

A Typology of Workplace Emotion

When considering emotion workers as skilled social actors, it is proposed that a recognition of four different types of emotion management in the workplace will help to de-construct the complex subject of emotion in organisations. In order to affect varied performances the organisational actor must draw upon different sets of feeling rules of which the typology broadly distinguishes three classes: commercial, professional or social feeling rules.

Table 1

A Typology of Emotion Management

	<i>Pecuniary</i>	<i>Prescriptive</i>	<i>Presentational</i>	<i>Philanthropic</i>
<i>Feeling Rules</i>	Commercial	Professional Organisational	Social	Social
<i>Associated Motivations</i>	Materialist	Altruism Status Materialist	Ontological Security	Gift
<i>Performance</i>	Cynical	Cynical/Sincere	Sincere/Cynical	Sincere
	Compliance	Consent/ Commitment	Commitment/ Consent	Commitment
<i>Identity</i>	Imposed Self	Professional/ Self	Self	Self
<i>Consequences</i>	Alienation Contradiction Conflict Resistance	Prof. Identity Contradiction	Stability	Stability Satisfaction

Of course, the use of the notion of ‘rules’ does not assume the existence of rule-bound behaviour. The concept of rules has frequently been used to analyse organisational life. From bureaucratic rules to ‘social regulative rules’ there is the recognition that rules are not hard and fast ‘social facts’ but are the result of continual interpretation and negotiation which produces an ever-shifting framework for action. Nevertheless, feeling rules may be negotiated and changed and new feeling rules created but feeling rules also stand over and above organisational actors informing and shaping the emotional life of an organisation.

In the context of the typology of emotion management offered here, the classification of feeling rules offers a multi-dimensional approach to the management of emotion and offers insights into the possible motivation behind various performances. A

central feature of the typology is a recognition of what motivates organisational actors to enact feeling rules in distinct ways. These are motivations that are firmly embedded in social situations and relationships which, in turn, are wedded to broader frameworks of action that include an acknowledgement of institutionalised practices, hierarchical power relationships and social positioning. Frequently, when seeking to understand emotion and employees' performances of emotion management in organisations, there is a sole concentration on the prevailing feeling rules, especially those imposed by the organisation. But without an attempt to understand the motivations that lie behind employees' performances only a depthless picture of working life emerges. This typology offers an alternative, more rounded, picture of organisational life and allows that there are a multitude of possible motivations behind each and every emotion management performance. It also allows that motivations are constantly emerging and changing through the process of interaction and, therefore, always have the capacity to transform it. Hence, a worker who successfully presents the organisationally prescribed demeanour may invest their performance with feeling or they may not according to a complex web of socially embedded motivations. As such, the type of feeling rules and associated motivations can be seen to impact upon the presentation of self, one's own sense of self and have consequences for the social world around us.

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Key References

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See below for examples of how the typology has been applied
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