

Emotional Labour and Policing from the Perspective of Retired Officers: A Preliminary Study

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### Abstract

This qualitative study is based on interviews conducted with 6 retired police officers. The study investigated emotional labour as experienced by law enforcement officers and the coping mechanisms that were used while on the job. The all male sample revealed emotional labour was experienced more in policing than in non-law enforcement jobs. A variety of coping mechanisms were identified and used to deal with emotional labour. Marital and familial support has been identified as an important factor in coping with emotional labour on the job. Participants felt that education and job training is an important component for a healthy and successful career in policing. Implications of findings are further discussed along with suggested recommendations.

**Keywords:** Emotional labour; Policing; Coping strategies

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## Chapter 1: The Problem Defined

### Background Statement

*Police Officer: "What's your name?"*

*Man: "My name is Joe Yeswit."*

*Police Officer: "George Edwards?"*

*Man: "Joe Yeswit."*

*Police Officer: "How do you spell it?"*

*Man: "What? I just ... How many times do I have to tell you? Y-E-S-W-I-T."*

*Police Officer: "Where're you at?"*

*Man: "I'm on Ocean Avenue."*

*Police Officer: "What number?"*

*Man: "I don't have a number here. There's no number on the phone."*

*Police Officer: "What number on the house?"*

*Man: "I don't even know that."*

*Police Officer: "Where're you at? Ocean Avenue and what?"*

*Man: "In Amityville. Call up the Amityville Police and have someone come down here. They know the family."*

*Police Officer: "Amityville."*

*Man: "Yeah, Amityville."*

*Police Officer: "Okay. Now, tell me what's wrong."*

The above excerpt is taken from a transcript of a 911 call of a murder scene in Amityville in 1974 (True Legends, 2010). The response of the police officer in the above scenario is no different from what is expected today from any officer who chose a career in law enforcement and public service. The role of the officer is to provide service with the utmost professionalism and courtesy even in the face of a horrendous murder scene. It is in the best interest of police organizations to maintain the trust and respect of the public by ensuring all officers are trained to display professional behaviour and response at all times. But how does the officer really feel

about the man's nuisance about the spelling of his last name? What is the frequency and duration of such exposure in the day-to-day work of police officers? Does the incident affect the officer's decision-making ability and performance overtime? Does it affect his or her mood and well-being? Hochschild's (1983) pivotal research in *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*, defined this phenomenon as *emotional labour* (Bierema, 2008; Hochschild, 1983; Kruml & Geddes, 2000a). Emotional labour is defined by Morris and Feldman (1996a) as "the effort, planning and control needed to express organizationally desired emotions during interpersonal transactions" (p.987).

Job burnout, job dissatisfaction, illness, and absenteeism have been attributed to the negative outcome of emotional labour (Bierema, 2008; Heuven, Bakkar, Schaufeli & Huisman, 2006; Morris & Feldman, 1996a; Van Dijk & Kirk-Brown, 2006). Emotional labour exists in any profession or line of work that involves human interactions. Research on emotional labour has span over areas of health care and industries that are focused on retaining market share and consumer loyalty by providing adequate service levels that differentiate them apart from the competition. In 2005, a research study on nurses revealed 34% of those providing direct care in hospitals or long-term care reported having been physically assaulted by a patient and 47% reported emotional abuse (Statistics Canada, 2005). Another study in 2002 found 9% of employees reported dissatisfaction with their jobs, and those who expressed greater dissatisfaction were more likely to report disability days compared to those who were satisfied with their jobs (Statistics Canada, 2002).

Emotional labour can also be found in the world of business and customer service, in fact one of Disney's expectations of employees is "first we practice the friendly smile at all times with our guests and among ourselves" (Rafaeli and Sutton, 1987; as cited in Bierema, 2008, p.57). Emotional labour requires the employee to actively engage in a behaviour (friendly and poised) that may not be consistent with the employee's genuine feelings (dealing with demanding parents) in order to adhere to work rules. The discrepancy between one's true emotions and what is overtly displayed or expressed is known as *emotional dissonance*. In the long term, hiding, masking, or faking these emotions can contribute to the employee's loss of emotional regulation, poor self-esteem, and self-alienation (Bierema, 2008; Kruml & Geddes, 2000a). On the emotional labour continuum also emerges a positive aspect that allows employees

to receive recognition and career advancement for producing desired reaction and goal-oriented results (Bailey & McCollough, 2000; Bierema, 2008; Van Dijk & Kirk-Brown, 2006).

Police officers are seen as a symbol of power, bravery, and enforcers of the law. Being a police officer by nature involves dealing with the public and requires one to elicit fear for breaking the law or a sense of comfort and protection during an emergency response. Police officers are trained professionals who are bound by a code of conduct and honour. Emotions are to be controlled even when faced with unfortunate situations that conflict with one's personal beliefs or values. Deviation of emotional control as found in allegations of police brutality or racial profiling are thoroughly investigated by a governing body of the profession that could reinforce disciplinary action of officer(s) if found guilty. How do police officers respond to emotional labour? What coping strategies do they use to perform the day-to-day duties? How do they maintain their health and well-being?

In collaboration with a charitable organization in Toronto, this study took place in the form of qualitative research; more specifically through interviews with six retired police officers. All officers interviewed had retired from the force for less than 5 years. This charitable organization has been established to honour the life of a murder victim and to bring attention to the psychological trauma that impacts emergency services and military workers in response to their chosen professions.

### **Problem Statement**

Earlier research on emotional labour focused on its impact on service workers (Bierema, 2008; Humphrey, 2006; Kruml & Geddes, 2000a; Mann, 2004; Mikolajczak, Menil & Luminet, 2007; Van Dijk & Kirk-Brown, 2006). Understanding the impact of emotional labour on law enforcement has not been the focal point of research. In fact, the concept of emotional labour remains foreign to many law enforcement officers, yet they experience it daily. In addition, limited research is available on what individuals can do to counteract the effects of emotional labour and to prevent job burnout and exhaustion. This study focused on the experiences of retired police officers to gain insight on the strategies once used to cope with the emotional labour associated with being a police officer.

## **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to identify strategies used by retired police officers in response to emotional labour during their policing careers. According to Sewell & Crew (1988), police officers are admitted to hospitals at higher rates than the general population (as cited in Miller, 1995). The results of this study will help establish what future researchers should use as a focus point to gain better understanding of the psychological demands of being a law enforcer and the importance of developing training that can help maintain the well-being of officers.

## **Research Questions**

1. What are the strategies used by retired police officers to deal with emotional labour during their policing careers?
2. What are the recommended strategies to help newly recruited officers counteract emotional labour?

## **Definition of Terms**

*Emotional labour*-The management of emotions required to perform one's job.

*Qualitative research*- The collection, analysis, and interpretation of narratives and/or visual data to gain insight on phenomenon or topic of interest.

## **Limitations of Study**

This study was limited by the sample of convenience recruited with the assistance of the charitable organization. Due to the time constraint of this capstone, the researcher undertook a preliminary study that can be completed within a suitable timeframe. As a result, the sample selected may not be enough to generalize the data, and further research is necessary to validate the results. In fact, the composition of the sample recruited resulted in an all-male sample. Therefore, the data cannot be generalized to female officers or officers in general where years of experience, area of law enforcement, rank within the force, and years of retirement can vary

among individuals. Furthermore, this study will utilize interviews as the only mode of data collection. Triangulation as required by qualitative research was not used and hence limited this study. Finally, due to the researcher's inexperience with qualitative research, observer's bias might have played a role in the analysis and interpretation of the data.

## Chapter 2: The Literature Review

Hochschild (1983) found that jobs that have an emotional labour dimension are distinguished by three characteristics: (1) face-to-face or voice-to-voice contact with the public; (2) the individual to elicit an emotional response in another person (i.e. satisfaction or fear); and (3) the employer through training and supervision, is to exercise a degree of control over the employee's emotional reaction (as cited in Bierema, 2008; Brothridge & Lee, 2003; Kruml & Geddes, 2000a; Lewis, 2005). As illustrated earlier, police officers especially front line officers; tend to deal with the public more frequently than officers of higher-rank (Johnson, Cooper, Cartwright, Donald, Taylor, & Millet, 2005).

Imagine a police officer being dispatched to deal with a dispute between two neighbours over the noise level from a party. It is expected that the officer who arrives on the scene will be equipped emotionally (assertiveness) and physically (to arrest or restrain) in order to diffuse the situation. The officer automatically meets Hochschild's first criteria by facing the disputing neighbours, which he or she must then assess the situation and attempt to control it by enforcing the by-laws and protocols that underlie his or her police training. The officer on the scene is aware of his or her responsibility towards the public and understands the implications of failing to adhere to the proper codes of conduct. If the situation rises out of control, the officer is expected remain calm and appear in control while calling for backup and not to simply resort to violence or abuse of power. Police officers similar to many other professions (child caregivers, nurses, call center agents or social workers) that involve "people-work" require the management of emotions and the expression of appropriate ones as dictated by the profession (Johnson et al., 2005; Mann, 2004; Schiabe & Gecas; 2010).

Emotional labour within policing has not been extensively studied but recent research is beginning to emerge to gain better understanding of its impact on this population. This review will explore the mechanism of emotional labour as studied in other professions and industries. By reviewing the existing research, emotional labour can be recognized and understood from inception which continues to dominate our understanding of the construct today. The latter part of the review will focus on emotional labour in policing and finally coping strategies in response to emotional labour in policing

### **The Mechanism of Emotional Labour**

The impact of emotional labour cannot be fully understood without examining the management processes that underlie the expression of emotions by employees. Hochschild (1983) further subdivided emotional labour into deep or surface acting. Surface acting occurs when an unfelt emotion is masked by the employee's attempt to alter his or her own behaviour to display what is expected by the organization. The officer in the earlier scenario may have expressed an apology to the man for misspelling his last name as exemplified by prior experience or training but not necessarily because the apology is heartfelt. On the other hand, deep acting asserts that the individual has the ability to manipulate and align his or her inner feelings to appear more genuine and truthful of their emotional expression, similar to theatrical drama, where actors portray a character by genuinely altering their inner thoughts and feelings (Bierema, 2008; Humphrey, 2006; Kruml & Geddes, 2000a; Mikolajczak et al., 2007; Van Dijk & Kirk-Brown, 2006).

Grandey's (2000) work on emotional labour attempted to operationally define the concept and proposed a model that described the regulation of emotions that occur when employees experience emotional labour. The model was developed based on examination of uncivil interactions with customer service representatives who were bound by work policies (display rules) to serve the customer. According to Grandey (2000), employees assess situational cues (duration, frequency, and nature) and recognize the negative outcome of the exposure (burnout/strain) and choose to engage in a psychological mechanism that mediates the impact. The use of deep and surface acting serves as psychological intervention mechanism that deals with the immediate situation. For example, faking a smile despite being yelled at by a customer allows the employee to carry on with the rest of the day. However, as the model proposes, long term exposure can lead to burnout and exhaustion on the individual level and poor performance and withdrawal on an organizational level (Bakkar & Heuven, 2006).

Van Dijk and Kirk-Brown (2004) recognize that individuals may engage in emotional labour but assert it does not necessarily lead to emotional exhaustion or burnout. However, the degree of emotional dissonance and one's evaluation of the incongruence is what determines the direction of the outcome (as cited in Van Dijk & Kirk-Brown, 2006). For example, when an employee surface acts and then appraises the experience as negative then he or she is likely to

experience greater tension or dissonance. In the body of research on dissonance, it is widely accepted that emotional dissonance or emotive dissonance as coined by Hochschild follows the theoretical model of cognitive dissonance; that is, “incongruence between thought, attitudes, values, and behaviour gives rise to experience of dissonance” (Van Dijk & Kirk-Brown, 2006, p. 105). In the presence of dissonance, individuals become motivated to change their thoughts or behaviour to reduce this tension (Adams & Buck, 2010; Morris & Feldman 1996a).

In the follow up study, Van Dijk and Kirk-Brown (2006) surveyed a sample of 181 tourism-based customer/visitor representatives. The results showed emotional dissonance to moderately mediate the effects of surface acting on emotional exhaustion. The authors concluded that consequence of emotional labour partially depends on the characteristics of actors. Individuals who are able to identify with their roles are less likely to feel the stress or negative affectivity that emerges with emotional labour (Humphrey, 2006; Van Dijk & Kirk-Brown, 2006).

In line with individual differences, Mikolajczak et al. (2007) investigated the protective effect of emotional intelligence (EI) on occupational stress in nurses. Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to manage one’s emotions (intra-personal) or the emotions of others (inter-personal). The researchers explored whether different levels of EI would differ in the use of emotional labour styles (surface versus deep acting) and whether these differences would mediate the impact of job stress (as indicated by levels of burnout and somatic complaint). The sample of 124 nurses showed those with high levels of EI traits had more positive scores and experienced lower levels of burnout and somatic symptoms. Although both emotional labour styles affect job burnout, surface acting seems to be more negative in the long run. Surface acting is more detrimental to the individual’s well-being because of 1) greater emotional dissonances, 2) the expectation to hide or fake true emotions and 3) the continuous monitoring of the emotion required by the job. Interestingly, nurses with high EI trait scores did not use deep acting more frequently than surface acting. Future research is necessary to determine whether surface acting is only detrimental in low EI individuals.

Grebner, Semmer, Lo Faso, Gut, Kälin and Elfering (2003) investigated working conditions, well-being, and job-related attitudes among call center agents compared to those of traditional jobs. Call centre agents communicate most of the time voice-to-voice with customers and generally deal with a variety of customer emotions both positive and negative. The

researchers attributed variances above those that were investigated (job control, job complexity, time pressure, concentration demands, and work interruption) to emotional dissonance. Specifically, intercorrelation analysis of emotional dissonance revealed a positive relationship between context free irritation reactions (“I am easily annoyed”) and psychosomatic symptoms (physical ailments) among call centre agents (Grebner et al., 2003, p.351). A limitation of this study is the cross-sectional design that relied exclusively on self-reporting surveys. In addition, the focus on one organization and one specific job undermines the generalizability of the findings to the general population.

Heuven, Bakker, Schaufeli and Huisman (2006) examined the role of self-efficacy on performing emotional labour. Self-efficacy is an emotional intelligence construct that similar, to the Mikolajczak et.al (2007) study, was thought to have a mediating effect on the relationship between emotional job demands and emotional dissonance. Self-efficacy is “the belief that one can successfully perform a novel or difficult task or cope with adversity” (Heuven et al., 2006, p. 223). Heuven et al. (2006) believed inconsistencies in findings regarding the negative or positive outcome of performing emotional labour lay in self-efficacy. That is, self-efficacy served as a buffer for the negative impact of emotional labour (i.e., burnout or emotional exhaustion).

Cabin attendants are the prototype of emotional workers; they are exposed to emotionally charged interactions with passengers that can be demanding, impaired or of aggressive nature (Bakkar & Heuven, 2006; Heuven et al., 2006; Hochschild, 1983). A sample of cabin attendants were surveyed for the study with a hypothesis that self-efficacy would correlate negatively with emotional dissonance. It was expected that individuals with high levels of self-efficacy would view job demands as challenges as opposed to stressors and apply different and more effective coping strategies than low-efficacious individuals. To assess emotional job demands questions such as, “Do you encounter situations on board that personally affect you?” Efficacy was assessed using a seven-item scale that was developed for the purpose of the study and posed questions such as “I am capable of successfully handling situations with demanding or difficult passengers” (Heuven et al., 2006, p.228). The results of the study did reveal that individuals with higher levels of self-efficacy were better able to manage emotional labour than those with lower levels of the trait. In fact, self-efficacy was not only a buffer against the negative residual of emotional labour but a necessary agent in maintaining and enhancing the positive effects of such

work. A limitation of this study is the low response rate (25%) and as documented in prior studies is the use of self-reporting surveys.

Why is emotional labour important? Based on product development and marketing research, the display of appropriate emotions is a feature of the product and is a reflection of the quality of service. As cited in Bailey and McCollough (2000), Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Barry (1988) studied consumers' perception in terms of service quality and identified five key indicators (1) tangibles (product attributes), (2) reliability (performs as promised), (3) responsiveness (willing to assist customer and provide prompt service), (4) assurance (knowledge and courtesy) and (5) empathy (caring and individualized service).

It can be deduced from these findings that three of the service quality predictors (responsiveness, assurance and empathy) are emotionally saturated. This can be applied to the context of law enforcement where the public's perception of officers to "serve and protect" depends on the display of empathetic, responsive, and assuring traits.

In fact, empathy has also been found to be a predictor of leadership advancement (Humphrey, 2006). The ability to bond with others by simply identifying with their current state helps leaders guide followers to express their emotions and to cope with negative events at work. During times of uncertainty and organizational change, managers and leaders must exert emotional labour by acknowledging the state of events while demonstrating an understanding for what the employees are feeling. Successful leaders would seize the opportunity to instil feeling of optimism and positive change while guiding employees in a direction that would increase productivity and well-being (Bailey & McCollough; 2000; Humphrey, 2006).

### **Emotional Labour in Policing**

Earlier research on work-related stress, emotional exhaustion, and burnout had identified policing and law enforcements as professions that negatively impact the psychological well-being of individuals. Police officers are noted to have higher rates of substance abuse, suicide ideation, divorce, job burnout and cynicism (Adams & Buck, 2010; Bakkar & Heuven, 2006; Johnson et al., 2005; Schaible & Gecas, 2010). Emotional exhaustion and burnout manifests in individuals as a lack of energy with the feeling that there is nothing more to give, depersonalization or viewing or treating others as object rather than people, and the negative evaluation of one's achievement (Bakkar & Heuven, 2006, Grandey, 2000; Johnson et. al.

2005). Police officers who are often exposed to unfortunate situations that are beyond his or her control can easily fall into the whirlpool of emotional exhaustion. Feeling that they can no longer console one more victim or judge all offenders the same rather than critically reviewing each case on its merit are symptoms of depersonalization. Not-to-mention, the development of crime prevention programs and safe-community initiatives are assumed to be an effort in vain.

Johnson et al. (2005) compared the experience of occupational stress across three categories (physical health, psychological well-being, and job satisfaction) and across 26 occupations. The results revealed police as one of the six professions that experience more stress on the job and greater job dissatisfaction. The other five occupations included ambulance workers, teachers, social services, customer services and prison officers. An average score on the psychological well-being dimension is 18.81; police officers scored 19.03 and social services providing care 24.35 in contrast to 15.18 for a director in the private sector (Johnson et al., 2005, p. 182). This research noted the differences that existed within the same professions such as police officers and senior officers, teachers and head teachers. Those with higher ranks or more administrative positions in policing and education reported less stress and greater satisfaction than the “front line” officers or teachers. As such, leading one to conclude that front line workers’ daily interaction with individuals in the classroom or the community drives the interplay of emotional labour.

Adams and Buck (2010) reviewed survey results of 196 police officers regarding their social interactions with civilians (outsiders) and supervisors/colleagues (insiders) while focusing on surface-acting (faking of emotions and expression) to mediate those relationships. In the community, police officers are exposed to array of emotions from hostile and angry offenders to distraught victims and as such are sensitive to their own feelings and expressions that must appear aligned with their call of duty (Bakkar & Heuven, 2006). The research also notes the impact of negative social interaction as exemplified by the disputing neighbour scenario. This type of interaction is considered a social stressor because it is based on uncivil and disrespectful behaviour that does not involve physical violence. Social stressors create greater pressure on police officers who in these types of incidents must diffuse the emotional hostility of the situation while remaining calm, rational and in control (internally and externally). Adams and Buck (2010) found a positive correlation between surface-acting (faking the desired emotions) and external social stressor (“members of the public made personal verbal attacks against me”)

as well as internal social stressor (“coworkers ignored or excluded me from professional camaraderie”). Morash et al. (2008) research with South Korean police officers identified public disrespect as a predictor of general strain or an external social stressor (as cited in Adams & Buck, 2010).

Despite the image of power and respect that accompanies police officers, the public’s demand for police accountability, legitimacy, and effectiveness continues to be a mandate for police departments to achieve (Schiabale & Gecas, 2010). In an effort to implement accountability and legitimacy many police departments and agencies introduced community policing that “softens” the image of police officers (Schiabale & Gecas, 2010). Not all officers have difficulty adapting to these changes especially if they view it as part of the duties that make their profession noble and respected. There are others that find it difficult to internalize the mandates and as a result dissonance occurs between the role expectations and their true feelings or thoughts.

Schaible and Gecas (2010) argued that police officers are placed in paradoxical position where they are expected to be nice and tough simultaneously. The authors argued that throughout one’s policing career there is the likelihood to face situations that are inconsistent with one’s belief and value system, but by virtue of the profession and chain of commands one must remain true to the overall vision and mission. The authors specifically focused on burnout in police officers, hypothesizing that (i) the greater levels of emotional dissonance leads to greater burnout; (ii) greater value dissonance between officers and reference group leads to greater discrepancy. The results of 109 surveyed revealed that deep-acting and value dissonance showed greater depersonalization.

Surface-acting and value dissonance showed a positive relationship which is inline with Grandey’s emotions regulation model. The model shows an officer who experiences emotional and cognitive incongruence protects his or her well-being by engaging in surface-acting to manage the emerging emotions (Grandey, 2000). In fact, engaging in deep-acting and expression of emotions seemed to lead to greater levels of exhaustion compared to emotional suppression (Schiabale & Gecas, 2010). Further research is required to examine why expression of emotions leads to greater exhaustion when in general suppression requires greater effort to sustain. It was noted that police officers may resort to depersonalization as a coping mechanism that allows distancing from an incident while managing the appropriate emotions. The depersonalization of

incidents and individuals creates a buffer against the continuous exposure and taxation of emotions on the job (Schaible & Gecas, 2010).

### **Coping Strategies in Response to Emotional Labour in Policing**

There is no doubt that police officers are exposed to circumstances and incidents beyond the general scope of the public. However, research on stress and trauma has shown that differences between individual's in coping mechanisms is what determines the consequences of the exposure (LeBlanc, Regehr, Jelley, & Barath, 2008). Bailey & McCollough (2000) qualitative research with service agent revealed the conscious effort placed to manage emotions using different coping strategies. As expressed by one service agent, "I would keep my game face on, but I would be seething underneath" (M, 37, retail) (p.58). Further analysis of the interviews has shown that following an encounter with a difficult customer, service agents engage in a cognitive justification of the incident as a coping mechanism such as "every customer is different, all people are different. Have to remember praise is not common but complaints are" (M, 22, retail) (Bailey & McCollough, 2000, p.59).

Although the body of research on coping styles has not converged on the exact organization of these styles, they can be categorized as task-oriented, emotion-oriented, and avoidant-oriented (Baumgartner, Carson, Apavaloaie & Tsouloupas, 2009; LeBlanc et al., 2008). Task-oriented coping style attempts to remove or modify the source of stressor through action. A police officer who feels distressed working in a homicide unit can transfer into other divisions. The recognition of the stressor and changing the environment is an example of task-oriented coping style. Emotion-oriented coping style depends on managing emotion through cognitive and behavioural adjustment. A police officer who engages in surface acting during the course of his or her duties is using emotion-oriented coping styles. Avoidant-oriented style is a mechanism that actively avoids thinking about the situation or conjuring up any emotional response related to the matter. A police officer who uses avoidant-oriented style can resort to alcohol or drug use to escape reality (Baumgartner et al., 2009; LeBlanc et al., 2008).

LeBlanc et al. (2008) study exposed 84 police recruits to an acute stressor while recording physiological response (heart rate and cortisol levels). Individuals who reported using avoidant or emotion-oriented coping styles were more likely to express greater traumatic symptoms. Officers who reported using avoidant-oriented styles did demonstrate a physical

response to the trauma as measured by heart rate and cortisol levels but managed to stay on task by not focusing on the stressor. This type of response allows avoidant-oriented style to be practical in emergency situations, where mobility becomes a priority over thoughts and feelings. Similar to what is known as “detached concern”, a mechanism used by emergency workers to cope with strong emotions during response (LeBlance et al., 2008). However, as suspected in the long term, the effort placed in suppressing or avoiding emotions is expected to affect the physical and psychological well-being of the individual (Bakker & Heuven, 2006; Schaible & Gecas, 2010). Perhaps, avoidant style is used more often by police officers given the uncertainty of the day-to-day work. But based on LeBlanc et al. (2008) research, new recruits who reported using avoidant-oriented coping style were more likely to experience intrusion symptoms which manifest in the form of flashbacks, recurring thoughts, and nightmares (LeBlanc et al., 2008). Furthermore, individuals with higher level of task-orient styles were less likely to report anxiety as a result of anticipating a stressor or following the exposure to one (LeBlanc et al., 2008).

He, Zhao & Archibold (2002) studied gender differences among police officers in response to occupational stress, the impact of work environment and work-family conflicts. The research concluded gender differences in the sources of stress and coping strategies between female and male officers. Female officers reported higher levels of physical and psychological stress compared to male officers (He et al., 2002; Ross, 2007). Female officers reported higher levels of somatic symptoms to stressors along with more incidences of depression. Male officers recalled more negative work-related events but continued to experience greater camaraderie compared to female officers. However, female officers seemed to use more positive and constructive strategies to manage depression compared to male officers. In addition, female officers were more likely to seek support from spouses, friends, family, and to rely on spiritual guidance than male officers (He et al., 2002; Ross, 2007).

Current research on emotional labour and response has not focused on gender differences in police officers. However, based on what is known about coping styles, future research should investigate whether the experience of emotional labour is different between female and male officers. Are female officers more in tuned with emotional responses and therefore better at managing emotions as a function of work? Are male officers more likely to use avoidant coping styles by turning to drugs, alcohol or food to deal with emotional labour?

Historically, the culture of policing is one characterized by inclusion, a sense of pride, and suspicion of others outside of the organization. Limitation of research on law enforcement is often the result of quantitative research such as questionnaire and surveys. Despite assurances of confidentiality and ethical research practices, officers continue to be concerned with participating in research that could potentially jeopardize their job and future advancement (Schaible & Gecas, 2010). As such this study was designed in the form of qualitative research (interviews) with retired police officers to gain greater insight on emotional labour and coping strategies within policing while eliminating biases that often emerge with employed or active officers. Research on emotional labour does suggest that police officers are among those professions that experience emotional labour on the job. However, research on how this group manages emotions on the job and the long-term effect of surface-acting and the use coping-styles has received little attention. The purpose of this preliminary study is to gain insight on the experiences of retired police officers with the notion of emotion work and how each managed to overcome the exhaustion and burnout that is associated with emotional labour.

### Chapter 3: Methodology

#### Research Methodology

Research that exists in the literature on emotional labour has been based on quantitative research findings and self-reported data. Researchers have used surveys and questionnaires extensively to capture larger sample size that are representative while maintaining the anonymity factor that is inherent in quantitative design. Despite this justification, many of the studies cited self-reporting responses and low response rates as a limitation due to the use of questionnaire and surveys (Grebner et al., 2003; Heuven et al., 2006; Van Dijk & Kirk-Brown, 2006). Furthermore, quantitative designs were chosen by researchers to establish whether a relationship between emotional labour and a specific constructs exist such as negative job outcomes, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, or dissonances (Heuven et al., 2006; Mikolajczak; 2007, Van Dijk & Kirk-Brown, 2006). As such, correlation may be established but not causation. As described by Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2006), questionnaires and surveys “suffer from the researcher’s inability to ask probing questions or follow-up questions” (p.165).

Schaible & Gecas (2010) point to the culture of law enforcement and the sensitivity towards research that attempts to understand its organization. Even when researchers offer assurances of confidentiality and anonymity for participation, officers remain hesitant to respond or threatened by the outcome of participating in research. In an attempt to control limitations found in other studies and to gain an in-depth sight on emotional labour this research was designed in the form of qualitative research. Interviews were conducted with 6 retired police officers about their experiences with emotional labour on the job and the effective strategies they once used to cope with emotional labour on the job. Emotional labour has been documented to be found among police officers but given that the term “emotional labour” maybe foreign to this population it was important for the term to be defined prior to the interview (Appendix A). The structured face-to-face interview used 6 open-ended questions such as “As an officer, what strategies did you use to deal with the emotional labour of the day-to-day work?” (Appendix B)

The strength of using interviews as a research method is for the in-depth data and detailed responses which are difficult to attain using surveys and questionnaires. However, limitations of this type of study are the small sample size, lack of anonymity, participant self-reported responses, and research or participant biases that could have emerged from the face-to-face

interactions and data analysis. The interviewer's experience in conducting qualitative research and ability to maintain a neutral demeanor may sway the participant's responses (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006).

### **Data Collection**

In collaboration with the Tema Conter Memorial Trust (T.E.M.A), 6 retired police officers were recruited to participate in a 30-minute interview. T.E.M.A was provided with a research proposal describing the purpose of the study followed by a panel interview with the researcher to help streamline the requirements of the research. The only criterion for participation was that the officers had been retired for less than 5 years. Retired officers were selected to participate versus non-retired officers for the following reasons: (1) to understand what contributed to the longevity of their careers in the presence of emotional labour, (2) to allow candid responses without the sense of job insecurity for participating in a research. The recruitment of one participant led to the recruitment of affiliates that resulted in an all-male sample. With the exception of one participant who was in the same cohort as the researcher, there was no professional or personal relationship with any of the other participants. Three individuals who agreed to participate were emailed "Letter to Participants" and "Letter of Information and Informed Consent" (Appendix C). The remaining 3 were given the documents in person prior to the interview. All participants were provided with a copy of the study information and the consent form. Prior to conducting the interview, demographic data was collected such as age, gender, years of service and role prior to retirement.

The structured face-to-face interviews consisted of 6 open-ended questions that explored their experience with emotional labour and the strategies they once used to cope and to perform their duties as officers (Appendix B). The researcher met with participants at a place and time of convenience to conduct individual interviews in a quiet atmosphere that was free of interruptions. All participants were explained the purpose of the study and thanked for their willingness to participate in this study. The researcher reiterated that participation is completely voluntary and the data will be kept confidential. In addition, they were reminded that they are free to refuse answering any questions that may pose discomfort. The interviews were audio-taped for later transcription but once again participants were asked for permission to tape the interview. No identifiers were recorded other than participant's alias code for processing.

## Data Analysis

In comparison to quantitative research, qualitative research allows the researcher to immerse into analyzing the data following the interactions with participants. As suggested by Anderson and colleagues, qualitative research requires the researcher to naturally reflect on the data to ensure that the focus remains clear and to eliminate data that is not important to the overall research (as cited in Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006). Furthermore, reflection “is important to avoid premature actions based on early analysis and interpretations of data” (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006, p. 468).

Qualitative researchers face the dilemma of lack of specified method to analyze the data collected. There are no specified steps but researchers agree that data must be read and re-read with finer tuning as more information emerges. To aid in the analysis of this study, a system of reading/memoing, describing, and classifying was the framework to extract the data. Prior to reading/memoing, each interview was transcribed verbatim and field notes of settings, participants and experience were noted following each interview. Taking notes during the course of the interview was avoided so not to distract the participants and to create a more natural setting for conversing (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006, p. 468).

The data was then coded by identifying themes that emerged from the interviews using the following categories for structure: 1) recognizing emotional labour, 2) coping styles/strategies, and 3) teaching to cope with emotional labour. The researcher included direct quotes that support the categories and provide evidence for emotional labour in policing. In addition, the demographic data collected prior to each interview was analyzed for mean scores using an Excel spreadsheet. The data is represented in the form of tables.

To ensure credibility of the study, the researcher adapted Dey’s six identifying questions to check the quality of the work (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006, p. 480).

1. Are the data based on one’s own observation, or is it hearsay?
2. Is there corroboration by others on one’s observation?
3. In what circumstances was an observation made or reported?
4. How reliable are those providing the data?
5. What motivations might have influenced a participant’s report?
6. What biases might have influenced how an observation was made or reported?

**Ethical Review**

At the request of T.E.M.A, a Vulnerable Sector Police Records Search (Form A) was required of the researcher along with Central Michigan University's Research Review approval prior to conducting the study. Upon clearance and approval, copies were forwarded to T.E.M.A to maintain the letter of permission and support of the organization.

### Chapter 4: Data Analysis

Emotional labour or “people-work” is a term that has been attached to occupations that require greater levels of emotional demand and management (Mann, 2004). Emotional labour occurs during more frequent interactions with clients, customers, or the public in general. Certain professions and roles depend on the management of one’s emotions such as nursing, flight-attendants, teachers, and police officers (Bailey & McCollough, 2000; Bierema, 2008; Mann, 2004, Van Dijk & Kirk-Brown, 2006). Mann (1998) identified three components of emotional labour (1) the faking of emotion that is not felt, 2) the hiding of emotion that is felt, and (3) the performance of this emotion management in order to meet expectations within a work environment (as cited in Mann, 2004, p.208). Police officers are inherently subject to emotional labour and are expected to exert the effort to maintain and display organizationally desired emotions on the job. However, only recently research began to focus on whether law enforcement persons experience emotional labour and the extent to which officers manage this aspect of their profession. This study focused on identifying strategies used by retired police officers in response to emotional labour during their policing careers. That is, what are the strategies used by retired police officers to deal with emotional labour during their policing careers? And, what are the recommended strategies to help newly recruited officers counteract emotional labour?

The demographic data collected from the participants in table 1 showed the average age was 54.5 years old, with 32.4 years as the mean for years of police service among participants. The recruitment requirement was that participants have retired for 5 years or less; the longest retirement was 36 months and the shortest was 7 months as of December 31, 2010. The average length of retirement is 18 months or 1 year and half. Retired officers were selected to participate versus non-retired officers to understand what contributed to the longevity of their careers in the presence of emotional labour and to allow for candid responses without the sense of job insecurity for participating in a research. The participants were asked to select a category that best described their role prior to retiring. This showed 1 in a managerial role, 1 was a front line officer, and the remaining 4 indicated other. Further specification of the ‘other’ category listed training, instructing, support program coordination, and crime analysis as some of the roles prior to retirement.

Table 1

Demographic Data of Participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Years of Service	Retirement Period (months)	Role Category	Others
n=6	M	54	30	36	Managerial	
	M	53	32	24	Other	Instructor
	M	55	31	24	Other	Administrative/Training
	M	55	35	10	Other	Support Program
	M	54	30.5	8	Front Line	
	M	56	36	7	Other	Crime Analyst
Mean		54.5	32.4	18.2		

As described in the previous chapter, data was analysed using the following categories for structure: 1) recognizing emotional labour, 2) coping styles/strategies, and 3) teaching to cope with emotional labour. To maintain the anonymity of participants, data is reported using fictitious identifiers that bear no relevance to the research group.

**Recognizing emotional labour**

Prior to conducting the interview, all participants were asked whether they know “what is emotional labour?” None of the participants recognized the term, but when emotional labour was defined they were able to immediately describe its impact in policing and especially, when asked whether law enforcement experienced more or less emotional labour compared to none law-enforcement. All participants concurred that police officers experienced more emotional labour than non-law enforcement jobs. As officers explained:

First off, their duties are such that every day they are encountering different situations. Now by your definition of emotional labour, they must maintain a constant ... represent a constant to the public that you are dealing with at all times. That in itself there’s certain rules they must follow. There’s certain guidelines they must follow. There are certain laws and regulations that they can’t breach or cross so therefore they experience way more than the average public (Officer X)

Well more because there are a lot of times where you would be dealing with members of the public and internally you might be wondering why on earth a person would behave the way that they're behaving, but you can't show that externally. And we always have to be totally neutral (Officer E)

If we go to any kind of difficulty, any kind of call, there's usually a victim so you have to be strong for the victim because if you fall apart, you become a victim also. So you have to stay strong no matter how you feel about it (Officer M)

### **Coping Strategies**

Lazarus & Folkman (1984) argue that coping styles are "habitual approaches to problems that tax or exceed an individual's resources (as cited in LeBlanc et al., 2008, p.77). Participants' coping strategies were categorized according to the three research based styles of coping: task-oriented, emotion-oriented, and avoidant-oriented (Baumgartner et al., 2009; LeBlanc et al., 2008; Mann, 2004). Most participants disclosed the use of multiple strategies to deal with emotional labour with emotion-oriented as the most frequently cited technique. Emotion-oriented coping style depends on the cognitive and behavioural manipulation for managing one's emotions and to maintaining a functional balance (Baumgartner et al., 2009; LeBlanc et al., 2008; Mann, 2004). As one officer described his day-to-day technique:

I didn't find it that difficult I think it's just a matter of detaching yourself from the circumstance and not to take things personally. Like you get in a situation and the big thing is not to take things personally (Officer E)

Officer X expressed that knowing that you have to be professional and that this situation will soon pass helped put things into perspective.

Officer M thought emotional labour was part of the job. I felt bad for people, but I didn't like sit there and memorize, I don't memorize names of people, situations ...I never took it home because it was a part of my job.

Officer Q made the decision not discuss work unless the matter was unmanageable.

I said [to my wife] you know what? From now on “Its how’s work?”; “work was fine”. If it was something major then we would discuss it. But, from day-to-day, work was always fine. If it really got bad or out of control then I would, we would sit down or discuss.

Task-oriented style is one approach that attempts to eliminate or reduce the effects of the stressor through action. According to the interview data, being engaged in physical activities such as sports was an avenue to release the frustrations of the day’s work.

What I did was I made sure that I left work at work, um... and I was really active in athletics. I took out my frustrations at the gym, and I played racket ball at a high level and made sure that I maintained that, regardless of what job or what stresses I had at work. I would just leave it at work and take off and go to the gym (Officer J)

We used to have a thing called choir practice, where after evening shift, you get together with your shift and go to a park and sit around and have a barbecue right, so you’d have hamburgers and drink and you would talk talk talk talk talk. Talking about the things that had gone on in the last month and a half and that was a way to relieve that stress, it was actually a therapeutic way of talking in a non confrontational non-threatening manner with other people, and it enabled us to deal with the stress (Officer E)

In addition, many of the participants believed communicating and seeking the support of one’s spouse or familial network was instrumental in maintaining their well-being. Following the interview analysis, the researcher collected marital status information (Table 2). All officers interviewed were married and have been with their spouse for an average of 28.6 years.

I had a very understanding wife. I think of it as a two way street we work together on things. She worked, I listened to her. If I had problems she listened to me (Officer Q)

I had a very supportive home; my wife never um...never got in the way, or told me that “hey, you shouldn’t do this”; she felt that hey if I found something that I like to do, I should go ahead and pursue it (Officer J)

You know at the end of the day, you get to go home and see your family. And so I guess having a strong family ... like for me that was ... that was really big (Officer Y)

Table 2

Participant's years of service in relation to marital status

Participant	Years of Service	Years of Marriage
n=6	30	33
	32	28
	31	25
	35	20
	30.5	33
	36	32
Mean	32.4	28.6

Officer J noted that during his career, he worked with new undercover recruits and found that the lack of support at home hindered officers from accepting new roles and challenges:

We would call them to do a job and they're like "no, no I couldn't do that. I wouldn't be able to do that. I can't go away for two months." Can't do this, can't do that. And this was because of home life, not because they didn't want to do it. It was because that they'd had stresses from home.

In collaboration with one of the above coping styles, few participants mentioned techniques that would be categorized as avoidant-oriented. Avoidant-oriented style is the conscious effort to avoid facing the stressor by indulging in behaviours that reduce the tension such as overeating or drug use (Baumgartner et al., 2009; LeBlanc et al., 2008; Mann, 2004).

I did drink a little bit. And but that was pretty common amongst most of the guys back in that era. Ahh... it was very common for platoon parties and that, where you drink till you almost black out sometimes eh? Especially after, you know, something particularly that

had happened, maybe somebody on your shift got hurt or something like that had happened (Officer Y)

I guess one of the things about the boozing was that you were socializing and you would talk about your cases with other police officers, and this was the time to talk things out sometimes (Officer Y)

Officer Y recalled that having children and a strong marriage helped him to stop on his own when he realized the drinking was too much.

As for determining whether the chosen strategy was successful, the participants assessed the results internally against their personal feelings and state of mind or externally through feedback from the public, peers, and family. Officer M thought the public's reaction would be the true test for whether managing one's emotions on the job was a success or not. Officer Y found drinking did not help him cope but instead lead him to drink more. Eventually, he stopped before it became destructive.

### **Education and Training**

All participants felt that managing emotional labour is not solely an innate skill or one that is developed through training and experience. Rather, it was a blend of natural aptitude that is strengthened by training and experience over the years. Officer E felt it was a combination of innate ability along with experiences that also stem from learning from one's peers.

Further question investigated reasons that discouraged officers from discussing the impact of emotional labour. Five different reasons were revealed during the course of the interviews:

People don't often want to talk about their feelings because they become vulnerable. Once you expose yourself to the person, he or she actually owns you. [Reputation is everything] in policing you want to be the one that he or she is a straight forward, dependable, honest, person. That's the reputation that everyone strives for; the person with integrity (Officer X)

Because [police officers] are supposed to be in total control all the time. So you don't want to admit that you have to do anything extra in order to maintain that façade. So that would hinder us talking about it (Officer E)

Embarrassment. You don't want to be viewed as weak. That pretty well sums it up (Officer J)

Confidentiality "like the Toronto service anyways, and those guys, they brought us in a psychologist or two, you know. They're company shrinks, and there's no way I'm going to say anything to those guys, because you never know what might come back to haunt you. It may have unexpected results (Officer Y)

"It's you know Ego! It's who we are I mean the whole idea is that police have to always keep it together at all times. You can't show weakness, you can't show vulnerability.... there's a whole stigma. You can't always let it go when you're working, because if you show weakness all the time you might crumble (Officer M)

Understanding the culture of policing, what services can be implemented to support new recruits from the impact of emotional labour and to prevent burnout and exhaustion? Officer X and officer J recommended identifying emotional labour and actually bringing awareness to the issue so new officers can be forewarned and properly trained with coping strategies. Sharing the information and encouraging the use of support tools when necessary. Officer E thought continuing to provide programs that are physically and socially engaging such as group sports or choir practice can provide a non-threatening avenue to deal with emotional labour. Officer M felt education and continuous education would be important for dealing with emotional labour. Not only at the beginning of their career but even later on when the impact of emotional labour begins to take its toll on individuals. Officer M further expressed that information overload can be counteractive. Officers should be given enough resource to manage emotional labour but not excessive that it begins to create intrusive thoughts and ineffective behaviour.

## Summary

The study found that the term 'emotional labour' is foreign to retired officers. However, once the term was defined, many of the retired officers recognized emotional labour through their career experiences and can recall incidences where it exemplified it. The data did suggest the use of three coping strategies emotion-oriented, task-oriented, and/or avoidant-oriented to manage emotions on the job. Participants did not use one specific technique to manage emotional labour but rather multiple strategies. Emotion-oriented and task-oriented strategies are used most frequently compared to avoidant-oriented strategy. Emotion-oriented technique revealed most of the officers believed emotional labour is a component of the profession and that it was their job to control and manage their emotions while serving the public. Task-oriented technique was expressed by participants in the form of exercise or engaging in group sports throughout their career. In fact most of the participants actively sought the support of their spouse and depended on the solid foundation of their marital relationship to maintain their well-being on and off the job.

Managing emotional labour was not thought to be an innate skill but one that requires the right attitude and experience to balance. Officers were discouraged from discussing the impact of emotional labour on the job because of vulnerability, embarrassment, fear for lack of confidentiality, and tarnishing one's image (weak, powerless, and poor performers).

Introducing support programs and group sports is one suggested method to assist new recruits but also educating by sharing and caring. First, teaching the concept of 'emotional labour' to new and existing recruits, while diffusing the stigma that prevents officers from admitting to the negative effects of emotional labour. Secondly, developing coping techniques that can be applied at the initial signs of exhaustion or burnout as result of emotional labour and finally, offering the necessary resources to seek help when needed.

## Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

### Summary

The purpose of this study was to identify strategies used by retired police officers in response to emotional labour during their policing careers. Emotional labour has been studied extensively in the field of psychology, business management, education, and nursing (Bierema, 2008; Grandey, 2000; Humphrey, 2006; Kruml & Geddes, 2000a; Mikolajczak et al., 2007; Van Dijk & Kirk-Brown, 2006). However, many of these studies were designed to investigate correlational relationships using questionnaires or surveys as the only mode of data collection. Furthermore, these surveys and questionnaires did not necessarily focus on emotional labour and policing. This study was of qualitative nature using interviews with 6 retired police officers to gain an insight on emotional labour and coping strategies they used during the course of their careers. The retired officers were recruited through collaboration with Tema Center Memorial Trust and associated referrals. Retired officers were selected to participate versus non-retired officers to learn more about what contributed to the longevity of their careers in the presence of emotional labour and to eliminate any concerns about the fear of job insecurity for participating in the study. This resulted in an all male sample which limited the findings of this research. Given that interviews were the only mode of data collection, triangulation which is often used in qualitative research was not used and hence limited this study.

Finally, this study remains preliminary in nature and requires further data collection and more representative sample to generalize the findings. However, the in-depth analysis of the verbatim interviews revealed that the retired police officers did experience emotional labour on the job and they did utilize a combination of task-oriented, emotion-oriented, and avoidant-oriented techniques to cope with emotional labour and to maintain their well-being. Surprisingly, most of the participants expressed spousal and familial support as one of the most important means of coping with emotional labour on the job.

Moreover, participants revealed several reasons as to why officers are discouraged from discussing the impact of emotional labour and the necessity of de-stigmatizing those who cannot cope with emotional labour on the job. Finally, participants felt that educating and training new recruits about emotional labour and offering resource that can be utilized in time of need is integral in surviving a career in policing.

## Conclusions

Emotional labour requires the management of emotions to meet organizationally desired goals and expectations (Bierema, 2008; Humphrey, 2006; Kruml & Geddes, 2000a; Mann, 2004; Mikolajczak et al., 2007; Van Dijk & Kirk-Brown, 2006). As described by Johnson et al. (2005) research on occupational stress and professions listed police officers among professions that experience more stress on the job and greater job dissatisfaction. Interviews with participants on the concept of emotional labour showed that officers don't recognize the term but once it was defined they were able to relate and in fact, the consensus was that officers did experience more emotional labour on the job compared to non-law enforcement jobs (Johnson et al., 2005). As reported by Fox and Spector, emotional labour has been found to contribute to the experience of emotional exhaustion and along with emotional dissonance is negatively correlated with job satisfaction (as cited in Johnson et al., 2005).

In addition, the participants recognized and verbalized the importance of guidelines that govern their profession and regardless of the external events or situation they would always maintain a professional and neutral position. That is, they actively engaged in surface acting. As supported by Grandey's (2000) model of regulation of emotions, employees assess situational cues (duration, frequency, and nature) and recognize the negative outcome of the exposure (burnout/strain) and choose to engage in a psychological mechanism that mediates the impact. As noted by Officer X, each police officer understood that "certain laws and regulations [cannot be] breached or crossed" and that being able to mediate this impact meant the ability to remain strong and not be victimized by the circumstances that surrounded the job.

It was observed during the interviews that participants were positive about their professional experience and expressed contentment for choosing policing as a career. As supported by Van Dijk and Kirk-Brown's (2006) study, participants' responses seemed to suggest that individuals identified with their role and believed emotional labour was a residual of their profession. A process that Van Dijk and Kirk-Brown (2006) believe helps to reduce the negative affectivity of emotional labour in individuals. Although, a positive demeanor could be attributed to many factors such as a sense of pride for being a veteran, having had a successful career in law enforcement, and perhaps engaging in post retirement activities that continues to enrich their lives.

The length of retirement did not affect this observation, whether retirement occurred few months prior to the interview or few years ago it did not change the participants' outlook on their careers. In addition, with the exception of one officer, all participants prior to retirement were involved in roles that were not classified as front line work. A similar finding to what was reported by Johnson et al. (2005), police officers and senior officers with higher ranks or more administrative positions in policing reported less stress and greater satisfaction than "front line" officers. As such, leading one to conclude that front line workers' daily interaction with the public increases the impact of emotional labour.

### **Coping Strategies**

Individual differences in coping strategies are pivotal in determining the consequences of exposure to emotional labour as to occupational stressors (LeBlanc et al., 2008). Similar to Bailey & McCollough's (2000) findings with tourism customer service representatives, most participants expressed the use of multiple strategies to deal with emotional labour. Emotion-oriented remained the most frequently cited technique, followed by task-oriented, and then the least is avoidant-oriented technique. Emotion-oriented style meant that officers on duty cognitively justify their position by detaching themselves from the present situation and not being personally offended by what was directed towards them from others. One of the participants made the conscious effort and decision not to discuss work at home unless the matter was intrusive and unmanageable. Fortunately, over the course of his career this was not necessary.

Task-oriented style is an active approach to dealing with emotional labour by engaging in routine physical activity such as attending the gym, participating in group sports, and/or social activities such as a choir practice or social gathering with unit officers. In addition, those who used task-oriented style also seemed to explore other units and positions by changing the environment and in turn what they are exposed to on a day-to-day basis. Avoidant-oriented style is the conscious effort to avoid facing the stressor by indulging in behaviours that reduce the tension such as overeating or drug use (Baumgartner et al., 2009; LeBlanc et al., 2008; Mann, 2004). One officer admitted to using this style to deal with emotional labour by drinking to sooth the tension off-duty. However, the officer quickly recognized that alcohol-dependency can destroy his career and family and opted to stop while he was in control.

So why is emotion-oriented style used more often than task-oriented and avoidant-oriented styles among police officers? One hypothesis is that emotion-oriented style could be more feasible to use and therefore could be a primary technique for coping and functioning during one's shift. That is, if an officer is experiencing emotional labour he or she cannot instantly engage in a task-oriented style where one can: 1) leave the situation, 2) transfer to other units, or 3) engage in a physical activity. Secondly, the continuous use of emotion-oriented style may eventually lead to an automatic response in the face of a stressor and could possibly explain why it was more often cited. Emotion-oriented technique might have become a habitual response by long serving officers. As for avoidant-oriented style, was less cited either because officers are knowledgeable about the impact of "bottling in" emotions and the negative outcome of turning to alternate behaviours such as smoking, drugs, or alcohol. Further research is required to test these specific hypotheses and to determine the sequence and use of coping strategies.

The most surprising finding from conducting the interviews on emotional labour is that all the participants interviewed stressed the importance of the roles their spouses played in supporting their well-being, preserving the family structure and the advancement and longevity of their careers. As reported by earlier research on occupational stressors and gender differences among police officers, it was noted that female officers compared to male officers were likely to seek support from spouses, friends and family (He et al., 2002; Ross, 2007). But, findings of this study indicate that male officers similarly value and depend on marital and familial support to cope with emotional labour on the job. Further research is recommended to replicate the findings and to investigate how female officers compare to the male-counterpart in terms of coping needs and strategies used.

### **Training and Education**

One of Hochschild's emotional labour dimensions is that the employer through training and supervision exercises a degree of control over the employee's emotional reaction (as cited in Bierema, 2008; Brothridge & Lee, 2003; Kruml & Geddes, 2000a; Lewis, 2005). That is, trainings and supervision that were designed to illustrate how individuals are to behave and respond as police officers. Schiabe and Gecas (2010) described the impact of this control as "tasks [that] require highly inconsistent and incompatible expectations for conduct, which can place officers in a state of role confusion' (p.317). Where does the responsibility of the employer

fall? Limited research exists on the role that employers play in assisting employees with the impact of emotional labour on and off the job. Findings of this study showcased the importance of educating and training new recruits and that regardless of aptitude, experience and mentorship are vital for a healthy and successful career. The participants recommended that new recruits and students should be taught about emotional labour, how to recognize it and what resources are available to cope with it. In addition, support programs should be available and structured to encourage disclosure, maintain confidentiality, and to de-stigmatize seeking help when needed so to avoid embarrassment, vulnerability and lack of confidence in officers that struggle with emotional labour.

### **Recommendations**

Further research is needed to:

1. Investigate emotional labour and coping strategies in retired-female officers and compared to retired-male officers.
2. Replicate the study with a larger and more representative sample.
3. Understand the role of spousal and familial support with regards to experiencing and coping with emotional labour on the job.
4. Analyze the effectiveness of training programs that address emotional labour and coping strategies on new recruits in law enforcement.

Current police training programs and police associations should:

1. Teach students and new recruits about what is known about emotional labour and how it can impact police officers on the job.
2. Emphasize the importance of using constructive coping strategies such as emotion-oriented and task-oriented styles and how to prevent the use of destructive techniques such as avoidant-oriented style.
3. De-stigmatize and encourage individuals to seek help and utilize individual and familial support programs when emotional labour becomes unmanageable.
4. Implement effective coping programs that counteract the negative impact of emotional labour and to prevent job exhaustion in police officers.

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*Appendix A*

## What is emotional labour?

Emotional labor can be defined as the degree of manipulation of one's inner feelings or outward behavior to display the appropriate emotion in response to display rules or occupational norms.

Emotional labour refers to paid work requiring the worker to maintain observable facial and bodily displays with the intention of creating particular emotional feelings in clients.

Among workers performing emotional labour are musicians who perform even as the ship sinks, flight attendants who continue to smile as the plane crashes, bill collectors, funeral directors, doctors, nurses, and others.

*Appendix B*

## Interview questions

The interview will begin by defining emotional labour. The questions will be open-ended.

1. To what degree do you think police officers experience emotional labour on the job?  
Compared to non-law enforcement job, do officers experience more or less emotional labour?
2. As an officer, what strategies did you use to deal with the emotional labour of the day-to-day work?
3. How did you assess whether this strategy/ies worked?
4. Do you think managing emotions on the job is an innate skill or a skill learned through training and experience?
5. What factors do you think discourage officers from discussing the impact of emotional labour in response to their job?
6. What services do you think can be implemented to support new officers to deal with the impact of emotional labour and to prevent job exhaustion?