Antecedents of emotional labour for holiday representatives: A framework for tourism workers

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Abstract

Despite advances in the tourism literature on emotional labour (EL), there is still a need to provide a detailed understanding of the antecedents because of their impact on tourism employees' workplace performance. This research presents a comprehensive framework of these antecedents by adopting a multi-method qualitative research design. Data was collected from 21 holiday representatives employed overseas by UK based tour operators. These employees were selected because they experience one of the highest levels of EL in customer service roles. The findings reveal that EL is multifaceted and complex. It identifies a new category of antecedents related to the work context and the myriad of workplace relationships which impact how these employees construct their EL. It provides insights into job roles where there are no clear distinctions between work and leisure, increasingly identified as typical for tourism workers. The findings inform tour operator policies on recruitment, training, and employee support.

1. Introduction

Emotional labour (EL) is widely acknowledged to be part of the working lives of tourism employees (Guerrier & Adib, 2003; Lee & Madera, 2019; Shani, Uriely, Reichel, & Ginsburg, 2014; Wong & Wang, 2009). The way these workers perform their jobs influences tourist satisfaction and creates memorable holiday experiences (Wong & Wang, 2009; Koikkalainen, Valkonen, & Huilaja, 2016; Pagliarin, 2017). Tourism employees, therefore, are expected to show positive organisationally desired emotions such as cheerfulness, friendliness or empathy (Saxena, 2016; Van Dijk & Kirk, 2008) during service interactions regardless of their true feelings (Pizam, 2004; Wong & Wang, 2009).

The existing tourism studies have focused on surface, deep and genuine acting and have taken a singular approach to understanding the specific determinants of the antecedents of EL. Emotional intelligence (Kim, Yoo, Lee, & Kim, 2012; Kim, Han, & Kang, 2019; Lee & Ok, 2012), personality (Gursoy, Boylu, & Avci, 2011; Kim, 2008; Sohn & Lee, 2012), mindfulness (Li, Wong, & Kim, 2017), exhaustion and work-family tensions (Zhao, Mattila, & Ngan, 2014) and national culture (Newnham, 2017) were studied as separate individual antecedents of EL. Job characteristics (Gursoy et al., 2011; Kim, 2008), organisational support (Hur, Moon, & Jun, 2013; Lam & Chen, 2012), customer misconduct (Hu, Hu, & King, 2017; Karatepe, Yorganci, & Haktanir, 2009) and human resource procedures (autonomy, recruitment, selection and training) (Johanson & Woods, 2008) have been the focus of the contextual aspects of the antecedents of EL. More recent research (cf Shani et al., 2014; Xu, Zheng, & Huo, 2020) has started to explore a more holistic perspective of the EL antecedents.

The tourism literature falls short in providing an in-depth explanation of the breadth of the antecedents of EL that is necessary to understand the outcomes and support mechanisms required by service workers. This research investigates both the contextual and individual antecedents of EL. By doing so, it enables a more comprehensive and diverse understanding of the employees' emotional reactions when engaging in service work. The antecedents of EL, also known as predictors or influencers, are those factors which induce certain emotional responses in employees who consequently determine how this is performed (Schaubroeck & Jones, 2000). This study contributes to the tourism literature through an intentional investigation which provides a much needed and thorough holistic picture of the factors which lead to EL, and it determines if there are any missing antecedents which are specific to the tourism industry. This research responds to the call for further investigation into the antecedents of EL in the

tourism industry (Shani, et al., 2014; Xu et al., 2020), through the development of research/theory which is focused, relevant and beneficial for tourism (Lucas & Deery, 2004).

This article focuses on holiday representatives who are an important element of a package tour (Page, 2011; Wong & Wang, 2009). These employees are the interface between the tour operator, the destination and holidaymakers and they build positive relationships with the tourists (Bastakis, Buhalis, & Butler, 2004; Constanti & Gibbs, 2005; Chiang & Chen, 2014; Tsaur & Lin, 2014). The role of a holiday representative is complex because of the blurred boundaries between work and leisure. Unlike other service jobs, such as hotel employees, where the interactions are transitory, these representatives are in constant contact with their customers (Guerrier & Adib, 2003). They participate in 'leisure' activities such as partying and drinking with the tourists whilst recognising that they are at work. These employees experience one of the highest levels of EL amongst customer service roles (Constanti & Gibbs, 2005) because of prolonged service interactions. Despite attention being given to the tour operating sector (Chiang & Chen, 2014; Sharpe, 2005; Torland, 2011; Wong & Wang, 2009), and the growth of the tour operating industry, the EL of holiday representatives is still poorly understood (Mackenzie & Kerr, 2013; Saxena, 2016). In this study, the need for a richer and more practical understanding of EL is addressed. The findings provide thought-provoking theoretical insights and managerial implications for how tourism employers can establish an appropriate work environment which is supportive of their employees. This research helps in formalising EL for the tourism industry so that it can be addressed from a managerial perspective by focusing on holiday representatives.

This paper is structured as follows. Firstly, the literature on EL and its antecedents are reviewed as the lens for exploring this focus on holiday representatives. A discussion of the methodological approach used is explained and this is followed by a reporting and analysis of the findings. To conclude, the research outcomes are examined and the implications for tourism theory and practice are offered.

2. Literature review

2.1 Emotional labour

Emotional labour was defined by Hochschild (1983) in her seminal work as 'the management of feelings to publicly create desired facial and bodily displays [which] is sold for a wage and has an exchange value' (p.7). According to Hochschild (1983), EL occurs in jobs which entail voice-to-voice or face-to-face contact with the public where emotions are shown to evoke emotional states in others and where the organisation has control over these emotions. These emotional requirements are referred to in the literature as display rules or feeling rules.

EL is critically important for the service industry, including tourism, where 'service with a smile' is an essential requirement for employees who must suppress any negative feelings, they may have during working hours in order to improve customer satisfaction (Hur, Moon, & Han, 2015; Grandey, 2003). Wong and Wang (2009) emphasise that to achieve competitive advantage, organisations expect appropriate emotional expressions from their employees. However, conveying these organisationally desired emotions is not always easy for service workers and many experience emotional dissonance (Hochschild, 1983) which occurs when one's true emotions are not in line with the feeling rules. For example, waiters still need to smile although they might feel angry because of a rude customer. To put across the right displays, service employees need to act. The way in which these emotional displays are met has been a focus of EL research (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). Most literature focuses on surface and deep acting strategies (Gabriel, Cheshin, Moran, & van Kleef, 2016). Surface acting entails faking unfelt emotions and suppressing the felt ones. Only the outward behaviours such as facial expressions or gestures are changed; the inner feelings remain the same (Hochschild, 1983). On the other hand, when deep acting, individuals attempt to control their inner feelings so as to be consistent with the display rules and thoughts are invoked in order to induce the appropriate emotions which are displayed through empathy (Grandey, 2000). Surface acting can be viewed as inauthentic by customers whereas deep acting leads to an increase in customer satisfaction as it is perceived to be more genuine (Grandey, 2003; Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011).

108 There are situations where individuals experience emotional harmony which occurs when their affective
109 states are congruent with the display rules (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). This is referred to as naturally felt
110 emotions or genuine acting (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). Scholars are divided over this strategy
111 because some do not consider it as an individual strategy (Van Dijk, Smith, & Cooper, 2011). Others
112 are of the opinion that it should be regarded since it still requires effort on the part of employees who
113 are trying to ensure they are meeting the organisation's display rules (cf. Diefendorff Croyle, &
114 Gosserand, 2005; Wong & Wang, 2009). This EL component can be unintentional when employees are
115 incapable of meeting the display rules or intentional when they simply do not want to obey them (Rafaeli
116 & Sutton, 1987).

117
118 *2.2 Antecedents of emotional labour*

119
120 Figure 1 summarises the antecedents of EL derived from the literature. In her seminal work, Grandey
121 (2000) introduces situational cues, and organisational and individual factors as shapers of EL. This
122 categorisation is also used in this research. The situational and organisational factors are categorised as
123 contextual factors (Shani et al., 2014).

124
125 *Insert Figure 1 here*

126
127
128 *2.2.2   Contextual antecedents*

129
130 *2.2.2.1 Situational*

131
132 Situational antecedents refer to the employee-customer interaction and the emotional demands of the
133 role (Diefendorff et al., 2005). Frequency, duration, routineness, intensity, variety and display rules are
134 particularly important situational antecedents as they increase the need for individuals to fake or modify
135 their emotions in order to meet their job requirements (Grandey, 2000; Morris & Feldman, 1996).
136 Intense customer interactions can impact one's emotions and consequently the strategies used by
137 employees to display the appropriate workplace emotions (Grandey, 2000). Additionally, an increase
138 in frequency and duration of customer interaction entails a higher level of EL which can lead to
139 emotional exhaustion for employees (Gursoy et al., 2011; Torland, 2011). Frequency has been linked
140 to surface acting (cf. Van Dijk & Kirk, 2008), deep acting (cf. Kim, 2008) and naturally felt emotions
141 (cf. Diefendorff et al., 2005). Likewise, an increase in duration can lead to more deep acting (Kim,
142 2008). These situational antecedents require employees to manage their emotions at work.

143
144 Regarding the intensity of emotions, Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) mention that more intense
145 emotional displays are linked to deep acting. Roles which involve a high variety of emotions such as
146 teachers require more EL (Morris & Feldman, 1996; Zapf, 2002). Zapf (2002) argues that having less
147 routine in a job leads to more deep acting as there are more attempts to actually feel the required
148 emotions. Physical demands of the role such as hospitality workers' long hours, negative workplace
149 events such as dealing with rude customers and mistreatment from customers make it difficult to engage
150 in more genuine forms of EL and has been linked to surface acting (Grandey, Kern, & Frone, 2007;
151 Hochschild, 1983) and these negative interactions can lead to emotional deviance (Grandey et al., 2007).

152
153 *2.2.2 Organisational*

154
155 Organisational antecedents include informal and formal practices which are used to influence workers'
156 behaviour in order to create acceptable emotional expressions during interactions with customers
157 (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). Previous research has explored job autonomy, perceived organisational
158 support, supervisory and co-worker support. EL is less difficult for employees who have autonomy as
159 they have more control over their emotional displays (Gabriel et al., 2016). Morris and Feldman (1996)
160 state that autonomy leads to less emotional dissonance and increases the likelihood of showing genuine
161 emotions, but that it can also lead to emotional deviance as employees are more likely to violate the

display rules. On the other hand, research by Johnson and Spector (2007) shows how less autonomy could lead to more surface acting as employees' experience greater job dissatisfaction.

Customer service training is another important antecedent because it helps employees better manage their service interactions (Grandey, 2003). For example, these employees engage in deep acting if they recall their training when dealing with angry customers (Gabriel et al., 2016). During training, employees are encouraged to deep act rather than surface act in order to reduce their emotional exhaustion (Diefendorff & Richard, 2003; Goodwin, Groth, & Frenkel, 2011; Lv, Xu, & Ji, 2012). Having positive relationships with supervisors and co-workers is also an organisational antecedent. Unsupportive managers can cause employees to surface act with customers through faking their emotions (Shani et al., 2014) whilst supportive supervisors can lead to higher levels of deep acting (Lam & Chen, 2012). Employees' perception of the manner in which the organisation views their contribution and is concerned about their well-being is known as perceived organisational support (POS) (Baran, Shanock, & Miller, 2012). For example, individuals who feel supported at work, are more likely to engage in deep acting (Moon , Hur, & Jun 2013) and naturally felt emotions (Lv et al., 2012) as they feel more valued.

2.2.3 Individual antecedents

There are also individual factors which could influence how EL is performed by employees. Personality has an impact on a person's EL (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Diefendorff et al., 2005; Judge, Woolf, & Hurst, 2009; Sohn & Lee, 2012). Overall, the consensus is that EL is more effective when an individual's personality matches the display rules of the organisation which would bring about an increase in emotional harmony and a decrease in emotional dissonance (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Chu, Baker, & Murmann, 2012).

Gender has been identified as an antecedent of EL, but the findings are inconsistent as some researchers have shown that women engage in emotion management in a more skilful manner (Hochschild, 1983; Kruml & Geddes, 2000) whilst others have not found any disparity between the EL of men and women (Sohn & Lee, 2012; Wong & Wang, 2009). Age is another demographic which the literature has identified as an influence on EL. Some scholars are of the opinion that older individuals are better at managing their emotions (Gross et al., 1997). Dahling and Johnson (2013) found that mature employees tend to express naturally felt emotions and deep act in an easier manner as they are more motivated to feel positive at work. Regarding experience, employees who have less role experience tend to use surface acting during their interactions with customers (Hochschild, 1983; Grandey, 2003). Torland (2011) states that as individuals progress in their role, they start using deep acting and later on will put across genuine emotions as they would identify more with their role.

Genuine emotions or the use of deep acting is more likely to be used by employees who have a strong customer orientation because they enjoy these interactions (Maneotis, Grandey, & Krauss, 2014; Wu & Shie, 2017). Emotional intelligence has been linked to EL. Individuals with a high emotional intelligence, which refers to one's ability to understand and observe others' emotions and manage their own (Salovey & Mayer, 1990), are more confident in social interactions and are more likely to use deep acting during these encounters which can contribute to a higher job performance (Kim et al., 2019).

The literature has demonstrated that there is a multiplicity of factors which shape the EL of tourism workers. These are conceptualised as job oriented EL and employee oriented EL (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). Recommendations have been made around employee personality characteristics (Sohn & Lee, 2012; Kim, 2008) and organisational training (Lee & Madera, 2019) in addition to supervisory support (Shani et al., 2014) in assisting employees in managing their EL. These antecedents are not trivial, and it is in the interest of tourism organisations to understand how they affect their employees. This timely study responds to the need for further investigation into the range of antecedents shaping the EL of tourism workers, moving the conversation beyond customer service encounters and discrete types of antecedents. Such a line of enquiry will aid employers in providing more directed organisational support to enable employees to offer good quality service.

3. Research Methods

This research focuses on holiday representatives employed by UK based tour operators and who worked overseas. The popularity of British package holidays was on the increase prior to COVID-19 (ABTA, 2020) and is predicted to reach 19.831 million by 2023 (Mintel, 2019). Post COVID-19, package holidays will continue to hold appeal for British overseas tourists especially during times of uncertainty (ABTA, 2020) due to continuous product innovations, financial protection (Holloway & Humphreys, 2016; Mintel, 2019) and the ability for quicker customer responses to alleviate travellers' concerns.

To investigate the antecedents of EL of holiday representatives, the study utilises multiple qualitative approaches including participant observation and in-depth, semi-structured interviews to collect the data. Ethical approval was obtained from the researchers' institution before any data was gathered. To comprehend the EL antecedents holiday representatives faced, rich descriptions of their lived experiences were required (Seidman, 2006). These chosen methods allow the researchers to understand their perspectives and comprehend the meanings they attribute to the phenomena (actions, beliefs, values, decisions etc.) in their world of work (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Snape & Spencer, 2007). In-depth interviews and interpretive analysis are also seen as a contribution to the EL literature since most previous research relies strongly on quantitative analysis (Shani et al., 2014).

3.1 Participant Observation

A seven-day package holiday with a British tour operator was booked to gain an insiders' perspective (Jorgensen, 1989) of holiday representatives' interactions and how they create meaning with regards to EL. Overt observations of the holiday representatives at work occurred in the lobby of a hotel. This was an unstructured, naturalistic observation where as much detail as possible was collected without a formal schedule (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Notes were compiled on the activities the holiday representatives carried out in the hotel, the requirements of their job and their interactions with customers. Video logs were completed at the end of each day to recollect the observations. These observations facilitated a rapport and helped to build an empathetic relationship during the interviews (Filho, 2013). This observation also confirmed the research context and the interview questions identified from the literature which focuses on the range of antecedents, the job role and customer interactions.

3.2 Pilot Study

Five pilot interviews were firstly undertaken to determine whether the questions developed from the literature and observations would generate the necessary data to answer the research questions (Silverman, 2010), to refine the interview questions and ensure the research instrument as a whole worked well (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Creswell, 2013). The pilot revealed that in-depth, semi-structured interviews were necessary for exploring the work of holiday representatives as they produced richer, relevant data about their lived experiences (Goulding, 2005). This type of interview allows flexibility as the researchers were able to probe and encourage participants to talk more about their beliefs and emotional experiences (Gray, 2014). The pilot study was also important in establishing the sampling frame (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). It revealed that respondents who were currently holiday representatives or those who had left this role in the last five years would be appropriate to interview because they would be able to recall their experiences more easily.

3.3 Interviews

Overall, a total of 21 interviews were conducted and their profiles can be seen in Table 1. Snowball sampling through personal networks and the social networking site of LinkedIn were used to recruit participants. This approach was successful in identifying a population as hard to reach as holiday representatives (Baltar & Brunet, 2012) and those respondents relevant to this research (Patton, 1990). It also ensured appropriate representation (Browne, 2005) as most of the holiday representatives who

271 were interviewed worked in different hotels, resorts and countries dependent on their posting from the
272 UK based tour operator. Participants were recruited without the assistance of tour operators to ensure
273 full anonymity and confidentiality and to encourage better rapport.
274
275 During the interviews, participants were asked questions relating to their job role, interactions with
276 customers, colleagues, managers and suppliers, their views of the organisation they worked for, their
277 free time and the consequences they experienced in their job role from performing EL. The interviews
278 lasted on average 60 minutes and were undertaken at the convenience of the interviewees either face-
279 to-face, via Skype, telephone or email. Informed consent was obtained from interviewees and
280 anonymity and confidentiality were maintained by using aliases. Data saturation (repetition of
281 responses) was reached at the 16th interview but a further 5 interviews were undertaken to ensure no
282 new knowledge was excluded (Saunders et al., 2018).
283
284
285 *Insert Table 1 here*
286
287
288 3.4 *Data Analysis*
289
290 Interviews were recorded and then transcribed verbatim using Dragon speech recognition software and
291 inputted into MAXQDA, a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software. Inductive, thematic
292 analysis was used to firstly, identify emerging themes and secondly, to validate and qualify them
293 (Burnard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008) through following an iterative process of
294 enabling the themes to emerge whilst the data was being reduced (Dey, 1993; Miles & Huberman, 1994;
295 Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Braun and Clarke's (2006) technique for data analysis was
296 followed: familiarisation with the data, initial code generation, searching for themes, assessing themes
297 and defining final themes. The participant observation data supported a better understanding of the
298 transcripts (Zhang, Kimbu, Lin, & Ngoasong, 2020). The main themes and sub-themes were constantly
299 compared and contrasted against the enfolding literature (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and are presented in
300 the next section.
301
302 **4. Findings and Discussion**
303
304 To determine the antecedents of EL, it was important to appreciate holiday representatives
305 understanding of this. Three themes emerged from the data analysis: work environment, context-
306 specific and individual antecedents. Our analysis led to the development of Figure 2 which depicts these
307 main themes and the accompanying sub-themes.
308
309 *4.1 Work environment antecedents*
310
311 The study reveals the prominent role of the work environment, in particular the characteristics of the
312 job and the interactions in the workplace, as influencing the emotions and consequently the EL of these
313 holiday representatives. The interviews with the holiday representatives offered extensive details about
314 their work environment and the different stakeholder relationships within it, as seen in Figure 2 and
315 discussed in depth below.
316
317 *4.1.1 A complex work environment*
318
319 Holiday representatives were exposed to complex working situations which involved heavy workloads,
320 high levels of responsibility and the selling of experiences to customers which intensified the job. The
321 complexity of the work environment is critical to understanding the EL of holiday representatives
322 (Ashkanasy, Hartel, & Daus, 2002; Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Grandey 2000; Morris & Feldman,
323 1996) as this contributed to the creation of emotional dissonance which made it challenging for them to
324 remain professional (Grandey et al., 2015). The irregular and long hours created intense physical

demands leading to physical and emotional exhaustion. R7 describes this situation by stating, 'you are tired, but you can't sit down and have a nap somewhere in front of the guests or something like that. You have to be up and walking around and smiling'.

These representatives also identified a greater emotional burden from the pressures of having to make sales (Wong & Wang, 2009). This was heightened for those who did not agree with the products they were required to promote because they felt they had to honour the service principle of putting customers first while at the same time meeting business targets. Some representatives experienced a 'selling-personal values misfit' as they were honest with their customers about what they were being sold and experienced naturally felt emotions.

Holiday representatives also felt they had a responsibility for safeguarding health and safety and always being on call. This added pressure made it difficult to provide a genuinely friendly service due to the physical hardship of the job. They therefore 'faked' positive emotions such as cheerfulness or enthusiasm through surface acting (Shani et al., 2014) to cope.

* Insert Figure 2 here

4.1.2 A unique work environment

Many respondents described their work as pretending to have fun when they were unhappy and bored. Although they initially enjoyed this 'fun' element, over time the job became unsatisfying to them because in reality it was repetitive and dull. Coupled with this, many representatives were moved around to various destinations in a single season which led some to resign their job because of the nomadic nature of the role.

Respondents compared their work to being in a 'goldfish bowl' because all aspects of their lives were visible to holidaymakers, and they felt they rarely had their own space away from work.

> Really, it's a 24/7 job. You get a day off but you are not actually off, you're always available; you're always made to be available (R8).

They recognised that they were representatives of the tour operator and needed to conduct themselves in line with display rules relating to their looks (hair, covering tattoos) and their uniforms. This extended even to when they were off duty due to the ad-hoc encounters they might have with customers, which they found frustrating. For example, they could not smoke in front of customers. These holiday representatives considered themselves to be aesthetic labourers because they had to look good and personify the desired displays of the tour operator to holidaymakers both on and off the job (Nickson, Warhust & Dutton, 2005; Warhurst & Nickson, 2007; Witz, Warhurst, & Nickson, 2003). This impacted on their overall satisfaction which challenged their ability to convey the required positive emotional displays for their role (Humphrey, Ashforth, & Diefendorff, 2015). Tour operators' aesthetic requirements were more likely to be met by these respondents because their age profile made them more likely to be inclined to conform to such expectations (Besen-Cassino, 2014; Robinson et al., 2019).

The respondents also indicated that they worked in an environment where 'anything can happen' and this influenced the way they coped. The customer interaction was unpredictable as they were confronted with changing clientele, guests losing their belongings, getting arrested or even dying. This increased the job pressure and in contrast to 'service with a smile' these reps had to display emotions such as sadness, tension or fear to support customers. Such unpredictability often involved the quick switching between an intense range of emotions. This requires greater planning, anticipation and emotional effort involving a greater degree of EL (Morris & Feldman, 1996). Some representatives did express dissatisfaction with this element of the job which could lead to long term consequences such as

379 depression. For others, the changeable nature of the job enhanced their working lives (Shuler & Sypher,
380 2000) because they found the challenge of dealing with these situations rewarding.
381
382 *4.2 Relationships*
383
384 EL was influenced by the organisation's stakeholders and the need to maintain a professional work
385 environment even though it may not be required by the business (Carlson, Ferguson, Hunter, & Whitten,
386 2012; Grandey et al., 2007). Four main stakeholder groups were identified in this research: the tour
387 operator, direct line managers, colleagues, and suppliers.
388
389 *4.2.1 Tour operator relationship*
390
391 The holiday representatives interviewed felt that the tour operators did not appreciate the complexity
392 and demands of their jobs and did not provide the level of organisational support required (Rhoades &
393 Eisenberger, 2002). The key antecedents of EL identified in the relationship with the tour operator were
394 the service expectations, pay (including rewards and recognition), training and autonomy. As part of
395 the job requirements, tour operators were not specific about the display rules holiday representatives
396 were expected to display to customers (Wong & Wang, 2009), even though there were certain
397 expectations and societal norms regarding how they behaved (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). These
398 representatives did deliver 'service with a smile' (Humphrey et al., 2015) as they knew they were
399 representing the tour operator (Pugh, 2001).
400
401   We always used to call it like 'the rep smile' because even if you're feeling tired you still need
402   to put that smile on and you still need to be approachable … you're still the face of the company
403   at the end of the day (R5).
404
405 Many representatives commented on how they found this difficult as they felt they were portraying a
406 manufactured personality. As stated by R8, 'you don't have a chance to put yourself across, your own
407 personality'. Over time, this display rule led to emotional burnout (Gursoy et al., 2011), turnover and
408 job dissatisfaction (Grandey et. al, 2015). However, the representatives agreed that showing positive
409 emotions through surface acting was beneficial not only for the holidaymakers but also for themselves.
410 Such emotions helped them to get good reviews and meet customer service scores even though the
411 literature asserts that such display rules can have a negative impact on employees (Brotheridge &
412 Grandey, 2002; Humphrey et al., 2015). These rather contradictory results may be explained by the
413 dynamic work environment.
414
415 Representatives often described their relationship with tour operators as 'exploitative' as they felt they
416 were not provided with a fair economic exchange for the work they did (Grandey et al., 2015; Guerrier
417 & Adib, 2003). R11 expressed that, 'the wages for what you have to do isn't enough; for the hours that
418 you are working, for the amount of stress'. Contrary to the existing research (Grandey, Chi, & Diamond,
419 2013), non-monetary rewards and recognition such as having time off work and being praised for a
420 doing a good job, were identified as more important than the monetary incentives. This made
421 representatives feel supported by the organisation and they were more likely to engage in deep acting
422 (Moon et al., 2013).
423
424 Training featured strongly as an antecedent of EL as these representatives felt they could have been
425 trained better. Some, but not all of the tour operators offered in-depth training on customer service both
426 pre-resort and in-resort. Where the training was thought to be inadequate, representatives were left
427 feeling poorly equipped to undertake their jobs effectively.
428
429   If I would have known I had to deal with these situations and I was trained properly before I
430   went out to the resort, I would have thoroughly enjoyed the job (R8).
431
432 Holiday representatives who joined mid-season lost out on the in-resort training and had to learn on the
433 job. Interestingly, some of the representatives indicated that learning on the job was not a disadvantage

434 as they felt better prepared to cope with their role. Shani et al. (2014) observed that on-the-job learning
435 can lead to inadequate customer service and employee dissatisfaction. Contrary to this, these results
436 suggest that value can be gained from on-the-job learning.
437
438 Autonomy was also identified as an antecedent of EL in the relationship with the tour operator.
439 Representatives with limited autonomy felt quite stressed because solving customer related problems
440 took longer than it should as they had to follow the company policies and procedures which meant they
441 could not provide holidaymakers with quick answers. Those representatives who experienced the
442 effects of this 'limited autonomy' would frequently go against the company policy. Such actions helped
443 them to avoid dealing with upset customers and reduced the need to engage in EL strategies (Grandey,
444 2000).
445
446 *4.2.2 Relationship with colleagues*
447
448 Support from colleagues is valuable when dealing with challenging customers because it helps minimise
449 negative emotions and job stress (Grandey, 2000). These constructive interpersonal relationships
450 enabled holiday representatives to offer a more positive 'service with a smile' experience to customers
451 (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Grandey, 2000). This support was related to helping each other,
452 mentoring and being each other's 'overseas family'.
453
454   Your colleagues are everything to you, you need them to cheer you up, to entertain you, to
455   advise you, and just to be your mates (R17).
456
457 The findings highlighted many negatives in terms of this relationship with colleagues which influenced
458 how these representatives performed EL. The blurred lines between work and leisure led to relationships
459 becoming intense which frequently resulted in arguments which impacted the dynamics of the team.
460 These difficulties with colleagues created further stress and tension (Anderson , Chappel, & Provis,
461 2002) leading representatives to surface act with one another. However, this surface acting allowed
462 holiday representatives to continue to feel a sense of belonging and be part of the social fabric of the
463 team (Ozcelik, 2013), which was a positive outcome of using this strategy. Surface acting was also used
464 with each other whilst at work in front of customers to avoid acting unprofessionally. Contrary to the
465 existing research (Hu & Shi, 2015), our findings show that using surface acting with colleagues within
466 the organisation can lead to productive work behaviours.
467
468 *4.2.3 Direct-line managers relationship*
469
470 Employees who feel valued by their employers and consequently more supported at work will tend to
471 use naturally felt emotions (Lv et al., 2012). According to Lam & Chen (2012), this reduces the need to
472 surface act and can shape how employees handle demanding customer interactions through deep acting.
473 This was confirmed from our sample of holiday representatives. Supportive managers helped
474 representatives to improve their customer service skills and provided emotional support. However, most
475 of the findings revealed the influences of an unsupportive managerial relationship which impacted the
476 emotional response of these holiday representatives in terms of how they performed EL (Li & Liang,
477 2016; Wu & Hu, 2013). Furthermore, representatives reported that they felt less confident carrying out
478 their job when they were under the supervision of controlling managers. This led to negative feelings
479 towards their managers which caused them to surface act in order to hide their feelings and remain
480 professional with customers (Carlson et al., 2012; Shani et al., 2014).
481
482   I managed it [the relationship with the negative manager] through maturity, but […] it did have
483   an effect on my morale and maybe my enthusiasm for the job (R5).
484
485 *4.2.4 Suppliers' relationship*
486
487 The relationship with suppliers (for example, hotel employees, coach drivers, local tour leaders) is
488 important in understanding the antecedents of EL of holiday representatives. They work with these

489 suppliers to facilitate the holiday experience. However, the EL literature has not fully explored these
490 relationships (Wong & Wang, 2009).
491
492 The findings demonstrate that a good relationship with the supplier fosters the use of deep acting or
493 naturally felt emotions because these suppliers were emotionally supportive especially when they
494 forewarned representatives of potential service issues. This helped representatives to avoid potential
495 instances of customer dissatisfaction, making them feel less frustrated in undertaking their job. These
496 positive supplier relationships were also financially beneficial. For example, these suppliers offered
497 representatives good deals in local bars and restaurants which saved them money and reduced the
498 pressure of earning commission.
499
500   If you are not selling enough car hires or excursions and your commission rates are really low,
501   you would need to have a good relationship with the suppliers because a lot of the time they
502   would offer you discounts in their restaurants or give you a free meal. So, you […] do it for
503   your own benefit as well [in order] just to survive (R9).
504
505 When holiday representatives had positive relationships with suppliers and customers complained about
506 these suppliers, they would resort to surface acting to empathise with the customers by displaying
507 negative emotions whilst suppressing the positive emotions they felt towards the supplier. Such
508 occurrences are not frequent in the service context (Hochschild 1983; Wong & Wang, 2009).
509
510 Where supplier relationships were not harmonious, it became burdensome (Constanti & Gibbs, 2005)
511 and frustrating for holiday representatives to act professionally. In these instances, holiday
512 representatives resorted to surface acting to ensure their customers were not disadvantaged. Hiding
513 these negative emotions required skilled behaviour and strength (Shani et al., 2014).
514
515 **4.3 Individual antecedents**
516
517 The personal characteristics of holiday representatives themselves cannot be ignored as antecedents of
518 their EL. Personality, age, gender, experience and having a strong prosocial customer orientation were
519 found to be important in how these employees performed EL. This study revealed that the employees
520 who were extroverts were more suited to this job (Humphrey et al., 2015; Kim, 2008) because they
521 appear more confident and found it easier to interact with the holidaymakers. In dealing with difficult
522 situations, they were able to modify their emotions appropriately to match the organisation's display
523 rules through deep acting. In contrast, introverted holiday reps experienced stronger negative emotions
524 when performing EL (Judge et al., 2009; Kim, 2008) which led to increased stress and emotional
525 exhaustion.
526
527   I've known another rep who was a lot more timid than I was and when she used to get shouted
528   at, it did used to upset her (R18).
529
530 Age was also identified as an antecedent of EL for these holiday representatives. Our data shows that
531 younger representatives were a better fit for the role because of the demanding and fast-paced nature of
532 the work which required higher levels of energy. However, the volume of work, the responsibility of
533 the job and dealing with aggressive and angry holidaymakers was often overwhelming for these younger
534 workers. They therefore experienced stronger and more negative emotions which can increase their
535 emotional dissonance requiring them to act in service encounters (Diefendorff et al., 2005; Grandey et
536 al., 2015; Hochschild, 1983).
537
538   It's a lot of responsibility for the young people as well. If you're dealing with the hotel
539   [having] anything between 200 - 500 people, it's a lot for a young person to deal with
540   (R8).
541
542 Part of the holiday representatives' role required effective management of demanding situations with
543 customers. This was considered to be more appropriate for older colleagues because of the maturity and

544 experience they brought to the role which made them more effective at engaging in deep acting. In
545 support of this Gross et al. (1997) stated that older workers were more skilled at emotional regulation.
546
547 Job experience was identified as another antecedent of EL of holiday representatives. As these
548 representatives gained more experience, they became more adept at displaying the appropriate emotions
549 (Wong & Wang, 2009) and engaged more in deep acting. Representatives with little or no experience
550 found the job to be very intense especially when they felt they had not received the appropriate training.
551 These holiday representatives become stressed, nervous and resorted to using surface acting with their
552 customers.
553
554 Gender was mentioned as an antecedent of EL for these holiday representatives. The findings indicated
555 that female representatives, in comparison to their male colleagues, tended to be more empathetic
556 (Torland, 2011) and understanding of customers feelings and were more skilled in their EL performance
557 in certain situations. This aligns to the observations by Grandey (2000) and Hochschild (1983).
558
559 Many respondents discussed the importance of having a strong prosocial customer orientation as an
560 antecedent of EL. The findings showed that representatives with a strong prosocial customer orientation
561 experienced naturally felt emotions because they were generally happy during service encounters.
562 These representatives put their customers first and even in negative customer interactions, they still
563 endeavoured to engage in more authentic forms of emotion regulation (Allen, Pugh, Grandey, & Groth,
564 2010; Maneotis et al., 2014) such as deep acting.
565
566   From a personal point of view, I'd feel guilty if I didn't give my best customer service because
567   they've paid a lot of money to come on holiday (R5).
568
4.4 Context specific antecedents
570
571 Our findings brought to light certain contextually specific factors which must be considered when
572 understanding the antecedents of EL of holiday representatives. Specifically, these were hotel and star-
573 rating, destination size, customer profile and season which are discussed in depth below.
574
4.4.1 Hotel and star-rating
576
577 The results revealed that on an average workday, holiday representatives could work in between 1-7
578 hotels which differed in terms of star levels. The number of hotels worked in, intensified the frequency
579 of service interactions and these representatives found it more beneficial to feign their emotions and
580 surface act (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). Shifting between hotels with different star ratings increased
581 the number of emotions that they had to display as their clientele was different. These representatives
582 perceived customers from five-star hotels as 'posher' and with higher expectations and so acted in a
583 more professional and reserved manner, often engaging in more surface acting. Some representatives,
584 preferred working in these more luxurious hotels. Consequently, for them the work was satisfying, and
585 they could experience more naturally felt emotions.
586
587 The holidaymakers at the lower star hotels were described as more 'down to earth' which some holiday
588 representatives felt more comfortable with. These findings confirm that a personality-hotel star rating
589 fit enabled employees to better identify with their role leading to emotional harmony (Chu et al., 2012).
590
4.4.2 Destination
592
593 The size of the destination was also an important antecedent of EL. Holiday representatives commented
594 that working in a large destination heightened the number of customer interactions due to more
595 holidaymakers, which increased their EL (Morris & Feldman, 1996). However, larger destinations
596 involved working in bigger teams leading to a greater division of labour and a lower individual
597 workload. Larger destinations also offered representatives spaces for them to 'escape' the customers
598 compared to smaller ones.

11

599 Furthermore, these destinations attract various types of holidaymakers such as families, couples, 18–
600 30-year-olds which necessitate different behavioural requirements from the representatives. Working
601 in numerous destinations with a changing clientele throughout a season required representatives to
602 express a large variety of different emotions in quick succession. This strengthened the claim that the
603 role of holiday representatives has a significant level of EL (Morris & Feldman, 1996).

605 The findings also identified that if representatives were placed in destinations which suited their
606 interests or personality, then they were more likely to experience positive feelings whilst at work. A
607 destination-personality fit improved their job performance because they were meeting the emotional
608 requirements of the job.

610 *4.4.3 Customer profile*

612 The demographics of the customer determined the way representatives interacted with holidaymakers.
613 This knowledge enabled them to provide a more personalised and flexible service and allowed them to
614 engage with more authentic emotions which Wong and Wang (2009) referred to as the customisation
615 of emotional transactions with the appropriate emotional displays. Representatives commented on how
616 they changed their approach depending on whether they were dealing with older vs younger customers
617 or families vs singles and couples.

619   If you've got 18 – 30s [customers] out all night, partying, you've got to go out and be lively and
620   party with them because they wanted to go out. Whereas if you've got like the older couples, it
621   can be a bit quieter and a bit calmer and they don't expect to see you out at two in the morning
622   (R16).

624 Dealing with returning customers was enjoyable for some representatives because they were already
625 familiar with their preferences and needs. They could therefore interact with their guests more easily
626 using more naturally felt emotions. Similarly, Shani et al. (2014) found that returners made employees
627 feel more comfortable and they were more inclined to display genuine emotions. However, it was more
628 challenging to sell excursions to returners who already knew the resort. This amplified representatives'
629 pressure levels to meet sales targets, leading to frustration which caused an increase in their emotional
630 dissonance.

632 *4.4.4 Season*

634 The 'repping' season (low season or peak season) was identified as a context-specific antecedent for
635 the EL of holiday representatives. During peak season, with more customers to take care of, the
636 representatives experienced a greater level of both physical and emotional exhaustion. They were
637 required to work longer hours and their work was frenetic leading to higher stress levels and burnout.
638 As a consequence, they experienced emotional dissonance, faking the 'service with a smile' in order
639 to hide their exhaustion. In our sample, the strongest intention to leave the role was experienced during
640 the mid-season which was likened to being on a 'treadmill' because work intensified as peak season
641 approached.

643 **5. Conclusion and Implications**

645 This research set out to investigate the antecedents of EL. Building on the in-depth, empirical data from
646 holiday representatives, the findings provide a holistic view of EL and clearly identified that EL is
647 multi-faceted and complex. The results also suggest that the most important antecedent of EL is the
648 work environment. The research is timely for tourism because it also identified a new category of
649 antecedents of EL related to the work context of these holiday representatives; context specific
650 antecedents. Previous research has not uncovered this (cf. Guerrier & Adib, 2003; Lee & Madera, 2019;
651 Wong & Wang, 2009). The results of this study disclosed that relationships with the tour operator,
652 colleagues, line managers and suppliers were also fundamental to the way these holiday representatives

653 construct their EL. There has been a dominance of research on customer-employee interactions (Lee,
654 Ok, Lee, & Lee, 2018; Lam & Chen, 2012; Moon et al., 2013) but the literature is scant on the impact
655 of other stakeholder relationships.
656
657 *5.1 Implications for theory*
658
659 This research has made innovative contributions to extending the knowledge on EL in tourism in several
660 ways. Firstly, it provides a comprehensive understanding of the diversity of antecedents of EL through
661 examining a job role that experiences one of the highest levels of EL and through the creation of a
662 framework (see Figure 2). Previous research has provided only a limited examination of these
663 antecedents (Lee & Madera, 2019; Xu et al., 2020). To set the underpinning for any research on EL, a
664 researcher first needs to understand the depth and breadth of these antecedents. This study has provided
665 a strong, empirical foundation for future scholars to contribute to existing frameworks or create new
666 approaches to studying EL.
667
668 This investigation has established that the job context cannot be ignored in future research as it is
669 fundamental to our ability to understand EL. It has uncovered several unique features of the work
670 environment of holiday representatives that have not been identified by previous research, but which
671 act as antecedents of EL i.e. context-specific antecedents. Some of these antecedents relate to the
672 destination itself, concurrent interactions with different types of clienteles and working in hotels with
673 different star ratings. These findings throw a completely new light on the demands facing these
674 employees. Through providing a holistic understanding of the antecedents of EL, the importance of the
675 job-related contextual factors is verified. It confirms the significance of the research context in
676 expanding the knowledge of EL (Wharton, 2013) which must be considered in future research on EL
677 in tourism.
678
679 The quality of organisational, supervisory and co-worker support was identified as having a positive
680 and powerful effect on emotions whilst dealing with customers (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). This
681 type of support, known as perceived organisational support (POS), relates to employees feeling
682 supported and knowing their contributions are valued by their colleagues and the organisation (Wen,
683 Huang, & Hou, 2019; Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986). Several hospitality studies
684 have documented POS as a moderator in the relationship between EL and its outcomes (Chen et al.,
685 2012; Cheng & O-Yang, 2018; Hur, Han, Yoo, & Moon, 2015; Wen et al., 2019), however there has
686 been very little research carried out on POS as an antecedent. As such, this study enriches the EL
687 literature in tourism by clarifying the importance of POS as an antecedent by explaining the prominence
688 of these stakeholder relationships.
689
690 Surprisingly, this research found that in managing these relationships, holiday representatives
691 sometimes engaged in surface acting which resulted in positive consequences for them. The existing
692 literature is clear that surface acting leads to negative outcomes such as stress, burnout and exhaustion
693 (Hur et al., 2013; Lee & Madera, 2019; Li et al., 2017). However, more recently Xu et al. (2020)
694 identified inconsistent findings with regards to surface acting. Our counterintuitive results suggest that
695 faking positive emotions does help service employees when EL is concomitantly performed with
696 different stakeholders. It can also aid them to feel included as become part of the team. Thus, a deeper
697 analysis of surface acting is warranted in the tourism literature as the recent findings do not fully support
698 previous research.
699
700 This study contributes to the research on EL in job roles where there are no clear distinctions between
701 work and leisure. Research has examined the work-leisure nexus (Adler & Adler, 1999; Filho, 2010;
702 Liang, 2020; Pagliarin, 2017) but the focus on EL is scant. The blurred lines between work and leisure
703 are considered typical working practices of those involved in entertaining tourists (Pagliarin, 2017).
704 This empirical research stresses that holiday representatives are not solely part of a group of service
705 employees but are unique in the way they perform their roles and cope with the work leisure boundaries.
706 This characteristic of the work environment sets their jobs apart from other service roles and exacerbates
707 any negative emotions they may already be experiencing which are derived from other aspects of their

708 work. This intensifies their EL (Guerrier & Adib, 2003) as they are often unable to completely switch
709 off from work. The advancement of technology, flexible working arrangements (Duerden, Courtright,
710 & Widmer, 2018) and new forms of employment such as the gig economy are changing this presumed
711 demarcation of work and leisure on jobs which were once thought to carry clear distinctions. This paper
712 contributes to the understanding of the interface between work and leisure and the impacts of this lack
713 of delineation on employees.

715 Lastly, the in-depth interviews allowed for deeper examination of previously proposed antecedents,
716 confirming many of the contextual (Grandey, 2000; Gursory et al., 2011) and individual factors
717 (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Diefendorff et al., 2005; Sohn & Lee, 2012) identified in the literature
718 which are also applicable to holiday representatives. This provides a research contribution by clarifying
719 and validating the antecedents which have reached consensus in the literature within a different work
720 setting. Contextual factors such as routineness of the job, intensity, autonomy, customer interactions,
721 and individual factors such as, age, gender, personality, strong pro-social customer orientation and
722 experience, were found to have an impact on EL. The findings recognised that the respondents used
723 aesthetic labour as a display rule to embody the organisation's image and this contributed to the
724 emotional pressures they experienced. The role of the holiday representative requires both the use of
725 emotional labour and aesthetic labour (Guerrier & Adib, 2003; Wong & Wang, 2009) similar to other
726 front-line workers due to the emphasis on managing appearance to meet customers' requirements in the
727 service sector (Li, Xie, Gao, & Guan, 2019; Ren, 2017). The strategies used to manage these situations
728 were all found to affect these holiday representatives' EL.

730 *5.2 Implications for practice*

732 The findings revealed that there are many challenging aspects of the holiday representative job which
733 should be recognised by the tour operators, and which could easily and immediately be mitigated. This
734 would help improve the well-being of holiday representatives themselves as well as their ability to cope
735 more efficiently and effectively with the demands of their jobs and would bring benefits to customers,
736 repeat business and financial rewards for their employers.

738 The provision of more appropriate and timely pre-resort training on customer interactions for all
739 representatives and their supervisors will help prepare them psychologically for the demands of the job
740 and reduce the risk of emotional dissonance. Those representatives who had been trained prior to
741 starting the job were reported as saying that their confidence increased because they had a better
742 understanding of what to expect and could deep act in their interactions with other stakeholders
743 (Grandey, 2003; Gabriel et al., 2016). More timely training will help to reduce their stress and anxiety
744 and would help the representatives engage in more genuine forms of emotional labour which would be
745 of greater benefit to their well-being, job satisfaction, as well as to the organisation (Grandey, 2003).
746 Unfortunately, the study found that not all the holiday reps received in-resort training prior to starting
747 work.

749 It is important to train the managers or supervisors to better understand the impact of the contextual
750 environment on their holiday representatives and to equip them with the skills needed to better support
751 and manage them. Those holiday representatives who received better organisational, supervisory and
752 co-worker support reported a better sense of well-being, felt more positive and confident particularly
753 when dealing with difficult customers and resorted to less surface acting with customers. This is
754 consistent with Shani et al.'s (2014) and Lam and Chen's (2012) findings regarding the importance of
755 supervisory support. Such support could also take the form of mentoring or through the creation of
756 support groups at work which provide opportunities to offload to co-workers and share experiences
757 with older and more experienced members of staff since experience as identified as having an impact
758 on EL (Sohn & Lee 2012; Wong & Wang, 2009).

760 Findings from the research also suggest that the more careful selection of holiday representatives to
761 ensure a closer personality fit to the job, the destination and hotel star rating. This could represent an
762 indirect way of managing potential future stress and anxiety often associated with more introverted

14

763 personality types (Kim, 2008). There should be limits on the number of different hotels that holiday
764 representatives are allocated to. Representatives can also be encouraged to specialise in particular
765 clientele or hotels rather than having responsibility for managing a variety of different types of clienteles
766 simultaneously.
767
768 Terms and conditions of employment of these holiday representatives should be reviewed. The package
769 holiday industry is notorious for its low wages which are an added source of frustration for exhausted
770 holiday representatives who are already fraught from long and irregular hours of work, intensive work
771 loads and pressure to sell. If wage levels cannot be improved because of fierce competition, other ways
772 of recognising and rewarding these employees should be sought. The findings demonstrated that non-
773 monetary rewards and incentives are important to holiday representatives. Working hours should be
774 reasonable and other ways found of reducing the hardship of these holiday representatives as they carry
775 out their duties. Providing transport to and from different hotel venues for example, offering laundry
776 services or subsidised meals, are helpful ways of lightening the emotional burden of these holiday
777 representatives.
778
779 *5.3 Limitations and Future Research*
780
781 As this study considered the antecedents of EL from the holiday representatives' perspective, the
782 generalisability of the results needs to be considered. Our findings are a starting point to encourage
783 future research on the complexity of the antecedents of EL. The qualitative research design was limited
784 to holiday representatives based on snowball sampling and this may have led to anticipated results for
785 some of the interviews. Future research can employ nonprobability or probability samples to increase
786 the validity of the conclusions beyond those representatives interviewed and the transferability to other
787 contextual settings. These limitations can be addressed through quantitative research by evaluating the
788 significance of the antecedents and the relationship to the outcomes of EL.
789
790 This study provides a foundation for future tourism research into the complex and multifaceted work
791 environment of holiday representatives. There are many factors that lie 'below the surface' and which
792 have an impact on the interaction with the customer and which contribute to the intensity of the EL and
793 the manner in which it is performed. Several of these factors have been identified in this study such as
794 organisational support, salary levels, physical demands of the job, the season, relationships with co-
795 workers, suppliers, and management. These require further scrutiny to establish more clearly the
796 strength of their influence.
797
798 Finally, this paper encourages new discussions on the integration of work and leisure in service roles.
799 There is a need to further comprehend the lifestyle choices of these holiday representatives and other
800 service workers. Future research is warranted on holiday representatives' desirability to perform in this
801 type of work environment and their conceptualisation of leisure.
802
803
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