

**Are we happy now?**

**Exploring emotional dissonance in the fashion retail industry**

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## ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed by: .....

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## ABSTRACT

The rapid rise of the service sector, and in particular the fashion retail industry has made the study of emotional work increasingly important within the area of emotions research. Specifically, emotional dissonance mediates the effect of emotional labour on levels of emotional tolerance. Emotional dissonance has been variously described and measured as an antecedent or as a consequence of the performance of emotional labour, as well as an inherent component of emotional labour. Recent conceptualisations of emotional dissonance did not accommodate that there was a range of emotions in its capacity to explain variances in the why service workers feel this way.

Concepts from emotional dissonance theory support this conceptualisation and were used to investigate whether there was a range of emotional dissonance among fashion retail employees, and to explore the key determinants behind this range.

Emotional dissonance was found to exacerbate the level of emotional tolerance at high levels of organisational demands, indicating that the range in emotional dissonance is narrowed down to the work and life experience that each individual has. Future theorising about emotional dissonance needs to account for emotional demands and life experience in particular. Potential ways to alleviate emotional tolerance due to emotional dissonance is to provide more staff training and education when people are recruited into this industry, with focus on more personalised methods of delivering this information.

The results demonstrated a significant range in emotional dissonance based on the personal levels of engagement people hold with the organisation, customers, and how they handle emotional encounters, supporting the use of a more theoretically and methodologically consistent measure of emotional dissonance.

# Chapter 1

## Overview of the Research

This research is an analysis of the metaphors contained in the experiences fashion retail employees tell about their emotional work in the fashion retail industry. Specifically, it identifies and analyses the emotional dissonance that surface from these experiences. The purpose of this research is to explore the range of emotions that emotional dissonance produces, and to pinpoint the underlying reasons behind this variation.

### 1 Introduction

Chapter 1 consists of three sections. The first section presents the key concepts of the study recorded in this thesis, and the second explains how the research progresses from an organisational basis to an analysis of metaphorical expressions. The third section is a discussion of the rationale for the research and the research questions, and the fourth section concludes this chapter by showing how the thesis is organised, and how each chapter contributes to the achievement of the purpose of the research.

#### 1.1 *The origins of research: My viewpoint*

I have lived in and observed the fashion retail industry for a significant period of time, from different positions – starting as a casual part-time, advancing to third-in-charge, and then gaining a management role. From these different positions, I saw that the rosters, job requirements, and fashion trends are always changing – but one aspect stayed the same: the domination that emotions played in these occupations, the way the emotions of workers were “possessed” by the organisation, continuously shaping and manipulating the performance that was displayed.

The concept of ‘emotional dissonance’ made me wonder, is there a range to the disconnect that employees feel? To what extent do the emotions imposed by organisations take over an employee’s real feelings? I wanted to unravel the “real” feelings hidden behind emotional work, and whether this affected performance, and I ask then, does the dissonance felt in these interactions have a significant contribution in the way workers in this industry perform? I will answer these questions by conducting interviews with workers in the fashion retail industry, and exploring how their lived experiences indicate

whether there is a range of emotions in the notion of emotional dissonance. Emotions in the workplace are a constantly evolving area of academic interest, being studied in the past four decades. In 1983, Arlie Hochschild established a new perspective in this field, based on how organisations tend to shape the emotional lives of workers. The term emotional work, better known as 'emotional labour', emerges from what Hochschild (1983) describes a display of emotions that is defined and controlled by management, and as a result is often perceived as inauthentic and falsely constructed. Emotional labour is also defined as the way roles and tasks exert overt and covert control over display rules (Grandey, 2003). Emotional labour is ubiquitous. Every occupation from flight staff and medicine to sales people and funeral directors at some point engages emotional labour whether as an image to create for others to consume, or to comply with, are the interactions that are formally instructed by an organisation (Morris & Feldman, 1996).

Research conducted by scholars in this field shows that emotions are evident in the workplace whether it is part of the job requirement or not (Hochschild, 1983; Kruml & Geddes, 2000; Zapf, 2002). Emotions are a dynamic and multifaceted process consisting of expressive behaviour compromising of practices that are both conflicting and compatible (Davidson, Jackson & Kalin, 2000). Emotions can operate in a beneficial manner, helping people understand their inner selves, but on the other hand, can also be seen as an inflicting burden that results in stress and despair for the worker. In a study carried out by Pettinger (2004), the selling techniques and methods of retail salespeople were explored, and it was found that the nature of emotional work was well-rehearsed and recited in order to influence the choices and behaviours of consumers. Without the presence of emotions, workplaces could well lack personality, which would also be detrimental for the products or services that rely on emotions to get the job done. It is through interaction as well as socialisation that the presence of emotional work exists.

Organisations have a strong belief that employing emotions as a management tool in shaping the workplace, and manipulating the behaviour and actions of employees offers great success in achieving organisational goals. In the concept of emotional work, there are notions that explain how this type of performance can lead to burn out and stressed behaviour which results in mental and physical decline (Grandey, 2003). Emotional labour can in fact be quite destructive, and there is potential emotional dissonance in concentration on fulfilling display rules. The emotional dissonance that workers feel overall affects job satisfaction and results in emotional exhaustion (Morris and Feldman 1996). These ideas all contribute to the work on emotional dissonance in the workplace, with links to other studies of emotions in the same field (Abraham, 2000; Morris & Feldman, 1996).

As the primary focus of this research, there is a significant difference between emotional labour and emotional dissonance. Emotional dissonance is best described as occurring when service providers experience a conflict between the emotions they feel about their job and the required emotions the organisation has determined to be acceptable for display (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987), whereas emotional labour is based on the general elements of emotional work (display rules, surface acting, deep acting) that service workers must abide by (Hochschild, 1983). Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) define emotional

dissonance as “the clash of actual emotions and those that organisations expect one to ‘put on’ while on the job” (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993, p. 23). Research investigating emotional dissonance shows that it is a natural occurrence in the field of emotional work (Hartel, Hsu & Boyle, 2001; Hartel et al. 2002; Lewig & Dollard, 2003; Morris & Feldman, 1996), but it is not clear in the literature whether emotional dissonance exists in a range and how intense that range might be. Are there key deterrents that contribute to this possible range of emotional dissonance in the service industry? This gap in research has led me to conducting this study in the hopes of exploring variations in emotional dissonance based on the fashion retail industry.

The fashion retail industry in New Zealand has flourished over time with the increasing numbers of women in the workforce, the ready availability of credit, new mass communications technologies and the changing strategies of retail firms altering local buying patterns (Weller, 2007). The drive to succeed has forced employees to display and manage their emotions to emphasise the products being sold. The growth of emotional labour in the fashion retail industry has been influential in altering the character of consumer preferences, most recently by encouraging fashion-savvy consumers to eclectically select items regardless of price ranges and brand categories (Tungate 2005). The fashion event industry now also plays a powerful role in shaping consumer tastes in the fashion-oriented parts of the market. I specifically selected this industry because it is dominated by women and could highlight how female employees experience emotional dissonance, keeping in mind that female employees are considered more vulnerable and exposed to emotional labour as opposed to male employees in this sector (Weller, 2007).

Interviews were chosen as the method of data gathering because they allowed me to collect the disparate stories about the experiences of participants. This approach was the most sensible as the conversational style of interviews allow a sense of exploration aligned with the purpose of this research.

The methodology is an analysis of the metaphorical expressions participants articulated, and the data are presented in key themes that emerged across the responses that participants gave. The arrival of these common themes derived from metaphorical expressions and images that participants shared, where similarities and differences surfaced contributing towards the purpose of the research.

The participants in the research are employees in a range of fashion retail stores across the same chain, as this selection was both convenient and appropriate in exploring how fashion retail employees feel when they operate the same management policies. The variations of responses give insight into the range of emotional dissonance that is present amongst these employees.

## **1.2 Rationale for the research and the research questions**

The purpose of this research is to identify and analyse the 'range' of emotions within emotional dissonance that fashion retail employees feel in the workplace. Specifically, exploring the underlying causes that produce this range in emotion.

Deriving from the findings in my honours dissertation, I found that emotional dissonance was present and absent in the workplace to some extent, but a limitation in prevalent research was that there was no discussion of the potential 'ranges' of emotions in emotional dissonance. Emotional theory has yet to discover that there are variations, similarities and differences that employees feel behind emotional dissonance.

The research has significance in that it may contribute to greater knowledge in why fashion retail employees experience emotional dissonance, and revealing the likely causes behind this concept. The research also has the capacity to provide information behind common metaphorical expressions – allowing participants to tell their stories in a new way that contributes to understanding how emotional dissonance affects fashion retail employees.

### **Research questions**

The following two questions frame the research:

- 1 Is there a range of emotional dissonance in fashion retail employees?
- 2 What are the key determinants that contribute to this possible range of emotional dissonance in the fashion retail industry?

The questions follow a logical development in terms of examining the concept of emotional dissonance, gradually exploring the possible causes of why a range is present. These research questions highlight certain implications and advantages that contribute to overall answers.

## **1.3 Organisation of the thesis**

The structure of this thesis is organised to flow consistently from one section to another. This first chapter, which serves to ground the research in its own history and in the philosophy of the researcher, is followed by a brief outline of the general research background.

Chapter two, which gives a more detailed background to the research, begins to frame the response to the first research question: Is there a range of emotional dissonance in fashion retail employees? The review of literature in this chapter deals with broad themes in emotional theory. The purpose of this

chapter is to provide a platform for later discussion about emotional dissonance which sketches out directions in framing answers to the research questions.

Chapter three deals with the methodological foundations of the study, exploring ideas about metaphors. Chapter four records the process of research, explaining the method of data analysis and the interview questions in the data collection. Chapter five completes the findings and discussion that analyses the second research question: Are there key determinants that contribute to this possible range of emotional dissonance in the fashion retail industry? This chapter discusses key ideas about emotional dissonance and ultimately answers both research questions that address the purpose of research.

The last chapter of the thesis draws together the themes from the interviews and places them in context of the problem that the research addresses. It also suggests useful areas for future research and limitations.

## Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2. The recognition of emotions in organisation studies

In a literature review of work published in management journals from 1985 to 1996, Hunt (1997) found that only slightly over *one percent* of articles focused on affective (emotion) related issues. Robbins and Judge (2010) suggest that research into emotions is directed towards the changing nature of the work environment and tends to link motivation and job satisfaction into the way work is considered and structured (2010, p. 86). This is because emotions are not associated with the work place, and the concept of 'emotion' is not typically spoken about, or disclosed in this environment. But it can also be said that in all organisations in which human interaction is part of the job, rules apply as to when and which emotions should be expressed (Hochschild, 1983).

Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the rise of scientific management organisations have been associated with the objective of trying to control emotions (Hunt, 1997). A well run organisation has been seen as one that successfully eliminates frustration, fear, anger, love, hate, joy, grief and similar feelings. In reality, this is not that case: Grandey (2000) reveals that organisations manifest, produce, and represent emotions more than ever before. Reason and cognition were viewed as suited to the bureaucratic process inherent in most organisations, and emotions in large part, remained undiscussable at work. The central ideology surrounding emotions in organisations is that they are irrational, idiosyncratic disturbances that are best controlled and kept under cover (Stearns & Stearns, 1986).

In saying this, the concept of organisations as emotional arenas was developed by Fineman (1996) and it challenged the dominant paradigm of rationality and norms of control. According to Fineman (1996) organisations suffer from the "myth of rationality" as once the façade of rationality is stripped from an organisation's goals purposes, tasks and objectives a veritable explosion of emotional tones is revealed. A closer look at cognitions reveals they are not fully comprehensible without recognition of the feelings that drive and shape them (Fineman, 1996, p.1). In other words, Fineman says that our thoughts and emotions are intertwined and emotions give us insight into the impact of work situations at the deepest level. Hence, there is a need to recognise both the wholeness and humanity of workers within the organisational context, because people cannot help but bring themselves into the work context.

The growing interest in this area of organisational studies generated an expansion in the field of emotions, which was first instigated by Arlie Hochschild in 1983, who opened up the endless possibilities and significance that emotions contributed to understanding how organisations function. Hochschild introduced the idea of 'emotional labour', which formulated a further level of insight into how emotion is related to self identity, and work performance. This then led to further discoveries of emotional dissonance - which is the focus of this thesis.

## **2.1 The notion of 'emotion work'**

In the study of organisational behaviour, emotion work has been an area of gradual development since the late 1980s. I see emotion work as quite significant since emotional performance is an important aspect of the jobs for many employees. Emotion work can be defined as the process of regulating feelings and expressions as part of the work role (Grandey, 2000). More specifically, Morris and Feldman (1996) define emotion work as "the effort, planning and control needed to express organisationally desired emotion during the interpersonal transactions" (1996, p. 987).

Hochschild (1983) introduced the scholarly concept of emotion work in her study of flight attendants. In all organisations in which human interaction is part of the job, rules apply as to when and which emotions should be expressed. For example, flight attendants are expected to display friendliness; funeral directors, sadness; and police officers, rigour. Ex-civilians should "focus on political guarantees allowing the insurgencies to disarm and transfer themselves into legal democratic movements, as well as the terms for reincorporation of ex-combatants into civilian life" (Hochschild, 1983, p.2). Hochschild (1989) estimated that roughly one third of American workers have jobs that include emotion work. Since the late 1980s, emotion work has received increasing attention in organisational stress research (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Morris & Feldman, 1996; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987) underlining its importance as a potential source of job stress.

These rules for which expression is appropriate in a certain working context are referred to as feeling rules or display rules. The expression of an appropriate emotional display can be achieved through deep acting, surface acting, and the expression of genuine emotion. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) point out that in most cases, the expression of emotion is a spontaneous process that does not cost any effort. According to Hochschild (1989), surface acting involves changing the observational expression while the inner feelings remain unchanged (fake smiles). Consequently, deep acting refers to the effort of actually changing these inner feelings in order to comply with the display rules, (i.e., actively trying to like a customer), (Hochschild, 1989). In this case, not only the emotional expression but also the inner feelings are regulated.

Clearly, emotion work has positive and negative consequences. Hochschild (1983) was the first who described the possible negative consequences of emotion work for employee well-being. She wrote that the "persistent, structural discrepancy between which emotions need to be displayed and what is really felt can produce alienation from one's own authentic emotions" (1983, p. 23). Emotions have a signal

function that can be compared to, for example, pain signals. If these signals are neglected due to the performance of emotion work, employees can suffer from energy depletion and burnout on a critical level. In this case, the difference between displayed and felt emotions as part of the work role has been named and identified as 'emotional dissonance'. Emotional dissonance is defined as a disconnection between an individual's identity and the displayed emotion (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). This aspect of emotion work is considered to be the key predictor of emotional exhaustion, and has been most consequently related with psychological strain (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Zapf, 2002; Morris & Feldman, 1997).

Since 1981, organisational behaviour researchers have approached the topic of emotions in the workplace from several vantage points (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002). There has been increasing attention paid to the employees' feelings and expressions with the increasing managerial emphasis on customer service, which involves employees' ability to express positive, upbeat emotions to customers, a process called "emotional labour" (Hochschild, 1983). Emotions are responses to specific events that have either positive or negative meaning to the individual. They are generally more focused, of shorter time duration, and more intense than moods or feelings, and emotional responses involve several psychological subsystems (Barsade, Brief, & Spataro, 2003). Some scholars see organisations as a sharing ground for emotions, as organisations involve complex relationships that are often competitive and compulsory – and employees often must interact with a range of people not of their choosing (Stearns & Stearns, 1986). Another strong aspect is that organisations typically involve pressure surrounding deadlines and productivity, and high personal stakes, and relate these factors to an individual's self-identity to change perceptions of organisational achievement.

Organisational achievement represents organisational norms, which reflect the culture of a company. However, organisational norms do vary across societies. An example discussed by Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) is the case of the recent opening of the first McDonald's in Moscow where staff were trained to smile at customers. This particular norm (a very strong one in America) does not exist in Moscow and customers felt that they were being laughed at by the staff. Nor does this norm exist in Israel, where, as Rafaeli and Sutton (1989) point out, smiling at customers is viewed as a sign of inexperience. In the Muslim culture, smiling can be a sign of sexual interest and therefore women are socialised not to smile at men.

Breaking such cultural norms, then, is likely to arouse strongly felt emotions (Weiss & Cropanzo, 1999). Individuals are selective, however, in the degree to which they authentically express these felt emotions (Erickson & Wharton, 1997; Hochschild, 1983). Understanding why there is usually a discrepancy between felt and expressed emotions and when this discrepancy is functional and dysfunctional can often be hard to distinguish. On one hand, venting of authentic emotions, particularly negative ones, would most likely have a deleterious effect on interpersonal relationships and workplace productivity. On the other hand, masking deeply felt emotions behind bland, smiling faces can also have negative effects for the individual and organisation (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987).

Emotional work in this degree can be seen in any occupation, such as a correction officer's work load. Whether a corrections institution is punitive or treatment based, the services provided by correctional staff require direct, face-to-face interactions with inmates. In these exchanges, the quality of services that are delivered may depend on the situation in which the interaction is taking place. The emotions expressed by the correctional staff are important to how well these services are delivered and received (Hochschild, 1983).

## **2.2 The concept of emotional labour and its consequences**

Researchers have identified deep and surface acting as the two most commonly-used emotional strategies for coping with display rule requirements, defined as 'emotional labour' (Hochschild, 1983; Kruml & Geddes, 2000; Zapf, 2002). In deep acting, employees attempt to modify their felt emotions so that a genuine, organisationally desired emotional display can follow (Hochschild, 1983). Hochschild (1983) exemplified deep acting by using flight attendants as a prime example, as they cope with angry and annoying passengers by thinking of them as frightened first-time fliers, therefore changing their inner feelings from annoyance to acceptance, pity and empathy. When employees engage in deep acting, they endeavour to express authentic emotions, and though not every attempt succeeds, emotions expressed as a result of deep acting are more likely to be authentic than those expressed through surface acting, which occurs when employees only change their outward emotion without genuinely altering how they actually feel. In surface acting, frustrated employees may suppress their frustration and simply smile at an annoying customer, thus "putting on a mask" without actually changing their feelings and expressing feigned rather than genuine emotion (Grandey, 2003, p.14).

Studies conducted into the role of emotions in service interactions between employees and customers show that the point of difference lies between employees' outer emotional displays rather than their internal emotion regulation. In terms of emotions theory, this contrast outlines distinctions between surface and deep acting. Tsai (2001) and Tsai and Huang (2002) uncovered a link between independent observers' assessments of employee affective delivery and self-reported customer mood and loyalty intentions, and Matila and Enz (2002) similarly found a link between observational data on hotel clerks' emotional displays and customers' service encounter evaluations, as well as positive moods after the encounter (deep acting). Tan, Foo, and Kwek (2004) reported a link between the extent of employees' positive emotions (measured by greeting, eye contact) and customer satisfaction. Overall, these studies focused on outwardly displayed emotions (surface acting) and primarily addressed whether service friendliness and related observational behaviours lead to positive customer evaluations. However, it is crucial to point out that there was the absence in the rating of the emotional strategies pinpointed. In other words, there was an examination of the physical emotional displays present in each service based study, but there was no rating or scale that indicated the certain extent the physical emotional appearances represented. These studies leave this important factor unexplored, and can be seen as a gap in research.

Only two studies have investigated how emotional labour strategies might influence service delivery outcomes. In a study of the emotional contagion process, Hennig-Thurau, Groth, Paul and Gremler (2006) found a significant impact of employees' emotional authenticity on customers' emotions in a simulated service encounter. Grandey (2003) focused on the concept of 'affective delivery' – which she defined as "service delivery perceived as friendly and warm by customers" as an outcome of emotional labour strategies and found a positive relationship with deep acting but a negative relationship with surface acting (2003, p. 21). However, in her study, co-workers of the observed employees, rather than customers, assessed the affective delivery. In hindsight, this study of emotional authenticity did not reveal how emotional labour strategies affect the customer experience, or the effects of whether customers are able to accurately detect emotional authenticity.

### **2.3 Types of emotional displays**

Mann (1997) proposes the concept of three types of emotions associated with different display rules. Firstly, integrative emotions are classified as those that combine groups together, such as love, loyalty and pride; secondly, differentiating emotions are those that trigger group differences, such as fear, anger and contempt (Kemper, 1984). Thirdly, a possible type of emotional display is emotional masking which refers to displays of emotional neutrality and restraint. Each will be discussed in turn.

#### *Integrative emotions*

Integrative emotions such as friendliness are often highlighted in service roles or public contact encounters in which the services are intangible, consisting of services provided rather than objects that are possessed (Wharton & Erickson, 1993, p. 466). Because the "emotional style of offering the service is part of the service itself", display rules are oriented towards emotions that instil a sense of well-being, good will or satisfaction in customers (Hochschild, 1983, p. 5). For example, in her study of McDonald's, Leidner (1991) found that the fast-food workers were told to be "cheerful and polite at all times" and that "crew people were often scolded for not smiling" (1991, p. 160).

#### *Masking emotions*

Stearns and Stearns (1986) argue that masking of emotion is "an aspect of all work roles to some degree" (cited in Wharton & Erickson, 1993, p. 467), but that it is a more salient display norm in some work roles than others and is particularly prominent in middle management and most professions. For example, Jackall (1988) describes the pressures on middle managers "to exercise iron self-control and to have the ability to mask all emotion and intention behind bland, smiling, agreeable public faces" (1991, p. 47). Other researchers also note how professionals are encouraged to mask emotion, a norm or display rule expressed as "detached concern" (Hochschild, 1983, p. 150) or the avoidance of "too much liking or disliking" (Lief and Fox, 1963, p.13). As Smith and Kleinman (1989) noted, "because we associate authority in this society with an unemotional persona, affective neutrality reinforces professionals' power and keeps clients from challenging them" (1989, p. 56). They go further by stating

that one element of professional socialization, then, is “the development of appropriately controlled affect” (p. 57). Despite this, they note, the development towards emotional neutrality “remains part of the hidden curriculum” of many professional training courses such as medicine (1989, p.60).

### *Differentiating emotions*

Work roles requiring emotional displays oriented towards negative emotions, or what Hochschild (1983, p. 137) called “positive bad will” are less understood. These are roles in which workers are encouraged to display mistrust, irritation or hostility towards others for the purpose of instilling in them unease, worry or fear. Ritzer (1992) calls these displays the “the McDonaldization of society” whereby society has come to expect McDonald-style courtesy and friendliness typified by the “have a nice day” sentiment (even if such sentiments are considered un-genuine). As a result, differentiating display norms are likely to govern fewer and fewer authentic work based emotions such as trust and team co-operation.

So far it has been argued that, despite the view held by many in organisations that emotions play no role in organisation life, the management and control of emotional displays continue to be an important part of the formal or informal organisational culture. Societal, occupational and organisational norms give rise to display rules that govern the expression of emotion in the workplace. These display rules can lead to the display of integrative emotions that bind groups together or differentiating emotions that cause group differences. Alternatively, display rules can lead to emotional masking whereby emotional displays are suppressed altogether.

Grandey (2003) examined the immediate emotional labour behaviours experienced by employees and customers rather than examining each individual, and the results demonstrated significant outcomes. First, service employees’ internal regulatory emotional labour strategies influence customer outcomes and the customers’ ability to judge the employees’ strategies accurately affects these impacts. Another important aspect was that deep acting provides positive benefits for customers, a result that is in line with research that shows the positive benefits of deep acting for workers (Grandey, 2003). Deep acting therefore emerges as an important driver of service delivery outcomes such as perceived customer orientation and service quality. Surface acting however, does not exert the same positive effect, but we do not find a negative main effect on customers either. As another key contribution, the difference between deep and surface acting sheds light on the crucial role of customers’ accuracy in detecting employees’ strategies; results highlight surface acting in exerting negative effects when customers perceive it as such. In other words, surface acting is not a problem as long as customers do not recognise it. The crucial role of emotion detection in turn becomes even more obvious through the finding that detection accuracy has the potential to increase the positive impact of deep acting on customer outcomes. No matter what emotion is surfaced or acted upon, there is a certain range in which this emotion can be detected in reference to emotional dissonance. This unexplored range of emotional dissonance is one of the main foci of this thesis.

## **2.4 Defining emotional dissonance**

The notion of emotional dissonance has emerged from previous studies based around components of emotional work, such as emotional labour. Emotional dissonance is best described as occurring when service providers experience a conflict between the emotions they feel about their job and the required emotions the organisation has determined to be acceptable for display (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). A number of experiential consequences may arise from emotional dissonance. Three key researchers in particular, have shown emotional dissonance to be an antecedent to employee burnout or exhaustion (Abraham, 2000; Morris & Feldman, 1996). Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) define emotional dissonance as “the clash of actual emotions and those that organisations expect one to ‘put on’ while on the job” (Frijda, 1988, p. 23). According to Morris and Feldman (1996), organisations are continually willing to direct and control how employees present themselves to others, alongside Hochschild (1983), who refers to the way organisations have a demanding and heavy expectation on the way people present and perform emotionally. As a consequence, a key factor of these actions carried out by many workers has become the result of emotions that are formed and desired by their organisation. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) point out that emotional dissonance peaks when in industries that include face to face interaction with others in the context of customer-contact transactions, such as retail or service-related work.

## **2.5 Preliminary observations from previous research**

Groth, Hennig-Thurau and Walsh (2006) tested out emotional dissonance in the context of ‘customer’ relations between service employees. In this environment, workers are expected to display certain emotions, (e.g., happiness) and suppress others (e.g., anger) in their daily interactions to comply with their job requirements and organisational expectations. Since Hochschild (1983) described the concept of emotional labour as “the process of regulating both feelings and expressions for the organisational goals”(1983, p.12), this concept has received ample attention in previous research regarding how organisations deliver “services with a smile” to their customers by effectively managing their employees’ emotional displays ( p.23). With regards to emotional labour, deep acting is the attempt to modify felt emotions so that a genuine emotional display follows (Hochschild, 1983). Another major emotional strategy is surface acting, which is faking or amplifying emotions by displaying emotions not actually felt. These two key concepts of regulating emotions comply with expectations of emotional display (Hoschchild, 1983; Kruml & Geddes, 2000). Groth, Hennig-Thuray and Walsh (2006) examined the link between employee’s emotional labour and customers’ perceptions of the overall service experience. To be more specific, this research considered whether employees’ emotional labour strategies – either genuine emotional display or surface acting affected customers’ evaluations of service experiences, and their relationships with the service providers. One of the major outcomes within Groth et. al.’s (2006) study was to observe if customers reacted positively to all displays of friendly emotions, or if customers have a less positive service experience when employees faked their emotional displays. The examination

of the extent that customers are able to detect fake and genuine emotions accurately, reveals how this ability influences on their assessment of the overall service experience.

In essence, Groth et. al. (2006) addressed their insights through the development of a theoretical model of the links between employees' emotional labour, customers' accuracy in detecting different labour strategies – and the resulting customer outcomes. The model was based upon Gross's (2002) psychological research into emotion regulation and emotion recognition. By testing the model empirically, this foundation offered a unique contribution to other findings in this field of research, as it allowed a direct focus on emotional labour performance in a specific and immediate service transaction, rather than asking employees about their behavioural patterns in general, as in previous studies (Grandey, 2003). The relation between emotional labour and customers' accuracy in detecting authentic and constructed emotions highlights the uniqueness of this theoretical model, which is seen as an innovative advantage expanding upon previous research conducted.

Emotional dissonance has been argued to be a stressor that has a negative impact on identified job outcomes (Grebner et al. 2003; Rafaeli & Sutton). Some authors suggest, however, that there is an emphasis on the personal state of discomfort, unease, tension or psychological strain that overpowers the state of emotional dissonance when felt and displayed emotions vary (Abraham 1999; Jansz & Timmers, 2002; Morris & Feldman, 1996). Researchers have also argued that emotional dissonance is an inevitable state arising from the performance of emotional labour, although it has been noted that it is not necessarily harmful to all employees and does not always result in emotional exhaustion (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Hochschild, 1983). What is generally accepted is that emotional dissonance revolves around the conflict between felt and displayed emotion (manifested or potential). Emotional dissonance can be approached through conceptualisation and operationalisation lens.

Some researchers consider emotional dissonance as antecedent to emotional labour (Zapf et al. 1999), while others perceive emotional dissonance as the 'labour' component when displaying emotions for organisational purposes (Rubin et al. 2005). Others determine emotional labour leading to negative work outcomes (Daus & Munz, 2005), for example, that consider emotional dissonance as an external demand rather than a reaction to, or consequence of, emotional labour. Rubin, Tardino, Daus & Munz, (2005) have called emotional dissonance a 'perceived emotional state representing the dissonance between felt emotion and the emotion that is perceived to be required' (p. 192). These authors assert that emotional dissonance arises from situational demands and individual differences that motivate the need to either surface or deep act. Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) also present the view that dissonance (which they regard as a perceived need) is required prior to the decision either to surface act or to deep act, and that deep acting is used by individuals to reduce a state of tension caused by the incongruence between the desired display of emotions and those experienced by the employee.

This view of emotional dissonance equates the incongruence between felt emotion and the emotional display required to be a state of tension, and ultimately represents a perceived need that motivates the act. Alternatively, it could be argued that the perceived need is not dissonance but simply recognition that incongruence between expected emotional display and those felt by the employee exists. Once it is

apparent to employees that there is a need to display unfeared emotion, they can then choose to fulfil their organisational obligation by either surface or deep acting.

Another view of emotional dissonance is that it is the display of unfeared emotion or the suppression of experienced emotion, and that emotional dissonance primarily constitutes the essence of emotional labour (Mann 2004; Morris & Feldman, 1996). However, a problem with this approach is that it suggests that whenever individuals choose to suppress or fake emotional display, negative work outcomes are inevitable. Some authors have pointed out that this definition of emotional dissonance is conceptually similar to, or the same as, surface acting which adds to the confusion (Grandey, 2000; Kruml & Geddes, 2000).

## **2.6 Consequences and effects of emotional dissonance**

As outlined, emotional dissonance is the feeling of unease that occurs when someone evaluates an emotional experience as a threat to his or her identity (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Morris & Feldman, 1996). Another key theorist in the field of consequences that emotional dissonance may cause is Frijda (1986). Frijda (1986) proposed a model in which the emotion dissonance process is unfolded in a step by step fashion. His theory starts with asking why an emotion occurs, and from here an evaluation of the first felt emotion can begin. In other words, the emotional dissonance experience is the source of this uneasy feeling. As soon as the dissonance is manifested, the individual has to cope with two parallel feelings: first, the prolonged experience of the specific emotion that is the focus of evaluation; second, the feeling of unease. This clearly indicates that emotional dissonance is present, and somewhat felt in a physical sense. Someone who experiences emotional dissonance feels ill at ease, and uncomfortable, but not necessarily aware of where that feeling comes from (Oatley, 1992).

The latter feeling tells the individual that there is a mismatch between his identity concerns and the emotional experience. In other words, the feeling of dissonance signals that this particular emotion draws awareness that something has to be done to combat this uncomfortable feeling. It motivates dissonance reduction, which reduces this feeling as well as regulating it (Jansz & Timmers, 2002). Dissonance tolerance refers to the ability to withstand the discrepancy or discomfort of expressing desirable emotions when they differ from the emotions actually experienced. In other words, dissonance tolerance is the degree to which a service worker does not feel troubled or bothered by the need to pretend emotions that are not genuinely felt. (Jansz & Timmers, 2002).

Van Dijk and Brown (2006) outline that recent studies have pointed to a causal sequence between emotional labour, emotional dissonance and negative job consequences, and emotional exhaustion (Hartel, Hsu & Boyle, 2001; Hartel et al. 2002). Evidence exists supporting the idea that emotional dissonance is directly linked to emotional exhaustion and is commonly experienced by service workers (Abraham, 1999; Hartel et al. 2002; Morris & Feldman, 1997). Hartel et al. (2002) tested this specific hypothesis that emotional dissonance mediates the relationship between emotional labour and emotional exhaustion. Clearly, this perspective considered emotional dissonance to be an outcome of performing emotional labour and is distinct from the previously discussed perspectives. Although Hartel

et al. (2001) presented evidence in support of their hypothesis, the emotional labour scale then adopted for the purpose of the study did not clearly discriminate between surface or deep acting.

Hartel et al's (2001) study examines surface acting as the component of emotional labour associated with emotional exhaustion and further examines the mediating role of experienced dissonance. Surface acting provides a situation where employee behaviour contradicts emotions felt, and is consistent with the general perception of the conditions that elicit emotional dissonance. In this study, it proposed that dissonance is distinct from surface acting and is a consequence of surface acting, but only under specific conditions. In this case, the 'perceived' need is not viewed as dissonance, but rather, a conflict between the required and felt emotions. This links the requirement imposed by the organisation for specific emotional display and the employee's actual emotional state specifically when it is not compliant with the organisation's requirements. The conflict between the emotion felt and the expected emotions displayed is considered to be the demand condition for emotional expression and management. The type of acting that the employee elects to undertake can be viewed as the performance component of emotional labour. The dissonance arising, or not arising, from performing emotional labour can then be viewed as the consequent experience. As mentioned earlier, behind this dissonance arising and not arising, is a certain range which helps detect the scale of emotional dissonance in this particular situation. As suggested above, the experience of performing emotional labour could be either positive or negative, it is important to discuss those conditions which determine the affective nature of the associated outcome, that is, those conditions under which dissonance may or may not be experienced.

Emotional labour is said to be unpleasant for the employee as it stimulates personal expression while organisation norms are also being implied (Morris & Feldman, 1996). Displaying unfeared emotion, which some authors regard as the core of emotional dissonance, has negative consequences due to the feelings of alienation from one's true self when engaging in emotional labour (Abraham, 1999; Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). Supporting this suggestion, emotional dissonance has also been said to be a type of role conflict which has been linked to emotional exhaustion (Lewig & Dollard, 2003; Morris & Feldman, 1996). In addition to this, Jansz and Timmers (2002) claimed that emotional dissonance is a consequence of negatively evaluating emotional experiences as a threat to one's identity. Evaluating emotional labour as a threat to individual identity (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993) is an entirely separate field of study in itself, and is consistent with the perspective of emotional dissonance as an outcome of emotional labour. Considering emotional labour in such a light contributes to the understanding operationalisation of emotional dissonance.

Van Dijk and Brown (2006) conducted a study that looked into the negative job outcomes of emotional labour, and evaluated the mediating role of emotional dissonance. Display rules are said to exist when organisations have implicit or explicit display guidelines in order to govern and direct employee behaviour in successfully performing roles in an organisationally desired manner. These rules are known as emotional display rules and are used by workers to guide their emotional display when engaging in activities to achieve organisational objectives such as a service encounter (Schaubroeck & Jones, 2002). A service encounter is defined as "a transaction between two or more parties, one representing the customer and the other as the organisation" (Schaubroeck & Jones, p.23, 2002). When complying with organisational expectations, there is an attached sense of obligation. Promises of rewards or even

threats support the imposition of display rules (Hochschild, 1983). Threats may come in the form of demotion or termination of employment when there is failure to conform to such expectations. Rewards may take the shape of a financial bonus for goal achievement, (e.g. sales targets) or promotion (Hochschild, 1983; Kruml & Geddes, 2000). The more rigid and imposing these display rules are the greater sense the sense of obligation and inflexibility for individual expression of emotion. This is particularly the case when the emotional display required and those emotions felt by the employee, are incongruent (Grandey, 2000).

Display rules are important when considering emotional labour, as they have been argued as leading emotional dissonance. Schaubrook and Jones (2002) called emotional dissonance a 'disturbing disequilibrium' between expressed and experienced emotion. It is suggested when the emotional display of the employee matches organisational expectations, but is in contrast to those emotions felt by the employee, a range of negative work outcomes such as ill health and emotional exhaustion or burnout can be experienced (Ashforth & Humphrey 1993; Hochschild 1983; Morris and Feldman, 1996). Other research has indicated (Rosse, Boss, Johnson & Crown 1991), however, that performing emotional labour is no more associated with burnout than any other kind of labour. Research has indicated that engaging in emotional labour could also be associated with positive job outcomes such as job satisfaction (Adelmann, 1995; Wharton, 1993). In an attempt to elucidate these mixed findings, a qualitative examination of emotional labour was conducted in applied settings by Van Dijk and Kirk-Brown (2004) in which it was identified that outcomes associated with performing emotional labour, specifically surface acting, can be either positive or negative. This Van Dijk and Kirk-Brown (2004) study suggested that mixed feelings from this qualitative process may in part be due to a lack of conceptual clarity regarding the relationship between emotional labour and emotional dissonance. They also pointed to the key role of cognitive appraisals in the link between surface acting and negative job outcomes.

Research examining the effects of emotional dissonance on work stress and work satisfaction by Tewksbury and Higgins (2006) was conducted in Pennsylvania, which studied the effects of emotional work by correction officers. Ab-Aziz (2008) conducted a study in the field of measuring the effects of emotional dissonance in employee's service quality alongside customer satisfaction perceptions, and this study was carried out in Malaysia. In Amsterdam, Jansz and Timmers (2002) investigated how emotional dissonance jeopardises self identity.

## **2.7 Burn out**

Drawing on the notion of emotion work taking a detrimental toll on physical and mental wellbeing, (Jansz & Timmers, 2002), Bakker and Heuvel (2006) define "burnout" into two main categories. The first meaning focuses on emotional exhaustion, and the other on depersonalisation. This case, follows on the first definition, with burnout viewed as a specific kind of occupational stress reaction among human service professionals, resulting from demanding and emotionally charged interactions with recipients (Maslach, 1982; Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993). Although several studies have shown that burn out is not

restricted to the service professions (Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2002; Leiter & Schaufeli 1996), the conditions are most prevalent among human service providers (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998).

Bakker and Heuvan (2006) conducted a study that investigated the toll of burn out amongst nurses and police officers, and the study revealed the emotional job demands of these two groups. Police officers are constantly confronted with society's interpersonal violence, confrontational interactions with individuals, and emotionally charged encounters with victims of crimes and accidents (Brown & Campbell, 1994). Nurses are also in frequent contact with severe illness, suffering and death. As outlined in the previous section, emotion work occurs in face-to-face contacts with the public in which expressions are regulated as part of the job to produce an emotional state in the recipients, or to comply with the organisational rules concerning emotional expression (Grandey, 2000).

Bakker and Heuvan (2003) conducted a study that used a sample of 220 flight attendants to test the hypothesis that emotional dissonance is an essential predictor of human service burnout. This was made in reference to the "classical" variables in Karasek's (1978; 1998) studies that explained the contribution emotional dissonance played in examining variance in burnout (i.e., emotional exhaustion and depersonalization). This case study found that emotional dissonance was a more important predictor of burnout among cabin attendants than quantitative job demands and job control. Moreover, there was a focus on finding out whether there is 'something else' about the intensive interpersonal interactions in human services professions that may cause burnout, which can be symbolised through the label of emotional work. Zapf, Vogt, Seifert, Mertini and Isic (1999) have drawn attention to the fact that most studies on work-related stressors are of a cognitive and social nature, while emotion work is a central part of working in service and helping professions. Emotion work can be described as the management, or modification, of emotions as part of the work role (Hochschild, 1983). As mentioned earlier, Hochschild and others have proposed that emotion can be stressful and may result in burnout.

On the other hand, the phenomenon of burnout is not restricted to human service professions alone, as (Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2002) outline. However, human service professions are characterised by specific demands, that are not found in other professions, and that can lead to burnout complaints. Although several empirical studies have shown that burnout is not restricted to the human services professions, (Bakker et al., 2002; De Jonge & Schaufeli, 1996; Warr, 1990), Maslach's (1982) original definition clearly limits the syndrome to this specific group of workers. Maslach (1982) defined burnout as "a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among people who do 'people work' of some kind" (p.1). These two key dimensions are generally considered as the 'core of burnout', whereas personal accomplishment reflects a personality characteristic (i.e., self efficiency) rather than a genuine burnout component (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Shirom, 1989).

As outlined previously, emotional exhaustion refers to feelings of energy depletion and of being overextended by the demands of emotion work. Depersonalisation is characterised by negative or cynical attitudes about the recipients of service or care (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996). In this study, Maslach et al. (1996) proposed a process model of burnout in which the various aspects of burnout were strongly interrelated. First, emotional exhaustion arises in response to a demanding working

environment. A way of coping with this exhaustion is to decrease the emotional involvement in the relationship with recipients by emotionally distancing oneself from them. Several empirical studies have provided evidence for this process model of burnout, such as (Bakker, Schaufeli, Sixma, Bosveld, & Van Dierendonck, 2000; Lee & Ashforth, 1996). Typical burnout in the human services is that it is to an important extent the consequence of job-related interpersonal stress (Maslach, 1982). In saying this, Buunk and Schaufeli (1993) mention the lack of reciprocity in the contact between the professional caregiver and the recipient as a main cause for the emergence of burnout complaints among this group of employees. Another common characteristic for workers in the human services is that interacting with people requires emotional work. Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998, p.124) argue that “the notion of emotional labour is potentially important for our understanding of burnout since it captures an essential aspect of the professional recipient relationship”.

## **2.8 Measuring emotional dissonance**

Abraham (1999) emphasises that the majority of emotional dissonance scales measure the differences between felt and displayed emotion and not the outcomes associated with doing so (dissonance). Holman, Chissack & Totterdell (2002) used a scale that measure the similarity between felt and displayed emotions, using items such as ‘I often feel there is discrepancy between what I feel and the emotions I am required to express to customers’. On another level, Hartel et al. (2001) came closer in attempting to identify the difficulty that employees experience when displaying unfeared emotion with indications such as ‘I have some problems with the way my job requires me to express emotions at work’, but failed to clearly distinguish the line between emotional labour and dissonance, or capture a sense of discomfort or tension. Mann (1999) comes closest when attempting to capture the strain of dissonance with two items, highlighting tensions or similarities in this blur of concepts. An example of one of the indications used in this study was, ‘At some point I felt stressed or found it a strain because I could not show my true feelings.’ The problem with Mann’s attempt in capturing the essence of dissonance is that the items used are pooled with items that measure the incongruence between felt and displayed emotion, and again does not clearly discriminate between surface acting and dissonance. To elaborate on this point, to the confusion surrounding the impossible separation of emotional dissonance from other emotional concepts, a scale was constructed to measure both experienced dissonance and surface acting. The indications used in Mann’s (1999) study, however, primarily measure the similarities in experienced dissonance and surface acting.

However, a problem with many scales of emotional dissonance is that emotional dissonance is viewed simply as the difference between felt and displayed emotion for organisational purposes. The literature in this area, suggests that it is not the performance of emotional labour through displaying unfeared emotion, but the tension or psychological discomfort as a result of doing so that links to emotional exhaustion (Abraham 1999; Morris & Feldman 1997). Scales that have attempted to capture the essence of dissonance have generally failed to make a clear distinction between the surface acting and the experience of dissonance. In addition, Van Dijk and Brown (2006) state that another aspect contributing to the misunderstandings between these two concepts is that emotional labour has been linked to

positive outcomes such as increased job satisfaction (Adelmann, 1995). What researchers have generally failed to consider is that incongruence between expressed and felt emotions, does not necessarily explain the 'range of dissonance' that occurs in dissonance itself. This gap in research indicates that this has not been explored, and is an area that needs to be researched, as it will ultimately contribute towards the field of emotional work, and will endeavour to look over disparities from previous research.

## **Chapter 3:**

### **Methodology**

The previous chapter outlined the significance of emotional work and how the attributions of emotions are vital in organisational behaviour and organisations alone. This chapter transitions into discussions of how metaphors provide useful foundations for the methodology, as metaphors have positive semantic qualities that make them irreducible to non-metaphorical language, making metaphors the most suitable choice when describing organisational change, techniques, methods or approaches, (Morgan, 1980).

The purpose of this thesis is to examine emotional dissonance experienced by fashion retail workers in New Zealand by exploring the metaphors that are associated with and around the field of emotions at work. It will require an in-depth analysis of the responses obtained from interviews that seek to capture the situations participants have experienced emotionally in the performance of their work. Research to date does not account for a range of responses within emotional dissonance, so this thesis will aim to explore this gap in research at a richer, deeper level. In terms of methodology, theorists (Thompson, 1984; Montgomery, 1986) have shown that qualitative methods such as discourse analysis have allowed researchers to glean the most meaning out of transcribed texts, such as Linstead (1992) in the area of organisational studies, where there is a focus upon workplace culture through examining behaviour traits of employees.

It is important to note here that metaphors gave the research the insights I needed into the ranges of dissonance, and that throughout this process I abandoned the original intention to use discourse analysis. I did, however, adopt aspects of Wodak and Meyer's (2001) main steps of discourse analysis in the most general way, to suit the conversational style that was brought out through the analysis of metaphors.

The first part of this chapter will be dedicated to exploring metaphors as part of discourse, with the view that discourse is constituted by social reality and interactions. In this approach, discourse is considered as social practice, and through this, language and metaphor is viewed as an interpretation of this social practice.

The second section will discuss the importance of metaphors, examining the attributes that metaphors have. The third section will go on to explain how metaphors are used in the research, and how themes emerged from this approach. After exploring a range of different methodologies that could best suit the

purpose of this project, such as narrative analysis, and textual analysis, I found that metaphors offered critical implications that can enhance raw data obtained from the interviews during the research collection process. It is important to outline that in this chapter, the 'text' will be observed as the interviews that will take place in this project.

### 3. Metaphors as part of discourse

All practices are practices of production – they are the arenas within which social life is produced, be it economic, political, cultural or everyday life. It is in this sense that Fairclough (2001) establishes interest in the concept of *semiosis*. Moreover, in this approach, metaphor is the examination of the dialectic relationships between semiosis (including language) and other elements of social practices. However, it is important to define what the term *semiosis* is, followed by definitions of metaphor.

Semiosis can be explained broadly as three forms of social practice according to Fairclough (1999). Firstly, it figures as part of the social activity within a practice. For example, part of doing a job (such as being a shop assistant) is using language in a particular range of lexical and expressive forms as the case with other social contexts. Secondly, semiosis figures in representations. Social actors within any practice produce representations of other practices, as well as (reflexive) representations of their own practice, in the course of their activity within the practice. In this sense, people are 'actors' who 'recontextualise' other practices (Bernstein, 1990; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999) – that is, through how people incorporate themselves into their own practice, resulting in an adjustment of how social actors will represent themselves differently according to how they are positioned within the practice. Representation is a process of social construction of practices, including reflexive self-construction – where representations enter and shape social processes and practices. Thirdly, semiosis figures in the 'performances' of particular positions within social practices. The identities of people who operate in positions in a practice are only partly specified by the practice itself. People who differ in social class, gender, nationality, ethnic or cultural membership, and in life experience, produce different 'performances' of a particular position.

Semiosis as part of a social activity constitutes genres. Genres are diverse ways of acting, of producing social life, in the semiotic mode. For example, this can be seen through: everyday conversations, meetings in various settings, forms of interview as well as book reviews. As outlined above, semiosis in the representation and self-representation of social practices constitutes discourses. In this sense, metaphors will be seen as the bridge that connects social activity into meanings. Discourses are diverse representations of social life which are inherently positioned – differently positioned actors 'see' and represent social life in different ways through different discourses. As Fairclough (2002) argues, the lives of the rich and the poor and are represented through different discourses in the social practices of government, politics, medicine, and social science. As a connection within each of these practices, the situation and exchange corresponds to different positions of social actors.

When examining the metaphors that are present in the interviews, the key step of this method is revealing rich insights from this data, in order to expose the relationship towards emotional dissonance and organisational behaviour. This approach is significant for the method of my data collection, and the implications that metaphors hold in expressing these key themes and ideas from the interviews. This brings forth the concepts and implications of metaphors as part of my methodology. According to Morgan (1980), the role of the metaphor is significant in understanding the way in which scientific theory is constructed as a symbolic form. The process of metaphorical conception is a basic mode of symbolism, central to the way in which humans forge their experience and knowledge of the world in which they live (Morgan, 1980). Metaphor is often regarded as no more than a literary and descriptive device for embellishment but more fundamentally is a creative form which produces its effects through a crossing of images (Black, 1962).

Metaphors have positive semantic qualities that make them irreducible to non-metaphorical language, making metaphors the most suitable choice when describing organisational change, techniques, methods or approaches, (Morgan, 1980). Analysing metaphors is the best suited method for this project, as this will enhance the experiences, giving an opportunity for comparisons to be made against and towards certain aspects. I will also apply Wodak and Meyer's (2001) three main dimensions of discourse analysis: description, interpretation and explanation into the way metaphors can highlight organisational behaviour.

Meaning is created when a person attaches significance to a concept in order to better understand and integrate the information presented (Roessingh, 2005). Once achieved the material is stored and later retrieved "as background knowledge in novel problem solving contexts" (Roessingh, 2005, p. 112). This means that discourse has the power to create meaning for people, and if influenced by particular groups, can aid the creation of power relations (Mumby & Stohl, 1991). Wodak and Meyer (2001) propose three main dimensions of discourse analysis:

- 1 Description:** the stage which is concerned with formal properties of the text (conversation).
- 2 Interpretation:** concerned with the relationship between text and interaction – within seeing the text as the product of the process of production, and as a resource in the process of interpretation.
- 3 Explanation:** concerned with the relationship between the interaction and social context, with the social processes of interpretation and their social effects. It is important to analyse language through a specific approach, and here we will explore the art of conversation analysis. Fairclough (1992) says that this approach was formulated by a group of sociologists called 'ethnomethodologists' (p. 16). This is an interpretative method to sociology which takes a particular interest in conversation and in the methods conversationalists use for producing meaning and interpretation (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984).

An analysis of metaphor examines specific parts of a conversation such as how topics are established, developed and changed; how people tell stories in the course of conversations; and how , why people

formulate conversations (explaining what they mean through anecdotes). An analysis of metaphors is best suited when obtaining data for interviews, as this is more appropriate towards the conversational manners of interviews, as opposed to other methods such as experimental projects or textual analysis. This will be explained in more detail later in this chapter. By adopting Wodak & Meyer's (2001) features of discourse analysis, this approach will complement how metaphor draws out meanings from the data gathering process.

### **3.1 The significance of metaphors**

Metaphor has also been shown to play an important part in the use of language, cognitive development, and the general way in which humans forge conceptions about their reality (Burke, 1945, 1954; Jakobson & Halle, 1956; Ortony, 1979). Considerable attention has been given to the role played by metaphor in the development of science and social thought (Berggren, 1962, Black 1962, Hesse, 1966). These three theorists have provided an analysis of the influence of metaphor upon society.

The research work of these theorists contributes to a view of scientific inquiry as a creative process in which people view the world metaphorically, through the language and concepts which filter and structure their perceptions, and through the specific metaphors which they implicitly or explicitly choose to develop their perceptual framework (Ortony, 1979). Attention in this chapter focuses upon the latter use of metaphor, with a view to showing how schools of thought in organisation theory are based upon the insights associated with different metaphors for the study of organisations, and how the logic of metaphor has important implications of the process of data collection. This again, links directly into the approach that my research will undertake, providing advantages over other methodologies.

The logic of metaphor thus has important implications for organisational theory, for it suggests that no one metaphor can capture the total nature of organisational life (Hesse, 1966). Different metaphors can constitute and capture the nature of organisational life in different ways, each generating powerful, discursive, but essentially partial kinds of insights (Schumpeter, 1934). The logic here suggests that new metaphors maybe used to create new ways of viewing organisations which overcome the weaknesses and blind spots of traditional analysis approaches, offering supplementary or even contradictory approaches to organisational analysis.

The metaphors found in organisational theory create meanings for seeing organisations and their functioning in ways which elude the traditional common metaphors mentioned (machine, organism) (Astley & Zammuto 1992). These metaphors also develop a functionalist approach to the study of organisations (Kiesler & Sproul 1982). They attempt to capture and articulate aspects of an underlying view of reality but from different angles and in different ways. Cornelissen, Kafourod and Lock (2005) found that a comparison model such as metaphorical interpretation involves a comparison of concepts to determine, or rather extract, what discrete properties or relations can also apply to the other concept in the same or similar sense. Accordingly, the suggested heuristic within such an account is to judge the aptness of a metaphor on the basis of the similarity of the concepts conjoined with it. Alvesson (1993, p.116) articulated this heuristic:

A good metaphor means the right mix or similarity and difference between the transferred word (i.e the source concept) and the focal one (i.e the target concept). Too much or too little similarity means that the point may not be understood and no successful metaphor will have been created.

An alternative stream of literature (Cornelissen, 2004, 2005; Morgan 1980 suggests that metaphor does not work by comparing or likening the target to comparison models. Rather, metaphor is seen to involve the generation or creation of new meaning through an interactive process of 'seeing-as' or 'conceiving-as', effectively moving beyond an existing similarity between the concepts. Metaphor has been shown to exert an important influence upon the development of language (Muller, 1997), as meaning is transferred from one situation to another, new words and meanings being created as root meanings are used metaphorically to capture new applications. This is why metaphors may assist in explaining organisational behaviour, as they bring forward critical and relevant insights that embrace how people express themselves.

The use of a metaphor serves to generate a mental image for studying a subject. This image can provide the basis for recognising and explaining the range of emotional dissonance amongst employees in the service industry. The creative potential of metaphor depends upon there being a degree of difference between the subjects involved in the metaphorical process. For example, a sales assistant may be described as wearing a "happy mask". In choosing the term "happy", we conjure up specific emotions of happiness, attributed to physical appearance and cheerful facial expressions. By this implication, the metaphor suggests that the salesperson possesses these qualities in their occupation. The use of this metaphor requires that the overall purpose of a mask that has the role of suppressing real expressions and explicit, human characteristics can be ignored in favour of an emphasis upon the characteristics that 'happiness' and a 'mask' have in common. In saying this, metaphor is thus based upon partial truth; it requires of its user a somewhat one-sided abstraction in which certain features are emphasised and others suppressed in a selective comparison.

### **3.2 Metaphors in action**

Using metaphors as part of the method means that this language device holds together the relationship between text and interaction, as semiosis describes. Alvesson and Wilmott (2003) see language as primarily constitutional rather than representational, the character and object rise together to create meaning and expression. For example, the participant and his/her experience come together to generate meanings as a metaphor. The metaphor is then explored in critical detail, probing possible meanings and explanations based on the researcher's truthful perceptions. The main idea from Alvesson and Wilmott's argument is that language has the ability to hold endless possibilities of engaging with the world, and expressing how we perceive particular characteristics – and through the interpretation step of this method, it is possible to produce such deep and meaningful information. Essentially, I will adopt a metaphorical approach combined with Wodak and Meyer's (2001) dimensions of discourse evaluation,

which will examine the implications, meanings and underlying potential behind each metaphor, relating this towards exploring emotional dissonance in the fashion retail industry.

Andriessen and the framework used in his research, provide the backbone and inspiration for the chosen methodology of my research (2006). Andriessen analyses common metaphors used in intellectual knowledge management literature to study the nature of the intellectual capital concept, and distinguishes how metaphors than emerge into categories, or common themes.

This technique was appealing as I had a clear outline of how underlying metaphors present in the interviews could be analysed to study the nature of emotions, in particular – emotional dissonance, in the retail industry. The key attraction of Andriessen’s research approach was how each metaphor that was mentioned in the key texts he analysed through Lakoff and Johnson’s (2003) work that a majority of thinking, discussion and expositions around us depend very heavily on metaphors. Andriessen (2006) used a text analysis methodology to examine two key texts in order to identify core metaphors. He then mapped out the metaphors deriving from Lakoff and Johnson’s theory, in reference to his key texts. From this, it was found that over 95 percent of the statements about knowledge (from the texts) are based on some kind of metaphor, and the two dominant metaphors that form the basis for the concept. This resulted in revealing that knowledge is an abstract concept that has no referent in the real world. This means that the uses of metaphors in this case are to map elements of the things we are familiar with in the real world onto the concept of knowledge to make it more understandable. Andriessen also concluded that knowledge has no real structure, as any resemblance of structure is reflected through a metaphor.

The implications of Andriessen’s study demonstrated that some metaphors may hold more than one meaning, resulting in frequent confusion. People should then be aware of the limitations of metaphors, and avoid taking the conceptualisation literally. This is because metaphors can possibly steer us in a certain direction and this may happen automatically and unconsciously. In my study, by acknowledging that metaphors can also highlight certain characteristics while ignoring others, I have exploited these limitations in my research to illustrate that metaphors can be used too literally and can result in an unsuccessful analysis of the research findings. By keeping this in mind, problems can be prevented by adapting more appropriate initiatives such as reflecting on the implications of different metaphors before choosing the underlying conclusions from my interview results. This is why some elements of Wodak and Meyer’s (2001) approach will be used to ensure that each characteristic is examined in the same light, providing a basis of common ground that eliminates any chance of overlooking, or overlapping material. As a result, this should provide more accurate justifications behind my interpretations.

However, most of the structure in Andriessen’s work was derived from the original works of two famous scholars, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. In 1980 and 1999, Lakoff and Johnson analysed the role of metaphor in human thinking. Their theory on metaphorical thought is based on three main findings from cognitive science (Lakoff & Johnson; 1999): that the mind is inherently embodied, that thought is mostly unconscious and abstract concepts are largely metaphorical. The key concept for my research is that abstract concepts are largely metaphorical – for example, in the conversational nature of

interviews, many abstract references are made and the only form of expressing ideas, comparisons and meaning will be through metaphors. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1999), the use of metaphor involves an elaborate mapping of elements from the source to the target domain. The mapping technique between source and target domains is significant because metaphors have many 'entailments' (Lakoff and Johnson; 1999). This means that the characteristics of the source domain can transport meaning from the source, to the target domain. For example, the metaphor 'the days sneaked past me' – illustrate time sneaking past as something unnoticed and implies that time is an agency that holds no blame.

The arrival of common themes through metaphor deriving from Andriesson's (2006) study was an a significant attribution adopted into this research, to gain clear meanings and interpretations from the data collection process. Before a metaphor emerged into a theme, Andriesson (2006) outlined three credentials that is crucial towards the classification of what formulates a theme. First, in a single interview there must be *repetition* of particular phrases, sayings, terms or words that the participant explicitly states which is deemed as significant. Second, across all interviews this repeated expression must be a *recurrence*, meaning that across the total number of participants this particular pattern must be evident. Third, there must be *passion* in the expression of the repeated phrase or word recurring among participants. This passion can be in the form of how participants convey emotion in the way responses are expressed.

This guideline facilitated the way metaphors were considered a theme in this research, which was to than be evaluated through Wodak and Meyer's (2001) dimensions of discourse analysis. All insights brought forth by these different theorists alleviate relevance in the focus of this thesis, by exploring the possible ranges of emotional dissonance in the retail fashion industry.

## Chapter 4:

### RESEARCH METHOD

#### 4. Methods of data collection

This study will focus on examining the 'gap' in measuring the ranges of emotional dissonance. In this thesis, participants were selected based on their occupation, location and various levels of experience within the fashion retail industry. Overall, there were six female participants, who contributed to the data collection process. Two of these participants were from another store (Glenfield) in Auckland, and the rest were all employed at the Albany branch. These two stores were in the same retail chain, which has 28 stores nationwide.

There were three full-time staff working up to 32 hours per week, who had experience ranging from one to four years; two part-time staff; one who worked up to 20 hours per week, and another who was on late night and weekend shifts only. The other participant was employed on a casual basis, filling in for gaps in the roster during school holidays, annual leave, and Christmas.

The interviews were recorded with an audio tape, and observations noted also. Here, the main points of discussion were based on their work experiences within this industry in terms of organisational expectations, the emotional workload, and any other aspects of organisational culture, norms or behaviour that maybe relevant to my research topic.

My research method employed some of Andriesson's mapping techniques to highlight the potential meanings behind the metaphors in my interview results, but did not employ all techniques as six interviews did not provide enough information to provide a substantial analysis. As previously mentioned, I will also apply Wodak and Meyer's (2001) three main dimensions of discourse analysis of description, interpretation and explanation when examining these core metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson (2003) found out that each different type of metaphor holds a complicated layer of multi processes that express meaning. This allows not only the elaboration of a concept in considerable detail, but also finding of appropriate meanings for highlighting some aspects of it, and hiding others.

Overall, Lakoff and Johnson (2003) suggest that metaphors structure the ordinary conceptual system of our culture, which is reflected in everyday language. Such metaphors are capable of giving a new understanding of experience, giving new meaning to the past, to daily activity, and to what is known and believed. I used this theory to discuss potential meanings behind the underlying metaphors in my interview results, in order to gain rich meanings and interpretations that link back into my research objectives.

## **4.1 Data analysis**

During the research stage, I was looking into a possible methodology that could explain the range in emotional dissonance through metaphors in the light of Wodak and Meyer's (2001) three main dimensions of discourse analysis, being description, interpretation and explanation. From this stage, I began researching previous works in the organisational behaviour field that highlighted how metaphors were the favourable choice of data analysis as opposed to other traditional approaches. I then decided to adopt some of Andriesson's (2006) mapping techniques that he used in his research to highlight key metaphors from the text (interviews).

The data obtained from the interviews were transcribed, analysed and highlighted all potential metaphors that were highlighted. I then mapped these out in according to Andriesson's mapping techniques, looking for any connections, or patterns that could either be common, or different. From this stage, I then arranged all metaphors surfaced into common themes. I then examined these core metaphors and themes through Wodak and Meyer's (2001) three main dimensions of discourse analysis: description, interpretation and explanation.

At the completion of the data analysis I considered the broad findings that had emerged and how they linked back to the research concept. It was noted that there was references to self identity through organisations, and organisational expectations, as well as the different levels of work experience which links to the range of emotional dissonance which then became the basis of my discussion section.

## **4.2 Participant Interviews**

There were six participants in this research. More participants might have strengthened the research but six people I interviewed were able to give me the time I needed. Six individual employees in the retail fashion industry were selected by advertising the focus of this project at their weekly staff meetings. They were then selected on the basis of their willingness and availability. The interviews intended to identify and explore the personal experiences, attitudes, perceptions the participants had towards emotional work, experiences with customers, and their overall experiences in this industry.

The retail chain has over 25 stores nationwide, with more than ten stores located in Auckland alone. The company was established over 20 years ago, and started off as a family business. Now with over 400 staff, the chain is one of the most well-known local businesses in New Zealand's fashion industry. The store that was the focus of this interview was located in Albany, north of Auckland that consists of over 6 staff members – full, part time and casual employees.

Table 1. Assignment of numerical number to interviewees

Participants	Age	Hours worked per week	Period of employment (years)	Experience in industry (years)
Participant 1	22	19-25	1.9	3.2
Participant 2	24	23-30	1.4	1.1
Participant 3	32	30	2.3	4.5
Participant 4	19	12-21	0.1	0.7
Participant 5	26	25-30	1.2	5.0
Participant 6	18	3-8	0.7	1.1

For the purpose of confidentiality, the participants were assigned identification numbers, which are used in the quotes added throughout the chapter for examples and clarification of certain themes. Throughout the data, responses will be organised in numerical tables presenting the common themes that emerged with regard to each question that was asked.

Fifteen indicative questions were constructed to generate a wide range of responses, based on the six different participants. The questions were developed with the purpose of gaining meanings and insights into emotion work, in particular, emotional dissonance. The articulation of the questions was straightforward, so that any person regardless of knowledge or education could process the direct intentions of what was being asked. Prompts and gentle probing were used to clarify any confusion or misunderstandings.

The responses from these questions were then analysed and grouped into appropriate headings that reflected what the main themes surfaced. I then extracted all the potential metaphors translated from the responses, and discussed these in reference to the literature review constructed earlier in light of Wodak and Meyer's (2001) discourse layering technique.

### **4.3 Indicative Questions used for Interviews:**

- 1** What is your definition of emotion, and how does this fit into your occupation?
- 2** How would you describe the way emotion is displayed as part of your job?
- 3** How do you maintain this on a day when you are not feeling on top of things?
- 4** How do you control the clash of emotions when you have to smile and be friendly to customers, but deep down you are feeling angry, sad, depressed, etc?
- 5** What is running through your mind at that particular moment? How would you like to express your true emotions?
- 6** Can you tell me about a particular instance when you felt the disconnection between the 'face' you are supposed to display at work, and how you really felt underneath it all? How did you handle this situation?
- 7** At any given time, do you feel as if you are not being the real person that you are outside of work?
- 8** How would you describe your level of capability in being able to disguise your real emotions from the emotions you are expected to display at work? (out of 10)
- 9** If a customer was to walk out of a changing room, leaving all clothes inside out, and all over the floor – how would you feel? Would you show this emotion?
- 10** How do you cope with not being able to show this? What would you do?
- 11** Are there times when you do genuinely express your real emotions at work?
- 12** How do you communicate with customers that you genuinely get on with? Do you put up a front/wall, or act as yourself?
- 13** If a customer was to place extreme demands on you that are not part of your job description, how will you react? Why/ Why not?
- 14** Does the way you display your emotions affect others?
- 15** How would you describe the way that your organisation places expectations and demands on you as a worker? Are these realistic?

Overall, this chapter highlights the combination of discourse analysis in examining the dialectic relationships between semiosis (including language) and other elements of social practices. In this sense, these 'actors' 'recontextualise' other practices (Bernstein, 1990; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999) by incorporating them into their own practice, and social actors then represent them differently according to how they are positioned within the practice.

The representations of social actors in this thesis will be analysed through the theoretical framework of metaphors. Metaphors have positive qualities that make them the most suitable choice when describing organisational change, techniques, methods or approaches (Morgan, 1980). Metaphorical analysis is the best suited method for this project, as this will enhance the experiences, giving an opportunity for comparisons to be made against and towards certain aspects.

The following chapter will discuss and examine the findings from the participant interviews, with all themes outlined on tables in regards to each question that was posed. After the transcription of the responses, all common themes that surfaced were recorded, and noted in correspondence with each participant.

## Chapter 5:

### FINDINGS

The second chapter of this thesis discussed the literature around emotional work, focusing on emotional labour and emotional dissonance, outlining both its consequences and scales of measurement. The scope of the literature review provided significant background information into the various theories and studies behind these concepts, and how emotional work is categorised in accordance with service work. The previous chapter justified the reasoning behind the research methodology and method used, highlighting the implications and justifications of the chosen approach.

By conducting interviews that explore these areas, I discovered many deep insights that were articulated through metaphorical expressions and common themes. This chapter will highlight the key findings obtained from the data collection process, integrated together with the discussion section in light of the previous literature review. This should assist in revealing the key ideas of discussion behind the main themes and underlying metaphors surfaced from the interviews.

*Table 2. Profiles of individual interviewee participants*

Participant profile		Under 20 years n = 2	20- 25 years n = 2	26 - 35 years n = 2
<b>Employment</b>	Full time	0	1	2
	Part time	1	1	0
	Casual	1	0	0
<b>Hours worked per week</b>	0 - 10	1	0	0
	11-20	1	0	0
	21 – 35	0	2	2
<b>Experience in retail fashion Industry</b>	0 - 1 years	1	0	0
	1 - 2 years	1	2	0
	2- 3 years	0	0	0
	3+ years	0	0	2
<b>Period of time currently employed at store</b>	0 - 1 years	2	0	0
	1 - 2 years	0	2	1
	2- 3 years	0	0	1
	3+ years	0	0	0

In most cases, the responses were overwhelming in the sense that there was a substantial amount of productive feedback, almost as if the participants were waiting for the right opportunity to disclose this personal information. Furthermore, I found it difficult to take in their responses, as these findings were not expected – I had anticipated answers that were not as intriguing and captivating, but more straightforward and plain.

Table 3. Definition of emotion in industry

1 = times (x) mentioned in interview

Question: What is your definition of emotion, and how does this fit into your occupation?						
Themes	Participants					
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6
How feelings are displayed	1	1	1	1	1	1
Emotional state of mind	-	-	-	-	1	
Company expectations	-	1	-	1	1	-
Showing appropriate emotions	1	-	1	-	-	-
Using emotion as a means to an end	1	-	-	-	-	-
Personal behaviour	-	1	1	1	-	1

The various definitions of emotion are outlined in table 3. All participants (n=6) mentioned that this was based on “how feelings were displayed and maintained”. The two younger participants aged under 20 years, reported that their view of ‘emotion’ was based on personal behaviour and self control based on their job. One participant (4) stated: “I see this as how I display myself and how I present who I am when I am in this job, and it’s also based on the rules of the company as well”.

This was also described as how “customers see me working” (P2). P2 and P4 reported that their definition of emotion was perceived through the company’s expectations and rules, as well as displaying the appropriate emotions through personal behaviour. In both interviews, it was mentioned that ‘feelings/emotion’ was observed through how they acted, looked, and how they communicated with customers.

However, out of the six interviewees, P5 viewed emotion as a reflection of her emotional state of mind rather than all other reasons outlined above.

*“Emotion, in my perspective is seen as how I display my feelings and how I choose to use these in my job. I also think it is how I reveal my emotional state of mind, and also how I reveal this” (Participant 5)*

Another interesting aspect was brought up through P1’s response, where she stated that she uses emotion to assist in gaining sales by her display behaviour. As this participant mentioned, “for this job emotion plays a huge role in how I get my sales up and in meeting new customers, especially if I want them to buy lots of clothes”.

The younger participants (P4 and P6) seemed to have a more naive understanding of what emotion was, compared to the older participants that acknowledged emotion as part of their job. They did not base their reply on the company’s expectations as participants P2 and P5 did. I also noticed that the younger group of participants had a more casual attitude to the interview shown by their laughter, and through their responses to the interview questions.

*Table 4. Role of emotional display in job*

<b>Question: How would you describe the way emotion is displayed in your job?</b>						
<b>Themes</b>	<b>Participants</b>					
	<b>P1</b>	<b>P2</b>	<b>P3</b>	<b>P4</b>	<b>P5</b>	<b>P6</b>
Cannot display ‘real’ emotions	1	-	1	1	1	-
Happiness’ mask is dominant	1	1	-	-	-	1
Company representation	1	1	1	-	1	-
Showing appropriate emotions	-	1	-	-	-	1
Social/organisational ‘exchange’	1	-	-	-	-	-
Job satisfaction	1	1	-	-	-	-
Personal challenge/will power	-	-	-	1	1	-

Table 4 represents the themes that arise when participants were asked how emotion was displayed in their job. Each theme entailed the collective meanings that each participant expressed, and the more times this was mentioned across every participant, this increased the occurrence.

As outlined above, the main themes that a large number of participants (n=4) experienced when describing how emotion is displayed in their job, is based on how they represent the company, as well as not being able to display their ‘real emotions’. One participant (P3) mentioned that not being able to display her true feelings was detrimental, and affected how she performed at work. Another participant mentioned that “If I show the wrong emotions, then this will drive customers away”, which shows the need for covering up true emotions, considering that they might gain rewards/extra incentives when doing so, compensating for the emotional differences.

Another overwhelming factor explaining how emotion is displayed in this job is based on being happy, or looking happy at all times. The most common response across this expression, was describing being happy as part of their ‘uniform’.

*“I think that being emotional can be seen as one of the keys to having success in this job, and it’s almost like it’s our uniform or mask that we have to wear each shift” (Participant 2).*

Some participants (P6 and P1) recorded that the way they looked happy was only to please managers who might be observing them during the shift, rather than for their own sake. The reason behind this was to look happy and satisfied in the job, even though it might not truly reflect their state of mind. An interesting comment made by one participant (P1) revealed that she uses her smile to ‘draw’ in customers, as they seem more receptive towards her physical display of emotions, which assists in her gaining more sales from these customers.

*“If I show the wrong emotions, then obviously this will drive the customers away from me, and that is why I have to always put on the happy smiley mask all the time. So yeah, I think a smile is almost like a magnet that encourages ladies to buy more, as they feel more welcomed” (Participant 1).*

This metaphorical expression also fell into the theme of social/organisational exchange, as happiness is a key factor in this equation; participants act or look happy in order to gain more sales, and more attention from potential heavy spending customers. The display of appropriate emotions was also crucial in this exchange, as looking the part helps ‘draw’ in these customers.

A couple of participants (P4 and P5) mentioned that being motivated and challenging their will-power as an important factor in how they display their emotions in their jobs. One particular participant mentioned that she had to constantly fight her inner emotions to look happy even though at times she did not want to.

*“I think emotions play a heavy part of this job, because it is the way that you display yourself and how it represents the store and of course, you as a person. In this store, we are always encouraged to talk to people, greet them and to look happy at all times” (Participant 4).*

## **5. The emotional mask**

### **Description:**

A metaphor that was significant across the responses to the Q1: “What is your definition of emotion, and how does this fit into your occupation?” and Q2: “How would you describe the way emotion is displayed as part of your job?” was that of emotion being a mask or disguise that displayed constructed feelings to suit the nature of the job in this industry. Several references were made clarifying the choice of using such an expression to describe how the participants defined emotion in their occupation, which ranged from ‘showing the right face and right feelings’, to ‘displaying my feelings to represent myself and the company’. The repeated theme of ‘the emotional mask’ exhibited how participants defended their actions and feelings when at work, justifying this through how they reveal their emotions.

## Interpretation:

A mask could symbolise many different meanings. A mask could be referred to the way that employees have to always look happy, be friendly and cheerful no matter what they are feeling underneath these emotions, as exposed through P2's comments (previously outlined). As a majority of participants (n=4) commented that they could not showcase their real emotions, the mask does not provide room for considering 'real' emotions beneath this disguise.

The responses by P1 and P2 suggest that the 'mask' in this context is made of deep characteristics based on emotional performance and display. The organisation, on the other hand, implies that there are expectations based on the way employees exhibit their emotions, in consideration of the customers and the company. From this perspective, the shared perceptions of the 'mask' seem to depend on covering up real emotion, replacing it with constructed emotion. The way these participants answered these questions, indicates that the 'mask' in both views are unrealistic and very complicated because of the amount of emotional stress that P1 and P2 experienced. This emotional stress can also depend on how a sale is made, interacting with customers, ways to enhance and enlarge a sale, physical appearance, and adhering to the selling steps that guarantee success, as P5 reveals in line of upholding the company's expectations of workers.

*"In this job, emotion is everything. It determines how we get sales, regular customers and overall satisfaction in what we do. I feel that if I don't show the right emotions than obviously I will have to perform harder to make up for this." (Participant 5)*

'The emotional mask' acts as a route of gaining sales from potential customers, as exposed through P1's response, where she states that she uses emotion to assist in gaining sales through how she displayed her emotions. As this P1 mentioned, "for this job emotion plays a huge role in how I get my sales up and in meeting new customers, especially if I want them to buy lots of clothes".

The organisational rules of expression deemed appropriate in a certain working context are referred as feeling rules or display rules (Hochschild, 1983). The expression of an appropriate emotional display can be achieved through deep acting, surface acting, and the expression of genuine emotion. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) outline that in most cases; the expression of emotion is a spontaneous process that does not cost any effort. Surface acting involves changing the observational expression while the inner feelings remain unchanged (fake smiles). Deep acting refers to the effort of actually changing these inner feelings in order to comply with the display rules, (i.e., actively trying to like a customer). In this case, not only the emotional expression but also the inner feelings are regulated.

In this study, participants specifically mentioned that they were not being able to display their true feelings as this affected their overall work performance. P5 said that "If I show the wrong emotions, then this will drive customers away", which shows the need to cover up true emotions, because workers might gain rewards/extra incentives when doing so, compensating for the emotional differences. Here, the difference between displayed and felt emotions as part of the work role has been named and

identified as *emotional dissonance*. This aspect of emotion work is considered to be the key predictor of emotional exhaustion, and has been most consequently related with psychological strain (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Zapf, 2002; Morris & Feldman, 1997).

There has been increasing attention paid to the employees' feelings and expressions with the increasing managerial emphasis on customer service, which involves employees' ability to express positive, upbeat emotions to customers, a process called "emotional labour" (Hochschild, 1983). Attributes of emotional labour were present in the way participants commented on how emotion is displayed in this job is based on being happy, or looking happy at all times. The most common response across this expression, was describing being happy as part of their 'uniform'. For example, P3 says that "emotions can be seen as one of the keys to having success in this job, and it's almost like it's our uniform or mask that we have to wear each shift. I think once this is displayed right, then the rest will follow".

Although these results identify emotions as an important aspect of organisational life, Gibson (2006) outlines the opposite. According to Gibson (2006), people's emotions remain, in large part, undiscussable at work, which supports the metaphor of 'the emotional mask'. The central ideology surrounding emotions in organisations is that they are irrational, idiosyncratic disturbances that are best controlled and kept under cover (Stearns & Stearns, 1986).

Furthermore, these formal and informal expectations are termed display rules, or "behavioral expectations about which emotions ought to be expressed and which ought to be hidden" (Rafaeli and Sutton, 1989, p. 8) and are generally a function of "societal norms, occupational norms and organisational norms" (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993, p. 91). Societal norms guide interpersonal behaviour in all cultures and provide general rules regarding how and what emotions should be expressed in the work environment. As outlined previously, this is the expectation that the company places on its workers. In other words, this is because the expression of emotion in organisational roles is influenced by the more general norms of the culture in which the organisation is based. In the case of service providers, the customer in most cultures usually has expectations about what these rules should be and the type of role the service provider should be playing.

These expectations in the customer vary as a function of the type of organisation, occupation or industry the interaction is taking place in; the kind of service or purpose of the communication being rendered; and the personal history and individual needs of the customer (Zeithaml, 1990). As reflected in the literature review, the strength or intensity of the norms can vary too according to the degree to which the norm is shared (consensus) and the degree to which it is internalized (Zerbe and Falkenberg, 1989). Furthermore, Zerbe and Falkenberg (1989) found, for example, that the norm strength for display rules (as rated by students) was greater for service occupations (such as salespeople, flight attendant) than for non-service occupations (such as shipping clerk, janitor).

## ***Masking emotions***

The concept of masking emotions seems to be more a feature, rather than a requirement of organisational life. These display rules are most likely to characterise roles in which workers seek to “establish or convey their authority over the target of their emotion-management efforts” (Wharton & Erickson, 1993, p. 467). In situations including salespeople and customers, genuine emotional displays are expected to be muted and excessive emotionality of any kind is discouraged – except for the constructed emotion approved by the organisation.

Stearns and Stearns (1986) argue that masking of emotion is “an aspect of all work roles to some degree” (cited in Wharton and Erickson, 1993, p. 467), but it is a more salient display norm in some work roles than others and is particularly prominent in middle management and most professions. For example, Jackall (1988, p. 47) describes the pressures on middle managers “to exercise iron self-control and to have the ability to mask all emotion and intention behind bland, smiling, agreeable public faces”. Other researchers also note how professionals are encouraged to mask emotion, a norm or display rule expressed as “detached concern” (Hochschild, 1983, p. 150) or the avoidance of “too much liking or disliking” (Lief & Fox, 1963). The suppressing of emotions explains the reasoning behind the metaphorical expression of ‘the emotional mask’ in various degrees.

### **5.1 The happiness magnet**

#### **Description:**

Another metaphorical expression that was present through the responses to the first two questions, was describing ‘happiness as a magnet’, used to draw in customers, to represent the company’s image, and of course to act as a ‘payment’ in the exchange for the emotional dissonance that the participants may be experiencing. This was a frequent manifestation of how emotion was used as an advantage in this industry, rather than as a detrimental weakness.

#### **Interpretation:**

In a service industry such as retail fashion that is heavily reliant on emotion, happiness is one of the key emotions that is crucial in surviving the intense demands from both the organisation and the customers. This metaphor is fascinating, as it can mean anything from displaying happiness in exchange for a sale, conversation, or to impress management in attaining a promotion, compliment or approval.

Displaying happiness is embedded into workers in this industry in early stages their employment, as the company stresses happiness as the key to gaining success and achieving goals as a sales person. This implies that employees then become something that the organisation can take possession of and donating emotions becomes part of the job requirement. Each employee then has to perform in a certain way that attracts customers, ignoring their personal values, opinions and views. This regulates

the way that employees display how they really feel, as the regulations hide the serious nature of the job.

As outlined in table 4, some participants (P6 and P1) commented that the way they looked happy was only to please management who might observe them during the shift, rather than for their own sake. The reason behind this was to look happy and satisfied in the job, even though this may not be true. An interesting comment made by one participant (P1) revealed that she uses her smile to 'draw' in customers, as they seem more receptive towards her physical display of emotions, which assists in her gaining more sales from these customers.

Work colleagues are trained to influence others to look and be happy, and to impose this mood onto the rest in the team. It was expressed that this was usually from management within the organisation that try to influence a false, happy mood for others in the work place to feed off.

Happiness was explicitly mentioned and quoted as a magnet that encourages customers to buy more; the stronger the happiness magnet, the more items people buy. *"I think a smile is almost like a magnet that encourages ladies to buy more, as they feel more welcomed"* (Participant 1).

An interesting observation was that those participants who could not handle the emotional workload had the tendency to resort to the 'emotional mask' more often than those that had longer experience in the industry. This means that the participants that had worked in the industry longer had a higher level of tolerance, and lower levels of burnout and emotional exhaustion.

As outlined in the chapter two, Miller et. al. (2007), emotional labour involves the display of emotion that is in some way defined and controlled by management, and as a result, is often perceived as inauthentic and falsely constructed. Emotional labour is the notion of the way roles and tasks exert overt and covert control over display rules, which are known as "display rules". Generally, emotional labour encompasses three types of emotions: integrative, differentiating emotion, and emotional neutrality that are associated with different display rules. First, integrative emotions are those that bind groups together, such as love, loyalty and pride, second are differentiating emotions are those that cause group differences, such as fear, anger and contempt (Kemper, 1984). A third possible type of emotional display is emotional masking which refers to displays of emotional neutrality and restraint.

In reference to the 'happiness magnet', integrative emotions, such as friendliness, are often emphasised in service roles or public contact encounters in which the services are intangible, consisting of services rendered rather than objects that are possessed (Wharton and Erickson, 1993, p. 466). Because the "emotional style of offering the service is part of the service itself", display rules are oriented towards emotions that instil a sense of well-being, good will or satisfaction in customers (Hochschild, 1983, p. 5). For example, in her study of McDonald's, Leidner (1991, p. 160) found that the fast-food workers were told to be "cheerful and polite at all times" and that "crew people were often reprimanded for not smiling".

This is what is seen in the happiness exchange between the employee and the customer: ‘happiness’ is viewed as the central display rule that provokes a sense of well-being, good will or satisfaction in customers which in return, result in customers to buy more items – increasing the effectiveness of the ‘happiness magnet’. For example, P1 said: “A smile is almost like a magnet that encourages ladies to buy more, as they feel more welcomed”.

Table 5. Emotional maintenance

Question: How do you maintain this on a day when you are not feeling on top of things?						
Themes	Participants					
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6
Conflict with real emotions	1	1	1	-	1	1
Acting ‘fake’	-	1	-	-	-	-
Surveillance	-	-	1	-	-	-
Putting real emotions first	1	-	1	-	-	1
Personal challenge/will power	1	1	-	-	1	-

“On top of things” is taken as a day where a participant may be feeling low in a personal, or professional sense and was left to her own explanation and definition.

Table 5 provides the common themes when participants were asked to expand on the previous question – to explain how they maintain those emotions on a day when they are not feeling on top of things. The different responses across six participants were related to each theme in a similar manner, this then formulated the overarching theme that each response was grouped into.

It can be seen immediately that almost all the participants (n=5) experienced some type of conflict with their real, or true emotions at the time. There was a range of reasons for this response, as the most common influence was not being able to reveal their true emotions of depression, boredom, anger, or frustration. One participant (P5) stated that one of the hardest obstacles for her would be overcoming boredom, and looking interested despite this. In fact, this coincided with challenging herself in remaining positive, and motivating her inner will power. When participants mentioned that they were ‘fighting’ with their real emotions, this was often justified through being able to stay motivated and challenged in the workplace.

*When I can’t be bothered showing my emotions, I fight my feelings within – but I mainly think about the consequences of not acting this way, then I try my best to smile and act happy when I am totally not in the mood” (Participant 2).*

On the other hand, participants (P1, P3 and P6) commented that when they feel that it is impossible to fight their real emotions against their fake, constructed feelings – they then resort to revealing their emotions in a subtle manner, whilst avoiding people at the same time. This involves ignoring customers, keeping away from managers, and not socialising with others unless they were required to. In a sense, it can be seen that these participants cannot handle, or deal with the emotional work on days when they are not feeling their best.

*“On a day when I don’t feel on top of the world, I try my best to show as much positive emotions as I can, but most of the time I just walk around and try to avoid people. I just don’t want my negative attitude to rub off on the customers, so I try my best to keep out of their way”*  
(Participant 1).

A metaphor that appeared was that of ‘being on stage and being watched’. When asked to explain this in further detail, P1 seemed to have difficulty in expressing her response – manifested through her attempts to visualise her answer.

*“On a day when I am not feeling on top of the world, I just try my best to do everything and not let my feelings get in the way at the end of the day. At times this feels impossible to do as I feel that I have a lot on my shoulders”.*

*Me: Why is this?*

*“I feel that I am constantly on stage and being watched, whether this is from customers or work in general” (Participant 2).*

## **5.2 Fighting an emotional war: Real vs. Fake**

### **Description:**

An image that emerged from the responses of question three about emotional maintenance revealed that participants were constantly fighting an emotional war within; of their real, genuine emotion vs. fake and constructed emotion.

### **Interpretation:**

For instance, one participant outlined that she fights her emotions within, in order to look and feel happy: “when I can’t be bothered showing my emotions, I fight my feelings within – but I mainly think about the consequences of not acting this way, then I try my best to smile and act happy when I am totally not in the mood” (Participant 2). On a deeper level, there is a wide range of reasons behind this; with the most dominant influence was not being able to reveal her true emotions of anger, boredom and depression.

Participants (P1, P3 and P6) outlined their real emotions in describing how they would handle the situation through swearing, throwing clothes and yelling at customers.

In view of the 'emotional war' metaphor, this manifestation has the same significance as a war zone. Here, real emotion is at war against the fake, constructed emotion that the company and customers favour. This is known as *emotional dissonance*, and is described when a disconnect occurs between an individual's identity and the displayed emotion (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Hochschild, 1983). It was mentioned by P2 that 'letting guard down' was referred to the action of revealing real emotions, and letting go of the constructed emotion that was once used in defence of one's self identity.

Referring back to the imagery of an emotional war— boredom, tiredness and anxiety are all hidden under the 'fake' emotions that are seen as the defence weapons that employees hide their actual emotions behind when interacting with customers and colleagues. These are all attributes that contribute towards the 'mask' outlines previously, that employees need to wear for the purpose of achieving targets and conforming to the expectations of the organisation.

I observed that those participants that were younger, less experienced had a more relaxed approach to their job, and had more difficulties in fighting their emotional battles, compared to the more mature and experienced participants.

### **Explanation:**

Emotional labour occurs when, according to Hochschild (1983), expressed emotions satisfy display rules, but clash with inner feelings. Hochschild (1979; 1983) argued that emotional labour is performed through either surface or deep acting. *Surface acting* involves conforming to display rules by simulating emotions that are not actually felt. This is accomplished by careful presentation of verbal and non-verbal cues such as facial expression, gestures and voice tone. This mirrors what participants felt, when they reported that they fight their emotions within, in order to look and feel happy: "when I can't be bothered showing my emotions, I fight my feelings within – but I mainly think about the consequences of not acting this way, then I try my best to smile and act happy when I am totally not in the mood" (P2). This is separate from *deep acting*, as this involves the participants attempting to actually experience or feel the emotion that they wish (or that others expect them) to display.

Some may say (Arthur and Caputo, 1959) that emotional labour is a functional part of many organisational cultures and has organisational benefits as well as individual benefits. Selling more products, dealing with customer complaints adequately are all positive outcomes associated with the performance of emotional work. This can all be effective when the expression of emotion is to be sincere (Rafaeli and Sutton, 1989). In this situation, participants were 'fighting' an emotional war, that resulted in emotional dissonance, and is described when a disconnect occurs between an individual's identity and the displayed emotion (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Hochschild, 1983). For example, P3 said: "I have to fight myself within to not let my real emotions shine through, but to be happy. But it's a really tiring process, and eats up all my energy which shows through eventually."

However, on another level, it has been suggested (e.g. Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993; Lief and Fox, 1963) that the emotional labourer can actually distance him/herself cognitively from the situation by acting rather than experiencing the emotion – which is what the metaphorical expression of ‘an emotional war’ entailed, because participants were losing touch with their true sense of identity. In saying this, there is a discrepancy between emotions expected and those actually experienced. This discrepancy is common because even though display rules may regulate expressive behaviour, they cannot regulate expressive experience. This means that no matter how hard the employees may fight their emotions; they have no sense of control over the way they express this. Emotions often reflect one’s central, salient and valued identity, which is why surface acting tends to become more difficult with each repetition of the role – as frequent repetition tends to blunt felt emotion.

### **5.3 Through the lens of an emotional camera: Emotional surveillance**

#### **Description:**

Another metaphor that surfaced from the response to this question, was that of ‘being on stage and being watched’. Just like a security camera that scrutinises movement in a frame, employees in this industry feel that they are constantly under the surveillance of customers, and management in reference to how they display their emotions.

#### **Interpretation:**

When this comparison was made between the displays of appropriate emotion to ‘being on stage and being watched’ from one of the participants, I unravelled the deeper connotations of this metaphor. I found out that some participants were conscious of their actions, as customers were behind the emotional camera. This surveillance could be pinpointed to a variety of reasons, with the most obvious exposing the insecurities that employees possess, with the awareness that they are being watched and observed by management. Although there may be no specific manual that explains using positive emotions in the workplace as opposed to negative, there is still the unspoken norm that employees must act professionally and look happy at all times. This provokes fear and insecurities in some workers, as they do not know whether they are confirming to the expectations that the company expects. P2 said: “I have to have the self control to handle this and make sure that I act professionally. I would really like to show how I feel, but I know it won’t be right.”

As already mentioned above, one participant reported: “I feel that I am constantly on stage and being watched, whether this is from customers or work in general” (P2). This reflects the extreme rules that these employees must oblige, as they are constantly being watched – which adds more pressure to their workload.

**Explanation:**

Emotional work and emotional labour theory also draws heavily on Goffman’s dramaturgical perspective (Goffman, 1959; 1969) in which the ‘labourer’ (in this case, the participant) is viewed as an actor performing on stage for an often discriminating audience. The actor changes or manages his emotions to make them appropriate or consistent with a “situation, role or expected job function” (Putnam & Mumby, 1993, p. 37). This is what is meant in the metaphorical expression described above: ‘through the lens of an emotional camera: emotional surveillance’. In this instance, the discriminating audience is substituted as the customer, or management staff.

These particular feelings are actively stimulated as the employees “psychs” themselves into the desired characters. For example, P3 stated: “Switching off to me means that I have to distract myself so that I don’t have the chance to react or show the way I truly feel.” It is similar to the way that professional actors prepare themselves for an upcoming role. Hochschild suggests that there are two routes to successful deep acting: conjuring up the feeling by actively attempting to evoke or suppress an emotion; and through trained imagination where the actor actively invokes thoughts, images and memories to induce the associated emotion (e.g. thinking of a relative’s death in order to feel sad). On the other hand, surface acting, then, focuses directly on outward behaviour whereas deep acting focuses more on the inner feeling.

*Table 6. Emotional tolerance*

<b>Question: How do you control the clash of emotions when you have to smile and be friendly to customers, but deep down you may be feeling angry, sad, depressed, etc?</b>						
<b>Themes</b>	<b>Participants</b>					
	<b>P1</b>	<b>P2</b>	<b>P3</b>	<b>P4</b>	<b>P5</b>	<b>P6</b>
Conflict with real emotions	-	1	1	-	-	-
Being/looking happy regardless	-	-	-	-	1	1
Machine metaphor	-	-	1	-	-	-
Personal challenge/will power	-	-	-	1	-	-
Emotional labour/dissonance	1	-	1	-	-	1
Deep acting	1	-	-	-	1	-
Burn out	1	1	-	-	-	-
Stereotypes	-	-	-	1	-	-

Table 6 presents the main themes surfaced when asked about the clash of ‘staged’ and real emotions when relating to customers. Surprisingly, all of the participants (n=6) experienced some type of emotional dissonance when dealing with customers. To begin with, two participants commented on feeling ‘awkward’ when they could not deal with (P4 and P3) the acting upon their real or ‘staged’

emotions. This was considered to be a result of a number of things including acting happy when not in the mood, avoiding customers, and dealing with self control.

Moreover, one participant (P6) commented on the efforts that she has to make as her 'duty' for the customers and for the company that she is working for.

*"This can be really hard because I know that as a salesperson I have to work on this, and I need to show that I am happier towards customers, (because) when I'm not, things can get quite awkward" (Participant 6).*

Although participants admit that they feel this emotional discomfort or disconnect, they still feel that it is their obligation to look happy at all times. This obligation towards customers in particular situations where they do not feel happy underneath this 'fake' emotion. On the other hand, most of the participants noted that they think of other 'happy' experiences in their past or previous memory to help ease this emotional discomfort. This is called 'deep acting', and it is interesting to discover how this concept is active in this type of service work.

*"When I have to smile and act all friendly to customers it can also be really tiring. When I don't feel like doing this, I just force myself to think of something else, maybe the shift will be over shortly, or Coronation Street will be on tonight – haha, so that usually helps me through these times." (Participant 5).*

*"Umm – sometimes when this happens I have to switch off. (probes) Switching off to me means that I have to distract myself so that I don't have the chance to react or show the way I truly feel. I don't really control this, but I do have this discipline within me to handle it." (Participant 3).*

P3 and P5 visualised a positive goal, or a hobby that they enjoy as a treat of going through the emotional hardship – so that when it comes to an end, they have something to look forward to. In this case, these ladies were looking forward to watching their favourite programmes after work, as this in mind kept them motivated.

However, another participant (P2) pointed out that they feel extremely tired, stressed, and frustrating from dealing with how they have to act 'happy' but do not feel this way in reality. This constitutes "emotional labour", and some of its attributes were noted in the interviews (Hochschild, 1983). One participant mentioned that she has to fight her real emotions in order to be happy. This is also known as 'burnout', when service workers experience this lack of energy from acting upon false emotions, whilst hiding or covering up genuine emotion (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993).

*"I have to fight myself within to not let my real emotions shine through, but to be happy. But it's a really tiring process, and eats up all my energy which shows through eventually" (Participant 2).*

Another interesting metaphor that surfaced was responding to the question in reference to almost being a 'machine'. I asked for elaboration on this example, and P2 then outlined that she has to 'switch off' in order to show that way that she truly feels. This expression is significantly mentioned in

organisational theories (Fineman, 1996; Morgan 2003), where service workers describe themselves or the nature of their jobs as holding mechanical characteristics.

*“... When this happens I have to switch off. (probes) Switching off to me means that I have to distract myself so that I don’t have the chance to react or show the way I truly feel. I don’t really control this, but I do have this discipline within me to handle it.” (Participant 3).*

#### **5.4 Remote controlled behaviour**

**Description:** This image holds many potential meanings – how a machine operates, the systematic processes, the input and output cycle, and of course the physical attributes of a machine/robot. This fits in ideally with the concept of constructed emotion in this type of industry.

**Interpretation:** Morgan (2003) outlines how the metaphor of a machine shapes the language, actions and behaviour of people within the organisation. To a certain degree, this has many disadvantages. Workers are placed under pressure to deliver high-quality results, maintain harsh expectations and live with the fact that they can be replaced at any time with or without notice. Similar to a machine, people within organisations are expected to be routinised, efficient, reliable and predictable. However, the reality to this is that these demands are unrealistic and are not consistent with human nature.

On another level, this expression could also reflect an automated person that lives on the demands of others with no freedom or self expression, because this turns into a routine rather than a preference of choice. For instance, P3 said that she has to ‘switch off’ in order to show that way that she truly feels: “Switching off to me means that I have to distract myself so that I don’t have the chance to react or show the way I truly feel. I don’t really control this, but I do have this discipline within me to handle it.” (Participant 3). This shows that she has to learn to control her real emotions, in a job that encourages being fake in order to endorse the company’s image and reputation.

#### **Explanation:**

Mann (1999) states that from the organisation’s perspective, employees that display pleasant emotions (that appear genuine) have a higher tendency to actively promote organisational goals. The emotional front that clients or customers associate with a particular organisation may influence the decision to use the services offered by that company. In saying this, research by Westbrook (1980) suggests that customers who have felt good about a particular product (that is, their mood was better, they were optimistic and they expressed general life satisfaction) were more likely to remember the store the next time they considered where to shop. This is why companies are more inclined to treat their workers like machines or robots, as they assume that they will deliver the same recited performance on a regular basis, to draw in more customers.

As far as the emotional worker is concerned, “what is functional for the organisation may well be dysfunctional” for the actor (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993, p. 96). It is argued (Hochschild, 1983) that portraying emotions that are not felt (surface acting) creates the strain of emotive dissonance which is akin to cognitive dissonance. This dissonance may cause the labourer to feel false and hypocritical. This explains why participants felt that they were being ‘remote-controlled’, because they are expected to expose false constructed identities and emotion, rather than being real and genuine.

Ultimately, such dissonance can lead to personal and work-related maladjustment, such as poor self-esteem, depression, cynicism and alienation from work (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993). It has been argued (by Darwin & Freud, 1989) that emotional reactions help one to make sense of situations and help make the connections between oneself and others. Deep acting may distort these reactions and impair a sense of authentic self. It may ultimately lead to self-alienation and may impair one’s ability to recognise or even experience genuine emotion (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993).

Table 7. Expression of genuine emotion

Question: What is running through your mind at that particular moment? How would you like to express your true emotions?						
Themes	Participants					
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6
Professional image/company’s interests	1	-	1	1	1	-
Personal values/reasons	-	-	-	-	1	-
Self control	1		1	-	-	-
Displays real emotion regardless	-	-	-	-	-	1
Covering real emotions	1	1	1	1	1	-

Table 7 outlines the themes that were common amongst these interviewees as they explained how they would like to express their true emotions, continuing with the previous question. Overall, majority of the participants (n=5) disclosed that they never act upon their hidden emotions, apart from one participant who reveals her true emotion when she is fed up with ‘acting’ and being true to herself.

In conjunction with this, these participants also brought up the fact that they must act and look professional at all times, no matter what. A pattern that emerged revealed that participants described the real emotions and how they would act upon them:

*“I will really just like to swear at them all and tell them to all go home! (laughs) But no, I will like to show how I really feel but I know I can’t because apparently I have to look professional in what I do here” (Participant 3).*

*“Sometimes I would like to show that I am bored, and not at all interested in other people’s lives, but generally I think that I can’t show this – just based on what the company expects and my managerial position really” (Participant 5).*

*“...I would actually love to just throw the clothes that they leave all messy back into their face, and give them cold looks in the same way they do to me. But, no – as it is required, I have to remain professional at all times and to be the better person, which means that I have to control and handle my true emotions”(Participant 1).*

*“I would really like to yell, swear at everybody and put the door down. But no, I have to have the self control to handle this and make sure that I act professionally. I would really like to show how I feel, but I know it won’t be right”(Participant 4).*

After analysing these comments, it is apparent to see that these participants have the extreme urge to show their real emotions, but do not act on these impulses due to satisfying the company’s expectations and image. These experiences are also based on having some form of self control where these employees can resist this compulsion. In addition to this, the personal values and attitudes of each participant are manifested through their responses.

Those that are more outgoing in the descriptions of their responses (P3, P4 and P1) wished to express their emotions through swearing, and physical actions as opposed to those (P5) that are more mature that prefer to handle their emotions more responsibly.

On the other hand, there appeared to be a lack of seriousness in the response noted from another interviewee (P6) on the opposite end of this scale. She had no interest in her position, responsibilities and duty that she was hired to represent, and commented that she ‘will act upon her true emotions’ not caring about what others think of her. This may indicate that she does not undertake her position in the store/company seriously, as she puts her real emotions first regardless of other people and around and above her.

*Table 8. Handling emotional dissonance*

<b>Question: Can you tell me about a particular instance when you felt the disconnection between the ‘face’ you are supposed to display at work, and how you really felt underneath this? How did you handle the situation?</b>						
<b>Themes</b>	<b>Participants</b>					
	<b>P1</b>	<b>P2</b>	<b>P3</b>	<b>P4</b>	<b>P5</b>	<b>P6</b>
Other influences, money	-	-	-	-	-	1
Self control	1	-	1	1	1	-
Happiness ‘mask’	1	1	-	-	-	-
Emotional dissonance	1	-	-	-	1	1
Poor customer treatment of workers	-	-	-	1	-	-

Table 8 illustrates the frequent themes that appeared when participants were asked about a situation where they felt the division between their emotional displays at work, and the feelings underneath this. Although each situation was different, the most common idea portrayed was the need to be in control of genuine emotions, and not disclosing this to those in the workplace. As one participant (P5) stated, “this actually happens on a regular and almost daily basis... I handle this by thinking positively and reassuring myself that the day is almost over.” In this comment, elements of deep-acting can be identified, through the process of imagining a more pleasant experience than the moment. The way this participant changes her thinking and attitude, shows that she has resorted to this in order to provide comfort, compensating for the emotional conflict she is undergoing.

Furthermore, the genuine emotions of these participants are not expressed in their personal situations because of many other influences. Behind this, the participants (P1, P5 and P6) experienced emotional dissonance, as they struggled to control their genuine emotions under those that they displayed. The main emotion exposed through their responses was anger, frustration, and the requirement of looking happy.

*“Well, I do feel stressed out at times, because sometimes I just want to show how frustrated and irritated I am, but instead of this, I am forced to be happy behind a face that really can’t be bothered. This happens on many occasions, and I am slowly getting used to it, but at the same time its a big challenge to hide these feelings. Can be very stressing and uncomfortable, because I feel that I’m being on the watch all the time” (Participant 1).*

*“I actually let my true emotions act out, because I had no control over this. As much as I tried to be the happy salesperson, it did not help. I had to always refer to my other colleagues when it came to dealing with annoying customers, as I couldn’t handle it” (Participant 2).*

Another influence that was significantly recorded was that of money. P6 in particular mentioned that she does not let her emotions get in the way of her work, as she “gets paid to help customers choose and buy clothing.” This in itself is an interesting approach to service work, which reflects her work ethic and nature. Based on her young age and adolescent behaviour, this explains her relaxed and less than serious attitude towards her job, and her responsibilities attached to her professional duties.

Among the different responses noted from the participants, there was the general theme of customer treatment of workers which emerged quite frequently in response to interview question. One participant (P4) explicitly mentioned that customers on a regular basis tend to mistreat workers in this industry, based on her experiences. She reported that during interaction with customers, she felt discriminated upon and acted upon her sense and emotions and dealt with the customer in a less than professional way:

*“She (customer) kept blaming me for this delay, so I got fed up and I told her to get out of the store because it was out of my hands. I know that as a part-time worker I had no right to say this*

*without my manager around, but she was just crossing the line and discriminating me against this job so I gave her a mouthful” (Participant 4).*

Table 9. Real vs. Fake identities

Question: At any given time, do you feel that as if you are not being the real person that you are outside of work?						
Responses	Participants					
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6
Yes, always	1	1	-	1	-	1
Sometimes	-	-	1	-	1	-
Not at all	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 9 illustrates the responses of participants when asked about their real identities, and whether this is acted upon in the workplace. A majority of the interviewees (n=4) stated that they always feel that they are not transpiring their true self in the work place due to a number of reasons.

A distinctive factor was due to the pressure of acting ‘happy’ and considering other elements of the job, such as the selling clothes and achieving targets. This process is heavily dependent on salespersons interacting, influencing and persuading the customers to purchase goods through interlinked steps. It is an emotionally intensive practice, which can lead to burn out and emotional exhaustion. Here, one participant describes this in light of carrying ‘so much baggage’, which affects her true identity underneath this act.

*“Haha, I always feel that I am not being my true self. This is because I have so much baggage to consider while I’m on the floor and that affects who I am underneath it all” (Participant 4).*

*“...Afterwards, I felt that maybe if I was not so worked up I would have been more professional, but I was just so angry and mad. Sometimes I do feel that I have to make such a huge effort to be the happy, smiling, polite and friendly person that I am known for, but I do not wake up feeling like this” (Participant 3).*

It is interesting that employees accept and realise that they have to display these happy, constructed emotions, acknowledging the fact that they are not natural. This in reflects the construction of reality typical in this type of industry, which represents the pressure in the routine of acting ‘fake’. This symbolises the range of self control in some participants compared to others, also indicating the level of emotional tolerance and dissonance which varies for each participant.

## 5.5 Emotional baggage

### Description:

This expression reveals the artificial constructions that employees carry in order to conform to the expectations of the organisation. Not only are these workers bearing their personal emotions, but they also have to consider and act upon fake, constructed emotions that do not reflect their true identity.

### Interpretation:

Emotional baggage, in this instance is defined as the personal conflicts of interest that are associated with customer interactions. Behind this social encounter, there is a great deal of energy and willpower that is required to continually perform according to expectations. These extra attachments are considered to be 'emotional baggage'. Moreover, emotional baggage is typically referred to as the fake constructions of emotion, better described as being false, phony, simulated or pretended.

I noticed that the range of emotional baggage is more 'heavier' for those that are younger, less experienced, and less mature, as opposed to those who are more knowledgeable, older, and experienced in the work role and industry.

### Explanation:

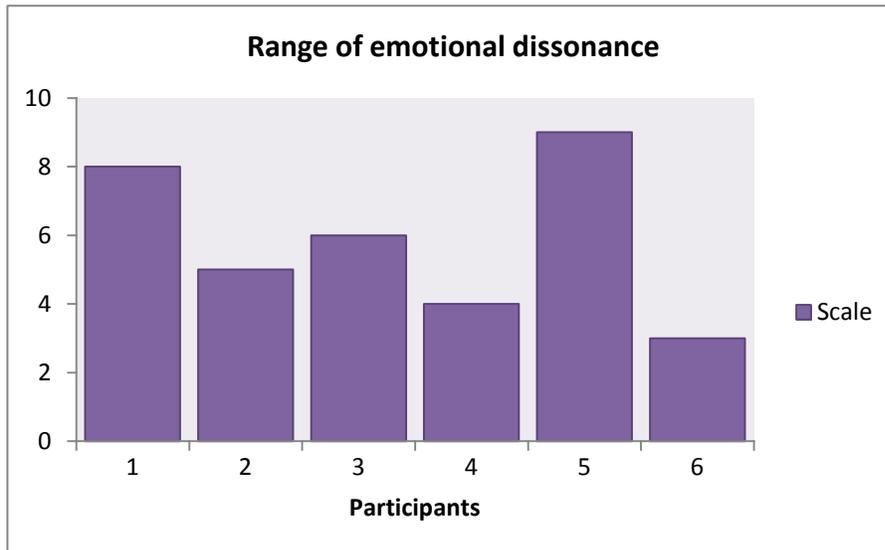
There are several reasons behind why the weight of faking and suppression of emotions might be more frequent (and potentially more damaging) amongst service sector employees who engage in face-to-face communication with customers, than opposed to those that do not. Both emotional faking and suppression require emotional regulation which, in turn, involves effort (Mann, 1999). It was predicted that face-to-face interactions might require more emotional effort, as greater congruity is required between display modalities. This is what is perceived as 'emotional baggage', the more emotional effort wasted, in return means the more emotional baggage a person may possess.

Moreover, faking interest, concern or enthusiasm and suppressing boredom, impatience and anger may be more difficult to sustain during face-to-face communications where the employee has fewer opportunities for respite, or to vent emotion "back-stage" (Mann, 2004; Rafaeli, 1989). Here, emotional suppression has a stronger contribution to the variance of most strain outcomes such as burn out, and emotional exhaustion. It is interesting to point out that participants accepted and realised that they have to display these happy, constructed emotions, acknowledging the fact that they are not natural. This in itself reflects the nature of this type of industry, which represents the pressure in the routine of acting 'fake'.

The significant relationships found between the emotional labour variables and strain outcomes suggest that it might have negative implications for service sector employees irrespective of mode of delivery. This reveals the sense of self control in some participants, P5: "I want to show my frustration and "true" feelings but I can't. Like I said, I just handle this by thinking positively and reassuring myself that the day will be over soon so this is uplifting in a way," as opposed to others P6: 'I do express my true emotions,

and I do this anyway I don't really care much about what others think of me." This degree of contrast also indicates the level of emotional tolerance and dissonance which ranges in each person.

Table 10. Range of emotional dissonance



This graph represents the response amongst the participants when asked "How would you describe your level of capability in being able to disguise your real emotions from the emotions you are expected to display at work?" This was ranked on a scale from 1 = Not at all capable, and 10 = Very capable. As depicted on the graph, it was clear to say that half of the participants rated above 5, with the rest below this point.

Those participants that rated themselves 5 or above on the scale were more mature, and experienced – and in a management position in the company. One participant (P5) in particular, described herself as being a '9', due to the fact that she has somewhat 'mastered' the art of thinking of something else that keeps her happy on the inside, previously referred to as 'deep acting'. Similarly, another participant (P1) commented that she sees herself as an '8' because she has learnt how to be 'fake as a profession', which reflects how this is embedded into her identity in the workplace, separate from her 'real' identity outside of work.

On the other hand, there was a difference with regard to those interviewees that described themselves in the lower half of the scale. The most general consensus among these participants was that their lower rating was connected to their lack of interest, experience and seriousness in regards to their job. One employee (P6) admitted that she has other goals in life that are more relevant to her future, which she said shows through her emotions at times. Other participants commented on the 'struggle' between acting upon the real emotion as opposed to the constructed emotions that are required at work.

*“... I think that I will be around a 5? Only because I can't handle this, and I feel that I need to stay true myself – so I find this as a struggle at times” (Participant 2).*

## **5.6 Range of emotional dissonance equals range of experience**

One of the most common insights that the interview process exposed, was that the range of emotional dissonance reflected the range of work experience that each participant possessed. Those participants that rated themselves as being above half (5) on the scale, seen as a reflection of their experience in the industry – which matches their emotional tolerance levels.

On the other hand, participants who were much younger and had other life goals – viewed this job as ‘a job’, rather than a career which was reflected through how they ranked themselves on the scale. They struggled to be more emotionally competent, and were less receptive to balancing and dealing with emotional dissonance. Life experience also plays a contribution to this particular aspect.

This reveals that being emotionally capable, is somewhat dependent on the work experience that an individual has held in this particular industry. As outlined in the graph, those participants engaged in full time work, had a more advanced level of understanding of the emotional division between their self identity, and the constructed identity influenced by the company and management.

For employees who interact with customers face-to-face, the perception of rules and expectations or emotional display was a key predictor of job satisfaction and work-life conflict. On the other hand, for telesales agents, however, with the exception of extrinsic job satisfaction, organisational display rules did not emerge as an important predictor of strain. Due to the protracted nature of their interactions, employees who perform emotional labour face-to-face (such as flight attendants) might expect greater opportunities for self-expression when dealing with customers (Hochschild, 1983).

Strong relationships were observed between components of emotional labour and perceptions of strain-based work/life conflict for both age groups of employees, as reported by Montgomery (2005), found that emotional faking (but not emotional suppression) predicted work-family interference amongst a sample of service workers. These findings emphasise the importance of considering different occupational groups into how different aspects of emotional labour might manifest themselves as personal and life-related strain. However, this does not reveal any insights into how age and experience may affect emotional dissonance.

Table 11. Expression of genuine vs. constructed emotion

Question: Are there times when you genuinely express your real emotions at work?						
Responses	Participants					
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6
Yes, always	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sometimes	1	1	1	1	1	1
Not at all	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 11 represents the feedback from the participants when questioned whether they express their genuine emotions at work. In this case, the word ‘genuine’ is defined as feelings or emotions that are not constructed, expected or forced upon – but develop naturally from within, reflecting the individuals personality, attitudes, and overall nature. From the table, all the participants reported experiences of displaying authentic emotion in the work place sometimes, and at particular times which was justified through a wide range of explanations.

Participants disclosed that they show their genuine emotions towards customers and colleagues, sometimes – and in most situations this was manipulated by other motives, such as money, personal reasons, or based on the exchange from the customer. This exchange varied from social, emotional, or personal reasons depending on the type of person involved in the interaction. For example, P2 said that she chooses to expose her genuine emotions when in a good mood, provoked by her thoughts of payday nearing.

*“Oh yeah! There are times when I do feel happy, probably on payday (laughs) ... or when I am in a good mood in general and this shows and I truly do feel happy” (Participant 2).*

Other interviewees (P5 and P3) reported showing their genuine emotion when they trusted the customer, and felt comfortable around them. The rest of the responses were based on displaying their genuine feelings, but keeping to themselves unless there was the need to interact with others in the workplace. Two participants (P3 and P4) mentioned that it takes a significant amount of energy or will power to execute these feelings, when interacting with others. It can be said that the expression of genuine emotion is present for some, and is nonexistent for others.

Table 12. Expression of genuine vs. constructed emotion

Question: How would you describe the way that your organisation places expectations and demands on you as a worker?						
Responses	Participants					
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6
Customer is always right	-	1	1	-	1	1
Unrealistic demands	1	1	1	1	-	-
Representing the 'face' of organisation	-	1	1	-	-	1

The final question in the interview asked: “How would you describe the way that your organisation places expectations and demands on you as a worker?” The responses were all varied in the sense that each participant had the opportunity to voice their concerns, and real opinions based on their experiences, the job, and the industry. Three common themes emerged that was evident across a majority of responses.

### 5.7 “Customer is always right”

This notion was repeated across four interviews (P2, P3, P5 and P6), with each participant holding similar views on the subject. There was a shared agreement that with the heavy expectations of the company to keep the customer happy, in addition to this the customer is always right – regardless. One participant (P2) mentioned that this norm needs to be addressed and altered, as it often results in the mistreatment of workers in this industry. There was also feedback outlining that the company does not understand how difficult it is to uphold the demands from customers, both emotionally and physically. It seemed that the participants ‘blamed’ the company for not understanding just how difficult their position can be:

*“I think that we have such a heavy expectation based around getting sales, and keeping customers happy when generally this is so hard to maintain. This company does not understand how hard it is to actually get somebody to buy something” (Participant 5).*

Participants also mentioned that the company is heavily reliant on the perception of the customer, which some participants view as unfair and bias - as these workers just want to be treated as humans, rather than remote controlled objects. This relates to the next theme that was frequently underlined in the responses, for example, P2 said:

*“I think that being here for this long, I can say that this company is heavily reliant on the perception of the customer which can be quite biased especially because we are human as well.”*

### **“We just want to be treated like humans”**

This statement and theme recurred on a regular basis in some of the responses, which to my understanding reflected the mixed expectations from different levels in this job. There were several references made to the company treating the workers like they were ‘remote-controlled’, “controlled by money”, and the need to be “treated like humans”. Participant 3 blamed the company for not having a more welcoming, and approachable manner when considering the employees and the obstacles they face in regards to their job. These participants commented that the company needed to realise this, in order to keep their staff happy and in the job for the long term:

*“...I can say that this company is heavily reliant on the perception of the customer which can be quite bias especially because we are human as well. They do not think for one second that we have feelings as well, but just treat us like we are remote controlled, only being controlled by money and that’s not right. I think that this company has a lot to work on, if they want to keep employees here for a longer time” (Participant 3).*

In saying this, participants felt this way because management and head office staff only set our requirements that are to be met, but have not taken the time out to live and experience the reality of the job. For instance, P2 said: “We are always expected to be role models and the face of the company through how we act and what we say, but how would they know what we go through? It is over rated now.” This point ties into the final idea surfaced from this question, which is that of representing the company, as well as the store.

### **“The face of the company”**

This metaphorical expression represents the requirement for employees to be a symbol of the company and the store on a physical and professional level. To illustrate this, one participant outlined how there was an out of reach expectation to be ‘role models’ of the company towards the customers. This exposes the norm of displaying the right ‘face’ when at work, on top of other responsibilities such as customer service and store duties. This can also be connected to earlier responses (see Table 4 and Table 6) that described how the job was heavily reliant on being happy, and looking happy as opposed to revealing other emotions.

*“We are always expected to be role models and the face of the company through how we act and what we say...” (Participant 2).*

## **Chapter 6:**

### **Conclusions and Discussion**

#### **6. Introduction**

In the research outlined in this thesis, I have applied Andriesson's (2006) metaphor mapping and Wodak and Meyer's (2003) methods of discourse analysis to the interviews that were conducted in evaluating emotional dissonance. One of my purposes in doing so was to explore the experiences that fashion retail employees tell in order to reveal the ranges of emotional dissonance in the workplace. Another purpose was to examine the different determinants that are behind emotional dissonance in this context, and how these factors contribute to the range of emotional dissonance.

In order to discuss these aims, I have structured this chapter into three sections. The first section is an overview of the findings in the case studies. The second section encloses some ideas for further research that includes suggestions for implementations of similar future projects. The last section is the overall conclusion, which is a very brief abridgment of the thesis.

The questions which framed this research were:

- 1 Is there a range of emotional dissonance in fashion retail employees?
- 2 What are the key determinants that contribute to this possible range of emotional dissonance in the fashion retail industry?

These questions have already been discussed in the previous chapter with specific reference to the information extracted from the participant interviews. In this chapter, I will not be going into further elaboration of these points, but instead I am going to address the questions together, to form the discussion in a holistic view of the contribution this research has made to original knowledge. This section of my concluding chapter, therefore, brings together and summarises the themes of the research.

The groundwork of this research was fashion retail employees' emotional experiences with the emotional work that is imposed onto them in terms of the job requirements. The transcribed interviews provided a reflection of the emotional encounters that these employees face, and although the language of the texts was not transparent, the use of Wodak and Meyer's (2001) discourse analysis guidelines enabled the peeling back of layers of meanings to show the "connections and causes which are hidden" (Fairclough, 1992, p.9). Lakoff and Johnson (2003) contributed to the analysis of the texts, as they emphasise the advantages that metaphors hold, in structuring the ordinary conceptual system of culture, which is reflected in everyday language. Such metaphors are capable of providing a new understanding of experience, giving new meaning to the past, daily activities, and to what is known and believed (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003).

The discourse and metaphorical analysis of the texts revealed significant evidence that framed responses to both research questions. In terms of research question one, the metaphor of 'the emotional mask' contained expressions and imagery of 'showing the right face and right feelings' which symbolised that there was a considerable shift in emotional dissonance when 'the emotional mask' was in action around customers, and of course when this mask was overlooked. The emotional variations that took place when 'the emotional mask' was employed show that the tolerance levels of the participants that abided by the organisation's emotional work requirements to "look happy, smile, and remain positive" were high. These participants were typically full-time, mature, and more experienced in the fashion retail industry and utilised 'the emotional mask' in order to maximise reputation, personal image and overall sales in terms of achieving productivity targets. In essence, these participants had a higher range of tolerating emotional dissonance, defined as "occurring when service providers experience a conflict between the emotions they feel about their job and the required emotions the organisation has determined to be acceptable for display" (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987, p.142).

A key factor that surfaced was the life experience that some participants had over others, which was obvious in the way that employee's handled emotional encounters. This contributed towards a higher tolerance of emotional dissonance, particularly in the sense that these full-time employees had more time and financial dependence invested in the organisation, as this was their main source of income as most full-time staff had families to provide for.

However, in contrast, those participants who refused to 'put on the emotional mask', were those of a young age, in part-time and casual positions that held less power in the store's hierarchy. This indicates that the level of tolerance for these employees is somewhat undeveloped, and that there is a lack of knowledge on the dynamics and concepts of emotional dissonance that "peaks in face to face encounters" (Grandey, 2003, p.43). This draws on the need for organisations in the fashion retail industry to educate staff on the risks and benefits of emotional dissonance which occurs on a regular basis for all employees despite personal and professional backgrounds.

Organisations in the fashion retail industry could outline the basic attributes of emotional work, with particular attention to emotional dissonance in order to gain a sense of co-operation and unity in the workplace. Job requirements in terms of employees forced to show a "happy and positive image" need to outline risks that lead to burnout, stress and how off-stage release should be utilised appropriately in

terms of health and safety constraints. This will contribute towards wider society's knowledge of emotional dissonance in service industries, where the employee turnovers based on the low tolerance of emotional dissonance can be decreased. This could affect areas such as filing for ACC and stress-related leave applications from work to be reduced.

Analysis of the texts revealed another metaphorical expression, the 'happiness as a magnet', used to draw in customers, to represent the company's image, and to act as a 'payment' in the exchange for the emotional dissonance that the participants may be experiencing. This was a frequent manifestation of how emotion was used as an advantage in this industry, rather than as a detrimental weakness. This theme indicates that the range in emotional dissonance across participants depended on their perspectives and judgements of the customer. For example, participants with a lower tolerance of emotional dissonance actively applied the happiness magnet to gain their own personal sense of happiness overriding the uncomfortable feeling of emotional dissonance. This would be used in cases such as gaining large sales, and achieving individual targets.

This insight draws on the significance of fashion retail employees seeking a deeper sense of self outside of the job requirements. Aspects such as self esteem, being open-minded, spontaneous and viewing people based on who they are regardless of personal preferences will make a difference in the exchange of emotional dissonance used as a means to an end. This contributes to the easing the lower band of tolerating emotional dissonance, and to extend the job description beyond organisational expectations and allowing self identity to play a role in how emotional work is conducted.

Disparities in view points based on the ages and backgrounds of the participants were also an interesting finding in terms of how each individual handles emotional dissonance, contributing to the range of emotion dissonance the research recorded. Participants of a younger age group did not have knowledge of how to handle the discomfort of displaying emotional cues, and how they truly felt about this on a personal level. As discussed in the previous chapter, the metaphorical expression of "fighting an emotional war: real vs. fake" draws on the variances of these factors in more detail. Those participants who adopted a more mature approach towards the occupation were more professional and skilled in how to separate personal emotion from constructed emotions as a compulsory part of the job. This range showed a significant lead in how these employees handled emotional dissonance reflected in their decisions and actions. What emerges is key determinants such as age, power, status and personal tolerance of emotional dissonance which measured the ranges of emotional dissonance that a person in this research felt.

This research has no answer to how individuals could personalise their approach to understanding key aspects of emotional dissonance, but there is an emphasis that highlights the need for more staff training based on emotional work when employees are recruited into this industry. This also benefits wider society in terms of maintaining long term staff in such a fast, demanding industry which is predominately based on maintaining the reputation and image of the organisation through the emotional work of employees.

This type of training needs to be customised based on the key determinants that contributed to the range of emotional dissonance that fashion retail employees felt, such as: age, position within the organisation, and personality differences. Management teams within these organisations need to consider the different generations that are common within their staff, to ensure that the information is delivered with specific features such as language, visuals and other materials to make the process more effective.

## **6.1 Further research**

The research reported in this thesis was based on the discourse and metaphorical analysis of fashion retail participants. The results of the current small scale study highlight some important issues and questions which can be used as future research problems. As previously noted, future research is suggested for investigating the range of emotional dissonance for the fashion retail industry. Future similar studies could also usefully explore the following issues. Firstly, research addressing the stressors arising from emotional dissonance and how employees actively handle these issues. These results may provide fashion retail organisations and employees with an indication if stressors are primarily related to emotional work or other external factors employees face.

Second, it would be worthwhile to conduct a study tracking those employees who have outside commitments such as study, families that could contribute to the understanding of variations within emotional dissonance. This could establish if there are work-life balance issues in emotional work that impact the level of discomfort workers in service industries encounter (Watts, 2002). Finally, future similar studies could explore in more depth other industries where emotional work may not heavily emphasised, such as the creative industries. The creative industries is one that is based on creative individuals rather than organisations, and this insight would assist in clarifying the variations of emotional work that each party carries out in achieving balance in emotional dissonance. This fairly new industry in New Zealand would highlight how creatives handle emotional work and will raise interest and amplify the importance of how emotional work can differ from employees of standard organisations.

## **6.2 Limitations of the research**

Any conclusions drawn from this study must be tentative as they are limited by the nature of the sample which was taken from a variety of fashion retail stores in the Auckland area. The sample itself was relatively small and restricted in numbers due to constraints such convenience, personal timetables and store rosters. It is therefore not possible to claim that the findings are representative of all stores in this industry.

Difficulties in recruiting a small group of volunteers for interviews as parts of the research also contributed to the small sample. The main reasons for the low response rate were due to the overlapping personal and work commitments. In addition, recruitment of participants was carried out

during the busiest time of work in the fashion retail industry; this busy time at the middle of the year may have contributed to the reluctance of participation. Perhaps this is an indication of the external pressures faced by employees and to some extent, the determinants that contribute to the range of emotional dissonance in this industry. Furthermore, the majority of the small sample consisted of younger employees in which the study had not anticipated.

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## Appendices

### *Main themes from interviews*

<b>Main themes</b>	<b>Central ideas of recurrence</b>
<b>Uniform/mask</b>	Fooled by real personality Disguise Display Physical expressions
<b>War/fighting/conflict</b>	Letting guard down Fighting emotions within Fake vs. Real emotions Real vs. Fake emotions Competition Misunderstanding
<b>Fake/pretending</b>	False emotion True emotions Angry emotions Raw emotions Swearing
<b>Making efforts</b>	Challenge Emotional labour
<b>Thinking elsewhere/distraction</b>	Other focus/goals New ways of thinking Visualisation Off-loading Not dependent on emotion
<b>Judgement</b>	Generalisations Stereotyping
<b>Company expectations</b>	Representations of company Customers always right Treatment of workers Money influence Professionalism Unrealistic expectations Management Politeness Lack of knowledge Patience Lack of experience Experience
<b>Division of labour (line)</b>	Comfort zone

<b>Personal/sensitive</b>	Insensitive Emotions Stressing/tiring Admits/acknowledgement Ignorance Mood Arrogance Awareness
<b>Human attributions/value</b>	Respect Unethical Self identity Assertiveness
<b>Happiness norm</b>	Happiness expectation Happiness exchange Exchange metaphor
<b>Surveillance/watched metaphor</b>	Observation
<b>Machine/Robot metaphor</b>	Switching on/off

# Consent Form



*Project title: Are we happy now? Exploring emotional dissonance in the fashion retail industry*

*Project Supervisor: Grace Teo-Dixon, Jacqueline Harrison*

*Researcher: Janet Tupou*

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 14/03/11.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes  No

Participant's signature: .....

Participant's name: .....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate): .....

***Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 24th May, 2011***

***AUTEC Reference 11/47***

# Participant Information Sheet



March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011

## **Project Title**

Are we happy now? Exploring emotional dissonance in the fashion retail industry.

## **An Invitation**

My name is Janet Tupou, and as a Masters student at AUT University, I am interested in your experiences and opinions based on the retail industry, and how certain emotions play a role in this field of work. I am inviting you to take part in an interview that will value your responses in relation to the main focus of this research project. This research will contribute significantly towards this qualification, and your input is much appreciated. Please note that this opportunity is entirely voluntary and you have the complete right to withdraw at any time.

## **What is the purpose of this research?**

Basically, this research has the ultimate aim of exploring the range in which emotional dissonance can vary in. But what is emotional dissonance? This is the way you may feel at work when you do not want to greet, smile at customers because you are feeling the opposite. This research will explore how you deal with the clash of these different emotions. I am interested in your experiences in particular, how you cope with this in your organisation. This information will contribute towards a qualification that expands upon a Masters in Communication and in return will increase the awareness and scope into the academic area of emotions in the workplace.

## **How was I chosen for this invitation?**

As you are an employee in the retail industry, you qualify share your opinions and experiences based on your job and organisation. I am keen to investigate your personal experiences, anecdotes, and stories based on your occupation.

### **What will happen in this research?**

An interview will be conducted and I will take notes and record our conversation via audiotape device. Basically, all that is required is your attendance as well as any stories, comments and experiences you will be willing to share.

### **What are the discomforts and risks?**

To date, there are no discomforts or risks in this method of data collection. As I will be familiar with you already prior to this interview, this helps in easing any feelings of awkwardness, and shyness. Your privacy will be highly valued and protected, in guaranteeing that total confidentiality in your answers will be safe and not dispersed to those unspecified (see consent form).

### **What are the costs of participating in this research?**

There are no formal costs to participate in this research, but will take approximately 30-45 minutes. This all depends on the length of your answer, and whether you would like to add any additional comments. The time and location of the interview will be set in a place that is at minimal travel, most likely after work hours – in a quiet environment, eg, local library, or the AUT Communications postgraduate room.

### **What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

Two days is the maximum timeframe you will have to consider this option, as this allows me to find any replacements if required. If you agree immediately, then all that is required is to complete the Consent forms –attached to this sheet.

### **Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

There will not be any feedback on the results of this research, unless requested. This can be obtained by emailing me directly.

### **What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, *Grace Teo-Dixon*, [grace.teo-dixon@aut.ac.nz](mailto:grace.teo-dixon@aut.ac.nz), (09) 921-9999. Ext 6261

Alternatively, contact *Jacqueline Harrison*, [Jacqueline.harrison@aut.ac.nz](mailto:Jacqueline.harrison@aut.ac.nz), (09) 921-9999 ext 6374

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTECH, *Madeline Banda*, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), 921-9999 ext 8260.

**Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

**Researcher Contact Details:**

Janet Tupou

Sbh9063@aut.ac.nz, or jay\_tupou@hotmail.com

**Project Supervisor Contact Details:**

Grace Teo-Dixon,

Grace.teo-dixon@aut.ac.nz

(09) 921-9999 ext 6261

Jacqueline Harrison

Jacqueline.harrison@aut.ac.nz,

(09) 921-9999 ext 6374

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2011,  
AUTEK Reference number 11/47.**

## Indicative Questions for Interviews:

### Participant 1



**Project Title:** Are we happy now? Exploring the fluctuations of employee emotional performance in one NZ fashion retail store.

**Age** 22

**Working situation** Part time, 19- 25 hours a week

**Occupation** Salesperson

**Areas of responsibility** Key holder, customer service, merchandising, cleaning, rosters etc.

**Duration of this position** 1 year 9 months

**Experience in industry** 3 years 2 months

**Researcher:** Janet Tupou

**Participants, please note:** In this particular situation, the word 'emotion' is not framed as a 'good' or 'bad' entity, so please do feel free to indicate your interpretation of the word 'emotion', and how this fits into what you are telling me.

I will also be probing and expanding upon your answers, asking questions such as why, or why not.

---

### QUESTIONS:

**1** What is your definition of emotion, and how does this fit into your occupation?

I'll say that emotions is the way you feel, and the feelings that you try to control and cover up – but at the same time you need to show the right emotions? Yeah that would be my definition, just showing the right face and the right feelings in what needs to be done. Umm, for this job emotion plays a huge role in how I get my sales up, and in meeting new customers. Especially if I want them to buy lots of clothes.

**2** How would you describe the way emotion is displayed as part of your job?

Umm, emotions rely on how I get customers to buy things, on how my manager sees me and just everything in general. If I show the wrong emotions, then obviously this will drive customers away from me, and that why I have to always put on the happy, smiley mask all the time. So yeah, I think a smile is almost like a magnet that encourages ladies to buy more, as they feel more welcomed.

**3** How do you maintain this on a day when you are not feeling on top of things?

Umm, on a day when I don't feel on top of the world, I try my best to show as much positive emotions as I can, but most of the time I just walk around and try to avoid people. I just don't want my negative attitude to rub off on the customers, so I try my best to keep out of their way.

**4** How do you control the clash of emotions when you have to smile and be friendly to customers, but deep down you are feeling angry, sad, depressed, etc?

Umm, I'll say that I have to watch what emotions I project, and that I need to find a place within me that can help me stay calm and in control. I think that when there are noisy kids crying in the store - that becomes the worst situation for me because I have to remain calm so I do not get all wild at the parents, especially. Also when customers are straight rude and disrespectful, that can become something that might get out of control quite easily.

**5** What is running through your mind at that particular moment? How would you like to express your true emotions?

Haha, I would actually love to just throw the clothes that they leave all messy back into their face, and give them cold looks in the same way they do to me. But, no – as it is required, I have to remain professional at all times and to be the better person, which means that I have to control and handle my true emotions.

**6** Can you tell me about a particular instance when you felt the disconnection between the 'face' you are supposed to display at work, and how you really felt underneath it all? How did you handle this situation?

Well, I do feel stressed out at times, because sometimes I just want to show how frustrated and irritated I am, but instead of this, I am forced to be happy behind a face that really can't be bothered. This happens on many occasions, and I am slowly getting used to it, but at the same time it's a big challenge to hide these feelings. Can be very stressing and uncomfortable, because I feel that I'm being on the watch all the time.

**7** At any given time, do you feel as if you are not being the real person that you are outside of work?

Well, of course I'm not being the real person that I am when I'm not at work, because if I was I don't think that I'll still be here. (laughs).

**8** How would you describe your level of capability in being able to disguise your real emotions from the emotions you are expected to display at work? (out of 10)

Umm... I would say that I'll probably be about an 8? This is only because of my long-term experience in this industry, and that I know how to be fake as a profession (laughs). But yeah, I can only disguise it so well because I have been doing this for quite some time.

**9** If a customer was to walk out of a changing room, leaving all clothes inside out, and all over the floor – how would you feel? Would you show this emotion?

Oh my gosh – that's one of my pet hates! I would just walk past all the customers in the store, not talk to any of them – regardless of whether they caused the mess or not, and I would just give everybody the silent treatment unless they asked me a question, or talked to me. I don't show that I'm angry, but I do show that I am annoyed, because I am human.

**10** Are there times when you do not feel any discomfort in the clash of real and displayed emotions at work?

Umm... There are times when I genuinely feel happy in what I do, (probes) but this is only when customers that I help buy large, or when they are nice back to me. It can be uncomfortable at times when I can't show how I truly feel, but I usually control this and try not to take things personally.

**11** Are there times when you do genuinely express your real emotions at work?

Yeah, yeah, there are times when I express my true emotions, but these are usually the positive rather than negative emotions. When I feel happy, and feel high on the clouds, then I show this – and I do get a happy response back, at times.

**12** How do you communicate with customers that you genuinely get on with? Do you put up a front/wall, or act as yourself?

Umm.. With customers that I genuinely get on with, about half the time I act as myself, and the other half I pretend. I only do this because I don't want to know them in a personal way, because I try not to make real friends with customers, at the same time I can't read whether they are true or false really!

**13** If a customer was to place extreme demands on you that is not part of your job description, how will you react? Why/ Why not?

Umm, if this happened then I would not go that extra mile – because I do not get paid for it, and there is a line that needs to be drawn between being nice and being taken advantage of.

**14** Does the way you display your emotions affect others?

I would say that the way I display my emotions does affect others – if I am happy, then this brushes off on others especially my colleagues, but if I'm grumpy and feeling like dirt then in a way this affects them too, and of course, the customers.

**15** How would you describe the way that your organisation places expectations and demands on you as a worker? Are these realistic?

Umm... I would say that this company does place high expectations on us as workers to deliver the results that they want, but in sense this is not forced because we don't have individual targets so its is not explicit in that way. But I think that there are ridiculous expectations placed on us in being emotionally ready to serve customers no matter what.

## Indicative Questions for Interviews:

### Participant 2



**Project Title:** Are we happy now? Exploring the fluctuations of employee emotional performance in one NZ fashion retail store.

**Age:** 24

**Working situation:** Full-time, between 25-30 hours a week

**Occupation:** 3IC (third in charge)

**Areas of responsibility:** Stock, customer service, cleaning, merchandising, key holder

**Experience in fashion retail industry:** 16 months

**How long have you been working here:** 18 months

**Researcher:** Janet Tupou

**Participants, please note:** In this particular situation, the word 'emotion' is not framed as a 'good' or 'bad' entity, so please do feel free to indicate your interpretation of the word 'emotion', and how this fits into what you are telling me.

I will also be probing and expanding upon your answers, asking questions such as why, or why not.

---

### QUESTIONS:

**1** What is your definition of emotion, and how does this fit into your occupation?

Hmm... My definition of emotion would be seen as the way I feel, and how I act around others at work I guess. I think that is the way that I apply these emotions into how customers see me working.

**2** How would you describe the way emotion is displayed as part of your job?

Umm, I think that emotional can be seen as one of the keys to having success in this job, and it's almost like it's our uniform or mask that we have to wear each shift. I think once this is displayed right, then the rest will follow.

**3** How do you maintain this on a day when you are not feeling on top of things?

(Thinks for a while) ... When I can't be bothered showing my emotions, I fight my feelings within – but I mainly think about the consequences of not acting this way, then I try my best to smile and act happy when I am totally not in the mood.

**4** How do you control the clash of emotions when you have to smile and be friendly to customers, but deep down you are feeling angry, sad, depressed, etc?

Umm, I think I just answered that above – I have to fight myself within to not let my real emotions shine through, but to be happy. But it's a really tiring process, and eats up all my energy which shows through eventually.

**5** What is running through your mind at that particular moment? How would you like to express your true emotions?

I would love to just lounge out, do nothing at all, try on clothes and text on the floor – just follow my heart's desires but its impossible because I there is no way in hell that I will get away from doing this.

**6** Can you tell me about a particular instance when you felt the disconnection between the 'face' you are supposed to display at work, and how you really felt underneath it all? How did you handle this situation?

Thinks for a while... Coming to think of it, I remember that I was going through 'that time of the month', and I just wanted to lie down all day with hot chocolate, but instead I had no other choice but to work a long shift finishing late. I actually let my true emotions act out, because I had no control over this. As much as I tried to be the happy salesperson, it did not help. I had to always refer to my other colleagues when it came to dealing with annoying customers, as I couldn't handle it.

**7** At any given time, do you feel as if you are not being the real person that you are outside of work?

To be honest, there are certain times when I can feel and notice that I am being fake, and by all means that's when I stand back and ask myself, "Who am I trying to be?" (LAUGHS)

**8** How would you describe your level of capability in being able to disguise your real emotions from the emotions you are expected to display at work? (out of 10)

Umm, hmmm.. I think that I will be around a 5? Only because I can't handle this, and I feel that I need to stay true myself – so I find this as a struggle at times.

**9** If a customer was to walk out of a changing room, leaving all clothes inside out, and all over the floor – how would you feel? Would you show this emotion?

Oh hell no! I would feel so angry, pissed off, and just straight annoyed! I am human, so I need to be treated like one not a slave or bum girl. What I usually do – is stare at them with the most evil look on my face, and that usually says enough already. Then they turn around at times SOMETIMES and pick it back up. The worst is when they actually hand the clothes back to me on the counter in a huge pile, yeah they are being considerate but it's also rude as well. It only takes a minute to hang clothes up! Geeze!

**10** How do you cope with not being able to show this? What would you do?

Haha, I usually don't cope at all (LAUGHS). No, seriously, I have to walk around, complain and bitch with my co-workers, release some steam than I head back and clean the mess up and make this very obvious.

Me: How?

Participant 3: By stomping my feet, yelling out loud and sighing and moaning (LAUGHS)

**11** Are there times when you do genuinely express your real emotions at work?

Oh yeah! There are times when I do feel happy, probably on pay-day (LAUGHS) or when I am in a good mood in general, and this shows and I truly do feel happy.

**12** How do you communicate with customers that you genuinely get on with? Do you put up a front/wall, or act as yourself?

I act as myself, I am generally friendly and get along with others – so I let my guard down and act as I normally do.

**13** If a customer was to place extreme demands on you that are not part of your job description, how will you react? Why/ Why not?

Haha, that's easy – I don't go the extra mile for any customers because they are generally thinking of themselves and are only using me. But if I feel that they are being sincere, then I would help them out.

**14** Does the way you display your emotions affect others?

At work? Yes – it does. If I'm grumpy, or moody then nobody wants to be around me, but when I am happy and cheerful then I attract more attention (LAUGHS).

**15** How would you describe the way that your organisation places expectations and demands on you as a worker? Are these realistic?

Umm – I would say that in this job there is a huge expectation of where the customer is always right no matter how mean they treat us, and that is wrong and needs to change in this day and age. We are always expected to be rolemodels and the face of the company through how we act and what we say, but how would they know what we go through? It is over rated now.

## Indicative Questions for Interviews:

### Participant 3



**Project Title:** Are we happy now? Exploring the fluctuations of employee emotional performance in one NZ fashion retail store.

**Age:** 32

**Working situation:** Fulltime, up to 30 hours per week

**Occupation:** 2IC

**Areas of responsibility:** Customer service, stock, cleaning, cash-handling, Roster organisation duties, key-holder.

**Experience in fashion retail industry:** 4 ½ years starting off as part-time

**How long have you been working here:** 2 1/2 years

**Researcher:** Janet Tupou

**Participants, please note:** In this particular situation, the word 'emotion' is not framed as a 'good' or 'bad' entity, so please do feel free to indicate your interpretation of the word 'emotion', and how this fits into what you are telling me.

I will also be probing and expanding upon your answers, asking questions such as why, or why not.

---

### QUESTIONS:

**1** What is your definition of emotion, and how does this fit into your occupation?

Emotion... Emotion... I would say that emotion in my point of view is seen as feelings, or expressions that you give off through communicating with others – I don't know if it's right, but that's what I think it is.

**2** How would you describe the way emotion is displayed as part of your job?

Emotion can be a good and bad thing in this job. The advantages of displaying the right emotions is that customers can feel this and live of this vibe, but the disadvantages is that I can't really display how I truly feel because I am at work, or show this in how I feel.

**3** How do you maintain this on a day when you are not feeling on top of things?

On a day when I am not feeling on top of the world, I just try my best to do everything and not let my feelings get in the way at the end of the day. At times this feels impossible to do as I feel that I have a lot on my shoulders, as I feel that I am constantly on stage and being watched, whether this is from customers or work in general.

**4** How do you control the clash of emotions when you have to smile and be friendly to customers, but deep down you are feeling angry, sad, depressed, etc?

Umm – sometimes when this happens I have to switch off (probes) Switching off to me means that I have to distract myself so that I don't have the chance to react or show the way I truly feel. I don't really control this, but I do have this discipline within me to handle it.

**5** What is running through your mind at that particular moment? How would you like to express your true emotions?

What's running through my mind. . . I would just really like to yell, swear and everybody and put the door down, and let my guard down. But no, I have to have the self control to handle this and make sure that I act professionally. I would really like to show how I feel, but I know it won't be right.

**6** Can you tell me about a particular instance when you felt the disconnection between the 'face' you are supposed to display at work, and how you really felt underneath it all? How did you handle this situation?

Oh yes! I remember there was this one time when there was little kid, and he pulled the big poster off from the front window – I was so angry, because it takes forever to put the poster up and needs two people. I just stared at his mother, and I just literally yelled to my colleague to "get over here", deliberately because I wanted the kids mother to hear me. She just looked at me, and walked off then I kept yelling and I think she got the picture that I was angry.

**7** At any given time, do you feel as if you are not being the real person that you are outside of work?

Haha, at that moment of time, afterwards I felt that maybe if I was not so worked up I would have been more professional, but I was just so angry and mad. Sometimes I do feel that I have to make such a huge effort to be the happy, smiling, polite and friendly person that I am known for, but I do not wake up feeling like this.

**8** How would you describe your level of capability in being able to disguise your real emotions from the emotions you are expected to display at work? (out of 10)

Umm... I would say that this will be around a 6? Only because I think that my expressions can be so obvious because it can be hard to disguise how I feel on my face and people can read it more than what I give off (laughs)

**9** If a customer was to walk out of a changing room, leaving all clothes inside out, and all over the floor – how would you feel? Would you show this emotion?

Oh goodness, I would just be so pissed off, and I'll make it so obvious. I won't talk to anybody, I won't smile, I won't even give off any positive emotions that indicate that I am friendly or that I even work there. I can be really mean and nasty at times, especially to those that do not have respect or plain common sense.

**10** How do you cope with not being able to show this? What would you do?

Ha-ha, like I said I'll definitely show how I feel! But just in a sense that is not completely inappropriate, but coming to think of it - there was no clause under this contract to say that I had to be happy all the time so I guess I am within my rights.

**11** Are there times when you do genuinely express your real emotions at work?

Sometimes I do truly show how I feel, whether this is a good or bad mood I do show it on the days when I don't have the willpower to fight it. Everybody knows me as being moody, so I guess label sticks (laughs).

**12** How do you communicate with customers that you genuinely get on with? Do you put up a front/wall, or act as yourself?

Umm, sometimes I have to not get involved too deeply with customers, because most of them just come in to have a long chat which does not help when management are watching, and it is against rules to have social conversations in store. I agree, because I find customers to be annoying in general ha-ha.

**13** If a customer was to place extreme demands on you that are not part of your job description, how will you react? Why/ Why not?

I would tell them that I actually cannot leave the store, or compromise on anything outside of what I am supposed to be focusing on in store, this of course is a lie – but if I don't lie, then some customers just don't get this through their head, they will treat me like I'm some kind of a slave.

**14** Does the way you display your emotions affect others?

Not really, but sometimes I feel that other colleagues younger than me that are under my supervision maybe affected by how I feel, and this probably affects them in the sense that they have to stay on my good side I think.

**15** How would you describe the way that your organisation places expectations and demands on you as a worker? Are these realistic?

Finally a question that I can say lots about! I think that being here for this long, I can say that this company is heavily reliant on the perception of the customer which can be quite bias especially because we are human as well. They do not think for one second that we have feelings as well, but just treat us like we are remote controlled, only being controlled by money and that's not right. I think that this company has alot to work on, if they want to keep employees here for a longer time.

## Indicative Questions for Interviews:

### Participant 4



**Project Title:** Are we happy now? Exploring the fluctuations of employee emotional performance in one NZ fashion retail store.

**Age:** 19

**Working situation:** Part time 12-20 hours

**Occupation:** Salesperson (3IC)

**Areas of responsibility:** Customer service, stock, cleaning

**Experience in fashion retail industry:** 7 months

**How long have you been working here:** Almost 2 months

**Researcher:** Janet Tupou

**Participants, please note:** In this particular situation, the word 'emotion' is not framed as a 'good' or 'bad' entity, so please do feel free to indicate your interpretation of the word 'emotion', and how this fits into what you are telling me.

I will also be probing and expanding upon your answers, asking questions such as why, or why not.

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### QUESTIONS:

**1** What is your definition of emotion, and how does this fit into your occupation?

Emotion... Hmm, I think that this will be seen as how I display myself, and how I present who I am when I am in this kind of job. I think it's based on the rules of the company as well.

**2** How would you describe the way emotion is displayed as part of your job?

I think emotions play a heavy part of this job, because it is the way that you display yourself and how it represents the store and of course, you as a person. In this store, we are always encouraged to talk to people, greet them and to look happy at all times.

**3** How do you maintain this on a day when you are not feeling on top of things?

Umm, when I am not in the mood I just try my best to show this, but if I can't, then I don't.

**4** How do you control the clash of emotions when you have to smile and be friendly to customers, but deep down you are feeling angry, sad, depressed, etc?

Well, I still show this but I am constantly trying to improve in this area, but I find it really hard – especially when it is dealing with customers that look down on me and treat me like shit.

**5** What is running through your mind at that particular moment? How would you like to express your true emotions?

I will really just like to swear at them all and tell them to all go home! (laughs)! But no, I will like to show how I really feel but I know I can't because apparently I have to look professional in what I do here.

**6** Can you tell me about a particular instance when you felt the disconnection between the 'face' you are supposed to display at work, and how you really felt underneath it all? How did you handle this situation?

Well, there was one time when a lady asked for a transfer from another branch to this one, and of course I have no control over the duration of how long that may take. She kept blaming me for this delay, so I got fed up and I told her to get out of the store because it was out of my hands. I know that as a part-time worker I had no right to say this without my manager around, but she was just crossing the line and discriminating me against this job so I gave her a mouthful.

**7** At any given time, do you feel as if you are not being the real person that you are outside of work?

Haha, I always feel that I am not being my true self. This is because I have so much baggage to consider while I'm on the floor and that affects who I am underneath it all.

**8** How would you describe your level of capability in being able to disguise your real emotions from the emotions you are expected to display at work? (out of 10)

Pause... Hahaha, I will say that I am about a 2 or 3 on that scale – only because I know that I can't handle my real emotions from the ones I am meant to show at work.

**9** If a customer was to walk out of a changing room, leaving all clothes inside out, and all over the floor – how would you feel? Would you show this emotion?

Haha – well I would tell them that they forgot something in the changing rooms, and to go back and at least hang the items on the hangers. So many people do this and they get away with it, but I don't and I don't care because I need to be treated right as well.

**10** How do you cope with not being able to show this? What would you do?

I do show how I feel, but I put this across in a nice way – so that I am still sounding nice and friendly at the same time.

**11** Are there times when you do not feel any discomfort in the clash of real and displayed emotions at work?

No – I always feel tired from having to be so nice all the time, especially when I don't feel like it.

**12** Are there times when you do genuinely express your real emotions at work?

Sometimes I do show how I really feel underneath it all, but this is only if I have the energy to. In most cases, I just keep to myself and only show how I feel if I really need to.

**13** How do you communicate with customers that you genuinely get on with? Do you put up a front/wall, or act as yourself?

I actually get along well with others, or customers that come in and I have a connection to. Sometimes I do act like myself, but like, other times I just pretend to be nice just to get a sale, or to have some company and somebody to talk to.

**14** If a customer was to place extreme demands on you that are not part of your job description, how will you react? Why/ Why not?

Hahaha – that's easy. Umm, I just make up excuses so that I don't have the option to help them because they have their own hands and feet. (Laughs)

**15** Does the way you display your emotions affect others?

Umm... Sometimes the way I display emotions can affect others, especially if I am going through some tough personal issues than I try to hide how I feel but I think others can sense this anyway.

**16** Can you think of any times when you did not display the 'right' emotions, and how others reacted?

I think that in general, others only want to be around those that are happy in this job. If you're not happy, then I don't think you will get good sales or last long in this kind of work.

**17** How would you describe the way that your organisation places expectations and demands on you as a worker? Are these realistic?

Umm. . I think that sometimes we are expected to do so much but don't even get paid for doing this which can be really stressful. I think that this job is far more emotional compared to hard physical labour jobs.

## Indicative Questions for Interviews:

### Participant 5



**Project Title:** Are we happy now? Exploring the fluctuations of employee emotional performance in one NZ fashion retail store.

**Age:** 26

**Working situation:** 25-30, Part time

**Occupation:** Part time

**Areas of responsibility:** Key holder, customer service, merchandising, cleaning, rosters etc.

**Experience in fashion retail industry:** 5 years

**How long have you been working here:** 1 year 2 months

**Researcher:** Janet Tupou

**Participants, please note:** In this particular situation, the word 'emotion' is not framed as a 'good' or 'bad' entity, so please do feel free to indicate your interpretation of the word 'emotion', and how this fits into what you are telling me.

I will also be probing and expanding upon your answers, asking questions such as why, or why not.

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### QUESTIONS:

**1** What is your definition of emotion, and how does this fit into your occupation?

(Pauses) emotion, in my perspective is seen as how I display my feelings and how I choose to use these in my job. I also think it is how I reveal my emotional state of mind, and also how I choose not to reveal this.

**2** How would you describe the way emotion is displayed as part of your job?

In this job, emotion is everything. It determines how we get sales, regular customers and overall satisfaction in what we do. If feel that if I don't show the right emotions than obviously I will have to perform harder to make up for this.

**3** How do you maintain this on a day when you are not feeling on top of things?

On a day when I don't feel tops, I usually try my best to remain positive. Out of all emotions, I think that boredom is the hardest one to overcome because there is only so much that I can do while I am alone, with all other tasks completed.

**4** How do you control the clash of emotions when you have to smile and be friendly to customers, but deep down you are feeling angry, sad, depressed, etc?

Oh dear (laughs). When I have to smile and act all friendly to customers it can also be really tiring. When I don't feel like doing this, I just force myself to think of something else, maybe the shift will be over shortly, or Coronation Street will be on tonight – haha, so that usually helps me through these times.

**5** What is running through your mind at that particular moment? How would you like to express your true emotions?

Sometimes I would like to show that I am bored, and not at all interested in other people's lives, but generally I think that I can't show this – just based on what the company expects and my managerial position really.

**6** Can you tell me about a particular instance when you felt the disconnection between the 'face' you are supposed to display at work, and how you really felt underneath it all? How did you handle this situation?

Well, to be honest this actually happens on a regular or almost daily basis – where I want to show my frustration and "true" feelings but I can't. Like I said, I just handle this by thinking positively and reassuring myself that the day will be over soon so this is uplifting in a way.

**7** At any given time, do you feel as if you are not being the real person that you are outside of work?

Sometimes I do feel that I am not my true self, and not being real – because I usually have to be aware of how I display my feelings but I think after being in this industry for quite some time, I can say that I tend to keep this under control quite well.

**8** How would you describe your level of capability in being able to disguise your real emotions from the emotions you are expected to display at work? (out of 10)

Umm.. (pause) I think that I am around a 9 in this scale, only because I have learnt how to master this trick by thinking of something else that keeps me happy on the inside.

**9** If a customer was to walk out of a changing room, leaving all clothes inside out, and all over the floor – how would you feel? Would you show this emotion?

Haha – this happens too many times in here. I usually give them a smile, ask if they want the clothes that were left all over the floor – and this usually provides time for customers to realise that they should actually do something about it. The arrogant ones just walk away, and that really annoys me.

**10** How do you cope with not being able to show this? What would you do?

Well, I can't show how annoyed I am, but I think that it's obvious in the way they know I have to pick up after them, especially those that don't even buy anything, I tell you it's ridiculous.

**11** Are there times when you do genuinely express your real emotions at work?

Yeah yeah, I can say that I do show how I really feel towards others but I do notice that this is only when I am feeling happy, and not when I'm moody or grumpy. I don't know, it's not unless I really feel comfortable with somebody and that's when I disclose how I really feel.

**12** How do you communicate with customers that you genuinely get on with? Do you put up a front/wall, or act as yourself?

Well, I usually get along with others in general – because I like to be around people. So I say that I do act as myself in some situations and in others I have to be.. “fake”.

**13** If a customer was to place extreme demands on you that are not part of your job description, how will you react? Why/ Why not?

Well, I will tell them what their options are and that we can't act upon your demands during work hours as part of our policy. It's hard to keep everybody happy in this type of job, and at the end of the day if I don't have to then I won't/ (Laughs)

**14** Does the way you display your emotions affect others?

Umm – well, it depends in what sense? Because if I am happy, then those around me usually feed off this but at the same time if I am not being happy – or being moody then my staff do not want to be around me. (Laughs)

**15** How would you describe the way that your organisation places expectations and demands on you as a worker? Are these realistic?

Oh I have so much to say about this! To start, I think that we have such a heavy expectation based around getting sales, and keeping customers happy when generally this is so hard to maintain. This company does not understand how hard it is to actually get somebody to buy something, because you need to crack other elements before reaching that stage.

I just think that we all have to do so much, and do not get the same value back in our job and as a human and that this company needs to work on doing something about it.

## Indicative Questions for Interviews:

### Participant 6



**Project Title:** Are we happy now? Exploring the fluctuations of employee emotional performance in one NZ fashion retail store.

**Age:** 18

**Working situation:** Casual, 3-8 hours

**Occupation:** Casual

**Areas of responsibility:** Customer service, cleaning.

**Experience in fashion retail industry:** 1 year 1 month

**How long have you been working here:** 7 months

**Researcher:** Janet Tupou

**Participants, please note:** In this particular situation, the word 'emotion' is not framed as a 'good' or 'bad' entity, so please do feel free to indicate your interpretation of the word 'emotion', and how this fits into what you are telling me.

I will also be probing and expanding upon your answers, asking questions such as why, or why not.

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### QUESTIONS:

**1** What is your definition of emotion, and how does this fit into your occupation?

Definition of emotion. . . I don't know, probably the way we feel in this job and how we show what it is we feel? I don't really know, sorry.

**2** How would you describe the way emotion is displayed as part of your job?

I think emotion is really important because this helps how much we know about what we are doing, and shows off how happy we are to do this.

**3** How do you maintain this on a day when you are not feeling on top of things?

Umm. . . Sometimes when I don't feel like doing or showing any emotion on most days and I don't feel that I need to, so I don't – even though I should.

**4** How do you control the clash of emotions when you have to smile and be friendly to customers, but deep down you are feeling angry, sad, depressed, etc?

Haha – this can be really hard because I know that as a salesperson I have to work on this, and I need to show that I am happier towards customers but when I'm not things can get quite awkward.

**5** What is running through your mind at that particular moment? How would you like to express your true emotions?

I do express my true emotions, and I do this anyway I don't really care much about what others think of me.

**6** Can you tell me about a particular instance when you felt the disconnection between the 'face' you are supposed to display at work, and how you really felt underneath it all? How did you handle this situation?

Sometimes like I said, this can feel really awkward, but at times I just act upon how I feel because I get paid to help customers choose and buy clothing – not on the emotions I use.

**7** At any given time, do you feel as if you are not being the real person that you are outside of work?

Umm, yes of course I do. Sometimes there's just too much pressure on looking and being happy and this can take a toll on who I really am, as a person.

**8** How would you describe your level of capability in being able to disguise your real emotions from the emotions you are expected to display at work? (out of 10)

Umm – I think I'll be at the bottom, haha!

Me: What number is this approximately?

Maybe around a 3-4? Only because I am casual and that I have other goals and aims in life that I'd rather focus on than this job – and that shows through my emotions at times.

**9** If a customer was to walk out of a changing room, leaving all clothes inside out, and all over the floor – how would you feel? Would you show this emotion?

Oh my gosh! This always happens – and I get soo angry and frustrated you just wont believe. When this happens, I don't tolerate anything – but I do have to smile while I ask them if they still want the clothes or not. So rude!

**10** How do you cope with not being able to show this? What would you do?

Well, I don't cope really – I get really angry and don't talk or go near those customers at all. Some people just think they are too cool to pick up after themselves.

**11** Are there times when you do genuinely express your real emotions at work?

Ah... Yeah sometimes I do when I'm happy, angry, or sad – I show this in how I act around the store, so people can leave me alone, because I'm not a machine or a slave either.

**12** How do you communicate with customers that you genuinely get on with? Do you put up a front/wall, or act as yourself?

Umm - sometimes it just depends on how those people are, and how my mood might be at that time.

**13** If a customer was to place extreme demands on you that are not part of your job description, how will you react? Why/ Why not?

That's easy – I'll tell her to shove it and to do it herself because I get paid to do my job and not to run after and be a slave for anybody no matter what.

**14** Does the way you display your emotions affect others?

Umm – yeah like I said when I feel like shit, people see this and don't wanna be around me which works out great because I don't wanna be around them as well, haha.

**15** How would you describe the way that your organisation places expectations and demands on you as a worker? Are these realistic?

Umm – to think of it, when I first started here I began to notice that retail was not going to be easy, and that it's quite competitive in a way.