

THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL LABOR IN CUSTOMER SERVICE AND HR POLICIES

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Abstract

Emotional Labour, a sub aspect of HRM was first defined by Hochschild in 1983 as the process of managing feelings and presenting outward signs that contribute value and positive energy to organizations. Its relevance has impressively risen and is now a critical instrument in many sectors to increase customer relations, guarantee satisfaction, and encourage loyalty. Emotional labour is carried out by employees of BPOs, hotels, restaurants, and sales personnel of companies belonging to IT and communication industry in Hyderabad, the capital city of Telangana which is reckoned as a major booming service sectors. In these sectors, workers are expected to manage emotions, show concern and act professionally in order to enhance the organization's objectives to meet customer needs. A meritorious example of sensational feeling rules is the primary research conducted by Hochschild focusing on flight attendants of Delta Airlines where deep acting and surface acting mechanisms was synonymous with considerable emotional work. Such an ability to physically maneuver through interpersonal interactions at the same level of compassion as the other party has become a best practice for organizations who are seeking to improve the customers' experiences. Emotional labour has since been advanced and Bolton and Boyd offered a new typology to broaden the scope of Hochschild's classification. While their typology discusses more dimensions of emotional labour, it paints a more vast picture of the position of the concept across workforce sectors. This paper analyses the development of the concept using Hochschild's aetiological theories and the expansion by Bolton and Boyd. That is why their significance and use in various fields, including businesses in Hyderabad, Telangana, where emotional work is used as a tool to satisfy the requirements of a rapidly growing industry, is discussed. Comparing these attitudes will demonstrate that the emotional labour concept is significant for improving the effectiveness of the personnel and organizational outcomes as one of the critical areas of the HRM.

Keywords: Emotional labour, Surface acting, Deep acting, Emotional dissonance, Emotion management, Display rules, Workplace emotions, Customer service, Front-line workers, Emotional regulation

Introduction

This paper aims to review the literature on the changes that have occurred in the realm of what Hochschild called emotional labour since she first discussed the topic in *Managed Heart*, published in 1983. It was first limited to service jobs, but has now risen to par with manual and mental work. Hyderabad, Telangana based organizations have embraced the concept of emotional labour strategies in their human resource management systems for the purpose of bringing about better customer relations, customer satisfaction and to gain competitive advantage.

The process of managing emotional labour entails working several basic protocols: training programs, policies and even audits which helps ensure that the employee have the required skills of fortune management. IT, hospitality and retail sectors are best understood through Hyderabad's flexibility, stemming from emotional labour. For example, active listening and understanding in the businesses as a customer service provider or a hotel employer is crucial for producing satisfied clients.

Hochschild study of delta airlines was the initial study done by the author that shed light on how flight attendants share emotions in that organization using deep acting and surface acting. They paved the way for theorising of what emotional labour is and how it has the potential to re-create goodwill value. Larson also noted that a broader view was later provided by Bolton and Boyd who developed a new typology, reformulating its very concepts. Their approach demonstrates an extension of the concept of emotional labour to different industries and the tactical deployment in the SHRM.

Emotional Labour

Emotional labour, a term explained by Hochschild (1983), reflects the regulation or modulation of feeling rules as a way of capturing emotion display and producing a façade of affective expression compatible with organizational needs. This emotional performance is often in compliance with what display rules which are standard working procedures developed by the management at workplace. Emotional labour is especially

crucial in the sector that depends on relations with clients or customers as key drivers of results. Essentially, it is expected of employees to show emotions like friendliness, empathy or confidence for the purpose of achieving the right responses from the customers.

Hochschild has documented emotional labor in details and an example is flight attendants. Some tricks are thus used whereby the flight attendances though they would be feeling terrible are encouraged to look calm and even cheerful, in fact they are trained to look cheerful even during emergencies. While such enthusiastic performance is relevant for passengers' satisfaction and safety, it also leads to emotional dissonance between the emotions employees experienced and those employees should demonstrate. This dissonance is a constant problem when emotional labour becomes a specific designated part of the employment relationship, as it does in many service jobs such as customer service work, waiting, hotelisy, and care giving.

Finally, emotional labour is not only an external public demonstration but also has internal mechanisms. It is not easy to constantly govern emotion so that it is appropriate to the context of work and hence takes a lot of mental and emotional energy. This regulation can therefore bring benefits as well as have drawbacks. On the one hand, it improves customer satisfaction and organizational reputation on the other hand, it increases pressure, emotional exhaustion, and burnout among employees, particularly in desired occupations.

Types of Emotional Labour

Hochschild (1983) categorized emotional labour into two main types: The major form include the surface acting and the deep acting that Hared introduced later a third type known as no acting required by Ashforth and Humphrey.(1993) Every type constitutes various degrees of emotional interventions and correspondence between pictured and experienced emotions.

1. **Surface Acting:** 'Surface acting' may occur whereby members adhere to established display norms but do not adopt them as part of their psychological experience. Employees consciously adjust their non-verbal communications, including facial or vocal impressions, to fit the organisational work environment and the job, despite experiencing opposing emotions. For instance, a receptionist will have a neutral body language and answer customers With respect while inside he/she may be angry or under pressure. Whereas, surface acting assists the workers to ensure that they meet the organizational expectations and requirements but as a result they experience emotional exhaustion since they express opposite feeling from their real feeling. This type of emotional labour is frequently identified in initial level or in what is described as 'transactional' form of service work such as call centre or retail.
2. **Deep Acting:** This type of acting takes place when employees conform to organisational display standards and try to experience organisationalally mandated emotions. This is unlike surface acting which is bogus, and deep acting which entails changing the state of the employee for the benefit of the job. For instance, a nurse attending to a patient will deliberately build on positive affects such as empathy and compassion to produce real authentic affection towards the person. Deep acting helps reduce emotional conflict because the staff feels a closer fit with organizational roles. Nevertheless, since the alteration of emotions involves exerting cognitive activities, it can cause stress over a period.
3. **No Acting Required:** The third category, proposed by Ashforth and Humphrey (1993), can be boy described as "other-appropriate" it relates to cases where observed emotions are congruent with actual emotions. To this extent, it is easy to state that in such contexts, there is little work involved in the regulation of feelings. For example, if a teacher or medical doctor is required by his or her conscience to give care emotionally for students or clients, then practice such kind of emotional labour. The alignment minimizes the psychological pressure that accompanies emotions management making it a daily practice in most vocations involving care giving.

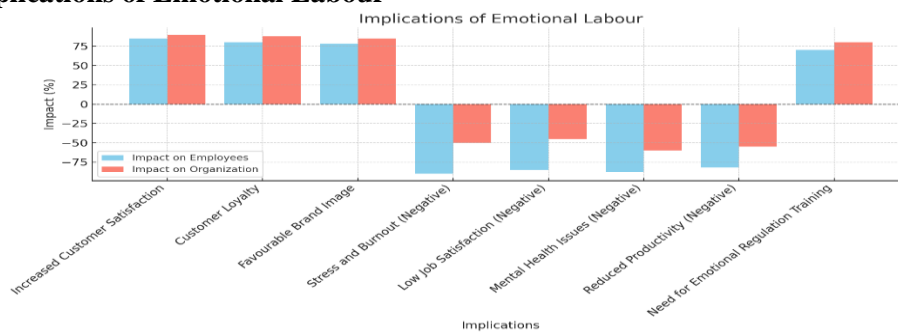
Implications of Emotional Labour

Thus, providing more support for the role of emotional labour in optimising organisational results for various industries. But it also creates problems for employees or the organizations they work for. Thus, emotional labour is especially often used in positions that require work with people: services, care, and their contact with the client. These regulation of emotions helps organisation achieve increased customer satisfaction, increase customer loyalty and a favourable brand image. For instance, hospitality employee who are friendly and attentive help to retain customers and attract others due to word of mouth.

Table 1 : Implications of Emotional Labour on Employees and Organizations

Implications	Impact on Employees	Impact on Organizational Outcomes
Increased Customer Satisfaction	85	90
Customer Loyalty	80	88
Favourable Brand Image	78	85
Stress and Burnout (Negative)	-90	-50
Low Job Satisfaction (Negative)	-85	-45

Graph 1: Implications of Emotional Labour



However, emotional labour is not all good for employees especially when surface acting is employed. The gap between what is felt, and what is expressed results in emotional congruence which leads to stress, burn out and low job satisfaction. Such effects are worst among employees in demanding positions and tasks that involve caring for the physically or emotionally strained correlatives like the hospital’s personnel, flight attendants, etc. Furthermore, the impact of emotional dissonance is that employees who work in such organizations are bound to develop poor mental health as well as poor health standards hence the low productivity.

These are challenges that organisations ought to acknowledge and act in a preventive manner to assist those workers who are performing emotional work. It is recommended that lots of training is given, which creates positive, supportive, and healthy work climates, and also assists individuals with emotional frameworks that allow them to cope with the negative impacts of emotional work. For instance, skills of emotional regulation training within employees, and coping with stress could be part of the program and sustained feedback and appreciation could enhance morale among the workers.

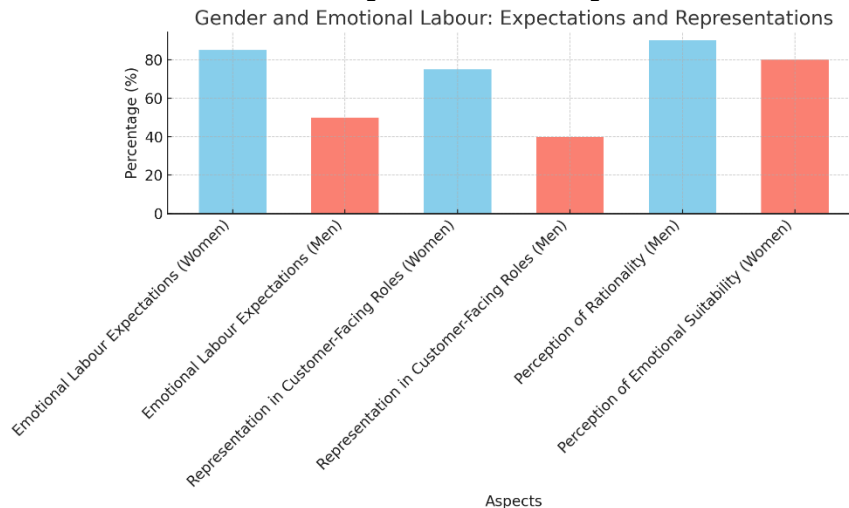
Gender and Emotional Labour

It is first and foremost tied with gender relations and emotions are seen as defined in opposition to reason and are usually constructed as a feminine attribute, which is ranked lower than masculinity in the occupational hierarchy. Consequently, rationality tends to be flagged as a male attribute of higher status than the female one. This association means that the emotional work is assigned more to women than to men are often expected to do more emotional work than their male counterparts despite being in the same profession.

Table 2: Gender and Emotional Labour Data

Aspects	Percentage
Emotional Labour Expectations (Women)	85
Emotional Labour Expectations (Men)	50
Representation in Customer-Facing Roles (Women)	75
Representation in Customer-Facing Roles (Men)	40
Perception of Rationality (Men)	90
Perception of Emotional Suitability (Women)	80

Graph 2: Gender and Emotional Labour: Expectations and Representations



This gender bias is seen when companies require smart and neat women for desk appearances such as receptionists or salespersons while implying the capability of appropriate emotion. Emotional labor is constructed along racial/gendered divides: women, especially in interact-interface jobs, are still seen as being better suited to offer the kind of emotional support customers seek. Such an expectation reestablishes gender roles that discriminates women and keeps wasting women time at workplace areas that approve emotional labor. alaboration

Importance of Emotional Labour

Since its introduction, the concept of emotional labour has increasingly assumed significance given that region more and more front-line service jobs involve interactions with customers. Often, newspaper ads and television and radio announcements promote customer service positions to underscore how the service element has become a crucial determinant of the delivery of service by service providers. It is now widely accepted that emotional labour plays a major role in sustaining customer satisfaction and subsequent customer loyalty.

With reference to the findings from the study, managerial employees monitor and coordinate the ways that employees of McDonald’s express emotions in the presence of the customers, and their ability to do this increases with time. This demand for emotional labour is concurrent with organizations’ careful implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) practices of outsourcing service enhancement to employees. The pressure posed to the employees to put on a happy face when they are not, or to wear the organisational approved veneer is not easily taken without consequential socio-psychological repercussions such as stress or emotional exhaustion in position that which they front-line service. This highlights the importance of organisations providing their workers that go through a process of emotional labour training on how to cope with this job.

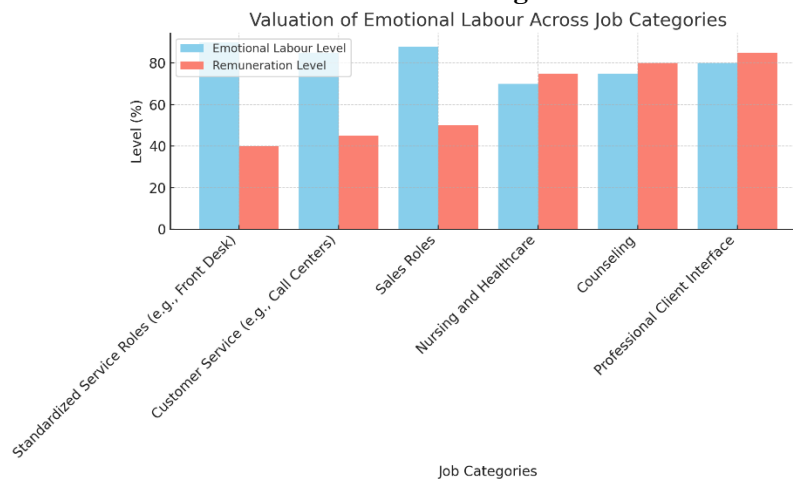
The Valuation of Emotional Labour

Thus, the idea of emotional labour has clear meanings for the estimation of work in various categories of occupations. The skills required in employment where people manage emotions for anticipated organizational display differ and therefore its perceived value also differs. Emotional labour is almost always required in standardized service jobs including front desk, customer care, and sales. Those performing these positions have to constantly look happy, be friendly or polite even if the feeling is not true at all. However, such positions demand hard and emotional work, and they are usually paid little money. This undervaluation stem from tendencies that always underestimate the emotional labor involved in standardized and repetitive service work that is expected from employees in the service sectors.

Table 3 :Valuation of Emotional Labour Across Job Categories

Job Categories	Emotional Labour Level	Remuneration Level
Standardized Service Roles (e.g., Front Desk)	90	40
Customer Service (e.g., Call Centers)	85	45
Sales Roles	88	50
Nursing and Healthcare	70	75
Counseling	75	80
Professional Client Interface	80	85

Graph 3 :Valuation of Emotional Labour Across Job Categories



However, where the emotional labour is accompanied by discretionary work – requiring expertise, education, experience or output - such as nursing, counselling, technical jobs and, professional interface client handling, the remuneration is better. Here, emotions are not only dealt with but also a specialized form of knowledge is being applied to build rapport or solve a challenging issue. For instance, to become a good counselor, one has to understand clients’ and patients’ pain when having to deal with certain issues and at the same time, the counselor should not forget that s/he is a professional required to get clients through the problem-solving process. Likewise, for a nurse, he or she has to have care while delivering the technical objectives with efficiency. In such roles, emotional work is involved in the process of producing organizational outcomes therefore, it is more prized.

The above breakdown shows that there is an inverse relationship between the level of emotional labour and the amount of pay. Although much emotion management is inherent in standardization of service roles, they do not include professional-technical components associated with superior rewards in the employment marketplace. This underpricing of sentimental work in lesser-wage positions is a culture to undervalue anyone who practices the traditional female characteristics including, but not limited to, assertiveness, emotional touch, pipeline adjustment and appearance.

Organizations have to accept the significant impact of emotional labour on improving the level of the perceived customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, as well as the positive image of the company and its products. This is owing to compensation inequity: the lack of support mechanisms for emotionally charged workers such as call center employees can be met by compensation reform by organizations. Therefore understanding that such employees who engage themselves in this kind of working experience are actually providing a crucial working tool vital for success in any organization is crucial in any organization to ensure equity and sustenance in learning modern working environment.

Hochschild’s Perspective on Emotional Labour

‘The Managed Heart’ (1983) was Hochschild’s critical contribution to critically revising the way emotions have come to be understood in work. She explained it in the process by which individuals must regulate their emotional state for it to fit the organizational structure and put on a show of happiness or coolness for instance. Some of her research, most especially the one on flight attendants, helped to explain that emotional

labour is systematically trained, disciplined and controlled in order to produce a certain type of outcome. For instance, Emotions displayed at work must be socially appropriate flight attendants must feed their fear and put on a brave front even in danger, an embodiment of the emotion that is calmness.

The idea of Hochschild to give concepts of emotional labour was in defining emotions by divisions of two, that include surface acting and deep acting.

- Surface acting entails portraying certain feelings on the exterior without having the feelings at inside. One changes even facial expression, intonation of voice or posture to fit into organizational culture. This type of emotional labour is typical in companies with standardised empathising work stations, where people must display certain, often friendly, gestures like smiling or speaking politely to customers. Although surface acting provides an adequate performance for the current job specification, deep acting has a negative impact on the employee as it elicits emotional exhaustion, which is defined as the gap between the emotions employees want to express and the emotions expected by their organization.
- Deep acting means that the employee has to adopt the organisational standards and actively have to feel the emotions that are expected of them.. It is a more real form of emotional work, which involves the internalisation of the employees' experiences and self-states. For example, a therapist feeling with a client, a nurse being compassionate with a patient is the example of deep acting. Although, this strategy influences low level of emotional conflict, it is very cognitively demanding and generates high level of depletion, which is also emotional exhaustion.

Nevertheless, relying on Hochschild's extensive contemplation on emotional work, it is possible to recognize her major contribution in two aspects: firstly, she connected emotional work with market processes secondly, she translated emotions into marketized objects. She maintained that it is when these attitudes are included in a contract of employment that they are commoditised, and made to conform to organisational norms. For instance, the cabin crew trainees said they felt they were selling themselves, means where warmth and empathy turned into corporate commodities.

While Hochschild was concerned with the structures where people do paid emotional labour, she also had a concept for paid people doing emotional work in private life. Emotions here are genuine and not bounded by regulators or clandestine motives of making a sale. Such personal emotional displays as care for family members or the enthusiasm for hobbies are 'gift-work,' p.82, opposed to office-specific 'emotional work'. In her work, she focused on the effort and the exertion that goes to regulating emotions at the workplace stating that this was as demanding as or even more than, and as valuable as, physical or mental work. The problem of framing emotional labour as a standpoint in a market has revolving the study of emotions from psychological point to sociological one, where emotional experiences are embedded in social structures.

Conclusion

Research has identified emotional labour as a significant yet nuanced concept within contemporary workplaces – a concept that dynamics the ways that organisation expect employee to regulate their feelings in order to accomplish tasks. Hochschild emphasized on how it turned emotions into valuable market assets and can help transform people so that they fit organizational culture of smile. On the one hand, emotional labour creates benefits in the form of increased client, customer, and organisational outcomes, while on the other hand, owing to surface acting the employee faces risks such as emotional exhaustion, stress, and burnout.

Thus, the appreciation of emotional work reveals or highlights the differences in remuneration of the two promising diverse job categories. Meant to be delivered with regular emotional intensity, standardized service roles less often offer the same financial and status rewards as positions that require emotional investment and are combined with technical or professional elements. They can be seen to reinforce prejudices that are currently observable in society and therefore challenge organisations to consider the systems of reward and assistance.

Concentrating on the commercialization and regulation of emotions, Hochschild shows how organizational emotional labor affects workers. While emotions in the pre-modern period referred to unique personality style and behavior, the new state of affairs referring to linear and compulsory organizational requirements has metamorphosed the character of work. While this transformation has potential for generating affluence, it also poses questions regarding the effects that these changes will have on employee health and well-being as well as the mercenary utilization and wearing out of emotional resources.

This paper has argued that organisations should not overshadow the prejudice of enforcing emotional labour on employees to build enduring workplaces. Measures that organisations might take include providing training on how to deal with the emotional load, supporting cultures that enable employees to endure the pressures of emotional labour and providing resources for the strengthening of the emotional self. Affordability and sustainability of organizations are achieved by acknowledging emotional labour as valuable in work delivery so as to avoid favouritism.

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