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NAME OF AUTHOR: LISSA DORO R155851G

DISSERTATION TOPIC: ROLE OF EMOTIONAL LABOUR IN MANAGING JOB STRESS FOR FRONTLINE OFFICERS IN A SERVICE INDUSTRY. THE CASE OF NATIONAL SOCIAL SECURITY AUTHORITY

DEGREE TO WHICH DISSERTATION WAS PRESENTED: BSc (Honours) Human Resource Management

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ROLE OF EMOTIONAL LABOUR IN MANAGING JOB STRESS FOR FRONT LINE OFFICERS IN A SERVICE INDUSTRY. THE CASE OF NATIONAL SOCIAL SECURITY AUTHORITY

This dissertation is submitted by **Lissa Doro Registration Number R155851G** in partial fulfilment of a Bachelor of Science Degree in Human Resource Management.

SUPERVISOR: Mrs. V. Chirasha

Signed: _____   **Date:** _____

DEDICATION

For my parents, Ishmael and Anna Doro.

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My heartfelt gratitude goes to Mrs. V. Chirasha, for being my mentor and offering me guidance.

Special thanks goes to the National Social Security Authority for assisting me with my research.

ABSTRACT

Frontline officers play an important role in organisations, as they are directly involved with customers and clients who are the lifeline of any organization. It is because of this function as the go- between the company and the customers that front line officers effectively need to manage stress so as to effectively deliver quality service. Coupled with various stressors such as role overload, role ambiguity, socio-economic stressors, work/life imbalance, and rigid organizational policies as well as disgruntled customers, frontline officers are bound to experience job stress on a greater magnitude than other employees. The researcher observed that NSSA does not have a stress management policy in place, hence this particular study. The main objective of this dissertation was to examine the role of emotional labour in managing job stress for frontline officers in a service industry. This study used a qualitative research approach. A sample size of 35 participants was drawn from 70 frontline employees at the NSSA Head office and Harare Regional Office, however there were a total of 31 respondents. Semi structured interviews and open ended questionnaires were used for this study. The main causes of job stress that were highlighted by respondents are work overload, economic uncertainties, nature of work, work-life imbalance, management/leadership style and difficult customers. It was discovered that deep acting is the emotional labour strategy that is effective in stress management as compared to surface acting.

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DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Emotional Labour

The management of feelings to create a publicly observable facial or bodily display (Hochschild, 1983). Grandey (2000) defined emotional labour as "the process of regulating both feelings and expressions for organizational goals".

Stress

A physical, chemical or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension and may be a factor in disease causation. It is a normal reaction when the brain recognizes a threat. When the threat is perceived, the human body releases hormones that activate its "fight, fright or flight" response. (Ratnawat and Jha, 2014)

Front line officers

The Cambridge English Dictionary defines a frontline employee as an employee who deals directly with customers. These frontline employees are charged with sensing market demand, disseminating information to customers about offerings, and delivering value in ways that contribute to customer acquisition and customer loyalty (Narver and Slater 1990).

Service Industry.

An industry that is made up of companies that earn revenue through providing intangible products and services, and are not involved in the production of goods (www.businessdictionary.com). Companies in the service industry are involved in finance, retail, distribution, transport, for example.

Deep Acting

The modification of one's feelings in order to display the appropriate emotions. (Grandey, 2000)

Surface Acting

The suppression of one's felt emotions and faking the desired emotions. (Grandey, 2000).

Emotional exhaustion

A state of physical or mental depletion, which is often accompanied by a high turnover rate, poor employee performance and low organizational effectiveness. (Li, Wong and Kim, 2017).

ACRONYMS

1. NSSA   National Social Security Authority
2. E.L   Emotional Labour
3. S.A   Surface Acting
4. D.A   Deep Acting

1.0. CHAPTER ONE

1.1. <u>Introduction</u>

There have been changes in the sphere of work in the 21st century when compared to yesteryears. The manner in which work is done today is very different from five decades ago, and most of these changes have been overwhelming on the part of the employee. With the ever changing world scene, today's employer demands more from the worker and at the same time the employee seeks more rest time which the employer is not at liberty to provide, and this results in unprecedented job stress. Robbins and Judge (2013) have advanced that the typical employee from the 60s and 70s showed up at a specified workplace Monday to Friday and worked for clearly defined 8 to 9 hours, and that is no longer true for a large segment of today's workforce. They go on to say that employees are increasingly complaining that the line between work and non-work time has become blurred, creating personal conflicts and stress. Robbins and Judge go on to say that a lot of job stress in recent years can be attributed to the changing work environment, globally. The world does not sleep anymore because of a globalization. Employees can be called to work at any time of the day. Robbins and Judge (2013) have stated that, "There has been an increase in single parent households and employees with dependent parents, and this has led to even more significant challenges in balancing work and family responsibilities." Stress is not necessarily bad and depends on how one takes it (Selye, 1976). In small doses, stress becomes positive as it helps one keep alert. However, problems arise when the sources of pressure become too frequent without being given the time to recover. Psychological risks, i.e. stress, are greatly neglected by employers in their drive to achieve maximum profits. According to the World Health Organisation (2007), "The focus of Occupational Health and Safety initiatives has been on chemical, biological and physical exposures, while psychosocial risks at work are being ignored and their causes and consequences still insufficiently understood." It is becoming increasingly evident that issues to do with occupational stresses and pressures need to be discussed and resolved.

In service industries, frontline employees act as the contact point between customers and the organization. Tsaur and Tang (2013) have commented that they are viewed as the source of service differentiation or competitive edge for companies. Because of their function as the go-between clients and the company, frontline employees may experience job related stress on a

greater magnitude than other employees. Because of globalization, companies have found themselves competing with other companies on a global scale. This therefore has shown business owners that they need to prioritise their customers so as to gain competitive advantage. Zairi (2000) stated that "Customers are the purpose of what we do and rather than them depending on us, we very much depend on them. The customer is not the source of a problem, we shouldn't perhaps make a wish that customers should go away because our future and our security will be put in jeopardy. That is the main reason why organisations today are focusing on customer satisfaction and retention." According to Singh (2006), for organisations to be successful they must look into the needs and wants of their customers. Frontline employees have the duty of making the client's experience memorable, therefore there is no room for a bad attitude.

It is no secret that employees experience some sort of stress whilst on the job, but unlike other employees, frontline employees need to practice emotional intelligence to a great degree because of their delicate function of dealing with customer. This research therefore seeks to analyse the role of frontline officers who often have to deal with customers,, how influential frontline officers can be in the level of customer satisfaction, and also tackle at how practicing emotional labour is crucial in managing job stress among frontline officers in a service industry, with particular reference to their interactions with customers and clients, as well as their own wellbeing. Hochschild (1983) only pointed out the negative impact that emotional labor has on employees, however the study will show evidence of a positive relationship between emotional labour and work related stress. There will be an analysis of whether emotional labour has a role in managing work related stress.

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1.2. Background of study

The service sector is fast growing, all around the world. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2015), there has been an increase in the number of workers in Australian's service sector as compared to the country's manufacturing and other sectors. To gain a competitive edge in a cutthroat market, businesses have to invest in their customers. As the saying goes, "the customer is King", which means that those employees that are in constant interaction with customers have to treat the latter as if they are royalty. This means that frontline employees have to constantly put the needs of the customer before their own. Workers have to keep their attitudes, feelings and emotions in check so as to display the appropriate emotions and feelings. Even when dealing with "impossible" or difficult clients and customers, frontline employees have to put on a brave face. This, coupled with various other stressors, causes stress on the part of the employee. However, regardless of these stressors, service employees must act and speak in a manner that is appropriate because this is an important part of quality service. It therefore brings about the argument of whether if applied correctly, emotional labour could be used as a measure of managing stress.

The National Social Security Authority (NSSA) was established in terms of the NSSA Act of 1989 as the statutory corporate body tasked by the government of Zimbabwe to provide social security. The Authority is a government entity which provides social security, which makes it a service provider to the people of Zimbabwe. NSSA provides an important cushion to Zimbabwean citizens during invalidity, retirement or death of a member of the Schemes. Its second mandate is to enforce adherence to national occupational safety and health legislation and thus prevent workplace accidents through the registration and control of factories, boilers, pressure vessels; approving new building plans; investigate occupational accidents and monitor compliance. (www.nssa.org.zw)

The majority of NSSA's clientele are members of vulnerable groups; the widowed, orphans, the elderly and those injured at work. Just like with any other service provider, customers at NSSA have to be treated well by those employees that they get into contact with. While it is normal for someone to deal with stress from time to time, frontline employees at NSSA cannot take show

customers that they could be stressed, either through lashing out at customers, ignoring customers, or not giving 100% in their work, because of the vulnerability of their clientele. This therefore brings about the concept of emotional labour as a concept in stress management. It begs the questions, can't emotional labour be used in stress management among frontline employees? And if it can, how best can frontline employees manage various stressors using emotional labour.

Sias (2009) is of the view that clients of social services (such as NSSA) appear to possess significantly less power and influence than, for example, a client in a consulting firm due to their high level of dependence on the social service agency. Therefore interpersonal skills such emotional intelligence, courtesy, pleasantness, tactfulness are imperative for a front line officer to possess.

1.3. Problem Statement

Job stress has been a major problem particularly among front facing employees at NSSA due to the work overload that resulted from the retrenchment exercise that was conducted in the year 2017. This retrenchment exercise left a wide gap especially in the Benefits Division which processes pensions; Occupational Safety and Health Division which is in charge of reducing occupational accidents and treating those injured at work; and Compliance Division which is in charge of collecting remittances from companies (i.e. NSSA's core business). A large backlog has therefore been created because of this, which has in turn greatly affected service delivery. Several front line employees have had to work overtime on several occasions, thus exacerbating job stress amongst employees. Stress management is currently not included in the organizational induction program, neither is emotional labour training and how it can be used to manage job stress. This research seeks to show how emotional labour strategies such as deep acting can be used to manage these stressors.

1.4. Research Objectives

a. To identify the various factors that cause job stress for front line employees in an organization.
b. To examine the use of emotional labour in managing stress.

c. To assess the effects of using emotional labour in managing stress.

d. To offer recommendations

1.5. Research Questions

a. What are the factors that cause job stress among frontline employees in an organization?

b. How do you assess the use of emotional labour in managing stress?

c. What are the effects of using Emotional Labour in managing stress?

d. What recommendations can be offered?

1.6. Justification of Study

According to the World Health Organisation (2007), traditionally the focus of Occupational Safety and Health initiatives has been on chemical, biological and physical exposures, while the psychosocial risks at work are still largely neglected and their causes and consequences still insufficiently understood as they pertain to the developing country context. Beer and Newman (1978) attributed the lack of progress in the area of stress research to the fact that stress seemed to be related to a large number of conditions that prevented a systematic focus. Majority of available research and theories about job related stress have been developed and empirically tested in western context. However the problem of job related stress and its consequences is more important for developing countries as these are undergoing enormous social and economic changes (Jamal, 1999). The current induction programs at NSSA do not incorporate stress management training or emotional labour training. The concept of emotional labour is getting more important for both organisations and individuals because of the fast development of service industries today. Frontline employees play a pivotal role in creating a perfect service encounter, since their display of emotions affects customers' perspective. Gaining a more holistic understanding of the relationship between emotional labour and stress management is crucial because of its implications in customer satisfaction as well as employee wellbeing.

Whilst many studies have examined how emotional labour has negative implications,(Hochschild, 1983), little research has been done to show how emotional labour

can help in reducing stress and this dissertation seeks to address that gap. It is important for the organization as a whole to understand the impact of work related stress and how it affects workers' morale. By doing this, emotional labour can improve overall performance as well as help manage job related stress.

1.7.   Limitations

Because this study was qualitative in nature, there is a reliance on information collected from participants, which may not be accurate. This information cannot be independently verified, considering that privacy and confidentiality of participants should be respected. This information may also possess bias and has to be taken at face value. Participants may exaggerate, or lie.

Time also posed a hindrance. Considering that the study is on frontline employees whose job is to attend to customers, those who were interviewed responded in a hurried manner, and this may affect reliability of their responses.

Respondents were not forthcoming with some of their responses in fear of breach of confidentiality and victimization, therefore this may affect the reliability of the responses.

1.8.   Delimitations of Study

The study covered front facing officers at NSSA Head office and Harare Regional Office only. This is because that is where the largest number of front facing employees is found. These are Compliance Inspectors; Occupational Safety and Health Inspectors; Credit Control Inspectors; Benefits Clerks; Public Relations Officers; and Nurses.

1.9.   Organisation of Study

Chapter 1 proffers the introduction to the entire study, the background of study as well as the justification for conducting this research. It discusses why this particular study is of interest. **Chapter 2** contains the literature review. This includes the work that has already been done on the concepts of emotional labour and stress, as well as the relationship between the two. It will

also include the conceptual framework of this study which is the theory/model that will guide this study.

Chapter 3 is the methodology section. This focuses on the research process that will be used, that is the research approach, research design, the sampling method applicable to the research, and the sample size. Ethical considerations when conducting this research will also be clearly laid out in the third chapter, as well as the limitations that the researcher may come across.

Chapter 4 of this study shows the findings from the research conducted.

Chapter 5 offers recommendations.

1.10. Conclusion

The chapter set the tone for the entire study. The research objectives of this study are; to identify the various factors that cause job stress for front line employees in an organization; to examine the use of emotional labour in managing stress; and to assess the effects of using emotional labour in managing stress. The gap that has been identified by this research is that there have been changes at NSSA that have caused stress for employees, and this study examined how regulation of emotions can help manage those stressors. This study targeted NSSA Head office and Harare Regional Office.

2.0. CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Introduction

In this chapter, it will be identified what existing literature says about the concepts of stress and emotional labour and try to find the relationship between the two. Research that has been conducted on the concept of emotional labour suggests that emotional is in fact a stressor on its own and has negative connotations, and little research has been done on how emotional labour can in fact help manage job stress. This section of the study will bring about arguments that show that emotional labour can be used in the service industry to manage stress, as well as include the conceptual framework that shows how this can be done. The concept of stress will be explored in detail, as well as the causes of stress among frontline employees and how these employees can employ strategies (such as emotional labour) to cope with this stress. The study also explores the concept of emotional labour and how emotional labour strategies can be employed to in stress management.

2.1. Concept of Stress

It is important to understand the concept of stress before trying to manage it. It is therefore significant to understand different Occupational Stress Inducers. It is said that stress is difficult to define, mostly because what stresses one may not affect another (Ratnawat and Jha, 2014). According to Ratnawat and Jha (2014) stress is a psychological and physical state that results when the resources of the individual are not sufficient to cope with the demands and pressures of the situation. Ratnawat and Jha (2014) defined stress as a physical, chemical or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension and may be a factor in disease causation. It is a normal reaction when the brain recognizes a threat. When the threat is perceived, the human body

releases hormones that activate its "fight, fright or flight" response. Lazarus (1991) argued that stress is a transaction, a dynamic process that keeps on changing according to the role played by stress moderators with the changing external economic and financial environment in different societies. Hans Seyle (1976) cited in Sengupta (2007), one of the founding fathers of stress research, first introduced the term "stress" to describe physical and psychological responses to severe conditions or influences. Selye used the word "stress" to describe the responses to a force that when implemented in bodies, causes deformation. He further stated that stress is not necessarily something bad; it depends on how you take it.

In the day to day life however, stress is considered to be negative only. For the purposes of this research, only the negative connotation of stress will be used as that is more important from the subject point of view. Stress can be resolved well if one knows the stressors or causes of stress. Occupational stress is a significant and costly problem, and that the challenge for organisations is to manage work stress in order to reduce health-care costs and improve productivity (Lawrence, 1995). It may lead to increased health problems leading to higher rate of absenteeism and turn over, more accidents and poor job performance. Narver et al(1990) go on to state that, "Occupational stress has become a challenge for the employer in organizations as it results in low productivity, increased absenteeism and collection of other employee problems like alcoholism, drug abuse, hypertension and host of cardiovascular problems". Tsur and Tang (2013) go on to say that stress is always present among employees however it can be reduced by improving the working conditions and quality of benefits in the companies. Front line officers, because of their constant encounters with customers and clients, have to be able to effectively manage stress because they are crucial to the effective development and maintenance of customer relationships.

2.2. Sources of Stress

There are several causes of job stress, which will be discussed in full below. Causes of job stress may stem from personal conflicts or work conflicts. This study will discuss personal sources of stress, organizational stressors, as well as socio-economic stressors. These are just as important because they tend to spill over to the workplace and affect one's work.

2.2.1. <u>Personal Sources</u>

<u>Work/Life balance Imbalance</u>

Robbins and Judge (2013) have noted that the typical worker in the 60s and 70s showed up to work at a specified time Monday to Friday and work for clearly defined 8hours. That's no longer true for a large segment of today's workforce. Employees are increasingly complaining that the line between work and non-work time has become blurred, resulting in personal conflicts and stress. They are of the view that job stress is caused mostly by the failure to create an effective work-life balance. Haldar and Sarkar (2013) define Work-Life Balance as "a satisfactory level of involvement or a fit among the multiple roles in a person' life." Technology has made it easier to get work done even outside the office, but it makes others feel like they never really leave the office. Haldar and Sarkar (2013) go on to state that, "...our lives are becoming increasingly complex with every passing year. We have more choices, more opportunities and more demands placed upon us." One's work life and personal life are interconnected and interdependent, and therefore there should be an effective balance between the two so that one aspect does not negatively affect the other. It has been noted by Borg and Riding (1991) that "occupational stress occurs when there is a discrepancy between the demands of the workplace and an individual's ability to carry out and complete those demands." It is crucial to note here that without effective work life balance techniques, job stress will always be apparent. If not properly managed, job stress will be manifest in ways that cannot be directly calculated, such as demoralization, reduced productivity, low motivation (Adams, 2007). One also has to look at the physical and psychological impacts that job stress has on an individual. Constant headaches, lowered immunity, backaches, fatigue, irritability, depression, and anxiety are some of the negative effects of stress. It is therefore apparent that employers have to incorporate effective work/life balance techniques into their organisations so as to cater for the well-being of the average worker.

<u>Lack of Job Satisfaction</u>

According to Colquitt, Lepine and Wesson (2011), employees with low job satisfaction experience negative feelings when thinking about their job. They go on to say that workplace

surveys suggest that satisfied employees are becoming more and more rare, and this begs the question, what could be the reason? Generally, an employee is satisfied when they job helps them attain the things they value. These things vary from individual to individual, in tandem with Abraham Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, depending on which stage they are in their career. For different individuals, these would range from high salary, frequent promotions, fringe benefits, intellectual stimulation, prestige, job security, employment security, social security, etc. When these needs are met, an ordinary employee would be satisfied with their job and will experience less stress, until they require another need to be met (Maslow's hierarchy of needs). If these needs are not met, then the employee will be dissatisfied with their work leading to job related stress

2.2.2. Organisational Stressors

A work environment that does not foster involvement or participation of the workers tends to create stress among employees. Employee involvement is a leadership philosophy about how employees are most enabled to contribute the continuous improvement and success of their work environment. Employee participation can be referred to as the process of involving employees at all decision making levels, which is through Worker representation. According to the Zimbabwe Labour Act (Chapter 28:01), it is every employee's right to be entitled to membership of a Trade Union and a Workers' Committee, therefore one can note that employee participation is mandatory. The act gives employees a fundamental right to be a member of a Trade Union and/or workers committee and take part in activities in the promotion of their interests at the workplace. It is deemed unfair labour practice if an employer interferes with employees' right to participation

Unfair labour practices also cause Job stress among employees. S8 of the Labour Act details out what unfair labour practice constitutes; and this includes, but not limited to, obstruction of employee rights, refusal to negotiate in good faith, bargaining with another trade union where a registered trade union exists, demanding sexual favours, sexual harassment.

Structural rigidity such as role ambiguity, role overload and bureaucracy also lead to job stress. Public institutions, such as NSSA, are ridden with bureaucratic structures. They are characterized by tall structures, which means that there is a lot of red tape. Bureaucracy is about control which

allows for strict supervision of subordinates by superiors through a hierarchical arrangement of positions where power decreases as one moves down the hierarchy and vice versa. Bureaucracies encourage rigidity, which in turn foster frustration on the part of the employee. This is particularly true for a frontline employee who has to assist customers. Because of its bureaucratic nature, a frontline employee at NSSA for example who wants to assist a recently widowed woman collect her benefits, has to wait for authorization from his/her superior. This may sometimes take a while because of the tall structure. The customer on the hand, will feel that the employee assisting her is being deliberately lazy, and this results in stress on the part of the employee.

Organisational politics is another cause for job stress. Organisational politics can be defined as the use of power by the bearers of power to achieve changes within an organization. These changes may sometimes serve individual interests and not organizational interests. Therefore, those that have power may prey on those that do not have power, resulting in stress on the latter.

The "Sick building syndrome" is another organisational source of job stress. This is whereby the offices of the organisation are heavily polluted, which makes it impossible to work in. This could be in the form of very old and uncomfortable furniture, noise and air pollution, and computer discomfort. This is one way or another results in job stress.

Retrenchments, with particular reference to the "survivors' syndrome" is another causation in work related stress. When an organisation conducts a retrenchment exercise, just like what NSSA did in 2016 and 2017, those employees that remain at the organisation develop what is called the survivors syndrome. This is with reference to the uncertainty that those employees face, with no guarantee that their own jobs are safe. The workload that is also increased by the retrenchment exercise on the remaining employees is another cause for job stress. Frontline employees have to deal with customers and clients having to deal with all these pressures.

2.2.3. Socio-Economic, Political Environment

It is no secret that Zimbabwe has been in a political, economic, social turmoil for the better part of three decades. From government policies that have led to the dearth of the economy, to political wrangles that have led to the suffering of multitudes of the economy, it is no surprise

that majority of Zimbabwean adults are going through one form of stress or another. The socio-economic, political landscape has been riddled with financial uncertainty, hyper-inflation, warring political parties, company closures, droughts, soaring prices of basic commodities, brain drain, high unemployment levels, corruption, the list is endless. Imagine an employee, who is constantly fearing for their job security, whose monthly salary cannot support him/her for the entire month (that is if their pay slip is consistent), and has to handle customers who are just as frustrated.

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2.3. Effects of stress

Workplace stress can manifest in ways that cannot be directly calculated, such as demoralization, reduced productivity, low motivation, depression, etc. When an individual's ability to cope is overwhelmed and stress levels become severe, physical and psychological manifestations can become apparent.

Depression

Constant worrying and stressing often leads to depression. Depression is a state of low mood, and often negatively impacts on someone's thoughts, behavior, feelings and sense of well-being. Long term stress may sometimes lead to psychiatric disorders resulting in poor performance, absenteeism, or labour turnover. Depression also manifests itself through unstable mood swings, irritability, dysfunctional behavior, and poor personal hygiene.

Health challenges

There are various health risks that long term stress pose on employees, which in turn affect job performance and service delivery, and these include high blood pressure; difficulty in making decisions; being unable to relax or concentrate and ultimately affecting job performance; coronary heart diseases; anxiety and depression; digestive system disorders and muscle pain.

These health challenges that result from stress lead to declined job performance and poor service delivery, therefore it is essential that stress management training be incorporated in organisations.

<p style="text-align:center">Burnout Syndrome</p>

Burnout syndrome (BOS) has been defined by Elshaer, Moustafs, Aiad and Ramadan (2018) as "the experience of long-term exhaustion and diminished interest, usually in the work context. It comes across as the result of a period of expending too much effort at work while having too little recovery." Burnout occurs when an employee experiences a lot of stress for a long time, without any interventions taken to manage the stress. Burnout is associated with a lot of adverse complications, including lack of accomplishment, negative attitude towards customers, cynicism and chronic fatigue. It is crucial that job related stress be managed before it leads to burnout which may be difficult to recover from.

2.4. Coping with stress

According to Prem, Kubicek, Diestel and Korunka (2016), when employees face stressful situations or threatening conditions that they think they cannot bear with resources they have, they subconsciously and unconsciously tend to increase their resources or try to relieve tension to reduce internal and external demands, and these acts to react, adjust and respond to stress is called *coping*.

Adams (2007) discusses about the concept of "hardiness". Hardiness refers to a person's ability to self-regulate stress, and this helps determine whether an individual will experience a given stressor as mild, moderate, or severe. Several techniques can reduce the impact of stress, such as counselling, relaxation, exercise. Bhatika (2009) identified three stress coping strategies. These are the control strategy (when one takes charge of their problem, tries to find a solution for it), the escape strategy, and the symptom management strategy (using methods such as relaxation, meditation, medication to manage symptoms of occupational stress).

For this study, emotional labour is the variable that will get tested as coping strategy, or rather a stress management strategy. This research will establish if emotional labour can be successfully used in managing work related stress, as per research objectives two and three.

2.5. Emotional Labour

2.5.1. Concept of emotional labour

Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) are of the view that Hochschild ignored an important element of emotional labour, which is when employees enjoy emotional labour. They go on to suggest that at times the service worker may not surface act or deep act emotions. This is because by virtue of their personality, the employee may feel the flow of emotions genuinely. Their work persona will be an extension of their authentic self.

2.5.2. Hochschild's Contribution

Arlie Russell Hochschild is attributed as being the first to coin the term *emotional labour* in 1983. This was based on her assumption that human beings often induce or inhibit feelings or emotions in order to make them appropriate in a certain situation in one's private life or at the workplace. She expanded this idea by providing a more detailed explanation of *surface acting* and *deep acting* in her 1983 book. She conducted a qualitative research on debt collectors and flight attendants so as to explore what emotional labour is. She intended to discover what emotions are, how emotions can be managed, what people do when they manage their emotions, and what the costs of managing emotions were. Hochschild defined emotional labour as "*the management of feelings to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display which requires the worker to suppress those feelings in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others.*" This means that employees have to hide their real emotions when carrying out their duties so as to display 'acceptable' emotions. Employees display 'acceptable emotions so as to meet organizational expectations that are required for their job roles. Hochschild also coined the term *feeling rules,* which refers to the rules that guide one's life

through normative role expectations about how one ought to feel in differing contexts. *Display rules* refer to organizational norms regarding how one ought to conduct themselves in job related situations.

Hochschild was of the view that emotional labour has negative effects on workers' well-being, because of the pressure that they get from having to 'fake' feelings and emotions so as to please customers and clients. Identity confusion and self-alienation was said to be some of the negative effects and could lead to frustration, anxiety, decrease in job satisfaction and exhaustion. Hochschild argued that the performance that comes from deep acting has negative implications because over time employees may have trouble distinguishing between who they really are and the person that they pretend to be while on the job. Although Hochshild is said to have painted a negative picture about emotional labour (Rafaelli and Sutton 1987), she also suggested that emotional labour can have positive effects for the ordinary worker. She stated that by performing successfully emotional labour, "an employee may somehow be satisfied in how personal her service actually was" (Hochschild 1983:136). Hochshild goes on to say that "such positive outcomes of emotional labour were more likely to occur when workers made an effort to change their feelings inwardly to fit with display rules as opposed to only changing their outward displays of emotion."

2.5.3. Surface Acting

Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) define surface acting as "showing emotions which are not felt but are required by the business, and suppressing or altering the emotions truly felt.*"* Zapf (2002) stated that in surface acting, employees try to manage the visible aspects of emotions that appear on the surface and which can be noticed by the interaction partner to bring them in line with organisation display rules while inner feelings remain unchanged.

Hochschild (1983) was of the view that with surface acting, one feigns emotions that they do not actually feel. It has been pointed out in literature that surface acting is associated with emotional

exhaustion and thus job stress, due to the ingenuity of emotions and feelings that the employee displays. Deep acting on the other hand, is said to be effective in stress management.

2.5.4. Deep Acting

Hochschild (1983) defined deep acting as "regulating emotions felt , that is the employees show effort beforehand to determine the emotions required to be felt instead of displaying fake behavior like superficial role making." Scholars such as Ashforth and Humphrey; and Grandey (2000) have found deep acting as the only facet of emotional labour that has been associated with positive outcomes, and could possibly lead to stress management. This is because when deep acting, an employee evokes only positive emotions, and they end up getting used to this calming method and eventually this becomes their way of life.

2.5.5. An analysis of emotional labour in stress management

Hochschild (1983) commented that emotional labour has negative outcomes such as emotional dissonance and exhaustion, burnout, work/family conflict and eventually job stress. She was convinced that emotional labour itself was a source of job stress, and not a solution to it. The influence of emotional labour on workers has generally been analysed as less favourable.

Some scholars, however, have suggested that if applied correctly, emotional labour has the capacity to be a stress coping strategy. For instance, Wharton (1993) did not find a negative relationship but a positive relationship between emotional labor and job satisfaction. Wharton's (1993) argument is that the positive or negative outcome of emotional labor on employee outcomes depends on the performance technique which the employee chooses to use. What this means is that suppressing negative emotions (i.e., surface acting) is detrimental to employees' wellbeing, whereas the expression of positive emotions (i.e., to deep acting) may in turn enhance employees' well-being. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) conceptualization which incorporated spontaneously and genuinely felt emotions allowed the possibility that emotional labour would lead to positive outcomes, where emotional labour had previously been associated with negative outcomes.

Grandey (2003) identified four facets to emotional labour; surface acting, deep acting, emotional deviance and automatic emotional regulation. One can argue that whilst surface acting and emotional deviance may actually result in stress and emotional exhaustion among employees, deep acting and automatic emotional regulation may be employed to manage stress among frontline employees because emotions are naturally felt.

Chen, Chang and Wang (2019) are of the view that deep acting decreases emotional dissonance by bringing feelings in line with expressions and organisational expectations. Therefore, deep acting is supposed to prevent exhaustion and stress. They go on to say that frontline employees may use DA with positive thinking to regulate their emotions, thus decreasing their depletion of emotional resources. Whilst surface acting is pretending to show emotions needed to satisfy customers, deep acting involves genuinely displaying and feeling those emotions. Ashhforth and Humphrey (1993) discovered that workers that have to surface act are more likely to experience stress than workers who use deep acting. This is because the constant faking of emotions invites a clash of inner feelings (emotional dissonance) eventually leading to burnouts. Deep acting, however, requires identifying with one's role and therefore there is little effort made.

Another implication of emotional labour through deep acting is job satisfaction. Surface acting can lead to job dissatisfaction because of feeling insincere and inauthentic towards ones work demands. It is proposed that surface acting for a long duration in a person's career leads to an alienation of the worker from their authentic self. Hochschild (1983) argues that when service workers are coerced into portraying (whilst feeling) a particular emotion, they fail to demonstrate or know what they are actually feeling. However, deep acting is accredited to job satisfaction, because it is understood that the employee tries to connect more with the job while delivering the expected performance, leading to job satisfaction (Jamal, 1999).

On the upside, effective emotional labour can lead to task effectiveness and produce good results for the organisation adding to the bottom line. Service workers, eventually develop emotional intelligence that leads to their managing emotions at the workplace more comfortably and effectively without the work from their professional space spilling into their personal domain. Emotional intelligence leads to acquiring the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth; the ability to access and generate emotions when they facilitate cognition, which ultimately leads to job satisfaction (Salovey and Mayer 1990). Development of

emotional intelligence moderates the effect of emotional labour and eases the amount of effort required to please the customers (Jamal, 1999). Brotheridge and Grande (2002) are also of the view that deep acting has positive relationship with personal accomplishment.

The emphasis should be on how to assist employees with performing deep acting—the emotional labor technique that has been consistently reported to result in more favorable outcomes for employees (e.g., increased job satisfaction and decreased emotional exhaustion) and ' organizations alike (e.g., increased customer satisfaction and sincere hospitality). Chung and Huang (2017) propound the importance of integrating deep acting into training to carefully regulate the internal processes of emotional management so that external emotional expressions will appear to be more genuine and spontaneous. In addition, this type of training provides an excellent opportunity for employees to discuss their feelings and frustrations on their jobs, particularly when they are hurt or insulted by difficult guests. They go on to say, "It should also be noted that such training should not be for front-line employees only but also for managers since the latter typically experience higher levels of emotional labor having to deal with both subordinates and customers. Both front-line employees and their managers can talk over negative emotions and exchange tips about expressing them in less offensive manners. Formal training programs for managers can incorporate modules such as "how to provide emotional support," "how to handle employee complaints," and "how to provide constructive feedback and opinions"

In conclusion, one can therefore note that if applied correctly, emotional labour is able to manage stress. The positive outcomes associated with emotional labour include promotion of organisational goals, task effectiveness due to emotional intelligence and thus this helps alleviate stress.

2.6. Case Study

A study carried out by Carnicelli-Filho(2011) highlighted in Torland (2013) has linked emotional labour of adventure tour leaders in New Zealand to the effective management of stress because it was noted that emotional labour had a positive relationship with job satisfaction. In his PhD study on the emotional labour of white-water rafting guides in New Zealand, Carnicelli-Filho (2011) found that guides performed emotional labour in order to enhance client satisfaction

which, in turn, led to enhanced job satisfaction for the guide employees through managing their emotions. Carnicelli-Filho discovered that aligning genuine emotions with the emotions displayed to clients, these tour guides felt a sense of achievement.

According to Carnicelli-Filho, deep acting was found to have a statistically significant positive effect on adventure tour leaders' job satisfaction. This effect appears to be derived from a sense of authenticity of self that could be attributed to the low level of emotional dissonance associated with the performance of deep acting. The sense of authenticity of self could also be due to a close alignment between adventure tour leaders' 'person identities' (i.e. how they view themselves as unique and distinct individuals with idiosyncratic personality attributes) and the organisational values of their employer. In addition, the positive effect is influenced by a positive feeling of achievement, which is likely to have dominated the negative feelings of frustration and emotional exhaustion that are frequently experienced by adventure tour guides.

Even though Carnicelli-Filho's study found a positive relationship between deep acting and job satisfaction, the same principle can be applied to deep acting and stress management. Just like the Carnicelli discovered, the feelings of authenticity brought about by deep acting disperse emotional dissonance, thereby giving an employee a sense of relief when performing their duties and therefore this minimizes the risks of job stress.

2.7. Conceptual Framework

In the emotional labour literature, there is no consensus on whether emotional labour is beneficial to the employee. Hocshild was convinced that emotional labour caused emotional dissonance and therefore was a cause in emotional strain and burnout. Ashforth and Humphrey are of the view that emotional labour is beneficial to the organisational bottom line, but neglect how emotional labour can have a positive relationship with individual stress management.

2.7.1. Social Identity Theory

Hochschild"s (1979, 1983) initial theoretical and empirical work suggests that acting to comply with imposed rules leads to emotional dissonance and is harmful for actors" well-being. Subsequent researchers have used various theories to counter argue or understand her argument. Drawing upon social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1985), Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) challenge Hochschild"s argument of uniform negative outcomes of emotional labor. They argue that when service providers identify with their work role, emotional labor may actually enhance their well-being. Their reasoning is that if individuals identify with their organizational roles, they may feel authentic when conforming to display rules. Performing emotional labor will not tax these individuals. Further, they also take into account the influence of time and suggest that over time,

surface acting or deep acting will lead to identification with the role and an alignment between expressed emotions and the experience of emotions.

2.8. Conclusion

Chapter 2 encompassed existing literature on the concept of emotional labour and job stress, as well as the conceptual framework. The causes of job stress have been extensively explained in the literature, and these include work-life imbalance; lack of job satisfaction; difficult clientele; unfair labour practices; structural rigidity; organizational politics; job insecurity; and the socio-economic and political environment. The chapter also pointed out the effects of stress, which include depression; burnout; weight loss or gain; heart diseases and high blood pressure. The stress coping method relevant to this study and that has been highlighted in this chapter in emotional labour. The facets of emotional labour which are surface acting and deep acting have been captured in the literature review, and it had been noted that deep acting is more likely to manage stress as compared to surface acting.

3.0.   CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0.   Introduction

Chapter 2 reviewed current literature on the subject matter. This chapter entails the research methods that will be used in order to obtain data regarding the three research objectives. Collis and Hussey (2003) define research methodology as the overall approach that the research takes. Qualitative research approach will be used for the purposes of this study. The research design that was used is also outlined in the chapter, as well as the study population, sample size, sampling technique, and research instruments. The chapter ends with a discussion of ethical issues that were taken into consideration during the planning and conduct of the study.

3.1.   Research Approach

Qualitative research approach was be used for this study. Young and Hren (2009) define qualitative research approach as the systematic collection, organization and interpretation of textual information. They go on to say that it is an inductive approach to generating novel insights into phenomena that are difficult to quantify. This research adopted the qualitative research approach over the quantitative research because of its ability to describe individual experiences. The aim of this study is to identify the factors that cause job stress among frontline employees as well as to examine the use of emotional labour in managing these stressors, therefore it is imperative to gain an insight into the individual experiences of the employees. Stress and emotions affect people in different ways, therefore through qualitative research one can be able to evoke responses that are rich and explanatory. Participants will have the opportunity to respond more elaborately and in greater detail because the relationship between researcher and participant will be less formal. With this being said, it can be concluded that qualitative research approach was more appropriate for this study.

3.2. Research Design

A research design is referred to as a roadmap or guide that a study should take. Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler (2011) define research design as "a strategy for a study and the plan by which the strategy is to be carried out." They go on to say that a research design should provide results which are judged to be credible and a replica of reality. According to Lapan (2011), a research design guides the choices researchers make with respect to sampling, data collection and analysis. It spells out the methods and procedures to be used in the collection and analysis of data. The research design that was used is the exploratory research design. Exploratory research is carried out in instance whereby little or no prior research had been carried in this field, or where the problem is not yet clearly defined. Conducted in order to determine the nature of the problem, exploratory research helps have a better understanding of the problem

3.3. Sampling Procedure

3.3.1. Sample Frame

The sample frame consists of frontline employees at the NSSA Head office and Harare Regional Office. Bryman (2012) refers to a sample frame as the listing of all units in the population from which the sample will be selected. For this study, the sample frame refers to all frontline employees at NSSA Head office and Harare Regional Office, totaling 70 participants. The study population comprises employees from the following four departments; 1. Collections, Contributions and Compliance; 2. Occupational Safety and Health; 3. Benefits; and 4. Marketing, Public Relations Corporate Communications, and Social Security. The job categories are 1. Compliance Inspector; 2. OSH Inspector; 3. Credit Control Officer; 4. Benefits Clerk; 5. Public Relations Officer; and 6. Nurse.

3.3.2. Sample size

The sample size refers to the actual employees that will take part in the research. One cannot collect data from the entire study population as this may prove cumbersome and time consuming, therefore a sample size has to be selected. Half of the entire study population was selected as this is representative of the population.

Table 1

Category	Total Population	Sample size
Compliance Inspector	25	12
Occupational Safety and Health Inspector	20	10
Credit Control Officer	10	5
Benefits Clerk	10	5
Public Relations Officer	3	2
Nurse	2	1
Total	**70**	**35**

Source: Primary data

3.3.3. Sampling technique

Convenience sampling was used for this study. This is whereby participants are chosen based on their availability, which makes it easy to collect data. This sampling technique was chosen due to the fact that Compliance Inspectors and OSH Inspectors mostly work in the field, and therefore respondents were picked from those that were available in their offices.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

3.4.1. Sources of Data

This research made use of both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary Data was in the form of questionnaire and interview responses that were collected from respondents. Kelly (2005) defined primary data as "the first hand and real time data collected by the researcher." The secondary data used was found in journal articles, official websites, research papers, the internet and books.

3.4.2. Research Instruments

Open ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used for this study so as to gather a lot of data. Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler (2011) define a questionnaire as a survey that is delivered to the respondent through personal or non-personal means that is completed by the respondent without additional contact with an interviewer. Open ended questionnaires were administered because they allowed the respondents to give their own account, which is commensurate with the qualitative research approach.

Semi-structured interviews were also be conducted. This is whereby a researcher has pre-set questions but is prepared to add more if they serve the purpose of addressing the research objectives. Kvale and Brikman (2009) defines an interview as "a method of gathering facts through conversations and oral means and should be used as the simplest method of human exchange of ideas." The researcher asks questions relevant to the study and gets responses so as to understand the phenomena better. Robinson (2011) states that "interviews are one of the most effective research tools as probing or asking the respondent to clarify some issues is facilitated."

The reason for using both questionnaires and interviews is that Compliance Inspectors, OSH Inspectors, Credit Control Officers and Nurses work in the field and therefore required questionnaires so as to be able to get information from them. Benefits Clerks and PR Officers were interviewed so as to complement the questionnaire and get an in depth analysis of the phenomena.

3.5. Data Analysis Method

This research is qualitative in nature, therefore data analysis was in the form of thematic analysis. The method involves extracting identical phrases. Tables were however used in some instances to clearly present data. Kvale and Brinkman (2009) stated that "data analysis is whereby the researcher seeks to understand collected data and thus help to answer the research questions." The questionnaires were analysed and categorized into major themes and patterns identified for easy interpretation.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

Researchers have to take ethics into consideration when conducting research. Emphasis should be placed on moral values relating to professional conduct and the rights and privacy of participants. Kvale and Brikman (2009) defines research ethics as the appropriateness of the researcher's behavior in relation to the rights of those affected by his or her work. With this study, the researcher first had to obtain permission to conduct research at NSSA from the relevant authorities. The researcher also had the ethical obligation to get consent from participants first before conducting the research, as well as to inform them how the information

would be used. Participants should be made aware that their responses will be kept confidential and their privacy respected. This encourages them to be more forthcoming. There should be no exploitation of the researcher and participant relationship, and participants should be protected from any discomfort that may arise. When participants are made comfortable and assured of anonymity, they can them be more forthcoming.

3.7. Chapter Conclusion

The chapter highlights that the study used the qualitative research approach, because of its ability to describe individual experiences. The research design that was used is the exploratory design, which is ideal in instance where there has been little prior research on the phenomena. The sample size amounted to 35 participants, drawn from NSSA head office and Harare regional office. Convenience sampling was used for this study. This sampling technique makes it easier to collect data from participants that are readily available. The research instruments that were used are the open ended questionnaire and semi structured interview guide.

4.0.   CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0.   Introduction

Chapter 3 looked at the research methodology that was employed in this study. This chapter looks at the presentation and analysis of data that was collected from frontline officers at National Social Security Authority. Data was categorized into major themes identified, and analysed to understand the phenomena better.

4.1.   Response Rate

Out of the targeted 35 participants, 31 employees managed to take part in the survey. This gives an 88.6% response rate. 28 questionnaires were distributed to 12 Compliance Inspectors, 10 Occupational Safety and Health Inspectors, 5 Credit Control Officers and 1 Nurse. 24 Questionnaires were returned, constituting a response rate of 86%. 7 out of 7 participants intended to take part in the interview session took part in the survey, constituting 100% response rate.

The large number of questionnaires is attributed to the fact that Compliance inspectors, OSH Inspectors and Credit Control Officers (who make up a large population of the study) are always mobile and could not find the time to sit down for an interview. The rest (7 employees) were interviewed because they were available in their offices.

Compliance Inspectors make up 29%, OSH Inspectors 29%, Credit Control Officers 16%, Benefits Clerks 16%, PR Officers 7% and Nurse 3%.

Response rate according to Research Instrument

Table 2

Category	Sample size	Respondents	Response rate %
Questionnaires	28	24	86%
Interview	7	7	100%
Total	35	31	88.6%

Source: Primary Data

Out of the intended 12 Compliance Inspector participants, 9 took part in the survey.

9 out of 10 OSH Inspectors took part in the survey.

5 out of 5 Credit Control Officers took part in the survey.

5 out of 5 Benefits Clerks took part in the survey

2 out of 2 PR Officers took part in the survey.

1 out of 1 Nurse took part in the survey.

4.2.   Demographic Summary

Table 3

Category	No. of respondents	Gender		Age Category					Length of Service (Years)					Highest Qualification Obtained		
		Male	Female	18-28	29-38	39-48	49-58	59+	<1	2-5	6-10	11-15	>15	Diploma	Undergrad	Postgrad
Compliance Inspector	9	6	3	1	2	4	2	-	-	1	7	1	-	-	8	1
OSH Inspector	9	7	2	-	4	4	1	-	-	2	7	-	-	-	9	-
Credit Control Officer	5	4	1	-	1	2	2	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	3	2
Benefits Clerk	5	1	4	2	3	-	-	-	-	1	4	-	-	3	2	-
PR Officer	2	-	2	1	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2	-
Nurse	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-
Total Number	31	18	13	4	11	11	5	0	6	5	19	1	0	4	24	3

Total %		58.1	41.9	12.9	35.5	35.5	16.1	0	19.4	16.1	61.3	3.2	0	12.9	77.4	9.7

Source: Primary Data

Since the study is on frontline officers only, the categories used are their job titles. That is, Compliance Inspector; Occupational Safety and Health Inspector; Credit Control Officer; Benefits Clerk; Public Relations Officer; and Nurse.

Gender

Out of 31 respondents, 18 were male and 13 were female employees. This constitutes 58.1% and 41.9 % respectively. Among Compliance Inspectors 6 were male and 3 were female. Among Occupational Safety and Health Inspectors 7 were males and there were 2 female Inspectors. Out of 5 Credit Control Officers, 4 were males and there was 1 female. Out of 5 Benefits Clerks, there were 4 females and 1 male. Both PR officers who took part in the survey are female, and the only nurse who took part in the survey is also female.

Age Distribution

4 respondents fell into the 18-28 age bracket, constituting 12.9%.

11 fell into the 29-38 age bracket, making up 35.5%.

The age bracket 39-48 also had 11 respondents, making up 35.5%.

5 respondents were in the 49-58 age bracket, constituting 16.1%.

No respondents were above the age of 58 years.

Length of Service.

6 respondents have worked for the organization for less than a year, making up 19.4%.

5 respondents fell into the 2-5 years bracket, making up 16.1%.

The most populated bracket was 6-10 years with 19 respondents, making up 61.3%.

1 respondent was in the 11-15 years bracket, making up 3.2 %.

No respondent had worked for more than 15 years.

Highest Qualification Obtained.

4 respondents have obtained a National Diploma as their highest qualification, making up 12.9%.

The majority 24 respondents have Undergraduate Degrees as their highest qualification, constituting 77.4%.

3 respondents have obtained Postgraduate degrees, making up 9.7%.

4.3.   DATA PRESENTATION

4.3.1.   Causes of job stress for frontline officers in an organization

The major causes of stress that were highlighted by the respondents are economic uncertainties; high workload; difficult clients; nature of job; work-life imbalance; leadership style; job insecurity. All respondents were asked if they understood what the term "job stress" means, and all of them concurred that they did understand what the term means. 19 respondents stated that they feel like they are always stressed, whereas 12 respondents thought that their stress is intermittent and not constant.

Economic Uncertainties

All respondents unanimously agreed that the economic uncertainty is a major cause of stress for the average worker in the country. One was quoted as saying,

"Situation yacho in Zimbabwe is difficult. Prices are rising on a daily basis, and stress iyi affects chero basa rangu." (The situation in Zimbabwe is difficult. Prices are rising on a daily basis, and the stress of it all affects even my job).

Two other employees had this to say,

"I have even resorted to sports betting online during working hours so that I get an extra income. This means that my work does not get 100%."

"Sometimes I spend time thinking about how to get fuel to get to work, pick up my kids, and go back home. This is stressful."

It was also highlighted that their salaries could no longer keep up with the cost of basic commodities. One employee was quoted as saying,

"It is stressful to think that salary yangu haikwani." (It is stressful to think that I can nolonger afford certain things with my salary.)

The 7 interviewed respondents indicated that the economic uncertainties made them fear for their job security, and this added to the occupational stress.

High Workload

Out of the 24 that responded to the questionnaire, 17 listed high workload as one of the causes of job stress. 5 that were interviewed concurred on this, and upon further probing indicated that the high workload is as a result of the retrenchment exercise that left a gap in the Benefits Division. One employee had this to say,

"Nditori ne backlog yakati kurei." (I have a large backlog.)

Another employee had this to say,

"We are fewer than we used to be, so the work is piling up."

Another employee stated,

"NSSA conducted a retrenchment exercise in late 2016, resulting in large gap in the Benefits and Compliance Departments."

Difficult customers

Another cause of job stress for frontline employees that was highlighted is "difficult customers". 4 Compliance Inspectors and all 5 Credit Control Officers listed difficult customers as a source of job stress. 2 employees who were interviewed gave insight into an incident that had occurred

two weeks prior to the study. An elderly client almost got into an altercation with some employees over her outstanding pension. The 2 interviewees stated that they tried explaining to the customer how the process works, but the customer became violent. One interviewee said this,

"....vanga vakuda kutirova. But isusu there isn't much we can do, because we have to follow certain procedures." (She became agitated and wanted to hit us. There isn't much we can do, certain procedures have to be followed)

One other interviewee said this was not the first time such an incident occurred, and such instances leave them (frontline employees) shaken up. She had this to say,

"They read stories in the paper and feel that NSSA is abusing their pensions"

Management/Leadership Style

Out of the 24 questionnaires, 16 indicated leadership style as one of the sources of stress. 3 interviewed personnel added to this, highlighting that the change in Senior Management of 2016/2017 has brought in new changes that employees were not ready for. One employee said this,

"We are still waiting for the 2016 bonus. We used to get a bonus every year, but when management changed we were not given the 2016 bonus."

Another employee added to this, saying:

"The new management scrapped over some benefits we had, and we did not receive our 2016 bonus."

Nature of job

All 9 Compliance Inspectors and 6 OSH Inspectors indicated nature of job as one of the causes of job stress in their questionnaire responses. The only nurse that took part in the study also highlighted that treating injured patients is traumatizing, even though it comes with the job.

Work-life imbalance

6 Compliance Inspectors and 5 OSH Inspectors listed work-life imbalance as a source of occupational stress.

4.3.2. The use of Emotional Labour in managing stress

4 out of 7 interviewees acknowledged that they knew what the term 'Emotional Labour' means. The other 3 initially said that they had never heard about the term, but once explained to them they knew what it was. All interviewees highlighted that they often have to practice emotional labour when faced with stressful circumstances at work. Out of 24 questionnaires, 20 stated that they knew what the term meant. It was not possible however, to further probe the other 4 respondents if whether it was possible that they knew what emotional labour is even though they do not know that it is termed that way. Only the interviewees could be probed in such manner. In response to whether the respondents had received stress management training, the 6 respondents who have worked for less than a year indicated no, while the 25 respondents who have served NSSA for over two years indicated yes. This led the researcher to assume that NSSA had not conducted stress management training in the last year.

In response to the question 'In what situations are you forced to employ either surface acting or deep acting when dealing with job stressors', 11 questionnaires detailed that they usually have to fake their emotions when conversing with difficult customers, whereas 13 questionnaires stated that they genuinely try to help difficult customers. 6 of the interviewed employees stated that they sometimes fake emotions when dealing with difficult customers, whereas the other one interviewed employee stated that they genuinely try to help difficult customers and had this to say,

"I think it's easier for both myself and my client if I genuinely help them. That's what I am employed for anyway."

When it comes to dealing with work overload one employee had this to say,

"It's hard for me to pretend to be happy when I have such a heavy workload, and it makes me grumpy."

When it comes to dealing with Management/Leadership style, one employee had this to say,

"Most of us aren't happy with our management. Sometimes we pretend to like our bosses so that we do not get stressed over some of these things."

When it comes to dealing with the stress of the economic uncertainties, one employee had this to say,

"I just try to think about other things, because there is nothing I can do about it."

4.3.3. The effects of using Emotional Labour in managing stress

In response to the question "In your opinion, do you think performing emotional labour helps in stress management", 13 questionnaires indicated yes whereas the other 11 indicated no. When the interviewees were asked the same question, 4 said no, 2 were unsure, and one said yes. These were the words of one employee,

"I think that sympathizing with the clientele instead of being harsh makes you a better person. Kana newe hauzoite stress yekungopopota." (Constant shouting leaves one feeling stressed.)

One employee who was interviewed who was of the view that emotional labour does not help in stress management had this to say,

"To be honest I seriously doubt if regulating my feelings would help with financial stress for example. That can only be fixed if my income is commensurate to the high cost of living."

In response to the question, "In your opinion, what are the effects of practicing emotional labour", 4 questionnaires stated that they do not see any difference, 14 questionnaires indicated that emotion regulation leaves them feeling more stressed, and 6 questionnaires stated that EL helps with stress management. One questionnaire highlighted that they usually just do what their manager tells them to do even if they do not agree with it (surface acting), and this sometimes results in high blood pressure.

One employee stated,

"I think suppressing my feelings about the economic uncertainties actually leaves me less stressed. Nothing can be done about it. I actually do my work better when I don't have so many things to think about."

DATA ANALYSIS

4.3.4. **Demographic**s

Response rate

The sample frame was drawn from all frontline officers at the NSSA Head office and Harare Regional Office. This is because that is where the largest population of frontline officers is, and this would be representative of the entire population. Frontline officers can be defined as those employees that get into contact with external customers on a daily basis as part of their job. At NSSA, these are Compliance Inspectors, OSH Inspectors, Credit Control Officers, PR Officers and Nurses.

These officers are at a total of 70, and the sample size was 35. De Paulo (2011) noted that a sample size of 30-50 participants for qualitative research was good enough to obtain the needed information. Failure to get a 100% response rate is due to the fact that Compliance Inspectors and OSH Inspectors had to carry out inspections in their designated zones.

Gender

Out of the 31 respondents, 18 were male and 13 female. There were different perspectives from both genders. The largest disparities were among OSH Inspectors, Compliance Inspectors and Credit Control Officers. OSH Inspectors had a male to female ratio of 7:2, Credit Control Officers have a male to female ration of 4:1 and Compliance Inspectors have a male to female ratio of 6:3. OSH Inspectors are Engineers by profession, Compliance Inspectors and Credit Control Officers are Accounting Professionals. The disparity between the two genders is due to the belief that more men than women are inclined towards science and maths subjects.

<u>Age</u>

15 respondents, who make up 48%, are Generation Y employees or Millennials and these make up the majority. 11 respondents are the Generation X and a minority of 5 respondents are the Baby Boomers. The study managed to capture different perspectives from these age groups so as to avoid a single narrative. These different age groups deal with occupational stress in different ways, therefore it was important to capture all these views.

<u>Length of Service</u>

The study categorized the length of service into 5 categories; less than a year, 2-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years and above 15 years. This was done so as to gather different views, and the respondents fell into all the categories. The most populated category is 6-10 years, constituting 61.3%. This means that respondents had gained several years of experience on the job, therefore their views were well informed. This is line with Kvale and Brinkman (2009) sentiments, "Since senior staff have been used to the same job requirements for a very long time, they are usually the best people to gather information from pertaining the organization,"

<u>Educational Qualifications</u>

Educational qualifications of respondents range from a National Diploma to Postgraduate Degree. 12.9% hold a Diploma, 77.4% hold an Undergraduate Degree and 9.7% hold Postgraduate Degree. This indicates that the respondents are highly literate therefore their views on the matter can be trusted.

4.3.5. <u>Causes of job stress for frontline officers.</u>

Respondents were asked to identify what they considered the major sources of job stress for frontline employees. The major causes that were picked are nature of job, high workload, economic uncertainties, difficult customers and work life imbalance.

Nature of job

9 Compliance Inspectors, 6 OSH Inspectors and 1 Nurse listed nature of job as a source of occupational stress. This is supported by Demerouti and Bakker (2011) who argue that because some jobs require sustained effort, these job demands are associated with physiological and psychological costs such as increased heartbeat and fatigue. They go on to say that these costs are likely to set the stage for the experience of burnout, because job demands lead employees to feel exhausted and to psychologically distance themselves from their work. NSSA's OSH Inspectors are Engineers by profession, and therefore experience stress that results from their jobs. They have the mandate to carry out tests on boilers and pressure vessels; to investigate occupational accidents as well as to inspect and commission factories, buildings, machinery and equipment. This comes with a lot of risks, such as constantly having to inspect some buildings and factories that are dangerous to be found in, as well as having to handle dangerous equipment. OSH Inspectors are also sometimes forced to manage a heavy wokload as well as work on weekends. Raja, Suhana, Mardhiah, Zuraidah, Norhasniza and Nzoririnah (2014) argued that Engineers are often faced with unmanageable loads and therefore this may interfere with their personal life. Working in the field is has also been noted to be stressful for these OSH Inspectors and Compliance Inspectors. They sometimes spend a lot of time working away from their families. Raja et al (2014) go on to argue that work-family conflict also grealty affect field workers' job satisfaction. Elshaer, Moustafa, Aiad and Ramadan (2018) argue that among health care workers, nurses have some of the most stressful duties because of the nature of their job. Nurses at NSSA treat workers who would have been injured at work. The nurse who took part in the study highlighted that she sometimes have to take care of patients who have been grossly injured and exhibiting depressive mood swings, and this makes the job stressful.

High workload

NSSA conducted a retrenchment exercise in late 2016, resulting in large gap in the Benefits and Compliance Departments. The Benefits Department is responsible for processing pensions for retired employees; when a worker retires, or becomes invalid the Benefits department ensures the worker and their dependents get the pension owed to them. When a member of the NSSA scheme dies, they must ensure that their dependents receive the pension. They keep records of pension beneficiaries and their dependents, and have to constantly update them. The Benefits

Clerks interviewed for this study highlighted that the workload is constantly mounting because they are fewer than they used to be. Alarcon (2011) noted that workload and work pressure are among the most important job demands that cause burnout. Hongxia, Yongbin, Shuicheng, Fen and Huan (2014) agreed with this notion when they discussed that characteristics of a job such as high woakload and high complexity produces pressures to employees. Frontline employees at NSSA have to deal with a heavy workload whilst simultaneously expected to deliver superb service.

Difficult Customers

11 respondents highlighted difficult clientele as one of the sources of job stress. This is supported by Zablah, Franke, Brown and Bartholomew (2012) who stated that, "Workers in frontline sales and service positions regularly participate in unscripted and challenging interactions with customers that strongly contribute to job stress and disengagement." There are times when customers get angry and agitated and these circumstances become stressful to the frontline officer. It is impossible to control the customer's behavior, therefore the frontline employee is constantly on the receiving end of a difficult encounter. Respondents highlighted that somethings are outside their control, and the customer may not understand this. It would be stressful to try and assist such a customer.

Work-life Imbalance

Conflict arises when an employee's work life interferes with their personal life and vice versa. 58% of the respondents indicated work-life conflict as one source of job stress. One's work life and personal life are interconnected and interdependent, and therefore there should be an effective balance between the two so that one aspect does not negatively affect the other. It has been noted by Borg and Riding (2011) that "occupational stress occurs when there is a discrepancy between the demands of the workplace and an individual's ability to carry out and complete those demands." It is crucial to note here that without effective work life balance techniques, job stress will always be apparent. If not properly managed, job stress will be manifest in ways that cannot be directly calculated, such as demoralization, reduced productivity, low motivation (Adams, 2007)

<u>Economic Insecurities</u>

All 31 respondents bemoaned the economic uncertainties in the country as a source of job stress. Economic uncertainties present a host of stressful situations such as erosion of pensions, job insecurities, and income not commensurate to cost of living. Masamba (2019) agrees with this notion when he stated that, "As a result of the hyperinflationary environment, workers in Zimbabwe who retire whenever the monetary regime is unstable are usually agonized with the pension income value destruction.

4.3.6. <u>The use of emotional labour in managing job stress.</u>

As part of their occupation frontline officers perform emotional labour. Emotional labour involves active strategies to modify, create, and alter the expression of emotions. Individuals do not always express their real feelings in social settings. Hochschild (1983) argued that individuals may learn to feel according to the situation cues, and strategically use their emotional expressions to achieve certain goals. Feelings do not erupt automatically, there are stressors that influence the eruption of emotion regulation. Frontline employees therefore have to modify their display of emotions either by surface or deep acting. A stressful situation influences whether a frontline officer attempts to modify feelings to match required display rules (deep acting), or forces employees to modify outward emotions without changing inner feelings (surface acting). Lewig and Dollard (2003) noted that employees can use the following emotion work strategies to manage job stressors; situation selection (choosing or avoiding certain situations), situation modification (physically changing the situation), attentional deployment (changing the focus of one's attention in the situation), and cognitive change (reappraising the situation so it is interpreted differently). The first two involve changing the situation, and the second two involve changing one's perception of the situation.

2 interviewed employees highlighted that they fake their emotions because of the negative perceptions they have about their employer. Psychological climate is defined as an employee's perception about an organization's events, practices, and procedures and the kind of behaviors that get rewarded, supported and expected. The psychological climate has many dimensions. The

concept of 'climate for service friendliness' refers to employee's perception that certain practices (which are adopted by the organization) are rewarding for being warm and friendly to the customers. Tsai and Huang (2002) found that psychological climate for service friendliness is positively related to displayed positive emotions. Grandey (2003) argued that deep acting is positively related to and surface acting is negatively related to the perception of the service delivery as friendly

17 respondents admitted to faking emotions (surface acting) in their line of duty when faced with stressful situations. This is when employees pretend to show emotions that are not felt. Zapf (2002) stated that in surface acting, employees try to manage the visible aspects of emotions that appear on the surface and which can be noticed by the interaction partner to bring them in line with organisation display rules while inner feelings remain unchanged.

3 respondents alluded to "faking" emotions when dealing with difficult customers, just so as to hasten the process. This is line with what Rafaeli and Sutton (1987) noted whey they argued that employees fake in bad faith because the employee wants to conform to display rules and keep their job, and not genuinely help the customer. Customer demand is the extent to which a transaction requires a prolonged and complex response from a service employee. It is positively related to the display of positive emotion during transactions with customers (Pugh, 2001; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1990; Tan et al, 2003). This supports the general assumption that employees use positive emotions to gain control over demanding customers

1 interviewed employee indicated that they try and sympathise with their elderly pensioners when assisting them. This is supported by Gross (1998) who noted that emotion regulation occurs when an individual modifies a situation or the perception of the situation in an attempt to alter her/his felt emotions (Gross, 1998).

4.3.7. <u>The effects of using emotional labour in managing stress.</u>

<u>Negative effects associated with surface acting</u>

Those who said that they felt they needed to fake their emotions noted that they felt even more stressed after doing so. This is supported by Grandey (2003) who noted that surface acting led to elevated stress levels. Several scholars have noted that the list of possible negative outcomes is extensive and supports the view that surface acting is associated with mostly negative outcomes. Shulei and Miner (2006) highlighted lowered self-authenticity; Abraham (1998) indicated role-person conflict; Hochschild (1983) noted increased depression; Austin, Dore and Donovan (2008) highlighted increased levels of burnout; and Brotheridge and Grande (2002) noted emotional exhaustion. Chung Lo and Huang (2017) argue that employees applying surface acting are not totally able to eradicate the effects of job pressures and demands. When surface acting is selected and used by employees, it would be difficult to expect that employees will attain absolute control by overcoming any underlying pressures and demands and possibly cause frustration at work. Surface acting will result in higher stress levels, and stress will actuate physiological processes acting to inhibit the emotion control process itself as well as the functioning of the immune system. Surface acting will lead to an impaired self-evaluation by surface actors, and depression in the long run, reducing motivation at work. The discrepancy between felt and expressed emotion is related to job stress and burnout. Researchers express that, surface acting is more likely to lead to emotional dissonance (Hochschild, 1983) and emotional exhaustion (Grandey, 2003) than deep acting. Consistent with the argument, Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) found that surface acting is linked to burnout and lower service performance. Hochschild (1983) argued that the effort to maintain a difference in feeling and feigning over the long run leads to strain, ultimately posing threats to the physical well-being of employees. Similarly, self-alienation may result when the worker ceases to recognize or even feel authentic emotions (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) argued that when employees' genuine feelings are masked, it decreases job satisfaction. Abraham (1998) proposed that increase in emotional dissonance reduces job satisfaction. Consistent to this argument, Chung and Huang (2017) found that the suppression of unpleasant emotions decreases job satisfaction and increases the intention to quit.

Positive effects associated with deep acting

Other respondents registered experiencing less stress when genuinely displaying emotions and feelings required. This is supported by Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) who noted that deep actors were on the easier side. They go on to say that employees who have adopted the strategy of deep acting will, by replacing their inappropriate emotions with those acceptable to the organization, reduce the risk of dichotomy of emotions felt and expected. Chen, Chang and Wang (2019) are of the view that deep acting decreases emotional dissonance by bringing feelings in line with expressions and organisational expectations. Therefore, deep acting is supposed to prevent exhaustion and stress. They go on to say that frontline employees may use DA with positive thinking to regulate their emotions, thus decreasing their depletion of emotional resources. Whilst surface acting is pretending to show emotions needed to satisfy customers, deep acting involves genuinely displaying and feeling those emotions. Staw et al. (1994) emphasized that service employees with positive emotions will be more successful in organizational life than employees with negative emotions. Updegraff, Gable, & Taylor, (2004) found that people with positive expectancies, not only experience more positive emotions over time, but also their overall sense of daily wellbeing is tied more to positive emotional experiences and less to negative emotional experiences. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) propose that emotional labor can increase self-efficacy of the employees and also increase personal wellbeing

Thus it can be noted that deep acting has a positive relationship with stress management.

4.4. Chapter Conclusion

This chapter was presenting the findings of the study and making an analysis. The response rate was 88.6 %, 31 out of the intended 35 participants took part in the study. 28 questionnaires were distributed and 24 were returned. 7 participants were interviewed. The study comprised of 9 Compliance Inspectors; 9 OSH Inspectors; 5 Credit Control Officers; 5 Benefits Clerks; 2 PR Officers and 1 Nurse. The main sources of job stress that were identified by the respondents are; economic uncertainties; work overload; nature of work; difficult customers; leadership style; and work-life imbalance. The uses of emotional labour in managing these stressors were identified as surface acting and deep acting through either faking emotions or regulating emotions so as to feel the appropriate positive emotions. The effects of using emotional labour in managing stress

were categorized as negative and positive. It was discovered that surface acting does not help in stress management and that deep acting is the technique that is required for stress management. The negative effects include emotional dissonance and exhaustion, burnout, health challenges which lead to more stress. The positive include improved sense of wellbeing; increased job satisfaction and decreased depletion of emotional resources. It therefore can be concluded that emotional labour can be used as a stress management technique if employees practice deep acting instead of surface acting.

5.0.   CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.0.   Introduction

The previous chapter presented and analysed the data collected. This final chapter will summarise the findings of the research. Recommendations to the National Social Security Authority will also be offered.

5.1.   Summary of Findings

The study set out to find the role of emotional labour in managing job stress for Frontline employees in a service industry, and the National Social Security Authority was used as the case study. Out of a total population of 70 frontline employees at the NSSA Head office and Harare Regional Office, a sample size of 35 participants was chosen. However, 31 employees managed to take part in the study, constituting a response rate of 88.6%. A qualitative research approach was used in order to get depth of the phenomena. The exploratory research design was employed because there has been little prior research on this topic. The first objective of this study was to identify the causes of job stress for frontline officers. The following were identified as the main causes of job stress; high workload; economic uncertainties; nature of work; difficult customers; leadership style; and work-life imbalance. The second objective was to examine the use of emotional labour in managing job stress. Some respondents alluded to faking emotions when faced with difficult customers, and others felt that they have to offer genuine help to clients so as to diffuse a stressful encounter. Surface acting was also noted to be used when dealing with management. The third objective was to examine the effects of using emotional labour in managing job stress. It was identified that surface acting, or faking emotions, was not ideal for stress management as it come with a host of negative effects which actually elevate stress levels. Deep acting, or regulating emotions so as to feel and portray the appropriate emotions, has been identified as the ideal stress management technique.

5.2.   Recommendations

5.2.1.   Stress Management Training

It is recommended that NSSA regularly conducts emotional Labour training for its frontline employees. This training can be incorporated into the induction and orientation programs so as to train new employees and cultivate a culture of stress management. Ongoing training programs should also be conducted. In implementing these, behavior modelling training has been reported to be "one of the most widely used and highly regarded psychologically based training interventions." (Chen et al, 2019). The procedure is comprised of modeling, role playing, social reinforcement, and transfer of training. To elaborate, employees are first shown good emotion management techniques, are asked to play employee-customer roles in simulated situation, and are then given feedback and praise by their supervisor or trainer. Targeting at new recruits, orientation programs are used to convey appropriate attitudes and display rules.

Training programs must also at focus on employees' feelings and well-being in order to provide the opportunity for employees to discuss their feelings and how to more effectively manage their emotions. Chu (2002) states that, "this would show the employees that the management is aware of and acknowledges the emotional contribution that they put into the jobs". By extension, employees' motivation and productivity on the job will be enhanced. Second, it provides the opportunity for employees to ventilate their negative emotions caused by their jobs. But more importantly, such training can develop in employees the ability to handle their anger and frustrations, and be able to realize that a difficult customer is not shouting at them but rather the organization. Hochschild (1983) put it in this manner, "If a passenger snaps at you and you didn't do anything wrong, just remember it's not you he is snapping at. It's your uniform; it's your role as a Delta flight attendant. Don't take it personally." The emphasis should be to help employees how to perform deep acting—the emotional labor technique that has been consistently reported to result in more favorable outcomes for employees (e.g., increased job satisfaction and decreased emotional exhaustion) and ' organizations alike (e.g., increased customer satisfaction and sincere hospitality). Chung and Huang (2017) propound the importance of integrating deep acting into training to carefully regulate the internal processes of emotional management so that external emotional expressions will appear to be more genuine and spontaneous. In addition, this type of training provides an excellent opportunity for employees to discuss their feelings and frustrations on their jobs, particularly when they are hurt or insulted by difficult guests. It should also be noted that such training should not be for front-line employees only but also for managers since the latter typically experience higher levels of emotional labor having to deal with both subordinates and customers (Chung and Huang, 2017). Stress management programs may adopt both emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping approach. The former approach is the steps taken by an employee to address and alleviate stressful feelings and emotions, whereas the latter refers to the actions taken directly with the source of stress.

5.2.2. Recruitment and Selection of right candidates

Selecting the right people for the job is crucial. NSSA can make use of aptitude and personality tests. In the context of a service industry, emotional intelligence tests would be relevant since it has been reported by McShane and Glinow (2010) that effective management of workplace emotions, particularly using deep acting technique, requires high levels of Emotional

Intelligence. This is because higher levels of Emotional Intelligence indicate greater ability to regulate emotions in oneself and in others. Exhibiting deep acting is a more difficult process that requires a lot of effort from employees to achieve. It is not surprising that Grandey (2000) cited that deep acting is commonly evident and practiced among emotionally mature employees. It is perhaps more important for NSSA to reconsider their employee training and development programs that can help improve the necessary skills to manage occupational stress.

5.3.   Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to explore if whether practicing emotional labour would help in the management of job stressors for frontline officers in a service industry. This research identified two facets of emotional labour, namely surface acting and deep acting, and their different implications on stress management. It was discovered that deep acting was effective in managing job stresses, whereas surface acting did not provide a positive outcome. This research also highlighted the major sources of job stress for frontline employees at National Social Security Authority which are economic uncertainties; work overload; difficult customers; nature of work; work-life imbalance and leadership style. Recommendations were also offered to NSSA, and these include implementing stress management training especially at induction of new recruits so as to socialize them; as well as the selection of emotionally mature individuals which can be done through aptitude tests and personality tests.

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