



# Emotional Labour and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour: Case of Regency Hotels (Masvingo)

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## Abstract

*This paper seeks to examine the relationship between emotional labour and organizational citizenship behaviours at Regency hotels in Masvingo town. The researchers used Hoschild's Emotional Labour Theory which postulates that employees must always suppress their emotions in order to produce the desired emotional state during working time. To test the veracity of this theory in Zimbabwe, a quantitative survey research design was employed to collect data from the field. The data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20 (SPSS v20). The study found that employees suffer from emotional labour through surface-acting and deep working time. It was also established that both surface and deep-acting have negative and positive effects to citizenship behaviour. As such positive emotions that employees come to experience during service delivery trigger positive citizenship behaviour and at the same time, negative emotions that employees experience through surface-acting can easily induce negative citizenship behaviours. The study recommends that service industries should implement emotional display rules to regulate employee's behaviours during service delivery.*

**Keywords:** Emotional labour, Organizational citizenship behaviour, Surface acting, Deep-acting.

## 1. Introduction

Globalization and technological advancements have made many changes to the global economy. The emerging complex business environment offers opportunities and challenges for service industries such as the hospitality industry. Therefore, in order to remain competitive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, service industries are coming to the realization that the management of emotions is a tactical approach that the service industry may use to wear the workplace challenges. The management of emotional labour in service industries is therefore regarded as one way of promoting organisational citizenship behaviour. The same view is echoed by Mupani (2016) who reports that emotional labour has received a substantial amount of attention in recent years and is generally viewed by many service organizations as an important tactic in the achievement of a sustained competitive advantage. Likewise, Grandey (2003) observes that, an understanding of the relationship between emotional labour and organisational citizenship behaviour enables management to generate positive workplace behaviours that can contribute to better service delivery. The same is not lost to the hospitality industry where Grandey (2003) reports that due to the increased competition among service providers, hotels are increasingly focusing on growing business by providing good customer services through regulating employee emotions.



Meanwhile, extant literature concur that employees regulate their emotions via two strategies, viz: deep-acting and surface-acting (Grandey, 2003; Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). In surface acting, the employee feigns emotions that are not genuine such as smiling, other facial expressions and gestures to exhibit required workplace emotions (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). In other words, with surface acting, the employee is expected to simulate emotions by changing their outward appearances like facial expressions, gestures or voice tone to exhibit the required emotions. In deep-acting on the other hand, employees actively regulate their emotions so that they can display genuine emotions that conform to organizational expectations (Troth & Lawrence 2011). Therefore, with deep-acting, employees should be able to self-regulate their emotions so as to ensure better service delivery for the employer.

Such forms of emotional management by employees are more significant in the hospitality industry since the way employees in the hospitality sector display their emotions is critical as customers who are satisfied with good services are likely to come back and recommend the service to others (Mupani, 2016). After all, service organizations such as those in the hospitality sector prefer to engage employees with greater interpersonal skills which require them to be cheerful and friendly at all times to maximize service quality and customer impressions (Kim, Yoo & Kim, 2012). Human resource management personnel in such industries are therefore according to Cook (2008) constantly scouting for emotions that are acceptable and the degree to which employees may express them during interactions with the customers. Such an understanding of emotional labour will help the management in the hospitality industry to manage and encourage employees to display certain emotions and suppress others as part of their job requirements.

## 1.2 Theoretical Framework

This research is guided by Hochschild's Theory of Emotional labour. The theory assumes that the working conditions in an organisation not only affect job attitude and behaviour of the employees, but also affects their emotions. The theory is based on the notion that organisations should specify emotional display rules which serve as standards for the appropriate expression of emotions, including what emotions should be displayed and what emotions should not be displayed during working times (Diefendorff, Croyle & Gosserand, 2005). In the context of this study, as we have already noted, service organisations should specify emotional display requirements and employees must actively regulate their emotions to meet the requirements. As such, players in the hospitality industry should therefore use policies, symbols, myths and stories to teach, demonstrate, and reinforce positive emotions and prevent the occurrence of inappropriate emotions.

## 2. Materials and Methods

A case study research design was adopted as it provides a systematic way of looking at events, analysing information and reporting the results. Therefore, by using the case of the Regency Hotel to collect data, the researchers were able to narrow down a very broad field of research into one easily researchable topic.

Due to the policy requirements set out at the case hotel, the researchers could not have direct access to employees, hence the help of the human resource manager was sought to distribute the questionnaires to employees. Organizational citizenship behaviour was measured using a scale inventory consisting of 5 concepts procured from Coyle-Shapiro (2002). As such, the structured questionnaire used to gather data consisted of 5 concepts, which are; Conscientiousness Behaviour, Sportsmanship Behaviour, Civic Behaviour, Virtue Behaviour, Courtesy and Altruism Behaviour. Respondents responded to the items using a 5-point Likert scale. Results from the tests were analysed using Regression analysis for related samples, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software application.

### 3. Findings

The major findings emanating from the research are presented below:

#### Emotional labour strategies performed at Regency Hotel Masvingo



**Figure 1: State of emotional labour at Regency Hotel**

From the above statistics, it can be highlighted that eleven respondents constituting (11%) agreed that they perform surface-acting during service delivery and thirty respondents constituting (30%) strongly agreed with the fact whilst six respondents constituting (6%) disagreed and fifty-three of the respondents constituting (53%) strongly disagreed that they only perform deep-acting.



	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	6	6.0	6.0	6.0
Disagree	76	76.0	76.0	82.0
Agree	7	7.0	7.0	89.0
Strongly Agree	11	11.0	11.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

**Table 1: Regulation of employee’s emotions by management**

The table above shows how Regency hotels management regulates employee’s emotions during service delivery. From the above statistics, it can be highlighted that seven respondents constituting 7% agreed that during service delivery employees have freedom to decide on how they should deal with customers and eleven respondents constituting 11% strongly agreed with the fact. Seventy–six respondents constituting 76% of the respondents disagreed that they have freedom to decide on how they should deal with customer’s whilst six respondents constituting 6% strongly disagreed.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly disagree	65	65.0	65.0	65.0
Disagree	11	11.0	11.0	76.0
Agree	8	8.0	8.0	84.0
Strongly Agree	16	16.0	16.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

**Table 2: Employees perform deep-acting during service delivery**

The table above shows responses to the view that during service delivery the emotions employees display before the clients are not the emotions they actually feel. In response to this sixty –five of the respondents constituting 65% strongly disagreed and eleven respondents constituting 11% disagreed that employees fake the emotions that they display before the clients rather they display genuine emotions. On the other hand, eight respondents constituting 8% agreed and sixty teen respondents constituting 16 % strongly agreed that they fake their emotions when providing services to the customer.

**Emotional labour and Conscientious behaviour**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly disagree	7	7.0	7.0	7.0
Disagree	10	10.0	10.0	17.0
Agree	13	13.0	13.0	30.0
Strongly Agree	70	70.0	70.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

**Table 3: Emotional labour and Conscientious behaviours**



From the above statistical data, it can be highlighted that ten respondents constituting 10% disagreed and seven respondents constituting 7% strongly disagreed on the notion that employees volunteer to be involved in extra duties and responsibilities when they genuinely display positive emotions. Thirteen respondents constituting 13% of the respondents agreed and seventy respondents constituting 70% strongly agreed that there is a positive relationship between deep-acting and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	4	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Disagree	13	13.0	13.0	17.0
	Agree	19	19.0	19.0	36.0
	Strongly agree	64	64.0	64.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

**Table 4: Emotional labour and sportsmanship behavior**

The table above shows how employees who are able to regulate their emotions engage in sportsmanship behaviours. Thirteen respondents constituting 13% disagreed and four respondents constituting 4% strongly disagreed on the notion that employees who are able to regulate their emotions defend the organization when other employees criticize it. Nineteen respondents constituting 19% of the respondents agreed and sixty-four respondents constituting 64% strongly agreed that there is a positive correlation between emotional labour and Organizational citizenship behavior.

**Emotional labour and Organizational citizenship behavior**

The tables below present an overview of statistical data on the relationship between emotional labour and OCB using Regression Analysis. The regression analysis above show that the predictor, which is emotional labour strategies have a significant effect on the dependent variable, which is organizational citizenship behaviour, (R = 0.625). The relationship is also tested on the One-way ANOVA and is significant at (F=62.94, Sig = 0.007).

**3. Discussion**



This study revealed that Regency hotels employees perform emotional strategies deep-acting and surface-acting during service delivery. Instead of using the terms surface-acting and deep-acting in the questionnaire, Regency hotels employees were asked if they hide their true feeling when dealing with customers. Research findings from this study highlighted that majority of the employees perform emotional labour. The majority of the employees who participated in the survey confirmed this as they disagreed with the notion that employees hide their true feelings when dealing with customers. This concurred with findings by (Ashforth & Humphery, 1993) who argue that employees must do surface-acting and deep-acting in order to express the expected emotions. Thus, Regency hotels employees modify their inner feelings to manage their displayed emotions.

More so, the study found out that Regency hotels management regulates employee's emotions during service delivery. Service organizations specify emotional display requirements and employees must actively regulate both their emotions and emotional displays to meet these requirements. As emerged in the findings it can be noted that Regency hotels management set emotional display rules that define the standards for the appropriate appearance of particular emotions, attitudes and behaviours. This is in line with Hochschild (1983) who argued that service providers and customers share a set of expectations about the nature of emotions that should be displayed during the service encounter. These expectations are a function of organizational norms. Regency hotels management therefore should implement display rules to regulate employee's emotions and behaviours through the use of organizational policies, symbols myths and stories to teach and demonstrate and reinforce these display rules. Based on these display rules, service providers are expected to act friendly and to disguise anger even towards annoying customers so as to ensure that employees project the desired image of the organization to the public and this image will elicit the desired response.

From the research findings, it can be noted that there is a positive relationship between deep-acting and organizational citizenship behavior, whilst surface-acting triggers a negative relationship. Majority of the participants participated in the survey strongly agreed that deep-acting has a positive effect on organizational citizenship behaviours. This is in line with the observation made by Hochschild (1983) which postulates that emotional labour strategies surface-acting and deep-acting can have either positive or a negative effect on organizational citizenship behaviours of employees depending on which emotional labour strategy employees engage in. This finding is supported by Salami (2007) by using the measurement tool of Podsakoff & Mackenzie (1994) the three itemsscale, Altruism behavior, sportsmanship, and civic virtue, suggested that surface-acting is negatively (-) correlated with OCB and deep-acting is positively (+) correlated with Organisational Citizenship Behaviour.

The study also confirmed that there is a positive relationship between deep-acting and conscientious behaviours. The majority of the respondents agreed to the notion that employees volunteer to be involved in extra duties and responsibilities when they genuinely display positive emotions. This is in line with the Organ



(1997) who argues that employees who display genuine emotions are able to trigger conscientiousness behaviours such as willing to work more than what is described on the job descriptions required. Regency hotels employees who are able to display positive emotions during service delivery are able to engage in conscientiousness behaviours such as arriving at work early, avoiding unnecessary breaks during working hours conserving organizational resources and make constructive suggestions to increase organizational performance.

Findings from this study also confirm that employees who are better able to regulate their emotions defend and identify themselves with the organization when other employees engage in systematic soldiering and criticize it. Thus, there is a positive relationship between deep-acting and sportsmanship behaviours. Regency hotels employees who are able to display positive emotions are able to trigger non task behaviours such as sportsmanship which enables them to defend and display positive behaviour when other employees criticize the organization. This finding is supporting the extant literature by Bowler et al., (2007) who observed that employees who display genuine feelings have a more positive intention to the organization; they are more willing to support and make contributions to the organization. A regression analysis was conducted from the survey findings to explore the relationship between deep-acting and surface-acting (independent variable) on Regency hotels employees' organizational citizenship behavior (dependent variable). The regression analysis above show that the predictor, which is emotional labour strategies have a significant effect on the dependent variable, which is organizational citizenship behavior, ( $R = 0.625$ ). The relationship is also tested on the One-way ANOVA and is significant at ( $F=62.94$ ,  $Sig = 0.007$ ). The researchers therefore conclude that emotional labour strategies are related to organizational citizenship behavior.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Based on the argument above we can conclude that in service industries, employees perform emotional labour through surface-acting and deep-acting during service delivery and organisations set display rules to regulate employee behaviour. Emotional labour strategies contribute towards how employees in service industries engage in Organisational citizenship behaviours which benefit the organisation. However, contributions of emotional labour strategies towards performance of citizenship behaviours vary on how employees perform emotional labour. Thus, results from this study reveal that the consequences of emotional labour can be either positive or negative, depending on how it is performed. Surface-acting triggers negative citizenship behaviours whilst deep-acting triggers positive citizenship behaviours. Findings revealed that employees who are able to display genuine emotions through deep-acting are able to engage in citizenship behaviours such as altruism behaviour, conscientiousness, civic virtue, courtesy and sportsmanship behaviour. However, employees who suppress and fake their emotions through surface-acting find it difficult to exhibit citizenship behaviours.

#### **5. Recommendations**





Service industries should ensure training programs to enhance employees' deep-acting skills as this is critical for the survival of service industries in this dynamic work environment. Training employees to adopt required emotional display rules will result in job satisfaction, customer retention, employee motivation and organizational effectiveness which culminate to superior organizational performance. Management should implement display rules to regulate employees' behavior during service delivery. The researchers recommend that organizations set policies, symbols, myths, and stories to teach, demonstrate and reinforce required display rules. Display rules are set as the basic expectations about the nature of emotions that should be displayed during the service encounter. These expectations are the function of organizational norms (Rafaeli & Sutton 1989)

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