

Going against the grain: Emotional labour in the face of established business school institutional logics

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Abstract

The institutionalisation of the United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) in business schools involves a normatively challenging change project. Drawing on the institutional work and emotional labour literatures, this paper reports on the findings of a qualitative study into the emotional labour that underpins the practices of PRME advocates in 24 UK business schools. While acknowledging institutional gains, findings highlight the emotional consequences including exhaustion and isolation experienced when seeking to disrupt dominant sector and organisational logics. The study demonstrates the potential value for both academic change agents and supportive management of insights derived from the recent ‘emotionalising’ of institutional work research.

Key words

Emotional labour; institutional work; institutional logics; business schools; Principles for Responsible Management Education; PRME

Introduction

This paper explores the significance of emotional labour in the institutional work undertaken by advocates for the implementation of the United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education (UNPRME, 2007) in UK business schools. It aims to draw into a mainly higher education (HE) conversation space a recent ‘emotionalising’ of institutional research within organisation studies (Voronov, 2014) that has incorporated a consideration of

emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983). In so doing it seeks to contribute a set of empirical data that addresses a continuing paucity of knowledge about what constitutes emotional labour in higher education (Tunguz, 2016). Without such knowledge, and without making visible what is currently invisible in HE (Meier, 2009; Koster, 2011), those engaged in emotional labour cannot appropriately anticipate and mitigate its widely researched negative effects. Nor can managers in HE be in a position to identify the environments that give rise to such effects and take action to avoid creating them (Hatzinikolakis and Crossman, 2010).

There are 66 UK business schools that are part of a 670 strong global membership of the UN PRME initiative (July 2017 data). The principles, launched in 2007, represent a response by sector accreditation and representation bodies to external ethical pressures. The business school sector, despite its worldwide growth, financial success (Pfeffer and Fong, 2002) and accompanying ranking schemes (Wilkins and Huisman, 2012) has been the object of sustained critique over the past twenty five years (e.g. Khurana, 2007). Critical perspectives have emphasised inter-related issues that include (1) concerns over the closeness of the relationship between business schools and the corporate sector (2) perceived moral lacunae in business school values and curricula (3) an alleged lack of practitioner relevance in business school research and (4) insufficient attention to wider social and environmental responsibilities. By contrast, the principles promote engagement through teaching, research and external collaboration with the goals of environmental sustainability, wider social contribution and responsible business and leadership practice.

Signing up to any voluntary set of principles is one thing, but implementing them against the institutional grain often another. While the official PRME literature has identified successful exemplars (Escudero, 2012), early PRME implementation studies also provided evidence that institutionalisation had frequently been contested. Forray and Leigh highlighted the need to

research “new models for change management ... that address fundamental barriers to PRME adoption and implementation” (2010, p. 307). Solitander, Fougère, Sobczak & Herlin (2012) examined the role of PRME champions in two business schools and identified a range of strategic, structural and cultural barriers to PRME implementation. In their reflection on the introduction of PRME, Young and Nagpal (2013, p.503) highlighted implementation challenges “in the field of resources, staff resistance, inertia, structural barriers and silos’ and Kirby (2012) identified inter alia a dominant profit maximisation logic as a key impediment to engagement.

The recognition of such contestation, the limited institutional change that this can result in and the potential implications for the experience of being a PRME change agent prompted research which has addressed the following questions:

- How does an emotional labour perspective assist an understanding of the kind of normatively challenging institutional work undertaken by PRME advocates
- What implications does such an understanding have for promoting values-based change projects (such as PRME) within Higher Education?

These research questions were addressed in interviews with 31 PRME advocates in 24 UK business schools during 2014 and 2015.

Following this introduction is a brief contextualisation of the study in the field of neo-institutional studies (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). Key concepts within the literature on institutional work (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006) are introduced, as well as a wider organisation studies context for exploring emotional labour in HE. An argument for the construct compatibility between institutional work and emotional labour is advanced. The research design, including a rationale for adapting Harris’s (2002) framework for

understanding the origins, content and consequences of emotional labour, is introduced. This is followed by the empirical findings and a discussion of their implications. The conclusions centre on the contributions made by this study. In addition to the wider aims stated at the outset, specific contributions claimed include being one of very few non student-facing studies of emotional labour by in HE to date, the confirmation of how central emotional labour can be to institutional work practices in HE, and the identification of strategies that would make values-based initiatives in HE such as PRME more likely to succeed.

Institutional logics, institutional work and emotional labour

Since the earliest applications of neo-institutional theory within organisation studies, higher education has been understood as an institutionalised field (Taylor, 2015). Central to field studies is the concept of institutional logics, the ‘belief systems and related practices that dominate in an organisational field’ (Scott, 2001, p. 139). First theorised at societal level by Friedland and Alford (1991), field level attention to how they operate has principally been shaped by Thornton and Ocasio who argue that institutional logics provide actors with ‘sources of legitimacy’ as well as ‘a sense of order and ontological security’ (2008, p 108).

The perceived explanatory power of institutional logics from macro to micro levels has become central to understandings of divergent change (upsetting order and ontological security) within institutional theory. Whether in relation to HE publishing (Thornton, 2004) or the impact of market discourses (Berman, 2012) there has also been growing interest in the nature of institutional logics in HE. Berman (2012) traces how previously dominant state and science oriented logics in United States HE have been overtaken by market-logic practices. Lejeune and Vas (2014) identify both tension and co-existence between multiple logics (academic, quality, professional) within business school accreditation schemes.

Actors seeking to advance or impede a particular logic are engaging in institutional work, which Lawrence and Suddaby (2006, p. 215) suggest can be viewed as ‘the purposive action of individuals and organisations aimed at creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions’. They argue that the notion of institutional work productively brings together institutional theory’s interest in exploring the constraints on and opportunities for agency with the insights of the sociology of practice (e.g. Reckwitz, 2002), thus taking up the injunction of DiMaggio and Powell (1991) to study practice as a microfoundation for institutional research. In promoting such research, Lawrence, Leca and Zilber (2013) propose that it offers many opportunities for understanding the messy realities of that practice

Such opportunities now abound thanks to what Voronov (2014) has called the ‘emotionalising’ of institutional theory; a recent development that reflects a catching up with wider interest in emotions within organisation studies since the mid 1980s. Voronov and Vince (2012) and Creed, Hudson, Okhuysen and Smith-Crowe (2014) suggest that a solely cognitive view does not explain how and why people engage in institutional work and politics. The former, for example, have proposed that emotional disinvestment from prevailing institutional norms is a prerequisite for actors to prompt change. The latter have shown how a particular emotion – shame – might affect compliance with institutional prescription, prompting questions about how other emotions impact on compliance or other institutional responses. The collective search is for new perspectives on how an emotions lens enables a fuller understanding of the micro-foundations of institutional processes and their transformation (Creed et al, 2014; Moisander, Hirsto and Fahy, 2016).

In applying such a lens, this study draws specifically on the emotional labour construct first formulated by Hochschild (1983). Her relational, intersubjective and socially situated view of

emotions, argue Voronov and Vince (2012), is particularly compatible with the interactional nature of institutional (work) processes. Hochschild proposed that in many customer-facing roles the emotional self-regulation and displays required of employees in the name of profit led individuals to intentionally regulate their emotions through surface or deep acting. In surface acting, by pretending ‘to feel what we do not...we deceive others about what we really feel, but we do not deceive ourselves’ (Hochschild, 1983, p. 33). In deep acting, by contrast, we do. Influential scholars following Hochschild defined emotional labour as ‘the act of displaying appropriate emotion (i.e. conforming with a display rule)’ (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993, p. 90) and ‘the effort, planning and control needed to express organisationally desired emotions during interpersonal transactions’ (Morris and Feldman, 1996, p. 987). The further argument for construct compatibility here is that the intentionality explicit in these formulations of emotional labour mirrors the purposiveness understood to be part of institutional work. Moreover, both constructs acknowledge the paradox of embedded agency – the need to see actors’ purposive action as being simultaneously shaped by and able to shape their milieu (Voronov and Vince, 2012).

The emotional labour field has evolved in a number of directions over time. Many studies (e.g. Tunguz, 2016) have investigated the display rules underpinning the self-regulation of emotion highlighted by early scholars. Other studies have distinguished between emotion-related job demands and employees’ self-regulating emotional labour (e.g. Naering, Vlerick and Van de Ven, 2012). By contrast, many researchers have viewed the fulfilment of such job demands, including the management of others’ emotions and the expectation of emotionally-engaged caring for others (Jenkins and Conley, 2007; Theodosius, 2008), as forms of emotional labour in themselves. Consistent with this evolution of the concept, the notion of emotional labour has also widened beyond emotional displays (surface or deep) to include the repression of emotional response and the expression of genuine emotion; the latter

understood as displays consistent with authentic feeling states (Mahoney, Buboltz, Buckner and Doverspike, 2011).

Hochschild and later researchers have demonstrated that the consequences of dissonance between felt and displayed emotion can lead to diminished job satisfaction (Bono and Vey, 2005), stress (Zapf and Holz, 2006), health problems (Ogbonna and Harris, 2004), exhaustion and possible burnout (Hochschild, 1983; Meier, 2009). However, as the construct has widened so a more nuanced picture has also emerged. Thus negative outcomes can co-exist with more positive consequences such as greater self-esteem (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993), in some circumstances enhanced job satisfaction (Mahoney et al, 2011) and a sense of community amongst those sharing emotional labour responsibilities (Shuler and Sypher, 2000).

While some writers (including Hochschild) distinguish between emotion(al) work and emotional labour, this paper uses the terms interchangeably. Consistent with the more recent work cited, emotional labour is also understood here to include the management of one's own as well as others' emotions, to include genuine emotions, not to be exclusively concerned with specific forms of display and to potentially lead to positive as well as negative consequences.

Although Hochschild recognised in passing the emotional labour of university teachers, much of her and subsequent work has remained focused on customer-facing employees such as airline stewards. However, Bellas (1999) in the USA and Ogbonna and Harris (2004) in the UK conducted early studies of emotional labour in HE that a limited number of others such as Meier (2009), Hatzinikolakis and Crossman (2010), Koster (2011), Mahoney et al (2011) and Tunguz (2016) have followed. Such studies have been complemented by a small number of other emotion-focused HE investigations, for instance in relation to the impact of

performance management on work-related emotions in research settings (Wilson and Holligan, 2013) and to the emotions related to being new faculty (Stupnisky, Pekrun and Lichtenfeld, 2016). There have also been explorations of emotional labour in other professional groups such as barristers (Harris, 2002), Human Resources teams (O'Brien and Linehan, 2014) and a substantial number in relation to school teachers (e.g. Naering et al, 2012).

As with many school level studies, the focus of HE emotional labour research in has mainly been in relation to student-facing work, emphasising both performative display (e.g Tunguz, 2016) and duty of care components (e.g Koster, 2011) in teaching. Ogbonna and Harris (2004), in ways complemented by Hatzinikolakis and Crossman (2010), have identified the emotional labour away from the student interface that can result from work intensification, performance cultures and increased consumer and market pressures. However, emotional labour outside the HE student domain remains under-researched. Moreover, found nowhere in the literature to date is an investigation of the emotional labour of academics promoting values-driven institutional change that runs counter to current values and logics. This is the contribution to both the HE emotional labour and wider institutional work literatures made here.

Research Design

Consistent with the predominantly interactionist, relational, contextually and structurally framed perspectives on emotion (Hochschild, 1983) outlined earlier, the ontological positioning of this study is that of social constructionism. Epistemologically, what flows from this is an interpretive approach that, as Geertz (1973) noted, is about inquiry from the inside – in this case principally from the perspective of what it feels like on the inside of the PRME

advocate experience. To facilitate such an inquiry and the trustworthiness (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) of subsequent findings, a narrative interview approach that had a dialogic intent at its centre (Riessman, 2008) was chosen. Rhodes and Brown (2005) highlight research findings that stories are an effective entry point into an understanding of organisational values and, pertinent here, that they ‘encapsulate the complexity of practice’ (p. 174). Interviewees were initially invited to tell two stories: an account of their own coming to PRME work, and of how their institutions became signatories. Subsequent questions focused on eliciting memories of PRME-related incidents that had particular resonance or led to strong feelings of any kind.

Sampling and participant profile

As of June 2014, there were 43 UK business school signatories to PRME. While all the then signatories were initially written to, a subsequent purposive sampling approach (Bryman, 2008) and a targeted sample size were driven by considerations of organisational diversity, length of organisational association with PRME and evidence of individual participant engagement. The aim was to generate a set of contexts and accounts sufficiently rich to lead to credible and dependable (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) research outcomes. 31 interviews, that included member checks to confirm sampling criteria, were conducted across 24 business schools during 2014 and 2015.

17 of the 31 participants were male, 14 female. The diversity of job roles (Table 1) undertaken by participants was marked, but with a bias towards those relatively junior in organisational hierarchies.

Table 1: Gender and role profile of research participants

| Male | Female | Total | Lecturer/ Senior Lecturer | Programme Manager | Professor/ Reader | Dean/ Assistant Dean | Total |
|-------------|---------------|--------------|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| 17 | 14 | 31 | 14 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 31 |

The 24 participant schools included a cross section of older and newer universities from across the English regions and one of then four Scottish signatories. At the time there were no signatories from Northern Ireland and Wales.

Data analysis

The approach to data analysis was of the abductive (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009), theoretically informed variety, influenced by the interlocking constructs of institutional work and emotional labour. These two lenses facilitated theoretical triangulation within the analysis (Denzin, 2006). In the former case, the nature of the institutional work undertaken as well as the influence of institutional logics on that work were the main concerns. In the latter case, the Harris (2002) framework for understanding the origins, extent and consequences of emotional labour in barristers was adapted and applied. Narratives were subjected to systematic, auditable (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) with a view to populating the Harris framework with an institutionally-infused understanding of the emotional labour carried out. Validation of findings and conclusions was facilitated through presentation and feedback sessions at two conferences with audiences of PRME advocates (including some study participants).

The Harris framework was embraced to facilitate a structured analysis and to make use of an extant, credible framework for understanding emotional labour in professional groups. This rationale had a number of elements. First, it was anticipated that occupational rather than

managerial norms would, as in Harris's study, play a significant role in the origins and nature of the emotional labour engaged in. Second, this framework distinguished between private (with other barristers) and public (with clients, judges etc.) emotional labour that mirrored decisions about research focus within this study. Third, Harris identified behaviours beyond simply feigned displays. Fourth, as with other studies of professionals, both negative and positive consequences were integrated into the model. And finally, within this broad framework, institutional considerations could also be integrated. As in the case of Harris, and certainly in the absence of statistically valid empirical data, the framework is offered as a guide only and should not be taken to imply causal relationships.

Findings

Table 2 illustrates what were the most important origins, content and consequences of the emotional labour identified in the experiences of some 25 of the 31 PRME advocates interviewed about their institutional work outside of the student domain.

Origins of the emotional labour

21 participants articulated a fit between personal or professional values and PRME values as driving their emotional engagement with PRME and subsequently their emotional labour in its support. For some this values fit with PRME was experienced on a continuum going back to childhood. For instance Participant (P)18 cited being 'a naturalist since I was 8 years old' and the capacity of PRME to bring together what was 'dear to my heart' with his professional commitments. The values link was also couched in more professional terms, in relation to issues such as sustainability, disciplinary identity and the purpose of education. So P1 reflected that 'it fits in with my value system and the importance of holding business to account' and P21 grounded his commitment in being not just a 'light green but a darker green' accountant.

Table 2: Framework for understanding PRME emotional labour

| ORIGINS | EXTENT AND CONTENTS | CONSEQUENCES |
|--|---|---|
| Moral obligation/ professional values | <i>During interaction with</i> Individual colleagues Senior managers Committees/other fora | <i>Negative effects</i> Regret Exhaustion Being under scrutiny |
| Clash of logics | | Isolation/distancing Guilt/inadequacy |
| Normative nature of proposed institutional changes | <i>Contents</i> Emotional repression Surface acting | <i>Positive effects</i> Solidarity/common purpose Intrinsic rewards |
| Isolation Time/effort required | Genuine emotions Displaying resilience | |
| <i>(Framework adapted from Harris, 2002, p. 563)</i> | | |

P5 gave voice to a feeling expressed explicitly or indirectly by many when she noted that:

‘...you know we hold it deep to our hearts, that we are educating people and that’s gonna have an effect in the world and we hope it’s gonna be a good one’.

P5 (and others) linked this emotional engagement to a sense of calling, saying emphatically ‘I don’t think it is personally rewarding I feel it’s my duty to do what I can’. P9 echoed this when describing what continued to drive him to challenge the established logics of his business school:

‘I actually chose, or it got chosen for me, to go on this path of developing this whole new area but... going out on a limb and saying we need to do this seems to be hard, wherever you are’.

Participants conveyed a spectrum of commitment levels to PRME-related work, ranging from reactive to highly committed. Whether reactive or proactive, however, a common cause of much PRME advocate emotional labour was the experience of isolation. Local support networks were often presented as nebulous and less than reliable. As P5 noted, ‘Yeah, I know the people who care....but we are not in any formal alliance, so I think I’m operating pretty well on my own’. In such contexts a recurring refrain was the description of working on PRME as a ‘bit of a lonely job’ (P4) or, in P1’s words, ‘it was me driving what feels like my lonely agenda’. Loneliness and isolation were also hinted at in other ways. P18 poignantly described the outcomes of intensive PRME advocacy thus, ‘I’ve had some ... really good results that have pleased me, [but I] don’t think they’ve pleased anybody else’. With some sadness, P29 acknowledged, ‘I think that the main problem we have here is that we still rely on a very few single people.’

Extent and contents of the emotional labour

The most common arena for seeking to advance PRME goals was in relation to teaching and learning. For those in senior positions, changes could be brought about via management action. However, this was not necessarily straightforward. P20, for example, noted the need for emotionally challenging conversations and that it had taken ‘almost a year to get colleagues ...to see beyond what they’ve been doing for many years’. Thus the ability to engage at both cognitive and affective levels in persuasion and negotiation were often components in management practice. For non-managers, the roads to innovation involved multiple persuasive practices requiring emotional awareness of others’ agendas. P18 stated, ‘I try to be correct in these things’, which meant working painstakingly via managers before approaching course leaders. P9, P13 and P27 amongst others emphasised the need to maintain a vigilant presence on Teaching and Learning Committees, in order to introduce or defend PRME content at key moments. Arising from his indignation at none of his school’s

established committees taking responsibility for PRME, P13 adopted more confrontational approaches involving:

‘being a pain in the arse really ... if I bring it up at the staff council every week, the research committee every week, development committee every week and they tell you to ‘piss off!’, then it goes where it belongs which is the teaching committee’.

The need to self-regulate such frustration was frequently voiced, for example by P4 in relation to the patience required to work with colleagues unaware that ‘there is a whole intellectual tradition that you can draw upon’. P8 privately despaired at how with a recently arrived Dean who believed the principal role of a business school was, ‘helping business make money’, the environment for PRME work had deteriorated. Almost every participant had needed to work around individuals antagonistic to PRME. 12 participants also identified whole disciplinary areas (marketing, economics and, most often, finance and accounting) where they had struggled to gain a hearing. P3’s outright anger was at the more trenchant end of the spectrum of opinion:

‘Finance people just don’t get it, they just don’t see that the social agenda has anything to do with them and it will continue so because ... they’ve taught it for twenty years and it’s easy.’

In the face of isolation, indifference, sometimes hostility, many PRME advocates voiced or in other ways depicted the need for resilience. One coping strategy enabling resilience involved creating emotional distance from the work. As P17 explained it:

‘I have learnt to take it more, I don’t know, not emotionally involved ...I work on it as a sort of institutional involvement rather than being personally involved’.

For P7 and P25 continued confidence came from a conviction that PRME was part of a megatrend, or zeitgeist. P7’s resilience was enhanced by returning to what had first drawn

him into management studies. In his words, ‘so the critical management perspective for me is a valuable sanity tool’. Others put their resilience down to personality, with P9 noting, ‘So, there are hurdles, but I don’t know whether I’m just a foolish optimist but, you know, I just carry on’.

Emotionally engaged institutional work had led in all schools to some adaptation and in a few cases transformation in the curriculum. In only five schools, however, was significant research-related progress identified, although where this had occurred the greatest overall institutional gains were seen. This limited research engagement speaks to some of the greatest institutional obstacles PRME advocates had encountered and to the emotional labour that seeking to overcome them had required. Many participants felt thwarted by an emphasis on individual Research Excellence Framework (REF) returns and four star journal publishing, as these had led to recruitment, reward and promotion systems that had tipped the balance against initiatives such as PRME that were seen as teaching-driven, collaborative in nature, based on values peripheral to the mainstream and associated with low status academic research. P5’s impression was, ‘If I stopped writing papers, or getting grants or teaching, that would be noticed. If I stopped trying to integrate ethics into the curriculum I don’t think anyone would notice.’ P10 observed:

‘PRME itself is very much embedded in teaching; it doesn’t link to research very well and a lot of people who’re in very powerful positions in business schools are research-active’.

P26 argued too that individualism, a focus on four star publications and related ‘performance management processes’ could lead in senior academics to an anxiety-induced ‘depoliticisation’ and unwillingness to promote marginal concerns such as PRME against resistance.

Recognition and reward tensions at wider organisational and field levels were also noted. Many participants perceived that their universities and the HE sector measured business schools against criteria antipathetic to PRME being valued. Frequently noted were the cash generation expectations put on business schools, and how they distorted decision making. For example, P8 highlighted how postgraduate sustainability courses did not lead to jobs that reflected well in the graduate earnings element of sector ranking schemes. The result was an energy-sapping need to justify Masters courses that could not meet standard success criteria. Also seen to influence attention and reward systems unhelpfully were central university targets in areas such as student recruitment. As P12 resignedly put it:

‘If you’re not gonna make your student numbers then that’s a serious conversation. If you’re gonna exceed your carbon limits that’s [*long sigh*]...probably not gonna be a conversation at all actually’.

Consequences of emotional labour

As a result of so often working against the institutional grain, and frequently alone, some 20 of the 31 PRME advocates demonstrated significant negative consequences of emotional labour. A few showed a limited number of positive emotional indicators.

Parallel to many references to the isolation that was both cause and effect of PRME emotional labour were references to the physical and emotional demands involved. That it felt like hard work even if management support was officially there was often voiced, as P2 indicated:

‘So the management are saying all the right things, go ahead and do it, but the everyday implementation seems to be near impossible. Those who are already doing it are like ‘why do you want to tell me how to do my job...?’ And those who are not are

like ‘well why do I need to change things?’ I’m [*said with feeling*] not the most popular person’.

Thus demanding work not only often met with limited success but could also lead to a degree of social marginalisation.

A sense of being overloaded was often articulated, as in P8’s observation that the lack of a ‘critical mass of people’ meant that ‘the people who do work very hard at it come to the conclusion that they can’t carry on anymore’. Being in the role of a sustainability advocate had led to a different kind of emotional weariness for P17, who explained:

‘I think whoever becomes a champion ...[and] says that they’re committed to being responsible, they are exposed to criticism ... And that level of scrutiny ... every single day It’s kind of tiring and you kind of always think: am I saying the right thing here or am I allowed to actually say something wrong in this capacity?’

Some participants also felt partly responsible for the failures of their organisations. P4 claimed:

‘It’s partly my own fault ... I haven’t built this up in a way that I think the school would have been amenable to it. if I had argued the case, it probably would have been possible’.

Similarly, P22 wished to recognise his failings ‘because it fell on me to begin with and I was new and I wasn’t a strong enough proponent of it’. Acknowledging growing opposition to PRME within her school, P26 reflected:

‘I didn’t give enough attention to maintaining the constituency ... so that when the Dean said we don’t need it, there wasn’t a great bunch of people who ... said oh yes we do ... it was really only me. So I think that is my fault’.

The emotional benefits of supportive networks were also occasionally evident. At organisational level, those who had so benefited referred to the importance of finding ‘like-minded’ colleagues. P25 sought to explain PRME progress in terms of just such affective bonds between close colleagues:

‘and we could talk about it strategically, around research, curriculum design, but it was really this cluster of people ... who want to research, to teach about sustainability... climate change, whatever it is, some like-minded people’.

At field level, the emotional value of solidarity was also noted. In P30’s words:

‘For me the main thing that has been good is the community...to... find out that ... we all fight the same battles - that has been really, really key’.

The clearest statements of PRME-induced personal and job satisfaction came from those senior managers (e.g. P14, P21) who with little emotional effort had effected substantial curricular embedding against few established institutional norms. Among a minority of those lower in the hierarchy, such as P27 and P31, there was also a strong sense of fulfilment from progress made. And even amongst some of those who had experienced the highest levels of emotional setback, there were occasionally indicators of job satisfaction. So P9 noted, ‘you get so many rewards for it ...but you have to be doing it for intrinsic reasons’. And despite many obstacles, P2 could still declare, ‘it’s not like hitting my head against a wall. It’s not a challenge I wouldn’t take on again’.

Discussion

Reflections on the origins of the emotional labour encountered

Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) proposed that the origins of the demand for emotional labour lie equally in societal, organisational and occupational expectations. In this case, findings confirm the role of all three but the particular influence of professional/occupational values.

Harris (2002), whose framework has been adapted here, has argued that professions 'are driven by an espoused intention to serve not only the needs of their clients but also a higher 'moral' good' (p. 555). Findings here seem to support this contention. A key driver for the institutional including emotional work of PRME advocates seemed to lie not in the demands of employers but in their own moral or values commitments. That these values led them to posit PRME's normative demands thereby causing a clash with dominant sector and organisational logics, and that such demands met various forms of resistance, is at the heart of understanding the kinds of emotional labour identified. That holding such values remained, with exceptions, a minority pursuit, led to the experience of organisational isolation that in turn also required particular manifestations of emotional labour.

Participants' moral certainty about the rightness of their actions thus in many cases underpinned their cognitive and emotional disinvestment in dominant (market, corporate, disciplinary, research) logics, willingness to challenge the status quo and, where needed, tolerance for the negative consequences of the emotional work required. However, for reasons related to career progression, relationship maintenance or job security, not all of those showing such certainty demonstrated high drives to engage in the hard work of institutional change, thus supporting Voronov and Vince's (2012) argument that it is above all emotional disinvestment in the status quo that is required to instigate institutional change.

The amount of time and effort needed to advance a responsibility-focused, collaborative PRME logic was a clear source of emotional labour. While not always directly articulated as emotionally demanding, the cumulative impact of the many small, daily interactions required to counter the discourses and practices of prevailing logics appeared considerable. It was, furthermore, testimony to how emotional labour involves not only the management of one's own but also the ongoing management of others' emotions (Jenkins and Conley, 2007; Koster, 2011).

Reflections on extent and contents

As this study was focused on private rather than public (student) facing roles (Harris, 2002), the sites of emotional work were in PRME-related interactions with colleagues. Seniority was no guarantee of avoiding some of the emotional labour involved in advancing a challenger logic. However, in ways that support Tunguz's (2016) findings about seniority, tenure and autonomy, cognitive disinvestment from current logics combined with positions of influence can be said to have both facilitated logic disruption and reduced the extent of emotional work needed to embed an alternative PRME logic. This supports too Voronov and Vince's (2012) proposition about the increased complexity of emotional demands experienced by those attempting institutional change from positions low in the formal hierarchy and without significant resources.

The two most prevalent expressions of emotional labour were inter-related: the repression of emotional response to setback and the need to draw on emotional energies to display resilience. There was no evidence of deep acting (Hochschild, 1983) but, arguably, repression and the need to demonstrate resilience could be construed as forms of surface acting. This study thus confirms Harris's (2002) conclusion that, rather than focus on the forms, duration and intensity of emotional display as indicators of emotional labour (Morris and Feldman, 1996), studies of professionals' emotion work should explicitly recognise the role of repression. These conclusions about the significance of repression further illuminate findings about the silencing and resultant inactivity of some PRME advocates, reflecting the ways in which 'local manifestations of institutional logics constrain people's emotional experiences and limit their opportunities to act as champions of alternative logics' (Voronov, 2014, p. 187). Such constraints undermined entrepreneurial engagement in subtle ways that appeared to be just as effective as explicit acts of open hostility.

Also engendered by the commitment to PRME values were many examples of genuine emotion (anger, passion, indignation) that involved just as intentionally purposive emotional work as the feigned displays traditionally associated with emotional labour. Such findings thus reinforce more recent proposals that care-inspired emotional work based on authentic emotions (Theodosius, 2008; Koster 2011) be fully integrated into the emotional labour construct.

Reflections on consequences

Positive consequences of the emotional work reported included the sense of community (Shuler and Sypher, 2000) experienced when PRME advocates, survivors of ‘battles’, discovered that their experiences were shared. Through sharing, as McCance, Nye, Wang, Jones and Chiu (2012) have shown, recovery from the negative consequences of emotional labour is also possible. Some participants felt too a sense of fulfilment from the outcomes of their work to embed PRME values and practices (a PRME logic) and others noted the intrinsic rewards gained. Findings here thus confirm others obtained, particularly in the caring professions (Theodosius, 2008), that the consequences of emotional labour are far from universally negative.

Nevertheless, the negative consequences predominated in participant accounts. For instance, experience of a critical reception had at times also led to that critical lens being turned inwards. One reading of this tendency might be to suggest it demonstrates reflexive honesty about personal shortcomings. Another reading would be to see in it the ‘tacit compliance and emotional accommodation’ that Wilson and Holligan (2013, p. 234) identified in academic researchers’ responses to new public management cultures. In this case, PRME actors’ responses could be interpreted as the internalisation of responsibility for the indifference of

actors rooted in dominant logics. Such outcomes also resonate with the impacts of performance management and work intensification on emotional labour in HE identified by Ogbonna and Harris (2004) and hypothesised by Hatzinikolakis and Crossman (2010). In addition they suggest empirical evidence to support Creed et al's (2014) theorising of the way troubling feelings (in this case of guilt, rather than shame) might lead to self-regulated conformity with dominant institutional norms.

In terms of the further two negative consequences highlighted in Table 2, the findings on exhaustion confirm from an institutional change perspective many prior studies' conclusions about emotional labour and the risk of burnout (e.g. Bono and Vey, 2005). Finally, the experience of loneliness and social distancing (both cause and effect of emotional labour here) appears to have two components. First, the isolation resulting from engaging in emotional labour unsupported has been well documented (e.g. Ogbonna and Harris, 2004). The second dimension is the nature of the values challenge posed by PRME. Emotional labour when against the grain of embedded institutional values is doubly isolating. As Koster (2011) notes, part of the stress of emotional labour is that it cannot be shared and so has to be self-managed – in this case because PRME values are not shared values.

Taken together findings here suggest that PRME advocates generally act individually rather than collectively, deploying a variety of contingent, located practices often involving significant elements of emotional labour that demonstrate vividly the messy reality of institutional work (Lawrence, Leca and Zilber, 2013). Where they have achieved at least some degree of institutional transformation it is because of a mix of adept, purposeful entrepreneurial action and locally accessible and adaptable institutional logics. Where, as appears more common, they encounter setbacks and little or no success, it is because of the

material and symbolic obstacles encountered in engaging both cognitively and emotionally with the institutional maintenance work of actors inhabiting (Creed et al, 2010) and defending dominant institutional logics at business school, university and wider HE levels.

Conclusions

This study does not claim that all PRME advocates in UK business schools experience their institutional work as emotional labour, though a clear majority of those studied here do. As a qualitative study, no such claims would be appropriate. Moreover, just as the emotional labour construct has been critiqued as having a western set of assumptions (Fineman, 2000), so these findings may have little plausibility beyond their national setting. Doing full justice through one-off interviews and the written word to the diversity of emotions and their expressive forms in the workplace is also difficult (Fineman, 2000). In the absence of method triangulation, particularly called for here is an acknowledgement that a written medium will never fully capture the ‘intensity, embodiedness and complexity of the face-to-face interview encounter’ (Elliott, Ryan and Hollway, 2012, p. 440). Seeking to bring together recent developments in institutional studies and the emotional labour literature into one paper for an audience unlikely to be familiar with their hinterlands has necessarily involved compromises, at times favouring breadth over depth. Without such compromises greater detail in other areas, for example about the process of thematic data analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006), would have been possible. Within these recognised limitations, a number of original insights and contributions are nevertheless claimed.

With reference to the first research question posed, this dataset has confirmed the significance of emotional labour as a component in the work and micro-institutional practices of those seeking values-divergent change of the kind PRME represents (Lawrence et al, 2013; Creed et al, 2014). The practices involved appear to demand firstly recognising and thereafter

expressing, repressing, responding to or rechannelling the emotional states (Reckwitz, 2002) aroused in oneself and encountered in others in the course of institutional work. The findings show too how insights from an institutional study might inform an understanding of the nature of emotional labour in higher education; for instance how actors need not only cognitive but also emotional disinvestment in current logics before attempting institutional transformation. Additionally, the study assists a recognition of the ethical impulse that is a driver of emotional labour in professions (Harris, 2002). While sustained surface acting in the sense of employer-demanded, feigned emotional display has not been demonstrated, this may be because, unlike most other HE studies of emotional labour, the focus has not been on student-facing work. However, what is argued is that a self-imposed repression of emotional response and demonstration of resilience in interaction with colleagues are in themselves forms of emotional and institutional work. What has been signalled too is that it is the PRME pressure for change of an ethically divergent nature that has sharpened the tension between dominant and challenger logics, and thus increased the requirement for and intensity of emotional and institutional work. As the first HE study of emotional labour in this context, these are significant new insights.

In relation to future research, this study underlines the potentially fruitful ways different forms of scholarship on work can be brought into conversation with each other (Phillips and Lawrence, 2012; Voronov and Vince, 2012) in an HE setting. The amended Harris (2002) framework also provides a basis for other institutionally-informed research in similar values-driven HE change environments. The currently highly contested area of curriculum ‘decolonisation’ (Le Grange, 2016) might be suggested.

Finally, this paper seeks to address explicitly the second research question posed: how findings might inform the organisational practices of those seeking or supporting normatively challenging HE change. From a PRME or equivalent advocate perspective, these findings emphasise the need to build supportive networks, internally and externally, in order to counteract isolation and provide moral and practical support when adversity is encountered. In this regard, learning from the social movement literature about alliance-building and the role of emotion in reinforcing solidarity (Jasper, 2014) could usefully be explored. The benefits of seeking to understand local manifestations of dominant HE logics and how to co-opt their recognition and reward practices to a challenger logic have also been shown. In this instance, such benefits emerged particularly where PRME advocates had managed to work through established research centres. In a future UK context, the benefits (in terms of institutional gains and the reduced need for emotional labour) of finding ways to embed PRME in the priorities emerging from one of the largest institutional transformations of recent times, the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), are also suggested by the outcomes of this study.

From a management practice perspective, these findings accentuate the need for institutional action at both symbolic and practical levels if Forray and Leigh's (2010) call for new models of PRME change management is to be answered. The former requires a full recognition of how established logics may work to the detriment of a challenger logic and a willingness to signal in key resourcing and reward fora how existing logics can be opened to adaptation or replacement. For instance, staff promotions committee criteria may need adjustment to recognise that research in a valued new area may be less likely to be published in top-ranking journals than research in established domains. At a practical level, this study suggests supportive leaders would actively create and sustain a change network, identify potential lead

actors who are already well networked, recruit them with resilience in mind, avoid lone working situations and encourage sharing (Shuler and Sypher, 2000). Be it in a PRME or equivalent HE setting, they would seek to harness the genuine emotions that will ignite successful institutional work in the desired direction while acting to minimise the negative consequences of emotional labour against the institutional grain that have been documented here (Hatzinikolakis and Crossman, 2010).

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