Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.
The Days of Our Lives: Deep acting, Surface Acting and Actors’ Health

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology at Massey University, Albany, New Zealand

Mike Green
2009
ABSTRACT

Although emotional labour has been studied extensively among work populations such as doctors, detectives and adventure tourism guides, there has been no known research on the psychology of actors and acting within an emotional labour framework. This investigation had two purposes. The first was to extend what is currently known about two emotional labour strategies: surface acting, the regulation of observable expressions of emotions, and deep acting, the regulation of felt emotions, to include actual actors. The dependent variables used in this study were job and life satisfaction. The second purpose was to examine whether having a sense of community moderated the relationship between surface acting, deep acting and the dependent variables. Responses from 89 professional, amateur and community theatre actors were analysed. Pearson's correlation coefficients showed a significant relationship between surface acting and the dependent variables. Hierarchical regression results showed a significant moderation effect for sense of community on the relationship between deep acting and life satisfaction. Implications, limitations, and directions for future research are discussed.
First of all I would like to thank Dr Dianne Gardner for her help, advice and support over the last year, which has made this project possible.

Second, my thanks goes out to all the participants involved in the present study who made this project so interesting and worthwhile, and who I hope will benefit from the insights into the psychology of acting this study intended to provide.

Third, I would like to thank Vinh Truong, my vizier, who kept me focused on achieving my goals for this project and who also provided me with much needed motivational psychology.

Finally, I am indebted to Charlotte Barlow, who provided me with emotional support and who put up with every late night, every early morning, and every social event missed in dedication to the completion of this project.
CONTENTS

Abstract ............................................................................................................................................... i
Acknowledgements ............................................................................................................................. ii
Tables and Figures .............................................................................................................................. iii

1. Introduction ........................................................................................................................................ 1

2. Acting .................................................................................................................................................. 5
Aims of Acting ....................................................................................................................................... 5
Different Styles of Acting ...................................................................................................................... 8
Effects of Acting on the Actor ................................................................................................................ 10
Effects of Acting on the Audience ........................................................................................................... 12

3. Emotions, Emotional Labour, and Organisations .............................................................................. 15
Emotions ............................................................................................................................................... 15
Emotional Labour ................................................................................................................................. 16
Aims of Emotional Labour ..................................................................................................................... 19
Emotional Labour Strategies ................................................................................................................. 19
Dissonance .......................................................................................................................................... 20
Technical and Truthful Acting, and Emotional Labour ......................................................................... 22

4. Sense of Community .......................................................................................................................... 23
Definitions of Sense of Community ....................................................................................................... 23
Sense of Community and Emotional Labour ......................................................................................... 24
Display Rules ......................................................................................................................................... 25
Consequences of Sense of Community ................................................................................................... 26
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Characteristics of Participants ................................................................. 32
Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities, and Intercorrelations among Scales .......... 38
Table 3. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Surface Acting, Sense of Community, and their interaction on Life Satisfaction ................................................................. 42
Table 4. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Surface Acting, Sense of Community, and their interaction on Job Satisfaction ................................................................. 43
Table 5. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Deep Acting, Sense of Community, and their interaction on Life Satisfaction ................................................................. 44
Table 6. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Deep Acting, Sense of Community, and their interaction on Job Satisfaction ................................................................. 46

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Hypothesized Relationships between Surface Acting and Deep Acting, Sense of Community, and Job Satisfaction/Life Satisfaction Outcomes .................................................. 30
Figure 2. Moderation of the Effect of Deep Acting on Life Satisfaction by Sense of Community .. 45