

**“Impact of Emotional Labour on Job Satisfaction:
A comparative study of the teachers in the four
different Key Stages in an International School in
Sri Lanka”**

By

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comparative study of the teachers in the four
different Key Stages in an International School in
Sri Lanka”**

By


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ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

The work described in this research was carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. Bhadra J. H. Arachchige and a report on this has not been submitted in whole or in part to any university or any other institution for another Degree/ Diploma.

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SUPERVISOR DECLARATION

I certify that the above statement made by the candidate is true and that this research is suitable for submission to the University for the purpose of evaluation.

Signature : 

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Date : 06.02.2016

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ABSTRACT

In this research, a comparative study was conducted to explore the impact of emotional labour on the job satisfaction of the teachers in four levels of teaching of an international school in Sri Lanka using thematic analysis. The purpose of the explorative study is to contribute new insights into existing understandings of how teachers’ engaged in emotional labour and its impact on their job satisfaction. Twenty teachers, 5 from each of the 4 key stages participated in a face-to-face interview each. The findings revealed that the performance of emotional labour in teaching and dealing with students has no direct impact on the job satisfaction of the teachers due to their caring nature and sense of teacher identity. This research contributes to the limited literature on emotional labour and its impact, especially in the Asian and the Sri Lankan context, as well as it develops existing understandings of how teachers contribute towards the betterment of students due to their caring nature. Furthermore, the empirical findings highlight that due to the professional identity of teachers in schools, they have a heightened sense of satisfaction in performing their job due to the belief of making a difference in children’s lives. Limitations of the current study and implications for future research are discussed.

Keywords Emotional labour, caring teacher, thematic analysis, international school, Sri Lanka

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Emotions are quintessential to human experience as they influence a person's thoughts and actions. In the past, emotions in the workplace were believed to obscure sound judgment and thus were not even perceived as a workplace phenomenon (Grandey, 2000). The importance of emotions in the workplace is gaining more and more attention partly due to the expansion of the service economy which most often requires human interactions leading to emotional displays. The products provided by service employees are mostly intangible and the perceived quality of the service is related to the interpersonal interactions between the employee and the customer (Morris & Feldman, 1996). For example, Pugh (2001) presented that the employees' displays of positive emotion were directly related to the customers' ratings of service quality and their overall satisfaction with the organization (Matilla & Enz, 2002).

Hochschild (1983) introduced the term 'emotional labour' in order to describe the actions of service workers that go further than physical or mental obligations. Emotional labour was described as a form of emotion regulation that creates a publicly observable facial and physical display within the workplace (Hochschild, 1983). Practically applied in a work place, this would mean that you either express only your positive feelings or hide/manage your negative feelings. She described emotional labour especially in terms of service jobs where workers frequently have to control their emotions in order to comply with an expected job performance standard. Hochschild identified two types of emotional

labour: surface acting and deep acting. When employees try to modify the expression of emotions, it is called surface acting. When they engage in deep acting, employees manipulate their internal thoughts and feelings in order to actually feel the desired emotion. Hochschild (1983) maintains that along with this commodification process, which expects the service worker to behave in a certain way, they become estranged from their own feelings in the workplace. Both types of emotional labour can lead to conflicting emotions which may have a negative effect on the well-being of workers. In the recent past, apart from these two dimensions, the works of Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) added a third component to the literature, which is the expression of naturally felt emotions.

This research focuses on emotional labour of teachers. Teaching usually involves face-to-face interaction with students. Teachers are also expected to deal with others such as parents, fellow teachers and the school management. In order to succeed at their task, teachers have to draw the attention of their students, motivate the students to learn and at the same time ensure the orderly conduct of classes whilst producing the expected results at public and other examinations. Furthermore, most of these teaching facets require that teachers show certain emotions (Ogbonna & Harris, 2004) and suppress others (Ybema & Smulders, 2002). Researchers such as Hargreaves (1998) and Zhang & Zhu (2008) point out that the teaching profession is, undoubtedly, one with the highest requirements regarding emotion management. In addition, some sociological studies regarding emotional labour suggested that workers are engaged in greater emotional effort in occupations which necessitate love, care, and face to face interaction with the public (Wharton, 2009). Educational researchers emphasized that the teachers who have to interact with their pupils in a loving and caring manner, need to practice emotional labour (Isenbarger & Zemblas, 2006). Scholars such as Zemblays (2005) also stated that

teachers, as a general rule, should avoid displaying their extremely strong or extremely weak emotions. The researcher Winograd (2003) came up with five feeling and expression rules for teachers to use which were; to love and to show enthusiasm for students, to be enthusiastic and passionate about subject matter, to avoid the display of extreme emotions like anger, joy and sadness, to love their work, and to have a sense of humour and laugh at their own mistakes and the wrongdoings of students (Winograd, 2003). If teachers fail to manage their emotions appropriately according to the display rules expected, they might be considered and treated as unprofessional. Hence, teachers have to perform emotional labour in order to be successful in what they do. Basically, this argument was accepted by most of education researchers (e.g. Nias, 1999; Ogbonna & Harris, 2004; Palmer, 1998) in their investigations on the outcomes of the emotional labour in teaching with regard to teachers' psychological and mental well-being (Tsang, 2014).

Research has shown that emotional labour behaviours have different and important relations with workers' wellbeing and stress. As per research of Nixon et al (2010), it also has shown that emotional labour behaviour types can increase workers' psychological stress and that this stress can have an impact on job satisfaction or the dissatisfaction (Nixon et al., 2010). Job satisfaction affects a teacher's performance, job turnover and absenteeism (Organ & Bateman, 1991; Robbins, 2005). Job satisfaction can do far more than help retain teachers; it can also improve their teaching, which is what is desired by all parties. This indicates that satisfied teachers can contribute significantly to the development of the students' academic performance and improve the school's effectiveness at large. Similarly, Shannon (2001) asserts that job satisfaction helps to retain teachers and makes them committed to their job and which in turn makes their