

THE RECOGNITION AND MANAGEMENT OF EMOTIONAL LABOUR IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY



By Barbara Anderson, Chris Provis and Shirley Chappel

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project sought to extend the understanding of the 'emotional labour' performed by service workers in the tourism industry, in order to identify more clearly the skills required to perform such labour and the management strategies which can support service workers in their client service work.

The performance of emotional labour involves the display of organisationally desired emotion, such as friendliness, by customer service workers in their interactions with customers or clients. It is significant activity as the skill with which emotional labour is performed impacts on perceptions of service quality. Another contributing factor to perceptions of service quality is the personality of service workers, as the service exchange is essentially a social interaction.

It is generally recognised that there can be either positive or negative consequences for those performing emotional labour, depending on how it is performed. One of the negative consequences of the performance of such labour is 'burnout', a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism observed among people who do 'people-work'. This syndrome is of significance to managers, as it can lead to deterioration in the quality of service provided and appears to contribute to job turnover, absenteeism and low morale.

Through a focus group and a series of interviews with managers and service workers in the accommodation, hospitality, tourism information and transportation sectors of the tourism and hospitality industry in South Australia, the study revealed a lack of awareness of the term 'emotional labour'. It did show however, that experientially, the interviewees understood very well the challenges of emotion management in the course of their client service work. Although the performance of emotional labour was readily and widely accepted as being 'part of the job', the need to support workers was also widely acknowledged.

The positive effects of the performance of emotional labour were evident. All the managers and service workers interviewed appeared

to genuinely enjoy their customer service work and took pride in presenting a professional image to their customers. Service workers emphasised the importance of being a 'people person' and using communication skills, such as listening, and acting in the course of their work. A number of the interviewees also highlighted the emotional exhaustion experienced at the end of a day of 'performing' emotional labour. Service workers used a variety of strategies to cope with the challenges presented by the performance of such labour. These strategies included emotion-focussed strategies, such as distancing and venting, and problem-focussed strategies such as learning new skills or procedures. Social support from co-workers was acknowledged as important and facilitated the use of other coping strategies, such as reducing ego involvement. Indeed, the importance of the social support provided by co-workers underscored the value of working in an effective team environment. The importance of managerial support was also widely mentioned. The difficulties arising when support from managers and co-workers was less than adequate were also discussed.

From the discussions with managers about the selection of service workers, it became evident that greater emphasis was placed on the interpersonal skills and the personality (the 'right' personality) of prospective employees, rather than their technical abilities. Having the 'right' personality (however that was defined in each organisational context), was often the basis on which managers made decisions about the provision of further training opportunities. The responses to questions to service workers about the training received in their current employment and that which they had received during the course of their working lives to assist in their customer service work, revealed that minimal formal training programs had been provided, and little, if any of that training had addressed issues associated with the performance of emotional labour.

These findings have a number of implications for service organisations relating to the management of their customer service workers. It is recommended that organisational policies and practices be reviewed as to their adequacy in the following areas:

1. Selection: the criteria for the selection of customer service workers should assess the interpersonal skills and the personality of

potential employees, in a manner, which is consistent with the definition of 'personality' within the particular organisational context.

2. Training: related to selection, areas in which consideration for further training to be supplied include communication and conflict resolution skills.
3. Organisational culture: the fostering of a supportive environment in which workers are encouraged to share their experiences, both positive and negative, with managers and co-workers, allowing them to cope more effectively with the challenges of customer service work and hence, display a more consistently welcoming demeanour towards customers.

In recognition of the need to communicate the findings of this study widely, a number of strategies have been employed. The findings of this study have been shared with other members of the academic community by the presentation of aspects of the preliminary findings at a number of conferences. They have also been publicised in the broader community through a newspaper article in the Weekend Australian and an interview with one of the members of the research team broadcast on the Adelaide radio station, 5AN. An industry briefing will be held to discuss the findings with key industry representatives.

Investigations into a number of areas were beyond the scope of this study. Hence, it is recommended that further research be carried out, using a larger sample size and considering the impact of aspects of job design, such as job rotation and shift duration, on the performance of emotional labour. Investigation could usefully also be carried out into several other areas. For example, the examination of organisational policies and practices which support workers in their customer service work; the development of training programs specifically to assist workers perform emotional labour and the role of cognitive appraisal in managing the emotional demands of the performance of this type of labour.

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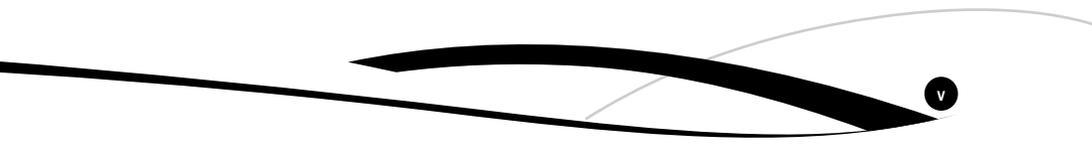
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ABSTRACT

This project sought to extend the understanding of the 'emotional labour' performed by service workers in the tourism industry, in order to more clearly identify management strategies which support service workers. The performance of emotional labour involves the display of organisationally desired emotion, such as friendliness. Interviews with managers and service workers revealed that support from managers and co-workers was vital in helping the workers cope with the challenges of performing such labour. Support strategies include selection of employees with appropriate interpersonal skills, provision of relevant training and a supportive team environment in which workers can share their experiences.

1. INTRODUCTION

Many workers in the tourism industry can be classified as 'front-line' service workers, as their jobs involve direct customer contact. The nature of speaking and acting in such work involves displaying emotions, which demonstrate a willingness to be of service. The management of such emotional display has become known as 'emotional labour'. The skill with which emotional labour is performed contributes significantly to perceptions of service quality. As a service exchange is a social interaction, the personality of service providers is also a contributor to perceptions of service quality.

It has been widely accepted that the delivery of quality service commences with the selection of suitable employees and the provision of appropriate training. The academic and practitioner tourism and hospitality literature contains a number of recommendations about the manner in which employee selection should be carried out. The need for the training of employees is also widely acknowledged. However, little explicit attention is paid to the selection and training of employees to perform emotional labour and the manner in which they should be supported in their client service work.

This report provides the results of research, which considered the recognition, and the management of the performance of emotional labour by workers in the tourism industry.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The complexity of the study of emotional labour is highlighted by the number of strands of literature drawn together in this review. The nature of emotional labour, the coping strategies used by those called upon to perform it, its impact together with that of the personality of the service workers on perceptions of service quality, and human resource management issues of working in teams, selection and training of service workers are discussed.

2.1 Emotional Labour

Many workers in the tourism industry can be classified as frontline service workers. Their jobs, which involve direct customer contact, are at the very heart of many tourism enterprises (Wharton, 1993). Albrecht and Zemke (1985, p.114-5) succinctly describe the nature of frontline service work as follows:

The service person must deliberately involve his or her feelings in the situation. He or she may not particularly feel like being cordial and becoming a one-minute friend to the next customer who approaches, but that is indeed what frontline work entails.

In other words, service workers must manage their own emotions and emotional display to create a favourable atmosphere in which the interpersonal transaction takes place. Although in recent years, this process of emotion management has become known as 'emotional labour', it is still largely unrecognised in day-to-day work environments (Karabanow, 1999). Emotional labour has been defined as 'the effort, planning and control needed to express organisationally desired emotion during interpersonal transaction (Morris and Feldman, 1996, p. 987). This definition highlights the employers' roles in directing their employees' emotional as well as physical movements (Erickson and Wharton, 1997). One way by which employers direct their employees' emotional movements is to provide scripts for the customer service interaction. These scripts may range from simple instructions to smile and the way in which customers are to be

greeted and farewelled to highly specific instructions for longer and more complex transactions (Leidner, 1999).

Morris and Feldman (1996, p. 990) cite Hochschild (1983) to explain that emotional labour is performed in one of two ways:

- surface acting: involves simulating emotions that are not actually felt.
- deep acting: involves attempts to actually experience the emotions one is required to display.

The idea of 'deep acting' is succinctly put by Mann: 'feelings are actively induced as the actor 'psychs' him/herself into the desired persona' (1997, p.7).

Ashforth and Humphrey (1993, p. 90) suggest that the service worker is seen 'as an actor performing on stage for an often discriminating audience'. Indeed, Hochschild (1983, p. 98) in discussing the selection of Delta airlines trainees, commented:

The trainees, it seemed to me, were also chosen for their ability to take stage directions about how to 'project' an image. They were selected for being able to act well – that is, without showing the effort involved. They had to be able to appear at home on stage.

Larsen and Aske (1992, p.12) suggest that there is agreement between practitioners and academics 'that the theatre analogy may be used to describe the role-play between the frontline employee in the hospitality industry and the guest in the role of customer and prospective buyer of services'.

While Hochschild (1983) in her seminal work concentrated on the deleterious or negative effects of emotional labour, subsequent writers have suggested that she has exaggerated the 'human' costs associated with this type of work (Seymour, 2000). Indeed, emotional labour can be either healthy or unhealthy for workers depending on how it is performed (Kruml and Geddes, 2000).

Of particular concern to managers and service workers alike is one particular negative consequence of the performance of emotional

labour, known as burnout. Maslach and Jackson (1981, p. 99) indicate that 'burnout is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs frequently among individuals who do 'people-work' of some kind.' As a result of the emotional exhaustion experienced, workers feel that they cannot give of themselves any longer. Burnout can lead to deterioration in the quality of service provided and appears to be a contributor to job turnover, absenteeism and low morale (Maslach and Jackson, 1981). There are well-known findings about the major costs that organisations often incur through absenteeism, labour turnover and accidents (Ivancevich, 1995, pp. 639, 668).

2.2 Coping Strategies and Resources

Given the negative effects associated with the performance of emotional labour, it is imperative that service workers are helped to cope with the demands associated with the performance of such labour, so that their well-being is not affected and subsequent interactions with customers are not tarnished. As a consequence, employers should be mindful of the ability of their employees to perform emotional labour effectively (Bailey and McCollough, 2000; Briner, 1999).

The extent to which individuals experience stress in any situation is determined by processes like cognitive appraisal and by general coping strategies. Stroebe and Jonas (2001) define cognitive appraisal as:

The evaluative process that determines why, and to what extent, a particular situation is perceived as stressful (p. 545)

By thinking about something differently, people come to have different feelings about it. An example of the use of cognitive appraisals by front-line service workers, in this case debt collectors, is provided by Sutton (1991, p 252) who found that collectors were taught how to use such appraisals in order to assist them to detach themselves emotionally from debtors.

More generally, coping is defined by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) as:

constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person (p. 141).

They suggest that 'coping is thus a shifting process in which a person must, at certain times, rely more heavily on one form of coping, say defensive strategies, and at other times on problem-solving strategies, as the status of the person-environment relationship changes' (p. 142). Furthermore, Lazarus and Folkman suggest that any change in this relationship will lead to a re-evaluation of what is happening, its significance, and what can be done. This reappraisal influences subsequent coping efforts such that the coping process is 'continuously mediated by cognitive reappraisals, which ... follow and modify an earlier appraisal'. (p. 143)

The importance of coping strategies is highlighted by Endler and Parker (1990), who suggest that coping strategies play a major role in individuals' physical and psychological well-being when they are confronted with negative or stressful life events (1990, p. 844). Coping strategies have been classified as being emotion-focussed or problem-focussed. Emotion-focussed coping strategies include avoidance, minimisation, distancing, and wresting positive value from negative events. Some cognitive types of emotion-focussed coping strategies result in a change in the way an encounter is construed, which is equivalent to reappraisal. Behavioural strategies which include engaging in physical exercise to take one's mind off the problem, having a drink, venting anger, and seeking emotional support are also emotion-focussed coping strategies. Problem-focussed coping strategies include reducing ego involvement or learning new skills and procedures (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984, pp. 150–2).

People under stress may be able to draw on a number of personal and external coping resources. Personal coping resources include health and energy (a physical resource); positive beliefs (a psychological resource), and problem-solving and social skills (competencies) (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984, p. 159). External coping resources include social and material resources (p. 243). Social support may be defined as 'information from others that one is loved and cared for, esteemed and valued, and part of a network of communication and mutual obligation' (Stroebe, 2000, p. 245). The availability of social

support has been positively associated with a reduced risk of mental and physical illness (p. 244). However, social support needs to match the needs of recipients, and can be unhelpful if it does not (Bierhoff, 2001, p. 311).

That sort of consideration can be especially important when people are working in teams. In the workplace, being part of a team can provide social support, which is well informed and useful. Katzenbach and Smith (1993, p. 45) define a team as follows:

A team is a small number of people with complementary skills, who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.

Scarnati (2001, p. 7) discusses a number of the main benefits resulting from teamwork. These benefits include: guardianship, such that the individual, rather than working alone, becomes part of a group of people sharing common interests; learning, as a result of interaction with other team members; and fellowship, as teams also provide a social opportunity to make friends. However, effective teams require honesty, trust and cooperation amongst team members (Scarnati, 2001, p. 8; Polley and Ribbens, 1998, p. 11), which may not always be present.

2.3 Service Quality

The importance of the effective performance of emotional labour is demonstrated in relation to perceptions of service quality. While there is an increasing demand for workers who can provide consistently high-quality service for the customer, what constitutes service quality eludes definition. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988, p. 13) suggest that 'service quality is an abstract and elusive construct because of three features unique to services: intangibility, heterogeneity, and inseparability of production and consumption'. Ferguson, Bulan, Erickson, and Wharton (1997, p. 235) suggest that the primary task of workers who provide high quality service 'is not to produce material goods, but to produce speech, action, and emotion that symbolise one's willingness to "do for" the client or customer'. This is consistent with the earlier suggestion that 'the social

interaction of an exchange and the physical environment in which it occurs are used by consumers as service quality cues' (Grove and Fisk, 1989, p. 428, cited in Giacolone and Rosenfeld, 1989). Dress behaviour in the form of uniforms can also be a tangible criterion of service quality. Uniforms or dress codes are acknowledged to present a professional image to consumers (Easterling, Leslie, and Jones, 1992; San Filippo, 2001).

On the basis of exploratory research, the SERVQUAL scale of service quality, which has the following five dimensions has been developed (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988):

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Tangibles: | physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel |
| Reliability: | ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately |
| Responsiveness: | willingness to help customers and provide prompt service |
| Assurance: | knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence |
| Empathy: | caring, individualised attention the firm provides its customers |

Bailey and McCollough (2000, p. 54) suggest that three of these five dimensions – responsiveness, assurance, and empathy – have potentially high emotional content.

This makes it natural to suggest that the quality of service depends in part, on the skills, attitudes and personality traits of the service providers (Chait, Carraher, and Buckley, 2000). 'Personality' means those personal characteristics that account for consistent patterns of behaviour (Pervin, 1993). Researchers are generally in agreement about the 'big five factors' of personality, namely, Extraversion, Emotional Stability, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Culture. Traits associated with Extraversion include being sociable and gregarious; those associated with Emotional stability or Neuroticism

include being embarrassed, worried and insecure. Agreeableness is associated with courtesy, flexibility and co-operativeness; and Conscientiousness is reflected by carefulness and being responsible. Culture is associated with traits such as being imaginative, original and curious, which are also attributes associated with positive attitudes towards learning. The traits associated with Extraversion, such as being sociable and gregarious have been shown to lead to effective performance for managers and sales personnel (Barrick and Mount, 1991). Thus, the quality of service can be enhanced by the selection of individuals who have the necessary personal characteristics (Chait *et al.*, 2000).

This point is probably well known to employers and managers at an intuitive level. However, little attention has been given in the tourism/hospitality literature to selection of service workers on the basis of their customer service orientations (Williams and Sanchez, 1998). It is only very recently that this point is being noted. Bettencourt, Gwinner, and Meuter (2001, p. 38) suggest that 'service orientation, ..., is only likely to increase in importance as emotional labour in service positions increases.' Hogan, Hogan, and Busch (1984, p. 173), who define service orientation as 'a syndrome containing elements of good adjustment, likeability, social skill and willingness to follow rules', have used a personality inventory to derive a measure of such orientation. It should be said that while it seems plausible to suggest a relationship between personality and service effectiveness, there is so far limited research that has examined the topic. It sometimes seems to be assumed that providers are positively disposed towards providing service (Hurley, 1998; Lee-Ross, 1999, p. 92). Indeed, employee commitment to customer service is now seen as leading to the provision of high quality service, rather than through the use of standardised rules for the service transaction (Peccei and Rosenthal, 1997).

While it has been acknowledged that sound human resource management practices in respect to the selection and training of service workers will contribute to the effective performance of emotional labour and hence, customer perceptions of service quality (Lundberg, 1991), there seems some question about how well such practices are used in the tourism and hospitality industry. Baum and Nickson (1998, p. 76) observe that:

on one hand, the industry rightly proclaims itself as a 'people industry', dependent on the capability and enthusiasm of its front-line staff in order to deliver quality products and services with consistency. At the same time, ..., these same front-line staff are among the poorest remunerated members of the workforce, [with] operating hours and conditions that would be unacceptable within other industrial sectors.

While the industry often laments the low skills base of much of its workforce, nevertheless, in order to provide excellent service, high levels of communication and interpersonal skills are required from many of these same low-skilled workers, who are the 'public face' of their organisations (Baum and Nickson, 1998).

However, in the hotel industry, there is a growing awareness of the need to carefully select employees, as customer relations' skills, particularly of front-office staff, are vital. Indeed, companies are recognising the need to carefully screen applicants, with more consideration being given to the personality of potential employees, in recognition of the emotional demands on those with front-line jobs (Berger and Ghei, 1995; Kuemmler and Kleiner, 1996; Waryszak and Bauer, 1993).

2.4 Human Resource Management Practices

The importance of a systematic approach to selection cannot be over-emphasised (Emenheiser, Clay, and Palakurthi, 1998). Furthermore, Cran (1994, p. 37-8) suggests that 'if service is regarded as a key job factor individual service orientation should hold as high a priority as skills, abilities or knowledge in employee selection, advancement or placement decisions'.

Evidence is sketchy about the selection practices, which are actually used. In the Australian hotel industry, interviews are widely used in all categories of accommodation, with the smaller properties relying almost exclusively on this method and minimally using reference checks (Waryszak and Bauer, 1993). In the US restaurant sector, the traditional management selection procedures include unstructured interviews and reference checks, with newer forms of selection including the use of cognitive tests and personality inventories

(MacHatton, Van Dyke, and Steiner, 1997). Although potentially an effective tool, psychological tests can also be misused or poorly constructed (Berger and Ghei, 1995).

After selection, the importance of staff training programs is widely recognised. The results of a survey sponsored by the American Express Foundation and Pacific Asia Travel Association indicate that customer/interpersonal relations were among the top three skills that companies were trying to improve in their managers, professionals, skilled/semi-skilled and unskilled workers (Anonymous, 1995). Employee training programs in interpersonal skills have been used by many businesses in order to improve the quality of service (Cran, 1994). However, there is little evidence that these programs take account of the difficulties in performing 'emotional labour' and the coping strategies that may be necessary or useful.

In recognition of the need to train workers in the tourism and hospitality industry in Australia, an integrated training package has been developed by Tourism Training Australia, funded by the Australian National Training Authority. This package contains a common core of competencies required by all those working in this industry. One of the core units, *Work with Colleagues and Customers*, concentrates on the interpersonal, communication and customer service skills required. Another core unit, *Work in a Socially Diverse Environment*, focuses on issues associated with working in a socially diverse environment (Tourism Training Australia, 1998). Even though the performance of emotional labour is not specifically addressed in either of these units, elements, such as communication in the workplace and the provision of assistance to customers, could be seen as about the performance of such labour.

Training sometimes commences with a formal induction procedure which familiarises new staff with the manner in which their new work environment functions. The importance of such arrangements is brought out by evidence that unless employees are properly prepared for the work they will do, they are likely to leave within one or two years. Furthermore, workers who are not prepared for the job often have high rates of absenteeism and their work lacks quality (Kuemmler and Kleiner, 1996). The allocation of a 'buddy' to provide advice and assistance facilitates this familiarisation and leads to

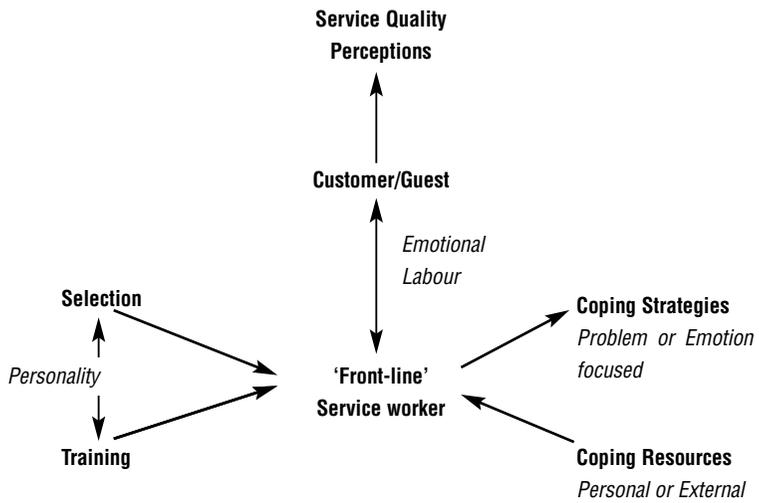
improvements in customer service (Urquhart, 1996). It will be seen also that such co-worker support can be important for the performance of emotional labour.

Training and coaching can provide service workers with a repertoire of quality service behaviours (Lundberg, 1991). However, as service workers differ in service orientation, so too do they differ in their receptiveness to training (Cran, 1994). Indeed, on the basis of the personality factors outlined above, it could be said that any training may be of limited value if the service workers are lacking in personality traits associated with Extraversion and Culture, as they are less sociable and gregarious by nature, and have less positive attitudes towards relevant learning.

In concluding this brief literature review, it can be said that emotional labour, the expression of organisationally desired emotion in interpersonal transactions, can be viewed as a 'performance', which has positive or negative consequences for those called upon to perform it. Often, the negative consequences are from the stress of maintaining such a performance over extended periods while performing other tasks as well. A variety of strategies can be used to cope with the stresses and strains of life, and some of them may be especially relevant to the stress that results from emotional labour. They include social support, and in the workplace, being part of a team can be a source of a number of valuable types of social or other support, which are of assistance in coping with stress. While there is wide and developing appreciation of the importance of appropriate HRM practices with respect to the selection and training of staff, there is little evidence about the extent to which such processes explicitly address issues of emotional labour. There is evidence that employee personality is an important factor in effective service provision in areas like tourism and hospitality, but there is little direct evidence about the interaction between employee personalities, effective performance of emotional labour and approaches to selection and training.

Figure 1, overleaf, sets out the key sorts of linkages in a way that emphasises the underlying conceptual framework for this research.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Research



3. METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study was carried out in two phases. In the first phase, six managers from organisations in the tourism sectors of accommodation, hospitality, tourist information and transportation participated in a focus group. The managers raised a number of issues associated with the performance of emotional labour, for example, its consequences, and issues associated with selection and training. On the basis of the literature review and discussions at the focus group, a series of questions about the performance of emotional labour were devised for managers and service workers.

During the second phase, nine different organisations in the accommodation, hospitality, tourist information service and transportation sectors in the Adelaide metropolitan area and four organisations in regional South Australia agreed to participate and 45 semi-structured interviews were conducted. These interviews were generally carried out in the various workplaces and lasted approximately thirty minutes. A profile of the interviewees is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Profile of Interviewees

INDUSTRY SECTOR	MANAGERS		SERVICE WORKERS	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
Accommodation	1	1	2	4
Hospitality	2	1	-	2
Tourist Information	1	4	1	12
Transportation	3	-	3	8
Total	7	6	6	26

Interviewees were not asked to provide any personal information, but in order to preserve their anonymity, all the names of interviewees quoted in this report have been changed. The interviews were audiotaped and then the tapes transcribed. The data were analysed to identify the key themes.

4. INTERVIEW FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A number of themes regarding the recognition of emotional labour and the management of service workers called upon to perform such labour emerged from the analysis of the interview data. The themes are discussed in the following sections:

1. the extent to which the significance of emotional labour is recognised by managers and service workers.
2. the skills used by workers in their client service work.
3. the extent to which the performance of emotional labour is formalised.
4. the consequences of the 'performance' of emotional labour.
5. the coping strategies used by service workers.
6. the perceptions of service workers and managers that the ability to perform emotional labour is a matter of 'personality', and the ramifications of this on methods of recruitment and training.
7. the level of consideration given to the performance of emotional labour in training programs.

It is worth noting that although an information sheet outlining the rationale for the research had been provided to all interviewees, prior to the interviews, there was a need to commence the interviews with an explanation of the concept of 'emotional labour'. Some interviewees seemed to have difficulty grasping this concept. However, there was almost instant recognition of issues associated with the performance of such labour when it was defined informally as 'smiling through gritted teeth'.

4.1 The extent to which the significance of emotional labour is recognised by managers and service workers

The observation made by Karabanow (1999) that the performance of emotional labour is largely unrecognised was confirmed in this study, as reflected by the following comment:

I've never actually looked at it that way, because to me, it's a job, and I love dealing with people, talking to people and being helpful, ..., so I never actually thought [it] an issue, you know, until say, once every blue moon, someone comes in and is just totally over the top and you think, oh, that's right, there are some pains out there, aren't there? (Ailsa, tourist information)

Another interviewee suggested that:

I think that it's a part of human interaction, part of life, ... (Sheena, tourist information)

In discussions about emotional labour, a number of interviewees recognised that 'it was just part of the job', which was not causing any difficulties for them, as indicated by:

I don't have a problem with it ..., I enjoy it and I enjoy customer contact, that's why I'm not an engineer, because I don't want to sit behind a desk... (Stuart, accommodation)

Other interviewees, while also recognising that the performance of emotional labour was an integral part of their jobs, acknowledged the challenges it posed and the need for support:

if you're in this sort of work, sort of environment, you sort of know already that that's what you sort of gonna get [sic], part of the job, so and I think they should have like some sort of training right, or they should have, ..., psychologists, ..., you know, people have, they can't cope anymore, and they burst and, ..., so they should sort of maybe have a like psychologist or someone come in every three months or something and have a word to each one, say 'how are you going?' (Kate, accommodation)

The demands associated with the performance of emotional labour were recognised as being more significant in some industry sectors than others. One interviewee noted that the performance of emotional labour was a greater issue for her when she had been a nurse than in her current position in a visitor information centre. Other demanding areas were mentioned as being gaming and hospitality:

a lot of people sort of have job burnout and I think it's a lot to do with not the actual job, like the physical aspect, but the emotional sort of level ... I mean, in gaming, you're not only dealing with ... maybe rude people or whatever, but you're also dealing with people who may have addictions and who may be like, you know, blowing money and things like that, and it's, it's hard not to take it personally, it's hard not to get involved, it's hard not to, I mean, you get people who come in you know, your regulars all the time ... I haven't found that very much here ... it's a visitor centre, you know what I mean? (Skye, tourist information)

look, I would think that any, in the hospitality industry as for waiting ... they would have issues, I mean, I've been to restaurants and you hear how people speak... (Janet, manager, tourist information)

In summary, it could be said that although the majority of managers and service workers were not aware of the term 'emotional labour', experientially they were more than familiar with the challenges associated with the performance of such labour. A number of managers and service workers acknowledged that it was a significant component of their jobs, for which support was needed. Issues associated with support are addressed in section 5.

4.2 The skills used by service workers in their client service work

When the service workers were asked about the skills, which they used in their customer service work, there was invariably a long pause before they answered, as they appeared to have difficulty identifying the skills, which they used in the course of their work. Their responses generally focused on personal attributes, such as being a people

person, and interpersonal skills ('soft' skills), rather than 'hard' skills, such as job knowledge. Indeed, the importance of personality, in the sense of being a people person was regularly mentioned:

I am an excellent people person, I always have been, I was born that way, I'm very confident, ..., I think that's probably the biggest skill, just I'm a really, really good people person ... (Annabelle, bus tour company)

...listen to what they actually want, ..., very happy, friendly tone of voice, never sound like I know it and they don't, ..., just being very friendly and helpful and listen to what they want. (Caitlin, tourist information)

Indeed, the importance of listening was regularly acknowledged

... I guess, mm, the main thing, I think, is to listen... I think you've just got to be able to listen and reason with people... (Beth, bus tour company)

Oh, absolutely, the prime, the prime ingredient. It's beyond everything else (Sheena, tourist information)

It's the most important thing, definitely. I think a lot of people jump in too quickly... (Skye, tourist information)

... but yeah, listening skills... and, yeah, patience is definitely a factor... just people skills, general people skills, I reckon that's what it is. (Chris, tourist information)

From these comments, it can be seen that the service workers themselves, after due contemplation, more readily acknowledged the importance of personal attributes (such as being a people person) and communication skills, for example listening, rather than the hard skills, such as job knowledge, in their customer service work.

4.3 The extent to which the performance of emotional labour is formalised

As reported in the literature, employers can direct the emotional movements of their service workers by the provision of scripts. These scripts may vary in detail, from simple instructions to smile and greet customers to highly detailed instructions for other types of customer service interactions. This study reveals little evidence of the provision of formal scripts, rather, service workers were generally encouraged to 'be themselves'. The service workers developed their own informal 'scripts', which suited their own particular communication styles:

we have ... operating procedures which are standard throughout [hotel chain], for certain things ..., but as far as what a person says to a guest, I'd rather that it was theirs, theirs alone, ... I wouldn't have them reading the same thing out to every guest that comes in, not at all, ..., interaction is definitely their own thing to do. (Lachlan, manager, accommodation)

... I've got my own little scripts that I've created for myself, but they have an entertainment value for the customers, ... no, we don't have scripted behaviours here. (Sheena, tourist information)

The wearing of uniforms was widely seen as a way of demonstrating their professionalism. Indeed, uniforms were popular amongst interviewees, being generally viewed as a 'badge of professionalism', confirming the view in the literature that they presented a professional image to customers:

... we all put our hand up to say 'yes', we, we want a uniform, because it's ... a smart approach, a professional look, and um, we prefer to wear the uniforms. (Rosie, bus tour company)

I like the uniform, I'd prefer to wear a uniform, to be quite honest, ..., it saves the hassle of just you know thinking, oh, what am I going to wear and you end up running out of clothes to wear ..., it looks more professional. (Beth, bus tour company)

... when the idea of a uniform was first voted, I thought no, I'm certainly not into the Chairman Mao-style of dressing. However, I spoke to my daughter-in-law and her mother, who are...reasonable Australians, and they both said they loved people in uniform because then you knew who to speak to, and I thought, oh, well, if it's good for the customers, then I'm happy to do it. (Sheena, tourist information)

Hence, it can be seen that the service workers were not constrained by an imposed 'service routine', rather they were at liberty to express themselves naturally, giving them greater freedom of expression in their customer service work. They were keen to wear uniforms, which were seen as an indication of professionalism.

4.4 The consequences of the 'performance' of emotional labour

All the managers and service workers appeared to genuinely enjoy their customer service work and were committed to high levels of professionalism in their jobs and the provision of excellent customer service. In response to a question about the best aspects of their work, 'meeting people' was regularly mentioned. Thus, it could be said that the 'performance' of emotional labour had positive outcomes for these people. It is noteworthy that both managers and service workers did in fact acknowledge the 'performance' aspect of their work, mentioned by Hochschild (1983) and Larsen and Aske (1992), as seen in the following comments:

It's like as soon as you enter the front-of-house where customers are, you're on stage, you perform, it is, it is to some extent and it can be a good thing, it can be a bad thing, it depends as to what level. If there's falseness, you can see falseness. (Claire, manager, hospitality)

...as soon [as] you take the plates out the back or something, you just might have a sigh and say 'oh, you're tired, or you wish that, you know, that the night was over or something like that', but as soon as you walk through the doors back out there, it's got to change. (Rhianna, waitress, hospitality)

...I always say when you're out there, I always feel like, like you're an actress... The very minute I sit in the car, I have to say to myself 'you're going to work, you've got to concentrate about work', and so the minute I put the key in the ignition and I drive, I'm only thinking about work...by the time I've parked the car, opened the door, turned the alarm off, I'm ready. (Lucy, tourist information)

Although the interviewees conveyed a sense of pride and enthusiasm about their customer service work, a number of comments about the effects on them of the events of a working day highlight the exhaustion experienced from the occupational stressors involved in performing emotional labour. One employee who works as driver and guide for a tour operation company summarised it clearly:

At the end of the day, I'm, I'm wrung out, I don't want to see anybody because you've been really nice, it isn't out of character for me to be nice, so I'm not playing a role. You're thinking about them all the time, you're concentrating on the road, because you don't want to have an accident, and you're trying to point out points of interest to them and chatting with them and making them comfortable... till at the end of the day, conversation drops, tiredness kicks in and at the end of the day... I don't want to see anybody... [at the] end of the day's work, I can't go straight home, I can't go straight home and then the wife says 'ok look, Ben needs new shoes, Ben needs new socks', Uhhhh!, see me later, I mean, because I've spent all day being nice, catering to other people to what they wish, and it's just you know, I've got to switch off, back to normal. (Ron, limousine driver)

This is reminiscent of the observation made by Ashforth and Humphrey that 'exhausted workers report that, despite their best efforts, they are simply unable to give any more of themselves' (1993, pp. 105–6).

However, the complexities of emotional labour are revealed in the comments of a manager in another tour operation:

They [tour drivers] are on their own in the bus and when they come, especially from the desert, a trip which is 10 days,... back, they're usually pretty mentally drained, but the thing is, if they've

had a really good trip, they're on a huge high, because you know, they've had 18 passengers in the vehicle just loving it and you know, so, they're on a huge high, admittedly, they're exhausted, but mentally, they're really happy as well. (Mark, manager, transportation)

Thus, negative effects and positive effects are possible from very similar work, and perhaps the very same work can have both positive and negative effects.

4.5 The coping strategies used by service workers in the 'performance' of emotional labour

Service workers in all sectors used both emotion-focussed and problem-focussed strategies to cope with the demands of the performance of emotional labour. Some interviewees reported 'psyching themselves up' at the beginning of a day, as mentioned by Mann (1997):

Of course, absolutely, yes, you have to, yes, I don't do it consciously though, I think it just happens, ...(Liana, bus tour company)

Absolutely, I walk in the door, before I answer the phone, before I speak to anyone I say to myself, 'the sky is blue, I'm happy', so to that extent, say but I wouldn't bother to do, if I was just.... sitting at the computer, but if I deal with people, if I want it to be a positive thing, I always tell myself 'life's good', something like that. (Sheena, tourist information)

Another set of strategies, which revolved around relaxation, distancing, and 'venting' was widely reported. An employee commented that:

If I get a bit stressed, I, I don't know what I do, I guess, I just step back and I just go out, I will make myself a cup of coffee or something and then that's you know, a two minute break or whatever, and then, you know, the stress will be over. (Beth, bus tour company).

Another independently reported a very similar approach:

Probably after the crazy rush finishes, I will get my coffee cup, I'll go downstairs, make myself a coffee, come back, hot coffee, come back upstairs, sit down and just get on with it, and, I think that little break really, really helps because you get yourself out of that environment and you refresh yourself, you know, and all of us girls do that, we all do that, we'll go downstairs for five minutes, just take a few deep breaths, you know, just go outside, stand outside for a while, you know... you really do need to do that sometimes, so I find that... I generally leave the office every half an hour or so, for a little while, you know, to take a break, just so I can relax and get my head straight ... (Annabelle, bus tour company)

The importance of such a strategy was highlighted as she continued:

I do get frustrated very easily, I get very flustered and I'm one of those people that takes my stress home, and then I take it out on my sister or something, you know, and I don't like to do that.

The comment was reflected in a similar statement by another employee that emphasised the adverse effects on social relationships that can be an important negative effect of performing emotional labour if coping strategies are not effective:

Sometimes, I'll have the worst day at work, but I, I hold it all in, and I'll get home and I'll take it out on my partner... Why did I do that? I'm like why, why? Maybe I should have just sat somewhere for ten minutes in the car before I got home and just sort of relaxed, just you know, not talked to anyone, just sat there quietly and sort of let it all just go. (Rosie, bus tour company)

Thus, it is important for managers to encourage and support such strategies by employees. Asked how they supported or assisted their staff, their responses included a number of indications that they encouraged staff to approach them with problems, but there were also more specific indications that that they would encourage or support particular coping strategies. For example, one manager said that supportive actions would include encouraging the feeling by staff

that 'they can release with us'. Particularly in the organisations in the hospitality sector, there was provision for staff to discuss the events of the evening, to 'vent', at the close of business. Another manager explained how things might take place at the end of an evening's work:

Sometimes some of them [finish at 10pm] ... then they go off for a couple of hours and come back ..., but they might come back at 11.30 or 12 and if we're here having a drink, they might stop and have a drink... It's very good, I think its very good stress management to do it, because it gives those ... that have had a problem, a chance to tell you. [It] also gives the staff who've had a really good night a chance to tell you how good things went and why they think they went well. (John, restaurant manager)

The same idea of encouraging 'release' is expressed in the responses of several managers, and that often that release was not only release with the individual manager, but an opportunity for employees to give one another social support:

I think, in our industry that [informal sharing of thoughts about customers] brings some humour into our organisation and it's very important to have that release. (George, manager, bus tour company)

The humour of such an occasion may reflect partly the fact that the employees share common knowledge and understanding about their work, so that the social support they can offer one another is informed and useful. Of course, venting anger or frustration does not absolutely require informed social support. It can be assisted by others' mere presence, or even their imagined presence:

You share the experience whether it be with somebody or out here, against the wall.... Yeah, and then you swear and then you go back out and you smile again.... And you just laugh, because you think 'oh, I just swore at the wall'. (Liana, bus tour company)

The issues of social support from their peers were pursued explicitly in interviews with workers. Some of their responses underscore the value of a team environment, which provides the elements of social

support. Several again stress the significance of informed and appropriate social support:

If there's a bad table and if there's two people working in a section, and if there's a bad table, like we'll both know about, because we'll tell each other that they're not very nice or that they're giving you a hard time. (Rhianna, waitress, hospitality)

You talk to other drivers about it, then you find out that they had the same problem, 'Oh, phew!, It's not just me.' (Ron, limousine driver)

This example seems to show that social support can assist with the implementation of other specific coping strategies: in this case, quite clearly, that of reducing ego involvement. Another shows how both peer and management support can assist with the coping strategy of 'distancing':

Often talking to people, like even in the office, other people just say 'look, it's not your fault, you can't help making a mistake, these things happen', and even the directors here, they're really good with that, once you've made a mistake, you've apologised for it, and realised what your mistake is, they just, they give you the benefit of the doubt and they know that you didn't mean to do it ... (Michaela, bus tour company)

This may partly consist of management intervention and support, but partly also of appropriate management systems:

We've got a very good system here ... because the door is sort of close to the reception and its always left open ... if they can hear that someone is getting angry or, or even just spending more time than is necessary...then, somebody will come up and say, 'oh, [name], there's a call for you, would you like to take it now?' (Lucy, tourist information)

Other comments suggest that social support can assist with problem-focussed coping strategies:

I think its good to sit down and have a talk with everybody that you've worked with, at least five minutes, just to capture whatever happened or to fix anything that you think went wrong. (Rhianna, waitress, hospitality)

and

If someone comes in and they're particularly difficult, I think just going back to the other staff and we sort of talk about it...and just like having that sort of interaction with the other staff, you think, 'oh, yeah, I might try that way next time'. (Ailsa, tourist information)

Other comments suggest that a variety of these sorts of support coping mechanisms may on occasion be intermingled:

Yeah, I think every evening, we would do that and it's really quite critical for a lot of the staff to do that, there's a chance to just talk through how the evening's gone. (Laura, waitress, hospitality)

and

We'll close the door and we'll go 'Aaaahhhh' at each other, kind of thing: 'Rah, rah, rah – can you believe that?' and things like that. That's how we all let off steam and 'you won't believe what happened to me' – like as soon as we get off the phone, and we'll probably tell ten people because we're so upset and we want to get it out. (Natalie, accommodation)

Nevertheless, in a number of interviews it emerged that although various forms of support for emotional labour were widely used and effective, there were some aspects of the support processes that were a matter of tension or that could be improved. These aspects related to both the support received from managers and co-workers.

While it was common for service workers to be positive about the levels of support they received from their organisations, it was sometimes perceived to be less or less effective than it might be. For example, in one organisation, the difficulties arising from the absence of a full-time manager on site were highlighted by several interviewees:

It would be a lot easier if he was in the back office here, you could say, 'look, we've got a customer out the front, who wants to speak to the manager, can you sort of head out, and help us out here?'...I feel that is the manager's role, they are to handle customer complaints and to a certain degree...I think we're taking on extra stress that really we shouldn't be taking on. Sort of aggravates us at times... (Rosie, bus tour company)

and that:

[It] probably unfairly puts staff under pressure, that's what it does. That's the frustrating thing, it shouldn't have to happen like that, there should be someone who can stop in. Probably there's, there's too much taken on board because of that, just by default. That shouldn't be the way it works. (Liana, bus tour company)

The importance of supportive managerial practices was acknowledged by managers and service workers alike. Claire, a manager in the hospitality sector, suggested that unsupportive management practices also contributed to tension or stress in the workplace:

It's not so much coping with the stress of the work environment, um, a lot of it actually reflects back to management, opposed to the job...how management push, how management treat the staff and that there perhaps isn't the support or it's like always pointing out the wrong thing, what you're doing wrong constantly, opposed to pointing out what's been wrong, but to rectify it and also to tell the positives as well, to encourage you, exactly, that's what tends to miss...that reflects a lot to do with turnover of staff in hospitality, because it's not so much people aren't interested to do the work or can't cope with it, it's the actual being bagged on top, that something's never quite good enough, never meets expectations....

Service workers also discussed the need for managerial support:

You want to be able to say something to them like 'no, you can't do that' and have your manager come out and support you...them to come out and say 'oh, actually', and you end up

looking ridiculous and that's worse than anything. I think that and that kind of thing puts me in a worse mood, what happens behind the scenes than what they [guests] can ever say to you. (Shannon, accommodation)

Another from a different industry segment made an essentially similar point:

I've heard of people ... when you call up and someone's asking a question ... they speak to someone else and they completely override your decision. I think that's really degrading. (Tracy, bus tour company)

Such occurrences increase stress rather than relieve it. In the latter two cases, of course, the difficulty for a manager may be that the employee actually has made some error, and the manager has to choose between supporting a wrong decision that may alienate a customer, and identifying the error in front of the customer. Although it was beyond the scope of the study to investigate ways in which this type of situation could be resolved, it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that a supportive manager should be able to handle the situation, perhaps through private negotiations with the service worker, in a manner which allows the employee to save 'face' in front of the customer.

The difficulties arising from personal relationships in the workplace were also mentioned. Scarnati suggested that 'unco-operative individuals can cause the team to become dysfunctional' (2001, p. 9), and Polley and Ribbens (1998) note the possibilities of 'social loafing' in team situations. These types of problems were identified by one interviewee:

I find that if you're friends with someone, sometimes, you do have issues with them within the office. Two of us girls are basically stuck there, you know, wanting to pull our hair out and yelling at this person, 'get off your computer and do your damn work.' When friendship in an office comes in the way of things like that ... Because we can't actually go to management and say something, because this friend of ours will know that it's us. This has been going on for about a year now and we still haven't said

anything about it, and we're still suffering and [it is] making us go a little bit crazy. In little situations like that it makes it really hard, because you can't... If you're not on a personal level with a person, it's easier to tell them what you think, you know, but when you're on a personal level, you help them with their love lives and ... they cry on your shoulder when something's wrong, it's a little bit more complicated, actually a lot more complicated. (Annabelle, bus tour company)

Indeed, the difficulties arising from friendships with work colleagues had caused one interviewee in the accommodation sector to remark that 'I don't make an effort of going out with [work colleagues] on a personal level because it becomes ... too involved'.

In short, the complexities of social relationships mean that 'peer support' and 'social support' are not the same as 'social relationships' (or even 'friendship'). Social relationships and even friendships can revolve around a number of dimensions, such as intimacy about one another's love lives or shared personal interests or the like, and there is no presumption that these will necessarily translate into social support for work activities.

These situations are examples of the types of conflicts in which workers find themselves. As illustrated above in the case of the tour guide and others, emotional labour can be demanding and stressful just because of the constant demand to be attentive and obliging, even when there is no significant conflict. When there is, stress increases. Then, service workers reported using a number of the coping strategies mentioned by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). Some interviewees used problem-solving strategies, as the following comments demonstrate:

I suppose what I do, is try and understand what ... their problem is, and try and sort of help them out and fix up the problem. (Suzi, bus tour company)

If there's no other people in the centre, ..., then, aah, I talk to the other staff members and that's where it's a really good team environment ... by talking to the other staff, um, it then becomes a problem-solving session, where we look at strategies of how to

deal with those situations,, in the future, if they come up, so yeah, and I think just talking out the problem, um, just relieves the tension that I'd be feeling, but I think, well that's good ... other people have listened to me and I think, oh yeah, and I've sort of got some positive feedback from them, so then everything's back on track. (Ailsa, tourist information)

In other cases, strategies of distancing and reducing ego involvement may be especially important:

I start from the position, in my head, they're not angry with you, 'cause they don't know you,... I'm just there, I'm just available,... I also have a really clear plan of action, I'm not really foul-mouthed, but once I've dealt with it, I'd go out the back and when there's no one around I say something absolutely putrid, to help, ...I've got no way of knowing how they've got to this point on that day, so, but, the least likely thing is that I've caused it, and the least likely, the least important person in their life is me, so, you know, let's not over-rate my role in this... it's really, really easy to put yourself at the centre of things, but in reality, you know, if they weren't born to you and they're not married to you, you're not really all that important to them, are you? (Sheena, tourist information)

Thus, it can be seen that service workers draw upon a number of strategies to help them cope with the demands of the performance of emotional labour. Coping strategies such as venting and problem solving highlight the importance and value of peer and managerial support. On the other hand, unsupportive managers and co-workers can be an added source of tension and stress in the workplace. Also, there was no evidence of managers encouraging service workers to use cognitive appraisals as a means of coping with the emotional demands of their work.

4.6 The perceptions of service workers and managers that the ability to perform emotional labour effectively is a matter of 'personality'; and the ramifications of such perceptions for the selection and training of service workers

In discussing the emphasis put on the performance aspects of the job as opposed to the service aspects in the selection process, managers often referred to the importance of the right 'personality':

My personal opinion is that anyone can be trained to do the job, um, so what's most important is the personality of staff members that I'm requiring... (Lachlan, manager, accommodation)

So its probably 60/40, to be honest – 60% personality and the way they sell themselves and 40% what they've actually done on paper. (Michael, manager, hospitality)

I tend to look at mainly the personalities of the person and their characters and their nature I think... it's important because those type of things you can't train people for. (Claire, manager, hospitality)

A number of the service workers also commented on the importance of being a 'people-person', which could be interpreted as their endorsement of the need to be gregarious and sociable, traits associated with Extraversion:

... you've got to be a people-person to do it ... (Chris, tourist information)

I look at myself and I'm a people's person, I, I find I can smile and you know, I can chat um, and I feel comfortable around strangers, and that's fine ... (Ellie, tourist information)

... I am an excellent people person, I always have been ... I 'm very confident and that's probably a good thing, and um, I think that really, really helps me, I love face-to-face contact ... (Annabelle, bus tour company)

From these comments, it appears that managers and service workers equated the performance of emotional labour with 'the right personality' and 'being a people person'.

The importance of 'personality' is also reflected in selection, as there is evidence of the use of personality testing and interviews when filling senior management positions, as reported by MacHatton *et al.* (1997) and Waryszak and Bauer (1993):

...in more senior management, they do have personality testing. In say, ah, a line level position, it's more arr, a bit of a panel interview, there's always two people that are sitting on an interview and I guess either person picks up different personality traits ... (Annalise, manager, accommodation)

... senior management um, have psychological testing, we don't actually do that for any staff sort of under senior management. (Hannah, manager, tourist information)

The importance of carrying out reference checks was also highlighted:

... we do look at their life experience, if they've had any other experience in the industry ... won't even talk to anyone without a decent résumé, references and stuff like that, just to get a little bit of feedback on them from a few people... We check them out pretty thoroughly to make sure that they're the right person for us. (Mark, manager, bus tour company)

On the other hand, one manager was quite sceptical about the value of references, preferring the use of his own networks within the industry:

References, employment of staff, I don't have a lot of faith in references or referees. I've never seen a referee and I've never seen a bad reference. ..., this industry is quite tight-knit too, so I've been doing it for twenty two years, I'm not street-wise, but you seem to know a lot of people and ... where they're worked before, what they've done, I mean I knew all about him before he walked in the door, just made a couple of phone calls... the

network works well, yes, that's where your so-called senior positions, key positions, ..., (Michael, manager, hospitality)

Indeed, the use of personal networks in the selection process was widely acknowledged:

... when we meet with people ... who have been cultural tourism students and we have done further research before we bring them in to interview. Like I may speak to the lecturers, get some feedback about you know, certain students ..., they might basically give me some sort of idea of whether they think they would be appropriate for the position. So I do quite a bit of research usually before I actually take someone on. (Hannah, manager, tourist information)

The value of networks in obtaining employment were also highlighted in this service worker's response to a question about the selection process which she went through:

What selection process did I go through? None really, um, I was actually like friends with management and they were developing this position with me in mind ... so I think its sometimes not what you know, its who you know. (Tracy, bus tour company)

The impact of the 'personality' on training outcomes was acknowledged by both service workers and managers, as seen in the following comments, lending support to the observation made by Cran (1994) that workers differ in their receptiveness to training:

... you've to be a people's person, got to have people skills and if you haven't, you can't train someone to have people skills, you know. (Robert, bus tour company)

Um, if someone has a good personality, I'll put the effort in, if they're keen, I'll put the effort in training them. I can always train them, but I can't change their personalities. (Michael, manager, hospitality)

The limitations of training programs were also recognised:

Once again, you can only train people so much ... I had one gentleman here who was thoroughly well trained, done traineeship, had gone through the TAFE system.... And he knew what he should be doing, but as soon as someone confronted him with a problem, especially a customer, he wouldn't know what to say, he might say the wrong thing, he could do the wrong thing and as a result, I had three complaint letters regarding him over December and we counselled him on numerous occasions. Every night, I felt like a social worker... (Michael, manager, hospitality)

You can do as much training as you possibly can ... you need to actually be in there and actually physically doing it... yeah, until you're actually are in there, and actually serving customers and doing the work, I think that's how you really learn to cope with different stresses and emotions. (Rosie, bus tour company)

Thus, it can be said that managers and service workers agreed that the ability to perform emotional labour is a matter of 'personality', which was seen as being more important technical skills. This view resulted in the selection and training of workers considered to have the 'right personality'.

4.7 The level of consideration given to the performance of emotional labour in training programs

The interview material revealed little evidence of training of any kind being provided for the service workers in this study. With respect to induction programs, from the managers' responses, there was little evidence of such programs:

we also have like an induction process that we go through, so through that we spend quite a bit of time with them, um, and over that three month period, we would determine whether you know, there's actually a match there, like whether they're happy, whether we're happy, um, whether it works well for the team, and we haven't had a bad experience yet. (Hannah, manager, tourist information)

On their first shift, I'd of course, run them through as to the lay-out of the floor, the familiarisation as to where, what and how are

things done and basically allow them, and give them space to feel their way through. (Claire, manager, hospitality)

A minority of managers indicated that there were on-going training programs dealing with customer service issues:

Yes, we do, ah, training sessions each month as to how to deal with hostile guests, not all the same sort of training, but definitely with hostile guests, complaints, abusive guests, language problems and all those sorts of things. (Annalise, manager, accommodation)

we're currently going through a refresher course, um, with customer service techniques and just revisiting some of the things that we take for granted, fine-tuning the way we do our delivery ... we have these forums, um, every month and there's always something positive that comes out of them. (George, manager, bus tour company)

However, there was evidence of informal 'on-the-job' training:

and I guess they just teach you what to do ... a lot of it here is um, you know, you get the manager to come and help you... I think as well, like when you do get a manager out, some of them are really good and some of them say different things and you think, that's a really good thing to say and just try, and you know, because obviously that's through their own experiences, because that's why they're managers because they've worked in the industry longer and they, they know more about it, and you [sic] 'good, I like that, I'll use that, I'll say that' and that's a form of training where you're not sitting down learning, but you're listening and you have a mentoring-type thing. (Shannon, accommodation)

The minimal provision of training was confirmed during the interviews with the service workers. Furthermore, there was little evidence of the provision of any training which had been valuable managing the emotional demands of the job. A number of interviewees suggested that they had just 'grown with it':

No, I've grown with it ... and I think age as well... (Natalie, accommodation)

I think it's just life experience ...,I don't think that I need any further courses, I don't think anyone in the office does, it's just generally dealing with different people, every single day... (Liana, bus tour company)

It may well be that workers who indicated that they have 'grown with it' may be unintentionally endorsing the value of the 'on-the-job training', through which they have either been coached by their managers or developed their own repertoires of quality service behaviours by observing those of their managers and co-workers.

The responses to the question as to whether, in the course of their working lives, the interviewees had ever had any training that had been beneficial in helping them in their customer service or emotion management skills revealed the minimal training provided by their current employers:

when I was at TAFE, I did a one year communication course, I thought that was invaluable in terms of public speaking...they look at communication in all forms, and you know, conflict resolution, and that sort of thing as well ... and then I guess my experience has been a good, a good training thing, as well. (Stuart, accommodation)

some with the ski-lift company I used to work for, um, which was just like service excellence and customer service skills, basically. Um, but I guess the fact that I've worked sort of, oh all my working life, I've worked with customers, worked with people...,I'm pretty people-oriented. (Skye, tourist information)

not necessarily emotional demands ... I did a business course at Pride's Business College, ... (Michaela, bus tour company)

I actually did an Aussie Host program, which is basically learning about customer service that was actually done through Unley High ... I actually studied um, tourism at TAFE, advanced diploma of tourism, and there was actually ... a module, a subject called

'client sales and services', and that's basically where we learnt about customer service as well. (Beth, bus tour company)

the only negative here, is perhaps the training and preparation for me to handle complaints, um, but then I think this association likes people to, don't know what the right words are, but, to get out there and do it, and see if you land on your feet or if you don't, maybe. (Caitlin, tourist information)

The value of the Aussie Host program mentioned above, was also mentioned during the focus group held at the commencement of the study. Nevertheless, it can be said that of the minimal levels of training provided for service workers, little, if any, addressed issues associated with the performance of emotional labour.

5. CONCLUSION

The interview findings confirm the lack of awareness of the term 'emotional labour'. However, after clarification, the performance of such labour was recognised as being an integral part of customer service work, for which support was needed. Indeed, the importance of managerial and peer support was readily acknowledged. Service workers used a variety of emotion and problem-focussed strategies to cope with the demands of the performance of such labour. There was general recognition of the importance of interpersonal skills and the 'right personality', which was perhaps seen as being synonymous with the ability to perform emotional labour. The findings have re-affirmed the impact of personality on service quality and the importance of interpersonal skills in customer service positions, hence the emphasis on these in the selection process. Although recommended limited formal training programs were provided and value of such training appears limited. Employees suggested that life experience contributed or assisted with the performance of emotional labour, which may well have been an unwitting endorsement of on-the-job training.

6. FURTHER RESEARCH

This research is limited by its small sample size and the issues which it addressed. It was beyond the scope of this study to examine issues such as the impact of job design on the performance of emotional labour. Hence it would be valuable to carry out further research, using a larger sample size, to address the impact of aspects of job design, such as shift duration and job rotation through other non-customer contact roles on the performance of emotional labour. Investigation could usefully also be carried out into organisational policies and practices which support workers in their customer service work; the development of training programs specifically to assist workers perform emotional labour, and the role of cognitive appraisal in the management of the emotional demands of the performance of this type of labour.

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