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Managerial Emotionality in Chinese Factories

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Abstract

Managerial emotion may be experienced and handled differently when reason and emotion are understood to be continuously (e.g., Eastern cultures) rather than dichotomously (e.g., Western cultures) related. Using a social constructionist perspective, this study investigated emotionality among directors from 48 different factories in the People's Republic of China. Social, moral, and material/economic situations were identified as sources of pleasant and unpleasant managerial emotional experience. Thought-feeling continuities were identified in how the managers described their emotional experiences. Both pleasant and unpleasant emotions were experienced very intensely and were managed in ways that both conformed to and departed from cultural ideals. Managerial emotions appeared to be best handled by thinking through them rather than by venting or suppressing them.

Organizing forces act on human emotions just as they act on information, work flow processes, and other sources of energy in work settings. Indeed, organizing emotional experience and expression can be seen as an additional means of control over employee conduct and communication (Fineman, 1993; Hearn, 1993; Parkin, 1993; Putnam & Mumby, 1993). Even though organizations and individuals interact to socially construct emotions, organizations typically use significant power resources to manage how employees personally control their emotions (Hochschild, 1983). When employees display or suppress feelings simply because of management dictates, their feelings have been appropriated by the organization for instrumental ends (Putnam & Mumby, 1993). Within the United States, self-estrangement and emotional numbness are possible negative consequences of managing emotion in the service of organizations (Hochschild, 1983; VanMaanen & Kunda, 1989).

This investigation seeks to further our understanding of organizational emotionality in two ways. First, it takes a cross-cultural approach by examining emotionality in factories

within the People's Republic of China. Such an approach is warranted because of differences in how Western and Eastern cultures view emotion. A Western worldview conceives of emotion and reason as distinct processes and tends to judge emotion as an impediment to rationality (Putnam & Mumby, 1993). In China, emotions are understood as natural or biological experiences that are connected to reasoning processes not necessarily subordinate to them (Sun, 1991; Wong, 1991). The construction and consequences of emotion management may be different when emotion and reason are conceived of as continuous processes rather than as being in conflict with each other.

Second, it is necessary to expand the scope of emotionality inquiry to better understand how organizational power and status affect the nature of emotion work (Wouters, 1989). This study examines emotionality among high-level, male managers of organizations. It has been suggested that men in organizations (Hearn, 1993) and other high-status members of society (Hochschild, 1983) do considerable emotion work. However, research has yet to systematically explore these claims. The majority of emotion research conducted in the United States focuses on lower level, frontline workers employed in the service sector (e.g., Hochschild, 1983; Sutton, 1991; Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988; Tolich, 1993). Much remains to be learned about the emotional experiences of high-level managers and the kinds of emotion work they do. Moreover, a managerial heart shaped by Chinese socialism and more traditional Chinese values may differ from one shaped by Western capitalism and commercialization (Hochschild, 1983; Wouters, 1989). In the West, a managed heart is one that is bought and sold in exchange for displaying a range of emotions that may differ from personal feelings but that are considered necessary to accomplish organization goals (Hochschild, 1983). Whether feelings are commercialized in the same ways and with the same effects among managers in China requires further exploration.

This study uses a social constructionist perspective on emotionality. A social constructionist assumes that emotional experience and expression are socioculturally constituted and sustained (Armon-Jones, 1986). What it means to experience and express emotion is best understood as both occur within and sustain a larger social and moral order (Harré, 1986). Although recent forms of social constructionism acknowledge the existence of some physiological dimension to emotional response, theorists still maintain that the meaning of emotional experience and expression can be understood only as a sociocultural construction (Oatley, 1993; Waldron, 1994). For the social constructionist, emotions are felt mainly in relationship to others (Kemper, 1981).

The cross-cultural study of emotionality is particularly well suited to the use of a social constructionist approach because "each culture has patterns of emotions that are somewhat distinctive, that derive from societal practices, and that convey meanings and effects to members of that culture" (Oatley, 1993, p. 341). Thus, to a great extent, cultural values are expected to shape and sustain what constitutes emotional experience as well as to regulate its appropriate expression. For instance, the cultural value of relational interdependence versus autonomy is expected to affect the types of emotional experiences encountered as well as the ways in which various emotions are expressed (Heelas, 1986; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Whereas perceived threats to autonomy may evoke anger among those who value independence, those who value relational interdependence may not even experience such threats, much less anger, in response to them (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Emotion can be best understood only within the context of a particular linguistic community. For instance, Western language reflects a clear conceptual separation between matters related to thinking and feeling. The Chinese term *xin* (heart), however, reflects a unitary concept of mind-heart rather than a bifurcation between the two (Sun, 1991). In Chinese, one often thinks as well as feels with *xin*. Instead of understanding and talking about rationality and emotionality as separate processes, the Chinese understand reasoning to be emotive. Emotion is thought to play a legitimate role in motivating action and in guiding how people ought to act in relation to others (Wong, 1991). In relating to others, *rationality* means to understand social propriety and to conform publicly with this understanding (Chen, 1993). Similarly, to *have a heart* means to deliberate for another party in a relationship (Sun, 1991). Descriptions of emotional experience in China should reflect an understanding of emotion and thought as continuous processes.

Guided by the assumptions of social constructionism, this study examines the events that trigger positive and negative emotional experience among high-level factory directors in the People's Republic of China. Further, it explores the nature of their emotional experiences, as well as their understandings of the ideal ways to manage pleasant and unpleasant emotional experiences in their organizations.

Literature Review

Chinese Culture and Emotionality

Understanding emotionality in China is complicated and enriched by an array of slightly different interpretations. However, all of these take as their starting point a strong relationship between the self and a larger social group. According to Chinese thought, human life is realized in the collective. Beginning in childhood, the family teaches its members certain ideals such as loyalty, obedience, and filial piety within a role-bound network. Within the family unit, children learn to maintain harmony by restraining themselves and overcoming their individuality (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). The family and its values appear to serve as the prototype for all social organizations (Chen & Chung, 1994).

Thus, an individual is not a system with clearly defined boundaries (Adler, Campbell, & Laurent, 1989). Instead, one is made whole only by the exchange of hearts with other people; one is completed within a matrix of many others (Sun, 1991). Viewing the self in this way does not imply that the self is lost in the group or systematically weakened by cultural programming over time. Instead, the self is deepened through connection with significant others. The self is construed as the center of relationships rather than as an autonomous unit, and through these relationships individual and spiritual development occur (Chang & Holt, 1991; Tu, 1985).

From this interdependent view of self, several interpretations of Chinese emotionality emerge. One view intimates that the Chinese learn to neutralize inner feeling and to restrain its overt expression to maintain face and group harmony (Bond, 1986). Cultural rules prescribe avoiding the expression of negative feelings and toning down the expression of positive ones. Emotionality is expected to be diffused into less intense channels or otherwise sidetracked from its direct target. In general, individuals subdue their emotions as they perform their "duty" within a human network (Sun, 1991).

Getting in touch with and expressing inner feelings is relatively unimportant to self and relational development in China (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Sun, 1991). A cultural emphasis on group conformity stresses the importance of expressing overt behavior that develops and maintains harmonic relationships with others rather than expressing inner feelings (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Under these conditions, the inner experience of emotion is less relevant to constructing and maintaining the collective than is an openly expressed willingness to adapt to the group (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Sun, 1991). Although independent selves may feel inauthentic when acting inconsistently with their inner feelings, interdependent selves are less likely to be guided by their inner feelings and less troubled if their outer actions contradict their inner emotional experience (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In fact, such inconsistencies may even be viewed as an opportunity, for it is only through the process of being sensitive and responsive to others that self-realization, life's ultimate purpose, can be achieved (Tu, 1985). For the Chinese, acting consistently with one's inner feelings can undermine the relationships that give both the individual and a group their identity and sense of security (Hu & Grove, 1991). An inability or unwillingness to adapt to group expectations results in a loss of face that embarrasses oneself, others, and disrupts the group's stability (Hu & Grove, 1991).

In addition, in China, although the "warmth of human feeling" is likely to prevail in relation to relatives, friends, and connections, sudden emotional outbursts can occur when faced with less familiar individuals (Sun, 1991, p. 21). Thus, emotion management may intensify when relating to in-group as compared to out-group members. As was mentioned previously, maintaining face within interconnected groups is of great importance to the Chinese. The same degree of importance is not placed on maintaining harmonious out-group relationships, which some have described as "coldblooded" rather than "warmhearted" (Chang & Holt, 1991). In-group harmony is maintained by restraining anger and communicating in other ways that avoid conflict (Hu & Grove, 1991). Practicing emotional restraint with interconnected others is construed as part of a spiritual journey, as a way to cultivate oneself in relation to others (Tu, 1985). In such cases, emotion is not so much suppressed and made unconscious as it is recognized but transcended as one moves toward the ultimate goal of self-realization.

This approach to emotion management also stresses the importance of reciprocity and of cultivating good feelings as a social resource in relationships. Reciprocity involves not doing to others what you would not want done to you and being happy when others are happy and sad when others are sad. Here again, individual development results from and is required to maintain harmonious in-group relationships that are guided by human feeling (Chang & Holt, 1991). In this sense, human feeling is managed instrumentally to ensure smooth interaction, to maintain face with in-group members, and to assist in achieving one's personal goals (Chang & Holt, 1991).

Finally, because the Chinese are more likely to have developed an interdependent sense of self, they might experience and express more other-focused emotions (e.g., sympathy, shame).¹ Those with more autonomous self-construals are socialized to experience and express more ego-focused emotions (e.g., anger, frustration, pride) (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Available research (e.g., Stipek, Weiner, & Li, 1989) lends some support to this reasoning. For instance, when asked to describe a situation that caused them to feel angry,

Chinese students described something happening to another as a cause of their anger significantly more often than did American students. American students described situations in which something happened to them as a cause of anger significantly more often than did the Chinese.

To summarize, the practice of emotional restraint among the Chinese is strongly motivated by face concerns, the ideal of spiritual development, and the instrumental need to attain goals, all within an interconnected web of relationships. Further, the Chinese may be more likely to report experiencing other-focused rather than self-focused emotions.

Chinese Management and Emotionality

There is less literature on managerial emotionality than there is on emotionality in Chinese society in general. It is widely accepted though that "people build organizations according to their values, and societies are composed of institutions and organizations that reflect the dominant values within that culture" (Hofstede, 1984, p. 81). Chinese managers most likely conform to cultural expectations regarding the importance of exercising emotional restraint and conveying emotional neutrality (Trompenaars, 1993). In fact, as occupants of high-level, administrative positions, the pressure to restrain emotional expression may be intensified. China has been described as "permanently bureaucratic" (Balazs, 1964), which implies a preference for rationality and impersonal detachment both of which are designed "to prevent the personal feelings of officials from distorting their rational judgment in carrying out their duties" (Blau, 1970, p. 142). Indeed, according to LuK'un, "superior men control their emotions and observe the rules" (in Yang, 1959, p. 148).

Like all bureaucracies, the Chinese version departs from the modern, rational ideal in ways that could provoke managerial emotional experience. For instance, with the institution of economic reforms and the shift to a factory director responsibility system,² managers are more responsible than ever before for seeing to it that their factories are profitable. Frequently though, they lack traditional forms of authority that might be necessary to maintain or increase production levels. For instance, factory directors often are unable to discipline or terminate problem workers. Moreover, they cannot always rely on technically efficient or effective production processes. And, they quite often worry about the occurrence of natural disasters such as fires within their facilities (Krone, Garrett, & Chen, 1992). A potential mismatch between increasing levels of responsibility and levels of authority and control may be a significant source of worry and stress for factory directors in China today. In addition, the shift from a planned to a market economy (see Child, 1994) is challenging managers to consider the use of more participatory leadership styles (see Krone, Chen, & Xia, in press). The scope and rate of change in Chinese manufacturing organizations is most likely emotionally demanding. Managers may be experiencing a broader range of emotion with greater levels of intensity than ever before. At the same time, traditional cultural values grounded in Confucianism (Yang, 1959) and concerns for face (Redding & Ng, 1982) restrain the expression of emotion that potentially could be divisive. Economic and social forces may be intersecting in ways that intensify the need for emotion work among high-level managers in China.

Shaped by Confucian values, Chinese bureaucracy emphasizes the virtue of *li* (correct behavior), or the need to conform to principles of behavior appropriate to one's role in a

social hierarchy. In fact, behaving in ways that maintain the proper social arrangement of people is a way to achieve the "Great Peace" (Yang, 1959). Rather than maintaining impersonal relationships with subordinates, superiors in a social hierarchy are expected to look after and educate those whom they outrank. Thus, factory directors relate somewhat paternalistically to their employees and work diligently to maintain a harmonious system of social relations that sustains this understanding of hierarchy. To do so, they "must be grave in stance, steadfast in purpose, gentle in expression, calm in emotion, brief and precise in speech, kind in heart, courageous and persistent in ambition, and discreet in official secrets" (Yang, 1959, p. 139). Chinese managers demonstrate character and virtue by relating to employees with a subdued kindness. In a recent study, managers from the People's Republic of China scored significantly higher on Confucian work dynamism than other cultural groups (Ralston, Gustafson, Elsass, Cheung, & Terpstra, 1992). Confucian work dynamism stresses the importance of maintaining the social hierarchy and displaying virtue by practicing moderation in all things, acquiring skills and education, working hard, being thrifty, and demonstrating patience and perseverance. Losing one's temper is taboo (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). Confucian values elevate the practice of emotional restraint to a managerial virtue and an opportunity to express and further develop mature character.

In addition, Chinese bureaucracy departs from the modern ideal in that not all employees are treated uniformly according to an impersonal system of rules and regulations (Redding & Ng, 1982). Face concerns can motivate favoritism and personalistic treatment of employees both of which undermine the Western, bureaucratic assumptions of rationality. For instance, a supervisor may need to restrain criticism of an employee because of a face obligation to a third party who had been a sponsor of this particular employee (Redding & Ng, 1982). Any single manager-employee relationship does not stand alone but rather is nested within a web of relationships. The need to practice emotional restraint is intensified in face-connected relationships through which high-level managers achieve instrumental organizational goals (Chang & Holt, 1991). Preliminary evidence shows that compared to those in the West, members of Eastern organizations place a great deal of importance on maintaining face and tend to honor face concerns by communicating in ways that avoid offending others and embarrassing oneself in the process. A loss of self-face is associated with feelings of shame, whereas feelings of satisfaction and pride are reported to follow from face-gaining episodes (Redding & Ng, 1982). Thus, having been socialized to conduct themselves in an appropriately superior fashion, upper-level managers in Chinese organizations may be even more deeply motivated by face concerns and the need to demonstrate emotional restraint.

This research is designed to explore further the nature of the managerial heart in China. To do so, the following research questions are posed:

Research Question 1: What triggers positive and negative emotional experience for Chinese factory directors?

Research Question 2: How is a continuous relationship between rationality and emotionality expressed in their descriptions of emotional encounters?

Research Question 3: What types of feelings do Chinese managers report experiencing during positive and negative emotional encounters?

Research Question 3a: How do their reports of feelings conform to or depart from the cultural ideal?

Research Question 3b: How intensely are their positive and negative feelings experienced?

Research Question 4: How do managers describe the best way to handle positive and negative emotional situations in their factories?

Method

The Participants and Their Factories

Forty-eight executive directors and deputy executive directors from factories in the People's Republic of China participated in this research. The respondents were members of two successive trade delegations visiting Columbus, Ohio, to participate in business meetings with central Ohio companies. Permission to conduct this study was secured from the Chinese State Council of Mechanical and Electrical Products, via the Sino-Ohio Center. Because China traditionally has been a male-dominated society, the majority of business managers also has been male. Likewise, all of the participants in our study were male and had held their current positions for 4 months to 21 years. They ranged from 29 to 55 years of age with an average age of 44 years. Their levels of education varied: 8% had completed vocational school training, 8% had completed high school, 44% had completed technical college, and 38% had completed college. Only 2% had completed a postgraduate education. The factories ranged in size from 50 to 38,000 employees and manufactured an array of small products including tools, locks, watch casings, and watches. Fifty-eight percent of the factory directors reported that they had the authority to hire, and 29% reported that they had the authority to terminate workers.

Procedures

Our use of a social constructionist perspective required that we avoid as much as possible forcing our preconceived ideas of organizational emotionality on respondents from China. In addition, research indicates that there could be as much variability within groups of Chinese as there is between the Chinese and other national cultures (Adler et al., 1989; Ralston et al., 1992). For these reasons, we asked the research participants a series of open-ended questions concerning an emotional encounter at work (see the appendix). Half of the managers responded to questions concerning a positive emotional experience, whereas the remaining half responded to questions regarding a negative one. All of the respondents were asked to describe the emotional event and the feelings that they experienced during the encounter and to rate the intensity level of the emotions they experienced. In addition,

they were asked to explain how emotional situations like the one they had described would best be handled in their organizations.

A back-translation procedure was used to prepare the questionnaire (Brislin, 1970). One of the researchers completed the first translation from English to Chinese and noted that, with the exception of two terms, the text of the questionnaire allowed adequate word-to-word translation. The two terms requiring some adjustment were the adjectives *negative* and *positive* when used to modify the term *emotion*. The phrases "negative emotion" and "positive emotion" had no equivalent translations in Chinese. It was necessary to use the terms *unpleasant bad feeling* and *pleasant/good feeling* instead and to include clarifying terms following each. The Chinese version of the questionnaire was then translated back into English by a native Chinese research assistant and compared with the original version for accuracy. The results were judged to be satisfactory in that the initial and the final versions of the questionnaire were almost identical.

Questionnaires were administered to two successive delegations of factory directors (24 participants in each group) following a training session on cross-cultural managerial communication. The training program was conducted by the researchers in exchange for the managers' participation in the study. Following both survey administrations, the Chinese responses were translated back into English. A bilingual research assistant and one of the researchers who is a Berlitz-certified, English-Chinese translator worked together to complete this process. When necessary, they discussed their interpretations of the managers' responses until both agreed on the final translation.

Data Analysis

A combination of orientational and inductive interpretive methods (Patton, 1990) was used to analyze our data. Data analysis began with several readings of the managers' responses to our questions (Lindlof, 1995). After several readings of the data, it became clear that many managerial emotional experiences were triggered by violations or confirmations of the social and moral order. Because social constructionism suggests that emotion would be experienced under these conditions (at least in the West), both concepts were judged to have continued relevance to our study (Lindlof, 1995) and were used to guide an orientational, qualitative analysis of the Chinese data (Patton, 1990). Emotional experience rooted in the *social order* involved those instances in which managers perceived coworkers as behaving appropriately or inappropriately given their proper place in the social and organizational hierarchy. Emotional experience grounded in the *moral order* involved managerial perceptions that employee conduct was conforming to or violating an ethical code of honor. This type of experience went beyond judging behavior as simply socially appropriate or inappropriate. It involved the perception that a coworker had behaved in a way that revealed either bad or particularly virtuous character.

Although social and moral conditions were used as sensitizing concepts in our analysis (Patton, 1990), additional sources of emotional experience emerged from our review of the data. An adequate and accurate representation of the data set required that we also examine emergent sources of emotional experience, namely, perceived threats to or confirmations of a *material order* and an *economic order*.³ Managerial emotional experience triggered by the material order involved incidents related to product quality, production processes,

securing adequate goods for production, filling orders, and meeting production quotas. Emotional experience rooted in an economic order included incidents related to the management of income or expenditures. It involved the production, distribution, and consumption of wealth, and the satisfaction of the material needs of the people. Thus, our analysis of Research Question 1 was orientational in that, consistent with social constructionism, we located examples of emotional experience that were rooted in both social and moral circumstances. However, it also was inductive in that emotional experiences grounded in material and economic circumstances were identified as having emerged from the managers' descriptions.

To determine if what we saw as emergent sources of emotional experience were themes as opposed to idiosyncratic examples, three researchers independently classified 25% of the managers' emotional event descriptions. Ratings were compared and adjustments were made in the coding scheme. Because material and economic forces were so closely related in managers' descriptions of their emotional experiences, we decided that it would not be meaningful to code for each separately. All four researchers then categorized each emotional event description for the presence of social, moral, and/or material/economic forces. Intercoder reliability was calculated using a special chi-square that takes into consideration the level of agreement among multiple coders as well as the number of categories in the coding system (Weider-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1984). Results indicated that intercoder agreement was not significantly different from a perfect agreement, $X^2(2, N = 315) = 2.82, p > .20$. A total of 14 ratings were discussed to reach a final coding agreement. In the event of an even split, the ratings of the native Chinese researcher were weighted more heavily.

A combination of orientational and inductive methods also was used to analyze the remaining research questions. Our analysis of Research Question 2 was oriented by the expectation that the managers' emotion event descriptions somehow would reflect thought and feeling as continuous processes. At the same time, we had few, if any, preconceived ideas as to how thought-feeling continuity might appear in their descriptions. Research Question 3 was addressed by simply identifying the types and frequencies of emotion terms present in the managers' descriptions of how they felt during the event. Research Question 3a was addressed more inductively by reexamining the event descriptions for examples that both conformed to and departed from the cultural ideal. Research Question 3b was addressed by calculating average responses to a single Likert-type item (1 = *very strongly affected*, 5 = *very weakly affected*). Averages were calculated for the level of emotional intensity experienced during pleasant encounters, unpleasant encounters, and for the entire group. Finally, an inductive analytic approach was used in the course of addressing Research Question 4. Following multiple readings of the data, themes were identified in managers' responses concerning the best ways to handle pleasant and unpleasant emotional situations in their factories.

Results and Discussion

Events Triggering Managerial Emotion

Research Question 1 was posed to learn more about the sources of pleasant and unpleasant managerial emotional experience in China. Threats to and confirmations of the social order were the most frequent source of managerial emotional experience (88%), followed by material and economic matters (71%) and then moral circumstances (44%). Emotional experience rooted in social matters involved a manager's perception that an individual or unit had behaved appropriately or inappropriately given their place within the social/organizational hierarchy. The following experience illustrates how unpleasant emotion was rooted in an assistant factory director's relationship with his director whom he perceived to be undermining his efforts and perhaps even competing with him, rather than behaving in a more appropriate superior fashion:

I had just got to my first job after college. I worked very hard and was highly appreciated by the employees and the management so that after only a little more than 2 years I was promoted from an ordinary technician to the factory's deputy director. And then something happened. The director of the factory, my superior, because I would not obey him all the time at work and often expressed different opinions, started to change his attitude towards me. He started to spread distorted facts about me to those above and below (up to the government supervising company and down to the cadres and masses), attacking me by saying that black is white. For example, he sent me to investigate something about an employee, then had me report back to him everything I found out and then dealt with it according to his decision. But when that employee found out, he was very displeased and the director would shift the blame to me as the investigator and say that if he had been the investigator, things would be different. It was the same situation when he reported to the government supervising company. Whenever there were problems that came up because he told someone to do something, he would say it was my decision. Therefore, I was very angry. (Manager A7)⁴

It could very well be that the assistant factory director's visible displays of competence, ambition, and intellectual independence were threatening to the factory director, who then engaged in what appears to be a chain of retaliatory responses, perhaps to restore his own face as director. Indeed, this emotional experience may be rooted in both parties' struggle to maintain face. Neither may feel that the other is behaving in an appropriately subordinate or superior fashion. In attempting to discredit his subordinate's reputation inside and outside the organization, this factory director appears vindictive at worst and, at best, insensitive to the face needs of his subordinate. Either would be considered inappropriate to the cultural expectations that managers should be even tempered (Hofstede & Bond, 1988) and attentive to the face needs of their subordinates (Redding & Ng, 1982). The presence of this type of incident also may illustrate the kinds of tensions present in a system that is attempting to balance economic change with social/cultural stability. Educated, ambitious,

and free-thinking employees can be important to the financial success of a business organization, but they simultaneously might be perceived as threats to the stability of the traditional, social hierarchy.

Whereas unpleasant emotion often was grounded in the perception that coworkers had violated the formal requirements of their social place, pleasant managerial emotion was grounded in the perception that employees had responded to threats to the social status quo in ways that confirmed and supported it. The following manager describes a pleasant emotional experience that exemplifies this pattern:

In one of the workshops, there are some problems with regard to the bonuses for performance. There are a lot of talks about that; someone even went to the factory director [this respondent]. I called the manager of that shop to come to my office and I asked him about this whole thing. The workshop manager said "I will take care of this matter. You don't need to worry about it." Fifteen minutes later, employees have come to an understanding about this matter and they call me about it saying that the manager has solved the problem for them. (Manager A15)

That disgruntled employees would circumvent their own supervisor and directly confront the factory director concerning salary issues constitutes some disruption to the workings of the organizational/social hierarchy. However, the workshop manager's reassuring and cooperative verbal response to the factory director, his ability to manage the situation to everyone's satisfaction, and the employees' willingness to take the time to let the factory director know that their manager had solved the problem all serve to sustain and legitimate the existing hierarchical arrangements. Pleasant managerial emotion is evoked by demonstrations of everyone's willingness to solve problems by smoothly navigating their way through the socially prescribed web of relationships.

A little less than half of the managerial emotion events were grounded in perceived violations or affirmations of the moral order. Demonstrations of especially bad or good character were numerically less frequent but striking sources of managerial emotion. The following event illustrates an unpleasant emotional experience triggered by one manager's perception that a violation of the moral order had occurred:

One afternoon, an employee came to my office. He told me that his daughter [who works in the same factory] was ill because of his workshop manager. Now he wanted to avenge him. I persuaded him to wait until we found out everything and then management would talk to that person on his behalf in order to find a solution. [I told him] "Don't try to take revenge before we find out about the truth. We should settle this according to the laws." He went out and immediately beat up the son of the manager and also hurt the mediator of his workshop. Then he came to my office again claiming that he had hurt the above two persons. This person was so irrational and would not be persuaded. Before he found out what really happened, he resorted to irrational actions which also violated the factory's regulations. I was very angry. (Manager B9)

Managerial anger is triggered in response to an employee who acts on his intense feelings rather than thinking them through to a more harmonious solution. He behaves irrationally by blatantly disregarding his manager's attempts to help him calm himself and resorts instead to the use of physical violence, which disrupts relationships with his workshop manager and mediator. If this employee has applied thought to his feelings, he has done so in a way that has intensified rather than neutralized them. He has behaved irrationally by disregarding his supervisor's advice, the factory's formal disciplinary procedures, and the more implicit rules regarding the appropriate management of emotion. It is this publicly demonstrated lack of emotional restraint that seems to push this incident beyond a mere violation of the social order into the moral realm. Had this employee been able to restrain himself emotionally under admittedly provocative circumstances, he would have been cultivating the formation of good character (Tu, 1985). Employees can regain their own emotional equilibrium by thinking through upsetting situations and understanding that harmonious solutions will emerge from the collection and use of information and trusting upper level officials to do the right thing. In learning to temper and subdue strong emotional responses to others, employees affirm the importance of the larger social order, reinforce their own roles within it, and develop themselves both individually and spiritually (Chang & Holt, 1991; Tu, 1985).

Conversely, the following manager reports pleasant feelings in response to his observation that a coworker transcended their own strained relationship and expended extraordinary effort on behalf of the factory:

For some reason, the relations between a colleague and I are not very satisfactory. In the winter of '88, some products had to be dispatched on time with good quality and the correct quantity, otherwise we would be fined. At that time, the raw materials were in shortage and the time was pressing. Under the difficult circumstances, this colleague of mine tried everything and even gave up some sleep to make a special trip to buy the material in need. Then he worked with the workers day and night until they finished the job 1 day ahead of time. I felt that this colleague was really a good person, showing great concern for the factory and for our collective. He is earnest and serious about his work and taking the interest of the whole into account. (Manager A17)

If this employee had behaved consistently with his inner feelings toward the director (as revealed by this manager's comment that "the relations between a colleague and I are not very satisfactory"), it is unlikely that he would have made a special trip to buy needed materials or worked with others day and night to finish a job. By overcoming his less than satisfactory relationship with this manager and being responsive to the factory's needs instead, the employee demonstrated good moral character (Tu, 1985). His willingness to live with the inconsistency between his inner feelings and his outer actions helps to maintain the group's identity and stability (Hu & Grove, 1991). And, in doing so, this employee further develops his own character (Tu, 1985). Such displays of good character conform to and sustain the dominant moral order and were a source of pleasant feelings for this manager.

Many of these managers' emotional experiences were rooted in threats to or affirmations of the material/economic order. Material and economic circumstances were frequent sources of unpredictability that factory directors needed to manage. As directors of state-owned enterprises, they still are dependent on state planning agencies that, at any moment, can legislate actions that affect a factory's profitability. In addition, they are attempting to manufacture products that will be competitive in global markets. It also was clear that material and economic emotional experience unfolded for these managers in ways that intersected with social practices. All employees in Chinese factories wrestle with unwieldy material circumstances, and they either overcome these obstacles or account adequately or inadequately for not having done so. The following example illustrates how unpleasant emotional experience unfolds in response to a material disruption that not only threatens the factory's financial well-being but possibly the manager's face as well:

One afternoon in August of this year, because of power outages, the generators were all operating to keep the important departments working and the uninterrupted functions going. After a while, the generators all stopped. I called to find out what was wrong, and the power supply department reported that they were running out of oil. I was extremely angry at that moment. (Manager A1)

A material failure such as this clearly threatens the factory's ability to meet its production quotas. And, because factory directors are held more accountable than ever before for their factories' financial success (Chamberlain, 1987; Walder, 1989; Warner, 1991), it is understandable that this manager would experience anger in response to the power supply department's failure to maintain an adequate supply of oil. At the same time, this department's failure to convincingly account for why they had run out of oil also fails to honor the manager's face. In this case, an unpleasant managerial emotional experience is prompted by the material disruption of running out of oil combined with an employee's face-threatening social oversight.

Interdependence with other units also serves as a source of material and economic constraint in the following manager's explanation of his unpleasant emotional experience:

Not long ago I attended a business meeting for exporters at a hotel in Ji County, Tianjing. In the meeting, the general director of the headquarters of the Import and Export Company proposed that all the big money-losing products have to lower their price. Among them, some of our products have to decrease their price by 5% to 10%. Then I spent the whole night talking with the director about this. We still couldn't solve the problem. We still have to lower the price. He told me "your factory has to reduce prices the least; the other factories have to reduce even more." I was very concerned and worried about this, because Tianjing port is the big exporting outlet for our factory. This move would directly reduce our factory's profit by half a million yuan. (Manager A4)

The above manager clearly is unhappy about the directive to lower their product prices. Interdependent units within and external to their factories sometimes act in ways that constrain these managers' abilities to be successful and are sources of unpleasant emotional experience. But, as the following quotes will show, material and economic interdependence with other units also are sources of pleasant managerial emotional experience.

The factory started the director responsibility system and the management has proposed specific goals for the organization. I had the full support of my subordinate and all employees. There is good coordination between departments and all of the employees. Whenever we successfully fulfilled our plans, accomplished our goals, I would be in the best mood and high spirits. This factory has the director propose annual plans to be discussed by employees of every sector and department. This would then be widely discussed and finally decided on as preliminary goals of that year. After it was passed, it would be distributed to various departments for implementation. By the end of the year, we make an assessment and annual summary to commend whoever fulfilled the plan and punish those who did not. As long as the plans and goals are consistent to the practical situation of our factory, we will be able to not only accomplish the task given to us by the state but also bring actual benefits to employees. When this comes true, because of the *joint efforts of all employees* [italics added], I realize that our employees are capable people, technicians and management personnel are well qualified, and that we are able to develop our production successfully. So I was very pleased. (Manager B3)

From the production plan for the last quarter, I understood one of our subordinate branch factories had only been filled up to the end of October, with November and December not assigned. One day in early October we received a fax from abroad (marketing personnel gave it to me). The order from this fax would keep the branch factory busy for 4 months. An order of such large quantity is rare. Since *market and manufacturer are a whole entity* [italics added], something like this certainly makes a director very happy. (Manager B8)

Our factory successfully joined force with an American bearing trade company. Historically, as well as politically and economically, the Chinese nation has been a highly civilized one. Why it remains such a poor country is due to numerous problems involving a wide range of aspects. However, it is not impossible to develop good enterprises . . . through *joining forces* [italics added] in enterprises, our organizations would be able to learn from the Americans about their good experiences in management. This would provide enormous good opportunities and advantages. Managing joined-force enterprises would help us to gain useful experience in management and also expand our market for the joined-force organizations. This incident of joining forces is the one that has affected me the most since I have been appointed director. (Manager B2)

Observing the joint efforts of all employees, experiencing the market and themselves (the manufacturer) as a whole entity, and joining forces with an American bearing trade company are all sources of pleasant managerial emotional experience because they reflect an understanding that progressing and moving forward are best accomplished through interconnection with others.

The previous quotes illustrate how managerial emotional experience occurs within webs of human and departmental relationships. Pleasant and unpleasant feelings are prompted by coworkers and units whose actions either sustain or jeopardize the integrity of the whole. At the same time, material and economic forces that frequently are beyond managerial control also act as significant sources of managerial emotion. Mechanical failures that threaten production, or unexpected gains and losses in business and profitability, quite often combine with social forces to trigger managerial feelings of delight, sadness, or anger.

Continuity between Rationality and Emotionality

Research Question 2 asked how an understanding of thought and feeling as continuous processes was reflected in managers' descriptions of their emotional experiences. In general, both pleasant and unpleasant emotional experiences seem to be understood as inner states of agitation that need to be calmed. Managerial emotional equilibrium can be regained by thinking through feelings with heart and from a position of connectedness with others. As the following example illustrates, thinking through unpleasant feelings in this way involves reflecting on how one's own behavior might have contributed to any problems:

In daily work there are from time to time work-related conflicts and interpersonal conflicts. Dealing with these matters is an important responsibility of managers. In order to deal with it properly, one has first of all to look for one's own part in the problem. Secondly, one should also try to collectively analyze the problem. This way, one would not encounter negative emotions at work. My experience is that as long as one treats himself firmly and with discipline, and treats others kindly and clearly distinguishes between right and wrong, one will not have bad moods. (Manager A16)

This manager appears to be thinking through his unpleasant feelings from a position nestled within a web of interconnected relationships rather than from outside it or above it. Similarly, another manager (A18) reported feeling anxious and worried that his factory had purchased low-quality equipment due to its technical department's failure to properly inspect the tools prior to purchasing them. At the same time, however, he added that he felt badly for not having supervised the quality inspection process more carefully. Moreover, he added that "because our training program for the youngsters is not complete, we cannot blame him [a particular worker]." Thinking through his unpleasant feelings from a position of connection with others reflects the proper orientation of a superior in a social/organizational hierarchy (Yang, 1959). Managers conform to the requirements of their superior positions by displaying the courage to face how their own actions might have

contributed to a problem and the benevolence to attempt to educate those whom they outrank (Yang, 1959). As others have suggested, managers' emotional equilibrium appears to be regained through quiet introspection (Sun, 1991), guided by a consciousness of themselves as managers.

The following extended example reveals how another manager thinks through an unpleasant emotional experience with heart and from a position of connection with his employees:

Early in July of this year, when I went to work one morning, the manager of the maintenance workshop, "A" (age 36, male), was waiting for me in the office. He told me that a worker in his workshop, "B" (an old worker with 20 years of experience, male, age 34), had called him bad names. I asked why. He said that this arose from their workload in repairing a machine. B and "C" (another maintenance worker, male, age 33) divided the work in half, because C is more skilled — finishing his work 2 days earlier. During the whole period of repairing, four assistants were hired by the workshop to help the two of them do the job. In counting who has done however many hours of work, they each get half of the assistance hours. The factory will pay the assistance, so it doesn't matter whether B and C get long hours of help or not. However, by the end of the month, B said that he had used assistance 6 hours less than C. Therefore, that should be counted as his actual hours. This is all because C worked extra hours after B finished. First, B accused A of being unfair, and A treated him badly. A wouldn't take this and went to the factory management to solve this problem. Otherwise, he would not work anymore. I asked the union leader and labor department manager to help investigate and mediate. B stopped the accusing, but A insisted that B should be punished accordingly. In a couple of days, A indeed refused to go to work. Instead, he came to my office to sit and wait. (Manager A9)

This factory director displays great patience in this situation, despite the fact that workers A and B were unable to settle their differences between themselves, and the appropriate supervisors also were unable to resolve the matter. Although he reported feeling kind of angry during this experience, he also indicated that "my subordinate managers need to be trained regularly so that they will be better in receiving feedback information and making good use of it." This manager held his employees accountable for their actions. However, he did not say that he saw the need to punish or blame them for either their lack of skill or cooperation, nor did he appear to distance himself from them. This manager responds and thinks through this emotionally provocative situation in several ways that confirm his role as a superior in this social/organizational hierarchy. He demonstrates great patience with his employees and courage in facing the fact that he and the factory may have been remiss in not seeing to it that employees have received adequate training. Thinking through their unpleasant feelings in these ways preserves the group's stability and everyone's sense of identification with it and reveals thought/feeling continuity. It also sustains their identity as managers in that they regain their emotional stability in part by thinking about what actions they should take to prevent similar problems from occurring in the future.

Thinking through unpleasant emotional reactions to various events also seems to be guided by a high level of face consciousness (Redding & Ng, 1982). For example, one factory director reported feeling sad following a related business unit's decision to disregard his and others' advice. Not only did this unit take independent and contrary action, but it failed in the process. Rather than feeling angered by such nonconforming behavior, or vindicated by its disastrous outcome, the manager instead reported the following:

It was soon proven that the rest of us and I had made the right decision, while that branch because of that problem was greatly affected in their production. The money invested in it did not yield the expected profit but instead created a big burden. This made me very sad. (Manager A23)

Feeling sad when another unit fails, particularly when it failed in part because of its refusal to heed your helpful advice, is an emotional gesture that probably protects the manager's face as well as the face of the unit that insisted on making an independent and poor decision. In restraining himself from criticizing the uncooperative unit, the manager appears appropriately managerial, and the unit is spared further embarrassment from what it already must have experienced under the circumstances. Managerial emotional control does not appear to be regained at the expense of another person or unit in the web. Further embarrassing others would also threaten their own face as managers (Redding & Ng, 1982).

For this group of managers, pleasant emotional experience frequently involved expressions and affirmations of a harmonious ideal in which employees were viewed as having set aside their individual needs to better serve the needs of their factories. As the following quotes will illustrate, pleasant emotional experiences stemmed from displays of collective effort that tended to be understood as public expressions of a deeper, collective consciousness as well as of managerial effectiveness. Emotional equilibrium appears to be regained by thinking through pleasant emotional situations in a manner that reassures managers of the strength of the harmonious ideal and of their own positions as managers within the relational web.

For instance, one manager (A4) described a situation in which the employees wanted to stop production because of extraordinarily hot weather. Following discussion with other managers, the director decided to continue production. Despite very hot weather, they exceeded their production quota for that quarter. This manager reported feeling the great importance of being united, high-spirited, and very happy, and added that "no matter how difficult things are, as long as everyone cooperates and works with *one heart* [italics added], any problem can be solved satisfactorily." Despite the fact that it was necessary to make medical preparations in case of emergencies, pleasant feelings came from this manager's perception that everyone was working together to sustain the collective ideal.

Another manager (B22) reported pleasant feelings when an employee went out of his way to assist a customer who had complaints about the quality of the factory's products. This worker took the customer to the technical department, talked carefully with him about the problem, and later made technical improvements in the product based on their

discussion. The manager was very pleased that there were workers who are “concerned about the factory and want to behave like a master [of the nation].”

These managers think through their pleasant feelings in ways that construe cooperative or obedient employee conduct as an affirmation of a harmonious ideal. Thoughts such as these may be emotionally stabilizing because they reassure managers that, at least for the moment, everyone is working with one heart. Everything is within their control or at least as it should be.

Types of Feelings and Their Intensity Levels

Research Questions 3, 3a, and 3b were posed to learn more about the qualities of managerial feelings evoked during the time of the pleasant or unpleasant event. Research Question 3 was designed to learn more about the specific emotion terms that managers would use in describing what they were feeling during their emotional experiences. When asked to describe their feelings, rather than listing explicit emotion terms, some managers offered mini stories from which we were left to infer what they must have been feeling. The following quotes illustrate this tendency among managers to tell stories rather than list isolated emotion terms:

It's difficult to be a manager in China. All the export products are constrained by state policies. The foreign trade and export companies themselves sometimes sell at a loss doing export business in order to obtain foreign currency, and they want to transfer the biggest money losers to the factories. The factories have no export permits, so they have to absorb these costs by reducing the factory's profit. I thought we should completely change the export mechanism in China to allow factories to have more independence and directly get into the international market to compete freely. At the same time, we should change the working style and the management situation of those foreign trade sectors to completely change their bureaucratic mentality. (Manager A4)

The above manager tells a story describing the almost overwhelming pressures and external constraints under which he operates. He does not explicitly say that he is angry at the state for maintaining outdated policies or at the export companies for maintaining practices that unfairly reduce his factory's profits. Yet, it is clear that he feels very strongly about the lack of support he and his factory receive from these units. His anger and frustration are implicit in his story about what it is like to be a factory director in China.

The following story also conveys the emotional impact of what it takes to be a successful factory director in China, without using explicit emotion terms:

If an organization always sticks to a single product and does not develop new products, the organization will reach a dead end. Even if a product sells well currently, this does not indicate that this will go on forever. Since the market changes rapidly, there is increasing demand for different products. Therefore, new product development is one direction that must be followed. Otherwise, the

organization will stagnate. For this reason, in spite of possible great disagreement, it is important to make bold decisions and be confident that we will succeed. (Manager A20)

This manager does not say that he is worried about the need to make ongoing changes or the need to summon courage to move forward despite great disagreement. Instead, he tells a story about how the world of a Chinese factory and its director is changing and about his vision for what will be necessary to succeed. Telling stories to describe what the managers were feeling during their emotional experiences rather than listing specific emotion terms may be an additional manifestation of the Chinese understanding of thought and feeling as continuous rather than dichotomous processes.

When managers did use explicit emotion terms to describe their unpleasant feelings, anger and worry were reported quite often. When reporting feeling angry, these managers described a range of inner agitation from angry (*shengqi*), to really angry (*hen shengqi*), to very, very angry (*yichang shengqi*), to enraged (*qifen jile*). Similarly, when reporting their feelings of anxiety, these managers used emotion terms that conveyed a range of inner agitation from concerned (*danxin*), to worried (*zhaoji*), to very anxious (*jiaolu*). Less frequently, they reported feeling displeased (*bumanyi*), very displeased (*jeichang bumanyi*), sadness (*nanguo*), regret (*huihen*), shame (*cankui*), hurt (*shangxin*), burdened (*gandao fudang*), or depressed (*yayi*).

When reporting pleasant feelings, the managers indicated that they felt pleased (*manyi*) and really pleased (*hen manyi*) most often, followed by delighted (*gaoxing*) and very delighted (*jeichang gaoxing*), and then happy (*yukuai*) and really happy (*hen yukuai*). The next most frequently mentioned pleasant emotion terms denoted an absence of worry and included feeling confident (*you xinxinde*), bold (*you yongqide*), or relaxed (*qingshongde*). Less frequent but still reported emotion terms included feeling relieved (*gandao kuanwei*), impressed (*henshou gandong*), or very, very excited (*yichang jidong*).

Research Question 3a asked how the managers' reports of what they were feeling conformed to or departed from cultural ideals. The conditions under which managers reported themselves experiencing pleasant and unpleasant feelings both confirmed and disconfirmed cultural ideals. Consistent with collectivist and Confucianist ideals, managers frequently reported pleasant feelings in response to organizational successes (rather than their own individual accomplishments) and unpleasant feelings in response to organizational failures. In addition, other-focused pleasant feelings were experienced in response to displays of exemplary conduct on the part of their employees. Very few managers reported unpleasant feelings, such as anger, in response to a single employee without also acknowledging their own responsibility for the problematic situation. For these managers, pleasant and unpleasant feelings often were rooted in the collective.

The following manager's description of the virtues and uses of emotional restraint illuminates both collectivist and Confucianist ideals:

If it is an ordinary internal problem about the relationship between superior and subordinate, as the director, I will adopt a lofty attitude and not be fussy about it. Occasionally, when I was so angry that I lost my appetite, I constrained myself.

If it is indeed somebody else's fault, I try to talk to him afterwards and do this with good humor and even temper. This way I can make the other see his own mistakes. When there are problems among managers, the way to deal with this is to timely exchange opinions so as to obtain agreement and to try to understand each other and assimilate the difference. Some special situations made me extremely angry, but as is said in China, always be calm whatever you are facing. (Manager B17)

In recognizing but restraining the expression of his intense anger, the above manager is working in accordance with the principles of "Confucian work dynamism" (Ralston et al., 1992) and demonstrating ideal managerial conduct (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). He maintains his superior position in the social hierarchy by moderating his intensely unpleasant emotional response to a troublesome coworker and reporting that he would talk through the problem with patience and good humor. Further, he demonstrates the process of thinking through feelings. That is, thought/feeling continuity is revealed when he states that he would talk with a problem worker with good humor and even temper, and especially when he says that "Some special situations made me extremely angry, but as is said in China, always be calm whatever you are facing."

Confucianist and collectivist ideals also support a high sensitivity to face concerns in China (Hu & Grove, 1991; Redding & Ng, 1982). In the following example, pleasant feelings are reported in response to an employee who appears to have anticipated the manager's implicit desire for an improved production process.

One day at lunch a worker wanted to make an appointment to talk with me about something, so we decided to meet after work. When I saw him, he asked me to give him the task of forming a new production line according to the technique of ceaseless production. This matter is just what I had been thinking about for several days, . . . so, you can imagine my delight. I immediately granted the request and at the same time praised him for thinking on behalf of the organization and being willing to take responsibility. (Manager A8)

It is highly likely that a great deal of mutual face work has been done both in the manner in which this manager made known his desires and the manner in which his employee appeared to spontaneously introduce the topic for discussion. The employee most likely knew that this manager would be interested in adopting a ceaseless production technique, either through his own observations or through conversations with others or with the factory director himself. The employee probably would have been unlikely to arrange a special meeting after work hours to discuss an idea that he knew held no appeal to his manager. That a face-gaining experience such as this would prompt pleasant managerial feelings is consistent with a strong cultural emphasis on face (Redding & Ng, 1982).

Nearly half of the managers, however, also reported feelings that appeared to challenge collectivist and Confucianist ideals and reflect insensitivity to face. Managers sometimes reported feeling pleased because of their own personal accomplishments or they felt and

even openly expressed unpleasant feelings regarding another's personal mistakes or misconduct. These managers did not always experience and express emotion in ways that conformed to cultural norms and ideals. For example, rather than exercising emotional restraint, the following 2 managers admitted having freely expressed strong feelings of anger. In doing so, they risked both self-face by violating the requirements of their social roles and other face by directly and publicly challenging a coworker's judgment.

"Little B" delivered the raw materials on time, which pleased me. But, after I got the report from the inspection section that there was a problem with the quality of the steel, my mood and attitude changed dramatically. I thought for a moment, "this material has quality problems. The first thing to be affected would be the timely delivery for the export contract. Secondly, it will affect our cash flow [because we will have to buy other steel]. And thirdly, I see with my own eyes that the subordinate personnel are not highly qualified and are lacking in a sense of responsibility." Therefore, I have an explosive burst of temper, with a very severe criticism pouring out. (Manager A3)

When I was in charge of technology and quality control, I had an argument with the deputy director in charge of production. It was mainly about the quality standard of some brass valves that were to be exported. The deputy director thought that as long as the whorl in the valves was up to standards and they were not leaking, they could be considered good parts. I, on the other hand, insisted on inspection strictly by regional standards including length and external appearance and so on. We argued until we were both blue in the face. We still could not settle our differences; neither was able to convince the other. We even exchanged unpleasant angry remarks. (Manager A22)

Although managerial emotional restraint is highly valued, the above examples illustrate that emotional outbursts do occur. Both of these factory directors went over the emotional edge in response to their perception that others were not sharing their standards for product quality. Although having an explosive burst of temper or arguing with a coworker until both are blue in the face are cathartic and therefore countercultural emotional responses for Chinese managers, they may be legitimated by their overriding concern and increasing accountability for the economic well-being of their factories.

The following manager also departs from the cultural ideal in reporting that he experienced pleasant feelings in response to his own personal accomplishment rather than to those of his employees:

One of our products is an electronic fan. Our brand is pretty well-known in this country and also has good foreign markets. However, market competition is intense. In order to increase production and development, I have proposed a scheme, which is to establish an electronic product group around our brand and

our techniques, which is able to perform specialized mass production. Our factory would be the major assembly plant with subordinate plants specializing in parts processing. The scheme was supported by the related government agent, and some small factories voluntarily joined us as subordinate branches. This way we have increased our sales by 50% yearly, with 10% efficiency increase. (Manager B24)

As the above examples illustrate, socially constructed managerial emotional experience is not monolithic nor is it always ideal. The emotional experiences of high-level managers in China are shaped not only by relatively stable and enduring social/cultural forces but by fluctuating material/economic constraints and opportunities. These managers were bending the rules of social propriety by expressing pride in their own individual accomplishments or by expressing unedited anger at ineffective coworkers. Such departures appeared to be rooted within the context of a changing material and economic order. Managing the ongoing tensions between traditional social/cultural forces and dynamic material/economic ones may prompt some factory directors to experience and express emotion in ways that diverge from the cultural ideal.

Research Question 3b asked how intensely pleasant and unpleasant feelings were experienced among this group of managers. Overall, the managers reported being strongly affected by their emotional experiences ($M = 1.87$). It is interesting to note that the mean intensity ratings for positive and negative events were nearly identical (1.9 and 1.8, respectively). Available research in the United States suggests a slightly different pattern in that negative events tended to be rated somewhat more intensely than positive events (Waldron & Krone, 1991). The pattern in the Chinese data departs somewhat from intensity ratings in the United States in that the inner experience of unpleasant feeling is no more intense than the inner experience of pleasant feeling. In contrast to the stereotypic belief that the Chinese may be unemotional, the present data suggest that among these factory directors at least, both positive and negative emotional events are experienced quite intensely. Practicing emotional restraint and subduing emotional expression do not appear to numb or dull the actual experience of emotion. Further, subsequent analyses reveal that the desire to remain calm is valued equally whether experiencing pleasant or unpleasant feelings.

Best Ways to Manage Emotional Situations

Research Question 4 asked managers to describe the best way to handle pleasant and unpleasant emotional situations in their factories. For these factory directors, unpleasant and even pleasant feelings were regarded as destabilizing forces that required thought and analysis. Under both types of emotional circumstances, the managers described the need to calm themselves so that they could act with good judgment. More specifically, emotional situations were best handled by one or some combination of the following processes: (a) paying attention to or recognizing the seriousness of a disruption, (b) diverting attention and thinking away from a disruption, (c) calming unpleasant inner feelings, either privately or in connection with others, (d) either keeping up or calming pleasant emotions, (e) keeping up their employees' positive emotions, (f) coming to a better understanding of

problems and possible solutions by thinking and feeling through them, and (g) learning from emotional experiences so that pleasant ones can be sustained and unpleasant ones can be avoided in the future. Moreover, managers' descriptions of the best ways to handle emotional situations continued to reveal thought/feeling continuity and their understandings of an ideal managerial identity.

In handling emotional disruptions, it is important to recognize the situation's seriousness. As reflected in the following quote, if not attended to and managed properly, some emotional experiences can threaten the economic well-being of the factories:

As a leader of an enterprise, anything unusual in emotion, moods, appearance, or even in mind, will easily bring some economic losses to the organization.
(Manager B11)

Another manager described the importance of recognizing the seriousness of a pleasant emotional situation and told how he thought through it in a way that amplified or intensified his feelings. A worker had made a suggestion that resulted in an improved product and increased profits for the factory. At the time the suggestion was made, however, this manager doubted its usefulness. In reflecting on this situation, the manager realized that he needed to

take things seriously and catch this sort of opportunity to create a breakthrough at work. I should never take things lightly; otherwise, my mood would not be positive as it was in this case. (Manager A8)

Other managers spoke of the need to divert their attention away from the emotionally provoking situation. This approach is revealed in Manager B7's description of the best way to handle an unpleasant emotional experience:

The best way [to handle an emotional situation] is not to think about it. Just try to think about things that are more pleasant. After some time, try to look back and see if there are any lessons of experience that will help to deal with similar matters later on.

For this manager, emotional equilibrium is best regained by mentally removing himself from the unpleasant situation and later reflecting on what can be learned from it to avoid its recurrence.

Both pleasant and unpleasant feelings were experienced as disruptions that most often needed to be calmed. For some managers, this was best accomplished privately, whereas others described how this was done through connection with others. For members of the former group, emotional composure was best regained by distancing themselves from others in time and place. For instance, Manager A21 said, "One should be cool in mind and try not to be rash. It would be better to find another more appropriate time and place to solve the problem."

Manager B19's recommendation reveals the need to reflect privately on an unpleasant situation and to learn from it:

When encountering things that may lead to emotional outbursts, constrain oneself and keep calm. When encountering something unpleasant, reflect back and draw some lessons. After things are over, treat people as good as before and do not bear any grudges. (Manager B19)

Manager A2 commented even more extensively on this same approach:

No matter how depressing or exciting it can be, whenever one comes across similar situations, one has to remind oneself to cool down, not to allow my emotion to influence subordinates or other employees so as not to affect the work. The thing to do in this kind of situation is to stay away from everyone for a while, try to calm one's emotions and think up some ways of dealing with things.

In both of these examples, distancing themselves from others appeared to be a retreat in strength with the intention to reengage at a time when their feelings have been thought through and their emotional composure regained.

Although several managers described the need to distance themselves in order to stabilize their unpleasant feelings, others indicated that these emotions were best handled or thought through in connection to others. For instance, one manager (A10) briefly stated that he would "Go home. Only my wife can comfort me." Another said,

Whenever I come across difficulties, I have sympathizers, supporters, people who help me and provide advice. In situations like these, the best way to solve them is to talk more with colleagues and exchange information to see mutual understanding so as to gain support and self-confidence. (Manager B23)

The above manager says that inner emotional stability is best regained by thinking aloud in interaction with like-minded others. Other managers described how unpleasant emotional situations would be best handled by thinking them through with those who were involved directly. For instance, Manager A20 said that one should "calmly analyze the grounds for his reasoning [a coworker who is the source of the unpleasant experience] and try to persuade him and also get others to persuade him to change his mind"; whereas Manager A24 said,

Try to overcome emotional upheaval and collect ourselves in order to consider problems calmly. We should allow the others to finish whatever they have to say. Try to give him some hint and allow him time to think it over. We should not be extreme, but more importantly, both sides should calm down and talk it over openly and honestly to gain mutual understanding.

Other managers tended to describe the use of an interactive problem-solving process as the best way to handle unpleasant emotional situations. The following managers even enumerated a series of steps that should be followed:

First of all, keep calm. Then each should try to reflect upon what happened. Try to find out the exact point where we agreed or disagreed. Then each should put forward their own opinions and solutions. Concentrate on the issue at hand and not get personal. (Manager A22)

When encountering things that may lead to emotional outbursts, constrain oneself and keep calm. When encountering something unpleasant, reflect back and draw some lessons. After things are over, treat people as good as before and do not bear any grudges. (Manager B19)

As was mentioned previously, pleasant feelings also were regarded as destabilizing and needed to be calmed by thinking them through. In thinking through pleasant emotional experiences, managers learned from them and were able to use them in ways that further benefited their factories:

I think that whenever we come across situations that bring positive emotions, I need to keep calm and consider the situation carefully analyze it, then take measures with active and positive attitudes. (Manager A12)

Another manager (A5) was very pleased that despite extremely hot weather and a loss of air conditioning, the workers had set aside their personal feelings of discomfort to meet the factory's production quotas. In his opinion, the best way to handle an emotional situation such as this one was to "use a heart to change a heart." He added that he wished to "preserve the current situation and develop toward the future." Although we do not know for certain that their employees felt similarly, the above three managers appeared to believe that positive emotional experiences related to successful production should be noticed and thought through for ways that employee and factory performance could be enhanced further.

The following quote reveals how Manager A17 thought it was necessary to calm his own pleasant feelings by summarizing past experience and to cultivate pleasant feelings among his employees: "Summarize the past experience and try to keep employees' positive emotions up, and make efforts to obtain better efficiency and better results." Regaining their composure during and following pleasant emotional experiences may make it more possible for managers to say and do what is necessary to maintain employees' positive emotions. That their employees would experience potentially destabilizing pleasant emotion during work-related accomplishments did not appear to be a concern.

Just as some managers listed a sequence of steps to follow in order to handle unpleasant emotional situations, the manager in the following quote prescribes a series of steps to follow in handling pleasant ones:

Positive emotion is usually a result of one or several pleasant events which are beneficial to myself or a success at work. The best way to deal with this is (a) to analyze where the positive emotion comes from, (b) to find out what others think about it, (c) reflect on one's own work and behavior to see if there's anything worthy of positive emotions, (d) keep a clear mind and never forget one's own responsibility, and places that can be improved in work, even in the middle of such good moods. (Manager B12)

Finally, none of the managers reported that it would be best to vent or even to simply express their inner pleasant or unpleasant feelings. In fact, doing so could lead to serious mistakes in judgment, as one manager reported:

One should keep calm in situations of high emotions so as to avoid unnecessary errors. If in fact, I had dealt with this incident right there, a possible result would not have been good. I would have been commending the old worker and criticizing and punishing the young one, even fining him or recording a demerit about him. (Manager A18)

This manager seems to be conscious of how the consequences of his ability to effectively manage his own emotions can reverberate quite loudly throughout the entire organization.

Although the inability to express what one is feeling has been considered a source of emotive dissonance and discomfort in Western organizations (Hochschild, 1983), for this group of Chinese managers, it is the experience of any emotion that is agitating and upsetting. Whereas emotion work in the United States involves reconciling gaps between felt and expressed emotion (Hochschild, 1983), managerial emotion work in China appears to involve doing what is necessary to regain emotional equilibrium and self-control. The results of this study suggest that managers are doing a considerable amount of inner emotion work to appear emotionally neutral (Hearn, 1993).

Although some lower-level employees in the United States have been observed to cope with negative emotional events by intentionally subverting organizational emotional display rules (e.g., Sutton, 1991; Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989), there is no evidence that this group of managers thought it would be best to handle their unpleasant feelings in this way. When uncontrolled emotional outbursts did occur, they tended to prompt feelings of remorse and regret. An effective managerial heart is a self-controlled heart.

Contrary to Western cultural values that seem to promote the need for consistency between thought, behavior, and feeling, none of these managers intimated that he was being emotionally dishonest by not expressing his inner feelings. Instead, the inner experience of emotion should prompt thought and inner reflection on what the manager and others can learn from the provoking situation. This seems consistent with others who have suggested that troubling circumstances in Eastern cultures are best handled by quiet introspection and meditation rather than a cathartic type of response (Sun, 1991). Emotional stability is of great importance and is achieved by understanding that difficult situations contain both good and bad things. The good things largely include the lessons that can be learned from the bad (see Sun, 1991).

In summary, these managers regarded both pleasant and unpleasant situations as emotionally destabilizing. Emotional composure is best regained by temporarily diverting attention away from, thinking about, analyzing, and reflecting on the details of these experiences. Whereas most managers advocated doing so through interaction with others, some believed it was best to engage in these processes privately. Thought-feeling continuity is reflected in their descriptions of the best ways to handle both types of situations. Unpleasant emotional situations should be thought through to harmonious solutions and/or to lessons that can be learned from them. Pleasant emotional situations should be thought through for lessons that can be learned about how to sustain harmonious and profitable conditions.

Limitations

This study begins to illustrate ways in which Chinese managers experience and handle pleasant and unpleasant emotional situations. Whether their self-reports of their emotional experience and emotion management strategies are a completely accurate representation of their day-to-day experience and behavior, however, remains a question. Further research that includes the use of observation would be necessary to further develop and support the claims we make throughout this study.

This research also is limited by the fact that the sample is exclusively male. As mentioned previously, this was of necessity because all of the members of the visiting trade delegation were male. As the number of female managers in China increases, it would be interesting to learn more about how their constructions of emotional experience and expression conform to or depart from those of their male counterparts.

Finally, this research was conducted with high-level managers in state-owned enterprises in China. The emotional experience and expression of managers in other forms of Chinese organizations would be equally interesting to study. Because of their intercultural dynamics, managerial emotionality in joint venture enterprises, for instance, would be a particularly fruitful area for further research.

Conclusions

As a part of Chinese social life, managerial emotionality appears to be subject to intense social and self-regulation. Emotional restraint is highly valued and appears to be practiced with a great deal of managerial consciousness and in the service of the larger social unit. Emotional experiences are thought through until emotional equilibrium is restored. Managers think through emotional experiences with an understanding of themselves as managers located within a strongly interconnected web of relationships. Thus, managerial face needs and those of others are given strong consideration.

Chinese cultural values and an understanding of thought and feeling as continuous are reflected in a social form of rationality/emotionality that does not require managers to maintain an impersonal and emotionally detached posture. Indeed, these managers experienced intense emotional responses in their work that were recognized and thought through rather than denied or suppressed. Self-estrangement and emotional numbness are

less likely to be consequences of this form of emotion management than are self-cultivation and even spiritual development (Chang & Holt, 1991; TU, 1985).

These managers do not appear to be surface emotional actors, attempting to change their feelings from the outside in (Hochschild, 1990). Rather, in connecting thought to a broad range of intensely experienced feelings, they appear to be deep emotional actors (Hochschild, 1990), thinking through their feelings with a great deal of consciousness and self-awareness. Grounded in thought/feeling continuity, feelings are listened to, learned from, and used to guide problem solving and action.

There is little evidence that these managers understand their feelings to have been commercialized by their organizations. A managerial heart constructed by Chinese socialism and more traditional, cultural values may indeed differ from one constructed by capitalism and commercialization (Hochschild, 1983; Wouters, 1989). In China, a managerial heart appears to be a "properly socialized" heart, one that is self-regulated by a deep level of social and moral consciousness combined with an emerging concern for seeing to it that their factories fulfill their economic promise and responsibilities to the state. Controlled emotional demeanor is displayed, not because they are highly paid to do so but because it is proper and necessary for them to do so as managers. Practicing emotional restraint serves not only the economic well-being of their factories but sustains their self-identities as managers. Moreover, self-regulation of emotion is a route to personal and social maturity, a way to cultivate themselves as human beings.

It has been suggested that in the West, members of higher status groups do more emotion work than members of lower status groups (Hearn, 1993; Hochschild, 1983). The results of our study do not permit us to argue that managers do more emotion work than lower-level workers. However, it is clear that being a high-level manager in China is emotionally demanding, and the demands for exercising self-restraint are severe. The results of our study are consistent with those of others, though, who have identified positive personal and organizational outcomes associated with the appropriate and effective self-regulation of emotion (Conrad & Witte, 1994; Snyder & Ammons, 1993; Tolich, 1993). Thinking through emotions calms and clarifies the managerial mind/heart and guides the accomplishment of organizational goals.

Research has shown that positive and negative emotional displays can function as control moves. That is, employees can be trained to use intentional displays of positive or negative emotion to gain control over their clients to better reach organizational goals (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1990, 1991; Sutton, 1991; Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988). The results of this study are more consistent with those who suggest that control is best accomplished through displays of emotional neutrality (Wharton & Erickson, 1993). The ability of these directors to maintain their emotional composure supports a managerial identity, sustains their relationships with employees, and enhances their ability to accomplish critical organizational outcomes.

The ways in which these managers think through their strong emotional reactions appears akin to what is being referred to in the United States as emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995). Their particular form of emotional mindfulness fosters an emotional and social sophistication that contributes to their ability to succeed as managers. Rather than

suppressing strong feelings or ruminating unproductively on them, these managers appear to treat them as occasions for directed thought and learning and for increasing their effectiveness as managers.

Finally, social constructionism has been criticized by those who argue that realities are not just socially but also are materially, economically, and politically constructed (see Miller & Holstein, 1993). As the guiding perspective for this study, our experience suggests that social constructionism can be broadened to encompass those possibilities. Indeed, many of these managers' emotional experiences occurred in response to material or economic disruptions. We have learned that it is impossible to separate the meaning of material and economic events from the social realities in which they are embedded. Social, material, and economic forces intersect to construct what we understand to be real and lasting.

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Notes

1. According to Markus and Kitayama (1991), the nature of emotional experience will be shaped by understandings we have of ourselves and our relationships to others in social situations. The conditions that elicit emotions and the specific emotions that will be experienced and expressed will vary depending on whether we understand ourselves as being independent from or interdependent with others. Those with an independent sense of self will experience and express emotions in ways that reinforce an understanding of self as autonomous. For instance, they might experience and express emotions that have their own needs, goals, desires, or abilities as the referent (e.g., anger, frustration, pride). Conversely, those with an interdependent sense of self will experience and express emotions in ways that sustain an understanding of self as being connected to others. They might be more likely to experience and need to manage feelings that have another

person as the referent (e.g., sympathy, shame). Markus and Kitayama then refer to these as ego-focused and other-focused emotions, respectively.

2. Beginning in 1949, when the Peoples' Republic of China was founded, a tripartite socialist structure governed the workplace. This structure consisted of the Communist Party, business management, and the workers' union. From 1949 to 1979, the Communist Party was very influential, often emphasizing "ideological purification" at the expense of production. Beginning in 1979, a factory director responsibility system was instituted in almost all state-owned factories. This system signaled a redistribution of power and responsibility among these three units. Rather than being subordinate to the Party, factory directors now were required to coordinate these three units. Generally, the Party's role now involves assisting business management with maintaining adequate production levels in the factories (Chamberlain, 1987; Walder, 1989; Warner, 1991).
3. Event descriptions were single coded if they appeared to be exclusively social, moral, or material/economic in nature. More often, events were judged to contain elements of more than one type of order and were double or triple coded.
4. Following Tompkins (1994), information was provided that could be used to verify the sources of our data. Respondents were assigned a letter depending on whether they were members of the first (A) or second (B) trade delegation. Each respondent also was assigned a number. For example, respondent A4 was the fourth member of the first delegation.

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Appendix
Questionnaire Items

Introduction: Please try to recall a particular case that gave you a pleasant (unpleasant) feeling (examples of emotion terms). It shall be something that happened in your present factory and must have a direct connection to another person who must be working in the same factory as you. Please give your answers after you complete your recollection of the whole events and the person involved.

1. Please describe the event that brought you pleasant feelings.
 2. Describe how you were affected then.
 3. Please explain the working relation between you and the person.
 4. Describe the degree you were affected (please circle one): *very strong, strong, so, so, not strong, weak.*
 5. Based on your experience, what is the best way to treat this kind of pleasant (unpleasant) feeling in your workplace?
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