

Migration, Gender, and the Hospitality Industry: Exploring the Use of Female Emotional Labour Within the Hospitality Industry

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Emotional labour is an important aspect of the service sector as it is related to the psychological wellbeing of employees and organisational performance. Therefore, this research examines motivations behind female migration and impacts of emotional labour within the hotel industry. Emotional labour is linked to employee motivations and employee performances within the hotel industry to illustrate the length of emotion applied by female migrants while conducting their duties in hotels, the consequence of which causes female migrant workers larger emotional burnout than their fellow male colleagues. The topic is critically reviewed based on available literature discussing this topic.

Keywords: emotional labour, female employment, female migration, hospitality industry

Introduction

In today's increasing global competitive environment, delivering quality service is regarded as an important strategy for enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty. In order to be successful in this environment, hotel managers are supposed to ensure that the attitudes and behaviours of frontline employees are consistent with the expectations of their customers and the organization. In fact, the performance of employees having frequent face-to-face or voice-to-voice interaction with customers is central to delivery of quality service in the hotel industry (Choi & Chu, 2001; Tsaur & Lin, 2004).

Moreover, many researchers have agreed that emotional exhaustion is the first stage of the "burnout syndrome" (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Gaines & Jermier, 1983). Such emotional exhaustion is related to depletion of emotional resources, and involves feelings of fatigue, being "used up", and frustration (Gaines & Jermier, 1983). Employees who work in boundary-spanning positions are especially susceptible to high levels of emotional exhaustion. As Cordes and Dougherty (1993) observed, "Individuals...in boundary-spanning positions will experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion compared to those...in non-boundary-spanning positions" (pp. 650-655).

When reading about the hospitality industry in books, journal articles, industry reports, or the popular media, we persistently encounter messages on how it is one of the largest economic activities employing

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millions of people worldwide (Leiper, 1999). Literature regarding the hospitality literature is very recent. It is not until the mid-1960s that hotel and hospitality management received significant research attention. Studies firstly focused on managerial activities (Nailon, 1968) as well as on the personal profile of the hospitality manager, although still only in a conversational style. More recently, the personal profile has been linked to the corporate profile providing a key insight into the individual and thus the business' success (Enz, 2000; Enz & Siguaw, 2000). In many communities, the hospitality industry emerges as one of limited, if not the sole, option for economic growth and diversification.

Emotional labour, if and when applied appropriately, can be beneficial to organisations and employees as this would lead to enhanced labour by employees, which then leads to better organisational performance. Kim (2008) illustrated how the display of organisationally desired emotions influences employee exhaustion levels. Reichel and Ginsburg (2014) stated that managers must create strategies that encourage employees to display emotional labour which results in genuine deep acting.

Reviewing Related Literature

Emotional labour is an important aspect of the service sector, a highly demanding and target oriented sector, as it is related to the psychological wellbeing of employees and organisational performance (Jung & Yoon, 2014). When viewed from the perspective of an individual service employee, emotional labour is characterised by individual differences and personal interpretations of their emotional experiences that they exhibit when analysing the causes and consequences of emotional labour (Liu, Perrewé, Hochwarter, & Kacmar, 2004). The requirement to raise standards of service quality, which is more important in longer customer interactions (Lucas, 2004) results in a greater need for emotional labour.

There is a significant body of literature related to the conceptualisation of emotional labour, its effects on organisational performance and employee wellbeing, and levels of expression, which explains how employees are/can be impacted by using various levels of emotions within a work environment (Beal, Trougakos, Weiss, & Green, 2006; Gursoy, Yasin, & Umut, 2011; Malecki & Ewers, 2007; Karatepe & Aleshinloye, 2009; Liu et al., 2004; Leonard, 2003; Kapiszewski, 2004; Sohn & Lee, 2012; Ashkanasy, Härtel, & Daus, 2002; Lee & Ok, 2014; Van Dijk, Smith, & Cooper, 2011).

Hotel operations consist of several features, such as rooms division, back office, food and beverage services, kitchens, maintenance, and housekeeping. Consequently, it is certain that various hazards in the workplace might take place, some of which are emotional labour related. Lee (2012) explained how the success of customer services, which also includes the food and beverage departments, relies on its employees' full attention and articulates hospitality, as customer service revolves around constant face-to-face interaction with customers in an effort to satisfy their varied demands. Hackett, Lapierre, and Hausdorf (2001) explained how, in order to perform emotional labour effectively, service workers must be committed to their workplace and work duties. Work commitment is seen as the internalisation of values about the work or the importance of work according to the individual. Thus, this may vary between various individuals based on their level of commitment towards their work. Therefore, emotional labour is seen as satisfaction with work in general and the perception a person has about their work commitments towards the workplace (Hackett et al., 2001).

Kim (2008) highlighted the importance of emotional labour, especially to hotel service employees and the hotel industry, by showing that the display of organisationally desired emotions influences employee

exhaustion levels. The importance of management support to employees in the service sector is highlighted by Shani, Uriely, Reichel, and Ginsburg (2014) by suggesting that managers must create strategies within the workplace that encourage employees to display emotional labour which results in genuine deep acting. Shani et al. (2014) explained that deep acting is essential in the service sector as it permits employees to display genuinely felt emotions in an emotionally demanding workplace.

In recent years, increasing research attention has considered how service employees display their emotions towards customers during service transactions, as well as how organisations seek to direct and control these emotional displays (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Grandey, 2003). This is to attain enhanced customer satisfaction. When viewed from the perspective of an individual service employee, emotional labour is characterised by individual differences and personal interpretations of their emotional experiences that they exhibit when analysing the causes and consequences of emotional labour (Liu et al., 2004). Generally, the notion of emotional labour, that is widely considered as prospective guidance to an employee's emotional condition and their interactions with employees, refers to the control, effort, and planning that is needed to express emotions that are desired by the organisation during interpersonal relations (Karatepe & Aleshinoye, 2009; Chu, Baker, & Murrmann, 2012; Yagil & Medler-Liraz, 2014). The differentiating aspects of emotional labour (Yagil & Medler-Liraz, 2014) include the ability to express positive emotions, the necessity to cultivate sensitivity emotions, and the emotional dissonance that is experienced. Furthermore, the financial value of service employees' emotional labour for the service industry in general and for hospitality firms in particular is unanimously accepted (Fox, 2001; Pugh, 2001). Displays of positive emotions have been found to be associated with desired organisational objectives, such as positive customer experiences, return intent, and positive word-of-mouth (Johanson & Woods, 2008; Tsai, 2001). Yet, these highly desired outcomes are strongly related to the customer's perceptions of the employees' emotional authenticity. As noted by Grandey, Fisk, Mattila, Jansen, and Sideman (2005), "when service providers do not seem sincere in their expressions it is less likely to create a positive impression in the customer; instead, a false smile may seem manipulative and the employee's impression management attempt fails" (p. 52). In other words, positive customer service outcomes appear to be associated with deep or genuine acting, while negative outcomes are often associated with surface acting (Guido, Van Dijk, Jaap, & Wesseling, 2011). The significance formed by the employee and customer in a service encounter is distinctive, experiential, and contextual (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Therefore, according to Lloyd and Luk (2011), a good service encounter requires employees to regulate their emotions in order to be attentive and patient, understand customers' expectations, adapt to the situation of the encounter, and generate flexible and creative solutions. Furthermore, individuals in service roles, such as hotel employees, flight attendants, tour operators, coaches, and counsellors, often face significant emotional labour demands. This labour requires employees to regulate their emotion in the workplace and essentially act their part (Vargo & Lusch, 2008).

In the context of hospitality and tourism, Pizam and Shani (2009) found that employees view their ability to conceal negative emotions that might emerge in a service transaction as skilled hospitality behaviour, and as an indication of professionalism and personal strength, rather than a discouraging job demand. Baerenholdt and Jensen (2009) conducted a study at a Danish tourist attraction. The results of their study revealed that recognition on the part of visitors was a key reward for frontline employees when performing emotions, which contributed to their sense of self-development and enhanced their self-esteem.

To manage emotional labour adequately, emotional intelligence is required. In this regard, emotional intelligence serves as a means to coping with emotional regulation (Ashkanasy et al., 2002). In the service sector, the latter refers to dealing with regulations enforced by management in a better manner. Emotional intelligence is defined as a form of intelligence that deals with person's ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions and with the ability to use the information to manage further actions (Grandey, 2000), dealing with knowing how to control emotions and eventually express emotions (Lusch & Serpkenci, 1990). This implies that emotional labour is required by management at first then by the employees next as it is management that monitor one's and other's actions. Once emotional intelligence is applied on management, it becomes their role to influence it on other employees by training them on how to better regulate their emotions at work specifically when dealing with customers. Emotional intelligence is the ability of an individual to identify, perceive, and manage emotions successfully and as such is not constant (Lee & Ok, 2014). Emotional intelligence, according to Lee and Ok (2014), can be affectively enhanced through proper training. Proper training, in this regard, refers to the regular training programmes offered by managers to their employees. Therefore, the organisational environment is a crucial factor affecting emotional labour among employees (Cossette & Hess, 2009). Some organisational factors that affect emotional labour include occupational factors, management and the support of co-workers, training, and display rules set by the organisational management which oversees the overall day to day activities of their organisations, such as area managers of hotel chains.

Emotional labour within hotels is highly associated with emotional exhaustion and high turnover rates of employees. Ducharme and Roman (2009) argued that emotional exhaustion is highly correlated with turnover intentions and further explain that employee turnover intention is a variable used to predict actual turnover behaviour. Ducharme and Roman (2009) suggested that by employers examining turnover intentions it can help them in understanding whether employees have plans to leave and the reasons behind why they are considering leaving. Employers can then respond to these adverse factors, increase employee retention, and reduce the potential costs (Ducharme & Roman, 2009).

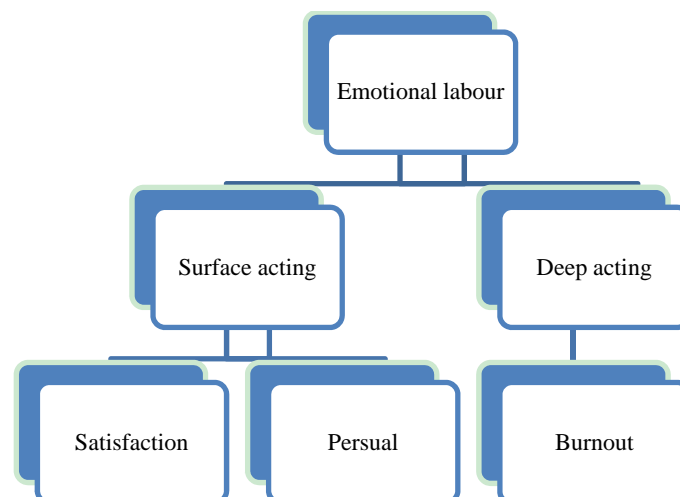


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

The enlargement of the service industry and the growth in competition has increased the necessity for emotional labour. Just like other forms of social contact, the obligation to control the emotions of other people plays a crucial role in our day to day lives and in our workplaces (Zapf & Holz, 2006). Emotional labour could

at times be a contributor towards, and the cause of, depression, especially when surface acting, as employees that surface act can be more prone to depression and anxiety, decreased job performance, and burnout (Zapf, 2002). Burnout is a concept associated with the loss of interest and faith in other people, and normally combined with cynical attitude towards an individual's environment. Hence, the conceptual model above suggests that employees that surface act during their employment are most likely to face some sort of burnout. On the contrary, deep and genuine acting employees will be more satisfied as their actions are genuine and not are simply display acts.

Zhao Xu (2013) discovered that surface acting and deep acting have a remarkable impact as they led to employee burnout, and thus, emotional labour produced a negative effect on turnover intentions. Hence, according to Zhao Xu (2013), organisational and managerial support is essential in the emotional labour phenomenon for employees.

Training employees to handle emotional labour and help to curb burnout and dissatisfaction can help employer in abolishing any supervisor/employee relation issues, as Chu (2002) suggested that managers can talk over negative emotions and exchange tips about expressing them in less offensive manners with employees. This would reduce turnover and consequently satisfy customers (Ashkanasy et al., 2002; Gursoy et al., 2011). Seymour (2000) suggested that organisations should offer more training, such as positive mindset and sense of purpose, to their employees. Seymour (2000) argued that organisations that offer emotional labour will help organisations for them to apply more appropriate strategies when engaging in and dealing with emotional labour. Jung and Yoon (2014) suggested that periodic counselling should be conducted to prevent any form of problems before they happen.

Methodology

This paper is part of a larger Ph.D. research which adopts both qualitative and quantitative research methods. However, discussions and analysis in this paper are solely based on secondary data collection. Secondary data are collected from a variety of sources, including books, websites, articles, conference papers, e-books, and various case studies. Secondary data were collected chiefly from topics relating directly or indirectly to emotional labour.

Secondary data are classified as "internal or external" in terms of its source (Gardner, 2012). Internal secondary data are information acquired within the organisation where research is being carried out. This is not the case for this paper. On the other hand, external secondary data are obtained from outside sources. Thus, this paper relied on external secondary data which were obtained from a vast variety of sources. The two major advantages of using secondary data in the research are time and cost savings (Smith, 2008). When good secondary data are available, researchers can utilise them for high quality empirical researches (Smith, 2008). It is hoped that this paper contributes to valuable empirical research and produces new and realistic knowledge.

Female Migrants

While women comprise about 48% of all international migrants, female migration has been rarely visible in migration studies (Kharouf, 2013). The proportion of female migrants is the highest in Europe (51.9%), followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (51.6), Northern America (51.2%), Oceania (50.2%), Africa (45.9%), and Asia (41.6%) (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2013). Caritas (2010) explained that men and women show differences in their migratory behaviours, face different

opportunities, and have to cope with different risks and challenges, such as vulnerability to human rights abuses, exploitation, discrimination, and specific health risks (p. 2). Nonetheless, gender issues in general and specifically the hospitality industry are major challenges which face countries, employers, and workers in harnessing the capacity of women to contribute more in economic, political, and social terms, and yet this topic is rarely discussed within the hospitality industry framework. As Ferguson (2011) noted, “hospitality employment is highly gendered, and—as with many other industries—draws on gender inequalities that provide a large global supply of highly flexibilised and low-paid female workers and potential hospitality entrepreneurs” (p. 238).

Gender inequality is manifested in a reality that “women perform 66 per cent of the world’s work, produce 50 per cent of the food, but earn 10 per cent of the income and own 1 per cent of the property” (Ferguson, 2011, p. 238). Meanwhile, Pyrillos (2002), as cited in Sharpley and Forster (2003), argued that as the labour force as a whole has become better educated and trained, there are too few women willing to take lower-grade jobs in hotels but too many chasing relatively few management positions.

In a study by Seymour and Sandiford (2005) that investigated how emotion rules were learnt by service workers in large and small units in a chain of hotels, it was discovered that managers expected employees to be skilled emotionally and be good emotion managers, flexible enough to move between different service contexts, delivering different emotional performances on demand.

In a study conducted by C. R. Chen, C. P. Chen, Zhao, and Duan (2011) that compared Chinese employees in the hospitality industry to American employees, results demonstrate that Chinese in comparison to Americans use different linguistic forms and semantic content to express their complaints because of their sensitivity to social power associated with their group-oriented culture. Results showed the Americans tend to convey their appreciation directly using both verbal and nonverbal expressions, while Chinese favour nonverbal over verbal expressions (Chen et al., 2011). In a different study conducted by Safdar, Friedlmeier, and Matsumoto (2009), comparing Japanese to Canadian hospitality employees, the study illustrated that Japanese tended to restrain expressions of power, such as anger, hatred, disapproval, and disgust, more than the Canadians, resulting in Canadian employees speaking out more and demonstrating frustration openly, while Japanese kept such frustrations enclosed within themselves and between one person and another. Thus, culture plays a key role in the expressiveness of emotional labour, and in the way employees express their inner and external emotions.

Moreover, Noon and Blyton (2007) argued that people who have to engage in emotional labour, such as hotel employees, over long periods, employ strategies to cope with the general pressures of that work, and the difficult situations they face, such as unpleasant customers. Noon and Blyton (2007) explained this by stating that hotel employees must remain behind the scenes where they are not visible to customers and take themselves away from the required performance in order to let off steam and be their normal selves before re-engaging with emotional labour. However, the latter could have great psychological impacts on employees as it implies the regular switching of emotions and identities. Noon and Blyton (2007) further stated that another strategy is engaging in covert activity, such as avoiding the customer, separating difficult groups using the “break-up-the-party” technique, or making things uncomfortable for the customer, such as the Disneyland “seat-belt-squeeze” (Noon & Blyton, 2007). Another approach, according to Noon and Blyton (2007), is to maintain the emotional performance but do so in an automated way, which is a method of surface acting. Noon

and Blyton (2007) pointed out that it is more difficult to maintain a sincere performance when one is inwardly escaping the role in this way. Similarly, Allan and Smith (2005) argued that hotel employees can manage emotions to deal with situations they face, by managing their emotional state directly by distancing themselves from the work involved and its associated emotions. Therefore, the authors suggest that employees can at times separate work emotions from non-work related ones. Allan and Smith (2005) suggested that frontline hotel employees can act as an emotional sponge and not soak up customer emotions. Instead, they deal with the situation in a professional manner without being emotionally attached and keep their emotions distant trying not to get sucked in. The latter examples suggest the use of surface acting at work. However, such methods are only deployed when genuine acting methods cannot be implemented such as the Disneyland “seat-belt-squeeze”. Such a method works better only with surface acting as revealing true emotions would demonstrate the levels of discomfort that employees hold towards customers and would reveal their intentions of actions. Thus, Disneyland’s “seat-belt-squeeze” would only work with a smiling face and surface acting although employees are realistically annoyed.

Allan and Smith (2005) suggested that frontline hotel employees can act as an emotional sponge and not soak up customer emotions. Instead, they deal with the situation without being emotionally attached. Methods, such as the Disneyland “seat-belt-squeeze” are only deployed when genuine acting methods cannot be implemented.

Emotional Labour in Hotels

The hotel industry continues to grow and is an industry that faces high turnover rates in employees due to high demands and the busy nature of the industry itself (Kim, 2008). However, many hotel managers fail to recognise the importance of emotional labour and the impact it has on the employees working in the hotel industry (Kim, 2008). In some instances, hotel managers believe that the management of emotional labour is similar to generic management or even human resource management and is simply an admin task or paper work duties, and might not realise the importance of emotional labour within their hotels and the benefits it could have on both the employee and the hotel itself. Hotel managers may not efficiently compensate employees for their psychological costs, which cause many hotel employees to ignore jobs, become drained and tired, and lose enthusiasm. Holston-Okae (2018) conducted a study comparing employee compensation on the one hand with employee motivation and engagement on the other. The author examined 156 services related employees from the hospitality industry in Western Georgia, Central Mississippi, and North Texas. Results demonstrated that compensation high and rewards highly affected employee turnover as employees that were not compensated in some form or another for the extra duties conducted were seeking other jobs. Holston-Okae (2018) concluded that organisational leaders must implement compensations systems at work that compensate employees, both intrinsically (rewards) and extrinsically (bonuses), which would lead to a sustainable workforce. Hotel managers tend to restrict the improvements of the quality of hotel services by not recognizing emotional labour (Liang & Chen, 2007). The problem with hotel management’s recognition of emotional labour is, according to Liang and Chen (2007), the excessive reliance on employee’s self-regulation, the lack of concern about the outcomes of emotional labour, taking for granted that emotional management is equivalent to emotional labour management, and ignoring the emotional needs of employees. These latter will be investigated within this research in order to examine whether such problem do factually exist.

Emotions in the Workplace

Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) suggested that the characteristics of service mean that encounters between workers and customers, and the emotional relationship between them, are not under the direct control of management, and should not be as this is a one to one relationship between two individuals. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) explained that the only way to overcome this is to establish a service culture in which workers internalise their adopted values of the organisation and identify with their service roles to the extent that the use of emotional labour involves the experience of emotion and not just emotional display. However, such internal emotions and emotional attachments to the work conducted can only be individually developed within every individual based on their personal interest. This is not something that the organisation can teach employees, but the organisation can however direct employees on the methods of attaining such attachments, although it might never realistically occur.

Moreover, Knudsen, Ducharme, and Roman (2009) discussed emotional labour within hotels by looking at emotional exhaustion and high turnover rates of employees. Knudsen et al. (2009) argued that emotional exhaustion is highly correlated with turnover intentions and further explain that employee turnover intention is a variable used to predict actual turnover behaviour. Knudsen et al. (2009) suggested that by employers examining turnover intentions it can help them in understanding whether employees have plans to leave and the workplace or commit permanently.

Conclusions

Within the service industry, specifically the hospitality industry, displays of positive emotions by employees working in these sectors have been found to be associated with desired organisational objectives such as customer delight, return intent, and positive word-of-mouth (Johanson & Woods, 2008; Tsai, 2001).

Emotional labour requires the use of attributes and capacities of employees as a source of competitive advantage. This, referred to by Warhurst and Nickson (2009) as aesthetic labour, is a gender and class based as it requires employees to have the right look for the job. Similarly, emotional labour is also related to sexuality through gender (Chong, La Ferrara, and Duryea, 2008), and women's oppression includes their sexual exploitation, which demands the performance of heterosexuality in service-based jobs.

Applying correct emotional labour practices in the workplace and dealing with emotional labour in a correct manner is the responsibility of both managers (Seymour, 2000) and the individuals themselves (Anderson, Provis, & Chappel, 2002). Individuals require the will to learn how to deal with emotional labour and practice such behaviours over a period of time. While managers should provide the guidance and training (Seymour, 2000) for employees in order to better understand how to control their emotions and deal with them in a professional manner. Training must be done willingly in a way to encourage employees otherwise such training can be assumed as forcefully taking control of employees. Hence, emotional labour responsibilities lay on both the employee and the employer. Emotional labour training is achieved through emotional intelligence (Grandey, 2000) as emotional intelligence deals with knowing how to control emotions and expressing correct emotions (Lusch & Serpkenci, 1990). However, emotional intelligence requires managers to be emotionally intelligent and entails that managers practice emotional labour first prior applying it to employees. As managers monitor one's and other's actions (Lee & Ok, 2014) they would only understand other's actions through the implementation and practice of emotional labour on themselves first.

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