EMERALD P**O**INTS

EMOTIONAL SELF-MANAGEMENT IN ACADEMIA

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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Marilena would like to dedicate this book to George and her family. You are my strength.

Mark would like to dedicate this book to Sue, Gemma and Laura. Thank you for your unfailing love and support.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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INTRODUCTION

> ## Emotion self-management in academia: the story begins
>
> *Hi Marilena*
> *Are you in university today? I was just wondering if I could come and see you for a chat about my report as I am really struggling with it. Deadline is tomorrow and I'm panicking. It doesn't make sense to me and I've been in tears all weekend. I'd like you to see you please.*
> *Kind Regards,*
> *Poppy*
>
> *Dear Poppy,*
> *I'm sorry to hear you are facing difficulties with our report. I am teaching the master's students from 9 till 5 p.m., so I won't have much time today. I have my office hours tomorrow 2 p.m. till 3 p.m., so feel free to pop in and we can have chat.*
> *Best wishes*
> *Marilena*
>
> Office hours are like weekly birthday parties: students queuing outside your office, just to see you. It's your moment with them. They have taken time from their busy lives to come and visit you and only. They bring assignment drafts and lots of questions instead of gifts, but if that access hour is towards the end of Term they also bring chocolates and cute 'thank you' cards.
>
> As I was replying to another email, Poppy knocked my door the next day at 1: 54 p.m. 'Can I come in?' 'Sure come on in, take a sit' (*though I was kind of hoping I would click 'send' to that email first and clear my inbox*). With a trembling smile, Poppy sits next to me and tries to take out her laptop. 'How are you today Poppy?' And then there are about 5 seconds of silence with Poppy looking at me speechless. I could see her mouth and eyes trembling, so I knew what was coming. She immediately burst into tears 'I can't do it…. I can't… do… it…it'.

    I thought 'Here we go now…' I turned and passed on some tissues. I've learned now and always have a full box of tissues on my desk. If social media influencers have their own shoes/clothing sponsors, then all academics should be sponsored by Kleenex.
'Aww sweetie don't cry. Of course you can do it. You are capable, you are smart and strong.'
'Noooo I'm not. This is too much', Poppy said with a crying voice.
'Okay okay. Let's get serious about this. Stop crying and show me your draft'.

Poppy stops crying and shows me an electronic copy of her work. I spent about 3 minutes reviewing it, and in the meantime I'm correcting some grammatical and referencing errors.
'Poppy, this is a really good draft!' (*It wasn't*)
'Really?'
'Yes' (*Emmm… not exactly but*) 'In the time we have left, let's work on some aspects that will help the assignment strengthen its academic rigour.'

The door knocks.
'Hello', I shouted.
Another student, Wayne, comes in.
'Can I come in? I've got a few questions about the report' he said.
'Wayne, just give me a few minutes and I'll give you a shout once I've finished', I said.

An hour and 30 minutes later, I had seen around 7 students. Only two cried this time, apart from Poppy.
Then Timothy, my manager opens my office door 'Did you see my email?' he boomed.

'No, I haven't seen my emails for the past four hours, as I was teaching and then came straight here for my office hours. What's it about?'
'Em… okay. Well, Claire is off sick and she won't be able to do her class tomorrow. Could you cover her, and she will cover yours once she is back?'

Well… I'm sure I remember having worse days in the office.

SELF-MANAGING EMOTIONS: SETTING THE SCENE

Are academics self-managing their emotions? In today's inflexible, fast-paced, managerialist and more corporate Higher Education (HE), is there room for genuine emotional work? The increasing emphasis on the 'culture of the customer' in universities across the world, accompanied by rising student numbers, diversification of modes of delivery, high job insecurity, increased demands for efficiency and accountability, increased commercialisation, reductions in government funding and the move towards financial self-reliance

for institutions have led to a greater emphasis on the management of employees' emotional displays as a source of competitive advantage. The expression and display of workplace-desired emotional expectations during any interpersonal transactions now requires emotional effort by academics.

In an attempt to understand how such changes have impacted upon academics' roles, an increasing body of literature has emerged relating to the concept of their 'emotion management' and its dynamic, complex relationship with occupational health and well-being. While many conceptualisations of emotions at work exist, this book is primarily concerned with emotional *self*-management, a term used consistently in these pages to indicate an agent's capability to suppress, induce, regulate, juggle and synthesise personal emotions in order to meet with social norms, organisational feeling rules and self-determined objectives (especially the preservation of personal integrity and psychological health).

An important component of being and working in academia is emotion self-management, comprising both emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983) and emotion regulation more generally (Gross, 1998, 2014). This book seeks to give an overview of the relationship of working with emotions and well-being in the academic practice. More than three decades have passed since the publication of Arlie Hochschild's seminal book, 'The Managed Heart', where she argues that academics, in common with other professions, undertake substantial amounts of emotional labour. According to Hochschild (1983), emotional labour involves following certain prescriptions or 'feeling rules'. Academics learn these feeling rules through professional socialisation and explicit organisational or occupational codes of conduct. Those who do not, may be subject to poor evaluations, informal or formal sanctions, and, in extreme cases, termination of employment.

Emotional labour essentially involves workers displaying socially desired emotions during work regardless of congruence with their internal feelings. This concept has been primarily associated with forms of emotion effort that are paid. While there is empirical evidence that academic staff in HE perform all types of emotional labour, there has been little attempt to fully conceptualise the performance of academics' emotional labour efforts in a single book. Moreover, recent developments in the field, such as emotional boundaries – a concept that refers to conscious and automated processes by which workers shape their emotional 'space' between themselves and other people at work for purposes of psychological resource protection and personal growth (Charalambous, Zembylas, & Charalambous, 2016; Lee & Jang, 2019) – have not previously been fully explored in this context. Emotion self-management potentially covers all aspects of job-related emotion regulation. This means not only the exercise of

emotional labour as a work-related demand but also academics' use of strategies such as antecedent- and response-based regulation (Gross, 1998, 2014) to protect and maximise their well-being and functioning in their workplaces.

Thus, this book is concerned with deepening the understanding on individual human agency in the performance of emotional self-management in academia and how this, in turn, affects perceived well-being. It examines first-hand accounts of activities, events and interactions, in which academics engage in all types of emotional labour, emotion regulation and emotional boundaries and discusses its drivers, outcomes and implications. Specifically, the book is an exploration of emotional self-management in different aspects of academia, such as teaching (both inside and outside the classroom), support provision, supervision, research and administration, and reveals how expectations differ, also considering factors such as age, gender and years of experience in the profession.

Ashkanasy and Humphrey (2011, p. 219) argue that the study of how 'affective events' at individual 'micro' level influence a particular employee's attitudes and behaviour is important to our understanding of workplace emotions. Thus, the aim of the book, based on the relevant definitions of emotional phenomena provided by the literature (Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011; Bolton & Boyd, 2003; Hochschild, 1983; Stets, 2012) is to investigate the experience of academics' emotional self-management and self-perceived well-being. While the primary focus of this book is on emotional labour, it also places emphasis upon the emerging concept of emotion regulation and emotional boundaries (Hayward & Tuckey, 2011). This aspect of emotional regulation offers a promising avenue into how academics, as service providers in a corporatised academia, manage their interactions in ways to protect their personal resources.

Written by academics, the book re-examines Hochschild's notion of emotional labour and combines it with emotion regulation strategies and emotional boundaries as these are utilised into the everyday practices of modern academics. Using rich, dense accounts from academics working in the UK, US, Australia, Denmark, Greece and Cyprus, the book emphasises that it is emotion – complex, messy and opaque – that drives emotional self-management, as shaped by contextual factors, such as organisational climate. By understanding emotions in academia, which are fundamentally interactive and communicative, the book concludes that emotional self-management is intrinsically linked to personal and social identity. The main conclusion is that to be an academic involves a responsibility to include self-management within personal and professional activities. This innovative book is the first attempt in the form of a monograph to reflect experiences of emotion self-management in HE, since previous research has only been reflected in the form of journal

articles. A further contribution of the book is to propose a conceptual frame-
work of emotional self-management in the context of HE.

Thus, this book's aim is substantially different from that of other empirical
work, being underpinned by a preoccupation with each academic's idiographic
experiences of emotional self-management and the understanding of the
'particular and unique' in individual cases. It presents accounts of emotional
self-management based on academics' experiences and reflections, where an
increasing emphasis on marketisation has become embedded within everyday
academic practice. Uniquely, this book explores practices of emotion self-
management and offers experienced strategies that could assist other aca-
demics to cope with the damaging consequences of the concept. The next
chapter begins this process of understanding by examining the nature of
emotions and emotion self-management in academics.

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UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONS AND EMOTION (SELF-) MANAGEMENT

What do I do with my socially inappropriate emotions?
Mark Crowder

One morning in February, Henry came to my office hours. He said he wanted someone to talk him through what was needed for his assignment that was due for submission in three days' time and asked if I was one of the tutors on the unit.

He told me that he didn't need to go to any of the classes or do any of the assignment activities because he could catch up, but now here he was asking for help with three days to go. I was fuming! Firstly, he had been given the assignment in September (six months ago) but had left it to the last minute before deigning to look at it. Secondly, he did not know if I taught on the unit – I appeared on the unit web page and in the unit handbook, but moreover I was the unit leader and had delivered over half of the lectures! Clearly, he had made no attempt to engage with any of the unit material at all. To compound matters, he was rude and acted as though I was there to serve his every need. As we spoke, he was fiddling constantly on his phone and clearly wasn't paying attention to what I was saying.

Perhaps the reader can imagine what I wanted to say to him…

Of course, I had to keep my feelings hidden. Students must never know how I feel. It is not allowed, and I must remain impassive. Therefore, I bottled up what I really felt and helped the student the best I could within the time available. I remained professional and outwardly calm, even though inside I was boiling.

Issues such as these recur frequently throughout the academic year. Academics are people. We come to work, and we get affected by situations just like everyone else. The difference is that I cannot show my feelings, so what do I do with these frustrations? I bottle them up and keep them locked inside. They build up and up and I get more and more stressed. The smallest issues become magnified and

> become worrisome out of all proportion to the reality, and management need to be aware of the impact and they must be prepared to respond accordingly.
>
>   And Henry? What was the outcome? To ensure my feelings did not influence Henry's grade, and for reasons of objectivity, I made sure that his work was marked by other tutors on the unit. He failed and had to resubmit.

This chapter provides a conceptual background that helps to develop an understanding of academics' experiences of emotional management and how these may affect their perceived well-being.

HUMAN EMOTIONS AT WORK: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The study of emotions as sociological phenomena gained momentum with Hochschild's (2003) views on the social construction of emotions. She explained that two basic theoretical frameworks of emotion have emerged since the late nineteenth century: an 'organismic' model and an 'interactional' model. Darwin (1872) believed that emotional expressions are vestigial parts of our bodies and insisted on the continuity of adult human behavioural mechanisms as evidence of our evolution from the beasts and development from infancy. His work has contributed to the biological utility of emotional expression and the development of an evolutionary-expressive approach, suggesting that emotions provide crucial action readiness to safeguard the survival of individuals. From a psycho-evolutionary perspective, emotions are the body's reactions to the basic problems of survival, which have been genetically etched into us over thousands of years of development (Plutchik, 1980). Evolutionary hints can even be found in the arguments of cognitive-appraisal theorists (e.g. Lazarus, 1991), claiming that emotions provide information that is essential to survival. For example, the emotion of anger may have biological underpinnings and an evolutionary history, which plays an important role in adaptive human functioning (Jenkins & Oatley, 1996).

Freud (1915) categorised emotions as primarily instinctive neurobiological processes or 'libidinal discharges', believing that emotion was a personal, instinctual and largely fixed biological process of the human body. Freud was preoccupied with the obstacles to psychological health represented by the existence and management of pathological emotions, being unconcerned with the possibility of emotions being socially influenced or constructed. Essentially, Freud regarded emotions as being states of mind we are conscious of through