Emotional labour

RESEARCH PROPOSAL – EXAMPLE 1 Project Title Emotional Labour and Gender in the Hospitality Industry Research Context The idea that there is an ' emotional' aspect to work seems to have only gainedacademiccredence in recent years. Hochschild (1983) originally introduced the concept of emotional labour in her study of flight attendants and bill collectors. Since then various researchers have subsequently expanded the topic to various different types of workers including teachers (Blackmore 1996), nurses (James 1992; O'Brien 1994), lawyers (Pierce 1996), police (Stenross ; Kelinman 1989) and caterers (Phornprapha ; Guerrier 1997).

Emotional labour could be seen as the management or display of appropriate emotions while working, requiring ' one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others. ' (Hochschild 1983: 7). A medium sized chain of English pubs has agreed to participate in the study and will be referred to as the ' Coaching Inn Company' The company has grown rapidly, and developed a portfolio of approximately 170 individual units widely spread around England.

Most of these outlets offer accommodation andfood, often with a relatively low reliance on wet (alcohol) sales, reflecting the apparent trends of the pub-going market towards other revenue generators such as food and accommodation (Williams 1996). The company has a relatively ' soft' type of branding, with a number of individual outlets of differing character, each supporting a wide customer base. In the past it had been the policy of head office to give unit managers quite a free hand in the running of their property.

However, there has been an increasing level of standardisation in some areas (with more standardised wine lists, menus, and accommodation offers, such as weekend breaks), and a central reservations system was increasingly used for accommodation. This approach to branding, with the unit distinctiveness being valued by head office and seen as a marketing opportunity, provided an early hint about the organisation's likely approach to emotional labour. Research Aim

The project aims to explore the nature of emotional labour in service interaction in United Kingdom public houses, and explore the extent to which it is affected by the gender of individual staff members. Key research objectives 1. To identify the impacts caused by emotional labour among employees involved in pub service. 2. To discover and evaluate coping strategies utilised by service staff engaged in the performance of emotional labour in relation to those suggested by employers, trainers and in the literature. . To recommend measures that could be adopted by organisations and individuals to improve employees' experience of emotional labour to the benefit of employers, employees and customers. Overview of the Literature Literature There are various different types of emotional labour including ' personalizing an impersonal relation' (Hochschild 1983: 109), refraining from reacting to abusive behaviour, and maintaining a perpetual, sincere smile' (Macdonald ; Sirianni 1996: 9).

Hochschild (1983) introduced the term ' feeling rules' to explain emotional norms, although if Scherer's (1996) definition of emotion, including not only feeling but also neurophysiological responses and motor expression, is to be adopted, the implied dominance of ' feeling' should be treated cautiously.

Ashforth and Humphrey (1993: 89) approach this issue by suggesting that ' display rules' is a more appropriate term, as emotional labour appears to be primarily concerned with ' publicly expressed' emotions.

Both of these concepts appear to have value, although neither, taken individually, satisfactorily includes all the elements of emotion and emotional labour, and a combination of both seems more appropriate. Display rules may seem more useful in the study of the subject, especially from a behaviourist point of view, but to fully understand their nature and impacts, actual feelings, cognition and physiological state should probably be examined as well. Various possible negative impacts of emotional labour on staff have been suggested including jobstress(Adelmann 1995) employee burnout (Ledgerwood et al. 997), emotional exhaustion (Wharton 1993), and feeling ' phony' when portraying false emotion to customers (Hochschild 1983). It should be pointed out, however, that positive effects of emotional labour have also been suggested with staff often enduring some less pleasant aspects of service work for ' the chance to interact with other people' (Riley et al 1998) and gaining satisfaction from such work. Weatherly ; Tanisk (1993) examined various methods used by customer-contact workers to deal with role stress that seem relevant to emotional labour.

These include: 1. Actual avoidance of contact, perhaps by avoiding eye contact so as not to have to take an order or deal with a complaint. 2. Reacting to and/or educating the client - Hochschild (1983: 127) recounts an incident when a flight attendant was asked by a customer why she wasn't smiling; she tried to pass the role onto him, asking him to smile and telling him to ' freeze, and hold that for fifteen hours. ' 3. Engaging customers (e. g.

asking them for help) in the service provision to distract them from making demands. . Mindlessness, relying on scripts and pre-programmed behaviour for fulfilling a role. 5. Over-acting, ascribing their actions to a role rather than themselves as individuals. Public Houses There has been relatively little academic research in the public house sector in recent years. This is of some concern given the considerable size of this part of the hospitality industry - it has been suggested that pubs represent the third most popular type of eating out establishment in the UK (Mintel Publications 1991).

The public houseenvironmentseems likely to require a considerable amount of emotional labour when dealing with customers due to the consumption of alcohol that takes place. This is likely to lead to a level of ' disinhibition' (Smith 1985a: 32) of customer behaviour that could cause problems for staff. The presence and relatively easy access to alcohol could also result in staff developing drinking problems which may affect their work performance generally and emotionally.

Pub landlords seem especially susceptible to the demands of emotional labour as, it can be argued that ' the publicans' sociability and relational network is focused around the ' regulars' who form the dominant group of users' (Smith 1985a). This suggests that the publican's social life is dominated by work contacts, especially since most individuals live on the premises. This was particularly well demonstrated by Smith (1885b: 295) when describing the publican of a ' rough working-class pub' who ' was behind the bar less often than in front of it' with his regular customers.

Relatively little seems to have been written about other service employees in pubs, although these people are in the front-line of the service encounter,

and as such, are likely to be able to offer valuable insights into emotional labour. Gender Gender issues have been addressed in much of the literature dealing with both emotional labour (e. g. Hochschild 1983; Pierce 1996) and pubs/alcohol (e. g. Hey 1986; Hunt ; Satterlee 1987; Gough ; Edwards 1998).

Some (if rather dated) literature deals with gender differences in the pub trade. Hey (1986: 43), for instance, suggested that the female bar staff member is expected to be a ' sexually provocative, friendly, sympathetic, and ' mature', experienced woman', while male bar staff ' wear dark suits, bow ties, shake cocktail mixers and are monstrously efficient. ' More recently, Folgero ; Fjeldstadt (1995) suggested that women employed in the service industry are likely to be subjected to sexual harassment by both colleagues and customers.

Hey (1986: 44) considered that women bar staff were expected to be ' socially available' and engage in ' Pseudo-flirtation' when a customer purchases a drink for them, although suggesting such expectations are limited to female staff appears to disagree with the researcherspersonal experiencewhen working as a male bar person. Research Design This will be an empirical research. It is proposed to conduct a small number of case studies in a selection of public houses, preferably owned and operated by a single chain.

A singlecase studymay produce distorted results, as each pub is likely to have unique characteristics and pubs often have relatively small workforces from which to generate data. A detailed study of a large number of outlets also seems impractical given time and resource limitations. It is suggested that two pubs could be investigated over a two month period, depending on

the type of access granted, allowing the researcher sufficient time to develop a reasonable familiarity with each, and generate sufficient and trustworthy data.

It should be stressed, however, that this study aims to explore a relatively new area in considerable depth and will not seek to generalise any findings to the public house industry as the case study approach will be adopted in order to understand the phenomena to be studied rather than their ' incidence' (Yin 1989: 55). Ethnographictechniques will be utilised with the researcher employing participantobservationof the individual pubs to be studied.

Fetterman (1998: 1) described ethnography as ' the art andscienceof describing a group orculture,' relying largely on participant observation (observation by a field-worker who takes part in the daily life of the society being studied) for data gathering, although numerous additional data collection techniques are available to the ethnographer for triangulation purposes. This is based on the idea that, by striving to find the locals' point of view (Narayan 1993) the field-worker will be suitably equipped to understand why individuals within a social group do what they do, not simply recount observed phenomena.

The participant observation will be conducted by working as a front-line bar person in each of the sampled pubs. Although this requires the co-operation of individual unit managers from the chain of public houses, major problems of access are not anticipated given the demand for experienced bar staff. This will enable the researcher to develop an in-depth understanding

(Sandiford ; Ap 1998) of the outlets, their staff and the processes involved in the emotional labour conducted in the work environment.

The participant observation will not be exclusively conducted in the work setting, as the social activities of staff are likely to provide a more holistic representation of the emotional demands and effects of pub work. Both informal and formal semi-structured interviews will be conducted with customers, service staff, line management and head office management to gain an insight into the views and experiences of different levels of employees throughout the company.

Such interviews will also help audit the project's findings at each stage of the analysis. Given the large number and different types of pubs in the United Kingdom, it is necessary to develop a view of the types of pub to be sampled. Primary consideration will be given to the size of pub, as, given the project's objectives, it would be inappropriate to spend a long period of observation in a pub operated solely by a management couple with no, or very few, customer service staff.

Giving an arbitrary minimum number of service staff at this stage also seems premature, although it is clear that the pubs to be studied should have a sufficient number of service staff, both full and part-time, to enable the researcher to address the research questions effectively. It would be desirable to target a mixture of geographical and demographic pub locations for the study, hopefully including one rural, and one urban setting which would provide different perspectives for the research and result in a variety of service phenomena for analysis.

A flexible time plan has been developed, with the two months to review the literature more fully, conduct the pilot study and seek formal access to a pub company for the main study. The next 2 months will be used to collect the data, with on-going analysis, followed by 2 months for completing the analysis and the final report. Ethics Participant observation presents researchers with various ethical dilemmas, as to inform research subjects that they are being investigated can result in them behaving abnormally.

However, it is felt that participating in the pubs to be studied for relatively long periods will help the researcher to integrate well into the work team even when known to be a researcher, and allow other members of staff to accept the researcher, thus minimising abnormal behaviour. Customers seem to present more of an ethical question, as it is not practical to explain to each one that they are being observed (Franklin 1985: 9). In this project, however, staff and their reactions to the emotional demands of the job are the main foci of attention so it is felt that this is a relatively minor problem.

Treatment of the Data The data will take various forms - the researcher will keep a daily personal journal containing field notes, personal observations and reflections on situations that arise; formal (and some informal) interviews will be recorded on audio tape whenever possible, and transcribed to avoid mistakes and mis-interpretations copies of these will be issued to interviewees, when possible, for member checking, following a similar audit trail to that used by Sandiford (1997) especially related to the interpretation of data; relevant company documentation (e. g. raining manuals, policy statements, etc.) will be examined, if permitted, to provide additional information related to emotional labour within the company. The data will

undergo ethnographic analysis in order to develop a full picture of emotional labour. The researcher will follow the framework utilised in his MPhil research (Sandiford 1997) and outlined by Spradley (1980). Such a systematic approach to the analysis, through three major stages, will result in thereconstructionof audited cultural themes related to the phenomenon of emotional labour which will provide the basis for the resultant thesis.

Planning See Gantt chart in Appendix A for a breakdown of the activities and the time required to complete them. Resources Required * Main researcher for 6 months, bar experience essential * Typist for 5 days to transcribe interviews * Access to academic library databases and Inter Library Loan * Digital voice recorder to record interviews (? 80) * Laptop to record daily logs while away from home (? 400) * Transport costs to and from Pubs, if pub not local (up to ? 200) * Accommodation if pub not local (? 1600) * Binding (? 100) Risk Analysis

Risk| Impact (I)| Prob (P)| I x P| Contingency| 4 week observation can't be completed| 3| 1| 3| Organise stand-by pub, optionally delay completion of research| Data lost| 3| 1| 3| Ensure regular backups to secure source| Companies/Pubs won't participate| 3| 2| 6| Establish possibilities early. Take advantage of 1: 1 networking opportunities. Solicit help from members of ULMS| Technologyfails| 2| 1| 2| Ensure backup solutions are available| Lack of co-operation with bar staff| 3| 1| 3| Ensure they understand the non-threatening nature of the study – not management driven.

Provide support and understanding of their situation. | Quality CriteriaInterviewquestions to be approved by supervisor and Head office contact before being used. Minimum of 6 weeks spent observing bar

interactions Minimum of 6 interviews with customers Minimum of 8 bar staff interviews (at least 2 part-time and 2 full-time, and at least 3 males and 3 females) Minimum of 2 Bar manager interviews At least 1 interview with head office staff All interview transcripts to be approved by interviewee before being analysed All references to company to be made anonymous before publishing.

Dissertation to be written using plain English, 12pt Roman, double spaced, HarvardReferencing, bound in maroon cloth covered boards with gold lettering. Monthly progress updates to supervisor and Head office contact.

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