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Emotional labor is a recent topic of interest in library and archival work, and research has explored how library professionals experience emotional labor in the workplace. However, there is a significant gap in the literature in terms of addressing how archive workers, from their own perspective, process and regulate emotional labor. The purpose of this study is to fill a gap in knowledge by exploring emotional labor and emotion regulation strategies through the perspective of archive workers. In particular, this study will examine how archive workers are essentially "grief workers," and may experience trauma due to the nature of archival work.

Headings:

Emotional Labor

Labor Demands

Libraries and Archives

Work Environment

Emotional Trauma

“FULL OF EMOTIONS”: EMOTIONAL LABOR AND EMOTION
REGULATION STRATEGIES IN ARCHIVES SETTINGS

by
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Introduction

In January 2021, I began processing an animal rights and welfare collection. Processing this collection seemed straightforward: arrange the photographs into corresponding series, establish physical and intellectual control, and publish the collection guide for public use. In reality, processing photographs that contained disturbing and graphic images of animal abuse was emotionally draining. As an animal rights and welfare activist, I was negatively affected by the contents of this collection.

I remember one day, I was upset by a series of photographs on dogfighting investigations, and a colleague came over to my desk. They observed something was wrong and said, “Hey, are you ok? You seem upset.” I responded, “No. It’s nothing. I’m fine.” But I wasn’t fine, so why was I hiding my thoughts and feelings? Throughout the workday, flashes of animal abuse and factory farming would invade my thoughts. After each processing shift, I felt drained, cynical, and sad.

Processing this collection was difficult because I love animals and seeing them treated horrifically in such graphic detail was distressing to me. I never felt that I should stop processing the collection because of how it was affecting my emotional state. However, my experiences with these records encouraged me question whether I was alone in feeling distressed by the nature of my work in the archives. Do other archivists experience strong emotional responses in the archives? How do they cope with these

emotional responses? Furthermore, why does it seem like no one around me is experiencing this phenomenon?

As I began to explore how working in the archives is “full of emotion,” it became clear to me how archival work is inherently a form of emotional labor (Leary, 2018). Archivist Wannett Clyde recently wrote a blog post about their experiences archiving human rights abuses in Brazil. Clyde was working for WITNESS as an intern to document public demonstrations in Brazil in response to the 2014 FIFA World Cup. During this conflict, citizens mobilized to protest the government spending billions of reais of public money on stadiums for the World Cup. The resulting violence between citizens and police illustrated how the police force abused their power to quell civilian protestors (Darlington, 2014; Clyde, 2015).

Clyde reflects that working on footage documenting traumatic experiences inhibited their ability to accurately describe video footage and affected their ability to remain unbiased. While viewing particularly violent footage of the conflict, Clyde (2015) continues, “On this day, I had turned down the sound and removed my headphones, deciding to give only one of my senses, my vision, to this madness. It made it easier, but only minimally.”

Clyde (2015) elaborates that their experiences archiving graphic materials was a form of emotional labor, which is defined as the management of one’s emotions “in response to display rules for the organization or job” and requires “enhancing, faking, or suppressing emotions to modify emotional expression” (Grandey, 2000). Theories of affect and emotional labor are being studied across disciplines, and these discussions have interesting implications for archival science. While archival literature reflects recent

interest in emotional labor, there are few research studies that examine how archive professionals are experiencing situations of emotional labor. Related to this, there is a significant gap in the literature in terms of how archivists, from their own perspective, manage emotional labor in the workplace. As a result, the purpose of this master's paper is to examine how archivists experience situations of emotional labor in the workplace, while exploring whether the management of emotions using emotional regulation strategies has become a job requirement for archival roles (Wharton & Erickson, 1993).

Research Questions and Key Terms

This mixed-method study includes an in-depth analysis of the interdisciplinary theories of emotional labor with perspectives from archive professionals. The main research question explored in this study is: How do archive professionals experience situations of emotional labor in the workplace? A secondary question relates to how individuals process emotional labor: How do archive professionals utilize emotion regulation strategies (ERS) to process emotional labor? In addition, the following questions will be examined in the literature review: What is emotional labor? How does emotional labor affect individuals? What are some recommendations for those experiencing emotional labor? Is emotional labor a requirement of the job for archive workers?

The following key terms are featured throughout the study to highlight major themes and topics in the literature:

- Emotional labor: “the management of one’s emotions in response to display rules for the organization or job” which requires “enhancing, faking, or suppressing emotions to modify emotional expression” (Grandey, 2000)
- Affect: “feelings we experience as part of our everyday lives that may lead us to engage in behaviors that are appropriate to our perceptions of a given situation” (Jhangiani et al., 2014)

- Emotion Regulation Strategies: “emotions may be regulated by either altering the stimulus or perceptions of the stimulus, known as antecedent-focused regulation, or altering the response to the stimulus, known as response-focused regulation” (Gross, 1998, 2002; Diefendorff, 2008)
- Surface acting: “the employee adjusts their outward expression of an emotion without adjusting the inner emotion” (Matteson & Miller, 2012)
- Deep acting: “the employee attempts to alter their perception of a situation to feel a desired emotion” (Matteson & Miller, 2012)
- Emotional dissonance: “a consequence of having to display specific emotions that contrast with those genuinely felt by an individual” (Mesner-Magnus et al., 2012)
- Vicarious or secondary trauma: “personal transformations experienced by trauma workers resulting from a cumulative and empathetic engagement with another’s traumatic experiences” (Cohen & Collens, 2013)

Literature Review

For most the 20th century, emotion as an indicator of individual and organizational behavior was largely ignored by scholars and industry leaders alike. A shift occurred by the 1980s, as scholars began to explore how emotion and affect are managed by employees to achieve specific outcomes (Grandey, 2000). By the 1990s, sociologists were examining the causes and consequences of emotional labor in the workplace and generating widespread interest in related topics of research. Now, the study of emotion and affect in organizational settings is an ongoing discussion incorporating research across disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, psychology, neurobiology, and library and information science.

In the 1980s, a shift in scholarship surrounding emotion and affect can largely be attributed to the work of sociologists in examining organizational behavior. Arlie Hochschild first coined the term “emotional labor” as “the management or modification of emotions as a part of the workplace” (Hochschild, 1983; Grandey, 2000). According to Hochschild, the doctor-patient relationship is a good example of how emotional labor plays out in the workplace, as the doctor is trained to “treat bodies, and also treat feelings about bodies” (Hochschild, 2000, pg. 151). Thus, the doctor must be able to manage their own emotions and the emotions of their patients while doing their job.

Scholars have built upon emotional labor theory by examining how workplace emotions may impact workers in specific workplace settings, such as the service industry.

By the early 2000s, scholarship began to explore how service workers are subject to emotional labor because of the nature of their work. In jobs that involve direct interaction with customers or clients, “employers frequently try to manage the emotions of their workers, while workers try to control the emotional responses of service recipients” (Leidner, 1999, pp. 81). There is a growing body of literature on this topic in connection to health care, food services, military service, emergency services, and many others (Erickson & Grove, 2008; Seymour, 2000; Godfrey & Brewis, 2018; Henderson, & Borry, 2020).

Scholarly interest in emotional labor has resulted in the development of multiple theoretical frameworks, including the Affect Event Theory (AFT) (Rubin et al., 2005; Cropanzo; 1996). The AFT states that individual work in the organization is directly related to the structure, causes, and consequences of affective experiences. This theoretical framework suggests that negative emotions in the workplace can lead to negative outcomes, and positive emotions in the workplace can lead to positive outcomes. More specifically, positive affective experiences in the workplace directly increases job satisfaction, employee retention, and overall productivity. Finally, the AFT recognizes that affective experiences are multidimensional as individuals undergo a range of psychological experiences with emotion at work. We all experience a range of emotions from anger to joy, but the structure and cause of the affective experiences in the workplace can be further explored in various organizational settings using the AFT (Cropanzo; 1996).

A direct result of increased interest in emotional labor theory is increased interest in how to *regulate* emotions to achieve greater organizational outcomes. A process-oriented model of emotional regulation suggests that emotions may be regulated by either altering the stimulus or perceptions of the stimulus, known as antecedent-focused regulation, or altering the response to the stimulus, known as response-focused regulation. With this model, antecedent-focused regulation is divided into four subcategories: situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, and cognitive change – resulting in 5 emotion regulation strategy (ERS) categories in total (Gross, 1998, 2002; Diefendorff, 2008).

Situation selection includes confronting or avoiding certain situations to regulate emotions. Situation modification means an individual alters the situation to change their emotional response to the affective event. Attentional deployment involves directing attention away from an emotional event through distraction, concentration, or positive refocus. Cognitive change requires an individual to reappraise a situation to invoke a more positive, desired emotional response. Lastly, response modulation includes “faking unfelt emotions and concealing felt emotions” (Diefendorff, 2008). All of these ERS are a direct response to an affective event, as described earlier with the Affective Event Theory.

Despite interdisciplinary research on emotional labor, there is a significant gap in the literature regarding how librarians and archivists experience emotional labor. Why is there a lack of research about the emotional labor of librarians and archivists? As Matteson & Miller (2013) suggest, librarians are trained to suppress negative emotions and convey positive emotions, and this standard is upheld by professional norms. Library

training focuses on LIS theories and technical skills, but emotional management skills are not typically taught or researched in the profession as fundamental for work roles.

Archivists, who may be subject to traumatic and stressful situations, are similarly not trained to deal with emotional labor (Matteson & Miller, 2013). As Sloan et. al (2019) argues, emotional labor is not usually attributed to archivists as an occupational hazard of working closely with trauma survivors and historic trauma.

In 2012, one of the first empirical studies examining how librarians process emotional labor was conducted by researchers at Kent State University. The researchers surveyed librarians from public, special, academic, and youth libraries to examine how librarians experience emotional labor. Throughout the study, the researchers focused on the occurrence of “deep acting” and “surface acting” in librarianship (Matteson & Miller, 2012). Deep acting occurs when the employee alters their perception of a situation to feel a desired emotion, and surface acting occurs when the employee adjusts their outward expression of an emotion without adjusting the inner emotion. An example of surface acting is smiling during a frustrating conversation with a patron, and an example of deep acting is reframing a patron’s behavior in order to feel more positive about the interaction (Matteson & Miller, 2012).

From the study, the researchers made several noteworthy contributions. The participants who reported more examples of surface acting were more likely to experience the negative effects of emotional labor. Surface acting was more closely associated with the negative effects of emotional labor because the librarians felt forced to conceal how they felt to convey a more positive emotion. Surface acting is not recommended as a primary ERS for workers, since the negative effects of surface acting

include emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and lower job satisfaction. Conversely, the librarians practicing deep acting reported more positive effects because deep acting allows the individual to reappraise or redirect their perspective to achieve positive inner emotions. The researchers concluded that in the future librarians should practice deep acting techniques, such as managing expectations about a situation to alter an emotional response (Matteson & Miller, 2012; Matteson, Chittock, & Mease, 2015).

Recent works have focused on how archivists have come into contact with emotional labor and trauma in archival settings. These works reorient the archivist as a witness of historical events as well as historical and generational trauma. As a witness, the archivist engages in relationships of reciprocity and affective responsibility with archival stakeholders and responds and acts on emotional levels (Cifor, 2015, p. 18). Although archivists may not be directly affected by trauma, archival stakeholders and communities can transfer trauma to the archive worker through these “relationships of reciprocity” (Cifor, 2015, p. 18). This transfer occurs because acting as witness to oppression and inequality is a form of trauma, and witnessing traumatic events may trigger deep emotional resonances for those documenting and preserving historical events (Cifor, 2015, p. 19).

What role does trauma play in archival studies? In the field of trauma studies, “the concept of trauma, itself a source of critique, is generally understood as a severely disruptive experience that profoundly impacts the self’s emotional organization and perception of the external world” (Mambrol, 2020). More specifically, trauma is a subjective and fragmentary experience that disrupts one’s ability to process the situation and themselves as a part, or not a part, of a situation. Trauma is likewise inherently

transhistorical and intergenerational, meaning that it can be transmitted across time.

Trauma's ability to spread to others in the vicinity, the sort of "infectious potential of trauma" is paired with that fact that individuals experiencing trauma rarely possess the ability to process the emotional nature of their experiences (Mambrol, 2020). Archivists are frequently coming into contact with historical objects, people, and places as witnesses to trauma, which may be transferred to the recordkeeper.

Acting as witness leads some archivists to develop what is known as "vicarious trauma," also known as secondary trauma, compassion fatigue, historical trauma, or vicarious traumatization (Cohen & Collins, 2013). Vicarious trauma takes many forms depending on the individual, but it develops as a "cumulative transformative effect" upon the individual working with survivors of traumatic life events (Deville, 2009; Cohen & Collins, 2013). For some, vicarious trauma manifests in symptoms similar to those suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and this phenomenon is still being researched today in the fields of trauma studies, psychology, and health care.

Vicarious trauma typically affects those who witness or experience traumatic events, such as therapists, medical professionals, and social workers. However, engaging with another person in a relationship characterized by the identification with their emotional experience similarly impacts the emotional experiences of archivists (Deville, 2009). As a result, there is increasing awareness that archivists are experiencing the effects of vicarious trauma as they interact with donors; acquire records; arrange, describe, and process historical documents; and work with communities impacted by historic trauma (Sloan et al., 2019).

Some major themes have developed in the literature about what types of experiences lead to vicarious trauma in archive professionals. Some argue that the content of “traumatic collections” may trigger a strong emotional response (Sloan et al., 2019). These traumatic collections may include records documenting human rights abuses, “archives of repression,” and/or controversial materials (Sloan et al., 2019). Another major theme in the literature is that connecting directly with communities experiencing trauma is emotionally difficult; however, the relationship between archivist and community members is widely overlooked as a source of emotional labor in the profession (Sloan et al., 2019).

Vicarious trauma may lead to burnout, which is characterized as a “psychological syndrome in response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job” (Deville, 2009). Some of the characteristics of burnout include, “‘overwhelming exhaustion’ or feeling depleted of one’s emotional and physical resources; feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job; and a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment” (Deville, 2009). Additionally, work overload, lack of support, role conflict and role ambiguity are consistently associated with burnout, especially for those experiencing vicarious trauma in their professional roles (Deville, 2009). Academic libraries are becoming more cognizant of how the job requirements for library professionals can lead to burnout and negative emotional feelings about work. This has led to more discussion in the field about how to regulate negative emotions for more positive outcomes (Brown & Settoducato, 2019).

Notably, emotional labor has become a topic of conversation at various archive conferences and meetings. In 2017, archivists Nicola Laurent and Michaela Hart

discussed their experiences with emotional labor at the Society of Australian Archivists conference. According to Hart and Laurent, archivists are missing key support in the field needed to cope with the traumatic effects of archiving. While identifying the traumatic effects of archiving, they argue that providing archivists with support “should be imbedded within our workflow and practices” (Laurent & Hart, 2018).

In the sociopolitical context, some scholars have argued it is important to recognize that emotional labor disproportionately affects those with less power and privilege in society. Emotional labor can affect anyone, but research demonstrates that those of a minority class, ethnicity, or nationality experience the negative effects of emotional labor more acutely. Similarly, individuals “who are older, disabled, with less education or aren’t cis men” may experience emotional labor because of the imbalance in power that occurs in the workplace (Schomberg, 2018). Recognizing and working to change these inequalities is one aspect of alleviating the burden of emotional labor.

Based on these discussions, how can the archival profession support individuals in processing emotional labor and developing emotional intelligence skills? Some scholars have suggested developing a more defined “community of care and support” to create spaces of authenticity and care within the profession (Brown & Settoducato, 2019; Laurent & Hart, 2018; Schomberg, 2018). Creating a community of care involves exchanging care with others in the profession to lessen some of the burdens of the job. These practices broaden the focus away from how an individual experiences emotional labor to how the community experiences emotional labor and can work together to alleviate systemic issues in the profession (Schomberg, 2018).

Furthermore, some have suggested that archivists adopt a form of trauma-informed archival practice, which places radical empathy at the center of work practices (Laurent & Hart, 2018). Caswell and Cifor (2016) describe radical empathy as “a willingness to be affected, to be shaped by another’s experience, without blurring the lines between self and the other”. In practice, radical empathy calls archivists to “bring our full selves to work, to emphasize, to question our physical spaces (reading rooms), and to understand the importance of context” (Laurent & Hart, 2018).

According to Laurent and Hart (2018), trauma-informed archival practices are deeply attuned to the role of social justice in the archives and the role of archivist in documenting history. These practices require significant reflection about the role of power in the archives and how decision-making processes can uphold inequality and silences in the profession. When the voices of survivors and victims are silenced, Laurent and Hart (2018) conclude it is even more imperative for recordkeepers to document their stories, as traumatic as it may be for communities and archivists alike.

Methodology

Role of the Researcher and Positionality

My role as primary researcher was to oversee the completion of the study. This included recruiting and interviewing participants. In addition, the research process involved analyzing interview responses according to scholarly discussions of emotional labor in the workplace. As an employee of an academic library, I was personally affected by the topic of this study, and professionally I was interested to see how the results of the study could improve archive workers' ability to process emotional labor.

For the study, I contacted coworkers at my current place of employment to discuss their experiences with emotional labor. This positionality affected the selection of participants in the study, as some participants were individuals I personally knew or individuals that were recruited for the study by association with the library. Some participants may not feel comfortable disclosing their emotional experiences in the workplace with a co-worker, so certain measures were established to protect private and sensitive information while removing potential sources of bias.

First, all participants were anonymized in the research study, and all personally identifying indicators (PII), such as occupation title, gender, and social status, were removed from the study. Second, participants had the option to redact or remove themselves from the research study at any point the research process and had access to final transcripts if requested. Because of positionality, there was also some risk of bias in

the study due to my previous knowledge and experience in the subject area and with the participants of the study. I took additional steps to reduce bias in the study by categorizing and quantifying the data. This entailed organizing the data into various codes and generating statistics to represent the data as separate from the participants. The purpose of the data analysis method was to remove personal connections between the participants and myself in the data set. By anonymizing the data using multiple methods, there was less of risk of introducing bias into the analysis based on personal connections to participants.

Sampling

The population studied in this project was archivists, librarians, and student workers employed at an academic library archive. I used a convenience sampling technique for data collection, where all members of the archives department were invited to participate in the study and were contacted to interview if they fit the study criteria. For the study, participants must have fit the following criteria for research purposes:

1. Participants must have been willing to discuss their experiences with emotional labor in the workplace during the interview process.
2. Participants must have worked in the archival profession for over a year to collect data on the potential long-term effects of emotional labor.
3. The student workers participating in the study must have possessed some interest in pursuing a career in archives in the future.

Data Collection

The primary method for data collection in the study was interviewing. After conducting the initial interview search, participants who were interested in interviewing

for the study were emailed consent forms. For the purposes of the study, responding to the email to schedule an interview with the attached consent form was considered verbal agreement to conduct interviews. The archives department staff was individually contacted via email to interview following the initial recruitment email.

From the sample population, any participants who consented to participate and fit the criteria were selected to interview. Several guiding questions were asked during the semi-structured interview process, and responses were recorded in audio format only to protect the privacy of participants. Interviews were conducted in-person or via zoom, and physical responses to questions were logged by the researcher. The interview was recorded and transcribed for data analysis. The process for searching, identifying, and conducting interviews with participants took approximately two months.

Because of the emotional nature of the research topic, conducting semi-structured interviews revealed more about the participant's experiences than other quantitative and qualitative methods. Drawing from ethnographic research methodology, interviews were excellent sources of data collection because they "allow the people involved to speak for themselves in their own way" in a "shared task of collaboration" (Hoffman, 2007, pg. 319). According to ethnographers, collaboration between the interviewer and interviewee requires analyzing emotions and emotional labor as a part of the data, which was uniquely suited for this research topic (Hoffman, 2007, pg. 319). Moreover, conducting interviews in-person or via zoom benefited the research process by allowing the researcher to observe physical cues and emotional responses to interview questions.

Data Analysis

The data analysis technique for this study incorporated a mixed-method, or qualitative and quantitative approach, to analyzing the data. The qualitative analysis included a discussion of the content of participant interviews. The quantitative analysis integrated responses from the participant interviews with data about the frequency participants process emotional labor in various situations and with multiple ERS.

Emergent coding was the primary technique used to analyze the qualitative and quantitative data, which is the interview transcriptions. After transcribing the interviews, the transcripts were reviewed and coded. For coding, the work of Diefendorff et al. (2008) and Grandey and Brauburger (2000) on emotional regulation and affect was used as a coding guide. Following Grandey and Brauburger's (2002) work integrating Affective Events Theory (AFT) with emotional labor, the coding technique explored whether specific work situations and emotions aligned with particular emotion regulation strategies (ERS). For further analysis, the following data points in the interview transcripts were coded in the following order:

1. All words, phrases, or expressions describing emotional responses;
2. An affective event, or the event triggering the emotional responses;
3. The emotional regulation strategy (ERS) employed by the participant to process the affective event and resulting emotional response.

According to the process-oriented ERS model, the emotional responses and related affective event were clustered together based on similarities and differences. Each emotional response provided in the interview was assigned a "situation code" to group like emotional responses together (Matteson, Chittock, & Mease, 2015). The emotional

response strategies were categorized according to Gross's 5 categories of emotional regulation: situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation (Gross, 2001).

For each affective event, there was an emotional response code, situation code, and ERS code to correspond with raw data from the interviews. Furthermore, the unique emotional descriptors participants use in the interview process were collected and coded according to whether the emotion was positive, negative, or neutral. Coding the emotional responses, according to the participant's expression of the emotion, allowed for a more nuanced analysis of the range of emotions individuals experience in archival settings.

After coding the data, clusters of codes were analyzed to identify potential themes, ideas, and emotional response trends in the data. These clusters of data were quantified for further analysis using the qualitative data and secondary research. For example, the quantitative data may answer the question, "How many times did participants express frustration with their overwhelming workload?" While the qualitative data may respond to the question, "How does the participant describe their emotional responses for negative patron interactions?" A benefit of this mixed method approach is that it allowed the researcher to locate similarities and differences in the way that participants express and experience emotional labor in the workplace.

Risks and Ethical Considerations

There are some privacy concerns for the participants; however, these risks were mediated by removing any information about the participants' employment and identity from the data. As a result, all personally identifying information (PII) was removed from the interview transcripts. Furthermore, personal information about the participants was stored separately from the interview audio recordings, including contact information and names.

After the data collection process was complete, participants had the option to review transcriptions and provide additional redactions if necessary. The principal investigator is aware the emotional experience is a highly subjective and sensitive matter. To reduce potential bias in the study, member-checking allows participants to clarify what their emotional responses were and correct any potential errors in the data. Furthermore, any results gathered from the data will be shared and reviewed by outside sources to ensure ethical accountability.

Research Impact and Limitations

Research Impact

If working through a global pandemic has taught library professionals any important lessons, it is that working in libraries is form of emotional labor. The COVID-19 pandemic created situations for library workers that were not only challenging, emotional, and draining, but also fulfilling, exciting, and engaging. Although the profession has, perhaps subconsciously, become more attuned to emotional labor because of recent events, there is little evidence of how emotional labor is experienced by individuals then regulated and managed in archival settings. There is also some hesitation in the field to open up Pandora's box, so to speak, and release all the emotional curses of our own profession. Some even question if library workers are allowed to experience emotional labor, or if that is beyond what is required of the role to accomplish tasks (Sloan et al., 2019).

One salient question continues to pervade the development of emotional labor theory in archives: "Who is entitled to experience emotional labor?" Some archivists have reported feeling guilt or shame for feeling distressed while documenting traumatic events, since they feel it is not their place to be distressed by others' stories (Sloan et al., 2019). However, archivists and their experiences with emotional labor is much more nuanced, since archivists are working inside and outside of trauma, and as active and passive participants of history. In addition, there is a strong sense of ethical responsibility

in the field – that we are bound by obligation and circumstance to record even the most horrific injustices in the world *for the greater good*. The result of our professional responsibility as recordkeepers is that we may experience emotional labor, vicarious trauma, and historic traumatization. Therefore, it would do the profession a great disservice to continue to ignore or suppress how emotional labor is a part of the job requirements for those who document and preserve history for future generations.

While this research topic may be sensitive for some information professionals to discuss, it is important to shed light on how archive workers process emotions in the workplace, especially if one is experiencing trauma or grief due to the archival setting. The primary goal of the study was to discuss emotional labor and emotion regulation strategies in the archives, so we could all work together to develop strategies for overcoming the negative effects of emotional labor.

The secondary goal of this research study was to introduce some theories and concepts of emotional labor to professionals in the field, so that archivists could reflect upon how emotion intersects with work practices in the archives. Are archivists creating a positive emotional environment for others to work in? How do professionals in the field process emotions in healthy and productive ways? What changes, if any, can archivists do to support other library workers as they deal with the negative effects of emotional labor?

Future studies may continue to delve into the sociological theories of emotional labor and emotion regulation, so that these strategies may be applied to archival work. For further contextualization, archive professionals in a variety of organizational settings, roles, and cultural backgrounds can be interviewed to discuss their work in connection

with emotional labor. Trauma studies is another great avenue for research, as the field is rapidly growing to incorporate interdisciplinary, diverse perspectives on the “psychological, rhetorical, and cultural significance” of trauma (Mambrol, 2018).

Limitations

There were a few limitations regarding the methods of the study. Convenience sampling for conducting interviews meant the sample population was quite small. Convenience sampling may have introduced some bias into the study, as the sample population was chosen by the researcher and not randomized. As a result of this sampling technique, the results and conclusions could only be applied to the sample population, and the results of the study would not be generalizable for future research.

Time and access to participants were major constraints with the study. Sampling from multiple populations would broaden the scope of the project, however, time constraints meant that convenience sampling was more feasible given the project timeframe. Due to the tight schedule of the project, 8 semi-structured interviews were conducted with library staff working at a university library.

Results

1.1 Affective Events

A total of 90 affective events were coded in the interviews. As shown in Figure 1.6 and 1.7, these affective events were further categorized into 14 situation codes and 6 ERS codes. For the situation codes, “None Provided” was added as a category due to the absence of data from the participant interviews. Similarly, “Unregulated” was added as an ERS code if the participant was unable to articulate how they regulated their emotions during an affective event.

1.2 Situation Codes

The affective events were categorized into 14 situation codes: Challenging Work Task, Overwhelming Workload, Negative Patron Interaction, Administrative/Organizational Situation, Negative Interpersonal Interaction with Coworker, Supervisory Responsibilities, Job Precarity, Goal Obstruction, Expectation of Emotional Neutrality, Unclear/Role Status in the Organization, Unmet Managerial Expectations, Performance Problem in Coworker, Performance Anxiety, and None Provided. As shown in Figure 1.6, the situation codes with the highest frequency of occurrence were Challenging Work Task (27.78%), Overwhelming Workload (18.89%), and Negative Patron Interaction (10%), representing 56.67% of all situation codes. The remaining situation codes totaled less than 10% each.

1.3 ERS Codes

The affective effects were further categorized into 6 ERS codes: Cognitive Change, Response Modulation, Attentional Deployment, Situation Modification, Situation Selection, and Unregulated. As shown in Figure 1.7, the ERS codes with the highest frequency of occurrence were Cognitive Change (35.56%), Response Modulation (17.78%), Attentional Deployment (15.56%), and Situation Modification (13.33%), representing 82.35% of all situation codes. The remaining ERS codes totaled less than 10% each.

1.4 Situation Codes and ERS codes

As displayed in Figure 1.8.1 and 1.8.2, there was a correlation between the occurrence of situation codes with corresponding ERS codes. Cognitive change, with 32 total entries, represented the greatest diversity of situation codes. Cognitive change occurred as a primary ERS in 6 situation codes: Challenging Work Task, Overwhelming Workload, Job Precarity, Negative Patron Interaction, Performance Problem in Coworker, and Unclear Role/Status in Organization. Response modulation, with 16 total entries, occurred the second most frequently in 4 situations: Administrative/Organizational Situation, Expectation of Emotional Neutrality, Negative Interpersonal Interaction with Coworker, and Performance Anxiety. Consequently, response modulation occurred at the highest rate during negative interpersonal interactions in various situations, and cognitive change occurred at highest rate during negative emotional responses due to the nature of archival work and work tasks.

1.5 ERS Codes and Emotional Experiences

While utilizing various ERS, participants reported feeling a wide range of emotions that were either positive, negative, or neutral. Emotional descriptors included in the interviews totaled 112 unique descriptions, with negative emotions occurring the most frequently with 90 unique descriptors used by participants to describe negative emotional experiences. Neutral emotions totaled 14 descriptors, and positive emotions totaled 8 descriptors. The ERS codes with the most variance and frequency of negative emotional responses were Cognitive Change, Response Modulation, and Attentional Deployment, with an average of 21 unique descriptors applied to these three ERS (Figure 1.9).

Figure 1.6 Definitions and Frequencies of Situation Codes

| Situation Code | Definitions | Percentage | Frequency |
|--|--|------------|-----------|
| Challenging Work Task | A work task that is difficult to complete due to its intellectual demand(s). | 27.78% | 25 |
| Overwhelming Workload | The archive worker feels physically or mentally unable to keep up with work demands due to a fast pace, busy environment, competing demands, low staff, etc. | 18.89% | 17 |
| Negative Patron interaction | A conversation or interaction involving an archive worker and patron that results in the librarian feeling negative emotions. | 10.00% | 9 |
| Administrative/Organizational Situation | A situation in which the archive worker feels negative emotion due to organizational/administration expectations. | 7.78% | 7 |
| None provided | The archive worker is experiencing negative feelings but does not know the source of negative feelings. | 6.67% | 6 |
| Negative interpersonal interaction with coworker | Personal or work-related conversation or exchange involving a coworker that results in the librarian feeling negative emotions. | 5.56% | 5 |
| Supervisory Responsibilities | Supervisor feels stressed or anxious while directing the work of other employees. | 4.44% | 4 |
| Job Precarity | Archive worker feels stressed or anxious due to the non-standard or temporary nature of their job. | 4.44% | 4 |
| Expectation of Emotional Neutrality | The archive worker feels pressured by perceived expectation of emotional neutrality from coworkers, researchers, donors, etc. | 4.44% | 4 |
| Goal Obstruction | An event, situation, etc., that prevents the librarian from completing her/his work-related task or goal. | 3.33% | 3 |
| Unclear Role/Status in Organization | Archive worker is unsure of their role and/or status in the library organization. | 3.33% | 3 |
| Unmet Managerial Expectations | Manager performs task, holds conversation, etc., that is not positively anticipated and welcomed by the librarian. | 1.11% | 1 |
| Performance Problem in Coworker | Coworker not completing work-related task(s) in an effective or positive manner, as viewed from the perspective of the archive worker. | 1.11% | 1 |
| Performance Anxiety | Archive worker internally feels stressed, anxious, or fearful about performing a work-related task. | 1.11% | 1 |
| Total | | | 90 |

Figure 1.7 Descriptive Statistics for Emotion Regulation Strategies

| ERS Code | Definition | Percentage | Frequency |
|------------------------|---|------------|-----------|
| Cognitive Change | Reappraising a situation to invoke a more positive, desired emotional response. | 35.56% | 32 |
| Response Modulation | Faking unfelt emotions and concealing felt emotions. | 17.78% | 16 |
| Attentional Deployment | Directing attention away from an emotional event through distraction, concentration, or positive refocus. | 15.56% | 14 |
| Situation Modification | Altering the situation so as to change their emotional response to the affective event. | 13.33% | 12 |
| Unregulated | Individual is unable to regulate emotions and/or describe how emotions are regulated during an affective event. | 10.00% | 9 |
| Situation Selection | Confronting or avoiding certain situations to regulate emotions. | 7.78% | 7 |
| Total | | | 90 |

| Figure 1.8.1 Situation Codes with Corresponding ERS Codes | Count of ERS |
|--|---------------------|
| Challenging Work Task | 25 |
| Attentional Deployment | 8 |
| Cognitive Change | 13 |
| Situation Modification | 2 |
| Situation Selection | 2 |
| Overwhelming Workload | 17 |
| Attentional Deployment | 3 |
| Cognitive Change | 8 |
| Response Modulation | 2 |
| Situation Modification | 4 |
| Negative Patron Interaction | 9 |
| Cognitive Change | 4 |
| Response Modulation | 4 |
| Situation Modification | 1 |
| Administrative/Organizational situation | 7 |
| Cognitive Change | 1 |
| Response Modulation | 3 |
| Situation Selection | 3 |
| Not Provided | 6 |
| Cognitive Change | 1 |
| Situation Selection | 1 |
| Unregulated | 4 |
| Negative Interpersonal Interaction with Coworker | 5 |
| Response Modulation | 3 |
| Situation Selection | 1 |
| Unregulated | 1 |
| Supervisory Responsibilities | 4 |
| Attentional Deployment | 1 |
| Situation Modification | 3 |
| Job Precarity | 4 |
| Cognitive Change | 2 |
| Situation Modification | 1 |
| Unregulated | 1 |

| Figure 1.8.2 Situation Codes with Corresponding ERS Codes | Count of ERS |
|--|---------------------|
| Expectation of Emotional Neutrality | 4 |
| Response Modulation | 3 |
| Unregulated | 1 |
| Unclear Role/Status in Organization | 3 |
| Cognitive Change | 1 |
| Situation Modification | 1 |
| Unregulated | 1 |
| Goal Obstruction | 3 |
| Attentional Deployment | 2 |
| Cognitive Change | 1 |
| Performance Anxiety | 1 |
| Response Modulation | 1 |
| Unmet Managerial Expectations | 1 |
| Unregulated | 1 |
| Performance Problem in Coworker | 1 |
| Cognitive Change | 1 |
| Total | 90 |

| Emotional Experiences Frequency | | | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|----------|------------|
| Figure 1.9 ERS Code and Emotional Responses | Negative | Neutral | Positive | Total |
| Attentional Deployment | | | | |
| Anxious, Stressed, Depressed, Tense, Dislike, Hate, Upsetting, Stressful, Difficult Disturbed, Emotionally Draining, Terrible, Not Great, Sadness, Distasteful, Unfulfilled, Isolating | 17 | | | 18 |
| Weird | | 1 | | |
| Cognitive Change | | | | |
| Stressed, Anxiety, Affected, Badly, “Hits Me,” Sad, Awkward, Concerned, Worry, Difficult, Unfulfilled, Distressing, Terrible, Emotionally Draining, Discouraged, Fatigued, Frustrated, Hard, Impatient, Overwhelmed, Uncomfortable, Upset, Depressed, Soul-Crushing, Unsure, Nervous, Crappy, Horrible | 28 | | | 36 |
| Caring, Happy, Fulfilled | | | 3 | |
| Deeply Connected, Weird, Complicated, Unsurprised, Bored | | 5 | | |
| Unregulated | | | | |
| Difficult, Stressed, Nervous, Worry | 4 | | | 8 |
| Nice, Good, Enjoyment | | | 3 | |
| Surprise | | 1 | | |
| Response Modulation | | | | |
| Bothersome, Troubled, Cynical, Difficult, Distressed, Anxiety, Unsettling, Hard, Frustrated, Irritated, Overwhelmed, Sad, Depressed, Resentment, Terrible, Bothersome, Annoyed, Troubled, Uncomfortable, Afraid | 20 | | | 25 |
| Weird, Disconnected, Divided, Blind-Sided, Emotionless | | 5 | | |
| Situation Modification | | | | |
| Anticipatory Stress, Worry, Anxiety, Difficult, Disturbed, Trepidation, Bad, Difficult, Upset, Guilty | 10 | | | 11 |
| Monotony | | 1 | | |
| Situation Selection | | | | |
| Aggravated, Frustrated, Distasteful, Uncomfortable, Troubled, Frustrated, Aggravated, Resentment, Upset, Terrible, Bothersome | 11 | | | 14 |
| Awkward | | 1 | | |
| Happy, Appreciative | | | 2 | |
| Total | 90 | 14 | 8 | 112 |

Discussion

2.1 Challenging Work Tasks

For archive workers, Challenging Work Tasks created the highest frequency and variance of negative emotional responses, which is significant for several reasons. The majority of these challenging work situations were related to archival processing, which includes describing, arranging, and processing collections. In 14 affective events, participants described how processing historical collections generated negative feelings. In their own words, participants labeled working with historical materials as, “upsetting, disturbing, terrible, sad, draining, depressing, and uncomfortable” (see Figure 1.4). The contents of collections described in participant interviews dealt with a wide range of topics including death, racism, abuse, suicide, and historic trauma.

The participants processing graphic and disturbing materials tended to use cognitive change as the primary ERS, with situation selection and attentional deployment used intermittently as secondary ERS. While utilizing cognitive change as a primary ERS, participants used two different situation reappraisal strategies to regulate their emotional responses. These reappraisal techniques are known as “distancing” and “reinterpretation.”

Distancing refers to “simulating a new perspective to alter the psychological distance and emotional impact of a stimulus,” and includes “spatial, distance, temporal, distance, or objectivity” (Powers & LaBar, 2019). With distancing, some participants in

the study felt required to “distance themselves from the content and not think about what it means” (Interview 08, Subject 08). Others tended to “focus on processing as an act and ignore the content,” as a requirement of their processing job (Interview 04; Subject 04).

As another form of reappraisal, reinterpretation involves “deriving an alternative outcome or meaning for some stimulus to alter its emotional effect” (Powers & LaBar, 2019). In the study, participants felt required to complete challenging work tasks by “reminding themselves it’s for the greater good,” and “reminding themselves of the benefits of processing collections for public use” as a form of reinterpretation (Interview 01, Subject 01; Interview 03, Subject 03). This form of reinterpretation allowed participants to alter their perception of the situation, as well as alter their emotional response to the situation from a negative response to a positive one.

Research suggests that reappraisal techniques are more adaptive and beneficial compared to other ERS in terms of improved cognitive, affective, social, and physiological results (Cutuli, 2014). Reappraisal of a situation is beneficial because it involves reframing the situation to change an inner emotion to a more positive one, which is a ERS strategy known as “deep acting” (Matteson & Miller, 2012). Deep acting aligns an individual’s emotions with their outward expressions, which results in less negative emotional responses as an outcome (Matteson & Miller, 2013). Therefore, study participants’ use of cognitive change to regulate negative emotions during challenging work tasks is an excellent practice of emotional regulation techniques.

However, it is clear based on the emotional responses generated while processing graphic collections that archival processing has the potential to transfer trauma from collections to the archive worker. The high rate of negative emotional responses,

combined with the disturbing nature of the collections' content, suggests that archive workers are dealing with significant aspects of historic trauma in the workplace. As other professionals have observed, "Many archives are full of emotion because you see a person's life very intimately" (Leary, 2018). Alternatively, the archive worker is working intimately with collections that are upsetting, disturbing, distressing, and uncomfortable, so the trauma transfers from collection to archive worker.

Study participants provided many suggestions for working with traumatic collections in the archives. Subject 05, a long-term archival processor, recommends teamwork processing as a beneficial way to process the traumatic nature of archival collections (Interview 05, Subject 05). With teamwork processing, groups of processors have the opportunity to work together on collections and share any upsetting information they discover in order to process negative emotional responses. This form of "social sharing" is highly recommended by sociologists and psychologists as a method for processing traumatic and stressful events and will be discussed in later sections (McCance, 2010).

Other recommendations including taking breaks from processing, working on other projects, listening to music, conducting minimal processing of the collection, or stop processing the collection altogether if it becomes too distressing (Interview 01, Subject 01; Interview 02, Subject 02; Interview 03, Subject 03; Interview 04, Subject 04; Interview 08, Subject 08). With these suggestions, participants proposed either attentional deployment or situation selection as a way to regulate emotional labor while processing traumatic collections. Attentional deployment includes directing focus away the source of emotional distress, like working on other projects or listening to a music. Situation

selection involves avoiding or confronting situations to reduce negative feelings, which for participants meant they could stop processing a collection completely if it was too traumatic.

These recommendations are great practices for ensuring processors have adequate support. Most participants understood they could stop processing a collection if it was too overwhelming or distressing. In turn, participants reiterated that student workers should communicate with staff members if issues arise while processing traumatic collections. However, more should be done to imbed “within our workflow and practices” support for archival processors (Laurent & Hart, 2018). Subject 04 expressed desire for more formalized standards and practices for processing traumatic collections (Subject 04, Interview 04). This would allow for more productive processing, since archive workers understand the proper steps to take if a collection or work situation is too distressing.

Subject 01 expanded this idea further by saying more could be done within the profession to provide resources for those suffering from trauma, especially if it is due to the nature of archival work (Interview 01, Subject 01). These resources range from providing archive workers with safe spaces for open communication to providing archive workers with outside resources for support. Some of these additional resources may include counseling, emotional intelligence training, and trauma-informed practice workshops.

2.2 Overwhelming Workload

In an organizational culture where overworking is the standard (Fyn et al., 2019), it not surprising that Overwhelming Workload was the second highest situation code experienced by participants in the study. Participants attributed overwhelming workload

with affective events such as “too many competing time constraints, low staffing issues, too many things going on during the workday, managing broad job responsibilities, and solving problems while dealing with regular work tasks” (Interview 01, Subject 01; Interview 02, Subject 02; Interview 03; Subject 03; Interview 07; Subject 07). These situations generated “stress” in the participants as well as “anxiety, cynicism, resentment, and depression.”

As with challenging work tasks, participants primarily used cognitive change as the primary ERS. Participants practiced various techniques with cognitive change, including “trying to understand what is making me stressed to change it,” and “remind myself that stress about the workload is not as stressful as may seem” (Interview 02, Subject 02; Interview 05, Subject 05). Situation modification was another main ERS utilized by participants in the study who felt overwhelmed by their work responsibilities. In these situations, participants practiced situation modification strategies by altering the situation in order to achieve a more positive outcome. Situation modification included finding better ways to communicate with coworkers, learning new skills to be better equipped for job responsibilities, and delegating work tasks to manage larger projects.

A few participants believed that an overwhelming workload was related to the structure of library work. Some participants claimed it is challenging to manage emotions in the workplace while dealing with an overwhelming workload. Other participants viewed an overwhelming workload as typical of the job and its requirements. Overall, few participants provided insight on how to regulate stressful periods of work while managing a wide range of responsibilities, tasks, and projects.

2.3 Organizational/Administrative Situations

Findings suggest that organizational and institutional culture has a significant influence on an individual's experience of emotional labor (Schomberg, 2018). Do archive workers feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and feelings in the workplace? Are there resources readily available for one to cope with the negative effects of emotional labor? Do archive workers feel supported by their superiors, peers, and colleagues in the field? These are questions of increasing relevancy as archivists deal with emotional labor as a requirement of their job roles (Sloan et al., 2019).

Participants described their experiences with Administrative/Organization situations in a variety of ways. Some felt internal expectations from upper-level management were misaligned with what the individual could accomplish. In one affective event, Subject 02 explained that administrative expectations were “stressful” to process. In response, the participant used cognitive change to alter their inner emotions to reflect their outward expression of emotions (Interview 02, Subject 02).

During this affective event, Subject 02 became excited about new ideas the administration was implementing and focused on how the changes could have positive impact on library services (Interview 02, Subject 02). Although cognitive change generated more positive feelings in the individual, Subject 02 still felt stressed by administrative expectations after processing the situation. This lingering sense of distress suggests that cognitive change is not completely effective as a primary ERS in the workplace.

As demonstrated in the remaining 6 affective events for this situation code, participants expressed similar frustrations about how internal expectations from the

organization were misaligned with how they felt they should act or feel. The main ERS used for Organizational/Administrative situations were response modulation and situation selection. Participants either concealed how they felt to better serve administrative expectations, or they avoided the situation altogether to regulate their emotion responses. Both of these ERS are proven to produce a higher number of negative responses in the individual, so issues related to Administrative/Organization situations require further discussion to regulate emotional labor in response to higher-level demands.

For Administrative/Organization situations, the data provided evidence for how organizational and institutional culture led to emotional labor for archive workers. A major theme from participant interviews is that organizational culture, specifically of academic libraries, emphasizes efficiency, innovation, and productivity over emotional labor. Some participants described being fearful of appearing as incapable or incompetent in the workplace by voicing their concerns about the job's demands (Interview 02, Subject 02). Ultimately, the institutional structures in academic libraries applaud toxic individualism and efficiency, which is distressing to library workers. In discussing toxic individualism and efficiency in library work, Schomberg (2018) continues:

We talk about library work as if productivity, efficiency, and countable things are the most important methods of evaluation. We tell people to make good things happen and prevent bad things from happening through sheer force of will. This creates an environment of toxic individualism, to the point where these modes of thinking cause harm to others and ourselves (p. 18).

Toxic individualism is a structural and organizational problem in library work that leaves some archive workers stressed because of the job demands, while unable to regulate emotional labor in response to the job's requirements. Issues such as burnout, job precarity, and negative interpersonal interactions exacerbate these issues leading to

negative emotional responses and decreased job satisfaction (Schomberg, 2018).

Moreover, the organizational structure of academic librarianship contributed to other issues discussed in participant interviews, including Unclear Role/Status in the Organization, Performance Anxiety, and Goal Obstruction.

2.4 Negative Interpersonal Interactions

Archive workers report feeling negative emotions due to negative interpersonal interactions in the workplace, which encompasses four situation codes. These situation codes include Negative Interpersonal Interaction with Coworker, Negative Patron Interaction, Performance Problem in Coworker, and Unmet Managerial Expectations and 17.77% of all affective events as shown in Figure 1.8.1 and 1.8.2. For negative interpersonal interactions, participants expressed feeling, “frustrated, terrible, anxious, stressed, distressed, and horrible.” These situations ranged from negative interactions with researchers who requested materials in a certain timeframe to negative interactions with a coworker that resulted in emotional distress.

For negative interpersonal interactions, the leading ERS strategy used was response modulation. In these situations, participants felt forced to hide, downplay, or conceal how they felt in a situation because of the context of the conflict. The process of hiding or concealing felt emotions led participants to experience emotional dissonance during negative interpersonal interactions. According to scholars, emotional dissonance occurs frequently during interpersonal interactions and is a “a consequence of having to display specific emotions that contrast with those genuinely felt by an individual” (Mesner-Magnus et. al, 2012). Emotional dissonance has been described as person–role conflict, because the individual does not identify with the role requirements and must

alter their response to satisfy role expectations with the other person (Mesner-Magnus et. al, 2012). Participant 06 described their experiences with emotional dissonance by saying, “Distress comes when there’s a disconnect between what you’re supposed to say and what you believe” (Interview 06, Participant 06).

Emotional dissonance and emotional suppression are directly related to “surface acting” as a form of emotional labor. Surface acting is known as a response-focused strategy, in which the individual “carries out the emotional labor process to display the organizationally desired emotion, even though the displayed emotion conflicts with the individual’s authentic feelings” (Mesner-Magnus et. al, 2012, pp. 9). Because surface acting requires the individual to conceal how they feel to complete a work task, it generated some of the highest negative emotional responses in participants of the study. With response modulation, participants described experiencing 20 varied negative emotions, which is the second highest in the study behind cognitive change (Figure 1.4). There are other ERS methods that can be used in place of response modulation, which will be discussed in later sections.

2.5 Unregulated Emotional Responses

There were a significant number of situations where participants did not utilize adaptive ERS, which means there are definitely areas for improvement in terms of providing archive workers with resources to regulate emotion more effectively. Six affective events were coded as “None Provided” because participants were unable to articulate the source of emotional stress in their work life.

In 9 affective events, participants felt they did not utilize any ERS techniques to properly process their emotional responses. These ERS events were coded as

“Unregulated,” which is concerning since these individuals had not worked through their emotional responses and still felt the negative effects of an unregulated emotional response. There is little training or educational resources available for students and professionals engaged in library work to enrich their emotional intelligence skills, which may explain the occurrence of unregulated affective events. Without adequate support and resources, professionals in the field may struggle with the emotional requirements of the job.

2.6 Job Precarity and Goal Obstruction

Job Precarity and Goal Obstruction ranked relatively low as a major stressor for archive workers with 7 total affective events coded. However, these two situations require further discussion because of the context of the emotional responses for participants. Some participants described the emotional labor of the two situations as “nerve-wracking, difficult, emotionally draining, and stressful.” It is important to note that the majority of these affective events were related to how the COVID-19 pandemic affected library workers’ ability to effectively complete job tasks. Some participants expressed frustration that they felt they could not do their job properly while working from home (Goal Obstruction), and this was especially true during the onset of the global lockdown. A few participants expressed worry about how the global pandemic would affect their job status, as they were anxious about how the economic impact of the pandemic would affect library services.

Job precarity was a concern for many service workers during the pandemic, but job precarity is also a systemic issue for librarianship as a profession (Matilla-Santander et. al, 2021; Lacey, 2019). Many entry-level librarian jobs are contract limited-term

positions that may result in a lack of “decent jobs, security, protection, and rights” for workers (Lacey, 2019). More specifically, job precarity leads to major issues such as financial insecurity, devalued labor, and negative mental health effects (Lacey, 2019). In four affective events, participants explained how job precarity is a form of emotional labor in their work. These affective events included, “worry about losing job during pandemic,” “stressed about temporary employment with no benefits,” and “feeling like you can’t take breaks or stop working because of the temporary nature of their job” (Interview 02, Subject 02; Interview 04; Subject 04).

There were several ERS strategies used to process these affective events, including cognitive change and situation modification. One participant felt their ERS was unregulated, meaning they continuously feel distressed by job precarity while working and did not know how to regulate negative emotions. Ultimately, it is difficult for some archive workers to regulate emotional labor in these situations, especially because job precarity is an ongoing systemic problem in the profession.

2.7 Expectation of Emotional Neutrality

In 4 affective events, participants discussed how internal and external expectations of emotional neutrality were role requirements. Emotional neutrality, or neutral affect, includes “feeling indifferent, nothing in particular, and a lack of preference one way or the other” (Gasper et al., 2019). In these affective events, participants described feeling “sad, depressed, emotionless, frustrated, and irritated” by expectations of emotional neutrality.

These affective events occurred during interactions with community stakeholders and while working with archival collections. Subject 06 explains, “While working with

others who assume I believe and think the same way they do, or support their cause, I feel like it is mission critical to be neutral” (Interview 06, Subject 06). This participant expressed frustration about interacting with stakeholders who have certain expectations about how the archive worker should act, feel, or think in order for them to effectively work together. Subject 05, primarily working in collection management, says:

“We were taught that we’re not supposed to use the collections. For the most part, we’re not using the collections, either just for historical interpretation, or for any kind of advocacy, and so I think that encourages us to not be expressive about it, to not express even our thoughts, and certainly not our feelings, about collections...I was taught that I was supposed to be objective and neutral” (Interview 05, Subject 05).

The result of an underlying expectation of emotional neutrality in the workplace is that participants felt inclined to conceal what they thought or felt about work situations, and they used response modulation as the main ERS. As previously mentioned, these types of affective events produce prolonged negative emotional responses because the individual is undergoing emotional dissonance. That is, the individual does not identify with the role requirements of a situation but must alter their outward response accordingly to portray neutrality (Mesner-Magnus et. al, 2012).

. The distress participants felt in response to these expectations is because it is unclear how one should feel, think, or act when emotional neutrality is the standard in some work situations. To complicate matters further, researchers have argued that “it is not possible to feel neutral because people are always feeling something” (Gasper et al., 2019). Again, emotional dissonance occurs in these situations because the study participants were expected to portray emotional neutrality, which is an impossible affective state to achieve. Until these issues are explored further in the profession, archive

workers may continue to feel tension between what is expected of them and what they can accomplish in the workplace setting.

Archival standards of neutrality may have contributed to the emotional dissonance participants expressed feeling in their work life (Leary, 2018). In a profession that is rejecting notions of objectivity and neutrality in the archives (Jimerson, 2007; Schwartz & Cook, 2002), it is interesting that participants of the study considered emotional neutrality a form of emotional labor. This suggests that the notion of archivist as neutral recordkeeper is deeply entrenched in the structure and function of archives, regardless of how much library science professionals have rejected such notions.

Previously, archival authority was centered around the idea of archivists as neutral purveyors of history (Bliss, 2019). According to Schwartz & Cook (2002), “archives as institutions and records as documents are generally seen by academic and other users, and by society generally, as passive resources to be exploited for various cultural and historical purposes.” The idea of archivists as passive or neutral purveyors of history is commonly rejected among contemporaries in the field today (Jimerson, 2007; Schwartz & Cook, 2002) but it is still present in archival work practices today. As Subject 05 and 06 explained, there are expectations of neutrality from various external and internal sources that create distress for those who are working with historical documents and the public.

In the archive profession, emotional labor has been overshadowed by standards of objectivity and neutrality that have become ingrained in the ethical codes, professional techniques, and specialized knowledge of archival practices. In a study of psychology students training to work as professional therapists, ethnographers observed that

emotional labor in health care “is not easily identified or recognized, mainly because rules of regulation and disciplinary practices are disguised as ethical codes, professional techniques, and specialized knowledge (Yanay & Shahar, 1998). Similarly, professional standards of neutrality and objectivity have led to a significant gap in discussions about the emotional experiences of archive workers. Some archive workers continue to feel traces of outdated archival standards while processing emotional labor, even though the management of emotional labor is not solely the management of neutrality (Yanay & Shahar, 1998).

The profession is currently at a major inflection point, in which archive workers are critically evaluating the role of objectivity and neutrality in the archives. On one hand, there are debates for neutrality and objectivity within the profession and the public sphere. On the other hand, there are archive workers pushing for more recognition of the power and privilege that recordkeepers possess in documenting historical events. The latter includes an emphasis on reshaping the archives as a social justice imperative (Jimerson, 2007; Bliss, 2019).

There are many questions that remain unclear in light of recent discussions on social justice and activism in the archives. If archival authority is not centered around neutrality, as it previously was, how do archivists present themselves to the public moving forward? What is archival authority to begin with? Lastly, is there a place for neutrality in the archives, while also recognizing how neutrality can be a dangerous perspective for archivists to present?

2.8 Emotional Intelligence and ERS

Most participants' ability to utilize cognitive change as a primary ERS was a positive sign, given that research argues cognitive change and reappraisal techniques alleviate some of the burdens of emotional labor. Generally speaking, the participants in the study displayed a high degree of emotional intelligence (EI) in responding to situations of emotional labor in the workplace. According to Mayer and Salovey, EI is:

“The ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth.”

A key aspect of EI is the ability to successfully use adaptive ERS, such as cognitive change, to generate more positive emotions and work outcomes. EI is an ability, or a learned trait, that individuals develop over time and experience. It is important to note that EI is not something people are born with, and it is a useful trait to possess while adopting trauma-informed archival practices (Laurent & Hart, 2018). All participants in the study have worked in academic libraries and archives for several years, so it is possible that they developed emotional intelligence after prolonged exposure to emotional labor in the workplace.

2.9 A Community of Care and Support

The research suggests that a community of care and support was lacking from the ERS utilized by participants to regulate emotions. One participant shared their work frustrations with coworkers or colleagues in the field as a form of social sharing. They observed social sharing was a beneficial way for them to process work demands with others who are experiencing similar situations (Interview 07, Subject 07). After speaking with colleagues, Subject 07 was able to release some of their emotional stress and

develop methods for resolving work issues. Social sharing, or “the process set into motion by the experience of an event of subjective emotional significance,” occurs when “a person who experienced the event communicates it to someone else, either verbally or in written form” (McCance, 2010).

Social sharing has many social benefits, including its ability to promote health and well-being, provide feelings of relief, and help service workers understand their negative experiences in order to view them more objectively (McCance, 2010). In dealing with emotional labor, social sharing has proven to be an effective ERS, but few participants relied on social sharing for emotional regulation in this study (McCance, 2010).

Social sharing is a key aspect of creating a community of support for archive workers, but the data indicates that social sharing is not a primary form of ERS for most archive workers in the study. Instead, the data suggests that archive workers tend to internalize their emotional experiences and reappraise the situation through cognitive change, which leads to increased positive experiences. Archive workers also heavily rely on response modulation while dealing with interpersonal conflict, which tends to generate a high number of negative feelings since they feel forced to conceal how they feel when interacting with others. Lastly, archive workers practice attentional deployment, situation modification, and situation selection less frequently overall to regulate their emotions during particularly unpleasant or distressing situations in the workplace. Together, the ERS codes demonstrate how archive workers regulate, or fail to regulate, emotional labor as a job requirement of their individual roles.

Conclusion

For any “helping” profession, emotional labor requires extensive training and practice in the form of emotion regulation strategies (Yanay & Shahar, 1998). This study substantiates the claim that archive workers experience emotional labor and have developed ERS to process affective events as a requirement of the job. However, with heavy emotional demands and a lack of formal practices and training, archive professionals are unprepared to fulfill the emotional requirements of the job. All participant in the study were asked, “Were you prepared for emotional labor as a young professional entering into the field?” The answer from all participants was a resounding, “No.”

In 2021, the profession is shaken by a divisive political climate, widespread social justice issues, and a global pandemic. Transformative changes have occurred calling archivists to change, empathize, and emote. Professionals in the field argue that archivists must respond to these transformative social changes by becoming more involved with community-driven work, activism, and social justice movements. Organizations and administrations are directing this forward momentum by prioritizing the preservation and documentation of major world events like the COVID-19 pandemic and Black Lives Matter movement. By engaging in essentially “grief work” (Douglas & Mordell, 2019), archive workers are left without the resources, training, and professional practices to

process emotional labor and develop emotion regulation strategies to continue their work (Bassett, & Duranseau, 2020). Since emotional labor is now recognized as a requirement for the profession, archivists can begin looking to other trauma-informed professions for guidance in processing emotional labor in the workplace setting.

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Appendix A. Interview Guide

1. What sort of emotional labor do you deal with in your work life?
2. Do you feel that you were prepared for emotional labor as a young professional?
3. Have you ever worked on archival collections that were emotionally draining or stressful to process? Describe the experience of working with these collection(s).
4. Do you ever feel as if you should hide or downplay your emotional responses in the workplace?
5. What has worked or not worked for you to be able to cope with emotional labor in the workplace?
6. How do you cope with the emotional labor of working in archives?
7. What changes, if any, would you like to see in the future for supporting archives professionals dealing with emotional labor?

Appendix B. Email Recruitment Script

Subject Line: Research Study on Emotional Labor in the Archives

Hello [Insert name here],

My name is Taylor Wolford, and I am a Master's of Library Science student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I am sending you this email to inquire if you would be able and willing to let me interview you about your experiences working in archives by June of 2021.

This interview will be as a part of a research study on the emotional labor of working in archival settings. For my master's paper, I am researching how archive professionals and student workers experience situations of emotional labor, also known as the "process of managing feelings and expressions to fulfill the emotional requirements of the job." I would like to speak with you about your own experiences with emotional labor in the workplace and any coping mechanisms you developed because of emotional labor.

I estimate the interview will take between thirty to forty-five minutes. The interview could take place via Zoom, another video conferencing program, over the phone, or in person. If these options are not convenient, the interview could also take place via email.

Please let me know if this would be possible, and if you would like more detail about my project, feel free to ask. I appreciate your time and consideration of this request, and I look forward to hearing from you!

Thank you,
Taylor Wolford

Appendix C. Participant Consent Form

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Research Information Sheet
IRB Study #: 21-1474

Principal Investigator: Taylor Wolford

The purpose of this research study is to examine how working in the archives is a form of emotional labor for information professionals. For the purposes of the study, emotional labor is defined as the “process of managing feelings and expressions to fulfill the emotional requirements of the job.” You are being asked to take part in a research study because you have worked in archival settings and may have experienced emotional labor in your position.

Being in a research study is completely voluntary. You can choose not to be in this research study. You can also say yes now and change your mind later. Participation is voluntary and will not affect your relationship to UNC.

If you agree to take part in this research, you will be interviewed by the principal investigator. Your participation in this study will take about 30 to 45 minutes in person or through a video conferencing software. It is expected that around 10 people will take part in this research study.

You can choose not to answer any question you do not wish to answer. You can also choose to stop the interview process at any time. You must be at least 18 years old to participate. If you are younger than 18 years old, please stop now.

The possible risks to you in taking part in this research are:

- Possible discomfort due to the nature of the topic, including feeling uncomfortable or embarrassed while responding to the questions. Possible loss of reputation or financial standing. If at any time, you decide that you would like to redact information from the interview transcripts, then you should contact the principal investigator.

This study requires the audio recording of your interview with the researcher. Neither your name nor any other identifying information will be associated with the final research paper based on the audio recording. Only the research team will be able to listen (view) to the recordings and have access to the audio files.

To protect your identity as a research subject, the researcher(s) will not share your information with anyone, and any personally identifying information will be removed from the research paper. In any publication about this research, your name or other private information will not be used.

After reading this form, do you agree to allow the researcher to audio record you as part of this research? Consent for the audio recording is effective until the following date: June 2022. On or before that date, all audio recordings will be destroyed.

If you have any questions about this research, please contact the Investigator named at the top of this form by calling 937-825-2962 or emailing tawolfor@ncsu.edu. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the UNC Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to IRB_subjects@unc.edu.

