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**EMOTIONAL LABOUR IN SERVICE INDUSTRY – SOME REFLECTIONS**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The services sector has emerged as the most dynamic sector of the world economy, contributing almost one-third of world gross value added, half of world employment, one-fifth of global trade and more than half of the world foreign direct investment flows. It remains the key driver of India's economic growth, contributing almost 66.1 per cent of its gross value added growth in 2015-16, important net foreign exchange earner and the most attractive sector for foreign direct investment inflows. The increasing share of service sector in developed countries has established new ways in creating competitive edge within the delivery of a high level quality service. The importance of service employees as the greatest asset is undisputed. Service is not denoted only by the intellectual and physical labour but also emotional labour. The objective of this paper is to examine the importance of the concept emotional labor and its use in service delivery and its implications in the present day context.*

**KEYWORDS**

emotions, emotional labor, surface acting, deep acting, services, services marketing, display rules, feeling rules.

**INTRODUCTION**

The services sector in India remained the most vibrant sector in terms of contribution to national and state incomes, trade flows, FDI inflows, and employment. India's services sector covers a wide variety of activities such as trade, hotel and restaurants, transport, storage and communication, financing, insurance, real estate, business services, community, social and personal services, and services associated with construction.

The consumption of services often involves the personal interaction of consumers and service employees. Past services research has focused almost exclusively on the behavior of service employees and excluded the consumer's role in this dual social process. The personal interaction between consumers and service providers is the heart of most service experiences. The moment the exchange commences the consumer is simultaneously involved in the production and consumption of the service and becomes an integral part of the service process. The consumer's experience within the service process is an important determinant of his/her satisfaction with the service and facilitates his/her assessment of service quality. In "pure" services, such as health care, financial planning, and auto repair, where a physical product is not exchanged and the service experience is difficult to evaluate, the interaction epitomizes the service from the consumer's perspective.

The personal interaction between consumers and service providers has been termed the "service encounter" and has become the focus of attention in recent service quality research. The research on service encounters and the service quality research suggest a number of factors that may influence consumers' satisfaction with services. These factors pertain to both the service outcome and the manner in which employees deliver service to consumers. Service quality research has focused almost exclusively on the employee's part in the service setting.

The services marketing literature has identified three significant characteristics of services - intangibility, inseparability, and heterogeneity - that reveal the human dimension of service delivery and consumption. These characteristics may make it difficult for consumers to evaluate the service offering in the absence of more concrete product attributes. As evaluation becomes more subjective, consumers are likely to draw more heavily on the total consumption experience, i.e., not only what service is delivered, but also how it is delivered, when assessing satisfaction and service quality. The service employee's perceived performance, including his/her projected attitude and behavior while interacting with consumers, may affect their evaluation process.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. To highlight the concept of Emotional Labour in services.
2. To discuss on the process of Emotional Labour and consequences.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study is based on the study of experiences of service providers in Service Industry particularly Banks.

The observations are recorded in various training programmes organised by the author in Banks through the interactions.

The service delivery and customer engagement episodes are carefully recorded through discussions and interactions with employees attending various training programmes.

**ANALYSIS****EMOTIONAL LABOR**

The increasing share of service sector in developed countries has established new ways in creating competitive edge within the delivery of a high level quality service. The importance of service employees as the greatest asset is undisputed. Service is not denoted only by the intellectual and physical labour but also emotional labour.

Emotional Labour is the control of a person's behavior to display the appropriate emotions. This means that a person evokes or suppresses certain emotions so to conform to social norms. The concept is not confined to the work place; it invades every aspect of life.

Emotional Labor is a relatively new term, 'Arlie Hochschild' first coined the term in her book in 1983 "The Managerial Heart". Hochschild pointed out that people control their emotions in personal and work life. Whenever a person alters their outward behavior (emotions, verbal cues, body language), it is emotional labor.

**FEELING RULES**

The question is to understand what determines the correct emotional response for a situation. Hochschild described a set of "Feeling Rules" also called "Display Rules", by which people identify what the appropriate behavior is. These feeling rules are similar to a script, describing the 'Correct' response for work situations. They can be part of the training for the occupation, or can be simply 'manners'.

Many larger organisations will have a set of policies, most of which will likely to govern the conduct with customers. This is a form of written feeling rules, a set of guidelines by which to judge the correct response. An example of such written feeling rules comes from Mc Donalds, who encourage sincerity, enthusiasm, confidence and a sense of humor in their service personnel. Another example is from Banks when they say "Service with a Smile". Most feeling rules however are unwritten, as in the case of "Manners".

The practice of emotional labor is most evident when a service transaction is going wrong, when the customers are unhappy for any number of reasons. In most situations, the employees will remain calm and polite to the customer, though the customer will most likely be irritating or upsetting the employee. This is a form of self-control, suppressing negative emotions and evoking more positive emotions.

Generally speaking, emotional labour is a form of managing emotions to display expected interpersonal interactions with the aim of appropriate emotional display in services sector that creates customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and positive word of mouth.

Emotions refer to physiological arousal and cognitive appraisal of the situation within which individuals can control their emotional expressions to follow the display rules. In order to be able to impact the emotions of others, the accurate perception of their feelings is required. Original emotions according to Freud appear unconscious however Hochschild, who first introduced emotional labour, builds upon theoretic grounds presuming that emotions appear within conscious processes and impact individuals' behaviour that bypasses cognitive process.

**The Display Rules** are norms of expected behaviour in certain settings that include normatively appropriate emotions. Although emotional display rules for service sector are easily adopted since service sector has long history of well-established display rules, managers have to strive to transmit organizational emotional display rules by hiring individuals with desired personality traits and measuring emotional intelligence during hiring procedure to confirm person-job fit. Emotional regulation can be done in a form of surface acting, deep acting or genuine display of emotions.

**Surface Acting** is a process of creation of expected emotions that are not felt by an individual therefore it means to manage visible aspects of emotions which break out on the surface whereas inner feelings do not alter. However mechanical surface acting to display expected emotions according to specific display rules is neither sufficient nor desirable. Few authors define surface acting as faking unfelt emotions and/or suppress felt emotions. Surface acting or sometimes called "acting in bad faith" relates only to outwardly observable expressions and emerges within the process of suppressing the true feelings and generation of inauthentic display of emotions according to organization rules. Surface acting is mainly related to routine process that does not require conscious actions but is triggered at the level of flexible action patterns at the sensory-motor level.

**Deep Acting** requires expected expressive behaviour and simultaneously regulation of inner feelings by invoking memories and thoughts that induce desired emotions. It is sometimes called "acting in a good faith", strongly motivated attempt to display expected emotions and means to manage actual feelings by proactively changing one's feelings to evoke authentic emotional display that is in accordance to organization rules. Customer satisfaction can be gained when offered sincere service, therefore deep acting can be linked to high scores in service evaluation. This is because employees by deep acting do not create only outer but also inner expression by recalling the past joyful circumstances that can create appropriate emotions. This requires conscious action controlled at the intellectual level of emotion regulation. Thus, employees have to try to respond to guests through deep acting to achieve high level of service quality.

Genuine display of emotions is by definition not a strategy because it does not require emotional labor. Some authors conceptualize automatic emotion regulation as **Passive Deep Acting** that occurs when a person does not have to act because required emotions are spontaneously expressed and therefore there is no emotional labor needed. Displaying genuinely felt emotions results in appearance of sincerity associated with high service quality.

#### EMOTIONAL DISHARMONY

There are three types of emotional disharmony that an employee might experience in surface acting (or some authors claim also in deep acting) when employee's feelings are not spontaneously expressed because there is difference between actually felt and expressed emotions. Let us discuss on causes of emotional disharmony effects, namely

**Emotional Dissonance, Emotional Deviance and Emotive Faking**, which are the triggers of emergence of negative outcomes.

##### 1. EMOTIONAL DISSONANCE

Emotional dissonance is stronger when an individual does not have an inner feeling, or the feeling is opposite of the required emotional expression in other words there is a mismatch between felt emotions and required expression of emotions. It is by no doubt problematic since it might cause low self-esteem, depression and psychological strain. It is an emotional regulation problem. High emotional dissonance when feeling inauthentic is obvious when applying surface acting, while in deep acting, there can be no emotional dissonance or low emotional dissonance, feeling mostly authentic.

##### 2. EMOTIONAL DEVIANCE

Emotional deviance is the difference between expected and displayed feelings that occur when required expressions of emotion are not displayed either intentionally when employees do not agree with the organizational display rules or unintentionally when employees try to express organisationally desired emotional expression but are not able to do so because of the emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion causes an individual to be no longer able to manage emotions adequately since it leads to depletion of emotional resources. Many researchers report influence of emotional exhaustion on lower job performance and higher turnover intentions.

##### 3. EMOTIVE FAKING

Emotive Faking is the difference between genuine and actually displayed feelings and may lead to poor perceptions of service quality by the customers. Surface acting means faking unfelt emotions or to suppress felt emotions

#### ORGANISATIONAL OUTCOMES

No doubt it can be concluded that successful management of emotional labour results in customer satisfaction and loyalty. Individuals respond to authentic emotions much more favourable than to inauthentic ones therefore customers detect authentic/unauthentic emotional expressions through non-verbal communication. So care is needed to fine tune non-verbal behavior of service employees.

The conclusion of different researchers is somewhat different. Some authors report that deep acting causes positive organizational outcomes, while others do not confirm gaining positive organizational outcomes by deep acting and negative by surface acting but rather by appropriately managing customers' impressions of emotional display. To achieve positive outcomes, experts point out designing training programs that provide insights into display of desired emotions.

#### CONSEQUENCES ON THE INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEES

Emotional labor occurs when a person suppresses or evokes an emotion conform to feeling rules. Feeling rules are scripts by which people decide the correct emotional response to situations. When the system breaks down, however, there are harmful consequences for the individual employee.

Dilemmas of Emotional Labor: All services require interaction with customers. These jobs require employees to be courteous and nice to customers regardless of how the customer is treating the employees. These days' customers are getting empowered through external marketing by service organisations. It would rather be a tough job for the service employees in handling customers and to display desired emotions through regulating their own felt emotions. There is every need to further probe in to the operation of emotional labor through further research.

#### CONCLUSION

The services sector has emerged as the most dynamic sector of the world economy, contributing almost one-third of world gross value added, half of world employment, one-fifth of global trade and more than half of the world foreign direct investment flows. It remains the key driver of India's economic growth, contributing almost 66.1 per cent of its gross value added growth in 2015-16, important net foreign exchange earner and the most attractive sector for foreign direct investment inflows. The increasing share of service sector in developed countries has established new ways in creating competitive edge within the delivery of a high level quality service. The importance of service employees as the greatest asset is undisputed. Service is not denoted only by the intellectual and physical labour but also emotional labour. The objective of this paper is to examine the importance of the concept emotional labor and its use in service delivery and its implications in the present day context.

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