

# Indirect Effects of FNE and POP on Emotional Exhaustion: The Role of Facades of Conformity

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## Abstract

*Facades of Conformity are termed as false representations created by employees to appear as if they embrace organizational values. The phenomenon demonstrates that apparent value congruence does not imply actual value congruence. Analysis of data from 322 employees of 4 services sector organizations situated in Rawalpindi and Islamabad, using Structural Equation Modelling technique, revealed that Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) and Perception of Politics (POP) are possible predictors of façade creation, which leads to emotional exhaustion. Evidence suggests that façade creation also mediates the relationships of fear of negative evaluation and perception of politics with emotional exhaustion. Drawing on the findings, we discussed some theoretical and practical implications. We also discussed some limitations and future directions in the end.*

**Keywords:** *Facades of conformity, emotional exhaustion, fear of negative evaluation, perception of politics, structural equation modeling.*

## 1. Introduction

Values constitute traits or qualities that signify what is important to human beings. They comprise of a set of principles, beliefs, standards, tendencies or cognitions that establish an internal reference and set standards for adjudging what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable (Rokeach, 1973; Kohn & Schooler, 1983). Organizations also develop certain norms and values that define their key components and signify the strategic mission developed by their leaders. Organizations strive to enact their values and ensure that these values remain aligned with the behaviors of employees besides being practiced manifestly by them (Gruys, Stewart, Goodstein, Bing & Wicks, 2008). However, an organization constitutes a collectivity holding a multitude of diverse individual values. Too often, organizational members are confronted with the dilemma whereby their own values confront with the overriding values of the

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organization. This incongruity in values can take many forms and can range even from the attire or appearance to the ways of conducting the core functions of their workplace (Hewlin, 2003). In such a situation, in order to fit in and gain acceptance, members of the organizations may suppress their values and engage in interplay of self-presentation and conformity to signal that they embrace the organizational values. Organizational scholars term exhibition of such type of behavior as creation of **“Facades of Conformity”** (Hewlin, 2003, Hewlin, Kim & Song, 2016). The construct demonstrates that apparent value congruence does not necessarily reflect actual value congruence (Stormer & Divine, 2008). According to Hewlin (2003), “Facades of conformity are false representations created by employees to appear as if they embrace organizational values”. During façade creation, an employee masks his true-self as a conscious decision when he confronts a discrepancy between his personal core/stable values and organizational values. After joining the organization and by becoming part of the workforce, employees learn about the overriding values and acceptable norms during their inter-organizational interaction. During this socialization process, employees try to conform to organizational norms and values (Van Maanen & Schein; 1979). However, their core values are likely to endure during this process. Likewise, organizational change results in emergence of new procedures and structures, which ultimately redefine organizational norms and values. In both of the scenarios however, a misalignment between organizational and personal core values is the likely outcome. In such a situation, employees will be left with the options of openly expressing their personal values or leaving the organization. However, the costs of opting any of these options may incite the employees in choosing alternate course of action. For instance, with limited alternate options during economic recession and unemployment periods, employees may not leave or switch their job. In such a situation, employees will only be left with option of staying in the organization by suppressing their core values and by outwardly expressing organizational values. As such they will indulge in pretense and feigning by signaling that they embrace organizational values. Such type of behavior is termed as creation of Facades of Conformity (Hewlin, 2003, Anjum, 2015). When organizations impel or thrust value congruence, it is highly likely that it may entice employees in creating Facades of Conformity (FOC), as non-conformity will be taken as a potential threat to their survival in the organizational life. Thus, FOC is an interplay of self-presentation and conformity and is an attempt to survive within the organization.

Extant research informs us that feigning or inauthentic expression at workplace can have detrimental consequences for the organization as it can hamper the emotional and psychological well-being of the exhibitor (e.g. Bell & NKomo, 2001; Hewlin, 2009; Bell, 1990) and may ultimately affect organizational performance. It also impedes the benefits of creativity and diversity for the organization (Hewlin, 2003; Argyris &

Schon, 1978; Morrison & Milliken, 2000). It is therefore imperative that factors that elicit exhibition of façade creation may be identified so that the necessary remedial measures could be taken to mitigate the occurrence of such behaviors at workplace. According to Hewlin (2003) creation of facades of conformity emanates from varied forces within three categories i.e. the organization, an individual's status within the organization and the personality of the exhibitor of facades of conformity.

Though a few antecedents of façade creation have been reported in extant literature e.g. subjectivity in organizational reward system, minority status, non-participative work environment, self-monitoring, collectivism and leader's integrity (Hewlin, 2003, 2009; Hewlin, Dumas & Burnett, 2017); the list is lacking constructs related to one of the most fundamental desire of human beings i.e. the desire to gain acceptance and belongingness (Leary, 2010; Leary & Baumeister, 2000). Social identity and social categorization theories corroborate that individuals want to be affiliated and included in groups to gain acceptance and reduce uncertainty (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Meaningful human relations therefore form important constituent of self and is one of the most fundamental human motivation that underlie many emotions, actions and decisions throughout the life. People want to have such meaningful relationship as it increases their likelihood for survival and success (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Social exclusion or rejection on the other hand lowers chances of survival and success and is therefore avoided.

We believe that individuals having higher levels of Fear of Negative Evaluation and Perception of Politics are more likely to be indulged in façade creation as these factors threaten and undermine the individuals' acceptance and belongingness at workplace and incite them to engage in interplay of self-presentation and conformity through creation of facades of conformity. These factors incite approval motivation from significant others at workplace. Thus, the primary question for the present research, is how an individual's fear of negative evaluation; i.e. the degree to which an individual is concerned of being evaluated negatively (e.g. Carleton, Collimore, McCabe & Antony, 2011); and perception of politics are likely to affect facades of conformity when he faces value incongruity. Specifically, we seek to understand how high levels of fear of negative evaluation and perception of politics may actually put more conformity pressure on those whose values conflict with organizational values, whereas those having low levels of the two may got released from conformity pressure. Talking about outcomes of Facades of Conformity, previous research evidence (i.e. Hewlin, 2009; Anjum, 2015) suggests that façade creation leads to emotional exhaustion. According to Goldfried and Sobocinski (1975), Fear of Negative Evaluation is positively associated with strain and social anxiety, both of which ultimately lead to emotional exhaustion. Similarly, research evidence also suggests that Perception of

Politics is positively related to strain (i.e. Chang, Rosen & Levy, 2009; Abbas & Raja, 2014), which also ultimately lead to emotional exhaustion. We therefore believe that Facades of Conformity may also act as the intervening mechanism that may lead Fear of Negative Evaluation and Perception of Politics to Emotional Exhaustion.

## **2. Literature Review**

Our study intends to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by integrating the research on a very important manifestation of social anxiety i.e. Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) with façade creation and emotional exhaustion. Though past research corroborates that those experiencing FNE tend to lessen the experience by presenting a favorable image (Arkin, Appleman, & Burger, 1980; Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953). It however fell short of explaining the interplay of self-presentation and conformity in doing so to depict how individuals experiencing FNE will be motivated to engage in façade creation in an environment of conflicting individual and personal values. We therefore conceptualize FNE as a coping strategy that the individuals high in FNE may rely on to avoid negative consequences. Similarly, we tend to integrate the research on perception of politics, façade creation and emotional exhaustion by conceptualizing façade creation as a coping strategy, encompassing self-presentation and conformity to avoid negative consequences at workplace. Moreover, extant research informs us that both FNE and perception of politics lead to strain related responses (Goldfried & Sobocinski, 1975; Abbas & Raja, 2014), we attempt to integrate the research on FNE, POP and burnout literature by explicating how façade creation could provide the mechanism that may lead to the FNE and POP to emotional exhaustion.

In succeeding sections, we attempted to elaborate as to how and why fear of negative evaluation and perception of politics are possible predictors of façade creation and the possible mechanism with which it may act as an intervening mechanism that may lead to emotional exhaustion.

### **2.1 Perception of politics and façades of conformity**

In organizational life, workplace politics is a reality and besides protecting varied and often competing interests, it exerts ubiquitous influence on all members of the organization (Poon, 2003; Chen & Fang, 2008) and constitutes an important dimension of employee's perception of their workplace environment (Parker, Dipboye & Jackson, 1995). At the workplace political arena, employees are often involved in various illegitimate political activities to protect and advance self-interest by ignoring its negative impact on others in the organization. These political activities may include grouping, favoritism in pay and promotion decisions and back stabbing etc. In a political environment, these activities are strategically manipulated to realize gains.

Perception of Politics (POP) is the subjective perception of employees on whether the organizational environment is political or not (Gandz & Murray, 1980). It has long been thought that POP has a substantive and largely detrimental impact on employees' outcomes (Burns, 1961; Gandz & Murray, 1980; Porter, 1976). It is negatively related to Job Satisfaction, Commitment, performance and OCB and positively related to job stress, turnover intentions, strain and may lead to psychological dilemmas (Abbas, Raja, Darr, & Bouckennooghe, 2014; Hsiung, lin, & lin, 2012; Jam et al., 2011; Miller, Rutherford & Kolodinsky, 2008; Chang et al., 2009).

Being a hindrance stressor, POP is related to attitudinal and behavioral reactions. It is a source of stress, which leads to strain responses from the employees and is detrimental to congenial and healthy employee-organization exchange relationships (Abbas & Raja, 2014; Ferris, Russ & Fandt, 1989; Aryee, Chen & Budhwar, 2004; Hall, Hochwarter, Ferris & Bowen, 2004). According to organizational scholars, POP represents an unfair organizational climate marred by unfair resource distribution (Vigoda, 2000). In their meta-analysis, Chang et al. (2009) concluded from extant research that highly political organizations usually reward employees who engage in high level of influence tactics, are capable of taking credit of other's work, are part of in-group or powerful coalitions and have good connections with powerful elites in the organization. Hence in highly political environment, employees perceive that various political activities, social relationships and being part of an in-group play more pivotal role for their success at workplace than their professional competence and in-role endeavors.

Though research evidence on perception of politics suggests that POP incites employees in impression management behavior (Bolino, 1999; Ralston & Elsass, 1989) and conformity (Cavazza & Mucchi-Faina, 2008); it falls short of explaining the interplay of the two during conflicting individual and organizational values. According to Ferris et al. (1989), POP triggers a primary appraisal about the work context being threatening. High levels of POP entice employees to engage in political activities to meet their goals as they may consider it an overriding norm or value of organization. However, various aspects of this indulgence in politicking (i.e. the act of engaging in political activities in the organization) may be in contradiction with their personal values. In such a case the employee may consider leaving the organization as empirical evidence suggests that POP is directly related to turnover intention. Keeping in view the exit costs, leaving the organization may not be an option for many such employees. Moreover, the employee may not be in a position to express his true self, as the dynamics of political environment may not permit him to act according to his own core values. When employees feel that organizational practices related to appraisal system and their career advancements are politicized, their personal images

become important. As such they are likely to react to such environment by focusing on improving their personal image and creating facades as a social mobility strategy (Phillips, Williams, & Kirkman, 2016).

In such a situation, the employee is likely to exhibit interplay of self-presentation and conformity that he embraces the values of some political coalition or political activity by compromising his core values. He will be left with the option of suppressing his values and signaling his allegiance to such overriding values of the organization. This results in adopting self-presentation tactics aimed at image enhancement and cultivating interpersonal relationships for achieving advancement at workplace by creating FOCs. We may hypothesize the following:

*Hypothesis No 1: The degree of Perception of Politics is positively associated with the degree of creation of Facades of Conformity.*

## **2.2 Fear of negative evaluation and façades of conformity**

Fear of negative evaluation (FNE) is the extent to which individuals are concerned about the possibility of negative interpersonal evaluation. It is defined as “apprehension about others’ evaluations, distress over their negative evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations and the expectations that others would evaluate one-self negatively” (Carleton et al., 2011; Watson & Friend, 1969). People having high level of FNE, try to avoid the circumstances in which others may potentially evaluate them negatively. Hence, they are predisposed to be distressed by negative evaluations and remain concerned about making a good impression (Leary, 1983). The possibility of other’s disliking would rarely be far from their minds. In this way they possess a chronic fright of being disregarded or criticized by others. Individuals who are high in FNE are more motivated to make good impressions upon others. These individuals experience social anxiety more frequently than people having low FNE.

According to Leary & Meadows (1991) and Miller (1995), FNE is related to public self-consciousness i.e. people high in public self-consciousness will be more prone to FNE. Miller (1995) studied relationship between FNE and embarrassability and found that embarrassment was also closely related to FNE. Nichols (1974), during his study of social phobic individuals, found that “sensitivity to and fearfulness of receiving disapproval and criticism” are the most common characteristics of people having high degree of FNE. It has also been empirically testified that people high in FNE also tend to score higher in trait social anxiety (i.e. an individual’s propensity to perceive a situation as threatening) (Goldfried & Sobocinski, 1975). Such people work harder on boring tasks when they believe that their hard work would be acknowledged by their supervisor (Watson & Friend, 1969). They seek to avoid potentially threatening

social comparisons, as they never want to be evaluated negatively (Friend & Gilbert, 1973). FNE was also found to be related to social approval seeking (Watson & Friend, 1969). Moreover, according to Leary (1983), individuals high in FNE appear more anxious when they are unaware of how to make a good impression on others. Such individuals display higher level of anxiety and lower levels of performance (Mesagno, Harvey & Janelle, 2012). Hence people high on FNE are more threatened by the prospects of negative evaluation regardless of how well they perform (Friend & Gilbert, 1973). Prior research indicates that FNE is positively related to social approval and negatively related to self-acceptance (Corcoran & Fischer, 2000; Durm & Glaze, 2001). FNE is a product of individual's trait and social environment. Such an environment is construed by means of rules, conventions and values and is influenced and shaped through rewards and punishments. Such environment has been referred to as ground rules by Goffman (1968) through which "social order" is upheld. Research evidence suggests that socially anxious individuals behave more submissively than others, despite knowing how to be assertive (e.g. Schwartz & Gottman, 1976), suggesting that such submissive behavior does not manifest skill deficiency but is a conscious attempt to avoid negative evaluations. That's how the idea of interplay of self-presentation and conformity can be explained; which according to Baumeister (1982) is the construction of social self by means of self-presentation behaviors in accordance with the rules and standards of the organization.

From the above review, it can be inferred that at workplace, fear of negative evaluation has far reaching consequences on a number of outcomes. It encourages avoidance behavior and silence and invokes pessimistic judgments about future outcomes (Kish-Gephart, Detert, Trevino & Edmondson, 2009), affects decisions to divulge hidden diversity (Ragins, Singh & Cornwell, 2007), has implications for distribution of rewards and punishments (Appelbaum, Bregman & Moroz, 1998), affects communication and interaction among team members (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Response to fear depends on source of threat, degree of severity of threat to the individual, available of alternative courses of actions of escaping from or avoidance of threat. However, a systematic qualitative and quantitative exploration of relationship between FNE and interplay of self-presentation and conformity are lacking in organizational literature. More specifically, we could not find any study exploring the relationship between FNE and façade creation. According to Fear Drive Model (Hovland et al., 1953), fear motivates individuals to engage in such behaviors that tend to reduce the unpleasant fear state. Moreover, research evidence shows that fearful individuals consistently make pessimistic judgments and choices (Lerner & Keltner, 2001). At workplace, when the organizational and personal values are in conflict with each other and the exit cost are high, individuals high in FNE may not express their personal values openly to avoid the potential negative evaluations. In

such a situation, it is likely that they may suppress their personal values and signal allegiance to the overriding values of the organization, in an attempt to reduce the fear state. Hence, they are highly likely to create façades of conformity. It may therefore be hypothesized that: -

*Hypothesis No 2: The degree of Fear of Negative Evaluation is positively associated with the degree of creation of Facades of Conformity.*

### **2.3 Façades of conformity and emotional exhaustion**

Emotional exhaustion is a subcomponent of burnout and is referred to as the depletion of emotional energy required to fulfill the job demands (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). It constitutes a loss of feelings and concerns, frustration, irritation, lack of trust and as such represents a high degree of impairment of psychological well-being (Maslach, 1982). Emotional exhaustion thus restrains employees to deliver best at psychological level and limits their capacity to conserve the coping resources to undertake the job demands. It is therefore considered as a form of strain emanating from job stressors (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). It has been thought that a discrepancy between individual's and organizational values may lead to internal distress and is strongly related to emotional exhaustion (Brief, Buttram & Dukerich, 2001; Margolis & Molinsky, 2008; Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). As such, façade creation behavior seems to be a strong conceptual correlate of emotional exhaustion. It creates a sense of ethical conflict within the employees; as they behave in something that is against their individual core values. Such a state breeds confusion, dissonance and psychological embarrassment that ultimately leads to emotional exhaustion (Elliot & Devine, 1994; Kammeyer-Mueller, Simon & Rich, 2012). Conservation of Resource (COR) theory, which provides a framework to understand the stress related phenomenon, corroborates to similar finding about the relationship between façade creation and emotional exhaustion (Hobfoll, 1998; Hobfoll & Freedy, 1993; Hobfoll & Shirom, 2000). According to COR perspective, individuals try to acquire, preserve and safeguard resources at workplace. When they sense that something they consider important (resources) is under threat, they experience strain that leads to burnout. Threat sources can have a broad range from lack of work related resources, increased work related demands, injustices or discrimination etc. According to the principle of primacy of resource loss of the COR theory, "resource loss is disproportionately more salient than resource gain" (Hobfoll, 1998). As such, when employees find that they have lost their precious resources, it psychologically hurts them and leads to emotional exhaustion (Tepper, 2000, 2001; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). Individual's core values are an important resource that enables him to distinguish between right and wrong, desirable and undesirable, likeable and unlikable and as such act as a



guide for individual behavior (Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli & Regalia, 2001). Employees exhibiting behavior of façade creation may take it as a compromise of this valuable resource. Continued loss of this valuable resource will ultimately lead to emotional exhaustion. It has been empirically testified that emotional exhaustion is the key outcome of façade creation (Hewlin, 2009; Anjum, 2015). In line with the previous research evidence, it is hereby hypothesized that:

*Hypothesis No 3: Façades of conformity is positively related to emotional exhaustion*

## **2.4 Perception of politics, facades of conformity and emotional exhaustion**

POP represents a unique hindrance stressor (Jam, Donia, Raja & Ling, 2017; Abbas & Raja, 2014). High perception of politics in organization thus constitutes a hostile environment; which is likely to be viewed as an overriding value of the organization. Such a state would create a hindrance stressor employee may find difficult to cope. As substantiated by meta-analysis of Chang et al. (2009), strain is a likely consequence for such a state of affairs, which may ultimately result in emotional exhaustion (Santavirta & Solovieva, 2007). Conservation of Resource (COR) theory (Halbesleben, Neveu, Parstian-Underdahl, & Westman, 2014) can also help us in understanding the relationship between POP and emotional exhaustion. As explained earlier, high POP organizations put pressure on employees to effectively navigate in the political environment. Employee's time and effort are two valuable resources at workplace. COR theory suggests that in a political environment, these resources are threatened. An employee who invests these resources and work harder may not receive the expected resource gain in the form of some reward if someone else acts politically in a self-interested manner and take credit of his work. Thus, in a high POP environment, the employee may not experience the expected resource gain, which may lead to negative outcomes (Hobfoll, 1998). COR theory informs us that when valued resources are lost or when resource investment does not yield the expected resource gain; negative outcomes emerge, which include emotional exhaustion (Tepper, 2000; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). Social exchange model of burnout (Schaufeli, 2006) also explains the similar phenomenon. The model suggests that high POP involves inter-organizational relations that incite psychological distress and depletes employee's emotional resources; as inputs do not give adequate outputs (Buunk & Schaufeli, 1993). We may conclude that a higher level of POP results in feelings of despondency and hopelessness, which leads to depletion of emotional energy in the employees. It may therefore be hypothesized that: -

*Hypothesis No 4: The degree of perception of politics is positively related to the degree of emotional exhaustion.*

Though COR theory suggests a direct effect of POP on emotional exhaustion, alternative indirect effect of POP on emotional exhaustion through façade creation also seems plausible. An interesting phenomenon of COR theory is the simultaneous investment of resources for gaining and spending resources, which depicts the complexity of resource investment and as pointed out by Halbesleben et al. (2014), is driven by varied psychological factors. In a high POP environment, an employee may feel threatened that he may not gain the desired resources in the form of expected rewards with the only investment of his resources of time and effort and needs to invest further resource by engaging in interplay of self-presentation and conformity and actively becoming part of politicking (Ferris et al., 1989). This additional investment will be made in anticipation of getting the desired outcomes. However, with this new investment, he will have to compromise another valuable resource i.e. his core values. Since core values are considered as a guide for behavior, they constitute and important resource (e.g. Bandura et al., 2001). As stated earlier, when valued resources are lost or threatened negative outcomes emerge which include emotional exhaustion (Tepper, 2000; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998).

Keeping preceding arguments in view, it seems plausible that POP may result in emotional exhaustion via façades creation. Research evidence shows that POP is directly related to attitudinal and behavioral reactions (Ferris et al., 1989). According to Ferris et al. (1989), POP triggers a primary appraisal about the work context being threatening and put pressure on employee to engage in politics even at the cost of his core personal values to meet his goals as he may consider it an overriding norm or value of organization. Research evidence suggests that this feigning and pretense would ultimately result in emotional exhaustion for the employee (Kammeyer-Muller, Simon & Rich, 2012). Therefore, it can be inferred that higher levels of perception of politics leads to emotional exhaustion as a result of creation of facades of conformity by the employee. It is therefore hypothesized that:

*Hypothesis No 5: Façades of conformity mediates the relationship between POP and emotional exhaustion.*

## **2.5 Fear of negative evaluation, facades of conformity and emotional exhaustion**

According to COR theory, negative situations are likely to deplete valued resources (Hobfoll, 1998). An individual's emotional energy also constitutes an important resource. Fear of Negative Evaluation acts as a workplace stressor and leads to various undesirable outcomes for the individuals. The stressful situation of higher levels of Fear of Negative Evaluation is likely to hinder an individual's capacity to cope with future stressful events. This may eventually evoke state of emotional exhaustion

(Tepper, 2000, 2001). Similarly, according to Goldfried & Sobocinski, (1975), FNE is positively associated with strain and social anxiety, both of which ultimately lead to emotional exhaustion. It is therefore hypothesized that:

*Hypothesis No 6: The degree of FNE is positively related to the degree of emotional exhaustion.*

In addition to the direct effect of FNE on emotional exhaustion, its indirect effect on emotional exhaustion through FOC also seems plausible. We anticipate that FNE is positively associated with Facades creation as higher levels of FNE entice employees to create FOC (Hypothesis 2), which in turn is positively associated with emotional exhaustion (Hypothesis 3). This is consistent with a mediation model and can be explained through COR theory. FNE signals a potential resource loss as individuals high in FNE perceive that negative evaluation or disapproval from others is likely to hamper their chances of success at workplace. Principal of primacy of resource loss of COR theory informs us that in an attempt to avoid resource loss, individuals will be motivated to invest other held resources. This resource investment is likely to be accomplished through Façade creation i.e. interplay of self-presentation and conformity for displaying outward allegiance to the workplace values. However, though this additional investment may result in increased chances of success and survival at workplace; it also entails drain of another important resource i.e. individuals core values. According to COR theory, loss of valued resources leads to negative outcomes, which include emotional exhaustion (Tepper, 2000; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). At workplace, when the organizational and personal values are in conflict with each other and the exit cost are high, the individuals high in FNE may not express their personal values openly to avoid the potential negative evaluations. In such a situation, it is likely that they may suppress their personal values and signal allegiance to the overriding values of the organization. Hence they are highly likely to create façades of conformity. However, this feigning and pretense would ultimately result in emotional exhaustion for the employee. We may therefore hypothesize that: -

*Hypothesis No 7: Façades of conformity mediates the relationship between FNE and emotional exhaustion.*

### **3. Methodology**

The present research has been designed as a cross sectional field study with time lagged data collection. The population for this study was the employees of service sector organizations of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Keeping in view the research design, resource and time constraints, access to research sites and wide dispersion of the organizations under population, it was unlikely to study the entire population.

We therefore chose a representative sample from the four service sector organizations within the population on the basis of convenience sampling. Participation was voluntary and data was collected through on-site survey administration.

Nature of variables used in this study required collection of primary data from a single source i.e. the employees themselves. In order to minimize the effect of common method bias and keeping in view the causal nature of the study, data was collected at two different points in time. Data on perception of politics, fear of negative evaluation and facades of conformity was collected at time-1, whereas data on emotional exhaustion was collected with a lag of four months at time 2. An initial sample of 431 employees, willing to participate in the study, was included in survey. A total of 359 x employees participated in the first survey, which resulted in a response rate of 83 percent. Second survey was distributed to only those participants who participated in the initial survey. In the second survey 338 x employees participated yielding a response rate of 94 percent of those participated in the first survey. 16 x incomplete surveys were excluded from the analysis. Hence the final sample consisted of 322 x employees, which resulted in an overall response rate of 74.76 percent. In order to assess multivariate outliers, we calculated squared Mahalanobis distance ( $D^2$ ) for each case using AMOS software. According to Byrne (2016), to qualify for an outline case, it should have a  $D^2$  value distinctively apart from all other  $D^2$  values. In our case, no case displayed  $D^2$  value distinctively apart from the rest, thereby confirming minimum evidence of serious multivariate outliers.

### 3.1. Data collection instruments

Responses were taken on 7-point, Likert-style rating scales in which 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree. Age, Job Experience, organization, gender, and monthly income have been included as control variables as previous theory suggests that these variables have been found to be associated with commonly studied dependent variables in OB (Xie & Johns, 1995). Under-mentioned measures have been used for the current research.

#### 3.1.1 Fear of negative evaluation (FNE):

FNE has been measured using brief version of FNE scale (BFNE-II) developed by Carleton, Collimore & Asmundson (2007). BFNE-II is the revised version of the BFNE-R. This is a brief version of original 30 items FNE scale developed by Watson & Friend (1969). The scale is used to measure apprehensions about receiving negative evaluations from others. The brief version consists of 8 items selected from original items. Higher score indicates higher levels of FNE. Sample items include "I am afraid that others will not approve of me". Responses are measured on seven-point likert-

style scale. BFNE-II demonstrated reliability of .96 (Carleton et al., 2007). Present alpha reliability remained .91.

### *3.1.2 Façades of conformity*

Façades of conformity has been measured using six-item scale developed by Hewlin (2009). Alpha reliability of the measure reported by Hewlin (2009) was .83. Sample Items include “*I don’t share certain things about myself in order to fit in at work*” and “*I suppress personal values that are different from those of the organization*”. Higher scores mean higher level of facades of conformity. Present alpha reliability remained .93.

### *3.1.3 Perception of politics*

Perception of politics has been measured using scale developed by Hochwarter (2003). The scale consists of 6 items, which are measured on seven-point Likert-style scale. Sample items include “*At work there is a lot of self-serving behavior going on*” and “*Many employees are trying to maneuver their way into the in group*”. Higher scores indicate greater perceptions of politics in organization. Original alpha reliability of the measure was .91. Present alpha reliability remained .93.

### *3.1.4 Emotional exhaustion*

Emotional exhaustion has been measured by using nine items emotional exhaustion scale of Maslach & Jackson (1981). Responses are measured on a Likert-style scale. Sample item include “*My job has made me feel like I am at the end of my rope*”. Cronbach alpha reliability for the items was .92. Higher scores indicate higher levels of emotional exhaustion. Present alpha reliability remained .92.

## **3.2. Data analysis**

In order to test the model, we used Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with analysis of moment structures (AMOS-20) (Arbuckle, 2011). The technique was preferred as it provides for simultaneous testing of the independent variables, the mediator and outcome variable. Maximum likelihood estimation method has been used for the analysis. We approached the analysis in steps in line with the recommendations given by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). Measurement models of all the constructs were tested in the first step followed by testing the structural model involving multiple-mediation. FNE consists of eight observed indicators whereas POP and FOC consist of six observed indicators each. Emotional Exhaustion consists of nine indicators. Error terms associated with the items of the same variable are allowed to co-vary due to close proximity as part of uni-dimensional construct. Since co-variation was allowed only for the error terms of same factor, this had no effect on

theoretical arguments being tested. Such practice is permitted in social psychological research (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Blader & Tyler, 2003; Byrne, 2016). We used path-analysis conventions to describe the hypothesized relationship in terms of direct, and indirect effects. Keeping in view the known shortcomings in the traditional inferential tests, for statistical inference we employed Bias Corrected Bootstrap method to establish confidence intervals for direct and indirect effects and generated 10,000 bootstrap samples using AMOS software. Goodness of fit was based on comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) and root means square error approximation (RMSEA). Wherever model comparisons were involved, we also used Expected Cross Validation Index (ECVI). Values greater than .90 for CFI and TLI represents relatively well fitting model and values less than .08 or, more conservatively, less than .06 for RMSEA represents a fairly well fitting model (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Prior to conduct of analysis, we assessed multi-collinearity using SPSS software. The VIF value between the independent variables remained 1.00, thereby confirming absence of any multi-collinearity. We also checked the assumption of normality of data using AMOS software. The standardized kurtosis index remained less than 7; which according to West, Finch and Curran (1995) represents that no item was substantially kurtotic thereby confirming univariate normality of our data. Moreover, Mardia's (1970) normalized estimate of multivariate kurtosis remained 4.59. According to Bentler (2005), values less than 5.0 indicate that data are normally distributed. The results therefore indicated that normality is not an issue in our case.

## **4. Analysis and Results**

### **4.1. Means, standard deviation and correlation**

Means, standard deviations and correlations among the latent variables have been presented in Table 1. 71% of the sampled employees were male; 82% were aged between 23 and 39 years and 18% reported their age between 40 and 53 years. Average tenure with the respective organizations was about 8 years. 71% reported their monthly income up to Rs.105,000. According to the findings, both the antecedents i.e. Fear of Negative Evaluation and Perception of Politics are positively related to façade creation. A positive and significant correlation was found between façade creation and emotional exhaustion. Moreover, façade creation was negatively related to commitment, OCB and performance.

### **4.2 Estimation of the measurement model**

Prior to the conduct of CFA procedures, sampling adequacy test was conducted through Keyser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure using SPSS software. The KMO measure

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations and Zero-Order Correlations<sup>a</sup>

	Mean	S.D	CR	AVE	MSV	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Gender	1.29	.45											
2. Exp	7.73	3.72				.02							
3. Age	34.37	5.50				.02	.88**						
4. Income	2.89	.93				.09	.48**	.44**					
5. Fear of Neg Evaluation	4.76	1.25	.91	.58	.35	.00	.17	-.10	-.004	(.76)			
6. Perception of Politics	4.52	1.48	.93	.69	.08	-.01	.01	.007	.08	.04	(.83)		
7. Facades of Conformity	4.66	1.62	.93	.70	.47	-.03	-.07	-.12*	.02	.59**	.29**	(.84)	
8. Emotional Exhaustion	4.04	1.27	.92	.56	.47	-.04	-.08	-.10	.04	.41**	.26**	.69**	(.75)

a n = 322. CR:

Composite Reliabilities, AVE: Average Variance Extracted, MSV: Maximum Shared variance. Square root of AVE are on the diagonal.

\* p < .05    \*\* p < .001

for the complete model was 0.923 and for individual items it ranged from 0.818 to 0.964; thereby suggesting adequacy of sample. In order to ascertain reliability, convergent and discriminant validity of the constructs, composite reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Maximum Shared Variance (MSV) were calculated and reported in Table-1. We adjudged the reliability and validity on the basis of cut off points recommended by Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson (2010). CR values of all the constructs remained greater than 0.7 thereby confirming the reliability of our construct. Moreover, AVE remained greater than 0.5 confirming the convergent validity of the constructs. Similarly, MSV value remained less than AVE and square root of AVEs were found greater than the inter construct correlations; thereby confirming discriminant validity of the measures.

We used CFA procedures for testing the validity of latent variables through Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with AMOS software. Measurement items were loaded on their respective latent variable (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). Results of model fit indices are reported in Table 2. As evident, the first order CFA models suggest that the sample data fit the models fairly well and all the items loaded onto their respective construct significantly.

Our hypothesized multiple mediation model consists of four latent variables (Fear of Negative Evaluation, Perception of Politics, Facades of Conformity and Emotional Exhaustion). In order to adjudge that whether the four key variables were distinct from one another, we tested the factorial validity of scores from the measuring instrument using confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) on the hypothesized four constructs and various alternate measurement models. Since all the constructs are uni-dimensional, respective scale items were used as indicators. Results of the CFAs are reported in Table 3. The results suggest that our four factor measurement model fits the data well and better than all other alternate models in which three, two or one variable(s) were assumed to be indistinguishable (CFI\_.950; TLI\_.943; RMSEA\_.059;ECVI\_2.832). Hence the series of CFAs support the discriminant validity of the measures.

**Table 2:** Fit Indices of Confirmatory-Factor-Analytic Models of Latent Variables

Variable	No of Items	$\chi^2$	Sig.	DOF	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
Fear of Negative Evaluation	8	19.88	.176	15	.997	.995	.032
Perception of Politics	6	9.3	.157	6	.998	.995	.041
Facades of Conformity	6	22.21	.005	8	.991	.983	.074
Emotional Exhaustion	9	38.67	.007	20	.993	.982	.054



**Table 3:** Goodness-of-Fit Summary for Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Hypothesized and Alternate Models

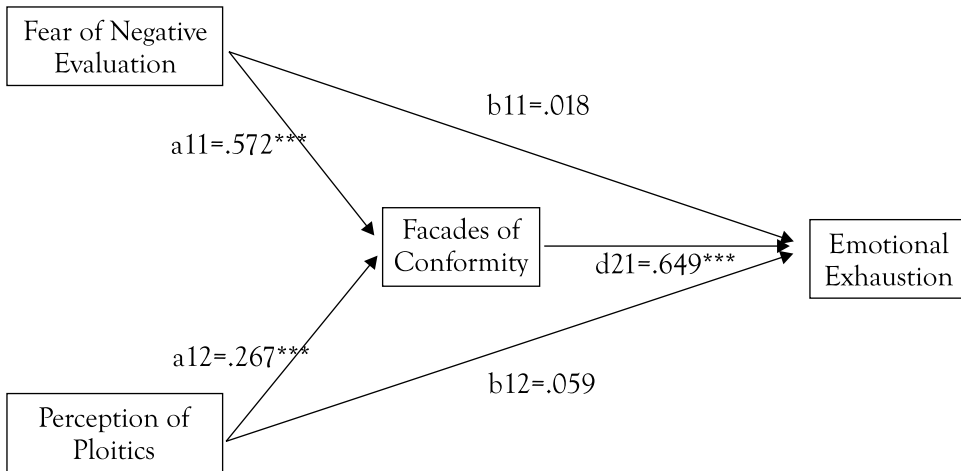
Models	X2	DOF	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	ECVI
Model-1: Hypothesized Four_Factors_Model	751.12	356	.950	.943	.059	2.832
Model-2: Three_Factors_Model (FOC and EE combined as single factor)	1209.68	359	.892	.878	.086	4.242
Model-3: Three_Factors_Model (FNE and FOC combined as single factor)	1557.78	359	.848	.828	.102	5.326
Model-4: Three_Factors_Model (FOC and POP combined as single factor)	1604	359	.842	.821	.104	5.472
Model-5: Three_Factors_Model (POP and EE combined as single factor)	1613.81	359	.841	.820	.104	5.501
Model-6: Three_Factors_Model (FNE and EE combined as single factor)	1681.09	359	.832	.810	.107	5.711
Model-7: Three_Factors_Model (FNE and POP combined as single factor)	1689.63	359	.831	.809	.107	5.73
Model-8: Two_Factors_Model (FNE & POP as one factor and FOC & EE as second factor)	2148.70	361	.773	.745	.124	7.155
Model-9: Two_Factors_Model (FNE & FOC as one factor and POP & EE as second factor)	2411.23	361	.740	.708	.133	7.973
Model-10: Two_Factors_Model (FNE & EE as one factor and POP & FOC as second factor)	2937.20	363	.674	.635	.149	9.599
Model-11: One_Factor_Model	2922.30	363	.675	.637	.148	9.55

### 4.3 Estimation of structural model

Structural model involves estimation of direct and indirect effects along with the inferential tests thereof. Organization, Gender, Income, Experience and Age were included as control variables. For the purpose of clarity, coefficients of relationship among latent variables are presented in Figure 1. Goodness of fit statistics for the model reveals that the model fits the data reasonably well. Overall  $\chi^2$ -value with 481 degrees

of freedom is 913.782. Model Fit indices with CFI= .949, TLI= .941 and RMSEA=.053 indicate a well-fitting model. Results of standardized direct and indirect effects are presented in Tables 4, and 5 respectively. Results reveal that both antecedents i.e. Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) and Perception of Politics (POP) have a significant direct and positive effect on Facades of Conformity (FOC). As can be seen from Figure 1 and Table 4, individuals having higher levels of FNE were involved in higher degree of facades creation than those who reported lower levels of such fear ( $a_{11}=.572$ ). The 95% BC bootstrap confidence interval for this direct effect was entirely above zero (.467 to .661) thereby supporting Hypothesis 2. Similarly, individuals who perceived that their organization is highly politicized also created higher levels of FOC ( $a_{21}=.267$ ) than those having lower levels of perception of politics. The 95% BC bootstrap confidence interval for this direct effect was also entirely above zero (.145 to .386), which provides support for our Hypothesis 1. As evident from the results, individuals who created higher levels of FOC experienced higher degree of emotional exhaustion than those who created lower degree of FOC ( $d_{21}=.649$ ). 95% BC bootstrap confidence interval of this direct effect does not straddle zero (.510 to .775), which provides support for our Hypothesis 3. According to the hypothesized model, FNE and POP are positively related to emotional exhaustion. According to the results, both are positively related to emotional exhaustion ( $b_{11}=.018$ ) and ( $b_{12}=.059$ ). However, 95% BC bootstrap confidence intervals for these direct effects do not support these relationship as their respective CIs straddle zero i.e.  $-.097$  to  $.144$  for FNE $\rightarrow$ emotional exhaustion and  $-.038$  to  $.165$  for POP $\rightarrow$ emotional exhaustion. Results therefore do not support Hypotheses 4 and 6.

Results of mediation model reveal that FNE and POP indirectly influenced emotional exhaustion through their effects on employee's levels of façade creation. As evident from Tables 4 & 5 and Figure 1, employees who had higher levels of FNE and POP created higher levels of FOC and those who reported creating higher levels of FOC experienced higher levels of emotional exhaustion. 95% BC bootstrap confidence intervals for the indirect effects between FNE and emotional exhaustion (.371) and between perception of politics and emotional exhaustion (.174), based on 10,000 bootstrap samples, do not straddle zero (i.e. .273 to .478 for FNE $\rightarrow$ FOC $\rightarrow$ EE and .089 to .271 for POP $\rightarrow$ FOC $\rightarrow$ EE). Moreover, as can be seen from previous section, there was no evidence that FNE and POP influenced individual's emotional exhaustion independent of their effects on an individual's level of FOC. This shows that FOC fully mediates the relationship between FNE and emotional exhaustion and between POP and emotional exhaustion there by supporting our Hypotheses 5 and 7.



**Figure 1:** Summarized Graphical Representation of Multiple Mediation Model<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Path coefficients are Standardized. Participant’s age, gender, income, experience and organization were controlled for mediator and outcomes.

n= 322 \*p≤ .05 \*\*p≤ .001

**Table 4:** AMOS Output of Standardized Direct Effects of Antecedents on Consequents

Antecedents	Consequents					
	Facades of Conformity			Emotional Exhaustion		
	Coeff	SE	95% CIs	Coeff	SE	95% CIs
Facades of Conformity	-	-	-	.649**	.068	.510 to .775
Fear of Negative Evaluation	.572**	.049	.467 to .661	.018	.061	-.097 to .144
Perception of Politics	.267**	.062	.145 to .386	.059	.051	-.038 to .165
Age	-.153	.105	-.348 to .065	-.017	.081	-.175 to .146
Experience	.085	.106	-.128 to .287	-.082	.085	-.255 to .082
Income	.023	.055	-.083 to .135	.098	.056	-.010 to .211
Gender	-.023	.045	-.112 to .065	-.022	.048	-.117 to .070
Organization	-.015	.047	-.105 to .077	-.040	.051	-.141 to .060
*p≤ .05 **p≤ .001	R2 = .431 p<.05 CI= (.325 to .504)			R2 = .489 p<.05 CI= (.346 to .603)		

**Table 5:** AMOS Output of Standardized Indirect Effects of Antecedents on Consequent

	Emotional Exhaustion	
	Effect	95%CI
Fear of Negative Evaluation	.371**	.274 to .477
Perception of Politics	.174**	.089 to .271

\* $p \leq .05$  \*\* $p \leq .001$

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

### 5.1. Theoretical implications

We developed and tested a mediation model that explicates why employees engage in facades creation and how such kind of behavior leads to negative outcomes. Our study supported our predictions that highly political environment and fear of negative evaluation are likely to inhibit explicit exhibition of true values by the individuals and entice them to only outwardly conform to the overriding values of their workplace.

Results suggest that POP has a significant direct effect on façade creation. The magnitude of this direct effect is however modest with standardized effect size of 0.269. It seems that POP has some share in enticing the employees to engage in political behavior of façade creation. We think that the employees may consider that in a highly political environment if they had to stay in the organization due to high exit cost, a failure to conform to the political arena may result in visible or invisible loss and may impede their success and progression within the organization. Moreover, the dynamics of a political environment may not permit the employees to act according to their own core values. When confronted with this dilemma, the employees are likely to indulge in interplay of self-presentation and conformity that they embrace the values of some political coalition or political activity. They will be left with the option of suppressing their values and signaling his allegiance to such overriding values of the organization. This results in adopting self-presentation tactics aimed at image enhancement and cultivating interpersonal relationships for achieving advancement at workplace. Regarding fear of negative evaluation, according to our results, fear of negative evaluation has a direct effect of 0.571 on façade creation. In line with our theoretical prediction, the strength of this positive effect indicates that fear of negative evaluation is one of the major factor responsible for creation of façade of conformity. We believe that since individuals having high level of FNE try to avoid the circumstances in which others may potentially evaluate them negatively, they are more likely to create facades of conformity. It is also pertinent to mention that like most of the organizations in Pakistan, the organizations used for data collection in this study had hierarchical structure. We believe that the dynamics of social rules within the hierar-

chical organizations dictate exhibition of certain behaviors. In such an organization, individuals are likely to go to extraordinary extent to submit to the social rules and values, especially when directed by significant others. Such an environment fosters fear of negative evaluations to submit to the acceptable values of the organization. Thus, controlling public impressions at work becomes imperative for gaining acceptance of others and for achieving status, which constitute two important interpersonal goals. Our results also demonstrated that creation of facades of conformity is likely to lead to emotional exhaustion owing to expression of inauthentic behavior at workplace. This concurred with previous research evidence (Hewlin, 2009; Anjum, 2015).

We could not find any direct relationship between fear of negative evaluation and emotional exhaustion. A possible explanation can be drawn from fear-as-acquired drive theory (Hovland et al., 1953; Janis, 1967), which argues that the negativity caused by fear motivates behavioral coping to pacify the fear. When a self-protective measure is adopted successfully, the negative effects of fear will tend to reduce. Individuals create facades of conformity driven by protection motivation from fear of negative evaluation. It seems that once an individual creates facades, this coping strategy pacifies the negativity associated with FNE. This explanation is supported by our results that fear of negative evaluation has no direct effect on emotional exhaustion. Findings however suggest that façade creation provides the intervening mechanism that links FNE to emotional exhaustion, which corroborates our theoretical arguments based on conservation of resource theory. Though indulgence in façade creation for individuals high in FNE provides a coping mechanism against fear, the expression of inauthentic behavior emotionally drains the exhibiter (Hewlin, 2009).

Similarly, we could not establish any direct relationship between perception of politics and emotional exhaustion. A possible explanation can be that when politics is perceived by employees as a pervasive phenomenon at workplace, they may come to terms with it and accept it as an integral part of work place; if they want to remain part of the workplace. This explanation is supported by theory of control and self-efficacy (Ajzen, 2002). As a coping strategy, they are likely to engage in façade creation in anticipation of getting the desired outcomes. As such, their political perception is unlikely to take the emotional toll leading to emotional exhaustion. However, evidence suggests that façade creation is the key intervening mechanism that links perception of politics with the emotional exhaustion. Findings therefore supported our arguments of indirect effect of perception of politics on emotional exhaustion through façade creation, which were based on conservation of resource theory. We think that high POP environment depicts a potential resource loss for the employees. They may feel that they may not gain the desired resources (i.e. expected rewards and progression at work place) with the only investment of their time and effort and needs to invest

further resources by engaging in interplay of self-presentation and conformity. As such they create facades of conformity. However, with this further investment, they compromise another valuable resource i.e. their core values. This resource loss leads to emotional distress and results in emotional exhaustion.

## **5.2. Managerial implications**

Creation of Facades of Conformity is likely to have negative impact on organizational members and ultimately for the organization. For individuals, the act of pretense and feigning by suppressing the core values may lead to psychological and emotional distress, which can prove damaging for their physical and psychological health. For organizations, it can create performance related issue. It has been empirically testified that façade creation negatively affects individual performance, OCBs and affective commitment (Anjum, 2015), all of which negatively affects the organizations. As façade creation represents only apparent reconciliation with the organizational values, this is likely to lead to what Stormer & Divine (2008) termed as veiled sabotage or symbolic convert conflict. Such behavior indicates non-conformity with organizational rules and regulations and may appear non-threatening till its damaging effects become obvious, as happens during failed change initiatives. It is therefore imperative that managers find ways that limit creation of FOCs in the first place in addition to finding out ways that may mitigate its negative effect for individuals as well for the organization after its occurrence. Our study suggests that managers may curb the tendency of façade creation by eliminating the environment that breed fear of negative evaluation and higher levels of perception of politics at work place.

## **5.3. Limitations and future directions**

Though our research has given important theoretical and practical implications on antecedents and outcomes of FOC, it is essential that limitations of the study that are likely to constrain validity of the results may be cogitated. First, the study is based on data collected from only four service sector organizations located in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Moreover, the organizations were having hierarchical structure as adopted by most of the organizations in Pakistan and about 71% sample was constituted of male participants. Our independent variable i.e. fear of negative evaluation and perception of politics are likely to be more inflated in hierarchical structures and fear of negative evaluation seems to be more pronounced in females as compared to males, especially in male dominant societies. Moreover, cross sectional design of the study limits the causality. As such, owing to these factors, generalizability of the findings is likely to be limited in multiple settings. We therefore suggest that the key hypothesis needs to be reexamined in multiple settings, especially with varied organizational structures and equitable gender population. Secondly, nature of our study necessitated

collection of data from a single source i.e. employees. Though, by collecting data at multiple occasions, we attempted to limit the possibilities of common method bias, we recognize that perhaps, our results may have been biased by some common source variances. Reevaluation of the key hypotheses with the data collected from varied sources may lead to interesting results.

Findings of the current study suggested two potential antecedents of facade creation. However, it seems probable that the strength of relationship between the antecedents and FOC may be attenuated by other factors. For instance, strength of individual and organizational values can potentially affect the relationship. Therefore, it would be interesting future avenue to test that whether strength of individual or organizational values have any contingent effect on relationship between facade creation and its antecedents. Similarly national culture may also potentially affect the relationship between FOC and its antecedents. Moreover, scholarship in the domain of facade creation is yet to conclude set of core values that are difficult to be modified by the individuals and which may possibly come in conflict with the organizational values. Future research may work out the set of such core values. There is also a need to objectively analyze those who do not opt to engage in behavior of facade creation and keep expressing their core values.

As regards antecedents and outcomes of FOC, empirical evidence of a few possibilities has been reported in literature (Hewlin, 2009; Anjum 2015), which by no means can be termed as exhaustive. More research is required in this regard. For instance, in order to find about specific personality traits that may potentially lead to facade creation, big five personality traits should be tested as potential antecedents of FOC. Regarding outcomes, we are yet to conclude that whether facade creation affects an individual's creativity, his job satisfaction and psychological empowerment etc, which is open for future research.

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