaktadır. Literatürde çoğunlukla bu değişkenler ikili düzeyde incelenirken, bu araştırmada dört değişken bütüncül bir çerçevede değerlendirilmiş ve ilaç sektörüne özgü dinamikler dikkate alınmıştır. Yoğun rekabet ortamında çalışan mümessillerin psikolojik süreçlerine odaklanması, bireysel performansın yanı sıra müşteri memnuniyetinin sürdürülebilirliği açısından da kritik bulgular ortaya koymaktadır. Akademik açıdan iş stresi, duygusal emek, satış performansı ve müşteri memnuniyetinin bir arada incelenmesi literatürdeki boşluğu doldururken, uygulama açısından ise ilaç firmalarına

çalışanlarının stres yönetimi, duygusal emek farkındalığı ve müşteri ilişkileri geliştirme konularında yol gösterici nitelikte katkılar sunmaktadır.

Veri Toplama Araçları

Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak online anket form uygulaması tercih edilmiştir. Anket uygulaması dört bölümden oluşturulmuştur. Anketin ilk bölümü sosyo-demografik özelliklerinden oluşan 6 maddelik soru, ikinci bölümde çalışanların duygusal emek düzeyini tespit etmek için 13 maddelik “Duygusal Emek Ölçeği”, üçüncü bölüm iş stresini ölçmeye yönelik 7 maddelik “İş Stresi Ölçeği”, dördüncü bölümde 4 maddelik “Müşteri Memnuniyet Ölçeği” son bölümde ise 4 maddelik “Satış performansı Ölçeği” kullanılmıştır.

Bulgular

Duygusal emeğin satış performansı üzerindeki etkisine bakıldığında; duygusal emek satış performansını e Demografik özellikler: Katılımcıların %78’i erkek, %68’i lisans mezunu, %73,8’i evli ve çoğunluğu 33–44 yaş aralığındadır. Korelasyon analizi sonuçlarına bakıldığında; yüzeysel ve derinden rol yapma ile iş stresi arasında pozitif ilişki bulunmuştur. Doğal duygular ile iş stresi arasında negatif ilişki saptanmıştır. Doğal duygular ile satış performansı arasında zayıf pozitif ilişki; satış performansı ile müşteri memnuniyeti arasında orta düzeyde pozitif ilişki belirlenmiştir. İş stresi ile satış performansı arasında anlamlı ilişki bulunmamıştır. Regresyon analizi sonuçlarına bakıldığında; duygusal emek iş stresini anlamlı biçimde etkilemektedir. Duygusal emek satış performansını etkilemektedir. Derinden rol yapma ve doğal duygular satış performansını artırmakta; yüzeysel rol yapmanın ise etkisi yoktur. Duygusal emek müşteri memnuniyetini etkilemektedir. Satış performansı müşteri memnuniyetini etkilemektedir.

Sonuç ve Tartışma

Sonuç olarak, tıbbi mümessillerin samimi ve içten duygularla çalışmaları hem satış başarısını hem de müşteri memnuniyetini artırmakta; buna karşılık yapay duygusal davranışlar stres düzeyini yükseltmektedir. Bu nedenle işletmelerin, çalışanların duygusal dayanıklılığını ve stres yönetimi becerilerini desteklemesi önerilmektedir.

Bu çalışma bazı sınırlılıkları da beraberinde getirmektedir. Örneklemin belirli bir sektörel grubu (tıbbi mümessiller) kapsamı, çalışmanın belirli bir dönemde ve sınırlı sayıda tıbbi mümessil üzerinde gerçekleştirilmiş olması araştırma sonuçlarının genellenebilirliğini sınırlamaktadır. Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma iş stresi ve duygusal emeğin ilaç sektöründeki stratejik önemini hem akademik literatür hem de uygulama açısından destekler niteliktedir. Bulgular, tıbbi mümessillerin müşteri ilişkilerinde sergiledikleri duygusal emeğin niteliğinin müşteri memnuniyeti ve satış performansına doğrudan yansıdığını göstermektedir. Bu kapsamda, ilaç firmalarının çalışanlarına yönelik stres yönetimi, duygusal emek farkındalığı ve müşteri ilişkileri eğitimlerini kurumsal bir politika haline getirmeleri önerilmektedir. Ayrıca, ilerleyen araştırmalarda farklı bölgeler ve daha geniş örneklemle yapılacak çalışmalar, sonuçların genellenebilirliğini artırarak iş stresi, duygusal emek, performans ve müşteri memnuniyeti ilişkisine dair daha güçlü kanıtlar sağlayabilir.