Beyond sexy is what's needed: The experiences of women employed in a luxury VIP nightclub in Cape Town

by

Sarah Jean Dart

Thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Sociology in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the Stellenbosch University

Supervisor: Prof. Lindy Heinecken

April 2022

Declaration

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Date: April 2022

Abstract

Interactive service industries are categorised by the extensive performance of emotional and aesthetic labour, and bodywork performed by employees. Establishments capitalize on the bodies and minds of employees to provide quality service and drive business profits. Research has shown that women employed in interactive service industries are under a disproportionate amount of pressure, to act and look 'the part', particularly in VIP Nightclubs (Warhurst & Nickson, 2009). This study aims to develop an understanding of how party starters employed in one of Cape Town's VIP nightclubs, Sky Nightclub, experience their work.

Theories on emotional and aesthetic labour, as well as bodywork, were examined in relation to issues on gender, sexuality, power and control. Foucault's work on power and control, as well as Butler's work on performativity, were applied to theories on aesthetic and emotional labour and bodywork, to provide a detailed review of the literature. This study adopted a qualitative approach to develop context-rich research through a series of semi-structured interviews, as well as in-depth participant observation. The interviews were structured around understanding the role that party starters play, how they perform their gender and sexuality, the type of labour they perform and the consequences/risks involved in their line of work. Participant observation increased the credibility of the interview findings and ensured that an in-depth account of the work that party starters do, was provided. In addition, a case study was provided to give an account of the nature of Sky Nightclub and how party starters fit into the space.

The study's findings reveal that being a party starter goes '*beyond being sexy*'. Their role is multi-faceted and involves the hyper-performance of both their gender and sexuality. Aside from being aesthetically pleasing, being a party starter revolves around capitalizing on social skills, performing emotional management and the use of the body as a way to attract customers and encourage them to spend money. In addition, this study looks at the consequences and dangers associated with nightclub work and how party starters navigate the risks and handle instances of harassment. Overall, this study is aimed at showing how party starters have agency and despite the consequences associated with their jobs, they should not be seen as victims. Party starters have developed the ability to use their appearance, body and emotional capacity to manipulate men into spending money, which is financially beneficial to themselves, and increases the club's profits. However, this study also points out, which this

work can lead to risky behaviour that affects the health, well-being, and lives of women party starters. This aspect is highlighted as part of the findings, but requires further study to understand the long-terms risks associated with this type of work.

Opsomming

Interaktiewe diensbedrywe word gekategoriseer volgens die uitgebreide prestasie van emosionele en estetiese arbeid, en liggaamswerk wat deur werknemers verrig word. Instellings kapitaliseer op die liggame en verstand van werknemers om kwaliteit diens te lewer en besigheidswinste te bevorder. Navorsing het getoon dat vroue wat in interaktiewe diensbedrywe werk 'n buitensporige mate van druk beleef om verwagtings te vervul ten opsigte van hoe iemand in hulle rol moet optree en voorkom, veral in BBP (sogenaamde "VIP") nagklubs (Warhurst & Nickson, 2009). Hierdie studie het ten doel om 'n begrip te ontwikkel van hoe partytjiebeginners in een van Kaapstad se BBP-nagklubs, Sky Nightclub, hul werk ervaar.

Teorieë oor emosionele en estetiese arbeid, sowel as liggaamswerk, is ondersoek in verband met kwessies wat verband hou met geslag, seksualiteit, mag en beheer. Foucault se werk oor mag en beheer, sowel as Butler se werk oor performatiwiteit, is toegepas op teorieë oor estetiese en emosionele arbeid en liggaamswerk, om 'n gedetailleerde oorsig van die literatuur te verskaf. Hierdie studie het 'n kwalitatiewe benadering gevolg om konteksryke navorsing te ontwikkel deur middel van 'n reeks semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude, sowel as in-diepte deelnemer waarneming. Die onderhoude is gestruktureer rondom die begrip van die rol wat partytjiebeginners speel, hoe hulle hul geslag en seksualiteit uitbeeld, die tipe arbeid wat hulle verrig en die nagevolge/risiko's verbonde aan hul werk. Deelnemerswaarneming het die geloofwaardigheid van die onderhoudsbevindinge verhoog en verseker dat 'n in-diepte weergawe van die werk wat party beginners doen, verskaf is. Daarbenewens is 'n gevallestudie verskaf om die aard van Sky Nightclub en hoe partytjiebeginners daar inpas te illustreer.

Die studie se bevindinge toon dat om 'n partytjiebeginner te wees meer behels as om "sexy" te wees. Hul rol is veelsydig en behels die hiper-uitbeelding van beide hul geslag en seksualiteit. Behalwe dat dit esteties aangenaam is, slaan die rol van partytjiebeginne munt uit sosiale vaardighede, die uitvoering van emosionele beheer en die gebruik van die liggaam om kliënte te lok en hulle aan te moedig om geld te spandeer. Daarbenewens kyk hierdie studie na die gevolge en gevare verbonde aan nagklubwerk en hoe partytjiebeginners die risiko's

navigeer en gevalle van teistering hanteer. Oor die algemeen is hierdie studie daarop gemik om te wys hoe partytjiebeginners agentskap het, en nie as slagoggers beskou moet word nie, ten spyte van die gevolge verbonde aan hul werk. Partytjiebeginners het die vermoë ontwikkel om hul voorkoms, liggaam en emosionele vermoens te gebruik om mans te manipuleer om geld te spandeer, wat finansieel voordelig is vir hulself, en die klub se wins verhoog. Hierdie studie wys egter ook daarop dat hierdie werk kan lei tot riskante gedrag wat die gesondheid, welstand en lewens van vroue partytjiebeginners beïnvloed. Hierdie aspek word beklemtoon as deel van die bevindinge, maar vereis verdere studie om die langtermynrisiko's wat met hierdie tipe werk verband hou, te verstaan.

Acknowledgments

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor, Prof. Lindy Heinecken, for her support and guidance throughout this process. Despite the challenges COVID 19 presented, we managed to work around it, so thank you for making it possible. Your continual encouragement helped me when I felt close to giving up.

Secondly, thank you to my mother, for helping me get to this point. Your support over the past 6 years has been invaluable and I will never be able to fully express how grateful I am.

To my father, who passed away shortly before I enrolled into my Masters degree, I wish you were here to witness it all. Knowing how proud I always made you, gave me the motivation I needed, when I thought I had none left.

Furthermore, thank you to Stellenbosch's Department of Sociology and Anthropology, for all the support and guidance I received.

Finally, thank you to my participants for their willingness to partake in this study, and share their experiences with me. Without you, this study would not have been possible, so thank you for inspiring me to share your stories with the world.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Local and international patrons are lured into the bustling nightlife that Cape Town has to offer through a variety of vibrant restaurants, bars and nightclubs. The shift from day to night opens "night spaces", where many work for a livelihood and others enjoy it for entertainment and leisure (Williams, 2008:514). Although this shift is a natural process, night spaces are socially mediated, regulated and largely dependent on human interaction. In some top-end nightclubs in Cape Town, party starters, often referred to as hostesses or 'girls', are hired and paid to promote the club via social media platforms and to interact and entertain guests upon arrival. Women interact with the guests using their aesthetic, visual, physical, social and sexual appearance as a commodity. The hyper-sexualisation of women and their bodies is apparent by the way in which party starters are used as a means to attract possible big spenders, who are usually men. In this regard, one can view VIP nightclubs as a 'spectacle' owing to the extravagance they project and through customers who buy into and become part of the experience. My intention is to carry out a study on one of Cape Town's VIP nightclubs, which I have named, "Sky Nightclub".

Interactive service industries, particularly VIP nightclubs, are competitive by nature. The overall look and feel of the venue is important and plays a role in attracting the right target market. For Sky Nightclub to be successful, they have to uphold a standard that exudes luxury, status, wealth and class. Sky Nightclub is expensively decorated and sells premium liquor at excessive mark-ups. The nightclub is a hub for attracting wealth and status drawing in a crowd of up to 200 guests per night. Sky Nightclub hires women based on their attractiveness and ability to hold a conversation'.

Party starters are required to create an atmosphere and lure patrons into consuming more alcohol and enjoying themselves. The women party starters are expected to engage with guests and literally to 'get the party started' using their beauty, sex appeal and sexual competence to create a particular atmosphere in the club. In this highly sexualised space, women have to navigate how they work, by performing stereotyped gender roles in particular ways to please men. The aim of this study is to uncover how women working at Sky Nightclub experience their work and navigate their way in this particular space.

1.2 Literature Review

To understand how women work in a space where their sexuality is at a premium for both obtaining employment, increasing their income and generating profits for the employer and the underlying power dynamics associated with this, I draw on a range of macro and meso/micro theories. These theories provided the conceptual lens through which I will analyse my findings.

1.2.1 Theoretical framework

Existing within a web of power relations, Foucault explains that multiple levels of power exist within our society (Foucault, 1979). We react to systems of power by being regulated, manipulated and controlled through societal standards and institutions. Foucault argues that our bodies and minds are further controlled through self-regulation and self-monitory practices. The docile body and the docile mind are created, whereby we enact and react, to the desired expectations that society requires (Foucault, 1984). Pressure is placed on the body and the mind by society and individuals to conform to norms and expectations. Foucault's theory of power can be directly linked to the party starters in this study who are pressured to conform to the rules of the nightclub, their peers and themselves, in order to look and behave in the desired way. The work that they do largely depends on how they dress and carry themselves and thereby conform to what is expected from them. Foucault's (1984:202) theory of power demonstrates how we internalise expectations, which in turn drives our everyday lives.

In applying Foucault's work to modern society, the increased pressure that is placed on women in regulating their bodies is looked at by Pylpa (1998) and Jaggar and Bordo (1989). In a patriarchal society, the woman's body is looked at through a critical lens and they are expected to conform to the ideal forms of femininity (Bartky, 1998). This includes being thin, polite and friendly. However, as party starters show, these norms and standards of desired femininity are often challenged through expressing agency. Smith (2016) looks at the discursive boundaries between pleasure and performance in sex work. Although this study will not be looking at sex workers, there are similarities regarding the use of femininity as a cultural resource. Sex workers, like party starters, have a degree of agency in the work that they do and studies tend to steer away from looking at the pleasure and liberation that this nature of work can provide.

Extending Foucault's work on power, Butler looks at gender performativity and how the social construction of gender ensures that we behave in a particular way (Butler, 1990:129). Gender is a regulatory process, which largely impacts women and how they are required to embody femininity (Butler, 1993:232). Particularly relevant to this study is Butler's work in relation to the workplace and how gender is performed in sexualised workplaces, like a VIP nightclub. 'Sexy' party starters are constantly on display in an attempt to attract male attention and to encourage them to spend more money. Caven *et* al. (2013: 1) shows how workplace expectations are not gender-neutral, with a disproportional amount of pressure placed on women to dress and act in the required way. Appearances are managed through both the institution and the individual. Sky Nightclub is a heteronormative venue that profits from male spenders and where women are used to exploit men in order to generate money.

Some feminists would claim that this is exploitation of vulnerable women, but this study seeks to show that women have agency and often feel empowered and liberated through the work that they do. The dualism between being a victim and being an agent is discussed by Shefer (2015), whose studies are within the South African context. Women are starting to be seen as agents and strategic in the type of work that they do (Shefer, 2015). Hence Shefer's is useful in showing how women are starting to liberate themselves and create sexual meaning in the context of resistance. They are able to do this by drawing on their emotional and aesthetic labour and bodywork.

The performance of aesthetic labour is a key component of this study. Looking at the work by Warhurst and Nickson (2007:116), aesthetic labour is defined as the process whereby the aesthetic attributes and capacities of workers are commodified. Aesthetic labour foregrounds embodiment, which appeals to the senses of customers through creating attraction simply by having 'the right look' (Warhurst & Nickson, 2009:386). This is particularly relevant when studying nightclub work, which strives to attract a certain clientele. Appearance plays a role in the hiring process and the general success of the nightclub, which results in the managing of dress codes and appearance.

Like the appearances of aesthetic labour, the emotions of employees are also commodified. By using Hochschild as the primary theorist in discussions around emotional labour, it is useful in outlining the understandings and experiences of 'party starters'. Emotional labour is broadly defined as the management of emotions and bodily display in the workplace (Hochschild, 2011:7). Hochschild, who has done extensive research on emotional labour,

argues that emotions, which are initially a private act, become commodified through control and management by institutions/organisations, or within the workplace (Hochschild, 1983). Commercial value is placed on the emotions of employees to drive profits. In this way, Hochschild explains how feelings and emotions become regulated, manipulated and controlled. This can have consequences for employees who become isolated from their true emotions, or lean towards risky behaviours, such as alcohol and substance use to cope with their stressful work environment (Hight & Park, 2018). Other risks involve sexual harassment, which is more likely to occur in environments like nightclubs, which are heteronormative and considered to be 'informal' places of work (Brunner & Dever, 2014).

The service sector works on the mantra "customer is king" and therefore places a demand on staff to behave in a certain way to satisfy their clientele (Warhurst & Nickson, 2007). Women employed in nightclubs need to alter their behaviour and physical appearance to create the 'right look'. Creating the desired 'look' is done through a combination of aesthetic and emotional labour, which Gimlin (2007:354) describes as bodywork. Party starters engage in work that manages both their emotional experience and the display of their bodies. The body is thereby managed and transformed to meet the expectations of the workplace through employees performing work on their own bodies and the bodies of others (customers) (Gimlin, 2007:255). Emotional labour, aesthetic labour and bodywork are often used by women as a form of agency to obtain employment and improve their livelihoods (McDowell 1997:139). This study will engage with theories to explore how women working in VIP nightclubs understand and experience the work that they do.

1.3 Research questions

Therefore, the aim of this study is to determine, "How do party starters navigate their experiences in an environment that places a high premium on their appearance, sexuality and emotional display?"

Overall my research objectives are as follows:

1. What role do party starters play within a VIP nightclub?
2. How do party starters perform gender by using their bodies and sexuality as a commodity?
3. How do party starters use their emotional and aesthetic labour, as well as bodywork agency?

4. Are there any potential challenges or risks associated with working as a party starter at the nightclub?

1.4 Methodology

This study followed a qualitative approach in order to develop a deeper understanding into the experiences of party starters employed at Sky Nightclub. Data was collected via semi-structured interviews and participant observation. The data was then analysed using thematic analysis, which was informed by the literature. The explorative nature of this research allowed for patterns of meaning, common understandings and shared experiences to be uncovered, adding to knowledge surrounding the employment of women in nightclubs.

1.4.1 Value of the study

Very little research exists on nightclub work in South Africa and particularly on women working in this sector. Emotional, aesthetic and bodywork, which are focal points within this study, are fields that are gaining increased interest. This study is valuable as it offers insight into how young South African women are using their confidence, bodies and overall appearance to earn an income. In addition, it offers a perspective into the struggles and certain privileges that come with the ability to be employed as a party starter.

1.5 Chapter outline

Chapter one provides an introduction and brief overview of this study, which discusses the understandings and experiences of women employed in one of Cape Town's luxury nightclubs.

Chapter two provides a literature review, drawing on key theorists such as Foucault on Butler to discuss power, control, performativity, gender and sexuality.

Chapter three discusses the nature of interactive service work and gender. The dynamic of VIP nightclubs is discussed, with particular attention drawn to the role that women play within this space. This chapter explains how emotional, aesthetic and bodywork acts as a form of agency and the consequences this holds for persons employed in this sector.

Chapter four includes a case study and outlines the methodology and research design adopted in this study. This chapter includes the strengths and weaknesses of the qualitative approach as well as ethical considerations that were taken into account throughout the study. Possible limitations and my role as a researcher are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter five gives a presentation of the findings to give a practical account of how party starters perform emotional and aesthetic labour and bodywork as well as the challenges they face within their line of work.

Chapter six concludes the study by reflecting on the findings, and gives recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER TWO: <mark>THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</mark>

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores theories on power, gender performativity and agency, which are deemed relevant to this study in understanding the power and agency of party starters. I begin by looking at the work of Michael Foucault (1984), who argues that power is understood as existing through society in multiple forms. Of relevance here, is how individuals engage in self-regulatory and self-surveying acts to discipline, both in terms of their mind and body, in accordance with societal norms and standards. Building on the work of Foucault, Judith Butler focuses on power enforced through the performance of gender norms and the enactment of desired femininities and masculinities (Butler, 1999). Ideal forms of femininities are adopted by women to meet societal needs, which are seen in the case of party starters. Party starters work in an environment that capitalises on heteronormativity, where the pleasing of male customers comes first and relies on women who embody feminine ideals.

Accordingly, this chapter also draws on Butlerian and Foucauldian thought on resistance to give an account for agency. This is expanded upon and discussed by Tamara Shefer, who analyses the dualism between victimhood and agency. Shefer looks at the kinds of power dynamics that exists within an ever-changing society and how we respond to these dynamics through conforming or resisting. Party starters are aware of their workplace expectations and although conforming is expected, these women express agency and often engage in forms of resistance.

The second part of this chapter examines the literature on the nature of the service sector and the use of aesthetic and emotional labour, as well as bodywork. As a commodity – this is particularly relevant to understanding how women in this sector navigate their way through heteronormative spaces, like Sky Nightclub. To understand this, we need to know how women use their appearance, emotions and body as agency within their work environment.

2.2 Foucault – the conception of power and control

It is important to look at Michael Foucault's conception of power in relation to the creation of the "social body". During classical ages, bodies were both targets and objects of power that underwent intense manipulation, shaping and training to prepare for war. Modern ages have seen a shift where the body has become an investment that can continually be improved on to

7

meet societal and cultural standards (Foucault, 1984:180). Foucault's work highlights how both the individual and society are involved in shaping our perceptions of our bodies as well as how we use and control them. This is important to understand as party starters engage in continual practices of moulding their bodies to meet expectations to benefit themselves and the establishment they work for. This gives them a sense of agency and power with which to navigate certain social or workspaces.

To explain this, Foucault uses the term "biopower", to demonstrate how power manifests itself through daily routines and practices. Individuals are constantly engaging in self-surveillance and self-discipline, therefore subjugating themselves to self-scrutiny (Pylypa, 1998:21). One of the key arguments of Foucault's work is that we exercise our own surveillance over our behaviour and thereby subjugate our bodies to oppression to conform. In other words, we apply our own self-discipline or rules upon our bodies according to cultural and social norms, and self-regulatory practices, such as hygiene, sexuality and health (Pylypa, 1998:22). Through this, societies and individuals conform to routines and monitor processes to create what Foucault calls "docile bodies" (Foucault, 1984). This can be applied to party starters, who adopt certain regulatory practices meet societal and norms related to their work and employment.

In this regard, Western culture has placed emphasis on the creation of docile bodies, as reflected in the article by Pylypa titled, "*Power and Bodily Practice: Applying the Work of Foucault to an Anthropology of the Body*". Here it is shown how biopower has become the dominant system of social control within modern Western society, where modern power is conceptualised by the levels of self-disciplinary practices we adopt, resulting in self-subjugation. Foucault's theory shows how power as "domination", involving physical coercion and repressive force, has shifted towards biopower, which is dispersed through society, embedded in practices and technologies and present in social relationships (Pylypa, 1998:21). Therefore, biopower operates on all micro-levels of everyday life through our desire to conform, subjugating the physical body to social regulation (Foucault, 1984:180).

Furthermore, Foucault visualises power as operating from two poles: the human species and the human body (Foucault, 1979). Disciplinary practices and techniques which are used to organise time, space and daily practices are both institutionalised by schools and workplaces and internalised by individuals through self-regulatory practices. For example, party starters are expected to embody style and 'sexiness', which is achieved through dress and appearance

codes. Outfits have to be glamorous and are often very revealing, to accentuate their feminine features. Their hair and make-up is expected to be neatly styled, all of which involves a considerable amount of effort and self-regulatory practices of advanced grooming. According to Foucault, we are all vehicles of power, meaning that power is everywhere and exists in all the discourses and norms of everyday life (Foucault, 1984). He explains that power should be seen as being productive rather than repressive owing to its ability to produce knowledge and desire. Relating this to the work of party starters, we see how they use their 'knowledge' to produce the desired appearance by altering their bodies and dressing in trendy clothing, as well as using make-up, wigs and accessories to create the desired look.

In this regard we see how conformity is achieved through compliance and knowledge, rather than coercion and force. Human beings have an intense desire to conform which leads individuals to sustain their oppression voluntarily through self-discipline and self-monitoring. According to Foucault, regulating bodies is achieved through practice and discourse, where individuals talk about what they "should" and "should not" do and also "confess to deviation from social norms" (Foucault, 1980:59). Party starters work within a very competitive environment, which relies heavily on good looks and staying up-to-date with societal expectations. The competitive nature means that each nightclub is trying to outdo the other through hosting the latest artists/celebrities and having the most attractive staff. This pressure results in self-disciplinary and self-monitory practices by party starters to conform to trends and in turn lure customers.

Of relevance to this study is how Pylypa (1998) looked at this in relation to three concrete bodily practices in Western culture, namely: physical fitness, femininity and obstetrical practices – all of which relate to sexuality. In eighteenth-century Europe, sexuality was controlled through repressive surveillance and control, but during modern ages, repression has transformed into the individual's desire to control their body. For example, through the desire to achieve "the perfect body" we subject ourselves to disciplinary practices like weight monitoring and exercise (Foucault, 1980:57). The fit and thin-body is idolised and desired because society views this type of body as being healthy, beautiful and sexy, whereas the unfit body is viewed as being unhealthy, unsexy and ugly (Pylypa, 1998:25). Although often untrue, this discourse is internalised and enforced through self-discipline and self-surveillance. The competitive nature of the night-time economy requires party starters to be

of a particular beauty standard. Their overall appearance, from their bodies to how they carry themselves is both self-monitored and enforced by the nightclub itself.

In this regard, women experience an increased pressure to conform to societal norms and standards in terms of the desire for thinness and fitness, which is reinforced by their "association with an ideal femininity" (Pylypa, 1998:28). Studies have shown that women engage in extreme self-disciplinary practices to appeal to what society describes as "desirable", which often leads to poor self-esteem and psychological and eating disorders such as anorexia and body dysmorphia (Jagger & Bordo, 1989). The feminine ideal is constantly shifting and changing, but chasing the 'ideal' remains pressurising for women. Whether ideals include embodying dependency and domesticity or the media demanding women to achieve a thin body, women are continuously pressured to conform (Pylypa, 1998:28-29). In this regard, Foucault's work shows how power operates through self-surveillance and self-disciplinary practices, as women construct an illusionary experience of empowerment when conforming (Foucault, 1980).

Women are conforming to societal norms and standards that exist within present day society. Increased pressure to look aesthetically pleasing not only to the public, but also on social media encourages women to conform. Achieving 'aesthetically pleasing' status involves dressing, posing, acting, and styling oneself in a way that is on trend (Woods, 2016). Party starters operate within a space that places a high value on their appearance and ability to stay relevant. The construction and governing of femininity operate in relation to desiring access into the male world. Hence, women conform to standards and codes of behaviour imposed by men, which raises the question of whether women have power, or agency if they indeed regulate their behaviour to comply with male world order. In this regard, some theorists have critiqued Foucault for removing the agency women have in accepting social norms and standards. Not all individuals respond to social norms in the same way and Foucault's theory does not account for variation in resistance (Pylypa, 1998:33-34). Thus, his theory does not take into account the possibility of successful resistance and change. Hartsock (1990:168) argues that Foucault reinforces "…the relations of dominations within our society by insisting that those of us who have been marginalized, remain at the margins." Overcoming and transforming knowledge and truth is not possible when one cannot appeal to truth and justify your position, which leaves women with no basis to make claims in a sexist society (Hartsock, 1990). However, Pylypa (1998:35) argues in favour of Foucault's theory, stating

that power does not aim to oppress us. Foucault's work adds to our understanding of the complexity of how power operates on multiple levels to create the "docile" body – one that conforms to societal norms and standards.

2.2.1 Society and the manipulation of women's bodies

Modern societies require more from the body, which means increased regulation and manipulation of bodily gestures and behaviours (Bartky, 1998:25). These disciplines produce practised and subjected "docile" bodies (Foucault, 1979:138). Bartky (1998) focuses particularly on the female body living in a patriarchal world and how a woman's body is subjected to increased pressure undergoing intense disciplinary practices. Although gender is assigned at birth, masculinity and femininity are not inherent. In accordance with your gender, you are expected to perform and enact the 'ideals' of what it means to be masculine or feminine (Bartky, 1998:27). According to Butler (1993:11), femininity is an artifice, an achievement, "…a mode of enacting and re-enacting received gender norms which surface as so many styles of flesh" (Butler, 1993:11). "The ideal body of femininity" is constructed through society, which is constantly changing according to time and culture (Bartky, 1998). Women who reflect cultural obsessions and preoccupations within that society are more likely to be accepted and admired.

During the time in society in which Bartky (1998) was writing, the ideal female body was "…taut, small-breasted, narrow-hipped and of a slimness bordering on emaciation (Bartky, 1998:28). She claimed that this fitted the image of a patriarchal society of women as fragile, powerless and in the need of protection. This discursive formation of femininity continues to exist in today's society with the push towards achieving "slimness". The presence of media, particularly social media, has a dramatic impact on the regulation of women's bodies in today's society (Singh, 2006:18). Western culture is obsessed with women having hourglass figures, which often results in women seeking cosmetic surgery to portray the image of being sexy and desirable. The hourglass figure refers to a slim body, with big breasts and wide hips. Establishing the allure of the hourglass figure is "programmed" in the human brain as it provides information about a woman's youthfulness, wealth and status (Singh, 2006:26). Similarly, the party starters are screened on appearance and whether they have the type of body that would appeal to the target market of the club. Appealing to male-spenders, bodies are selected based on what is desired, which in the case of Sky Nightclub, is women with hour-glass figures.

In addition to the physicality of the body, women are expected to engage in behaviours that protect the image that society, at that time, wants to portray. For example, being slim is valued by certain societies, even more so, when a woman is soft-spoken, polite, taking up as little space as possible (Bartky, 1998). Foucault's work on power shows that through different societies and eras, women are manipulated to meet the criteria society requires. Women react by enforcing regulatory, disciplinary practices on both their bodies and their behaviour; however this is not necessarily a form of compliance or submission. Women have agency and can use this to their advantage, especially in certain industries where a premium is placed on their bodies and how they use it. Party starters find themselves in a position where, even though they engage in self-monitory behaviours, their work has the ability to liberate and empower them. They are able to perform gender in a way that benefits them in order to attract customers, engage in their conversation and 'party' with them. Party starters benefit in this sense from performing within a heteronormative space that capitalizes on women being fun, flirty and attractive.

2.3 Butler –performativity

Judith Butler builds on the Foucaldian idea notions that subjectivity is discursively produced (Jagger, 2008:3). In her work, Butler explains that subjects are formed through their discursively constituted identity and develops the notion of performativity to explain how it works in relation to gendered subjectivity.

In *Gender Trouble,* Butler's notion of performativity, she agrees that gender is socially constructed (Butler, 1999:129). From the beginning of existence, all bodies are socially gendered and prescribed certain roles and behaviours, which are enforced through societal acts. Butler's argument points towards the idea that gender is not something one *is* but rather something one *does*, a "doing" rather than a "being" (Salih, 2002:55). "Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame" meaning, that bodies are prescribed how they should act, dress, behave, communicate, and carry themselves within everyday life – in line with the arguments espoused by Foucault (Butler, 1990:25). However, what Butler tries to convey, is that although gender is a particular kind of regulatory process, those who perform gender are not without agency even though their choices may be constrained (Salih, 2002:56).

Butler emphasises the distinction between 'performance' and 'performativity'. It is important to note that Butler does not claim that gender is a performance. She prefers to use the term "performativity", which embodies agency (Butler, 1994:33).

For Butler, gender is an act, it is something that one does or performs, which implies an element of agency in the way we conduct ourselves in public. Individuals represent gender by mannerisms, dress and social interactions, which provide "clues" as to how the culture and context define gender roles (Lester, 2008:284). Through performing gender, individuals reinforce and replicate norms and roles, legitimizing their existence. Choosing to perform one's gender means navigating gender norms and individual agency (Lester, 2008:283). Butler (1994:215) acknowledges that "…the physical body is that which can occupy the norm in myriad ways, exceed the norm, rework the norm, and expose realities to which we thought we were confined." Therefore agency is not entirely limited in the sense that norms can be over-performed and resisted (Lester, 2008:283). Individuals exist within societies that enforce and prescribe gender roles and norms, which they then perform. Central to this study is the agency involved in *how* individuals carry out these roles and norms. Certain workplaces, like nightclubs, emphasise the employees ability to embody, and at times over-emphasize, their sexuality. Party starters use their gender to embody femininity to personify what our society views as being "sexy".

Central to Butler's work on performativity is how it translates within places of work. Related to this is Caven *et* al's. (2013) study, which looks at performance and gender within sexualised work exploring how employers seek to control employees through dress codes and behaviour. Their work in the service sector shows how performances within the workplace have shifted from gender-neutral performative labour, to the sexualised labour involved in the objectification of female service workers. Natural feminine attributes are sexualised and women in service work are often required to engage in 'sexual servicing', which involves maintaining an 'attractive' appearance and engaging in sexualised jokes/banter (Adkins, 1995:133). Simply put, women within interactive service industries are expected to 'give men what they want'. Women become sexual commodities, which goes beyond dress codes and appearances to include embodied sexualised performances including flirting, smiling and ego massaging that they are expected to enact (Adkins, 1995).

Sexualised aesthetic work goes beyond the locales of the workplace and management control (Caven *et* al., 2013:3). In addition, sexual servicing does not just take place between

employees and customers; women are also subject to demands for sexualised banter and appearance from co-workers. This is important to acknowledge, as it highlights the patriarchal, heteronormative space in which women within service sectors work (Caven *et* al., 2013:3). Women are seen to exist to service the (hetero) sexualised needs of men, which emphasises how performances within the workplaces are highly gendered. Both aesthetic and performative labour performed within the workplace draw upon theatrical metaphors, as suggested by Goffman (1959). Goffman (1959) explained that people put on different performances of the self, depending on the social context making the distinction between 'front-of-stage and 'back-stage'. Front of stage performances involve continual regulation and maintenance where backstage performances include areas where the performance may be dropped (Goffman, 1959) For example, a person's performance in the workplace (front-of-stage) is likely to be more managed and controlled and adheres to workplace codes, whereas at home, the performance is likely to be more relaxed and true-to-self.

In this regard Butler (1990) holds that gender is a 'parody' or 'performance' that gives rise to gendered performances. At the heart of these gendered performances, is the heterosexual matrix, which includes dominant heterosexual norms from which gendered categories emanate. Sexuality and gender categories are continually performed and maintained through 'corporeal signs' (Butler, 1990). Especially in the service sector, gendered roles and performances form the basis for sexualised work, where compulsory heterosexuality shapes workplace performances both front – and – backstage (Caven *et* al., 2013:5). In this regard, Nickson and Warhurst (2009) use the example of the American cheerleader-styled restaurant, Hooters. Hooters contractually stipulate standards of beauty and appearance based on female-sex-appeal, where employees are expected to engage in sexual banter (Warhurst & Nickson, 2009).

Interactive service work involves women playing into patriarchal narratives where males are seen as being superior and women are simply there to serve. Although enforced, whether through legislation or expectations, which are often unspoken, some rebel against the narratives that exist within heteronormative spaces (Butler, 1990). Others play into these narratives for personal gains, such as the possibility of increasing tips, or increasing the profits of the employers. Therefore, there is a fine line between being a victim to societal norms versus expressing agency. In this regard, the work of Shefer (2015) on the dualism between victimhood and agency is particularly relevant to this study as she picks up on both

the work of Foucault and Butler. Shefer (2015) argues that – '…where there is power; there is resistance'. While men may assume they have patriarchal/male privilege and power, this is being increasingly resisted by women, especially feminists, who push back against this. Patterns of power are constantly at play and over time the roles that women occupy in society are continually changing. Resisting societal and institutionalised structures that operate to oppress women and their bodies are being challenged to reduce inequalities and normative gender roles (Shefer, 2015:211).

While Shefer's work focuses on HIV, it provides a useful lens on issues of gender, power and sexualities. Her work addresses the "victim-agency dichotomy", which discusses the battle between reinforcing and challenging normative gender roles amongst young women (and men) (Shefer, 2015:215). She challenges the notion that women are submissive, passive and asexual, while men are seen as controlling, aggressive and hypersexual in their relations with each other (Shefer, 2015:215). A continued emphasis on women's powerlessness and passivity has the potential to silence the times that women *do* challenge men and resist male power (Shefer, 2015:215). A woman's capacity to articulate positive sexual desires and lived experiences is hindered when she is viewed as disempowered. There has been an increasing amount of work on positive discourse about female sexual desires, needs and the possibilities of asserting themselves in ways that are equitable and pleasurable.

Shefer (2015) argues that we need to move away from dialogical constructions of gender and sexualities and resist the binaristic picture of women as either victims or agents. Agency refers to the ability to define one's goals and act on them. Embodying agency means one's capacity to make decisions and act on these, which increases one's power and freedom to control resources and institutions that shape one's life. As an extension of Shefer's (2015) victim-agency analysis, I look at Bhana and Anderson's (2013) study, "*Desire and constraint in the construction of South African teenage women's sexualities*." Although their study focuses on HIV and the way that agency is employed, how the young women in the study use their agency, is relevant to my study. Researchers now suggest that while male power is pervasive, it is simultaneously contested and negotiated in ways that permit a measure of female agency (Bhana & Pattmann, 2011). As opposed to women being portrayed as docile expressing sexual passivity, young women are starting to be seen as strategizers who create sexual meaning within the context of sexual oppression and resistance (Bhana & Anderson, 2013:549). This study showed how young women are increasingly objecting to, resisting and

adapting to male sexual power. In conclusion, the study found that the women negotiated their femininity in ways that both permitted and hindered their sexual agency (Bhana & Anderson, 2013:565).

Similarly, Sociologist Catherine Hakim (2010:499) argues that women possess what she calls, "erotic capital". Erotic capital describes the social value that an individual or group acquires owing to their sexual attractiveness. Building on the work of Pierre Bourdieu, she argues that erotic capital is used by women as a form of agency and can be used to obtain other forms of capital, including social, cultural and economic capital. Erotic capital is a combination of aesthetic, visual, physical, social and sexual attractiveness to other members of society, particularly those of the opposite sex (Hakim, 2010:501).

Women generally have more erotic capital than men because "…they work harder at it" (Hakim, 2010:504). Given the large imbalance between women and men in sexual interest over life's course, women are well-placed to exploit their erotic capital. However, a central feature of patriarchy has been the constriction of 'moral' ideologies that inhibit women from exploiting their erotic capital to achieve economic and social benefits (Hakim, 2010:510). In other words, it is not socially acceptable for women to use this form of capital. According to Hakim (2010) feminist theory has been unable to extricate itself from this patriarchal perspective and reinforces 'moral' prohibitions on women's sexual, social and economic activities and women's exploitation of their erotic capital. This has led to widespread theoretical debate among feminists, with one stand condemning the use of erotic capital as a form of oppression, while others argue that women have the right to use their bodies as agency or as a career in whatever form (Gerassi, 2015). In terms of my study, one sees that in the highly sexualised space of Sky Nightclub, party starters perform gender in a particular way by using their erotic capital to appease men.

Erotic capital is directly linked to aesthetic and emotional labour, as well as bodywork foreground embodiment. Within interactive service industries, erotic capital is used to appeal to the senses of customers by creating attraction simply by having 'the right look' (Warhurst and Nickson, 2009:386).

CHAPTER THREE: THE NATURE OF INTERACTIVE SERVICE WORK AND GENDER

3.1 The nature of interactive service work, particularly VIP nightclubs

Millions of people across the globe work in interactive service industries, a sector which is often understudied and undermined in terms of the amount of labour employees perform (Warhurst & Nickson, 2007). Academic accounts for the nature of interactive service work emphasize the 'servility' of the workers within the service encounter. The term 'service' shares etymological roots with 'servant' and 'servitude', which compliments the role that service workers occupy (Korczynski, 2002:135). Interactive service workers adopt the social role of implied subordination to customers, who have '…the right to define and direct the relationship'. Although employees are conditioned to place customers first, this does not mean that they have little or no capacity to shape the service encounter (Bradley, *et* al., 2004). This is particularly true for party starters, who play a large role in leading and entertaining relationships and interactions with customers.

Weaver (2005), drawing on Goffman (1959), explains that interactive service work can be compared to a performance. Service employees can be viewed as 'actors', who assume certain 'roles' and engage in improvisation, where the workplace is seen as being the 'set'. VIP nightclubs embody this notion by portraying a night out as an 'experience'. VIP nightclubs, like Sky Nightclub, are theatrical by nature, where dancers, waiters/waitresses, and party starters all put on a show for the guests, giving them an all-round performance. Expressive acts, and the social interactions that result from them, have commercial value to employers (Warhurst & Nickson, 2007:6). Employees within interactive service industries are viewed as being very adaptable, as most social encounters have outcomes that cannot be predetermined, meaning that employees have to improvise and draw on their social skills (Warhurst & Nickson, 2007:6). This is particularly the case for service workers who work in VIP nightclubs, where service is finely tailored to meet the high-end standards which customers demand.

The VIP party scene is dispersed globally, tapping into the world's wealthiest spectrum and becoming increasingly more mobile and international than in previous centuries (Atkinson *et* al., 2011). These parties take place in "urban glamour zones" in global cities like New York and Miami. Like these global cities, Cape Town is a hot-spot tourist destination, drawing in people from across the globe to witness its natural beauty and vibrant nightlife (About Cape

Town, 2005: Bars and Nightlife). VIP nightclubs cater to the global elite, giving the clientele VIP (very important people) status, which is a purchasable status denoting valued customers (Mears, 2015:24). VIP customers are highly mobile, with large amounts of disposable money and as a result require extra care and attention by service workers in luxury settings.

VIP nightclubs are characterised by offering "bottle service", meaning that premium alcohol is served by the bottle and the ordering of single drinks is not permitted (Mears, 2015:1103). VIP clients reserve tables at a high price and are then served bottles of alcohol, which are brought to the tables by attractive waitresses/bottle girls. All of the bottles are lit up with sparklers, which alerts the club that a customer has ordered a premium bottle/s of alcohol (Mears, 2015:1103). This adds to the luxurious ambiance that VIP nightclubs try to create and encourages spending through the competitive nature of customers. VIP nightclubs are therefore considered to be exclusive and harder to access. This scarcity lends a higher status (Bourdieu, 2002). Within these A-list clubs, there are visible cues that exhibit wealth and status: "bottles with sparklers and beautiful women" (Mears, 2015:24). Sparkler-lit bottles are purchased by guests, who are almost always men, referred to as "spenders". Among the regular guests are celebrities and influencers, who don't pay for their bottles, but are valued for their social capital. VIP nightclubs attract this type of clientele by relying on women of a certain look (Rivera, 2010).

Clubs target women whose bodies correspond to those valued in the high-fashion arena, such as models and influencers. These women are often called "girls", a term that signifies a distinct social category (Weinbaum *et* al., 2008). Within the VIP sphere, the "girls" are usually young, between the ages of 16-25, thin, tall, and typically though not exclusively white. "Girls" are viewed as being those who are the most physically attractive and "cool", with high cultural esteem (Mears, 2015:26). In addition, "girls" add social value to men, playing a key role in helping men maintain social ties, which is valuable to businessmen who want to expand business connections and opportunities. There is social value attached to having attractive women at one's table and as a result these men are admired and attract attention (Skeggs, 2004). Clubs go out of their way to ensure that they have a good quantity of quality "girls" working for the venue owing to their effectiveness in attracting the desired clientele.

The nature of interactive service work and particularly the role that women occupy in VIP nightclubs are often looked at from a "consequence" perspective. In other words, these

women are often pitied and look down upon for the work that they do and for their lack of willingness to choose this occupation (Mears, 2015). This study aims to view these women as willing individuals, who have agency over the work that they do, often finding it liberating and enjoyable. With, interactive service industries can be extremely draining. The long hours coupled with the high-pressure environment demands employees to perform an intense amount of emotional, aesthetic labour and bodywork. Party starters engage in work that uses both their bodies and their minds to attract customers, uphold the nightclub's name and adhere to societal standards and expectations. Aesthetic labour focuses on the visual, whereby interactive service workers engage in behaviours to monitor their dress and overall appearance which will drive profits for the establishment that they work for (Warhurst & Nickson, 2007:116).

3.2 Aesthetic labour

Interactive service industry jobs that involve 'person-to-person' or 'soft-skills' have become increasingly popular, over-taking many jobs that require 'thinking skills'. Having the look to fit the job is ever more important (Warhurst & Nickson, 2007:103-104). In their article titled, "*Employee experience of aesthetic labour in retail and hospitality*", Warhurst and Nickson (2007), argue that aesthetic labour is used by employers to level competitive advantage. Therefore, the appearance of employees serves as a means to boost profits and increase a company's success within the economy.

Aesthetic labour refers to the commodification of worker aesthetic capacities and attributes and the valorisation of embodiment (Warhurst & Nickson, 2007:116). From the job application process to hiring procedures to the day-to-day work of employees, aesthetic labour plays an integral role within work spaces, particularly interactive service industries, such as entertainment and hospitality. Job advertisements are one of the first steps of the employment process and are highly likely to contain attributes such as, "well-groomed", "well-presented", "neat" and sometimes even "good-looking", when advertising for potential candidates (Mears, 2015). The concept of aesthetic labour developed from this increased awareness of physical appearance in relation to employment, where candidates are hired because they embody particular characteristics that are likely to appeal to customers. This means that a candidate's physical appearance carries weight and can influence whether they are hired or not. Once employed, these characteristics are organizationally mobilised, developed and eventually commodified (Weinbaum *et* al., 2008).

19

Within the sociology of work, aesthetic labour is an increasingly important field of research, particularly within online industries such as blogging and interactive service industries. Hospitality and entertainment industries have always seen an unequal ratio of men and women employed, with women dominating interactive service industry work. Aesthetic labour is therefore geared towards women where their 'embodied capacities and attributes' are mobilised, transformed and commodified into 'skills' and 'competencies' designed to produce a 'style' of service encounter (Warhurst *et* al., 2000:4). Using aesthetic labour, women employed in interactive service industries work to appeal to the senses of customers aurally and visually. This is done to create favourable interactions with customers and as a result these women are often employed to be on 'display' in an attempt to enhance business performance (Warhurst *et* al., 2000:5).

Creating the perfect appearance through smiling, looking inviting and accommodating and maintaining a friendly persona, all contribute to delivering a good service. Women employed in service industries are expected to tend to their appearance in two ways: through clothing, make-up and hair, and also through maintaining pleasing facial expressions (Warhurst *et* al., 2000:5). Therefore, for aesthetic labour to be embodied to its fullest potential, hiring staff with the 'right look' is important in interactive/entertainment industries. Hiring staff based on their physical appearance and level of attractiveness to the public eye, as pervasive as it may seem, influences business profits. In the current neoliberal economy, employers are more likely to employ employees who need little training and are therefore more likely to hire those who already possess the desired look (Maitra & Maitra, 2018:343). This means that women who embody the appearance and style that the business is looking for, are more likely to be hired. Because minimal training will be required, employees engage in the continual self-improvement and self-management to produce a particular style of service that appeals to customers (Maitra & Maitra, 2018:343). Employees are also hired based on those whose habitus aligns with the organizational brand image and its clientele, therefore 'class-privileged and consumer driven' candidates are more likely to be hired. Those who look or sound like low-wage workers who are struggling to make a living are less likely to make the cut (Maitra & Maitra, 2018:243).

The concepts of aesthetics pertaining to physical appearance, overall persona and sense of style are looked at before candidates are even hired. Aesthetic labour plays an integral role within the workplace, particularly within interactive service industries, such as entertainment and hospitality, where employees become showpieces for what the business has to offer.

Women employed in interactive service industries are obliged to pay particular attention to their appearance, be it through dress codes, sense of style and various aesthetic skills relating to the overall aura and physical impressions (Maitra & Maitra, 2018:343). Appealing to the senses of customers through aesthetic skilling/up-skilling is used as a selling point to accumulate profits in many interactive service industries.

Women capitalise on appealing to their aesthetics as a means of making money for themselves and in turn make profits for a business. Drawing on their physical appearance has opened up work opportunities for many women globally. However, it comes at the cost of time, effort and money to maintain this appearance. In Entwistle and Wissinger's (2006) article titled, "*Keeping up Appearances: Aesthetic Labour in the Fashion Modelling Industries of London and New York*", they discuss the effort involved in the upkeep of aesthetic labour. Firstly, they argue that aesthetic codes are constantly changing and therefore require upkeep in order to conform to the socially defined notions of appearance (Entwistle & Wissinger, 2006:774). Secondly, they highlight that aesthetic labour involves the entire embodied-self and how keeping up with certain appearances and trends, are emotionally taxing. Lastly, they argue that aesthetic labour is an on-going production of the self/body and is therefore not only performed while at work (Entwistle & Wissinger, 2006:774). The 'aesthetic labourer' is therefore a culmination of existing beauty trends and standards, whose labour is not only executed when at work, but becomes a lifestyle.

The maintenance of aesthetic labour and the creation and on-going upkeep of being the aesthetic labourer is shown in two ways. Firstly, through the importance of 'body-projects', which are outlined in Chris Shilling's (2000) work on modernity and self-identity, and secondly through the production of workers who are 'always-on', meaning their work exists outside of working hours (Entwistle & Wissinger, 2006:778). Chris Shilling (2000), identifies three body-projects; dieting, exercise and body building and age management projects, the latter of which has been added since his initial research (Shilling, 2000). Shilling's (2000) research shows that the rise in modernity has led to an increased emphasis placed on the body, consumption and leisure, making 'body-projects' central to employment. Bodies are regulated through exercise regimes, aesthetic/beauty procedures (such as botox and plastic surgery) and beauty trends relating to clothing and styling. Therefore, aesthetic labour and the performance thereof is on-going and has to be constantly regulated and maintained, within and outside of the workplace, in order to meet societal and employment demands (Entwistle & Wissinger, 2006:778).

Aslop and Lennon's (2018) article titled, "*Aesthetic surgery and the expressive body*" gives an accurate account of the relationship between the body and the self and how women undergo aesthetic procedures as a means of empowering themselves and their livelihoods. Feminists oppose this and argue that aesthetic procedures and surgeries are performed owing to the objectification of women's bodies under the male gaze or overall societal standards of what it means to be beautiful. Aslop and Lennon (2018:95) offer a different perspective, suggesting that the decision to modify one's body can be both empowering and intelligible. Whilst extensive feminist research has shown how women's bodies have been controlled, regulated and objectified, current discussions stress that women have agency to decide, for example, whether to undergo cosmetic surgery or not. Kathy Davis (1995:163), who has widely researched the feelings and outcomes of women who have undergone aesthetic procedures concludes that; "cosmetic surgery can be an understandable step in the context of an individual woman's experience of embodiment and of her possibilities by taking action to alter her circumstances". Cosmetic surgery, has the possibility to impact the world of work for those who rely on their physical appearance. It also has the opportunity to empower women, by boosting their confidence and self-esteem (Aslop & Lennon, 2018:100). Yet one cannot deny that societal beauty standards and the 'male gaze' can place pressure on women to undergo aesthetic procedures to improve their self-esteem and worth.

Given the centrality of aesthetic labour in the service sector particularly, this has been a topic of much research in terms of how women strive to fit into societal moulds relating to attractiveness. From the initial screening of potential employees, filtering out those who don't have 'the look', to the on-going management of aesthetic labouring, the significance of aesthetic labour within the workplace and beyond is highlighted (Maitra & Maitra, 2018:343). Some industries, such as the entertainment and hospitality industries rely more heavily on aesthetic labour and the employment of women, as shown by Entistle and Wissigner (2006), as a means to drive profits and create the desired 'look' their business is trying to achieve. Women within interactive service industries can be seen as 'aesthetic labourers' who depend on their outer appearance to bring provide an income. However, it goes beyond just looking the part, interactive service workers have to have the right attitude and express the desired emotions for the job.

3.3 Emotional labour

As the years go by, the nature of paid work is shifting towards symbolic forms of production, where the emotions of employees are important 'tools' of labour (Forseth, 2001:4). Broadly defined, emotional labour refers to the management of emotions and bodily displays within the workplace (Hochschild, 2011:7). Hochschild has done extensive research on emotions, which are initially a private act, but become commodified by institutions and organisations to improve customer service and to drive profits (Hochschild, 1983). Hochschild explains how feelings and emotions are regulated, manipulated and controlled.

Emotional labour has exchange value and is subject to the laws of supply and demand. The ability of workers to create and control particular emotions when interacting with customers is not only important in rendering a service, or promoting sales, but has a profound effect on the image of an establishment and its ability to both attract and retain customers. As a result, organisations have come to monitor and control this in terms of the way employees speak, act, dress and behave. In interactive service industries, this typically requires employees to perform in a certain way, or to put on a professional mask (Forseth, 2001:7).

In Hochschild's (1983) work, she identifies two ways in which emotional labour is performed, 'surface acting' and 'deep-acting'. Surface acting involves employees changing their outer emotional display to influence the emotions of the customers. It also often involves the deception of others but not the deception of those doing the acting (Taylor & Tyler, 2000:76). For example, if the employee is cheerful and smiling, the customer is more likely to be receptive and impressed with the service. Deep acting involves changing more than just ones surface appearance but rather changing one's feelings from the 'inside out'. Deep acting requires altering how one may feel and rationalising the emotions of the customer, therefore it involves the deception of both the actor and the customer. For example, if a customer lashes out, as the employee you have to remain professional at all times despite your own feelings.

The gendered division of labour is explored by Hochschild (1983), in her work where she identifies that women are more likely to be employed in sectors where they can affirm and enhance the well-being and status of others. Women have traditionally been viewed as masters of controlling their anger with the ability to be 'nice', making them a suitable fit for interactive service industries. Traditionally men have been viewed as being more aggressive, harsh and less likely to be polite and friendly. In Taylor and Tyler's (2000) study on

emotional labour and sexual difference in the airline industry, they concluded that emotional labour is not considered a "gender-neutral phenomenon". Hochschild's (1983) initial research supports this claim, stating the emotional labour is predominantly performed by women employed in industries, which require intensive emotional labour. In service industries, like the airline industry, there is a demand to maximise service quality and customer satisfaction and this is achieved through the feeling management of employees (Taylor & Tyler, 2000:78).

Feeling management involves employers controlling and regulating the feelings and emotions of employees in order to maximise service delivery satisfaction. Taylor and Tyler's (2000) study showed that women are more likely to be employed in service industries, as they are more likely to chat, build rapport and interact. Flight attendants are expected to be organised, attentive, well-prepared and sincere and have the ability to care emotionally and physically for others. This work is seen as being 'women's work' owing to the qualities that many women are viewed to possess naturally. Therefore, it is perceived that being friendly, having higher tolerance levels and being more accommodating comes more naturally to woman and therefore require less feeling management (Taylor & Tyler, 2000:84). In the airline industry, women are trained on how to deal with customers and how to shape and change their feelings. During the interviews, the air hostesses admitted that when male customers would 'have a go' or embarrass them, they had to tolerate their behaviour and "just take a few breaths and let the irritation cool down" (Taylor & Tyler, 2000:84). Pleasing the customer is always the first priority and this is emphasised before the air hostesses even begin their training. Gendered assumptions about the 'natural' abilities and personalities, including the capacity for women to 'put up with' sexualised encounters and offensive behaviour, are inscribed within managerial attempts in prescribing emotional labour.

The airline industry promises service that is personal, where flight attendants are expected to be friendly and open to requests (Hochschild, 2004:331). The simple act of smiling is sexualised and air hostesses stated that beyond being overly helpful and accommodating to the needs of the guests, they often have to respond to the sexual fantasies of passengers. There is an underlying demand to accept flirting and propositioning, which are seen as signs of attractiveness and sexiness, and often results in the suppression of feelings, where certain behaviours are demeaning or intrusive (Hochschild, 2004:331). Air hostesses, like party starters, are therefore burdened with the constant need to hide how they may truly feel in an attempt to remain 'professional' and maintain customer satisfaction. The control of feelings

and emotions within the workplace can be both direct and indirect. Management supervises, regulates and controls the display of their employees' emotions, which then adds pressure to the employees to self-monitor and uphold a particular standard.

The competitive nature of the modern-day economy has placed extra pressure on organisations to ensure that certain emotions are expressed, while others remain supressed. Businesses within the interactive service industry sector, are structured around customer satisfaction and in order to keep customers happy, employees are expected to keep themselves 'in check' to avoid complaints. Employees are driven to achieve customer satisfaction as a means of getting tips as well as to avoid customers complaining to management (Hochschild, 2004:345). The continual performance of emotional labour has a direct impact on the profitability of a business, which in turn affects the lives of employees. Employees depend on their emotional labour to bring in an in extra income in the form of tips, or even to be promoted within the industry they work in. For example, air hostesses who make an extra effort, are extra attentive, caring and patient, are more likely to be appointed head of the cabin crew.

Throughout Hochschild's research she explains the dimensions to the emotional labourer and the effects thereof. Consumer-facing work relies on the commodification of emotions and central to her theory is its application to Marx's alienation theory (Bolton & Saxena-Iyer, 2009:532). Through the commodification of emotions, workers become alienated through what Hochschild refers to as 'transmutation of feelings'. Engaging in deep-acting and surface acting often results in workers becoming alienated from the product they produce or the service they perform. The continual management of feelings and emotional display can lead to employees belonging more to the organisation than to the 'self' (Hochschild, 1983:198). Adhering to managerial control and societal standards, these workers adopt a workplace persona. Adapting their appearance and emotions to meet workplace expectations, proves that the body plays an integral role in the services that they deliver.

3.4 Bodywork – 'the project of the self' and sexuality

The sociology of the body has become an increasingly important field of study. Authors such as Gimlin (2007) and Wolkowitz (2006) have proposed the concept of 'bodywork' or 'body labour'. Bodywork includes both the emotional and the physical aspects of work and exists in different forms (Gimlin, 2007:354). The notion of bodywork is categorised by work performed on one's own body, paid labour on the bodies of others, the management of

emotional experience, and the display and the production/modification of bodies through work.

Drawing from the work of Foucault's rationalised management of social life and human bodies, contemporary theorists offer a more comprehensive account of the notion of bodywork (Gimlin, 2007:255). Through the different forms of bodywork, contemporary literature explores how the body of oneself and others is managed and modified through the act of work. Body/appearance work explores how bodies are transformed from their 'natural' state to one that is 'cultural' through adapting appearances to meet societal expectations (Gimlin, 2007:255). This transformation is executed through both daily mundane forms of bodywork, such as dressing and hair/make-up styling, as well as the individual's experiences of bodywork within the workplace (Wolkowitz, 2006). The study of body/appearance work outlines the emphasis that post-industrial economies place on the employee's entire body or the 'embodied self'. The body as well as the work the body performs is sold both to and by the employer, thus making the theory of body/appearance work central to this study.

Whereas before bodies use to be valued for what they can do in the workplace, they are now also valued for how a person looks and performs, and can act as a tool for corporate branding (Hancock & Tyler, 2000). Individuals undergo, which Gimlin (2007) refers to as 'the project of the self', where embodied capacities that were once private, become commodified. The project of self involves the entirety of one's being, including the gender and sexuality of individuals (Gimlin, 2007, 356-157). Gender and sexuality have therefore proven to be key elements in the study of body/appearance work as both have a direct impact on the success of businesses. Marcuse (1968) was one of the first theorists to identify the pervasiveness of sexuality and its embodied display in the workplace. Businesses and organisations encourage the embodied display of sexuality through dress, grooming, flirting, gossip and demeanour as a means of gratification in work that is generally seen as being mundane (Gimlin, 2007). Marcuse (1968) explains that in addition to mental and physical capacities, the sexuality of employees is also commodified and 'sold' to employers through the bodily display of sexual features.

Gender plays an integral role in body/appearance work, particularly relating to corporate branding. McDowell (1997:139) identified gender as being central to the success of the workplace. The notion of 'the gendered body', personal appearance and all the unseen work that goes into maintaining societal standards, affects the way in which, and how successfully,

a business or establishment operates. Societal standards relating to style, bodily form, overall appearance and how employees 'perform', continue to rise in modern-day workspaces (McDowell, 1997: 140). Although these standards are applied to all genders, literature shows that there is increased pressure on the younger generation, particularly younger women (Gimlin, 2007:357). For example, the findings of McDowell's (1997) study showed that older male workers engaged in more traditional, patriarchal, disembodied aspects of work whereas younger men engaged in various forms of bodywork within the workplace. The younger men proved to be more conscious of their client's perceptions of them and as a result paid more attention to their bodily display or discipline; such as their weight, clothing and hairstyle. Overall, the study showed that women often ended up adopting an alternate version of 'the self' through 'building up a shell' and not using their 'real personality' within the workplace (McDowell, 1997: 201). Thus, a workplace persona is created through the continual management of bodily display and appearance. The social construction of the female body as "nature, not culture, for pleasure, not work" continues to mark women as different from, and inferior to, an embodied but still ideally masculinised worker (McDowell 1997, 140).

Elaine Hall (1993) performed a study within the service sector, looking at the construction of gender relations amongst waitering/waitressing staff. She discusses two mechanisms through which work organisations construct gender. Firstly, through the gendered division of labour and secondly how job performance is defined according to gender within the workplace (Hall, 1993:329). Work within the service industries focuses particularly on what is defined as "women's work", with waitressing being one of them. The allocation of positions with the workplace produces gender inequality at different organisation levels (Hall, 1993:330). This study showed that interactions and appearance styles differ amongst the genders, meaning that the same job requires different expectations depending on whether you are male or female. Female severs were required to wear feminine, 'more sexy' uniforms, mainly for working in family-style restaurant or coffee shops (Hall, 1993:338). Male servers found themselves in more formal dining-type restaurants, where tuxedos and more formal clothing was worn. This differentiation in uniform has a direct impact on how staff are viewed and in turn affects their status in society (Hall, 1993:343). Men are able to maintain a higher status thus showing the role that gender plays in appearance/bodywork.

Body/emotional management is the third form of bodywork, which focuses on emotional labour (Gimlin, 1997:361). Through the theory of bodywork, emotional labour is directly linked to the body and the health thereof. "Bodily well-being", focuses on the link between

27

the mind and the body and how emotional management within the workplace influences the overall health and well-being of employees. This literature links the above discussions on the theory of emotional labour to bodywork by linking emotions to the physical body (Gimlin, 1997:365). The three forms of bodywork are linked to the final form, body-making at work. This form of bodywork focuses on the fact that human biology itself is partially formed by social factors, including social events and relationships (Gimlin, 1997:363). The impact of bodywork both within and outside of the workplace has the ability to "make" or alter the physical body. For example, Hochschild's (2004) study on flight attendants showed that wrinkles formed on the faces of workers, as a result of constant smiling. Lessor (1984), who also studied flight attendants, found that many of the women experienced health problems, such as varicose veins, back problems, hearing loss and early menopause as a consequence of their work. The body is therefore negatively altered, which influences the self-esteem, confidence, social prospects and overall well-being of workers (Gimlin, 1997:363). In addition, jobs that require intense emotional labour are linked to psychological changes involving the endocrine and nervous system. Body-making also includes alterations to the body done through cosmetic surgeries, which can often result in a lot of pain and discomfort.

The study of bodywork and the various forms in which it operates, ties together previous sections on emotional and aesthetic labour but emphasises the influence of one's physical body in the work that one performs. Looking at the way in which bodywork operates, is central to the work of party starters, who rely on their bodies to perform their role successfully. In addition, it is important to look at how the continual engagement in emotional labour, aesthetic labour and bodywork affects employees, like party starters, who are expected to put their body and mind at the forefront of everything that they do.

3.5 Consequences of aesthetic and emotional labour and bodywork

As shown above, emotional labour is a key component within interactive service industries across the globe. Although as previously discussed, emotional labour proves to be beneficial to establishments, and at times, the employees, providing "service with a smile" can be detrimental to emotional labourers (Hochschild, 1983). Research has shown a direct correlation between emotional labour and negative effects on the mind and health of employees, including burn-out, attitude and behavioural changes and high levels of stress (Pugliesi, 1999:187). Out of all the 'labours' discussed above, emotional labour has the widest range of consequences within interactive service industries. Looking at the

consequences is of particular relevance to my study, where party starters engage in large amounts of aesthetic emotional labour and bodywork to perform their job successfully.

Maintaining positive relations and reactions from customers within service industries is not an easy task but has a direct impact on the success of establishments. Putting the customer, their needs, wants and desires first means that the true feelings and emotions of employees take second place. Literature has shown that the performance of emotional labour has a diverse range of consequences for employees, both positive and negative (Pugliesi, 1999:125). Pugliesi (1999) researched work-stress, job satisfaction and physiological distress as a result of emotional labour performed by employees. Other researchers, such as Hight and Park (2018), Mann (1997) and Grandey *et* al. (2019) link the effects of emotional labour with substance use. Studying the effects and consequences that emotional labour has on employees has become a growing topic of interest of research, particularly in industries, such as hospitality (Pugliesi, 1999:125).

In recent years, the focus has shifted more from economic gains to one that highlights the social dimensions of the workplace and employee experiences (Pugliesi, 1999:126). This can be attributed to the growth seen in the service sector across the globe, where tasks of work are intertwined with interpersonal features. Paid employment distinguishes the interpersonal tasks performed in service sectors from general human interactional dynamics performed outside of the workplace. Emotional states and displays are actively created, managed and controlled within service industries (Pugliesi, 1999:127). Altering one's true emotions and ensuring that you are always friendly, inviting and accommodating, often goes against our nature as human beings. Emotional labour is guided by employers and often leaves employees feeling detached from their true selves and seeking coping mechanisms (Hochschild, 1983). In Hochschild's, (1983) study on flight attendants, she emphasised the negative consequences that emotional labour has on flight attendants, including inauthenticity, burn-out, loss of feelings and diminished self-esteem. Pugliesi's (1999) study looks at the link between the degree of control employees have versus work-stress through the use of the "demand-control" model of job strain.

The demand-control model of work stress was used in relation to the effect that emotional labour has on employees. The performance of emotional labour within the workplace operates according to the demand placed on employees by organisations and how much control employees have over their emotions and display of feelings (Pugliesi, 1999:127). The

study concluded that jobs that place high demands on employees and offer limited control are the most stressful for workers, increasing the risk for a variety of psychological and health problems. This study fell short in examining cultural and structural features that may shape the effects of emotional labour. For example, paying particular attention to the role that gender plays in the performance of emotional labour, as well as employees who engage in self-monitoring practices. The demand-control model of work stress is a useful tool in analysing the effects of emotional labour with interactive service industries, which include high-stress jobs.

Mann (1997) performed a study, which linked emotions with rationality, to prove that organisations directly control emotional display. This study demonstrated the effects that the suppression of true emotions to comply with organisational expectations and managerial control can have on the well-being and general behaviours of employees. The shaping and control of emotions are either done through a formalised written set of rules and/or indirectly enforced by employers through their organisational culture (Mann, 1997:2). Just as societal expectations and ideals govern our everyday emotional display, so do organisations that govern expected behaviour and emotions. Employees have to engage in continual cognitive control over their emotional display, where three types of emotions can be distinctly recognised; integrative emotions, masking emotions and differentiating emotions.

Integrative emotions, such as friendliness, are often emphasised and highly demanded from interactive service industries, as the emotional style of offering the service is "part of the service itself" (Mann, 1997:4). Therefore, waiters/waitresses often display integrative emotions to promote satisfaction in customers. Secondly, masking emotions involve masking true emotions, norms or display rules as "detached concern" (Hochschild, 1983:150). Detached concern is a process whereby service professionals blend compassion with emotional distance when interacting with customers to prevent burnout. Lastly, differentiating emotions, which are often displayed in work roles that require a negative emotional display, or "positive bad will" as Hochschild likes to refer them. This type of emotional display involves evoking hospitality and irritability within customers and is often only displayed by bouncers or bill collectors (Mann, 1997:5). These three types of emotions outlined by Mann (1997) are included in the performance of emotional labour.

The suppression of negative emotions and the constant encouragement of positive emotions often create a despondent individual, detached from their true selves (Hochschild, 1983).

Interactive service industries rule out the possibility of having a 'bad day' and prohibit employees from displaying any sort of irritability, anger or hostility. Friendliness, cheerfulness, high energy, support and care should be displayed to customers at all times to provide a premium service. Various studies, such as Mann (1997), Hochschild (1983) and Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) showed that conflict arose when employees did not genuinely feel the emotions that they are expected to display. Emotional labourers experience emotional dissonance, which is closely related to cognitive dissonance and results in employees feeling false and hypocritical. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) concluded in their study that deep acting impairs one's sense of authentic self, resulting in self-alienation and the inability to distinguish between true and inauthentic emotions. As workers distance themselves from how they truly feel, they distance themselves from who they truly were and often end up abandoning core values and experiencing burnout (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993:96).

Looking at the consequences of emotional labour is imperative in attempting to understand coping mechanisms that employees, like party starters, adopt to cope with the effects of emotional labour. Employees within interactive service industries, particularly within hospitality, often experience burnout because of extensive emotional labour (Mann, 1997). Burnout often results in workers feeling unmotivated, emotionally, and physically drained and despondent. Strenuous working hours, physical demands and the continual performance of emotional labour increases the likelihood of work-related stress. Through an assessment of literature and various studies (Hight & Park, 2018; Grandey *et* al., 2019; Violanti & Aron, 1993) relating to emotional labour and work stress, it can be concluded that substance use and alcohol consumption are often used as coping mechanisms by employees in interactive service industries.

As an attempt to understand the link between emotional labour and the likelihood of employees engaging in substance use and alcohol consumption, I considered the effects of emotional labour as well as the nature of service industries. Hospitality and service industries promote long strenuous hours, shift work, high physical and emotional labour demands, and an increased pressure to adhere to societal pressures and standards (High & Park, 2018). Hight and Park's (2018) study looked at the causes and effects of substance use amongst restaurant workers. Employees within restaurant industries have historically shown a higher tendency towards substance and alcohol consumption. Similarly, Grandey *et* al. (2019), studied emotional labour and alcohol consumption among service workers in the United States and found that employees are likely to engage in substance use and alcohol

consumption. This increased likelihood can be attributed to the effects of working in an industry that involves high levels of work stress, as well as the accessibility of drugs and alcohol within interactive service industries.

Employees within restaurant and night-time industries, such as nightclubs, are more likely to engage in substance use and alcohol consumption owing to accessibility (Grandey *et* al., 2019:482). Working in an environment that serves alcohol to generate profits means that employees constantly interact with alcohol and have it at their disposal. While most studies tend to focus on alcohol and drug use amongst patrons, Buvik *et* al. (2019) examined substance and alcohol use amongst staff members at licensed premises in Norway. Nightlife settings are associated with drunkenness, intoxication and high levels of energy and social interaction. The survey performed by Buvik *et* al. (2019:394) amongst nightlife staff, found that there were high levels of consumption of alcohol and drugs while at work. Employees attributed this to long working hours, high stress, liberal norms and easy access to alcohol and substances, which encouraged their consumption. The study showed a higher prevalence of this consumption amongst the younger age group (18-36 years old), with cannabis and cocaine being the drugs of choice. The study went further to analyse the behavioural intentions and attitudes towards drug and alcohol consumption (Buvik *et* al., 2019:396). Employees within nightlife industries displayed positive, liberal attitudes towards drug use, alcohol consumption and the legalisation of cannabis in comparison to the general population.

Grandey *et* al.'s (2019) study observed that employees in occupations that involve frequent interacting with the public (i.e. patrons) while showing positive expressions (Hochschild, 1983) are some of the heaviest drinkers. Drinking and substance use is a maladaptive stress response and is also linked to increased energy and confidence levels. Nightclubs demand that employees exhibit energy that is enticing and keeps guests entertained, making them directly responsible for the customer's enjoyment and overall experience. It becomes easy for employees in interactive service industries to turn to drugs and alcohol as a means to get them through the shift and deal with unruly customers, who are often intoxicated themselves (Grandey *et* al., 2019: 483). In addition, Violanti and Aron (1993) found that the consumption of alcohol is often used by employees in an attempt to reduce emotional dissonance. Therefore alcohol can make 'faking' emotions and masking how employees truly feel to comply with organisation rules easier.

An important aspect to consider when looking at emotional labour and its link to alcohol and substance use is self-control. Hight and Park's (2018) study found that self-control moderated the relationship between role stress and substance use. Self-control refers to the capacity that an individual has to alter regulate and control behaviours to align with standards, goals and norms (Hight & Park, 2018: 70). Self-control is therefore considered a mental resource that mandates an individual's undesirable behaviours, such as drug use and alcohol abuse. As mentioned, work stressors and the performance of emotional labour leads to fatigue and the depletion of mental, emotional energy, increasing the likelihood of alcohol and drug consumption (Grandey *et* al., 2019). Employees with a higher level of self-control can control their negative reactions to stress easier than employees with low levels of self-control (Hight & Park, 2018:70). In addition, both Grandey *et* al. (2019) looked at emotional labour through the lens of self-control. As with the definition of self-control, surface acting involves inhibiting behavioural responses to conform to workplace expectations. Self-control and surface acting operate on different levels within the workplace depending on the individual. Aside from engaging in risky behaviour, like substance and alcohol use, nightclubs present employees with other dangers, such as harassment.

3.5.1 Nightclub work and sexual harassment

As highlighted, nightclubs are hegemonic spaces which expect female employees to exaggerate the performance of their sexualised femininity (Grazian, 2009: 913). Women that work in nightclubs often wear revealing clothing and are expected to flirt and put the customer first in everything that they do, which increases the existing entitlement that men have. Many men who enter the nightclub setting view nightclub workers as "fair game" due to the role that they play within the venue, which in turn increases the likelihood of them being catcalled and harassed (Grazian, 2009). Sexual harassment is defined as 'unwelcomed sexualised behaviours in the organisational context' (Brewis & Linstead, 2000: 71). Sexual harassment can either consist of demands for sexual favours as a condition of employment or requests for dates, sexist jokes or comments or any other behaviour that creates a hostile workplace for employees who are targeted by this behaviour (Brunner & Dever, 2014).

Recent studies on sexual harassment have applied Foucault's observations of the institutionalization and regulation of sexuality (Brunner & Dever, 2014:461). The regulation of sexuality within workplaces has been studied through the lens whereby sexual harassment is viewed as the mechanism through which power is enacted. Individuals and workplaces

create and maintain control of sexuality, particularly a women's performance of 'feminine heterosexuality'. In this sense, male customers often use harassment to reinforce their power and control. Therefore, sexuality and power operate in routine interactions in the organisation arena, which places a particular burden on women who are more embodied in the workplace compared to their male counterparts (Budgeon, 2003).

Sexualised performances and roles that women are required to engage in in certain forms of employment, like being a party starter, can complicate the meanings of sexual harassment (Adkins 2000). This is seen in service industry work, particularly in nightclubs, where the nature of the work impacts on how female employees understand and negotiate meanings of sexual harassment. Service sector workers are subject to new management approaches, which encourage them to invest in the quality of the customer's experience and in turn often neglect reporting instances of harassment (Wolkowitz, 2006).

As highlighted through emotional and aesthetic labour and bodywork, employees monitor their dress and appearance, while developing a personable manner and a positive attitude towards customers (Brunner & Dever, 2014: 461-462). Brunner and Dever (2014) examined sexual harassment in the context of service roles within the new economy which increasingly requires forms of sexualized bodywork. The study found that the demands from employees to self-manage and adopt new flexible modes of employment often blur the boundaries between employees and customers. Within service sector roles, female employees are expected to perform feminine receptivity towards male customers (Wolkowitz, 2006). Owing to this performance, which often involves flirting, that female employees employ, male customers often feel comfortable enough to try their luck. Workers are required to adopt a sexualized identity as 'part of the job', which is characterized by a particular aesthetic and a high level of 'receptivity' (Adkins, 2000). In addition, encouraging the sale of alcohol, and the excessive consumption thereof within nightclubs, increases workers' exposure to customer violence (Guerrier & Adib, 2000:692; Wolkowitz, 2006:108).

Within nightclub work, the requirement for female staff to have an 'open personality' also impacts the likelihood of sexual harassment. Participants in Brunner and Dever's (2014) study collectively viewed sectors such as hospitality and customer service work as 'casual', 'part-time' jobs, which are usually adopted by students, instead of a 'career' or a 'real job'. This distinction has a direct impact on how employees address sexual harassment. Employees are more likely to address issues of sexual harassment in formal workplaces rather than in

nightclubs for example. There is also a fine line between 'work' and 'play' in nightclubs, which can increase instances of sexual harassment (Adkins, 2000). Party starters work in an environment where sexual harassment is likely to occur owing to the nature of nightlife, the consumption of excessive alcohol and the informal work structure. Although this study does not aim to focus on sexual harassment, an attempt is made to highlight how party starters understand and handle the various forms of harassment they encounter.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at how the body and the mind of interactive service workers are commodified for financial gain to both the employee and the employer. Working within interactive service industries requires the manipulation, control and regulation of appearance and emotions by establishments to appeal to a particular target market to drive sales. In this sector workers engage in continual emotional labour, which involves altering their true emotions and putting on a façade to keep customers happy. In addition to emotional labour, interactive service workers manage their appearance through aesthetic labour, where having 'the right' look determines whether they get the job and how successfully they portray their establishment's brand once employed. Linked to this, bodywork is a combination of aesthetic and emotional labour, but with a particular focus on the physical body and how it is used and commodified (Gimlin, 2007:255).

Even though aesthetic and emotional labour and bodywork have potential benefits to both the employee and the employer, there are consequences that the extensive performance of emotional labour has on employees. The aim of this study is to explore this in relation to party starters working at Sky Nightclub. In the next chapter, a description of Sky Nightclub is provided, before explaining the methodology adopted to uncover the experiences of women working in this sector.

CHAPTER FOUR: CASE STUDY AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter includes a case study of the research site and outlines the research methodology and design adopted for this study. A qualitative approach was adopted to uncover the experiences and understandings of the party starters. This study sought to understand the nature of the nightlife industry and how women are expected to perform gender in accordance with societal and workplace expectations.

4.2 Research site

My research was done on site at a nightclub located in Cape Town's city centre. All of the participants who participated in this research are employed by the nightclub. I have been employed as a waitress at Sky Nightclub since 2018 and always try to interact with other staff members. Party starters would often come and speak to me about their experiences at work and because we interacted so closely on shift, I decided to choose Sky Nightclub as my research site. Limited research on the kind of work that party starters do also motivated me to look further into the employment of women within nightclubs.

VIP nightclubs, which are predominantly in Johannesburg and Cape Town, offer a similar experience of exclusivity, embodying luxury and high-end service. Sky Nightclub has been voted the best nightclubs in South Africa over recent years and it is often admired by other venues for its ability to embody the full nightlife experience. Appealing to a black African[1] market with specific appeal to Nigerians, Sky Nightclub invites guests who are predominantly between the ages of 25-45 years old. Sky Nightclub successfully appeals to an upper class through serving premium, expensive alcohol and through the overall look and feel of the venue, which represents wealth and luxury. Emerald green and gold velvet couches compliment the crystal chandeliers and exotically dressed dancers, which draws in a crowd that values wealth and status. Sky Nightclub was chosen as the research site as it not only fully embodies what a VIP nightclub is expected to look like and represent, but also through the role that party starters play in adding to the luxury experience customers are promised. In addition, the accessibility of Sky Nightclub as a researcher, made choosing to study this site an appropriate choice.

---

[1] In South Africa, we have four race categories; black African, Coloured/mixed, Indian, Asian and white

4.3 Case Study

Case studies involve a detailed exploration and description of a particular case, organisation, community or person (Bryman, 2012:45). An intensive examination of a setting is conducted by the researcher to provide an inductive approach to the relationship between the theory and research (Bryman, 2012:68). For this study, I chose to incorporate a case study to help the reader understand the setting and nature of a VIP nightclub. VIP nightclubs are spaces that are not researched very often, particularly within the South African context and I often find that people are surprised when describing the nature of Sky Nightclub to them. Therefore, a visual description of Sky Nightclub puts the setting that party starters work in context (Bryman, 2012).

Situated in Cape Town's CBD, Sky Nightclub is one of the city's popular nightclubs which invites locals and internationals. Established eight years ago, Sky is known for its consistency, luxury, premium service and professionalism. It is visibly set apart from other nightclubs within the city by its expensively decorated interior and the guests and celebrities that it hosts. Within the Cape Town CBD area, four other VIP nightclubs compete with it. Sky nightclub aims to provide guests with more than just a night out. From the minute they enter the front door; they enter a "theatre" and prepare themselves for a luxury experience.

A car guard, who I will call Melvin, operates on the street of Sky Nightclub. His role is pivotal to ensuring the luxury experience from arrival. Melvin reserves parking for the VIP's he knows will be arriving that evening. This is for two reasons; firstly these guests do not want to walk far to the club and secondly because these guests drive luxury cars. Porches, Ferraris and the latest Mercedes-Benzes line the street. This is a symbol of wealth, status and class and alerts outsiders to the type of guests who frequent Sky Nightclub. Once parked, guests make their way to the entrance where they are greeted by bouncers and hostesses. The bouncers are some of the best in the industry and dressed in black suits. The hostesses are all young, beautiful women under the age of 25. The front door staff determine who enters the venue by assessing dress codes, checking bags for any weapons and implementing a R200 entrance fee.

Sky Nightclub's dress code is formal. No shorts or tracksuits or worn-out clothing is allowed. This is done to ensure that a particular crowd enters the venue, one that can afford the luxury experience. All guests who have reserved tables are escorted upstairs by the hostess. Sky Nightclub has two floors; VIP and Mezzanine. Tables in the VIP section range from R15000-

R20000 and in the Mezzanine section, R5000-R10000. Payment is done upfront on arrival and counts as a tab that the guest will run for the evening. Guests can go over this amount, with the average bill ranging between R20000-R35000. The highest bill I have seen since working in the venue is R350 000. Following the hostess, guests enter "the empire" - a popular term used to describe Sky Nightclub.

The stairs from the entrance leading up to the first floor are covered in black draping. The entrance section leading up to the main section is expensively decorated with gold and black marbled wallpaper, black draping and strip lights leading up the gold-railing staircase. This sets the tone for guests that the venue is upper-class. The dark entrance area interior leads guests to the venue, where they are met by loud music and the party starters. The venue is decorated in black, emerald green and gold with large crystal chandeliers hanging from the ceiling, adding some warm light to the dark space. The couches are all covered in velvet with small side-tables lining the venue. The walls are covered in large dark-filtered portraits of models', who are wearing gold jewellery, faces. Premium alcohol sponsors also have their displays against the walls, lining the club with expensive champagne like Moët and Dom Perignon. On the centre wall of the club, there is a large screen, which projects videos that have been made of evenings at Sky Nightclub. The decoration and overall aesthetic of the club is on par with VIP clubs in places likes Miami, New York and Dubai.

Once seated, VIP guests are greeted by a waiter/waitress. Waiters wear black collared shirts and tailored trousers and waitresses wear sexy and revealing clothing. My typical outfit would be a short dress with heels. Customers are asked to place their order from a premium bottler-service only menu. The most popular bottles ordered are Verve Rich at R3500 per bottle, Hennessy XO at R8500 per bottle, and Dom Perignon at R9000 per bottle. The most expensive bottle stocked is Armand de Brignac (Aces), which costs R14000 per bottle and is also very popular. On a good night, up to 25 bottles of Ace are sold. Once the bottles have been ordered, the waitress/waiter places a large silver bucket of ice on the table, along with the chosen mixers for the drinks, such as Red Bull and Appletiser. Each bottle is lit up with two sparklers and brought out by the waiter/waitress followed by the sparkler girls. The sparklers girls are dressed in gold costumes and carry a sparkler in each hand as the bottles go out. This is done to put on a show for the customers and to draw attention to their table and what they are buying.

The competitive nature of Sky Nightclub means that the guests compete with one another in terms of who can spend the most. The MC walks around the venue with a microphone, hypes up customers by giving them shout-outs, alerting the rest of the club to the name of the person and what they have ordered. For example, the MC will say "5 bottles of Aces going out to Ivan, big money Ivan, we see you!". This entices customers to spend more and become known as the person who spends the most money. Another way that customers like to show their wealth is by pouring champagne over their Rolex watches to prove that they are genuine Rolexes. A Rolex costs on average between R105000 –R180000 but can cost up to R4730000. These watches complement the expensive attire that customers wear to the venue. It is highly unlikely that Sky Nightclub would admit a customer who isn't wearing luxury fashion labels such as Gucci, Burberry and Louis Vuitton. Their outfits in total can cost up to R350 000. Sky Nightclub hosts customers that enjoy flaunting their wealth, which is why the entire experience from the time they enter the door is tailored to make them feel important and to boost their egos.

Women play an important role in creating the luxury experience and making male customers feel special. Three dancers perform at Sky Nightclub each night, two on the stage in the VIP section and one in a cage upstairs on the Mezzanine floor. Dancers are dressed in extravagant costumes and heels, and change up to three times per night. The costumes are very eye-catching, revealing and filled with sparkles, usually resembling a more luxurious type of bikini. Sometimes the dancers will have life-sized angel wings attached to their backs. Their make-up and hair is done very boldly to match their outfits. Alternating between synchronized routines and free-styling, dancers are extravagant and sexual in the way that they move their bodies. The dancers at Sky Nightclub are usually dance/acting students, between the ages of 19-23 and are either black African or Coloured. They are all 'physically attractive' and are considered to be thin or having an hourglass figure. Sky Nightclub places an emphasis on having physically attractive women as employees, ranging from the hostesses at the entrance to the waitresses, sparkler girls and dancers upstairs.

Most importantly, the party starters play the biggest role in facilitating the look and feel that the club tries to create. Often referred to as 'slay-queens', their role is the most interactive with the customers and they have the most pressure to engage and adopt a particular workplace persona. A 'slay queen' is a term Sky Nightclub patrons give to a woman who embodies high levels of confidence and luxury by the way she looks and acts. I have sat in various staff meetings where the role profile of the party starters is discussed by management.

Overall, party starters are hired to be the 'eye candy' of the venue. They must be able to 'party', hold a conversation and look 'sexy'. As far as the dress code goes, they have 'to look sexy'. The party starters who are hired are all young and generally up to date with the current dress and appearance trends. As a result, they understand that wearing revealing, eye-catching, tight and fashionable clothing is part of the job, and as a group, they execute this very well. Their make-up and hair is done neatly and boldly and they wear perfume that can be smelled from when they enter the venue. Most of the competitors around Cape Town City Centre have party starters, but the ones employed by Sky Nightclub are known for being both sexy and classy.

Party starters arrive as the club opens, which is often about 2-3 hours before customers arrive. They often arrive in a group of 2-3 and assemble around one table in the VIP section. The nature of nightlife revolves around late starts where the venue is only extremely busy for a maximum of three hours. During the hours before guest arrival the barmen set up the bar and the waiters/waitresses receive the brief for the evening ahead. After this the barmen and waiters are allowed to 'chill' until the guest's arrival. Waitresses are allowed to sit on the couches and be on their phones. I mention this because the party starters have a different experience. On arrival, they are expected to stand, dance, post and engage on social media and do everything possible to lure in a crowd.

Party starters take pictures and videos of each other, often using a flashlight to improve the lighting and quality of the content. The party starters are very confident, they look good and one can see that they feel good too. They spend a lot of time getting done for the evening and they are ready for a night of drinking and socialising ahead. Party starters are provided with alcohol for the evening, which helps to 'get them in the mood' (as explained in staff meetings). They receive a bottle of either Vodka or Gin with juice and two tequila shots each. Once the alcohol is consumed, they have finished their tab, but are expected to get customers to top up their glasses, particularly the champagne glasses. Their job involves creating a specific atmosphere and ensuring that the venue looks inviting at any given point, even when there are few guests in the venue.

During the first two hours of their shift, party starters usually mingle amongst each other, dance and drink the alcohol they had been given. Once the night picks up and most tables are occupied, customers will put in a request to the waiter/waitress for 'girls' at their table. As a waitress, I usually approach this by going to the head party starter and asking if she could

send girls to the customer's table, or I go and ask specific party starters to join the table, as sometimes customers are particular in terms of the girls they want sent over. Once the party starters join the table, the spender at the table will ask them what they would like to drink. The party starters understand that they are there to get the customers to spend as much money as possible and as a result will often order a bottle/s of Verve Rich. Waiters/waitresses push customers to spend more by filling up the champagne glasses to the top and regularly topping up their glasses. There is a mutual understanding and common goal shared between the staff and the party starters, which is why they will drink as much as they can within that time frame. The party starters entice customers to spend more by flirting, dancing at their tables and keeping a conversation.

Being a party starter involves a lot more work than most people realise. Certain staff members like the barmen, often mock and laugh at the party starters. However, they are all very confident and sure of themselves and the work that they do. They have the ability to deal with difficult customers and to lead them on, making them believe that they will go home with them at the end of the night. Although this does happen, it is not very common at Sky Nightclub. The hiring of party starters is therefore a process that requires thought and attention to the type of women that Sky Nightclub requires. There are usually 5-7 party starters working per shift, every Friday and Saturday night. Some of the party starters have worked for Sky Nightclub for a few years, but most are fairly new, as there is a high turnover of women occupying this position. I have seen girls work for one weekend and then never again. This can be attributed to the nature of the work that they do, which does not appeal to everyone. Most of them are recruited via Instagram or through the referral of a friend. The head party starter or one of the managers does the recruiting and through my observation, I noticed that most women have expectations of what the work is going to be like, which are not necessarily realised on their 'trial shift'.

The picture is painted to potential recruits that all the job entails is looking sexy, having fun and getting customers to spend money. Most party starters don't last in the position because they feel out of place and realise the job requires more than they initially expected. As previously mentioned, Sky Nightclub appeals to the African (particularly Nigerian) market and as a result, some women battle to adapt to the space. This is usually the case for white and some coloured, women who trial as party starters. These women often battle to interact with the customers, the music and the other party starters, who are comfortable in the space. The women who have been with the establishment for the longest are mostly black African

41

and coloured. For those who enjoy drinking, socialising, making friends and need or would enjoy extra money, being a party starter is an attractive choice. Party starters earn R600 per shift, which is usually around 5 hours. Therefore, there is potential to earn R1200 per weekend or R4800 per month. The rate was R800 pre-COVID, but had to be reduced due to financial constraints. This rate is considered high for this type of work, and coupled with the free alcohol, often attracts students. Party starters are allowed to accept tips from customers; however this is not very common as customers do not always view them as 'working'.

Sky Nightclub relies on all staff members to keep the venue running and profitable. The party starters play an integral role in the ambience and overall atmosphere and success of the evening. They are the first people that customers see as they walk up into the venue and they can make a customer's experience more memorable. Without the party starters, the club would only be filled with service staff when the guests arrive, which will increase the likelihood of customers leaving owing to a lack of a 'vibe'. Party starters ensure that there is engagement and interaction with guests throughout the evening. They increase the customer's status and the overall success of the evening/night.

Sky Nightclub prides itself on its ability to stand out from its competitors. Many celebrities and public figures come to Sky for a night out. I have personally served Julius Malema and Usain Bolt, which speaks to the calibre of this venue. Each component of the venue, from the decorated interior, the MC, the DJ to the staff, impacts a customer's experience. Although Sky has a wide range of women employed to entertain men, such as the dancers and sparkler girls, this study looks at the party starters and how they experience the space. The role that they assume is extremely dynamic and understudied.

4.4 Research methodology and design

The selection of an appropriate research method and design should complement the aim of one's research and desired outcomes. To gain a deeper perspective of Sky Nightclub and the party starters, an inductive, explorative approach was used to. Qualitative research is flexible by nature and enables one to develop a context-rich research to capture the lived experiences of participants (Bryman, 2012:471).

A qualitative approach enables one to gain insight into the feelings and experiences of the party starters (Bryman, 2012:408). The perceptions, behaviours, opinions and feelings of the participants were analysed in order to develop an understanding of how party starters

experience the work they do. Therefore, choosing a qualitative research method allowed me to study the perspective of the social actors (party starters) and then apply it to the relevant literature. A quantitative approach would not have been suited to this study as it involves the collection of numerical data and often involves generalising (Bryman, 2012:160). Quantitative research involves a large sample size and the party starters are a small group. In addition, quantitative research has an objectivist conception of social reality, which goes against what this study seeks to adopt. This study did not aim to generalise or collect data from a large group and convert it into figures. Instead, this study adopted a qualitative approach to get an in-depth account for how a small group on party starters experience their workplace.

4.5 Data collection methods

Data collection methods included both semi-structured interviews and participant observation. In order to get an in-depth look into the work of party starters and how they navigate their experiences, these data collection methods proved to be appropriate. The combination of two data collection methods gave way to context-rich data through direct access to information from the participants themselves as well as the interpretation of the social setting. As a researcher, I prioritised collecting my data in a way that authentically represented how the party starters understood and experienced the work that they do.

4.5.1 Recruitment and sampling

Participants were selected using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a non-probability form of sampling, meaning that participants were not selected on a random basis, but strategically (Bryman, 5108: 418). This meant that I relied on my own judgement to select suitable participants for his study. Party starters who are currently working at Sky Nightclub and were willing to participate were selected to be part of this study. In total, eight party starters agreed to take part in this study and this was sufficient, as at this point a level of saturation was reached. The general manager of Sky Nightclub was also interviewed. The party starters are predominantly women of colour, aged 20-29 and all South African citizens. Due to my familiarity with Sky Nightclub and the staff employed, I was able to select participants who have been working at the club for a while. I was also able to select participants of different age and race groups to ensure variety. This aided in establishing the accuracy of my research as all of the participants had sufficient experience in party starting and the nightlife setting.

Name	Position	Gender	Age (in years)	Race	Date Interviewed	Brief description
Hugo	General manager	Male	28	Coloured	18/02/2021	Hugo has worked for the venue for 8 years, working his way up from a barman. He is a large, stern-looking man who is well-liked by staff members.
Julia	Party starter	Female	28	Coloured	18/02/2021	Julia is married with a daughter. She is a fashion buyer for a large retail company during the day. She has an hourglass figure and is one of the longest standing party starters.
Tayisha	Party starter	Female	21	Black African	25/02/2021	Tayisha alternates between being a dancer and a party starter. She is a student at the Waterfront Theatre School. She is of average height, has big breasts and is always full of energy.
Samu	Party starter	Female	22	Black African	25/02/2021	Samu attends the University of Cape Town where she studies Business. She also hostesses at another venue. She is tall and slender but has a large 'butt' and often admired for the clothing she wears.
Rae	Party starter	Female	25	Coloured	05/03/2021	Rae is a candidate attorney, who works at a law firm during the week. She is a go-getter

45

						and is very outgoing. She is short, curvy and known for her round butt.
Aaliyah	Party starter	Female	24	Coloured	06/03/2021	Aaliyah originally comes from a small town in the Karoo. She has worked at various venues throughout Cape Town and sometimes waitresses. She is short, curvaceous and can be timid at times.
Caylee	Party starter	Female	27	White	13/03/2021	Caylee is the longest standing party starter. She is a freelance writer and student during the day. She is passionate about health and fitness and stands firm in her beliefs. She is a strong feminist. Caylee is of average height and toned. She enjoys wearing lingerie to work.
Lulu	Head party starter	Female	23	Black African	23/06/2021	Lulu took on the role as head party starter earlier this year (2021). She is very confident, full of energy and considers herself to be 'slim-thick'. She is a TV presenter and works at Sky nightclub for extra money. Lulu is very sure of herself and the role that she needs to play within the workplace. She is a good leader and well-liked by the other party starters.
Lelethu	Party starter	Female	21	Black	23/06/2021	Lelethu has been working as a

				African		party starter for 3 years. She works as an admin assistant during the day and loves to have a good time. She is very social, friendly and often a customer favourite because she is charming and full of energy. Lelethu is of average height and has an hour-glass figure and big breasts. She is also very fashionable.

4.5.2 Semi-structured interviews

The primary method of data collection was conducted between February and March 2021 and then a second round of interviews between June and July 2021. All interviews were conducted online via video calls. I opted for online interviews as the club closed on the 16th of December 2020 and only reopening in the second week of April 2021 owing to COVID 19 restrictions.

Semi-structured interviews consist of a series of open-ended questions not asked in a particular sequence, allowing for flexibility (Bryman, 2021:212). Conducting semi-structured interviews with each participant individually, allowed me to probe and obtain in-depth accounts of a night in the life of a party starter. Each participant had an opportunity to voice their independent thoughts, feelings and experiences openly. I designed two interview guides, one for the party starters and one for the general manager of the nightclub. Once the participants were selected, I sent out consent forms, which I went through and explained to each participant individually. Interviews were then scheduled at the convenience of each party starter. The research aims and outcomes were explained to each party starter before the interview. All interviews were conducted online and ranged between 30-40 minutes each.

An interview guide helped me stay on track the flow of my questions (Bryman, 2012:471). I began with basic questions relating to age, race and gender and then moved onto a series of open-ended questions. Open-ended questions are not too specific, but allowed for the individual's interpretation and perceptions of what was being asked (Adams, 2015:494). The

benefit of asking open-ended questions is seen through the ability to pick up on probes and then asking follow-on questions. Throughout my interviews, I was able to lead open discussions of enquiry through picking up on probes, thereby uncovering issues I had not originally thought of.

I entered the field equipped with both a theoretical and practical understanding of the work party starters do. The language used throughout the interviews was relevant and comprehensible to the participants. All interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed. Throughout the gathering of my research, I remained grounded in my position as an employee in the club as well as a researcher. I paid extra attention to insider-outsider bias, even though I have access to a space where participants are familiar with me, I focussed on conducting my research through a non-stereotypical, unbiased lens. The participants were also aware of my role as a waitress in the club, and role as a researcher. Throughout the research process, participants were assured of their anonymity in the reporting of the findings.

My role as a researcher was maintained through my ability to remain open, receptive and unbiased in my approach (Bryman, 2012:405). I was professional at all times and did not disclose anything discussed in the interviews to other staff members. I was able to establish a professional, non-judgemental space by distinguishing between my role as a colleague and my role as a researcher. Overall, the semi-structured interviews produced content-rich data, proving its usefulness to my research. The semi-structured interviews I performed also assisted me in choosing areas of focus when performing participant observation.

4.5.3 Participant observation

In addition to semi-structured interviews, I used participant observation to observe the participants behaviour, responses and interactions with customers and each other. Participant observation is a useful technique to use in conjunction with semi-structured interviews, as it allows the researcher to observe what was said in the interviews (Bryman, 2012). After obtaining permission from the general manager at Sky Nightclub, I performed overt participant observation over 6 months during my shifts every weekend at Sky Nightclub, prior to the interviews. Adopting overt participant observation techniques meant that the participants were aware that they are being studied (Bryman, 2012).

Participant observation was performed on Sky Nightclub as a whole. I wanted to capture the setting in its entirety over a long period of time. I paid particular attention to the party starters' interactions with each other, with staff members and with guests. Over the 6 month period, I was able to observe dress codes, social cues and the overall behaviour of the participants throughout their shift. Throughout the participant observation process, I recorded notes on my mobile device, when the club was not too busy, or where I had free time. This worked to my advantage, as I was not pressured to make notes under time constraints. Participant observation allowed me to obtain a wide range of data at Sky Nightclub over 6 months, which meant that I was able to record scenarios, interactions and relationships as they happened.

A disadvantage that comes with participant observation is a conscious change in behaviour as a result of the participants being observed (Bryman, 2012:436). However, because I have been employed by Sky Nightclub since 2018 and have been observing the space for years, I did not find that behaviour changed significantly. Party starters would often include me in their conversations, because we work quite closely. My relationship with the party starters, as a colleague, assisted me throughout the participant observation process as the participants were already comfortable with my presence in their workspace.

Participant observation proved to be an effective choice of data collection as I was able to develop a comprehensive, in-depth and context-rich account as to how the participants operate in the space they work in. In addition, I was able to take my time and patiently observe the party starters as they arrive 2-3 hours before the guests. The easy access to the space as well as the amount of time I was able to spend observing the party starters provided depth to the research beyond the interviews. In addition, I have been a waitress working at Sky Nightclub for 3 years, so I draw on observations I have made throughout this timespan as well as my lived experiences of working in the space. My observations of the space over the years, as well as the data I gathered allowed me to produce a substituted study.

4.6 Data analysis

All data that was analysed using applied thematic analysis, which refers to a type of inductive analysis used for qualitative data involving multiple analytic techniques (Guest *et* al., 2012:2). Patterns of meaning (themes) were created through the systematic organisation of data, which allowed me as the researcher to make sense of collective/shared understandings and experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2012:47). Codes are representative of identified themes

and then used to link raw data, or later as a summary marker for analysis (Guest *et* al., 2012:2). However, these categories were informed by the theory and literature in the field.

Thematic analysis proved to be the most suitable for my study as it enabled me to capture the complexities of meaning within a textual data set (Guest *et* al., 2012:2). After I transcribed all the interviews and organised my participant observation notes, I was able to analyse the data and draw out common themes. Engaging in a process of thematic analysis assisted me in developing context-rich research through organising commonalities identified in the gathered data and relating it to relevant literature. This form of data analysis allowed me to organise my data in a way that accurately represents the understandings and experiences of the party starters and subsequently revise my theoretical framework. Hence I worked inductively and deductively in a flexible, interchangeable way.

4.7 Ethical considerations

As a researcher, I followed the ethical guidelines while conducting my research. The planning, implementation and execution of my research adhered to the guidelines in the Sociological Code of Ethics (Asanet.org, 2019). Adherence to this ensured that the interests of the participants' were protected and reflected the views of participants.

Before engaging in any research, I submitted my research proposal to the Stellenbosch University's Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology's Ethical Screening Committee (DESC). Upon receiving confirmation that my project was classified as 'medium risk', I approached Sky Nightclub to obtain permission to conduct my research. I received a letter of confirmation from the general manager, stating that I may commence with my research. This permission was necessary to obtain before I conducted my research to ensure that the club remained anonymous and protected. The ethical clearance along with obtaining institutional permission from Sky Nightclub took longer than expected due to COVID 19 restrictions. I had to resubmit my initial Research Ethic Clearance (REC) application following COVID 19 restrictions, thereby adapting my approach to meet guidelines put in place by the South African government.

Apart from interviewing the general manager, this study only involved women employed as party starters by Sky Nightclub. As all participants have to be over the age of 18 years old to be employed by the nightclub, they are considered to be adults, according to South African law. Participants were therefore able to understand the nature of the research, the process of

participant observation and the questions asked during the interviews (Asanet.org, 2019:13). Before conducting the interviews, I sent a detailed consent form to each participant via Whatsapp, which explained the purpose, nature and any potential risks of the research. Included in the consent form was that all interviews would be audio-recorded and it stated that participation was entirely voluntary. I explained the consent form to each participant via a phone call, before conducting the interview, to ensure they understood the nature of the study. Those who felt comfortable and chose to participate in my study, signed the consent form, scanned it and sent it back to me.

The protection of participants involved in this study remained of utmost importance throughout the research process. All participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identity and ensure their anonymity. Owing to the sensitivity of the questions asked and the nature of the environment where the participants work, they were offered a counselling service free of charge. At any given point throughout the interview process, participants were able to request counselling provided by The Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust, which is a non-profit organisation in observatory Cape Town which provides free counselling. In addition, contact numbers of a trauma hotline service was provided prior to the interview process (24-hour helpline 0214479762). Before participating in my research, all participants were made aware of these counselling services and were reminded of them throughout the interviewing process. Throughout conducting interviews with each participant, none of the party starters requested counselling.

In terms of ethical principles followed for the participant observation process, I implemented similar strategies to protect the participants and their privacy. The use of pseudonyms was important to ensure anonymity of the participants and the nightclub that where I performed the study (Bryman, 2012:471). Although participant observation was performed of Sky Nightclub as a whole, and included everyone who occupied the space, from staff members to guests, I ensured that I remained professional while observing them. As an employee of Sky Nightclub, it meant that I was able to occupy the space and take down notes in a way that was non-invasive and unobtrusive.

Throughout the research process, I made it a priority to remain as reflexive as possible. While being aware of my position as a white woman in society who works as a waitress at Sky Nightclub, I maintained an awareness of my privileges and expressed them to the participants. My relationship with the party starters as a colleague had to be clearly

distinguished from my relationship with the participants as a researcher. A few of the party starters questioned whether the information they shared would be kept private, as they viewed me as a potential whistle-blower. However, I assured them throughout the process that any information shared would not be divulged to any other person and that the use of pseudonyms protected their anonymity. This was useful to reassure the party starters when speaking about sensitive information or when they shared information regarding other party starters and management. It worked to my advantage that the participants and I had a certain level of trust owing to working at the same establishment.

A precaution was that all data collected was stored on the SU One Drive, which is password protected. This meant that all interview recordings, interview transcriptions and participant observation notes were safely stored. Only I have access to my SU One Drive platform to ensure the privacy of the participants. This storage platform proved very useful as I was able to access the drive from my mobile device, making it possible for me to make observation notes throughout my shift. Our mobile devices are used throughout our shifts to place orders, therefore my note-taking was not noticeable, which assured the participants of their privacy and resulted in them acting as natural as possible. All the data is still currently stored on my SU One Drive and will be safely stored for future use.

Lastly, it should be noted that this project was conducted and completed amidst a global pandemic, COVID 19. This came with many challenges, as the South African government responded by implementing a risk-adjustment strategy (COVID-19 Risk-Adjusted Strategy - SA Corona Virus Online Portal, 2021). A staged approach was implemented where the country, or a province, was placed on a level according to the infection rate, with alert level 5 having the most restrictions and alert level 1, the least. During the phases of writing my research proposal, we were between alert levels 5 and 4, which meant that all nightclubs were closed. This meant that I had to conduct the interviews online, as Sky Nightclub was closed. From an ethical point of view, it remained my priority to ensure that I did not increase the risk of infection and as a result, I had no contact with any of the participants until the club reopened, on alert level 2, in April 2021. From the point of Sky Nightclub re-opening, I began my participant observation, where I continued to adhere to safety protocols as much as possible.

Due to the fact that all participant observation was done on the Sky Nightclubs premises, I had limited authority in terms of ensuring that the protocols implemented by the South

African government were adhered to. Certain industries, like the entertainment and hospitality industry, have been the hardest hit, with many having to close (COVID-19 Risk-Adjusted Strategy - SA Corona Virus Online Portal, 2021). Certain establishments like Sky Nightclub tended to focus more on being profitable than adhering to certain safety protocols. As a result, I did not have much say in ensuring that temperatures were checked upon arrival, masks were worn, the venue capacity was adhered to and that sanitary protocols were followed. However, as a researcher, I tried as much as I could to maintain a social distance when observing and engaging with the participants and I sanitised my hands before any contact.

4.8 Reflection of methodology and limitations

Upon reflection, I was able to conduct my research in a way that accurately represented the experiences and understandings of the party starters employed at Sky Nightclub. The recruitment process, data collection, data analysis and ethical considerations were effectively executed. However, I did encounter limitations along the way and had to make certain adjustments to align with COVID 19 restrictions.

Although qualitative research can be very useful as stated above, there are criticisms when it comes to using this approach. Bryman (2012:405) outlines some critiques of qualitative research. Firstly, qualitative research is being criticized for being too subjective and impressionistic, which means that the researcher's personal views and understandings of the topic can impact on the findings. For example, qualitative research usually begins very open-endedly and then narrowed down. Through the process of categorizing the information, some important details may be lost (Bryman, 2012:405). Secondly, qualitative research is difficult to replicate because it is unstructured and often reliant on the researcher's ingenuity. Qualitative research is also criticised for the limited sample size and generalizing the findings, which may lead to some questioning about the scientific rigour of the results (Bryman, 2012:406).

To counter this, I worked both inductively and deductively to ensure that I did not discard valuable information. Having worked in the nightlife industry for five years, I was aware of the areas I wanted to focus on and this enabled me to have a broad understanding of my subject and to know when I reached the point of saturation in terms of data collection. This study proved to be cost and time-efficient as I was able to work around my shifts and while the club was closed, I was able to conduct online interviews at times suitable to myself and

the participants. The number of participants who were interviewed proved to be effective in developing context-rich data without having to generalise or leave out important findings.

As previously stated, Covid-19 has had a marked impact on my research site. Conducting my interviews online instead of in-person, had an impact on my study as the sense of personal connection was lost behind the phone/laptop screen interaction. This meant that I was not able to connect with my participants in the same way as when conducting face-to-face interviews. It is a lot easier to read body language, analyse tone and monitor social cues when you are physically interviewing a participant. Online interviews create a detachment between the researcher and the participant, which affects the quality of the data collected. Owing to the fact that my study aimed to get a deep understanding of how the party starters experience the work that they do, online interviews made this more difficult.

Adapting to life online came with new challenges. I found that a lot of the party starters were nervous about the interview being online. Some would delay it, or not respond to my messages when I tried to schedule a suitable time. I also found certain interviews to be rushed as if the participants were anxious to get it over with. This affected the flow and overall pace of the interview. Online interaction lacks the connection, personal touch and rawness that comes with physically interacting with others. As a student experiencing the pandemic, I can say that online meetings, lectures and interviews can be daunting, as they are unfamiliar and require a different set of social skills. Some of the participants did appear to be nervous during the interviews. I feel that had the interviews been done in-person, there would be a higher level of comfort and it would have been easier to put the party starters at ease and guide conversation. A second challenge faced was that of connectivity due to the interviews requiring sufficient internet access. At times during certain interviews, I experienced breaks in connectivity where the participants were unable to hear me and questions had to be repeated. Luckily, this did not happen often and overall the online interviews were conducted without any interruptions. Using participant observation as a tool to collect data once Sky Nightclub had reopened was very beneficial to combat the challenges faced during the interview process.

4.9 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter outlined my research methodology and design. The qualitative approach was appropriate and the ethical guidelines were adhered to. In the following chapter, I present the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the interviews conducted as well as the participant observation. This study found that party starters often feel a sense of power through the work that they do. Although playing into societal norms and standards relating to gender, party starters use their erotic capital and perform their gender for personal gain. However, being a party starter can still be draining, requiring intense emotional and aesthetic labour, as well as bodywork. They are often overlooked and seen as just being 'slay-queens', when in reality, the work that they do requires advanced social skills and high levels of confidence. This study showed that these women have agency and often willingly choose to be party starters owing to the nature of the work which aligns with their lifestyle at their specific age. The findings of this chapter are presented according to themes that emerged from the data, which correlate to the literature review.

5.2 Performativity, power and control

Foucault's work on power and domination shows how society produces the bodies that it requires through enforcing norms. Our bodies are controlled by perceptions created by both individuals and societies (Foucault, 1984). This power is manifested in different ways, which Foucault refers to as biopower and involves self-regulatory practices through self-surveillance and self-control. Foucault's theory is both insightful and offers knowledge into understanding the impact of social norms and societal standards in everyday life.

During the staff meetings, the management team, who are all men, spend a lot of time reviewing the dress code, staff rules and how each evening should run. Following the discussion of how the previous weekend enfolded, each staff department (waiters, barmen, party starters and dancers) were addressed separately by management in front of all departments. This allows staff to comment on the performance of each department. Management reiterates the party starters' brief in each meeting, reminding them that they are the 'eye-candy' of the venue and that they are the faces who are remembered most by customers, 'a walking brand'. Management instructs them to "look sexy and engage with the customers, you are not just being paid to have a good time." They are also instructed to engage with guests outside of the nightclub by inviting them to the venue and upselling the type of night-out that they could expect.

Party starters are therefore not only controlled by management but also regulated by other staff members and other party starters. This results in self-regulatory and self-surveillance practices which ensure that the party starters are meeting desired standards. They are pressured by societal standards to look and act "*trendy*", as Lelethu explained, as well as by Sky Nightclub itself. Lelethu expressed that "*It takes a lot of effort to look and act the part, especially when you know you always have eyes on you.*" Power operates on multiple levels, where employees aim to ensure that the customers' standards are meet, while keeping up with the management and staff member expectations. Operating within a space that is highly competitive motivates party starters to have self-control and the discipline to deliver what is expected from them. In this sense, Sky Nightclub reflects the demands that women face in the outside world every day. As a woman, performing one's gender in a way that is considered to be 'acceptable' is achieved through similar systems of power. Party starters are expected to hyper-perform their gender and emphasise their femininity, as Julia explains:

> "*Being a party starter means you have to be hyper-feminine. You are hyper-sexualized, and almost put on display for men. The club is a very heteronormative space in the sense that we are there to draw attention from men. For the most part, we trying to get men to spend more…or get beautiful woman to join the club in order to lure in men*"

Butler's work on gender performativity looks at how we "do" gender where subjects are recognisable through the gendered norms that they enact or adopt. Subjects exist within a field of power relations, which are produced through the repeated performance of norms and with gender being one of its characteristic properties (Caven *et* al., 2013). These norms are not only instances of power and not only do they reflect broader power relations, but they constitute one way in which power operates (Butler, 2009:ii). Service work is statistically gendered and the increase in women with interactive service industries has meant an increase in the labour that they perform. Performances expected from workplaces are not gender-neutral, with certain jobs being associated with dress codes and appearances are gendered and sexualised (Caven *et* al., 2013: 1).

During my shift I noticed that party starters resembled performers. They perform their gender in a way that is hyper-visible. Personality-wise they are confident, outgoing and extremely friendly. Physically, they flaunt their bodies, play into what customers want and dress themselves up. Most of them also have rhythm. One can visibly notice those who are more

comfortable in their skin just by the way they dance. They are not allowed to sit during their shift and I observed that most of them appeared to be more comfortable when they were moving their bodies. The majority of the men within the venue are seated, which draws attention to the party starters who are standing and putting on a performance. They know all the trending dance moves and are able to sing to popular songs subtly to look attractive because they are aware that they are on display. Party starters conduct themselves elegantly and perform in a way that expresses femininity.

Nightclubs hire women based on their sexual or erotic capital agency to create an atmosphere and lure in crowds into consuming more alcohol and enjoying themselves (Rivera, 2010). Party starters are expected to engage with guests and to literally 'get the party started' using their erotic capital, in particular their beauty, sex appeal and sexual competence to create a particular atmosphere in the club. Samu explained, *"I definitely use my sexuality; I usually charm, flirt…do wherever I can, you need to try and get men to spend at the end of the day and have a good time."*

I looked at the mannerisms the party starters used to draw attention to themselves and the way in which they would approach tables or how they would be selected to be at a table. The ability to flirt, be charming and flaunt one's body expresses a confident personality, which customers proved to be drawn to. One customer requested two particular party starters to join his table. They had been dancing sexually and closely interacting with each other, which caught his attention. Party starters work hard at trying to distinguish themselves from other women in the club. They want to stand out and be seen and their erotic capital helps them do this. Lulu explained:

> *"It's all about how you look… so the only way to get attention in the club is if you look really good, or if you're dancing really well. If you look a certain type of standard of beauty, you're gonna stand out. You don't even have to say much, but people want you in their space."*

As shown by Lulu, party starters are very aware of the role that their looks and confidence plays within Sky Nightclub. They take on their role with pride, embracing their features and tailoring their personalities to embody an "alpha-female", as Tayisha explained to me. Many people view party starters as victims and often pity them for the work that they do. Every party starter that I interviewed admitted that their work often made them feel powerful and gave them a platform to manipulate gender norms. Within the South African context, Tamara

Shefer's (2015) work on the dualism between victimhood and agency shows how women are increasingly starting to resist gender norms and reassert their power within society. Bhana and Anderson's (2013) study also serves as an example of the above theories in action where women are aware of their position in society and challenge it. Their study showed that resistance can increase agency but also reiterate gender norms and patriarchy. Lulu explained:

> *"There are two ways to look at it, women are being treated like objects or men just perceive us for our beauty. Like you can say the smartest thing, it doesn't matter, if you look pretty, you are entering a spenders' section. You can be smart but the minute you are gorgeous and look above average and meet the standard of beauty you will sit in the spenders' section. But, women are obviously very smart so we see what's happening and we use situations to our advantage and that enables us to do this job as party starters because men are dumb enough to think that 'she is just here because I have her here'. Meanwhile, I am here because I am doing a job and to make sure you spend money, which they end up doing all the time."*

Lulu emphasises that they have agency within their field of work and use their situation to their advantage. They are not there to prove their intelligence to anyone; they are there to get customers to spend. Using their erotic capital, party starters are able to manipulate spenders into spending as much money on bottles of alcohol as possible. Once this is done successfully, party starters feel liberated because despite playing into gender norms and expectations, they are the turning the tables on the men to benefit themselves.

Through observing the party starters I was able to see how they were able to manipulate the spenders. The most difficult part is being invited to join the table and from there they have to maintain their role of appearing interested. They achieve this by encouraging customers to order the most expensive bottles of champagne, inviting other party starters over to the table, getting the MC to do more shout-outs of the spender's name, encouraging the spender to drink more and drinking at a fast pace themselves.

Party starters end up enjoying their evening either way because they are drinking for free and often have other party starters with them, who they usually become friends with. Their work is acknowledged and appreciated by Sky Nightclub and they are not tied down to any of the spenders, as they are not forced to go home with them. As noted, party starters are not sex-workers but the power relations that operate within their field of work is often similar to that

of sex-workers. Foucault's work provides a strong theoretical lens when looking at how women resisted dominant understandings of their sexual pleasure and their sex-work. Party starters are often liberated through their work, which society is often looked down upon by society. Existing under "the all-encompassing gaze of power", Foucault asserts that power operates as a complex web and is non-directional (Foucault, 1984). Sex-workers, like party starters, are subject to discourses that seek to 'speak the truth about the', which they then resist (Smith, 2016: 349). Through Foucault's work on power/knowledge/discourse, these understandings create "individuals in their own reflections" (Foucault, 1984). In other words, party starters express their agency through defining the work that they do for themselves, despite outside opinions. Hugo further emphasised their agency through stating:

> *"We have a job description, which states that we want the girls to have fun. But we are not selling them off. It is their own prerogative to go further with whoever they want to when they want to and if they want to."*

Although being a party starter is often enjoyable, with the potential to be liberating, it can be just as draining. Party starters continually have to tailor their emotions, appearance and bodies to be successful.

5.3 Aesthetic labour

Being a party starter is not as simple as it often may seem to outsiders. A lot of time, thought and effort goes into embodying the look of one of Cape Town's VIP nightclub 'slay-queens'. From outfits to make-up, hairstyles, perfumes and overall appearance, party starters are expected to be put together from head-to-toe in order to appeal to the senses of the customers while representing luxury aesthetics.

Before party starters start their shift, they begin prepping for the evening through planning outfits, make-up and hair styles. This means that even before arriving at work, these women are working at creating the perfect look for the evening. This is what Shilling (2000), referred to as being 'always-on', as the work of party starters does not only begin when they arrive at Sky Nightclub. Many of the women stated that they spend quite a bit of time grooming and preparing mentally for the shift ahead, paying attention to what they look like and ensuring that they arrive at work looking good and feeling confident. Rae confirmed this by expressing to that, *"it's such a cutthroat industry, you have to be very strong and confident in yourself"*.

Party starters are expected to adhere to the dress-code of Sky Nightclub but to a stricter degree if they want to be successful. Sky Nightclub's semi-formal dress code impacts the overall atmosphere of the venue aimed at embodying luxury, wealth and status. Party starters follow the dress code, but with the added pressure of standing out from the rest, especially from other woman who arrive as patrons. Aesthetic labour is a key aspect of the work of a party starter and, hours are spent getting the right image.

Using the aesthetics of employees as a means to compete within the market economy has become increasingly common in modern day society (Warhurst & Nickson, 2007). Attributes and capabilities, particularly relating to the appearance and overall aesthetics of employees and their abilities to capitalise on their looks is beneficial to both the employees and employer. Party starters, are hired based on their overall appearance and then used to create a certain kind of energy at the nightclub through appealing to the senses of customers, driving alcohol sales and bringing in regular clients. The 'aesthetic labouring' for a party starter is performed both at the workplace and outside of it, preparing for work (Entwistle & Wissinger, 2006:774).

The hiring of party starters is often based on referrals from friends who are already employed by Sky Nightclub, or scouted via social media. From the moment a potential party starter comes for an interview, her appearance and overall sense of style and the way she carries herself is taken into account. This is very common in interactive service industries, where appearance and attractiveness plays a role in appealing to customers and ensuring not only the survival, but the success of businesses (Maitra & Maitra, 2018:343). Possessing the 'right look' is crucial in the employment of women in nightclub industries as they represent the brand of the club and impact on profits. The following quote by the club manager, Hugo, confirms this:

> *"The hiring process is usually very appearance based and energy based, party starters are expected to be well-put together so good-looking, attractive females are the ones who we hire. At the end of the day we need to uphold a certain standard as a venue and attractive females bring the energy and type of clientele that we try and attract."*

The party starters employed at Sky Nightclub are all women under the age of 30 and considered to be 'good-looking' and in 'good-shape'. Therefore, women who are young, fit and attractive are the ones who make the cut. However, advancing through the hiring process

is only the first step. Once employed as a party starter at Sky Nightclub, these women engage in continual aesthetic labour, tending to their appearances and overall persona. Owing to the strict dress code, party starters spend hours styling their looks before a shift, putting in a lot of effort into ensuring that their outfit, hair and make-up embodies style and attracts attention. This reflected in the following comments by two of the party starters, Tayisha said that, "F*rom 3pm I start getting done for work because I have to do make up and stuff like that.*" Similarly, Samu said that,

> *"We have to look nice, we have to dress nice, we have to always act friendly, always act in a way that is attractive to customers and that pushes the Sky brand… So it's definitely expected that we dress classy, elegant, we put in a good amount of effort into our make-up and our hair."*

When interviewed, most of the party starters referred to their dress code as elegant and sexy, but with some freedom in their choice. Allowing the party starter's freedom of choice is easy for the Club, as the hiring process entails hiring women who already embody the desired look and style that fits the Sky Nightclub brand. Minimal training and supervision is required, which means that employers do not have to spend time and effort moulding suitable employees, as explained by Maitra & Maitra (2018:343). Dress codes and the policing of overall appearance is not something that the Club has to do, the party starters all have a good sense of style and are driven by potential money that could be made during an evening.

The on-going upkeep of being presenting as a stylish and attractive woman, may require little effort from Sky Nightclub, but this is not the case for the party starters themselves. On and off shift, party starters engage in constant grooming efforts to keep up their appearance. The body and the self are a "project" that requires constant work (Shilling, 2000). For party starters, endless time and effort goes into staying relevant in order to keep up with trends, staying fit and remaining in shape and ensuring that make-up and hairstyling techniques are of a certain standard. Some admit to competing amongst each other, to draw in the desired clientele and receive economic incentives. This is reflected in the comment made by Samu:

> *"I would also say that the competition amongst us also gets us to dress in a certain way. So you don't want to be the one that comes in looking like you've put no effort and when the other girls are going to come in sequins dresses and Steve Madden heels they're going to have nice weaves on so you need to make sure that you almost fit in with a group in that sense."*

The wearing of clothing brands presented itself as a theme during the interviews. Working in one of Cape Town's VIP nightclubs, means that not only is there pressure on dress code regulations upon entry, but there is also competition amongst the staff and guests that enter the venue. Party starters admit to paying attention to the brands of clothing that their colleagues wear. Designer brands are associated with being upper-class and representing status and wealth. Aesthetic labour is geared towards appealing to the senses of customers through drawing attention and wearing designer brands, which facilitates this process (Warhurst *et* al., 2000:5). Tayisha, explains that party starters often feel intimated when someone from the group arrives in a designer brand. She explains that the likelihood of men approaching her is increased automatically as some men prefer women who wear expensive name brands, such as Louis Vuitton. Hence, party starters therefore have the added pressure to dress to a certain standards as this affects the amount of attention they receive during the evening and the overall success of their role as a party starter. Tayisha explains:

> *"There's competition when it comes to a party starter wearing Louis Vuitton. For example if, a party starter is wearing a Louis Vuitton top, I will feel intimated because more guys will come up to her because they can see her top whereas I am wearing Cotton On and he won't care to see that I am wearing Cotton On or Zara you know. So sometimes men prefer girls wearing designer brands."*

When it comes to choosing an outfit for the evening, party starters consider many factors including which customers they want to attract. This includes not only conforming to dress codes, both formal and informal, but the need to be both elegant and sexy, which can involve showing a lot of skin. Although the club does not prescribe a look, associated with the brand is 'looking sexy' and wearing revealing clothing. The manager of Sky Nightclub confirms this

> *"You know they need to look sexy, elegant and to look respectful. I mean, we don't want them come in looking like they are covered up to the T but they know that fashion is what you make of it so we'd like them to dress in a sense where they feel good"*

In interactive service industries, women are described as being on 'display' and revealing clothing proves to be successful in luring customers in, playing on the senses of men in particular (Warhurst *et* al., 2000:5). However, there is more to getting a man's attention than merely wearing a revealing dress. Aside from clothing and fashion trends, aesthetic

63

procedures relating to the modification of the body and physical outer appearance play an integral role for the aesthetic labourer. Going for a similar look is very common amongst the party starters in the sense that there is little variation in the dress, body style and overall aesthetic of the women employed at Sky Nightclub. Big breasts, round butts, plump lips and a curvy waist fit the profile of most party starters. Women highlight these features through wearing tight, revealing clothing that shows off their figures. This is something I paid particular attention to through participant observation, where I observed the overall appearance of the party starters.

During my research, I observed the party starters from the moment they entered the venue, until the end of their shift, looking closely at how aesthetics influences their work. At the beginning of every shift, all of the party starters gather around the bar and do outfit checks. Fixing the straps of each other's dresses and blending their make-up where necessary to ensure that they look perfect for the evening. During this time, I observed how they take selfies and videos of each other from top to bottom while strutting through the venue, analysing and observing each other's dress and appearance. Other employees, like the bar tenders, often make side comments to each other or to the waiters about who is looking good on the evening or who has gone overboard. This serves as a kind of recognition and praise, which the party starters like and it boosts their morale and confidence.

Once the guests arrive, party starters ensure that they are standing, interacting and looking the part at all times. Playing with their hair, dancing, applying lipstick and using their facial expressions to draw in the attention of customers requires a lot of time, and emotional energy. Party starters may never look bored, sloppy, or uninterested. Their appearance and the way that they carry themselves throughout the evening is important and observed by the head party starter, as well as by management. In fact, they are under constant surveillance by both the employers and clients, with every move they make being judged in some way or another while on duty. However, this investment comes at a price. The aesthetic labouring that goes into being a party starter is not just about before or during a shift but also after hours as party starters often have to buy outfits and ensure that their hair is in good condition. Therefore, being a party starter involves continual grooming and upkeep of their appearance which is both costly and time-consuming.

5.4 Emotional labour

Although the party starters often refer to the work that they do as 'quick, easy money', the work that they do requires the continual performance of emotional labour. Working in the entertainment industry means that the hours are strenuous, with shifts usually going into the early hours of the morning. As most of the party starters are students or employed at other establishments, this means working a double shift. Going straight from one job to the next, is both emotionally and physically exhausting.

As explained, emotional labour involves individuals managing and controlling the display of emotions and bodily actions (Hochschild, 2011:7). Once the party starters arrive at the club, they immediately begin performing emotional labour. Among other staff members, the party starters are of the first to arrive, usually arriving at least two hours before the guests show up. Even to new staff members or the random guest that may find themselves in the venue early, the party starters have an immediate presence once they walk into the venue. Rarely arriving alone, party starters walk into the venue with an overwhelming sense of confidence and purpose and head upstairs to the VIP section of the venue where they spend the majority of the evening.

From the moment they arrive, they need to start creating the mood or vibe of the club. I observed, for example, how they started to socialise with each other, taking videos and pictures for social media to demonstrate to those arriving that they are having a good time. They need to make the venue look lively and inviting. Inviting guests online through lively videos, posting pictures all over Instagram and 'going live' on social media platforms, the party starters are expected to create a mood not only for those present, but also those watching online, to lure outside people into the club. They create this 'vibe' by displaying alcohol, taking shots, dancing with each other, and videoing the venue. Beyond this, each party starter is expected to invite at least three guests to the venue. This kind of work requires good social skills and ability to persuade customers to join them for a night of fun at Sky Nightclub. Julia stated:

> "We obviously put people on the guest list and then once at the club we have to like create a vibe, make the club look exciting, speak to people. Like when there are big spenders, we go to their table and help them move their alcohol faster so that they end up buying more."

Within interactive service industries, women employed in the hospitality or entertainment sectors constantly must work at being presentable, not only aesthetically but also emotionally (Hochschild, 1983). Throughout the shift, party starters are expected to be standing and engaging with guests and creating liveliness in the venue. At no point are the women allowed to relax, sit or look bored. I observed how they constantly roam the venue, scouting for big spenders, particularly new ones that they are not familiar with and interacting with those that they know, getting them to spend more. Big spenders, who are known for ordering copious amounts of the most expensive bottles of champagne, play an integral role in the work of a party starter and are 'high maintenance'. They require undivided attention, impeccable service and usually expect to be the centre of attention. Party starters grow accustomed to identifying these spenders, which are usually men. When I asked Rae how she identifies the big spenders, this was her response:

> *"...males come to the club to get female attention, like it's obvious, and basically, you (can tell if you) see a lot of bottles (of alcohol) on the table. Sometimes you can tell by what they are wearing or who they are with. Also, if they are regulars and know a lot of people in the club."*

The party starters are astute and able to profile guests as they enter the venue, being able to distinguish between the spenders and the average customers. They develop this social skill that enables them to interact with clients in a certain way, read them and to develop techniques on how to get them to spend more. Service industries are known for seeing the customer as 'king', meaning that it is imperative that party starters behave and carry themselves in a way that serves this mantra (Warhurst & Nickson, 2007). Luxury VIP nightclubs, such as a Sky Nightclub, lure in people who have large amounts of money and as a result expect a particular type of service for the money they spend. The party starters explained how they learned to navigate the environment through paying attention to the management of their emotions, bodily display, and social cues as this impacts the turnover and overall image and atmosphere of Sky Nightclub.

Once the party starter has selected a big spender to entertain, the more intensive emotional labour begins. Through participant observation, I observed a number of these encounters, from the selection of the spender up to when the bill has been settled. It is usually during this part of the evening where the party starters do a lot of surface acting to get - and keep - the attention of customers (Taylor & Tyler, 2000:76). Party starters use various techniques to

draw the attention of big spenders, some walk past the customers countless times while flicking their hair, while others will dance near the table. The very confident ones will go straight up to the customer and start talking to him immediately. Acting very friendly, smiling, flirting and making the customer feel as if he is the centre of attention are some of the techniques that the party starters use. Surface acting allows them to make the customers believe that they are the most important person in the venue (Taylor & Tyler, 2000:76). The party starter knows exactly what she is doing and that she is there to do one job, get the customer to spend as much money as possible, even if she has no interest in him at all.

The ones who succeed get a seat at the client's table and are very quick to call the waiter/waitress over and request a glass. She will then have her drink poured from his bucket of expensive liquors and/or champagnes. If the big spender is generous, he will allow her to order anything from the menu and the usual choice is a bottle of expensive champagne. This is the best possible outcome because once she has ordered her first bottle, it is very likely that she will be allowed to order more. There are certain party starters that are particularly good at this. They are able to identify customers and get them to buy bottles of their favourite expensive champagnes quickly, mostly through flirting and persuasive talk. The party starters know that the goal is to get the customers to spend as much as possible - ordering a cider is not a good look.

Throughout the evening, the party starters will sip on their champagne, getting tipsier by the glass. They tend to become extra social, loud and sometimes even affectionate with their selected big spender. She puts on a performance, entertaining his stories and comments and even though she may be under the influence, she is continually performing emotional labour to maximise customer satisfaction. Party starters end up tailoring their personality to what the customer desires. After being on the scene for a while, many of them can identify what customers are looking for. While some want loud, outgoing forward party starters at their table, others prefer the quieter ones that can sit there, almost as if they are on display. The act of constantly tailoring oneself to meet the desires of a customer can be emotionally taxing and can lead to the deception of self, which Caylee demonstrates below:

> *"I would say I have at times like pulled my shirt lower down so my cleavage shows more or worn shorts that I know my butt looks nice in. Other than that it's just about like just misleading male customers just to make them seem like they have a chance with me and then ghost them after that."*

Surface acting and the deception of others is very prevalent in the nightlife industry as it has a direct impact on customer satisfaction and overall experience of the venue (Taylor & Tyler, 2000:76). The customers are usually unaware that they are being deceived and are then often 'ghosted' once the party starter has achieved what she set out to do. Caylee explained to me that the term 'to ghost' means to completely ignore someone once you have received what you want. Surface acting often works out to be mutually beneficial when the customer gets company for the evening and the party starter increases sales. The customer is tempted to spend more as he has girls at his table and wants to impress them. This often results in party starters ordering premium champagne from the waiters/waitresses and even inviting other party starters to join the table. Although in this case, surface acting does prove to be mutually beneficial, it does come at the emotional cost to party starters. The act of putting on a display of emotions that are not always genuine takes energy and patience, which Samu expressed to me:

> *"I definitely think it could be it is emotionally taxing and draining. I mean, as human beings, we're not always in a great mood. And, for example, I work another job and I study so at times I can be extremely tired and to interact with customers and always seem happy and friendly, when you're actually exhausted, can be very draining."*

Entertaining customers and ensuring that they are satisfied, while paying attention to what they have ordered and trying to get them to spend more, involves not only surface acting but also deep acting. Deep acting, which proves to be more detrimental to the actors, involves altering one's true emotions, resulting in the deception of self. From the moment party starters get to work they are expected to embody a certain role, which often involves putting on a friendly face, drinking and socialising with rich men. At times, party starters end up neglecting how they really feel or become so completely absorbed in their role that they ignore even their own morals. This links to the relationship between drinking and substance abuse in the nightlife industry.

As I have worked in the club for a few years, one often observes how people who are employed do not drink much or do drugs at the start of employment and then develop a tendency to engage in substance abuse more often as time goes by. This can largely be attributed to the stressful nature of working in the nightlife industry coupled with substances being readily available for use, and become a coping mechanism for some. Samu explained,

> *"It definitely can be draining. I've had incidents myself where I've just been so overly emotionally and physically exhausted and just sat in the bathroom and cried or, you know, it can be difficult. A lot of the girls do drugs, especially cocaine, to stay awake and lively during a shift and it's an easy way to get addicted, I have seen it happen before, where girls who were against drugs start doing lines [of cocaine] every shift."*

Substance use is very common in nightclubs where guests use substances, such as alcohol and drugs to enjoy themselves, which will be discussed further on. It is a coping mechanism as well as a way to 'loosen' the party starters up to have a good time. The confidence they have within themselves in terms of how they look, their social skills and their bodies have a direct impact on how they feel and act throughout the evening. Therefore, their bodies and the way in which it performs, is central to the work that party starters do.

5.5 Bodywork

Bodywork as a theory encompasses both the physical and emotional aspects of work, involving the entire body of employees (Gimlin, 2007). Within interactive service sectors, the body plays an integral role in providing a service to customers/consumers. The competitive nature of the economy in present-day society has resulted in nightclubs depending on bodywork even more than before (Gimlin, 2007). For example, the party starters employed by Sky Nightclub engage in bodywork not only when on shift, but before and after working hours too. The entire physical and emotional aspects of the body are used to lure in and entertain a crowd, which affects the overall sense of self and well-being of the party starters.

Within interactive service sectors, the division of labour ensures that women remain in roles that are very visible to gain traction with male spenders. Studies on gender-role division within the workplace have shown the young female-body experiences an increased amount of pressure to look and perform in a particular way (McDowell, 1997:139). The party starters employed at Sky Nightclub are all women under the age of 30 years and are seen as being 'attractive' according to social standards. The party starters I interviewed showed that they were very aware of their position within society and the role that their gender and attractiveness play in the business and its profits. Caylee, expressed that, "*because I am a woman I have been given jobs that probably wouldn't have been given to men, purely for the reason that pretty girls help alcohol sales in a nightlife setting*". Bodywork and its relation to

gender already begins during the hiring process of the party starters where their physical appearance, body shape and overall persona determine whether they get the job.

The body is valued in the workplace for both how it looks and how it performs, with female bodies being used as a branding tool (Hancock & Tyler, 2000). Sky Nightclub has a team of marketers and hosts who design flyers, videos and short clips to promote their brand. During the week, staff members post the content to promote the venue via social media platforms including Instagram, Twitter and Whatsapp. Social media marketing allows for an online club presence to be created through various images of the venue, the staff and the clients that enter the venue. A sense of luxury and status is expressed through the images and videos posted, where women often play a key role in 'pushing the brand'. Pictures and videos of the party starters are essential to the marketing of Sky Nightclub, meaning that they need to be ready to have a picture or video taken of them at any point throughout their shift. Samu says, "*Women are kind of used as a tool or tactic to drive profit sales and get the club's name out there. If you have a bunch of beautiful woman you are bound to have men at the club*." Samu emphasises the fact that attractive female bodies influence the profitability of the business. This involves the first form of bodywork, body/appearance work, where the body is commodified in terms of how it looks and how it performs (Gimlin, 2007).

Party starters continually engage in bodywork. This can be both physically and emotionally draining due to the work performed on their bodies as well as the way their bodies are managed, maintained and presented in the workplace (Gimlin, 2007). The notion of bodywork performed on one's own body as well as the production/modification of bodies through work is part and parcel of the work of party starters. Tayisha emphasises these notions of bodywork, expressing that:

> "*One thing for sure about being a party starter, you are not allowed to sit down you always have to dance. Even if you sit for a few minutes you will get in trouble or get fired. You always have to move around and look busy.*"

Hence, their work entails more than just aesthetic and emotional labour. Their bodies must be seen to be moving and dancing. Work exerted on the body through physical activity, such as standing throughout a shift and/or dancing shows how the body is valued for how it performs within spaces of work (Hancock & Tyler, 2000). They are the 'life of the party', which means that sitting down and relaxing is not an option. Samu said that she must, "*always make sure you moving interacting, chat, be friendly, don't sit around and look bored*." Julia expressed a

similar feeling stating that, "*you have to be lively and you can't be tired so you have to pretend to be having a good time the whole time.*" The party starters explained how the continual portrayal of a highly energetic and friendly self leaves them feeling physically and emotionally drained. I observed this particularly before the guests arrive, where one can see that the party starters are often not in the mood to interact with each other, or dance. They will often stand around the table where their bottle of alcohol is situated and do very slow body movements, talking to each other every now and then. However, they know that they are being watched as 'commodities'. Samu and Tayisha both expressed that they feared being fired, which indicates the precarious nature of this job. There is the constant need to interact and put oneself on display using one's body.

The continual engagement in bodywork has an all-around effect on the body, affecting the body, spirit and mind (Gimlin, 2007: 361). My research showed that the physical effects of party starting include emotional and physical exhaustion, which can be attributed to the long working hours where the women are constantly on their feet. Party starters wear heels while continually dancing and engaging in conversation, usually after coming from either university or another job during the day. Rae explained the physical and emotional impact on her when she said, "*nobody obviously cares if you've had a long day and done something before because you need to work ...It doesn't matter what you've done before like you start, show up and do your best*". The women interviewed explained how exhausted they felt, the bodily pains, and how this affected their health in terms of their sleeping and eating patterns. Caylee, who suffers from digestive issues, expressed that "*because of working late nights I often felt really tired, and that exacerbated my digestive health issues to the point of my doctor asking me if I could leave the nightlife entirely*". Hence, this work goes 'beyond being sexy' and using one's erotic capital and entails bodywork, which has consequences for party starters that are not observable to others. Therefore, the impact on their bodies and the use of their bodies, is a key feature of their work.

At Sky Nightclub, it is clear that the female body is used as a commodity, a selling point that capitalises on their sexuality. The bodily display of party starters' sexual features is used by the party starters to flirt with male customers and encourage them to spend money (Marcuse, 1968). Hence, Sky Nightclub encourages the party starters to dress in clothing that shows off their body, particularly their breasts and legs, which is often beyond what is 'acceptable' in society and would be considered 'sluttish' or 'promiscuous'. Caylee expressed that she would "*at times, I like pull my shirt lower down so my cleavage shows more, or I wear shorts that I*

71

know my butt looks nice in." Thus, using their bodies for sex appeal is key to the product offered and is a commodity used to generate income for Sky Nightclub and the party starters alike.

Unlike male staff members, such as barmen and waiters, employed by Sky Nightclub who wear formal clothing and have their bodies fully covered, women must flaunt their bodies. Bodywork, through each of its forms, creates the gendered, sexualised body, which is used to attract the attention of customers. Talking to the party starters, they are very aware of this as a form of erotic capital, as explained by Rae when she said that,

> *"At the end of the day I take advantage of being a female and being confident in my sexuality and what I have to offer and things like that has really helped me."*

Understanding that nightclub culture capitalises on 'sexy, confident' women, party starters use these qualities to their advantage in order to earn an income. Rae expressed how she uses her dress, confidence and sexuality to assist her in party starting by stating that:

> *"You can't go to work with long sleeve covered up polo-neck and loose fitted pants, like you need to obviously come to show your body so look sexy and feel confident in yourself and flaunt it. It does make the job easier. And obviously, if you put a bit of effort in and you make yourself look a certain way does make me feel good and also in my job."*

The findings of my study showed that bodywork operated through each notion outlined by Gimlin (2007) and Hancock and Tyler (200). The work performed on one's own body through body/appearance work as well as the management of embodied emotional experience and display, the production/modification of bodies through work. Attractive women that uphold societal standards of 'beauty' and exude confidence and sexiness, which is what the manager at Sky Nightclub said he wanted in those who worked as party starters saying, "*at the end of the day we need to uphold a certain standard as a venue and attractive females bring the energy and type of clientele that we try and attract*." For those, who enjoy this type of work, it often results in them 'remodelling' themselves through not just exercise to shape the body, but also through cosmetic surgery or aesthetic procedures, such as botox.

Cosmetic aesthetic procedures, such as botox, breast implants and dental procedures have become increasingly popular amongst women working in nightclubs (Aslop & Lennon, 2018:95). Women often undergo procedures in an attempt to modify their appearance and

72

keep with trends, which can enhance their confidence and livelihoods. Working in an industry where a lot of attention is paid to their bodies, party starters draw on their bodily features, particularly their breasts and butts and while they did not expand on this, I could see that some party starters have visibly undergone procedures. The most common being lip fillers and breast implants. However, many women of colour possess these features naturally, features which had once been looked down upon and discriminated against (Aslop & Lennon, 2018:99).

Observing a space that is highly competitive, housing some of the most beautiful women I have ever seen means that I paid extra attention to their features and common beauty or appearance trends. Most of the party starters either have big breasts or big round butts, which often turn heads in terms of the clientele Sky Nightclub attracts. Although some of the party starters have had lip fillers and breast implants and most of them wear wigs and false eyelashes.

There is a lot of pressure to live up to certain trends and beauty standards, as the literature explained (Entwistle & Wissinger, 2006; Maitra & Maitra 2018). At the moment, fuller lips is the 'in thing' and it has become normal to get a breast augmentation. Party starters observe and idolise one another as well as other women who come to Sky Nightclub, which often pressures them into changing their look. Rae explained,

> " *naturally, I have a very small waist and bigger hips, almost like an hourglass figure…except without the big boobs. I decided to get a boob job to match the rest of my body. Also, my lips were something I was always self-conscious of because they were so thin and most of the black (black African) girls have full lips which looks amazing… so I had mine done."*

A certain level of confidence and surety of self is required to work as a party starter, where you are constantly on display. Their bodies become commodified through the work that they do, as sexuality is a selling point within Sky Nightclub. Therefore, the bodies of party starters play an integral role in their work and how they see and carry themselves. If they don't feel good enough, or need a confidence boost, altering their bodies and appearance is usually the first thing that party starters do. Party starters understand the value of being confident in themselves within their line of work; however, the use of their body in achieving this confidence has consequences for women engaging in this type of work.

5.6 Consequences of aesthetic and emotional labour and bodywork

No doubt, working in this sector and the demands that aesthetic, emotional and bodywork impose on party starters comes with certain consequences. I observed and found a correlation between emotional labour, burnout and the consumption of alcohol and drugs. The nightclub is a fast-paced environment, adapted to current social norms and expectations and involves high levels of effort from employees to pull off a successful night of trade (Pugliesi, 1999:126). Party starters play an integral role in setting the tone for the evening and influence the mood, atmosphere and overall turn-out of an evening. This is not an easy task and most party starters admitted to experiencing exhaustion and emotional fatigue as a result of working long shifts.

Substance use and alcohol consumption are common practices among party starters. I examine the reasons behind substance use and alcohol consumption by analysing the effects of emotional labour, self-control and accessibility which the nightlife settings entail.

I distinctly remember a shift where I was working as a waitress; it was a Friday night in the middle of the month, which is usually a quiet time for Sky Nightclub. The Club's energy as a whole was low and waiters/waitresses were not expecting to make a lot of money. Halfway through the evening, one of our regular spenders arrived unexpectedly and asked for a table. He does not drink himself but is known for spending large amounts of money on champagne for the party starters. All the staff at Sky Nightclub have become accustomed to this type of behaviour and capitalise on it. Party starters began to flock around the table as I poured the first round of Verve Rich, which sells at R3000 per bottle. The aim is for the party starters to drink as much as possible to turn over profits. By the time the spender called for his bill, the party starters had already consumed six bottles of champagne between the four of them at the table. They were visibly tipsy, but they did what was expected of them and the club made money and I ended the night with a good tip. Consuming large amounts of alcohol increases the likelihood of engaging in substance use, like cocaine (Buvik *et* al., 2019:394).

Cocaine is the drug of choice at Sky Nightclub. It is easily accessible and is known as being a drug that increases an individual's capacity to drink more, and also increases overall energy (Buvik *et* al., 2019:394). Substance use along with alcohol consumption can increase confidence, which makes flirting and interacting with customers easier. It is important to look at how cocaine is obtained and the accessibility of the drug. Through observing and participating in the space over the years, I have paid attention to the use of drugs within the

74

venue. I have often been offered drugs, asked by customers to organise drugs and witnessed employees doing drugs multiple times. When analysing the reasons behind this, I looked at accessibility and the behaviour towards drugs within the venue. I observed how drugs were spoken about, how openly they were taken and how easily they obtained.

The nightclub space encourages the use of drugs from before one enters the venue. During the brief moment between your parked car/Uber drop-off to the entrance of Sky Nightclub, the likelihood of being offered drugs is high. Drug dealers flock to the streets of Cape Town's CBD and target those who enter nightclubs. Once in the venue, it becomes apparent that many people have drugs on hand. The management at Sky Nightclub is known for dealing drugs through staff members and regular customers. Working in an environment where management deals drugs and are regular drug users themselves both increases the likelihood of consumption by employees and also adds to the relaxed atmosphere surrounding drug use (Hight & Park, 2018). The management at Sky Nightclub are purely concerned with business profitability and providing quality service, even if that means drugs are used to uphold the status of being one of Cape Town's best nightclubs.

Aside from the accessibility, I explored the specific reason behind drug use amongst party starters at Sky Nightclub and found physical and emotional fatigue to be key contributors. The ability to work two jobs or take on the role of being a working student, takes a toll on the body. Going from one role at a day job or college to being a party starter in the evening, means that these women work long hours with limited breathing time in between. Many expressed that being a party starter can be physically draining. As an attempt to combat fatigue, drugs become an attractive option. One of the party starters, with whom I am close friends, came up to me the one night and said:

> *"Sarah, I am so tired and you know I have never done drugs before but tonight when one of the customers offered me cocaine, I was so tempted. I have never felt this tired before and I honestly don't know how I am going to make it through this shift."*

Steering away from using drugs is easier for some. The level of self-control that party starters have impacts on their willingness to do drugs. While the rare few can stay clear from substance use, others find it more difficult and use cocaine as an accessible coping mechanism, as it provides the much-desired energy to continue with the shift. Cocaine allows party starters to 'fit in' with club norms and cultures, making interactions with staff members and guests easier. Pushing aside and masking one's true emotions to uphold expectations of

business requirements in terms of emotional display, is often a task that is underestimated and undermined within nightclubs. Party starters often use drugs to put themselves at ease and to make emotional labouring easier. If the party-starters are relaxed, confident and are sociable, they draw in a crowd easily, which enhances the customer experience. Those who do not engage in drug use, rely on alcohol to keep them going.

Within the brief that is prescribed to each party starter before she accepts the position, is a list of requirements and expectations related to serving in this role. The consumption of alcohol is one of the expectations upon accepting the job. Although the amount of free alcohol prescribed has changed over the years with changing management, the goal for party starters remains to create a vibe through consuming alcohol and encouraging customers to spend more on alcohol. As states, party starters are prescribed between 2-4 bottles of alcohol per shift and have the choice between gin or vodka to share between the 4-5 of them working the shift. In addition, to two tequila shots they each get. The club culture within Sky Nightclub involves a lot of alcohol consumption by staff members, from management to waiters/waitresses to party starters. This means that alcohol consumption is constantly encouraged and is easily accessible. Samu explained this by saying:

> *"We get a bottle of vodka, gin and then throughout the night we'll get another…usually up to four bottles. That's alcohol that the club provides us and then obviously through the night we get alcohol from customers so we are all constantly drinking."*

For some party starters, the consumption of alcohol is one of the reasons they are drawn to the job. Most of the party starters employed by Sky Nightclub are under the age of 28 and are therefore at an age where clubbing is a norm. Getting paid to drink and socialise within a club setting is an attractive way of making extra money for many young women. Speaking to the party starters over the years, a common reason behind taking on the position is because they are 'being paid to drink and have fun'. Most of them expressed that they would have been in the club over the weekends anyway so why not get paid to do it. As seen through the findings of this study, being a party starter is a lot more complex than it appears. The role of alcohol consumption was explored in relation to its accessibility, the relationship that party starters have with alcohol and whether alcohol is used as a coping mechanism (Hight & Park, 2018).

I noticed that whether party starters like drinking alcohol or not, it is part of the job and hard to escape. I noticed that certain party starters purposefully drank slowly while others would try their luck at the bar and order more. The vodka/gin that they receive is not their first choice of drink and this motivates them to charm customers into buying them champagne. Party starters can easily finish a bottle of champagne on their own, which is in addition to the alcohol they consume upon arrival. Customers visibly appear entitled when they have a group of beautiful women at their table who they are buying champagne for. Sometimes, it is short-lived though, where party starters are kicked off of the table by the spender. If spenders catch on that they are drinking too much alcohol at a fast pace, they are often unimpressed and will tell them to leave. Most of the spenders have been on the night scene for a while so they are aware of the role that the party starters play within the club, but some remain hopeful that one might end up going home with them.

The consumption of alcohol comes with the title of being a party starter at Sky Nightclub. From a business point of view, the nightclub benefits from providing the party starters with alcohol. Running an establishment where the sale of alcohol is the main source of profit means that techniques and strategies are employed to ensure that alcohol sales are optimised. Using the party starters to push the sale of alcohol, particularly imported champagnes, has proven to be successful. Hugo explained,

> *"They are there to encourage others to either come to the venue or to spend more money within the venue. By drinking the alcohol that's offered to them in return, the venue makes more money because the customer has to buy more once the promo [promotion] alcohol runs out."*

In addition to boosting club profits, alcohol is directly linked to boosting the moods of party starters. Alike with substance use, party starters admitted to consuming alcohol as a means to get them in the mood for the night ahead by making them more relaxed. When I asked Aaliyah about why she drinks alcohol at work she explained that the job is stressful and that she uses alcohol to "*calm the nerves*". Drinking helps Aaliyah relax and ease into the night ahead by increasing her confidence and energy levels. Hugo further emphasised this by stating –

> *"Because of the environment that it is if you're going to come to work and not drink, you're not really going to be in the best of moods and you probably won't be as successful as what we would like you to be."*

Being in a good mood is expected from all party starters on a shift from management and customers. Observing the group one night, I noticed one party starter that appeared to be extremely shy and reserved. Because it was her first night, she was doing a trial shift. I was standing at the front door when she arrived in her sequins dresses and high black stilettos, she visibly ticked all of the boxes, but as far and her confidence and energy levels went, she battled to fit into the groove of the evening. Being aware of this, I went out of my way to make her feel comfortable and at ease. I showed her to the assigned table for the party starters and offered to pour her a drink. After the first drink and the arrival of the head party starter, who is known for dishing out tequila shots, she appeared to be more relaxed. By the end of the evening, she was dancing on the stage and seemed to have latched onto two of the other party starters. She even went on to attend an after-party and pre-drinks the following night before their shift.

This particular party-starter is still working shifts at Sky Nightclub regularly and has become extremely confident in the role that she plays within the venue. The presence and consumption of alcohol forms a key component of being a party starter, the two operate simultaneously. It is not possible to be a party starter and not enjoy alcohol and even if one is not too fond of it at the beginning, it will grow on you. Consuming alcohol does not stop after a shift as a party starter at Sky Nightclub, but continues into the everyday lives of these women. Samu states, *"I have drunk more than I usually have in the past, so now maybe crave a drink or crave going out and drinking, whereas before, it wasn't really a thing for me."* Party starters admitted to craving alcohol outside of the workplace. Lulu explained to me that she was not much of a drinker before she started working at Sky Nightclub, saying,

> *"I will say there are those days when I crave alcohol. I was out for lunch on Saturday and I was craving a glass of champagne and I was like 'oh my God that's unusual' because I wanted alcohol."*

Interactions and interviews with the party starters showed that their employment at Sky Nightclub influenced their decisions outside of their shifts in terms of the amount they went out and the amount of alcohol they consumed. An initial response to the emotional and physical labour performed within the workplace results in resorting to substance use and alcohol consumption, which then carries on in their personal lives as shown in other studies (Pugliesi, 1999). The findings suggest that the age group of the party starters, the easy accessibility and the need for coping mechanisms in a fast-paced, high stress environment, all

increase the chances of drug and alcohol consumption. The only way for each party starter to avoid or minimise all of the temptations that are present on shift is through self-control. Self-control levels vary depending on the individual, which Samu expressed to me,

> *"You definitely become, I wouldn't say, always addicted, but I have seen some girls; they do drink a lot more than others. And a lot of us are also very young. So we get exposed to high amounts of alcohol from quite a young age. And I do think that sets the tone. We get used to that amount of alcohol and the lifestyle that comes with drinking."*

Being a party starter can have long term consequences for the women employed in this sector. Aside from being aesthetically pleasing, interactive service workers engage in a strenuous amount of emotional labour that, amongst other side-effects, has the potential to lead to burn-out. This study showed that the body and the mind of employees are central to performing their work effectively. The physical pressure that is placed on the body through all the notions of bodywork outlined by Gimlin (2007) often results in workers feeling overworked and drained. This often leads to party starters engaging in risky behaviour that affects them in their personal lives outside of the workplace.

The physical and emotional side- effects of working in a nightclub increase the likelihood of engaging in substance use, which affects party starters lives outside of the club. When I asked Caylee to expand on the effects she stated that, "*it's affected my performance in uni [university], my mental health because of chemical imbalances from drinking and...other things [drug]*."

Being a party starter and encompassing the role in its entirety does not just begin and end after a shift. My study showed that being a party starter is not simply about showing up to work looking sexy. Party starters have to consider many factors, including the availability of substances in the workplace and the pressure to uphold standards relating to appearance. A lot of time and effort is put into meeting societal standards and workplace expectations before a shift, in terms of dress and overall appearance as well as experiencing the effects of their work post shift. The project of the self through bodywork means that bodies are created, managed and modified to meet both societal and workplace standards (Hancock & Tyler, 2007).

There are also other dangers and risks working in this sector. Over the years, I have noticed how certain party starters are attracted to the high-status life and use their employment as a means of finding a wealthy boyfriend, or 'blesser', as these men are commonly referred to. The glamorous life is often accompanied by fancy sports cars, excessive amounts of alcohol and mansion parties in Camps Bay or Clifton. Reckless driving under the influence of alcohol, has resulted in three party starters dying in car accidents since I have been employed at Sky Nightclub.

5.6.1 Nightclub work and sexual harassment

Owing to my experience working at Sky Nightclub as a waitress serving entitled male customers, I am aware of how harmful the space can be. With the informality of the industry, as well as the heavy consumption of alcohol, male customers often test boundaries and take advantage of female staff by engaging in sexual harassment. The Nightclub is a space where many men come to find potential women to take home or to simply admire. At Sky Nightclub, the party starters, as explained, are on display for men. It should be noted that Sky Nightclub has 8-10 bouncers working on every shift per evening to deal with unruly customers; however, not all instances of sexual harassment are reported. Based on my own experiences and participant observation, I asked party starters how they handle customers that make them feel uncomfortable, during the interviews. Most of the party starters admitted to being put in uncomfortable positions and also that they had become 'accustomed' to or 'desensitized' to instances of sexual harassment. Lulu explained:

> *"Uhm well I think this might be a horrible thing to say but you get so used to being made [to fee] uncomfortable that you learn how to manoeuvre around it. Like someone might grab me in a way that makes me feel uncomfortable, but instead of me calling the bouncers or being like 'fuck outta here', most of the time I will push it aside. I will obviously leave that section but I won't make it as big of a deal as it should. So I won't get the guy kicked out because then I will have to kick out every man that misbehaves and then there will be no men in the club."*

Interactive service work revolves around ensuring that customers are happy so that they stay, and ultimately return to the venue (Wolkowitz, 2006). Female employees play a key role in ensuring that male customers have an enjoyable night so that they spend as much as possible and invite as many people as they can. Party starters, who through their aesthetic and emotional labour, as well as bodywork, adopt a highly feminized and sexualized role within

the venue. Some of the party starters highlighted how the relationship between 'work' and 'play' is often misunderstood by customers, who often view them as sex workers. Julia explained an incident that she had one night:

"So there was an incident where I didn't know what language they were speaking but I could definitely see there was some sort of action going on. They [the spender and group of men at his table] invited me to their hotel room but I heard the one guy say 'I don't want this one, I want the other on"... I felt like I was being sold."

When Julia spoke to the head party starter about this, she approached the male customer who said this and firmly said "*don't you ever do that again*". Party starters are usually able to handle these situations quite well, as it comes with the job. Lulu explained that in the workplace, she adopts a different persona, where she handles harassment differently from how she would outside of the nightclub. She said:

"I manoeuvre around it, especially because it's a work environment but if I wasn't working I would definitely slap the living shit out of him. When I am working I usually become the bigger person because most of the time even if you do speak to men, they don't care, that's what I have realised. Even if you say, 'that was disrespectful'. Men in the club think one way and one way only. They don't listen to what you have to say, they just see you as this object and when the object tries to speak it's like 'girl what are you saying'.

Party starters, like Caylee, have spent many years in the nightclub industry and her approach to dealing with harassment has changed over time. She states that:

"I used to just tolerate it when I was still quite young because I thought that was what I had to but as I got older I didn't tolerate it and I would be quite firm in telling men to not touch me or invade my space."

Most of the time, party starters try to handle the situations by themself. Aaliyah said that she had an incident where she punched a customer in the face after asking him multiple times to stop being disrespectful. Aside from dealing with the harassment themselves, all of the party starters admitted to having a strong support network at Sky Nightclub. Working in a high-risk environment that can be hostile, management pays attention to ensuring the safety of all staff members. Samu captured the dynamic of what party starters experience and how they handle these situations perfectly:

"Well, I've personally had multiple incidents in the club. I've had men take pictures up my dress. I've had men grope me; I've had men put their hands up my dress. You are put in difficult situations and it's very hard to remain professional. But we do have quite a strong support system at the club; we have a very good team of management that we can go to if there is an issue. We also have bouncers who are stationed at multiple points of the venue and they also are found that they've been very helpful in assisting in situations like this. But personally, I'm not one to keep quiet. So I will stand up to the customers. I'll let them know that what they're doing is wrong. I definitely think this behaviour becomes normal or normalized and you become desensitized to men constantly groping and grabbing and making comments, which I definitely think is sad. When you're working in the club; you definitely become almost accustomed to that which isn't one."

Samu shows how her strong personality often results in her trying to resolve instances of conflict or harassment on her own, while admitting that there are people she can go to for help. In workplaces, such as nightclubs, where sexual harassment is likely to take place, it is important that workers feel protected. All of the party starters testify to a strong support system, which was then reiterated by Hugo, the manager, in his interview who stated,

"We take the touching, and the groping and so on very seriously at the venue. So, if something has happened we all open for them to come and speak to us at the end then and it will get dealt with immediately with a bouncer and the customer will be called downstairs and removed from the venue."

I can testify to this being the truth and even in instances where I have been harassed, I have been supported and the customer has been dealt with accordingly. The bouncers, in particular, are very protective of the staff. However, this still does not take away from the effects that harassment can have on party starters. This has an impact on the well-being of party starters and can lead to them becoming anxious at work.

5.7 Conclusion

Based on these findings one can see that nightclub work involves both the body and the mind of employees. Tailoring themselves to entertain guests and put on a 'performance', party starters manage their emotions and appearance to meet workplace and societal standards. They put their bodies at the forefront of everything that they do through engaging in

bodywork. However, this study showed that emotional, aesthetic and bodywork can effect and have consequences on the livelihoods, well-being and physical bodies of the party starters (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). Emotionally labour performed by party starters, specifically, often results in burn-out and overall exhaustion.

Party starters are often seen as being walking billboards for Sky Nightclub and are expected to embody the nightlife in its entirety. Temptation coupled with stress, exhaustion and accessibility results in party starters using drugs and alcohol as coping mechanisms. In addition to the consequences of emotional and aesthetic labour and bodywork, party starters work in an environment where sexual harassment occurs often. However, despite these consequences, party starters are agents and often find their work empowering. They enjoy the work that they do and work towards perfecting the role that they play within Sky Nightclub.

The next chapter discusses the findings and draws some key conclusions, in relation to the key research question and objectives. Chapter six shows that women are not mere victims but rather agents who have developed strategies to protect themselves in environments where harassment often occurs.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This study aimed to determine how party starters navigate their experiences in an environment which places a high premium on their appearance, emotional display, body and sexuality. The objectives of this study included:

1. What role do party starters play at Sky Nightclub?

2. How do party starters perform gender by using their bodies and sexuality as a commodity?

3. How do party starters use their emotional and aesthetic labour, as well as bodywork agency?

4. Are there any potential challenges or risks associated with working as a party starter at the nightclub?

In this final chapter, I draw on both the theory and the findings of the study to develop an understanding of the work of party starters, who are employed at one of Cape Town's best VIP nightclubs, Sky Nightclub. Through participant observation and a series of interviews, this study found that the performance of aesthetic and emotional labour, as well as bodywork, is central to the role that party starters play within Sky Nightclub. In the performing of this role, party starters also required to present a hyper-performance of their femininity and sexuality, within Sky Nightclub, where systems of power and control are constantly at play. In addition to party starters adhering to expectations from management, they manage themselves through engaging in the performance of gender, self-discipline and self-surveillance. The study found that party starters are agents who are confident in themselves, their roles, and their ability to manipulate male customers to their own benefit in an environment that places a high value on their sexuality. However, to perform these roles, they sometimes engage in risky behaviour, which is seen as the norm, or part of the job, but can have long-term serious consequences for their well-being and health.

6.2 VIP nightclubs and the role that party starters play within the space

Research indicates that interactive service sector work is competitive, performative and often highly stressful (Warhurst & Nickson, 2007:6). Korczynski (2002) indicated that this is owing to the tri-partite employment relationship that exists between, the employer, employee and customer. Employees are there to 'serve', by putting the customer first and ensuring that

they have an enjoyable time, while experiencing high-quality service. Bradley, *et* al. (2004) supports this claim, but adds that employees are able to manipulate and dictate this relationship. In other words, they have agency in terms of how they perform their various roles. This study confirmed this, in terms of how party starters navigate their environment and interactions with customers in this venue.

VIP nightclubs fall within the interactive service work sector. They embody luxury and attentive service, Mears (2015) explains the nature of VIP nightclubs, which appeal, to the global elite. Complimenting both Mears' (2015) studies and Rivera's (2010) study relating to VIP nightclub work, this study highlighted the extravagant nature of Sky Nightclub. Sky Nightclub remains one of the best VIP nightclubs in Cape Town owing to the service it provides and the aesthetic standard of the venue. The boldly and luxuriously decorated interior, along with the high-priced premium liquor and table rental fee, attracts upper-class customers in the top wealth-bracket, as is shown in the case study. To ensure this all-around experience, this study, like Warhurst and Nickson's (2007) research, showed that employees play a vital role in ensuring the success of this experience. Party starters are employed to embody what 'nightlife' represents. In other words, they represent a good time, they are fun, they consume large amounts of alcohol and enjoy dancing and interacting with others. Sky Nightclub's party starters are 'sexy' young women who are hired to be 'the life of the party' and quite simply, to get men to spend as much money as possible. These women are visually appealing and represent the Sky Nightclub brand by the way they dress, carry themselves and interact with customers.

This study highlighted that party starters play an integral role in attracting customers to the venue, driving profits for Sky Nightclub and ensuring that customers have a good time. They have a direct role in influencing the energy of the venue, like Julia explained when she said they are there to 'create a vibe' and 'make it look exciting'. The findings of this study indicated that when party starters are successful in creating the right atmosphere and 'vibe', they are likely to be invited to join a spender's table. This is where the more intensive labour of the job is performed. Interactive service work requires employees, particularly female employees, to tailor themselves both physically and emotionally to meet workplace standards and requirements (Warhurst & Nickson, 2007; Mears, 2015). This study showed that to deliver the premium service that high-status clientele expect, party starters have to manage themselves through aesthetic and emotional labour, as well as through bodywork.

Many theorists have done research on service work, particularly on women employed within service sectors and have emphasised its sexualized nature (Hochschild, 2003; Mears, 2015, Grazian, 2009). The commodification and commercialization of women's bodies, most frequently in the context of their heterosexuality, is a central feature of interactive service work (Mears, 2015). Women experience the nightlife sector as gendered, where they are subjected to higher levels of control and management. This study found that the party starters were aware that they were sexualized and often seen as a commodity, but they used this to their advantage to generate an income. Party starters cater to the economic elites, who are status-driven. Therefore, the clientele at Sky Nightclub "*want you in their space*" as Lulu explained, as it is seen as a form of cultural and class capital.

6.3 Hyper-sexuality and performance

To fit into the VIP nightclub space, the party starters exaggerate their gender and embody hyper-femininity. Foucault's (1980, 1984) work on power and domination showed that individuals regulate, manage, and control themselves to meet societal and workplace standards and expectations through biopower. At Sky Nightclub, one observes how party starters impose a form of 'self-discipline' and regulation to meet the expectations of both the employer and the client. They perform gender in a specific the way which appeals to customers and generates money for Sky Nightclub. As Butler (1990) explains; performances within the workplace, specifically interactive service sectors, are not gender-neutral. Systems of power that operate within these spaces enforce 'acceptable' ways of performing gender, which Julia confirmed during the interview stating, "*you have to be hyper-feminine…you are hyper-sexualised*".

Party starters perform their gender by using their erotic capital. Hakim (2010) coined this term to describe the social value of sexual attractiveness, which is usually possessed to a larger degree by these women. This study showed that the party starters capitalized on their looks and sexual attractiveness firstly by taking on the role and secondly making themselves visible in the venue. As they have confidence and the ability to charm, flirt and embrace their sexuality, party starters are able to stand out and entice male spenders and do whatever is needed to get men to spend more money and have a good time. This shows that the party starters are aware of their position in the venue and embrace it. They do not view themselves as victims, but rather use their erotic capital as a means to manipulate men to their advantage. This being said, being a party starter can be as liberating as it is draining.

6.4 Aesthetic and emotional labour and bodywork

Within this line of work, appearance matters. Anyone who does not fit the look or image of Sky Nightclub, will not be hired. Warhurst and Nickson (2007) and Wiebaum *et* al. (2008) argue that interactive service industries use the appearance of employees to boost profits and as a result, the hiring process often involves selecting those with the desired physical characteristics. Employees represent the brand of their workplace and are expected to be well-groomed and good-looking (Warhurst & Nickson, 2007). Aesthetic labour, as discussed primarily by Warhurst *et* al. (2000) refers to the labour involved in managing appearance and style.

This study showed that within Sky Nightclub, looks and overall style and appearance influenced whether party starters were hired. Party starters are either recommended by a friend, or recruited on social media platforms, like Instagram. It is very rare to be recruited for your personality via Instagram as it involves posting pictures of yourself in an attempt to get comments, likes and followers. Party starters are profiled and if they fit the role by having the desired body type, fashion sense and overall style, they are allowed to begin their first shift. The party starters are expected to be 'attractive' as Hugo explained. He emphasised that the party starter's appearance has a direct impact on the energy and type of clientele drawn to the venue.

The findings suggest that you cannot be 'ordinary' or 'average' to be a party starter. You have to embody glamour, luxury and the ability to either stay ahead of trends or be a trend-setter – to be 'beyond sexy'. One has to be comfortable, strong and confident in one's skin, as these characterisers are vital to this role. Party starters are 'on display for men' and perfecting their look takes the constant performance of aesthetic labour. Research emphasises how the embodied characteristics and attributes of women are used to drive profits within interactive service industries (Warhurst *et* al., 2004; Maitra & Maitra, 2018). This study supports this claim by showing how valuable the aesthetic labour of the party starters is in terms of creating the VIP experience at Sky Nightclub.

In addition to the value that party starters have in terms of their appearance, their emotions and the way in which they interact with customers is just as important and often overlooked in this line of work. Engaging with Hochschild's (1979, 1983, 2004) work on emotional labour, interactive service work is viewed as involving intensive labouring and managing of emotions. Hochschild (1983) emphasised the way in which the emotions of employees are

manipulated, regulated, and commodified by employers to provide customers a 'service with a smile'. Therefore, emotional labour has exchange value, which results in employees putting on a professional mask, hiding their true emotions and manipulating how they feel to attract and retain customers. In VIP nightclubs, employees serve customers who place a high value on their status, which results in their demand of a premium service (Mears, 2015). In other words, they expect the quality of service to match the amount of money they are spending. This study found that Sky Nightclub has been successful in retaining its name in the industry through providing a service that outdoes its competitors.

Party starters play a significant role in providing an all-around premium service and the way in which they do this, involves using their emotional labour and often faking how they truly feel to entertain customers. This study found that apart from being a strong visual component of Sky Nightclub, party starters need the social skills to match it. Apart from looking sexy, party starters must act sexy too. While they engage in hyper-femininity, party starters are expected too always be friendly, accommodating and energetic. They are not allowed to look bored or angry or frustrated. Hochschild (1983) refers to this changing of one's outer emotional display as surface-acting, which involves employees displaying cheerfulness in an attempt to impress customers.

In order to stand out in the crowd, party starters have to look as if they are having a good time. They dance and sip alcohol and have happy and enthusiastic expressions on their faces. If they embody what a customer desires, then they will be selected to join a table, which makes it easier to encourage customers to spend money. Once they are at the table, party starters have to act interested in the customers, which requires intensive emotional labour, for example they have to laugh at the spenders' jokes, flirt and continually engage in conversation. This can be exhausting, as shown in Taylor and Tyler's (2000) study on women employed in the airline industry. Taylor and Tyler (2000) concluded that emotional labour is not a "gender-neutral" phenomenon.

Women employed in service industries are under a disproportionate amount of pressure to monitor their emotional display, which is demonstrated by the way party starters engage in surface-acting and deception. Typically, party starters use their bodies and display a lot of cleavage and butt and make customers believe that they stand a chance of further engagement with her, when in reality they don't. The continual portrayal of inauthentic emotions can be taxing, especially when they must be lively and pretend to be having a good time, even when

they are not always in a good mood. However, party starters are aware of the value of their emotional labour and the need to put on a performance, which requires a high level of confidence, a strong social skillset, and the ability to control their emotions.

Beyond this, party starters engage in bodywork to perform their role successfully. Researchers, such as Wolkowitz (2006) and Gimlin (2007) use the term "bodywork", which is a combination of aesthetic and emotional labour, to describe the work that individuals perform on their own bodies and the bodies of others. To meet cultural, societal and workplace norms and standards, individuals subject their bodies to performances, which are 'bought' and 'sold' by employers (Gimlin, 2007). Literature suggests that employees in the modern economy engage in the 'project of self' where they manage, and often perfect, their bodily display (Gimlin, 2007). The findings of this study demonstrated how party starters engaged in bodywork by using their bodies to perform paid labour. Like the findings by Gimlin (2007), this study also that bodywork involves the natural state of the body being managed, modified and transformed to meet cultural and workplace expectations. This reflected in the findings, where the party starters purposefully change their physical appearance, through hair/make-up styling, to increase their attractiveness and dance in a way that is seen as to be 'sexy' and draws attention to themselves. Some even undergo cosmetic surgery, such as getting breast and butt implants, to improve their appearance. Party starters engage in bodywork to indicate their place in the hierarchy of Sky Nightclub by distinguishing themselves from the rest of the crowd.

Hancock and Tyler's (2000) research explained the value of the female body to the branding of a business. Within heteronormative societies, the female body is valorised, sexualised, and used to attract the attention of men (Hancock & Tyler, 2000). Party starters play a role in the marketing of Sky Nightclub, with their faces and bodies appearing on social media posts to attract spenders to the venue. The bodies of party starters are commodified, which has both financial and social value to both themselves and Sky Nightclub. Apart from the use of the emotional and aesthetic labour, bodywork is performed by party starters to increase their visibility. The way that party starters move, dance and interact by using their bodies, to emphasize their femininity and sexuality, proves to be valuable to Sky Nightclub and impacts the number of spenders who enter the venue.

The 'gendered body' performs work in a way that emphasises gender norms (McDowell, 1997). Research strongly suggests that women in interactive service industries are subject to a

disproportionate amount of pressure to adhere to gender and sexuality norms and standards, as opposed to their male counterparts (Hall, 1993; Marcuse, 1968). The body-shape, physical appearance and overall persona of party starters are studied before a party starter is hired and then continually enforced once she has been employed. This study shows that party starters understand that the role their gendered body plays within the space. They are 'pretty girls' who help alcohol sales by using their emotional labour and sexuality.

Young women employed in VIP nightclubs use their bodies and sexuality to their own advantage to get the attention of spenders and encourage them to buy more bottles of alcohol. Although performing bodywork can be exhausting and taxing on the body, as Gimlin (2007) explained, party starters continue to dance, be lively and friendly and refrain from sitting down and looking bored. By using their erotic capital, the expressions on their faces and the movements of their bodies are commodified, thereby managing to provide financial gain both to themselves and Sky Nightclub. The question one can ask is: are women being exploited to appease men, or are men being exploited by the women who have mastered the power of their erotic agency. However, there is another side to this work in terms of the risks and consequences of working in this type of industry and using this type of labour.

6.5 Risks and consequences associated with being a party starter

While party starters realise the benefits of performing aesthetic and emotional labour and bodywork, it can have negative consequences on their overall well-being. Interactive service industries demand intensive management of emotions and appearance, which research shows, can lead to emotional exhaustion, burn-out and an increased likelihood of engaging in alcohol and substance use (Hochschild, 1983; Pugliesi, 1999; Hight & Park, 2018). Employees in interactive service industries, like nightclubs, often find coping mechanisms, which enable them to supress their true emotions and boost their confidence and energy levels (Hight & Park, 2018).

The suppression of authentic emotions that are considered 'negative' can lead to emotional dissonance within employees. Emotions such as irritability, boredom and anger are forbidden in interactive service work, as explained by Ashforth and Humphrey (1993). The party starters at Sky Nightclub are repeatedly encouraged and expected to be energetic and interact as much as possible. Some party starters in this study admitted that they use alcohol and cocaine to help them 'stay awake and be lively'. Alcohol plays a huge role in the work of party starters. Not only are they provided with free alcohol by Sky Nightclub, but their role

profile includes getting men to buy them alcohol once the 'free' alcohol has been finished. Therefore, this study found that the party starters are expected to drink alcohol. Drinking and encouraging others to drink is part of the job description, it is both an enabler to do the work, and a means to generate profits.

Mears' (2015) study showed that without the "girls", customers were less likely to spend their money and that the "girls" transform the venue into a high-status space. This is exactly what this study found in terms of how the party starters get men to spend their money and enhance the 'mood' of clients. Alcohol also increased the party starters and made them feel more confident. Studies, such as Buvik *et* al. (2019) confirm that VIP nightclubs encourage the consumption of alcohol and substances are used to both 'calm the nerves' and put people in a good mood. However, this can lead to alcohol addiction, as shown in this study. One participant explained how working at Sky Nightclub has affected her mental and physical health, particularly her hormone levels, which are altered from drinking alcohol and using drugs. It can be said that being involved in this type of work, which entails excessive alcohol consumption and substance usage, can have long-term implications for women working in this sector in terms of both their health and well-being.

This study showed that nightclubs are sexualised spaces where harassment, particularly sexual harassment, is likely to occur (Grazian, 2009; Brunner & Dever, 2014). Grazian (2009) explained that women working in nightclubs are often viewed as being "fair game", owing to the way they dress and conduct themselves. Sexual harassment often occurs in spaces where women perform heterosexual femininity. This study found that sexual harassment was part and parcel of the job. Party starters admitted being catcalled, grabbed inappropriately, and being subjected to inappropriate or sexist comments. They often must deal with men groping them, putting their hands up their dresses, or having to deal with invitations to have sex with clients. This is very common in nightclub work, but women in this study spoke of how they learned to 'maneuverer' around these various forms of sexual harassment. For example, they simply 'push' instances of harassment aside, or tolerate it while at work, but not in their private lives. These problems come with the job and party starters said that they would rather keep quiet about being harassed or disrespected, than upset a customer and lose the money that they could bring to the business.

However, what is also clear from the findings, is that women learn how to deal with these problems due to the support system which has been put in place, and do not consider

themselves to be victims of sexual harassment. Most of the party starters expressed that they felt protected by management and the bouncers who removed customers from the premises if they became abusive or disrespected staff. Within themselves, party starters have agency and have developed strategies to mitigate the effects of the harassment. This does not imply that they are unaffected by the stress and anxiety that could come with sexual harassment, but that they navigate these problems to ensure that they do not feel like victims of sexual exploitation. This is possible, because ultimately, they have protection from management and operate in a controlled space which is under surveillance. They therefore know that if they report instances of harassment, these instances will be dealt with. It should be noted, however, that although staff at Sky Nightclub are aware of management support and the protection provided by the bouncers, no formal training is provided to equip staff with the tools to navigate the dangers associated with their work. This type of work engenders risky behaviours, which can have long-term consequences for these women.

6.6 Conclusion

This study looked at the experiences of a group of women, employed as party starters at Sky Nightclub. Engaging issues of gender, sexuality, power and control, this study showed that the labour that women in VIP nightclubs perform is both gendered and sexualised.

In engaging with theories relating to emotional and aesthetic labour and bodywork, the findings of this study showed that being a party starter is beyond simply being 'sexy', it requires emotional and social skills. Women use their erotic capital as agency to benefit themselves, and boost profits for the nightclub. More importantly, they are aware of what men want and how to put on a 'performance' to manipulate men into spending more money, while at the same time enjoying the 'nightlife' and earning an income. The party starters see themselves as agents and not victims, they feel powerful, not powerless and they embrace their gender and sexuality. However, as indicated, this is 'risky' work and women have to deal with instances of sexual harassment in the workplace, and the impact that the long-term consequences of alcohol and substance abuse may have on their own lives. In this regard, one cannot ignore the reality that this type of work may yield short-term income, and that it can have long-term implications for the health and well-being of women working in this sector.

Very little research has been done on VIP nightclub work, particularly within the South African context. This study attempted to fill the void by looking at how women working in nightclubs experience their work. VIP nightclubs require a specific type of work to appeal to

the clientele that it attracts. In this regard, the findings suggest that women play an integral role in creating the right atmosphere by using their emotional and aesthetic labour, as well as bodywork. In addition, through capitalising on their erotic capital, party starters show how women in the interactive service industries use their sex appeal and sexual attractiveness, to increase profitability for themselves and their workplace. Although VIP nightclubs are spaces which exude money and luxury, which can be beneficial to employees, the work is risky and has consequences.

Sky Nightclub, gives party starters access to a high-status world, high-profile people and customers who fall within the global elite wealth-bracket. Most party starters are young and at a vulnerable age, which often results in them making reckless decisions as they get drawn into this glamorous life. As indicated, this often results in alcohol and substance abuse, which affects their health and well-being, but can even result in the loss of their own lives. Getting caught up in the nightlife poses many dangers for young women and further research surrounding the consequences and risks that they face, is required.

There are a number of limitations to this study, and this provides areas for further research. I did not look at the party starters from a feminist perspective, but rather from the perspective of the sociology of work. Furthermore, I did not unpack the underlying power relations associated with the intersectionality of race, class, and gender and how this influences privilege and access to certain employment positions, such as being a party starter. In this regard, it would be interesting to look to develop an in-depth account of the way in which race and class impact the work of women employed in VIP nightclubs. From what I have observed, but it was not a research focus of this study, that Nigerian men are very attracted to coloured girls. These girls often come from underprivileged backgrounds and are easily attracted to the wealth that Nigerian men flaunt at Sky Nightclub. It would be interesting to develop an integrated account of the experiences of Nigerian spenders and the coloured party starters on how race, culture and class shape their interactions.

Another aspect, not dealt with in-depth is the effects that sexual and substance abuse has on the health and well-being of the party starters once they leave the industry. These issues were avoided owing to the ethical implications they pose, but they are important to the research in order for women working in this sector to be educated and informed about the risks and dangers associated with this type of work. Certain party starters, who aren't in the industry any more, but visit Sky Nightclub, express how grateful they are to not be working in the

industry anymore and emphasise how easy it can be for the environment to 'swallow' you. Overall, they admit that during the time that they worked as party starters, it served its purpose but they are happy that they don't work in a nightclub any more. With regards to this statement, research surrounding the reasons as to why certain employees become addicted to the nightlife and others not, should be considered for further research. It therefore stands to reason that further research regarding the long-term effects on the party starters who have left the life-style and moved on to living a more 'normal' and regulated life, should be conducted.

Reference List

About Cape Town. 2005. Welcome To Cape Town – South Africa. (online) http://www.aboutcapetown.com. September 30.

Adams, W., 2015. Conducting semi-structured interviews. In: E. Newcomer, ed., *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation*. [online] ProQuest Ebook Central, pp.492-505. Available at: <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/umanitoba/detail.action?docID=2144898.> [Accessed 10 June 2021].

Adkins, L., 1995. *Gendered work*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Adkins, L., 2000. Mobile Desire: Aesthetics, Sexuality and the `Lesbian' at Work. *Sexualities*, 3(2), pp.201-218.

Alsop, R. and Lennon, K., 2018. Aesthetic surgery and the expressive body. *Feminist Theory*, 19(1), pp.95-112.

Ashforth, B. and Humphrey, R., 1993. Emotional Labor in Service Roles: The Influence of Identity. *The Academy of Management Review*, 18(1), p.88.

Atkinson, A., Piketty, T. and Saez, E., 2011. Top Incomes in the Long Run of History. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 49(1), pp.3-71.

Bartky, S., 1998. Foucault, Femininity and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power. In: R. Weitz, ed., *The Politics of Women's Bodies: Sexuality, Appearance and Behavior*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp.25-45.

Bhana, D. and Anderson, B., 2013. Desire and constraint in the construction of South African teenage women's sexualities. *Sexualities*, 16(5-6), pp.548-564.

Bhana, D. and Pattman, R., 2011. Girls want money, boys want virgins: the materiality of love amongst South African township youth in the context of HIV and AIDS. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 13(8), pp.961-972.

Bolton, R. and Saxena-Iyer, S., 2009. Interactive Services: A Framework, Synthesis and Research Directions. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 23(1), pp.91-104.

Bourdieu, P., 2002. Forms of Capital. *Journal of Economic Sociology*, 3(5), pp.60-74.

Bradley, H., Erickson, M. and Stephenson, C., 2004. *Myths at work*. Cambridge: Polity in association with Blackwell.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V., 2021. Thematic Analysis. In: *APA Handbook of Research Methods in Psychology*, 2nd ed. American Psychological Association, pp.57-71.

Brunner, L. and Dever, M., 2014. Work, Bodies and Boundaries: Talking Sexual Harassment in the New Economy. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 21(5), pp.459-471.

Bryman, A., 2012. *Social research methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.1-766.

Budgeon, S., 2003. Identity as an Embodied Event. *Body & Society*, 9(1), pp.35-55.

Butler, J., 1993. *Bodies that matter*. New York: Routledge, pp.1-297.

Butler, J., 1999. *Gender trouble*. New York: Routledge, pp. 1-171.

Butler, J., 2009. Performativity, Precarity, and Sexual Policies. *AIBR, Revista de Antropologia Iberoamericana*, 4(3), p.i-xiii.

Butler, J., Segal, L. and Osborne, P., 1994. Gender as Performance: An Interview with Judith Butler. *Radical Philosophy: A Journal of Socialist and Feminist Philosophy*, 32(9).

Buvik, K., Bye, E. and Gripenberg, J., 2018. Alcohol and drug use among staff at licensed premises in Norway. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 47(4), pp.393-399.

Caven, V., Lawley, S. and Baker, J., 2013. Performance, gender and sexualised work. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 32(5), pp.1-17.

Davis, K., 1995. *Reshaping the female body*. London: Routledge, pp.163.

Entwistle, J. and Wissinger, E., 2006. Keeping up Appearances: Aesthetic Labour in the Fashion Modelling Industries of London and New York. *The Sociological Review*, 54(4), pp.774-794.

Forseth, U., 2001. *Boundless work*. Trondheim: Inst. for sosiologi og statsvitenskap, Fak. for samfunnsvitenskap og teknologiledelse, Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige Univ, pp.1-299.

Foucault, M., 1980. *POWER/KNOWLEDGE Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*. New York: Pantheon Books, pp.55-62.

Foucault, M., 1984. *The Foucault reader*. New York: Pantheon Books, pp.1-399.

Gimlin, D., 2007. What Is 'Body Work'? A Review of the Literature. *Sociology Compass*, 1(1), pp.353-370.

Goffman, E., 1959. *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Anchor Books, pp. 1-152.

Grandey, A., Frone, M., Melloy, R. and Sayre, G., 2019. When are fakers also drinkers? A self-control view of emotional labor and alcohol consumption among U.S. service workers. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 24(4), pp.482-497.

Grazian, D., 2009. Urban Nightlife, Social Capital, and the Public Life of Cities. *Sociological Forum*, 24(4), pp.908-917.

Guerrier, Y. and Adib, A., 2000. `No, We Don't Provide that Service': The Harassment of Hotel Employees by Customers. *Work, Employment and Society*, 14(4), pp.689-705.

Guest, G., MacQueen, K. and Namey, E., 2012. *Applied thematic analysis*. California: Sage Publications, pp.1-21.

Hakim, C., 2010. Erotic Capital. *European Sociological Review*, 26(5), pp.499-518.

Hall, E., 1993. Waitering/Waitressing:. *Gender & Society*, 7(3), pp.329-346.

Hancock, P & Tyler M., 2000. Body and Organisation. *"The Look of Love": Gender and the Organization of Aesthetics*. London: Sage.108-129

Hartsock, N., 1990. *Foucault on power: A Theory for Women*. New York: Routledge, pp.157-175.

Hight, S. and Park, J., 2018. Substance use for restaurant servers: Causes and effects. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 68(2018), pp.68-79.

Hochschild, A., 1979. Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure. *American Journal of Sociology*, 85(3), pp.551-575.

Hochschild, A., 2004. Feeling Management: From Private to Commercial Uses. In: A. Amin and N. Thrift, ed., *The Blackwell Cultural Economy Reader*, 1st ed. UK: Blackwell Publishing, pp.329-350.

Hochschild, A., 1983. *The Managed Heart*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 1-339.

Jaggar, A. and Bordo, S., 1989. *Gender, body, knowledge*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.Foucault, M., 1979. Discipline & Punish. Vintage Books, pp.1-318.

Jagger, G., 2008. *Judith Butler*. London: Routledge, pp.1-181

Korczynski, M., 2002. Human Resource Management in the Service Sector. *Employee Relations*, 24(4), pp.461-463.

Lessor, R., 1984. Social movements, the occupational arena and changes in career consciousness: The case of women flight attendants. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 5(1), pp.37-51.

Lester, J., 2008. Performing Gender in the Workplace. *Community College Review*, 35(4), pp.277-305.

Maitra, S. and Maitra, S., 2018. Producing the Aesthetic Self: An Analysis of Aesthetic Skill and Labour in the Organized Retail Industries in India. *Journal of South Asian Development*, 13(3), pp.337-357.

Mann, S., 1997. Emotional labour in organizations. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 18(1), pp.4-12.

Marcuse, H., 1968. *Negotiations: Essays in Critical Theory: 'Industrialization and Capitalism in the Work of Max Weber.'* Boston: Beacon Press, pp. 1-290.

McDowell, L., 1997. *Capital Culture: Gender at Work in the City*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, pp. 1-260.

McNay, ed., Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on Resistance. Boston: Northeastern University Press, pp.61-86.

Mears, A., 2015. Girls as elite distinction: The appropriation of bodily capital. *Poetics*, 53, pp.22-37.

Mears, A., 2015. Working for Free in the VIP. *American Sociological Review*, 80(6), pp.1099-1122.

Pugliesi, K., 1999. The Consequences of Emotional Labor: Effects on Work Stress, Job Satisfaction, and Weil-Being. *Motivation and Emotion*, 23(2), pp.125-154.

Pylypa, J., 1998. Power and Bodily Practice: Applying the Work of Foucault to an Anthropology of the Body. *Arizona Anthropologist*, 13, pp.21-36.

Rivera, L., 2010. Status Distinctions in Interaction: Social Selection and Exclusion at an Elite Nightclub. *Qualitative Sociology*, 33(3), pp.229-255.

SA Corona Virus Online Portal. 2021. *COVID-19 Risk Adjusted Strategy - SA Corona Virus Online Portal*. [online] Available at: <https://sacoronavirus.co.za/covid-19-risk-adjusted-strategy/> [Accessed 15 June 2021].

Salih, S., 2002. On Judith Butler and Performativity. In: *Judith Butler*. New York: Routledge, pp.55-68.

Shefer, T., 1990. Feminist Theories of the Role of the Body Within Women's Oppression. *Critical Arts*, 5(2), pp.37-54.

Shilling, C., 2000. The Body. In: G. Browning, A. Halci and F. Webster, ed., *Understanding Contemporary Society: Theories of the Present*. New York: Sage Publications, pp.415-427.

Singh, D., 2006. An Evolutionary Theory of Female Physical Attractiveness. *Eye on Psi Chi Magazine*, 10(3), pp.18-28.

Skeggs, B., 2004. Context and Background: Pierre Bourdieu's Analysis of Class, Gender and Sexuality. *The Sociological Review*, 52(2), pp.19-33.

Smith, E., 2016. 'It gets very intimate for me': Discursive boundaries of pleasure and performance in sex work. *Sexualities*, 20(3), pp.344-363.

Taylor, S. and Tyler, M., 2000. Emotional Labour and sexual difference in the Airline Industry. *Work, Employment and Society*, 14(1), pp.77-95.

Violanti, J. and Aron, F., 1993. Sources of Police Stressors, Job Attitudes, and Psychological Distress. *Psychological Reports*, 72(3), pp.899-904.

Warhurst, C. and Nickson, D., 2007. A new labour aristocracy? Aesthetic labour and routine interactive service. *Work, Employment and Society*, 21(4), pp.785-798.

Warhurst, C. and Nickson, D., 2007. Employee experience of aesthetic labour in retail and hospitality. *Work, Employment and Society*, 21(1), pp.103-120.

Warhurst, C. and Nickson, D., 2009. 'Who's Got the Look?' Emotional, Aesthetic and Sexualized Labour in Interactive Services. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 16(3), pp.385-404.

Warhurst, C., Nickson, D., Witz, A. and Marie Cullen, A., 2000. Aesthetic Labour in Interactive Service Work: Some Case Study Evidence from the 'New' Glasgow. The Service Industries Journal, 20(3), pp.1-18.

Weaver, A., 2005. Interactive service work and performative metaphors. *Tourist Studies*, 5(1), pp.5-27.

Weinbaum, A., Thomas, L., Ramamurthy, P., Poiger, U., Dong, M. and Barlow, T., 2008. *The purchase of intimacy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp.1-368.

Williams, R., 2008. Night Spaces. *Space and Culture*, 11(4), pp.514-532.

Wolkowitz, C., 2006. *Bodies at work*. London: SAGE Publications, pp. 1-224.

Woods, S., 2006. #Sponsored: The Emergence of Influencer Marketing. *Chancellor's Honors Program Projects.*, pp.1-26.

Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Guide (for party starters)

1. <u>General questions</u>

a) Please state your age, gender, and race.

b) How did you get the position at Sky Nightclub?

c) How many years have you worked at Sky Nightclub?

2. <u>Critical question</u>: What are the understandings and experiences of the party starters?

    a. How/what led to these women being employed as party starters?

    b. Explain the nature of your work?

    c. How does your work affect your life outside of your workplace?

3. <u>Critical question</u>: Given the culture of the club, that promotes sexuality, how do you navigate their experiences?

    a. How does your sexuality influence your work?

    b. How do they handle customers that make them feel uncomfortable?

    c. If you are harassed in any way, are you supported by the clubs management in dealing with this?

    d. How do others react when you share your experiences with them?

4. <u>Critical question</u>: Employed as entertainers, how do these women manage the emotional labour that the job requires?

    a. Do you perform or act in a particular way to be successful in your job (i.e to increase sales or tips)?

    b. Does the club expect you to dress or behave in a particular way?

    c. How does your work in the night club influence your everyday/personal life and identity?

Appendix B: Interview guide (for manager)

1. Please state your age race and gender

2. How long have you been a manager at Sky Nightclub

3. Can you describe the nature of the work of the party starters

4. In your opinion what makes a party starter?

5. Do you think sexuality plays a role?

6. Over the years has the dynamic of the party starters changed? Explain.

7. How do the party starters impact the atmosphere of the club?

8. Do you find that alcohol is an important factor when it comes to being a party starter?

9. Do the party starters impact sales to a large degree?

10. What is the protocol if a party starter reports feeling uncomfortable?

11. Do you feel that there is bias when it comes to favouring the customers over the staff members?

12. Are party starters employed regularly or is it a solid group of girls that has been working for a long time?

13. Do you find that party starters often form relationships with the customers?

14. How does the appearance of the party starters influence the club, for example their dress, hair and makeup?

15. How does the behaviour of the party starters influence the club?

Appendix C: Observation List

1. How many party-starters are on duty per shift?

2. What do they wear to work? Is there any uniformity as a group?

3. Who do they take instruction from?

4. What are the comfort levels observed while at work?

5. The amount of alcohol given and consumed?

6. How do the party-starters interact with one patrons, during and possibly a shift?

7. How do the party-starters interact with one another?

8. How do they respond to different patrons when they get approached, asked to join or table or when a patron orders them drinks?

9. How do they interact with staff members, including myself?

10. What are their facial expressions during a shift?

11. What are their bodily stances when dealing with customers?

12. What do they do during quiet times when the club is not very full?

Appendix D: Consent Form

UNIVERSITEIT·STELLENBOSCH·UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

You are invited to take part in a study conducted by myself, Sarah Dart, for my masters research project as part of Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at Stellenbosch University. You were approached as a possible participant because meet the desired requirements to participate in the study, which involves being employed as a party starter at Sky Nightclub.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to explore how party starters employed in a Cape Town VIP nightclub, navigate their experiences within that space.

2. WHAT WILL BE ASKED OF ME?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to partake in interviews where questions relating to your understandings and experiences as a party starter at the club will be asked. Answers will be audio recorded, with your permission. In addition, I will be conducting observation whereby I will observe your behaviour and interactions with those around you and take down notes on the SU OneDrive, which I have access to from my mobile device. Participant observation will occur over a period of 6 months whenever I am shifted, which is usually 2-3 times per week. I will be paying particular attention to your interactions with each other, with staff members and with guests. I will be observing dress codes, social cues and your overall behaviour throughout your shift. All interviews and observation notes will be analysed. There is a possibility that you will be contacted for follow up interviews should I need more information.

3. POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

If you feel uncomfortable or at risk at any point throughout your participation in the research, you may ask to withdraw from the research with no penalty or consequence to you.

At any given point throughout the interview process, you will be able to request counselling. The Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust is a non-profit organisation in observatory Cape Town that provides free counselling services for sexual trauma and/or any other emotional/physical abuse/trauma experienced. In addition, the following trauma hotline services are accessible (24 hour helpline 0214479762). Should you find any questions triggering and/or experience any emotional distress throughout the interviewing process, these counselling services will be at your disposal.

4. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

This research is for academic purposes and you will not be remunerated for your participation.

5. PROTECTION OF YOUR INFORMATION, CONFIDENTIALITY AND IDENTITY

Any information you share with me during this study is confidential and your identity is protected. This is ensured by not disclosing your name or any other personal information through which you may be contacted or identified. You will therefore remain anonymous throughout the research process.

All interviews are audio recorded and later transcribed before being analysed. Should this research be published, all your information will remain anonymous. A copy of the transcript as well as a draft of my thesis can be made available for checking upon your request.

6. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you agree to take part in this study, you may withdraw at any time without any consequence. Should you choose to withdraw, all data collected will be permanently erased.

You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

7. RESEARCHERS' CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact *Sarah Jean Dart* at *19817908@sun.ac.za,* and/or the supervisor *Lindy Heinecken* at *lindy@sun.ac.za.*

DECLARATION OF CONSENT BY THE PARTICIPANT

As the participant I confirm that:

- I have read the above information and it is written in a language that I am comfortable with.

- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been answered.

- All issues related to privacy, and the confidentiality and use of the information I provide, have been explained.

By signing below, I _____ agree to take part in this research study, as conducted by ___Sarah Jean Dart__

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   **Date**

DECLARATION BY THE MASTERS RESEARCHER

As the **principal investigator,** I hereby declare that the information contained in this document has been thoroughly explained to the participant. I also declare that the participant has been encouraged (and has been given ample time) to ask any questions. In addition I would like to select the following option:

	The conversation with the participant was conducted in a language in which the participant is fluent.
	The conversation with the participant was conducted with the assistance of a translator (who has signed a non-disclosure agreement), and this "Consent Form" is available to the participant in a language in which the participant is fluent.

_____   _____

Signature of Principal Investigator   **Date**