ORGANIZATIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF EMOTIONAL LABOUR IN MANGENENT

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Abstract: Emotional labour, as a self-contained field of research, is only three decades old. This study aims to summarize key findings from investigations of the last ten years in an attempt to provide a reference for interpretation of organizational emotions and the organizational aspects of emotional labour. It makes no secret of its aim being to call the attention of anybody dealing with people as workforce that work no longer has only physical or mental aspects, but an emotional dimension as well. Most often this latter dimension lives an independent life. Normally, it is not regulated, tracked, appreciated or rewarded properly, which might send a message to employees that it is not really important. However, emotional labour is a concomitant of most professions and jobs. Where it is not given any conscious consideration by either the employer nor its employees, numerous opportunities of making it easier or improving it may be lost.

Introduction

In parallel with a client-oriented corporate attitude gaining ground, employees are more and more frequently confronted with organizational expectations relating to the emotional aspects of working in addition to a long-established set of mental and physical requirements. As proven by research, such factors as length of client / clerk interactions, appraisal of the quality of service, probability of regular clients, and that of recommendation of a product / company to others are all dependent upon the employees' emotional displays (*Pugh,* 2001; *Tsai and Huang,* 2002). According to a formulation frequently encountered in literature, one of the principal tasks of an employee is to manage his emotions and further his clients' well-being (*Hochschild,* 2003; *Tan* et alii, 2003).

A former emotionless and rational way of managing business has been replaced with a conscious corporate usage of the emotional component to improve leader-group relations (*Losada and Heaphy,* 2004) as well as interactions with clients (*Hsee and Kunreuther,* 2000) and even with stakeholders (*Luoma-aho and Vos,* 2010). Such improvement postulates suppression / concealment of negative emotions and expression of positive ones. Even organizations not consciously making use of emotions in their everyday dealings have got their expectations with respect to their employees' emotional displays. To act under a mask of emotionless rationality, an employee will have to conceal both negative and positive emotions of his. By doing so, that employee will be involved in more emotion control processes than others working for organizations which make a conscious use of the impact emotional displays may have on people.

Still in the 21st century one may encounter organizations which fail to give a conscious consideration to their employees' emotions or emotional displays. Surely enough, however, even those organizations do not tolerate agressiveness or behaviours like shouting, cursing, or banging of doors that would disturb other employees. The leaders of even those organizations should be aware that numerous situations at work may cause employees to develop negative emotions. According to the findings of *Russell and Barrett* (1999), negative emotions are often linked with clear (or prototypical) behavioural patterns. Therefore, if organizations are to prevent the occurrence of inappropriate behavioural outputs linked with their employees' negative emotions, they shall alter the emotions themselves that would induce such outputs.

Consequently, controlled emotional displays, whether result from conscious explicit expectations or norms acting implicitly, are peculiarities of all organizations or, generally, social communities.

Emotional Labour

The first definition of emotional labour was created by *Hochschild* (1979). The Emotional Labor Theory deals with emotions which employees feel or pretend to feel in order to meet their job requirements, irrespective whether or not they are different from their true emotions. Emotional labour is defined as the way of managing publicly perceptible emotional displays, i.e. those mediated by physiognomies and body language. Hochschild had formulated his original definition of emotional labour in connection with jobs in which there are explicit expectations in place concerning the

employees' emotional attitude, and employees are rewarded for their expressions of appropriate emotions. According to his definition, it is essential for emotional labour to occur that the employer excercises control over its employees' emotions, and that employees have direct interactions with, and generate emotions in, clients.

Numerous definitions of emotional labour have been formulated by now. An element of the notion with relevance to this study is that instead of displaying their true emotions, the employees regulate their emotional expressions to comply with organizational norms, irrespective whether they are confronted with traditional performace requirements.

Types of Emotional Labour

Two ways of performing emotional labour are reported in relevant literature. Performing surface acting, the individual displays emotions which are not identical with those he truely feels. The surface actor suppresses or conceals his sincere emotions and acts in a way in compliance with the norms the organization has prescribed with respect to its employees' emotional displays. On the other hand, a deep actor alters such emotions of his in order to comply with organizational norms as he sincerely feels in any particular situation. The same process may take place through a cognitive revision of the situation or distraction. With the former strategy adopted, the individual looks for such characteristics of the situation or his client as may justify the required emotions, while with the latter strategy, he seeks to assume a required emotional state by recalling situations entirely different from the one he encounters currently.

Numerous different individual motives may underlie emotional labour, including compliance with power, a desire for conformity, economic interests, empathy or identification with various goals, whether social, organizational or professional (*Bolton,* 2005). There is an especially strong motivational relationship between immediate fellow-workers, while the organization as a self-contained entity may have a moderate emotional influence. Where emotional labour arises from an intrinsic urge (i.e. where it is unselfish or discretionary), it will be genuine, with the individual investing energy in emotional labour continuously without any deliberation. Where, on the other hand, emotional labour is dictated by self-interest (whether economic or professional / organizational), the individual will continuously measure his emotional labour and the energy invested therein against the benefits gained therefrom, expecting some compensation (remuneration or recognition). Surely, it is better for the organization to have employees who perform emotional labour in order to comply with organizational norms out of an intrinsic motivation, because the resultant compliance will be much fuller. However, an intrinsic motivation like that is rather hard to generate using organizational means (and most often will be produced by collective and social forces). Consequently, it is worth looking for it when recruiting new employees.

Whether a performer of emotional labour decides on this or that strategy will mostly be dependent upon his personality or the situation. The decision will, however, bring about numerous organizational and personal consequences.

Personal Consequences

Like any labour, emotional labour is tiring, drawing energy from the performer, and carrying a potential to lead to emotional exhaustion in the long run. Excessive emotional labour may have a negative influence on one's behaviour as well as one's psychic and somatic well-being (*Gelderen* et alii, 2007; *Karim,* 2009)

According to the findings of Butler et alii (2003), it is surface actors that have taken the harder way. It is because, owing to an undissolved emotional dissonance, surface acting will result in higher stress levels, and stress will actuate physiological processes acting to inhibit the emotion control process itself as well as the functioning of the immune system. Surface acting will lead to an impaired self-evaluation by surface actors, and depression in the long run, reducing motivation at work, while increasing the number of days on sickness-leave and the probability of a job change. A negative impact of emotional labour on multiple personal and job-related factors is corroborated by several studies (e.g. by *Brotheridge and Grandey,* 2002; *Zapf,* 2002).

Deep actors are on an easier side. Employees who have adopted the strategy of deep acting in order to comply with such requirements as their organization may make on them with respect to their emotional displays, will, by replacing their inappropriate emotions with those acceptable to the organization, reduce the risk of dichotomy of emotions felt and emotions expected. Through assuming a desirable emotional state in a particular situation, if we suppose that coherent emotional expectations are in place, they will create an appropriate emotional atmosphere for the next interactions as well, and reduce the very necessity of emotional labour. In consequence of the latter mechanism, deep acting often leads to self-enstrangement or detachment from one's true self / emotions. A high activation level implies a further risk, which may lead to emotional exhaustion or burnout in the long run. Still, findings from investigations into the effects of deep acting on one's personality are ambiguous. According to *Grandey* (2003), deep acting shows negative correlation with job satisfaction, while *Brotheridge and Grandey* (2002) found deep acting to have improved deep actors' perception of efficiency and self-image at work.

Leaving behind an undissolved dissonance between true emotions and those expressed, surface acting will involve high psychic and somatic pressures, while deep acting will trouble the deep actor through the very fact that the process of altering one's emotions consumes one's cognitive and psychic energies. Namely, both strategies have their drawbacks.

Organizational Consequences

Emotional labour has a predominantly negative influence on individuals, while it is mostly beneficial to the employer or organization. A uniform attitude shown by employees will enable an efficient execution of tasks, high-quality services, and regular clients, which will, in their turn, result in an increased turnover, increased number of regular satisfied clients, and better corporate reputation. Emotional labour improves the efficiency of work, reduces the need for direct control, and lessens interpersonal problems. For these to take place, however, it is necessary that the target persons perceive the outcome of emotional labour, i.e. the behavioural output, as sincere and genuine.

Emotional labour is, however, difficult to estimate. Being unaware of the true emotions of the performer of emotional labour, an onlooker will not realize how much energy should be invested, or what emotions should be suppressed or concealed, by the performer of emotional labour to ensure that he attains a desirable target state. Estimating emotional labour as perfomed, the performer himself will take into account such true emotions as may act to hinder the desired emotional display and such other psychic factors as may interfere with the process of emotional labour, while estimation by onlookers (clients or leaders) will be confined to emotional displays actually completed. Therefore, any estimate formed of emotional displays will be rather biased, and still some control of emotional displays is an absolute necessity, otherwise insincere emotional displays would induce client reactions inconsistent with what the organization deems desirable.

What one perceives to be insincere or sincere is rather dependent upon one's personality. Contrary to a common misbelief, neither truth serum nor polygraphic tests can be used to find out whether a subject tells the truth or a lie (*Lilienfeld* et alii, 2010), and even skilled assessors are incapable of telling an emotional display out of surface acting and one out of deep acting apart (*Beal* et alii, 2006). Moreover, emotional displays adequate for a particular situation are culturally and situationally determined, and hence learnable. With all rules observed, surface acting will (or seem to) be as 'sincere' as deep acting. After all, if labour is 'well done', neither the client nor the organization will care much about how it has been done.

Impact of Organizational Processes on Emotional Labour

Emotions have influence on the functioning of organizations as well as organizations have influence on emotions and, hence, the individuals engaged in emotional labour. Below an outline is given of the roles of company / companionship, recognition, and control.

Social Processes

Most often researchers of emotional labour ignore the impact organizational and social processes may have on emotion control processes and behavioural responses. One of the possible reasons is that social communication about emotions are mostly implicit. The social aspect of emotions often passes unnoticed, and manifests itself mechanically, with a potential to create unexpected situations in organizational life. An example is the phenomenon called 'emotional infection' where, without so much as undergoing a cognitive evaluation process, a particular oranizational member's emotions, whether aversion to changes or fear from the unknown future, or 'infectious' laughter, are projected on to the whole organization. Formal leaders or other persons of authority with a restful and composed behaviour may moderate or prevent the propagation of such intense emotions by showing emotional displays with a message to the contrary to make people realize the emotions in question. However, leaders will have a very hard task to do. Social signals are rather quick and surprisingly efficient to influence employees' emotions. Most often organizational members develop emotions in a mechanical response to non-verbal signals given by their fellow members. Certainly, a mechanical process like that should be preceded by the organizational member's socialization.

Another way social interactions are important is that multiple emotions such as joy and humour will only become really meaninful if shared with others. Social existence will, however, lend not only a meaning but a purpose to the emotions of organizational members. A considerate behaviour as exhibited by fellow-workers may help an individual to get into an appropriate emotional state, reducing the frequency of emotional dissonance and, hence, emotional labour. Namely, emotional infection does not only work with negative emotions but is also an effective means of disseminating positive emotions required and approved by the organization. An adequate social environment at work may also help employees to become identified with the organization (or organizational goals), which will, ideally, lead to internalization of organizational norms relating to emotional displays in place. Even if behavioural patterns as required by the organization do not become natural intrinsic responses by organizational members, a positive occupational climate will offer some explanation with a potential to dissolve any emotional dissonance. ('Though I may not be free to express my emotions, and may have to keep smiling at stupid clients all the time, my colleagues understand me, and know how I feel. A little emotional labour is no high price to pay for my working in a community as good as this.')

Organizational Identity

People seek to develop personae which put them in a more favourable light. As far as employees can make dominant features (i.e. goals and values) of the organization their own, they will develop an organizational identity or persona, or identify (themselves) with their organization. For employees with an organizational identity, organizational membership will carry a positive value, and generate positive

emotions (such as pride and joy). Those who can identify with their organization will experience positive emotions even when it is their organization that meets with recognition or favourable estimation. This will make interactions easier with a client with a favourable attitude towards the organization because through his attitude the client himself will help the employee get into an emotional state approved by the organization. Moreover, the stronger the organizational identity, the more positive emotions the employee will experience during his everyday work (*Gibson and Schroeder,* 2002). Employees with an organizational identity show higher commitment, are more involved in organizational life, and more loyal (*Alvesson and Willmott,* 2002), while perceiving rules pertinent to desirable emotional displays to be less bothering (*Gosserand and Diefendorff,* 2005).

Norms Relating to Emotional Displays

The principles of mental work, whether involving explicit or tacit knowledge, are imparted through either internalization or socialization, while employees can learn the ins and outs of some physical job mostly through practical training. No generally accepted technique of imparting emotional labour norms has, however, been worked out yet. Nor responsibilites such as defining, communicating, and enforcing such norms, or rewarding / penalizing people for compliance / non-compliance with such norms, have been assigned to particular functions yet.

Norms relating to emotional displays can be encountered both with gigantic enterprises in the service-provision sector which tend to put every principle to writing in an encoded form in order to compensate for their large size and loose geographical formation, and in descriptions of multiple minor jobs involving provision of some service to meet client / customer needs. Furthermore, corporate Codes of Conduct and Statutes may also include a few guidelines with respect to emotional labour. Comprehensive, detailed descriptions are, however, seldom available. A probable reason is that emotional displays are difficult to verbalize precisely (just imagine how an attentive, caring, etc, employee could be defined). Another reason is that it is not specific emotional displays, but a wider range of emotional displays capable of producing desirable (emotional) outcomes with the taget group, that employers expect their employees to show.

For this reason, what employers mostly tend to prescribe are outcomes which should arise from emotional displays, setting client / customer satisfaction as an ultimate aim to be attained by their employees. By regulating emotional displays rather than emotions themselves, they let their employees satisfy job requirements as well as to their 'ownself be true'. They offer their employees the choice to make between surface acting and deep acting, and grant them opportunity of asserting their own personalities and acting free within a particular frame of action until the desired goal is attained with the target persons.

Practically comprising bodily displays, emotional labour complies with the rules of physical work. It being,

nevertheless, hard to encode for reasons as outlined above, its methodology can be imparted through socialization principally. Logically, a suitable training method would be on-the-job training. In most cases, people engaged in emotional labour have acquired knowledge of a particular range of required emotional displays with the assistance of their colleagues, or by watching, maybe even secretly. In this way, however, only a set of required behaviours, or superficial features, can be learned, and performers of emotional labour themselves cannot help finding (out) techniques by which a desirable target state can be attained. A new hire will, however, be unable to acquire an implicit knowledge of emotional displays through socialization unless he has, through previous experience of emotional norms in social environments with much more explicit rules, such as his family or schools, already learned how ro recognize and accept 'rules of the game' (*Keltner and Ekman,* 2000).

Recognition

Processes of rewarding play an important role in facilitating emotions. If an employee thinks it important that he receives recognition for his emotional labour, the very fact of recognition will generate positive emotions, helping him to get closer to positive emotional displays (required by most organizations). The emotional relevance of a particular event is, however, alse dependent upon the role recognition of his behaviour in a particular situation may play in his objective function. If, in his perception, the estimation or recognition of his labour is incongruous with the emotional labour he has actually perfomed, he will no longer think emotional labour important or worth its while, will be less motivated to perform emotional labour, and the emotional display norms in place, or mere compliance with them, will make him develop negative emotions – contrary to the organizational expectations. Where emotional labour is not recognized adequately, individual intrinsic urge will decline, and the likelihood of emotional dissonance increase. Making up ideologies is a most common way of dissolving emotional dissonance just like cognitive dissonance. A lack of recognition of his emotional labour will deprive the employee of his most obvious ideology (namely, 'I perform emotional labour because that is my job, and that is what I am paid for').

Finances are not a sole means to recognize emotional labour. Social recognition, such as praises from fellow-workers, leaders, or staff, will add value to both emotional labour and the employee himself (or his subjective self-evaluation). An employee may also obtain assistance from satisfaction felt with a job well done as a sort of psychic self-rewarding, which is but mostly a concomitant, or occurs in consequence, of social recognition.

Recognition sends a message to the employee that he is a worthy individual, and for this reason it is essential that he thinks it fair. If his perception is that tasks or rewards have been distributed or granted unfairly, or the estimation /

rewarding process has discriminated against him, his ability and willingness to perform emotional labour will decline, and burnout will be likely to occur in the long run. Such unfair treatment will make him feel anger and sorrow, augmenting the range of emotions to be concealed, his emotional dissonance, and the pressure of emotional labour.

Monitoring

By monitoring emotional labour and performance in general on an ongoing basis, the employer can measure and continuously improve the employees' output, grant rewards to the best performers, and spot and penalize underper-formers. Multiple mechanisms of control, such as customer satisfaction questionnaires, trial purchases, recordings of telephone calls, etc, are available to the organization to ensure that emotional displays at work are confined within desirable limits. By Stanton's (2000) definition, monitoring is aimed at observation, examination, and recording of the empoloyees' behaviour with or without technological devices. It is beneficial to employees because the employer will by that means recognize their efforts, and obtain an up-to-date feedback about their behaviour (or emotional labour). Data in literature show that the very fact of advancement alone, as detectable through data acquisition by the monitoring system, will make employees develop positive emotions, and stimulate them to make further efforts (*Stanton,* 2000).

However, the purpose emotional labour may be subjected to examination for does matter. Where monitoring is adopted with the purpose of restricting the employees' (emotional) freedom of movement, it will be regarded by them as a personal threat, raising their levels of stress at work, and impairing their well-being. Continuous observation may affect social processes at work adversely, and generate harmful rivalling or hostility among employees.

In an idealistic case, monitoring will not be necessary because the employees have identified with organizational goals, created an organizational identity, and spare no pains to attain organizational goals. Where an organization has failed to hire employees who are capable of internalizing organizational goals, however, it will be key that management develop and maintain a toolkit for testing performance (and emotional labour in particular) (*Bolton and Boyd,* 2003). Therefore, a condition of sound equilibrium should be sought and achieved which provides employees with a sense of control over their working as well as the employer with a tool for testing employee performance.

Epilogue

Emotional labour is closely related with emotional intelligence; indeed, by Goleman's (1995) definition, it is nothing short of emotional intelligence adapted for use in practical life. Emotional labour is learnable, and emotional intelligence improvable. For all that, there are few companies

which expect their employees to perform emotional labour as well as provide them with all necessary tools. In lack of such tools, employees engaged in emotional labour are compelled and responsible to learn by observation the norms and practices the organization has adopted with respect to emotional displays; set their inherent emotional intelligence, trained during previous social interactions, to work; make their choice of a type of emotional labour they are willing to perform; select tools to be employed; and take the (often negative) consequences of their decisions.

How long an individual can tolerate emotional dissonance or exhaustion is up to him. Organizational factors have influence on different people in different ways, just like ability to perform emotional labour varies with individuals. It is applicable to all, however, that as long as the negative impact of (emotional) labour load is mitigated by social support, organizational identification or adequate remuneration / rewarding, it will pay for employees to remain in the organization at the expense of more or less (emotional) labour. If, on the other hand, organizational factors are not of the supporting type, it will not pay for employees to invest energy into emotional labour in psychic or cognitive processes.

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