

## **EMOTIONS AT WORK**

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### **Abstract**

The workplace is just as emotional as any other place in our life. Emotions find expression at workplace as they cannot be separated from a person. Human beings are emotional and they bring their emotions at workplace. Emotions play a large role in how an organisation communicates within itself and to the outside world. Positive emotions in the workplace help employees obtain favourable outcomes including achievement and job enrichment whereas negative emotions increase the workplace deviance. Socialisation, training and situation affect the emotional expression. Emotion work or emotional labour is the expression of organisationally desired emotions in part of once job.

Emotional dissonance occurs when an employee is required to express emotion as which are not genuinely felt in a particular situation. It results in emotional extortion, job dissatisfaction and burnout.

Thus, emotion at work in organisations is an important issue as it has both positive and negative implications. Organisations are now emphasizing the art of managing emotions as they play an important role in all the crucial processes. *The following conceptual paper explains the various concepts which are related to the human emotions at work.*

**Key words:** Emotions, Emotional Labour, Emotional Dissonance. Burnout.

## **EMOTIONS AT WORK**

### **Introduction**

Emotions find expression at work as they cannot be separated from a person. Human beings are emotional and they bring their emotions to the work. Emotions play an important role at the workplace. Earlier organisations tried to keep themselves emotion free as they were considered impediment to practical behaviour. There was a belief that emotions interfered with an employee's ability to work effectively. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the role that emotions play in the workplace. (Fisher & Ashknasy, 2000).

### **CONCEPT OF EMOTION**

Emotion can be more clearly understood by analysing its meaning, definitions and the distinction between affect, emotions and mood.

### **Meaning of Emotion**

Emotions are intense feeling that are directed at someone or something. Initially the word emotion meant migration i.e. movement from one place to another as it is derived from the Latin words 'ex' which means out and 'movere' which means to move. With the passage of time the word emotion started being used to denote an excited mental state of individual.

### **Definitions**

According to **Van Maanen and Kunda**(1989, p.53), emotions are "ineffable feelings of the self-referential sort", and are comprehensively defined as "self-referential feelings an actor (employee) experiences or, at least claims to experience in regard to the performances he or she brings off in the social world."

**Ashforth and Humphrey** (1993) further define emotions as an “ integral and inseparable part of everyday organisational life. From moments of frustration or joy, grief or fear, to an enduring sense of dissatisfaction or commitment, the experience of work is saturated with feeling”.

According to **Hess** (2001), “emotions in everyday language, can simply refer to feelings states such as happiness, excitement, love, fear or hate.”

### **Basic Emotions**

Various research efforts have been made to limit and define the emotion into basic set of emotions. Emotions include anger, contempt, enthusiasm, envy, fear, frustration, disappointment, embarrassment, disgust, happiness, hate, hope, jealousy, joy, love, pride, surprise and sadness.

**Rene Descartes**, the founder of modern philosophy, identified six” simple and primitive passions” – wonder, love, hatred, desire, joy and sadness- and argued that all the others are composed of some of these six or species of them.

Researchers have agreed on six essentially universal emotions i.e. anger, fear, sadness, happiness, disgust and surprise-with most other emotions subsumed under one of these six categories.

Some researchers even plot these six emotions along a continuum: happiness-surprise-fear-sadness-anger-disgust.

### **Distinction between Affect, Emotions and Moods**

Affect is a wider term and it includes emotions and mood. It is defined as a broad range of feelings that people experience.

Emotions refer to the feelings experienced towards an object, person or event that create

readiness.

Moods are feelings that tend to be less intense than emotions and that often lack a contextual stimulus.

### **Review of Literature**

1. People differ in their ability to manage their emotions as well as in their ability to regulate and alter the affective reactions of others (Salovey and Mayer, 1989-90)
2. People are motivated not only by the rational exchange approach (Vroom, 1964), but also by the extent to which each contents provide them with such experiences as joy, excitement, surprise and frustration (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1995)
3. Grandey (2000) has defined emotional labour as the process of regulating both feelings and expressions for organisational goals.
4. Hochschild(1983) used the term emotional work to refer to any attempt to modify the experience or experience of a constantly felt emotion.

### **Emotional Labour**

Emotional labour is an employee's expression of organisationally desired emotions during interpersonal transactions at work.

According to Fulmer & Barry, 2009, Emotional Labour means "effort, planning and control needed to express organisationally desired emotion during personal transactions."

Hochschild defined Emotional Labor as 'the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display for a wage.'

According to Diefendroff and Gosserand(2003), Employees engage in emotional labour to

influence the emotions of others so that work goals can be achieved.

The service sector employees are required to display emotions as a part of their sale. While displaying these emotions they are involved in surface acting and deep acting. Surface Acting means displaying of those emotions which are required by the job. Deep Acting means that the employees try to experience those emotions which they have to express.

This process surface acting and deep acting may lead to Emotional Dissonance.

### **Emotional Dissonance.**

Emotional dissonance occurs when an employee is required to express emotion as which are not genuinely felt in a particular situation. It results in emotional extortion, stress, job dissatisfaction and burnout. Emotional dissonance has been related to emotional exhaustion (Abraham,1998; Morris & Feldman, 1997).

### **Burnout**

The signs of burnout are emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment. Burnout is a result of stress. According to Jackson, Schwab & Schuler,1986 Burnout occurs when an employee becomes overly emotionally involved in interactions with customers and has little way to replenish those emotional resources being spent.

### **Importance of emotions in organisations**

Emotions play a very important role in the organisations. They can:

- a) Help in generating multiple future plans(flexible planning);
- b) Improve the decision- making process due to a better understanding of one's
- c) emotional reaction(creative thinking);
- d) Facilitate cognitive processes such as creativity on the one hand and punctuality on the other hand(mood redirected attention); and

- e) Enhance persistence regarding challenging tasks(motivating emotions) (Salovey and Mayer, 1989-1990).
- f) Help in Selection
- g) Help in Decision Making
- h) Help in Leadership
- i) Help in Conflict Management
- j) Help in Stress Management
- k) Help in Motivation
- l) Help in Group Dynamics

### **Conclusion**

Thus we can conclude that emotion at work in organisations is an important issue as it has both positive and negative implications. Organisations are now emphasizing the art of managing emotions as they play an important role in all the crucial processes.

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