Fake it till you make it:
The emotional labour of project managers

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Oleksandra Lysak and Katherine Zlatar
Summary

The primary aim of our research is to explore the potential emotional labour (EL) as experienced by project managers (PMs). In a projectified society where projects are seen as the key way to deliver competitive advantage, the role of the PM is seen as paramount. PMs are responsible to deliver projects and also constantly interact with, motivate and maintain engagement of stakeholders. This implicitly requires PMs to handle their emotions in the workplace, yet, little academic credence is actually been given to the emotional trade-offs and potential laborious nature of constantly managing emotions that PMs may experience. The concept of EL is not new and has been the centre of many academic works. Yet, the majority of previous works have been conducted on front-line service industries and not the professional groupings such as PMs. Understandably, the forces that shape and influence the emotions and behaviour of front-line service employees are different to those experienced by higher level professional PMs.

Thus, the primary objective of this study is to explore whether PMs experience EL and if so, a secondary objective is to identify the possible dimensions of their emotional regulation process. As no prior research has been done in the PM context, an exploratory study was conducted adopting interpretivist epistemological and constructivist ontological stances. Influenced by authors’ philosophical positions and partially by pragmatic considerations, this research adopts primary inductive approach with deductive elements also present. Unlike the majority of prior EL research, our study employs qualitative research methodology and uses semi-structured interviews to collect data. Template analysis (TA) was deemed appropriate for interpreting qualitative data and particularly suitable for studies following constructivist ontology. Based on the literature reviewed, an integrated EL conceptual framework was used as a foundation from which we conducted our interviews.

From the data gathered during the eight interviews, our research strongly indicates that PMs do indeed experience EL. Dissimilar to front-line service contexts, where the perceived emotional requirement for a situation was imposed; the PM has greater control in setting what emotions are best for the situation at hand. Perceived emotional requirements are determined by the PM as to what was best for the overall project, with the consequential behaviour displayed by the PM being strategic in nature. A primary behavioural strategy utilised, is to feign emotions by surface acting for the good of the project. This indeed demonstrates that PMs do ‘fake it till they make it’. Other behavioural responses included the revaluation of felt emotions by deep acting or show expressions of genuine emotion, depending on what behavioural strategy best elicits the desired response from the audience they are engaging with. Once established that EL is experienced by PMs, the interviews delved deeper into the stories told by PMs as to ascertain the dimensions of this emotional regulation process. Our findings show insight that a unique mix of antecedents, moderators and outcomes of EL during the process of emotional regulation may be present for PMs. Our work concludes with a discussion as to the implications of our research and suggestions for future researchers.

Key words: emotional labour, project management, emotional regulation process, emotional labour conceptual framework
Concept definitions and abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deep acting</td>
<td>DA</td>
<td>A behavioural response to a stirred individual state whereby an individual consciously tries to experience the emotion deemed appropriate for the situation (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 195).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Display rules</td>
<td></td>
<td>Common standards regulating the expression of emotions required by the role, commonly set by the employer (Ashkanasy &amp; Humphrey 2011, p. 217).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional deviance</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>An individual state where perceived emotional requirements of the situation are discarded for the expression of felt emotions, whether it is intentional or unintentional (Rafaeli &amp; Sutton 1987, p.32).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional dissonance</td>
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<td>An individual state where there is a dissonance between the inner emotions felt by an individual and those perceived to be required for the situation (Morris &amp; Feldman 1997).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional harmony</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>An individual state where inner felt emotions corresponds with the perceived emotional requirement of the situation (Rafaeli &amp; Sutton 1987, p. 32).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional intelligence</td>
<td>EQ</td>
<td>The ability to “read, monitor, and understand one’s own and other’s emotions; to differentiate between positive and negative aspects of emotions; and to use one’s knowledge about emotions to inform one’s thoughts and guide one’s behaviours” (Salovey &amp; Mayer 1990, cited in Humphrey 2000, p. 244).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional labour</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>The effort, planning and control needed by an employee to express the emotions desired by an organisation during interactions with customers (Morris &amp; Feldman 1996, p. 987).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional regulation</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>A theory of emotions where “the processes by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions” (Gross 1998, cited in Grandey 2000, p. 98).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genuine behaviour</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>A behavioural response to an individual state whereby genuinely felt emotions of an individual are expressed (Ashforth &amp; Humphrey 1993).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual state</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>The affective state, or feelings, of an individual (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 192)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivated behaviour</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Consequential behavioural response from a stirred individual state to regulate emotions back in line with perceived requirements (REF). Motivated behaviours include surface acting, deep acting and the expression of genuine behaviour (Ashforth &amp; Humphrey 1993).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project manager</td>
<td>PM</td>
<td>“The person assigned by the performing organization to achieve the project objectives” (PMBOK 2008, p. 444).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface acting</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A behavioural response to a stirred individual state whereby an individual simulates the emotions and behaviours not truly felt, but deemed appropriate for the situation (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 194).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Template analysis</td>
<td>TA</td>
<td>Analysis of qualitative data that involves creating and developing a hierarchical template of data codes or categories representing themes revealed in the data collected and the relationships between these (Saunders et al. 2012, p.683).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Table of acronyms and definitions
Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................. 1
   1.1. Background information ................................................................................................. 1
   1.2. Research questions ........................................................................................................... 2
   1.3. Research purpose ............................................................................................................. 2
   1.4. Pragmatic considerations ................................................................................................ 3
   1.5. Research disposition ........................................................................................................ 3

2. ACADEMIC STARTING POINT ................................................................................................. 5
   2.1. Research philosophy ....................................................................................................... 5
       2.1.1. Ontological position ............................................................................................... 5
       2.1.2. Epistemological position ......................................................................................... 6
   2.2. Role of the researcher ..................................................................................................... 6
   2.3. Research approach .......................................................................................................... 7

3. LITERATURE REVIEW ............................................................................................................. 8
   3.1. Project managers ............................................................................................................. 8
       3.1.1. The project management environment .................................................................. 8
       3.1.2. Project managers at the heart of the project ....................................................... 9
       3.1.3. Project managers as occupational professionals ............................................. 10
   3.2. Emotional labour ............................................................................................................ 11
       3.2.1. The acknowledgment of emotions in the workplace ....................................... 11
       3.2.2. What is emotional labour? ................................................................................. 12
       3.2.3. Perspectives on emotional labour ....................................................................... 13
       3.2.4. The focus of previous EL research in service based industries ................. 15
       3.2.5. Constructing an emotional labour framework ................................................. 16
       3.2.6. Conceptual framework ....................................................................................... 17
       3.2.7. Final comment on the nature of emotional labour research .................... 35

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ................................................................................................. 37
   4.1. Methodological choice ................................................................................................... 37
       4.1.1. Research design ..................................................................................................... 37
       4.1.2. Research strategy ................................................................................................... 38
       4.1.3. Sample criteria ....................................................................................................... 38
       4.1.4. Interview procedures ............................................................................................ 40
       4.1.5. Ethical guidelines ................................................................................................. 43
   4.2. Data analysis .................................................................................................................. 44
       4.2.1. Data analysis strategy .......................................................................................... 44
       4.2.2. The quality of the research .................................................................................. 45
5. **EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

5.1. Individual state and motivated behaviours

5.1.1. Emotional dissonance

5.1.2. Emotional harmony

5.1.3. Emotional deviance

5.2. Situational Antecedents

5.2.1. Interaction expectations

5.2.2. Display expectations

5.2.3. Job characteristics

5.2.4. Emotional events and project environment

5.3. Moderators

5.3.1. Individual factors

5.3.2. Organizational factors

5.4. Possible outcomes

6. **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

6.1. Findings

6.2. Limitations

6.3. Significance and contribution

6.4. Future research directions

6.5. Final remarks

References

Appendix 1 Trends in prior EL research

Appendix 2 Initial template

Appendix 3 Final template

Appendix 4 Interview guide design

Appendix 5 Company participation proposal
List of figures and tables

Figure 1 Integrated emotional regulation process framework ........................................19
Figure 2 Relationship between an individual state and a possible coping strategy ........23
Figure 3 Emotional regulation process framework for PM context ..........................48

Table 1 Table of acronyms and definitions ..............................................................vi
Table 2 Interview respondents and companies ......................................................40
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background information

Projects are not new, they have always existed and have been an integral part of human history ever since Egyptian pyramids and Coliseum in Rome were built (Frame, 1999, p.3; Meredith & Mantel, 2003, p.8). However, today, as Maylor et al. (2006, p. 664) stress, a broader trend of reliance on projects emerged, that goes beyond the organisational life and expands to ‘projectification of society’. Building further, Hodgson (2002, p. 804) observes that project management has gained greater popularity due to its positioning as a professional discipline. Indeed, the growing number of project management professional associations, as well as accredited educational programmes and own Bodies of Knowledge, signal that project management has formed in a distinct profession and PM is regarded as an occupational professional (Kwak & Anbari 2009, p. 437; Louw & Rwelamila 2012, p. 70; Packendorff 1995, p. 320). However, projects do not come without their own set of challenges. Project environments have a reputation of being unique and innovative (Prabhakar 2008, p. 3), uncertain and ambiguous (De Meyer et al. 2002, p.60) and high pressure (Turner & Müller 2003, p.1). At the helm to navigate the treacherous waters of project management, is the PM.

With projects regarded as temporary organizations (PMI, PMBOK Guide, 2013, p.29), the role of the PM is akin to being a CEO of a temporary organization (Turner & Müller 2003, p.5). PMs are the ones responsible for delivering the project, often in the turbulent, versatile and complex environments (Maylor et al. 2006, p. 664). On the technical side of skills required for the role, the PM is responsible for successful implementation of plans within iron triangle of scope, time and budget (Henderson et al. 2013, p.764). Yet, as Lloyd-Walker and Walker (2011, p.384) point out, the focus of the PM is not only on the iron triangle and return on investment, it is about project leadership. Concurring with this sentiment, Henderson et al. (2013, p.764) explains that project success partly stems from the ability of the PM to create an environment of positivity, encouragement, motivation and inspiration. In this sense, PMs must perform cathartic and cognitive roles (Turner and Müller 2003, p.5). The latter is traditionally seen as a rational approach to project management, when project managers delegate responsibilities to their project teams but at the same time direct and constrain their team members’ actions. The cathartic role, however, is less rational and is more associated with emotional management (Turner and Müller 2003, p.6).

The role of emotions in project management and for the PM has gained momentum in academia, yet the stream of research seems constrained around how to get the best out of the PM for the good of the project. For example, the research of Clarke (2010) identifies that PMs with strong EQ are best able to get the performance required from their team to achieve the objectives of the project. The work concludes with suggestions on how to improve the emotional intelligence (EQ) of PMs as to get the best performance for future projects (p. 17). The combined works of Müller and Turner (2005; 2007) essentially offer up a similar argument, where the ability of the PM to identify, understand and regulate emotions directly ties with the success of the project. Implicit with these works, is the focus on the organisation. Put differently, the focal point is on how the company can achieve the objectives of the project by equipping their PMs with the softer skills required by the role. We believe that the concentrated focus on what the company can extract from the PM, skips over the effects that the emotional demands of the PM role has on the individual within it. Our research looks...
the somewhat darker side of project management, on the efforts that PMs undertake in order to be constantly emotionally available for their team and their project, a concept known as EL.

In its most generic sense, EL is the “effort, planning, and control needed to express organizationally desired emotion during interpersonal transactions” (Morris & Feldman 1996, p. 987). EL takes place on an individual level and occurs when the employee must express certain emotions, or suppress certain emotions, that they may not actually feel in a workplace situation (Bono & Vey 2005, p. 217). One may better understand the concept by the example of a front-line service employee displaying behaviours of composure and willingness to help in the face of an irritated customer who blames the employee for a business problem (Kruml & Geddes 2000, p. 177). As another example, nurses are expected to express a level of degree of empathy and demonstrate care to patients, regardless of how they feel inside at the time (Diefendorff et al. 2011, p. 171). Whilst EL is performed for the role, it is understood to have deleterious effects on the individual, such as burnout or decreased job satisfaction (Grandey 2000, p. 104) If PMs work in such a chaotic and emergent working environment (Maylor et al. 2006, p. 664), with such a heavy burden of emotional responsibilities on their shoulders (Henderson et al. 2013, p.764), we suspect that PMs may also experience EL in the workplace, yet the precise dimensions of this potential EL remain murky. This leads us to the aims and purpose of our research.

1.2. Research questions

The primary question that our research aims to answer is:

*Do project managers experience emotional labour?*

Further to this primary question, if the answer is affirmative, we then aim to answer the following sub question:

*What are the possible dimensions of the emotional regulation process, as experienced by project managers?*

As EL lies at the heart of the emotional regulation process, only when the primary research question is affirmative, may the sub question be looked to be answered also. Understandably, if it were found that EL was not actually experienced by PMs, trying to delve deeper into identifying the dimensions of a non-existent EL from their process of emotional regulation would be futile. Within this, we acknowledge that we enter into this research underpinned by a basic understanding as to the nature of EL. We also have a basic understanding that an emotional regulation process is likely to consist of antecedents, moderators and outcomes. Our research design and approach is performed considering the consequential nature of our research questions.

1.3. Research purpose

The research purpose that we propose directly stems from the primary and sub research questions our research aims to answer. Our principal purpose is to explore whether PMs experience EL. Further to this, the purpose of this research is to determine the possible dimensions of the emotional regulation process as experienced by PMs.

Within the aims of our research, we affirm that it is not our intention to determine causal relationships within the emotional regulation process, but to explore and describe the possible dimensions of it. Thus, our exploratory research design is extended with descriptive elements.
1.4. Pragmatic considerations

The objective of this study is to perform the initial exploration of EL within PM context. The limited amount of empirical literature on EL within professional groupings and zero prior research within project management context is a reason of the initial use of exploratory research. We acknowledge that an explanatory research design might be more appropriate to examine the conceptual framework we developed, however the aim of this research is not to examine the causal relations but to explore and illustrate the factors associated with EL. Explanatory research may be considered as the next step in studying EL and its outcomes once the presence of EL with PMs is recognised.

Due to our pragmatic considerations (that of limited time and resources) we collected data from a single point of time, rather than attempting longitudinal research, relying on the perceptions of participants rooted in their experience. Data was collected through semi-structured telephone interviews, as face-to-face interviews were impossible due to geographical distance between participants and researchers. We acknowledge that this might have caused certain biases, however we did our best to mitigate them. These biases are explained further the quality of research, in Section 4.2.2.

1.5. Research disposition

Chapter 1. Introduction

The present chapter provides the background of our research topic, introducing the reader to the concepts of EL and project management. The tumultuousness of the project environment and role of the PM is introduced along with arguments as to how academic focus seems to be on the PM role, not the person behind the role. Research questions and objectives are identified alongside our pragmatic concerns.

Chapter 2. Academic starting point

This chapter is aimed to introduce the philosophical standpoints of our research, outlining our ontological and epistemological stances, as well as our role as academic researchers in the research process. The chapter provides arguments our chosen approach, which ties in with our philosophical positions and practical considerations.

Chapter 3. Literature review

This chapter commences with an explanation of we conducted the literature review in line with our research approach. In the body of the chapter, we first look at PMs, the environment they operate and EQ as a prerequisite of the PM role. Next, the concept of EL is introduced together with main perspectives of EL, as well as identifying trends in pervious EL research. The major part of literature review centres around the conceptual EL framework and main dimensions of emotional regulation process, as this forms the foundation upon which we base our understanding in the research process. The reflection on the previous EL research finalises the literature review section.

Chapter 4. Research methodology

This chapter explains the methodological choice of the study and provides arguments for selected research strategy and data collection techniques. The sampling and interview procedures, as well as interview guide design, are explained. It also addresses ethical considerations we hold and potential biases that may occur in the course of research. Next, our approach to analysing the collected data is outlined and the main steps of analysis are defined. The chapter concludes by addressing issues of research quality and actions undertaken to mitigate them.
Chapter 5. Empirical findings and discussion

The main purpose of this chapter is to present our empirical findings about EL experienced by PMs. The answers of interviewees are interpreted and analysed according to the categories identified within the conceptual framework. Further, based on the collected data, the new framework, tailored to PM context, is described.

Chapter 6. Concluding remarks

This chapter commences with the reiteration key findings that directly answer the research questions posed in our research. We then proceed to discuss the significance and contribution of our research and address the limitations of our study. Finally, the future research direction is given to further studies both of EL and EL within PM context.
2. ACADEMIC STARTING POINT

2.1. Research philosophy

The approach taken in our exploration of whether PMs experience EL, and the possible dimensions of this, is directly linked to the ways in which we, as social science researchers, conceptualise the nature of social reality and how this reality should be explored. Implicit and explicit assumptions underpin conceptions of reality, flowing downstream to influence the research strategy employed, and further naturally downstream to the methods chosen and how the data is then understood (Burrell & Morgan 1979, p. 1; Long et al. 2000, p. 190; Saunders et al. 2012, p. 128). Long et al. (2000, p. 190) explains that these founding assumptions pertain to the “ontological, epistemological and methodological nature of society and social science”.

We acknowledging that our own root assumptions shape the philosophical stances in which we subscribe to and this invariably shapes our research method. The aim of this section is to be explicit in our philosophical ontology and epistemology standpoints, extending credence to the assumptions that underpin them. Providing clarity on the nature of beliefs of our research, we look to demonstrate consistency between our research purpose and methods with how we view social reality and overcome the “illusion that it is the research methods themselves, rather than the orientations of the human researcher, that generate particular forms of knowledge” (Morgan & Smircich 1980, p.499).

2.1.1. Ontological position

Ontological perspectives concerns the “assumptions held about the nature of social reality” (Long et al. 2000, p. 190). On one extreme end of the ontological spectrum, objectivism, social phenomena is considered a pre-determined and extant reality, abstracted from those who interact with it (Bryman & Bell 2007, p. 21). An alternate view of social reality is held at the other spectrum end, where those that interact with the phenomena actually construct and reconstruct their own individual view of what constitutes that reality (Saunders et al. 2012, p. 132).

The purpose of our research is to explore whether PMs experience EL, and if so, the dimensions of this labour. Within this, the primary facet of our purpose, is exploring the social reality PMs, as they themselves construct it. We acknowledge that PMs work in an organisation that is likely to have predetermined job descriptions, guidelines for their duties and have a determined place within the organisational hierarchy, which suggests perhaps more of a structured milieu and objectivist ontology (Bryman & Bell 207, p. 131). However, our interest is not in this objectivist side, we lean more towards the subjectivist end, as we are more concerned with how the PMs, as individuals, “attach their own individual meanings to their jobs and the way they think that those jobs should be performed” (Saunders et al. 2012, p. 131). Pivotal to our research, is how PMs perceive their surroundings, how they interpret it and the emotions that they experience within it and as such, we assert a social constructivist ontological tendency. We deem the reality of EL to be constructed, and reconstructed, from the perceptions, interpretations and actions of PMs.

As a further point, a more objectivist approach would perhaps prove too illogical as this view holds the assumption that emotions, and henceforth EL, can be accurately observed and measured externally by the researcher from a distance (Morgan & Smircich 1980, p. 494). Emotions are deeply internal and personal to the individual
and can only be understood by tapping into the perceptions of that individual, not through mere observation. As such, social constructivism seems a more appropriate ontology for our exploration purpose.

2.1.2. Epistemological position

Flowing on from our social constructivism ontology and still in line with our research purpose, we believe to be more to a broad interpretivist epistemology. We found our research on the belief that EL is predominantly a socially constructed concept. As such, we, as social science researchers, may only understand EL by understanding the significance, construction and reconstruction of EL to PMs directly engaged in the social context we wish to study. Put differently, our aim to explore and understand EL in a PM context through interpreting the experiences of PMs lends itself towards an interpretivist epistemology. We reject positivist philosophies, which search more for causal relationships and aim to generalise findings (Gill and Johnson, in Saunders et al. 2012, p. 134).

Furthermore, a major convention of positivistic epistemologies is that “only phenomena and hence knowledge confirmed by the senses can genuinely be warranted as knowledge” (Bryman & Bell 2007, p. 15). The notion of sensations rests upon the assumption of existence in reality and ties in with the objectivist notion that only phenomena that can be observed and measured is real (Morgan & Smircich 1980, p. 494). Emotions logically fall outside this description and unsurprisingly, lay at the very heart of emotional regulation and EL. Interpretivist stances lend themselves more towards the feelings and the meaning behind actions (Bryman & Bell 2007, p. 16; Saunders et al. 2012, p. 137) and with greater suitability to our research purpose, we reaffirm our interpretivist tendency.

2.2. Role of the researcher

With our ontological and epistemological stances identified, our role, as empathetic social science researchers (Saunders et al. 2012, p. 137), is to tap into the context of the PMs, in order to interpret their interpretations and social construction of the world in which they exist. As we are putting our interpretations, of what PMs interpret, into our EL framing, this may be seen as a triple interpretation (cf. Grint 2000, in Bryman & Bell 2007, p. 18).

As researchers, we also acknowledge the role that our values play in influencing us during our research journey (Bryman & Bell 2007, p. 139). We came into this research, with an academic understanding that PMs bear the full brunt of project failures and somewhat of an organisational underdog. We value fairness and equality and see that PMs carrying the full blame may be rather unfair. These values are clearly demonstrated in this research, as we look to explore the somewhat darker, or rather unilluminated, possibility of PMs experiencing EL within the workplace. This could perhaps be seen as somewhat of an academic outlet to reflect on our values in a context that is important to us. We are aware that the values that we hold and the preconception that PMs bear the brunt of project failures may unfairly taint our interpretations, judgments and conclusions we draw. This is rather counter-intuitive to our values of fairness and equality, so we remain consciously aware of this to ensure our values and preconceived notions do not encroach too deeply and heavily bias the research process.
2.3. Research approach

The approach taken in this research is guided by the relationship between theory and our research, and is influenced by our philosophical standpoints (Bryman & Bell 2007), but also pragmatic considerations. Together, our philosophical standpoints and pragmatic considerations lend us to follow a combination of inductive and deductive approaches.

Essentially, we are exploring the realm of PMs and collecting data through interviews with a pool of PMs, with the purpose of understanding whether PMs do experience EL, and following on, the potential dimensions to this labour. This is arguably akin with an inductive approach, where observation and data findings are used for the generation of theory (Bryman & Bell 2007, p. 13). However, we reaffirm that it is not the aim of this research to generate theory or create strong generalisations. Research into the potential EL of PMs has not been done before, and as will be further argued in the literature review, exploration is warranted. Therefore, research at this beginning stage is to be “wholly or predominantly exploratory in scope” (Stebbins 2010, p. 12). Future research added on top of ours may later yield PM E: theory, through a process called concatenation. With this, a number of studies conducted on the phenomena link together and cumulate, yielding inductively generated, or additory grounded theory (Stebbins 2001, p. 12). We reiterate, whilst primarily inductive, we are not attempting to generate theory in our research.

As the literature review will later show, we underpin our understanding of EL from the theoretical conceptualisations posited in previous academic works, which is deductive process. This is purely a practical decision that we have chosen, as the dearth of works into EL experienced by PMs, and the confusing nature of EL itself, proves very risky for us to explore without some sort of conceptual guidance or direction. Harris (2002, p. 561) conducted his research into the EL of barristers in a similar fashion and he argues that the “tentative deduction of central concepts and constructs [acts] as guides for subsequent inductive theory development”. We agree with his argument, but obviously depart from his argument regarding theory development, for the reason we stipulated earlier. Long et al. (2000, p. 195) suggests that determining an approach that suits the research situation and not conforming to “a priori set of rules” demonstrates intuition and common sense. Ergo, we acknowledge deductive elements are also present within our research.

In summary, influenced by our philosophical views and practical considerations, our research approach as a combination of both induction and deduction, with a slight predominance of the former as compared to the latter. We believe that this mix of induction and deduction approaches better suits and enables us to achieve the objectives and purpose of this research. The next section commences our review of the literature relating to PM and EL, which serves as a basis of understanding for which we conduct our empirical data gathering.
3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Whereas literature reviews on descriptive and explanatory research aim to identify gaps in the literature that justify one’s research by thorough reconstruction of a theory from its very conception, exploratory research has a different aim (Stebbins 2001, p. 42). The aim of the literature review in an exploratory work is not to trace theory and its transformation over time, but to exhibit that little to no research has been performed on the topic under consideration (Stebbins 2001, p. 42). It is also to display that the phenomenon has features that cannot be easily structured in the research process and that this openness requires exploration. (Stebbins 2001, p. 6). With this in mind, our aim is to demonstrate that little to no research has been performed on the topic of EL on PMs and as such, this lack of guidance in prior research on this topic warrants an exploratory research approach.

We approached this literature review with flexibility in looking for prior research and openness as to where to find them (Stebbins 2001, p. 6). Stebbins (2001, p. 22) identifies that as a research cannot cover everything at once, all exploratory research is limited to an extent. We feel that this exploratory aim also applies to the literature review and as such, the PM and EL reviews will only identify research that comes closest to the phenomena we wish to explore and demonstrate that past research leaves unexplored critical features of the emotional regulation phenomena in the PM context. Commencing the literature search with a few key articles on PM and EL already held by the researchers, a snowball approach was used to gather further literature. The reference list of these key articles was pilfered for documents that we believed to be pertinent to our research, and in the essence of exploration, those dissimilar to articles already gathered. Articles were accessed using online Business Source Premier and EBSCO Host and databases.

The literature review will first look at PMs, their environment and a basic understanding to the directions of research in the emotions of the PM, so as to demonstrate that research generally stops at the acknowledgment that PMs need a strong EQ for success in their role. The aim of this part of the review is to identify that emotions research in the PM context generally falls short of looking at the somewhat darker side of emotions management, that of EL. This follows logically onto a review of EL literature. As a means to give the reader a sound understanding to the concept, the primary perspectives of EL are first introduced. The fragmentary and cursory nature of EL research is highlighted as to demonstrate how EL cannot be easily structured in the research process, whereby justifying the need for exploration in our research. In line with our pragmatic approach to data collection, an integrated framework of EL subsumed from literature is then introduced as a foundation of understanding, from which we aim to answer the research questions posed in our work.

3.1. Project managers

3.1.1. The project management environment

In a sentiment shared by many, including Haniff and Fernie (2008), Lundin and Soderholm (1998) and Morris and Pinto (2007), Midler (1995) heralds the projectification of society, with projects being hailed as the primary means in which to improve organisational performance (Pant & Baroudi 2008, p. 124). The environment in which projects exist is regarded as vastly different to that of traditional organisational environments. Whereas the latter is regarded as more stable and long-term, the project
environment is argued to have its own particular set features. First, each project is regarded as unique, as preceding and subsequent projects will not be the same (Prabhakar 2008, p. 3). Second, projects are regarded as innovative, as each will use a unique mix of processes and approaches (Prabhakar 2008, p. 3). Unlike stable traditional organisational structures, projects are also subject to uncertainty, with ambiguity considered inevitable for majority of projects, as one cannot be sure whether the project will actually deliver valuable change (De Meyer et al. 2002, p.60). Finally, projects are regarded as temporary endeavours that are always subject to urgency, as they have fixed timeframe to deliver results (Turner & Müller 2003, p.1).

Regardless of the chaotic environment in which they exist, projects are seen as a primary means of improving organisational performance (Pant & Baroudi 2008, p. 124). As projects are undertaken to improve organisational performance, Cooke-Davis (2007, p. 226) is unsurprised that research into the success factors of projects has also gained popularity. In their synthesis of project success, Müller and Turner point to the research conducted by Pinto and Slevin (1988, cited in Müller & Turner 2010, p. 440), whereby the contribution of the PM did not even rate in the top ten most important factors of project success. Cooke-David (2002, cited in Müller & Turner 2007, p. 21) reached a similar conclusion more than a decade later. This is rather surprising, as PMs are seen as the heart of the project, they are the ones with ultimate responsibility ensuring technical aspects of the project are delivered, as well as managing the interpersonal dynamics amongst project stakeholders (Jugdev et al. 2000, p. 183; Müller & Turner 2005, p.57; Vittal 2010, p.15). Müller and Turner (2007, p. 21) attribute this to an outdated view of project success which defined by the appropriate use of tools and techniques, and more recently, risk management and governance processes. In a rather passionate plea against the proliferation of hard-skills being taught to new PM generations, Pant and Baroudi (2008, p. 125) argue that real success stems from the contribution of the project members, of which the role of the PM is pivotal.

3.1.2. Project managers at the heart of the project

As projects are usually defined as a temporary organization (PMI, PMBOK Guide, 2013, p.29), project manager then is a CEO of this temporary organization (Turner & Müller 2003, p.5). There is a strong trend in PM related research as to the responsibilities, characteristics and qualities that PMs require in order to be successful in their role. Srivannanboon (2006, p. 89) finds that PMs are the responsible party for framing and aligning project objectives and strategy to the organisation. On the softer side, Henderson et al. (2013, p.764) claim that in order to be successful in reaching project objectives, PMs must not only create positive and encouraging project environment, but also motivate and inspire their subordinates. Turner and Müller (2003, p.5) argue that PMs also have to perform cathartic and cognitive roles. The latter is traditionally seen as a rational approach to project management, where PMs delegate responsibilities to their project teams but at the same time direct and constrain their team members’ actions (Müller & Turner 2005, p.57). The former cathartic role is regarded as less rational and is seen to be more associated with emotional management, motivation and leadership (Turner & Müller 2003, p.6).

There is also a strong trend in PM related research, primarily lead by the various works of Müller and Turner, as to the importance of PMs possessing a strong EQ. In its most generic sense, EQ is the ability to accurately perceive, generate, understand and regulate emotions (Clarke 2010, p.5). As EQ can affect work quality, it may also be a source of competitive advantage (Othman et al. 2008, p. 31). In an extensive surveying of PMs,
Müller and Turner (2007, p. 30) concluded that the EQ of a PM is a more significant contributor to project success than that of managerial or intellectual competence. Their next work (Müller & Turner 2010) and most recent (Müller et al. 2012) only served to highlight their earlier finding that PMs must have sound EQ for project success. Underpinned by the research of Druskat and Druskat (2006, cited in Clarke 2010, p. 5), Clarke (2010) also demonstrates how a PM with sound EQ can overcome the perceived minefields of projects, namely being temporary, unique, complex and potentially rife with conflict arising from an emergent environment. For example, by using EQ to build interpersonal relationships works to support greater knowledge exchange and better enables the PM to overcome the problems associated with unique and ambiguous projects (p. 6).

So whilst the trend into PM research appears to have drifted more towards the softer and emotional side of management, it appears as though the majority of works looks to how to best build and utilise the skills of the PM to successfully attain the objectives of the project. Put differently, the focus seems to be on how to best get the PM to work on the project, with little spotlight on how the project may actually affect the person behind the PM role.

### 3.1.3. Project managers as occupational professionals

Hodgson (2002, p. 804) argues that project management has become so widely spread mostly due to its positioning as a professional discipline. Harris (2002, p. 554) justifies the importance to distinguish between occupations and professions. Professions are regulated by widely dispersed, formal codes which usually advocate commonly accepted standards (p. 558). Furthermore, professions heavily rely on creativity and ingenuity of each individual (p. 555). Hodgson (2002, p. 804) adds to this argument emphasizing the importance of intellectual knowledge, standards and expertise maintained within professions. Harris (2002, p. 558), however, differentiates two types of professions – status and occupational. Status professions originate from Anglo-Saxon view of professions and include medicine and law as the authentic status professions (p. 558). Professions with a lower status that appeared as a result of middle class expansion are referred as occupational professions and include engineers and accountants (p. 558). Based on this distinction, PMs may be considered as occupational professionals.

The formation of project management as a profession is evidenced by the growing number of professional associations and institutions membership (Hodgson 2002, p. 807). Project management is a world with its own professional associations, journals, accredited training programmes and conferences (Kwak & Anbari 2009, p. 437; Packendorff 1995, p. 320). Project management became an integral part of Further and Higher Education programmes with a mushrooming number of participants each year (Hodgson 2002, p. 807). Furthermore, project management professional associations developed their own Bodies of Knowledge designed to guide the professional field of project management (Louw & Rwelamila 2012, p. 70). Together, this provides a pervasive argument that PMs as occupational professionals. As the literature review will go onto explain, the identification of PMs as professionals is important in our research, as the majority of EL research is conducted on front-line service personnel, the forces on PMs professionals may be different than those on than front-line employees, which serves to justify the explorative approach taken in our research.

### PM summary

In short, the rise of a project culture has seen the formation of project management as a profession, and within it, the PM regarded as an occupational professional. Whilst
delivering a project, with its instable, chaotic and tumultuous environment (Maylor et al. 2006, p. 664), the PM is assumed to be constantly emotionally available for their team and arguably so, other stakeholders (Clarke 2010, p. 17, Müller et al. 2012, p. 79; Müller & Turner 2010, p. 446). Little credence is given to the emotional trade-offs a PM may go through to constantly understand, incite, motivate and react to emotions in the workplace. This paves the way for the introduction to the concept of EL in the next chapter, which has never been looked at in the context of PMs.

Our thesis research aims to shining a light on this darker side of project management by exploring the possible presence of EL on PMs and possible dimensions of their emotional regulation process. The literature review also aims to demonstrate how the majority of previous EL works concentrate on the EL as experienced by front-line service industry personnel, whom generally operate in stable environments. Our context, we believe, is different. PMs have been identified as professional employees who work in ever-changing and emergent environments, arguably so, the EL that PMs may undergo from these two influencers, may be different than those previously studied. These new features warrant exploration in our research, yet as a pragmatic approach, undertake this exploration with a basis of understanding of the previous EL works conducted. The next few chapters of the literature review look at the EL phenomena, showing the fragmentary nature of prior research, and introduce the integrated EL framework from which we underpin our research.

3.2. Emotional labour

3.2.1. The acknowledgment of emotions in the workplace

The concept of emotions sits at the very core of EL workplace, yet the notion of emotions having a stake in organisational life has only recently been acknowledged in academic circles (Ashforth 2000, p.xii). Traditional organisation research posits itself on the assumption that humans are rational beings (Schuler & Sypher 2000, p. 54). Emotions are viewed as an unacceptable rationality obstacle and performance handicap and therefore, cast in the academic background (Antonacopoulou & Gabriel 2001, p. 445; Ashkansay et al. 2000, p.1; Ashforth & Humphrey 1995, p.97). This traditional representation stems from positivistic/realism roots, where emotions are akin to “sand in the machinery” (Eide 2005, p. 11). This depiction suggests a heavy dose of Taylorism, which postulates that supreme organisational productivity is achieved with the evacuation of all discretion from work processes (Grey 2009, p.38). On a rather polemical point, Briner (1999, p.327) argues that this traditional representation proliferated in academia due to research agendas sometimes being set by the economic interests of organisations and conscious researcher avoidance of the emotions topic, which due to its dynamic and transitory state, are a lot harder to study than static aspects of organisational phenomena, such as attitudes and satisfaction.

Briner (1999, p. 326), Eide (2005, p. 15) and Wong and Wang (2009, p. 252) draw consensus that emotions are innate in all social interactions and are elemental in work behaviour, yet concede that there is no one definition of emotion. The disorientation in emotion research is acceptable, according to Ashkansay et al. (2000, p.4), as different theoretical perspectives yield different theoretical emphases and spawn different definitions, suggesting that a unified emotion concept is an elusive ideal. In line with our ontological stance, we take a social constructivist view of emotions, and henceforth EL, whereby, emotions are socially constructed ephemeral roles that are enacted and interpreted by individuals, based upon the explicit and implicit rules depicted under the societal context (Liu & Perrewé 2005, p. 72).
Despite the fragmented and cursory nature of emotions research, the growing realisation that emotions impact organisational behaviour finally sees it coming out of the academic shadows. This ‘emancipation of emotions’, as Mastenbroek (2000, p. 31) hails it, is evidenced by the increase in the number of academics researching the potential for emotions to achieve organisational outcomes (Briner 1999, p. 323; Eide 2005, p. 15). The means to understand, control and manage one’s emotions at work is now seen as a method to enhance individual employee performance, with a flow-on benefit to organisational performance (Mittal & Chhabra 2011, p.55). Yet, Eide (2005, p. 17) warns that attempting to edict the emotions of employees makes it susceptible to organisational exploitation, which begs the question of whether it is indeed far removed from its Taylorism roots. The evolution from emotions being the company’s ‘ugly duckling’ to ‘invisible asset’ (Eide 2005, p. 14) has lead to the generation of emotion-based organisational theories that aim to understand and explain the management of emotions inside the organisation, including “emotional intelligence, affective-events and emotional labour theories” (Härtel et al. 2005, p. 4).

The acknowledgement of emotions in the workplace sets up a foundation of understanding as to the background nature of EL research. Emotions research itself, is regarded as highly fragmented and cursory, a trend that seems to flow downstream onto EL research. This section serves as a basis to argue for exploration is required in research relating to emotions, including EL, as well as acknowledging the positivistic roots of emotions research, a trend which permeates EL research also. The following section looks in more detail at EL.

3.2.2. What is emotional labour?

In traditional economics literature, salaries are exchanged between employer and employee for physical labour, that is, the physical exertion of employees to attain company objectives, and mental labour, the expertise and cognitive abilities of the employee. A third labour type, EL, is now recognised to be required by employees in exchange for monetary reward (Chu & Murmann 2006, p. 1181; Zaph 2002, p. 238). The concept of EL is explained further in this chapter, but it can be loosely explained as “the extent to which an employee is required to present an appropriate emotion in order to perform the job in an efficient and effective manner” (Wong et al. 2005, p. 239). EL differs from emotional work, with the former being conducted as a part of employment remuneration and the latter occurring in a private environment (Bryman & Bell 2011, p. 394). EL takes place on an individual level and occurs when the employee must express certain emotions, or suppress certain emotions, that they may not actually feel in a workplace situation (Bono & Vey 2005, p. 217). The kinds of emotions employees must express, or suppress, in EL are determined primarily by the company, whereas in the private domain of emotional work, required expressions are primarily driven by societal expectations (Briner 1999, p. 330).

As a research offshoot from emotions in organisational behaviour, exploration into EL has grown in popularity of late. Yet, much like their emotion-based organisational theories parent, theories of EL are fragmented. As explained in the previous chapter, fragmentation is due to different theoretical perspectives, with different emphases, yielding different conceptualisations (Ashkansay et al. 2000, p.4). Bono and Vey (2005, p. 216) point to the infancy of the research field, whereby differing focuses and priorities of researchers yield different conceptualisations and constructs. Grandey (2000, p. 95) asserts this disparity emanates from an incomplete operationalisation of the construct. Bolton (2005, p. 53) presents a similar, and rather contentious, argument,
whereby the popularity of emotions in organisations and EL theory has led many researchers to jump onto the EL “bandwagon” and use, and abuse, the term in a multitude of ways. The infancy of the theory has meant that none of EL perspective has been accepted in academia, leaving openness into the definition and features of EL, which justifies our need for exploration. As explained in the beginning of the literature review, it is not the aim of this exploratory work to provide an extensive review on the evolution of the EL concept, but three main perspectives proliferated in academia and shaped the directions of researchers are worth highlighting in order to understand the concept.

3.2.3. Perspectives on emotional labour

Dramaturgical perspective

The concept of EL was introduced by Hochschild (1983) to demonstrate how companies economise employee emotions (Ashkanasy & Humphrey 2011, p.215; Diefendorff & Gosserand 2003, p.945). Hochschild (1983, p.7) defined EL as “the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display”. In her work, Hochschild (1983, cited in Duffy et al., 2010, p.90) used Goffman’s dramaturgical approach. The Dramaturgical perspective of EL presents employees as actors that have to reply to organizational demands, with their work context seen as their stage (Dahling and Perez 2010, p.574). Hence, Hochschild (1983, p.35) argued that employees manage their emotions through surface and deep acting. These acting behaviours will be explained further in detail in Section 3.2.6.

Behavioural perspective

In contrast to Hochschild's dramaturgical approach, Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) theorized EL from a different perspective. They defined EL as ‘an act of displaying the appropriate emotion’ (Ashforth & Humphrey 1993, p. 90). Such interpretation of EL moderates the role of emotional regulation and focuses primarily on observable behaviours rather than emotional states and feelings (Duffy et al., 2010, p. 90). Rubin et al. (2005, p. 190) argues that such approach helps to clearly distinguish between EL as behaviour versus as an emotional state. According to the behavioural perspective, it is recognisable patterns of observable emotional behaviour that matter rather than inner dissonance between emotions felt and displayed (Bono & Vey 2005, p. 217). Ashforth and Humphrey (1993, p. 90) favour their behavioural perspective over Hochschild’s conceptualisation for two main reasons. Firstly, it is actual behaviour of individuals in response to organizational demands that affects the recipient of a particular emotional display. Secondly, an individual can comply with organizational demands without having to alter own emotions (Ashforth & Humphrey 1993, p. 90). This statement is echoed by Duffy et al. (2010, p. 90) who argue that emotional displays can be natural and effortless, thus EL does not necessarily result in burnout and exhaustion. However, Bono and Vey (2005, p. 217) point out the main disadvantage of behavioural approach is that as it favours behaviour over emotional management, it loses the crucial theoretical link between EL and possible consequences.

Interactionist perspective

Morris and Feldman (1996, p. 987) presents a different EL approach; the interactionist perspective. The authors contend EL is ‘the effort, planning, and control needed to express organizationally desired emotion during interpersonal transactions’ (p. 987). Duffy et al. (2010, p. 90) argues that this perspective differs from the previous two by emphasizing specific task descriptions over emotion management or the effectiveness of
emotional displays. Morris and Feldman (1996) make four main contributions to EL theory. First, they argue that EL takes place even when individuals have to display emotions that are genuinely felt (Bono & Vey 2005, p. 218). Thus, Morris and Feldman (1996, p. 988) debate that the majority of work environments are laborious, as even naturally felt emotion still must be translated into required emotional display. Second, they (p. 988) call for significant attention to social factors, as they are the ones that regulate experience and display of emotions. The interactionist approach implies that emotions are at least partially socially constructed (p. 988). Thus, emotional display can be a consequence of external influence, enhancement or repression. Third, their definition of EL (p. 988) asserts that there are certain standards that regulate how exactly emotions are expressed. These standards are called display rules. Essentially, the way that organizations control the appropriateness of emotions and behaviour from their employees is by setting display rules (Diefendorff et al. 2011, p. 170). Display rules can be defined as common standards regulating the expression of emotions in a particular situation (Ashkanasy & Humphrey 2011, p. 217).

Finally, Morris and Feldman (1996, p. 989) argue that EL can be conceptualized in terms of frequency of required emotional display, attentiveness to display rules, variety of displayed emotions and emotional dissonance. The authors assert that frequency of emotional display is the most studied dimension of EL. Yet, the authors also warn that frequency alone fails to take into account levels of planning, control and needed skills to manage emotional displays (p. 989). Attention to display rules is the next dimension of EL. They (p. 989) argue that the more attentiveness job requires the more efforts an individual has to make to display appropriate emotions, thus the more ‘labour’ has to be performed. Attentiveness to display rules includes both duration and intensity of emotional display (p. 989). The authors argued that the longer the duration of emotional display is, the more labour has to be performed. Intensity of emotional display indicates how strongly particular emotion is experienced (p. 990). It is the level of intensity that is responsible for whether emotional display was successful and convincing or not. Variety of displayed emotions also determines the extent of EL performed, whereby, the greater the variety is, the more extensive EL is likely to be (p.991). The final dimension of EL pertains to dissonance. The authors (p.992) assert that emotional dissonance occurs when there is inconsistency between emotions that are felt and expressed. Whereas previous perspectives consider dissonance as a consequence to EL, the authors view it as another dimension of EL alongside frequency, intensity and attentiveness to display rules. Emotional dissonance may exacerbate EL if an individual struggles to display organizationally required emotions (p. 992).

Rubin et al. (2005, p. 190) argues that frequency, duration, intensity and variety are situational factors, whilst dissonance, is an individual state. Morris and Feldman (1996, p. 992) also elaborated on relationships among dimensions of EL. According to the authors, frequency and attentiveness to certain display rules have inverse relationship while frequency and variety of expressed emotions may have no direct relationship. The authors argue that job context and specific features of a given situation will influence the variety of displayed emotions to a greater extent (p. 993). Frequency of emotional display and emotional dissonance are positively related, whereby the more often individuals have to express organizationally required emotions, the more chances genuinely felt emotions will contradict the organisational expectations (p. 993). The authors also claim that the variety of displayed emotions and dissonance have inverse relationship, where the more limited range of emotions one is allowed to display, the higher possibility that naturally felt emotions will conflict with organizationally
required ones (p. 994). Finally, attentiveness to display rules is directly related with both variety of displayed emotions and emotional dissonance. The longer the duration and the higher the intensity of emotional displays are, the wider range of emotions individual has to perform, the greater potential emotional dissonance to be felt (p. 994). Underpinned by the theory of Morris and Feldman (1996), Ashkanasy and Humphrey (2011, p. 218) argued that whilst some of EL dimensions may lead to lower job satisfaction, it is emotional dissonance that is responsible for negative outcomes associated with EL.

Of the three perspectives outlined, we draw favour with the interactionist perspective of EL. This perspective views EL as a socially constructed phenomena, which as mentioned earlier in our work, ties in with our philosophical view of emotions. This perspective calls for the external situational factors that influence the inner emotions of individuals. As we present the environment of the PM as being influenced by chaos and emergence, we feel this interactionist perspective is more congruent with our understanding of the PM environment and our own philosophical considerations.

### 3.2.4. The focus of previous EL research in service based industries

The possible tolls on the individual from regulating emotions in social situations has a lengthy history in academic research, however, Hochschild was the first to bring it into an organisational context (Grandey 2002, p. 96). Hochschild’s conception of EL and her consequential “groundbreaking study” (Brotherridge & Lee 2003, p. 365) was focused on EL as experienced by flight attendants (Bryman & Bell 2011, p. 394). From this initial study, there seems to be a distinct trend in EL research into other front-line service related fields, such as the clergy (Kinman et al. 2011), call-centre workers (Goodwin et al. 2011; Lewig & Dollard 2003), teachers (Gaan 2012; Larson 2008; Mittal & Chhabra 2011; Ogbonna & Harris 2004), health care workers (Martínez-Iñigo et al. 2007; Zammuner & Galli 2005) and tourism and hospitality services (Hwa 2012; Wong & Wang 2009). This trend was picked up by Wharton (1993, p. 208) and a decade on, reiterated by Harris (2002, p. 554), describing it as an empirical research bias towards front-line personnel categories.

Harris (2002) presents a particularly prominent argument to rupture the notion that EL is bounded purely to front-line service workers. In an argument underpinned by Sturdy (1998, cited in Harris 2002, p. 556), Harris suggests that the growing prevalence in EL coincided with the growth of service sectors and as a coincidence, they merged. Harris does not stand alone in this opinion, a similar sentiment is echoed by Lewig and Dollard (2003, p. 366). This suggests that perhaps, research momentum of separate popular phenomena, the rise of the service sector and EL research, gave the illusion of a dependent relationship. Perhaps the creation ‘academic horse flaps’ meant that EL continued to be bound to service industries, at the expense of other areas that also may experience EL, such as background managerial roles.

There is also a possible misunderstanding of what Hochschild initially meant by EL, which has resulted in the theory remaining stagnant in service industries. Hochschild (1983, cited in Wong & Wang 2009, p. 250) contends that organisational positions that are likely to experience EL have the characteristics “(a) ...occurs in face-to-face or voice-to-voice interactions with customers; (b) emotions are displayed to influence other people’s emotions, attitudes, and behaviours; and (c) the display of emotions has to follow certain rules”. This categorisation shaped the studies of Mikolajczak et al. (2009), Westaby (2010) and Zapf et al. (2010), amongst others. Given the context of Hochschild’s argument that management aims to commoditise emotions and her
proceeding study examining flight attendants interactions with passengers, perhaps the original meaning of EL occurring only with “interactions with customers” has been taken too literally. There is the possibility that due to the infancy of the EL concept, academic researchers have taken the EL checklist of Hochschild as gospel and conducted research in industries that fully satisfy the checklist, including an interaction of worker to customer. This perpetuates the cycle and cements the notion that EL is only felt by front-line workers, and not other within other parts of an organisation.

Giving credence to our prior argument, Brook (2009, p. 543) defends Hochschild, suggesting although she failed to accurately convey and emphasise that her theory of what EL constitutes sits in a wider organisational context, this “lack of emphasis is not the same as theoretical closure”. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993, p. 90) further explain that although the service context is important, due to the proximity of the worker with the external customer, the internal customer may also impact the extent of EL felt by an employee. This sentiment is echoed by Brook (2009, p. 538), who interpreted Hochschild’s work differently, and recognised that “as an aspect of labour power, [EL] is utilized in varying degrees by all workers in multiple areas of a service organization, not just during customer interaction”. This extends the pervasiveness of EL beyond front-line roles and to different organisational roles that interact with external and internal customers (Burch et al. 2013, p. 119).

Despite growing recognition that EL may occur from interactions with internal and external customers and amongst different hierarchical levels, there is a dearth of empirical evidence confirming the presence of EL in roles high in the organisational food chain or amongst professional groupings. In his research on the EL of barristers, Harris (2002, p. 558) argues that EL in professional groupings has been largely ignored and suffers from under-research. He (p.561) goes on to argue that professional groupings, barristers in his case, undergo a different sort of EL than that of what he classifies as occupational emotional labourers. Put simply, occupational EL may be composed differently from the EL experienced by professionals. As such, generalisations made in previous EL research in service industries may not seamlessly marry over to our project management context, yet some of the components may prove durable. The openness of the problem and the potential inability for previous front-line service focused EL research to perfectly marry over to the PM context further justify the need for exploration in our research.

Hodgson (2002, p. 804) argues for PMs to be seen as a profession, and henceforth, the role of the PM to be an occupational professional. Under this categorisation, PMs are understood to be bound by a code of project management ethics and possess a greater level of expertise in their role (Helgadóttir 2007, p.744). Skills, both hard and soft, must be mastered in order to be a good PM (Henderson et al. 2013, p.764). Furthermore, this peculiar environment in which projects exist and PMs work, may mean that the composition and process of EL experienced by PMs may be different than that which has been researched in primarily front-line service contexts. The clear lack of guidance in prior research on the environment in which PMs experience EL presents warrants exploration.

3.2.5. Constructing an emotional labour framework

Recalling the earlier work of Hochschild and tracing the academic evolution of the EL concept, Wong and Wang (2009, p. 250) content that ambiguity is still clouding the concept. In a sense, this is understandable, as different authors underpin their research with different perspectives, such as Morris and Feldman’s interpretivist approach, as
utilised by Schaubroeck and Jones (2000, p. 166). Different underpinnings create different frames of reference to view the concept and consequently, yield different conclusions. This diversity is amplified by application of the concept into different contexts. This is not to say that different conclusions drawn by researchers are wrong and consensus in conclusions is the only preferred route, but it identifies theoretical confusion and openness in the problem of researching EL (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 191), whereby justifying the requirement of an exploratory research strategy.

Rubin et al. (2005, p. 210) contends that a simple formulation to explain EL may not be useful, as it is determined by a wide range of complex and interwoven factors. Schaubroeck and Jones (2000, p. 181) express a similar concern regarding the diversity and interconnectivity of EL dimensions. The complexity surrounding the identification and explanation of the structure and myriad of EL components justifies the exploration, as it requires discovery in what, at the outset, appears as chaos (Stebbins 2001, p. 23).

To reiterate, there is a lack of consensus in academia as to the dimensions of EL, yet there seems to be an agreement that whatever dimensions are present in a given context, they are interrelated and complex. For our research, it presents a problem where the features of EL cannot be easily structured in the research process and there is a lack of guidance from more experienced academics as to how to overcome these problems.

As a means to better understand prior EL research, before exploration of its presence in the context of PMs, we look to the most prevalent models of EL and integrate the concepts they contain in order to provide a holistic view of the construct we wish to explore. The categories and components of the integrated framework will be explained, along with arguments for its relevance in the PM context and justifying inclusion in our research. The integrated framework is illustrated in Figure 1.

3.2.6. Conceptual framework

Despite the diversity of previous EL conceptualisations, the majority can be roughly described as a process where situational cues affect the emotional state of the individual, requiring an emotional regulation mechanism and the laborious nature of this regulation may produce consequences for the individual.

Grandey’s (2000) proposed EL framework is one of the most widely adopted in academia and forms a solid basis in our research also. Grandey (2000) draws together previous theoretical viewpoints of Ashforth and Humphrey (1993), Hochschild (1983), and Morris and Feldman (1996) and underpinned by an established model of emotion regulation theory, unifies these viewpoints into a framework. The emotion regulation model that Grandey (2000, p. 98) adopts is essentially an input-output process, whereby “individuals receive stimulation from the situation and respond with emotions”. Application of this causal theory to previous EL research results in a linear process whereby interaction expectations and situational events cue the formation of an emotional response (p. 101). The process of regulating these emotional responses requires effort on the part of the individual, or EL, and may result in long-term consequences to the individual and the organisation (p. 103). Grandey (2000, p. 107) intentionally kept her framework linear and simplified in order to provide some clarity to a muddled concept, but recognises that her framework is not all-encompassing and there may further situational, consequential and moderating dimensions not shown in her framework, but may still pertinent to EL theory.

Grandey’s initial framework has been extended and reworked by other academics, such as Rubin et al. (2005). Similar to the approach of Grandey (2000), Rubin et al. (2005, p.
193) also integrated prior EL research, yet argued for a more multi-dimensional framework, including additional components and reverse relationships between components. These will be explained further in the review, but essentially, Rubin et al. (2005, p. 191) separates the experience of emotion from the behavioural response and argues that behaviour can have a reverse flow to emotion experience. Despite the nuances that exist in EL frameworks, the basic constitution of the framework remains comparable; antecedents induce an emotional response, of which the effort to manage in line with organisational requirements is emotionally laborious and may result in outcomes for the individual. Together, the framework outlines the entire process of emotional regulation. EL is said to exist primarily around the behavioural response, but is influenced by the other aspects of the framework.

Before going into detail about the antecedents, moderators, consequences and other dimensions of the framework, it is important to make clear that we are not suggesting that EL and emotional regulation is a linear system, nor that the components of the framework are mutually exclusive. This framework illustrates the results of prior research, theoretical discussions and empirical interpretations into the construction of EL. We recognise that prior research has been mainly done in service industries and amongst front-line employees (Burch et al. 2005), yet we will argue that the conclusions drawn from prior research hold relevance for exploration in the project management context. Nor is our research bound by the dimensions and relationships illustrated in this framework. In line with our research purpose of exploration, we maintain an open-mind and flexible approach to the potential EL felt by PMs, yet believe these dimensions serve as a practical foundation with which to base our understandings and best enable us to answer the sub research question posed in our work.

**Individual state**

The individual state of a person refers to their affective state (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 192), or in laymen’s terms, their feelings. An individual’s affective state is understood to be stirred when there is a disparity between the emotions felt by an employee and what they perceive is required from them by the employer (Morris & Feldman 1997, p. 992). Building further, Mann (1999, p.348) depicts this as a conflict between an internal state and an external demand felt by the employee. The emotions required for the situation are strongly influenced by the display rules set by the employer and indirectly shaped by the customer, but also pertain to the very context of the situation at hand (Burch et al. 2005).

The experience of disparity between emotions felt and emotions required, according to Rubin et al. (2005, p. 194), creates an internal psychological tension or displeasure that the employee is motivated to alleviate. The source of motivation to regulate emotions back in line with perceived requirements can be understood in order to prolong employment and avoid punishment (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 196). As will be discussed further in the next section, it is the motivated behaviour enacted by the individual to alleviate the inner tension caused by this disconnect that actually constitutes the laborious facet of EL (p.194). In line with our underpinning of Morris and Feldman’s (1997) perspective of EL, the feeling of emotions within a person is distinctly separated from their consequential display of behaviour. To explain this in our context of project management, there must be a detachment from what the PM feels themselves, versus what they perceive the emotion requirement to be from the company. When this is present, the behaviour then undertaken by the PM to regulate their emotions back in
Figure 1. Integrated emotional regulation process framework
accordance to what they perceive is expected of them from the display rules, constitutes laborious facet of EL.

The EL framework constructed by Rubin et al. (2005, p. 193) clearly separating out the individual state from the behavioural response, with the former being a prerequisite for the latter. Grandey (2000), however, was not so clear in her distinction. Although she recognises dissonance “as a negative state of being” (p. 101), much along how Morris and Feldman (1997, p. 992) describes it, she takes her definition of emotional dissonance from Hochschild (1983), who describes dissonance being the difference between emotion felt and emotion expressed. In Hochschild’s definition, the feelings of emotions are subsumed within the behaviour and are not a precursor, as with the definition given by Morris and Feldman (1997). This omits the individual state from Grandey’s (2000) framework, leaving antecedents to directly feed into the expression of emotion, where the labour potentially occurs. Rubin et al. (2005, p. 191) points out the omission of individual state, suggesting that it demonstrates confusion in EL modelling and instead argues that as individual emotional state influences behaviour, it must remain separated from behaviour. We agree with this argument and as a necessary precursor to EL, the employee must feel a disconnection between the emotions they genuinely feel and those they perceived are required of them from their employer.

An overarching assumption in this talk so far, is that an employee will feel dissonance between emotions felt and perceived emotional requirements and only when this is felt, will EL be potentially felt as the employee regulates their behaviour back in line with requirements. Put differently, EL will not be felt by those who feel no dissonance from what they feel inside versus what they perceived expected of them. This big assumption both implicitly underpins the frameworks of Grandey (2000) and Rubin et al. (2005), as their frameworks only recognise emotional dissonance as being a precursor to EL. Yet, this leaves a gaping hole for those employees who actually feel the same emotions required by the company. Rafaeli and Sutton (1987, p. 32) rectify this by introducing emotional harmony, whereby the emotions felt by an employee are on par with the expectations required. At the other extreme, Rafaeli and Sutton (1987, p. 32) also introduce the notion of emotional deviance. Under emotional deviance, the employee discards the perceived required display of emotions and expresses their felt emotions instead. Discarding of display rules may be calculated, if the employee is not in assent with the emotional displays required and chooses to bear their own emotions, or unintentional, “because the employees tries, but is not able to show the desired emotion, perhaps due to emotional exhaustion” (Wong & Wang 2009, p. 250).

Despite this somewhat widespread assumption that emotional dissonance is the only precursor to EL, Rafaeli and Sutton (1987) argue that emotional harmony and deviance are valid constructs to be considered a part of EL research, as they may still have an effect on the individual. For example, emotional harmony and the expression of internally felt emotions may cause EL, as the conscious effort to ensure expressed behaviour is in line with display rules may be laborious (Wong & Wang 2009, p. 250). Emotional deviance may have a laborious effect on an individual’s emotions, as deviant behaviour may produce guilt or other such inner tension within the individual (Rafaeli & Sutton 1987, p. 33). We believe these two individual states to be of relevance and in the spirit of exploratory research, include them as individual states in the integrated framework of EL.

In summary, a discomfort is said to be felt by an employee when they feel emotions that are different from what they perceive to be required of them within the workplace
(Rubin et al. 2005, p. 190). This unstable state is enough to spur on a behavioural response as a coping device to reduce this felt discomfort (Mann 1999, p. 349). The behavioural response of the employee constitutes the laborious aspect of EL (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 194) and will be discussed in the next section. Feeling emotions on par with workplace requirements, or completely antipodal, have also been argued as influence the behaviour of the individual, and whereby, potentially act as determiners of EL.

### Possible motivated behaviour

The fragmented and sprawling nature of EL research has resulted in a panorama of EL constructs that differ in their dimensions. In her conception of EL, Hochschild (1983) identified two strategies to confront the perceived dissonance felt by an employee; surface acting and deep acting. This dual dimensional view of EL is adopted in academia by Boyle (2005), Bono and Vey (2005), Brotheridge & Lee (2003), Hwa (2012), Grandey (2000), Mann (1999) and Mittal and Chhabra (2011), amongst others. This two dimensional view assumes that the only behavioural response for employee will be to ‘act’ and stifles the freedom of the employee to express emotion that they genuinely feel. A third dimension, genuine behaviour, is gathering credence as a bona fide emotional dimension and has joined the ranks of surface and deep acting in the research by Ashforth and Humphrey (1993), Diefendorf et al. (2005), Harris (2002), Rubin et al. (2005) and Westaby (2010), amongst others. In the nature of exploration, we take this three dimensional view of EL, as to remain open to the purpose of ascertaining whether PMs experience emotional labour. As such, section will explain the three predominately recognised behavioural responses to an individual emotional state; SA, DA and genuine behaviour.

**Surface acting:** Surface acting is executed when an employee “simulates emotion that is appropriate for the situation” (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 194) and authorised by the company, whilst internally feeling a different emotion (Grandey 2002, p. 100). The simulation of emotions not truly felt (Ashforth & Humphrey 1993, p. 92) by an employee clearly entails the expression of fake emotions but also involves the suppression of felt emotions (Harris 2002, p. 570). The laborious aspect of surface acting stems from the notion that ‘individuals generally do not like to feel ‘fake’, or in the long-term, because suppressing true emotions and expressing false ones requires effort that results in stress outcomes” (Grandey 2000, p. 101). Terms ‘fake’ and ‘suppression’ give off rather negative connotations; yet SA is sometimes the appropriate behavioural strategy for an employee to enact. Diefendorf et al. (2005, p. 345) explains that when negative events create strong negative emotions for an employee, suppression of negative emotion and feigning positivity may be the only route for emotional regulation in line with company requirements. To illustrate this in the PM context, a PM may display a warm smile and pleasant attitude for the good of the project and company, whilst internally seething from an interaction with a hostile customer.

**Deep acting:** Conversely to complying with required displays, an employee deep acts when they consciously try to experience the appropriate emotion for the given situation (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 195). Hochschild (1983) explains it as getting emotionally involved with the customer interaction. To illustrate the difference between surface and deep further, DA entails the alteration of inner emotions in line with perceived display rules, which result in a more genuine display of emotions (Diefendorf et al. 2005, p. 343). SA, on the other hand, entails the alteration of expressed emotional displays in accordance with display rules, but maintaining the initial emotion (Wong & Wang 2009, p. 250). Rafaeli and Sutton (1987, in Grandey 2000, p. 100) believe DA...
demonstrates benevolence, as it demonstrates a willingness to change one’s internal feelings to proactively exude the behaviours perceived desirable by the company. Where previously Grandey (2000, p. 100) was confident that SA results in stressful outcomes, the outcomes from DA remains rather wavering. The laborious aspect of DA seems to stem from the effort to internally readdress felt emotions and trying to understand the emotions required by the situation (Ashforth & Humphrey 1993, p. 93).

Rubin et al. (2005, p. 195) makes a prominent point that primarily deep acting may modify the difference between emotions felt and perceived display requirements and abridge the extent of perceived dissonance. Put differently, continuously altering feelings in line with display requirements may more permanently reduce the emotions felt and perceived requirements gap through repetition cementing into routine. In this sense, expressed emotion may result from felt emotion, but alternatively, expressed emotion may also influence felt emotion (Briner 1999, p. 333). This potential flow-back from behaviour to individual state is illustrated by a feedback loop between the two.

**Genuine behaviour:** Expressions of genuinely felt emotions is a relative new comer to the EL scene, as it was originally thought that only when one fakes or makes a conscious effort to feel the emotion, does it constitute the stressful aspect of EL (Mann 1999, p. 365). Leading the charge for genuine behaviour to be a component of EL is Humphrey, who in his vast works, argues that the genuine expression of emotion can also be laborious on the individual (cf. Ashforth & Humphrey 1993; Ashkanasy & Humphrey 2011; Humphrey et al. 2008). Morris and Feldman (1996, p. 988) concurs with this, asserting that it “does indeed take ‘labor’ to display organizationally desired emotions, because felt emotion must still be translated into appropriate emotional displays”, yet reason that it would be comparatively less laborious than its surface and deep counterparts. Harris (2002, p. 55) adds to this, arguing that appropriate emotional displays suggests contextual pressures acting upon the individual, which reinforces the socially constructed interactionist perspective of emotion.

Morris and Feldman’s (1996) explanation, and indeed those of Humphrey also, somewhat assumes that the expressed emotion and behaviour will be one desired by the company, such as a positive happy emotion. Rubin et al. (2005, p. 196) offers a counterbalance, arguing the behavioural display may actually be negative, such as showing hostility, and be organisationally undesirable but still expressed by the employee. This act of emotional deviance carries with it an element of EL, as the employee is aware that their deviation from the display required by the company may produce ramifications. In this sense, genuine displays of emotion may either be in line with perceived display rules, emotional harmony, or contrary to them, emotional deviance carries an element of EL for the employee.

The underlying assumption so far, is that there is a one-way relationship where a stirred individual state triggers a behavioural response, yet underpinned by physiological theories, Bono and Vey (2005, p. 228) suggest that a reverse relationship may also exist between behavioural response and individual state. The authors make the example that, surface acting by faking a pleasant demeanour may actually induce the individual to become more pleasant and happy, which suggests that the behavioural response may actually inform and influence potential dissonance (p. 228). This relationship is denoted by a reverse flow between motivated behaviour and individual state in the integrated framework.

In summary of the individual state and motivated behaviour explained so far, when an employee’s emotional state is at odds with their perceived display requirement, an
internal tension is felt (Mann 1999, p. 351). The two coping strategies to relieve this tension are identified in prior research; to fake the expressed behaviour in line with perceived requirements whilst retaining the initial emotion, surface acting, and attempting to alter the felt emotion in line with the perceived requirement, deep acting (Hochschild 1983; Grandey 2000; Brotheridge & Lee 2003). When one already feels the emotion that is perceived to be required of them, they are in a state of emotive harmony and are likely to express this genuine emotion (Rafaeli & Sutton 1987, p. 32). At the other end of the continuum, when felt emotions outweigh perceived emotional requirement, the individual is in a state of emotive deviance and is likely to express their felt emotion through genuine behaviour (p. 32). Figure 2 provides a basic representation to cement understanding of this.

![Figure 2. Relationship between an individual state and possible coping strategies](image)

The next section discusses the potential antecedents that trigger the initial emotional state of the employee. These antecedents influence the felt emotions of the individual and their perception of the workplace, and as such, directly influence the potential emotional state of the individual, which may be an indirectly result in EL (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 196).

**Situational antecedents**

Grandey (2000, p. 102) argues that the situational context surrounding an individual acts as signal from which emotions be developed. Recalling the trend of EL research in service contexts, Grandey (2000, p. 102) further explains that “in the customer service setting, the salient situation is the interaction with customers and the expectations of the organization”. The frameworks of Grandey (2000) and Rubin et al. (2005) draw consensuses on how the customer interaction expectations perceived by the individual may be a possible precursor to emotional labour, yet separate on other situational cues. Grandey (2000, p. 103) argues for acute emotional events possibly inciting emotions that require management, whereas Rubin et al. (2005, p. 196) looks towards the particular characteristics of the job role as an EL antecedent. We take the position that all categories identified in these frameworks are salient and at this early stage of exploration into the PM context, cannot be ruled out as irrelevant.

**Customer Interaction Expectations**

Grandey (2000, p. 102) asserts that different work roles require different levels of customer interaction and different expectations from the customer. Roles vary in terms of frequency of interaction, duration of emotional display, variety of emotions displayed and the rules stipulated by the organisation that provides structure for the interaction (Grandey 2000, p. 102; Rubin et al. 2005, p. 196). There is an overwhelming feeling that when these authors refer to the ‘customer’, they purely refer to the external

23
purchaser of the organisations product or service, and that this external customer indirectly sets the expectations for the interaction. Yet, we argue that the meaning and rationale behind these expectations go beyond front-line worker to external customer and bear significance to the interactions that occur internally within a company. We argue that for a PM, their ‘customer’ is not the end user or project sponsor, but any party that interacts with the PM during the course of the project. As such, we take the stance that the interaction expectations, job characteristics and unanticipated events, primarily researched in service industries, also occur in the life of a PM and may also directly spark emotions that indirectly impact EL.

This section will explain the main situational factors that have been identified as antecedents to EL, yet, we recognise that this list is by no means exhaustive and only represent the elements identified in the reviewed literature. We remain open and flexible to the potential antecedents that may be identified in the exploration of the PM context, yet we understand this prior research to be of value to our understanding prior to gathering our own data.

**Frequency of interaction:** In her conception of EL theory, Hochschild (1983) recognised the direct proportional relationship between frequency of emotional displays and EL. The rationale behind this dimension is that the more frequently a job calls for interactions between worker and customer, the more frequently emotions are to be displayed by the worker, which increase the prospect of the worker experiencing EL to deal with such intense frequency (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 199; Wong & Wang 2009, p. 343). Furthermore, a high interaction frequency may reduce the likelihood of an employee displaying genuinely felt emotions (Diefendorf et al. 2005, p. 343). Morris and Feldman (1996, p. 989) unquestionably label frequency as crucial indicator to the presence of EL, but warn that frequency itself “does not capture the level of planning, control, or skill needed to regulate and display emotional expression”. As such, frequency works hand in hand with the other antecedents of duration and variety (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 200; Morris & Feldman 1996, p. 992).

For PMs, their role as being ‘mini CEO’ and centre of the project (Turner and Müller 2003, p.5) may see them as having a high rate of interaction with team members, external customers, third-party contractors and other stakeholders. According to the founding EL works of Hochschild (1983) and Morris and Feldman (1996), a high frequency of interactions will require a greater density of emotional display, which, along with duration and variety, are theorised to be situational antecedents to EL.

**Duration of interaction:** The duration of emotional display for the customer as demanded by the job is another antecedent to EL (Grandey 2000, p. 102). Short customer interactions, such as a waitress taking an order, is likely to be scripted, whereas prolonged interaction, such as the concierge giving advice to a customer, is the less scripted and is likely to require more effort to display required emotions throughout the interaction (Rubin et. al 2005, p. 200). This sentiment is echoed by Morris and Feldman (1996, p. 989), whereby “emotional displays of longer duration should require more effort and thus more emotional labour”.

**Variety of emotions:** Morris and Feldman (1996, p. 991) contended that a direct positive relationship exists between the assortment of emotions required to be displayed and the level of EL experienced by the worker. Grandey (2000, p. 102) refers to this dimension, yet fails to sufficiently justify its inclusion in her framework. Rubin et al. (2005, p. 200) also adopts variety as an antecedent dimension and explains that service workers are frequently required to display a variety of emotions, some of which may be
contradictory, in order to fulfil the requirements of the role. In his research into the EL experienced by secretaries, Wichroski (1994, in Morris & Feldman 1996, p. 993) points out those employees that interact with a greater variety of stakeholders and contexts are required to display a greater variety of emotions. Furthermore, having to change the emotions conveyed in light of different stakeholder interactions and varying contexts is likely to bring about more EL for the employee (Morris & Feldman 1996, p. 991).

Taking the context of the PM, being somewhat heliocentric to the project, they are required to interact with stakeholders of different importance and power, both internally and externally. The PM is also likely to have display contradictory emotions through the course of their job. For example, whilst receiving bad news from superiors regarding a cut budget, the PM may still have to feign a smile in order to remain on good terms with superiors of the organisation.

Display rules: Display rules are guidelines for the suitable expression of certain emotions, as required by the role (Ashkanasy & Humphrey 2011, p. 217), and are set by the employer, especially in service contexts, but heavily influenced by what the customer expects from the situation (Briner 1999, p. 330; Burch et al. 2013, p. 123). Being set by the employer for the required role makes display rules somewhat contextually specific, yet broadly speaking, they call for employees to express positive emotions, whilst suppressing negative emotions (Hopp et al. 2012, p. 84). Rafeli and Sutton (1989, in Humphrey 2000, p. 240) go one step further, explaining that display rules are determined not only by occupational standards, but influenced by wider organisational and societal standards. Display rules may be learnt explicitly, through formal organisational training, or implicitly, through employee observation (Cropanzano et al. 2000, p. 58). They are a part of the culture of an organisation and aim to homogenise the type of emotions to be displayed in the workplace (Burch et al. 2013, p. 124) through observable behaviour, not internally felt emotions (Ashforth & Humphrey 1993, p.90). At this point, it is important to note that the sheer presence of company display rules does not directly result in the experience of EL (Bono & Vey 2005, p. 218), it is only when the emotional state of the individual is stirred, if there is emotional dissonance for example, will EL be possibly be felt.

The work of Morris and Feldman (1996, p. 998) sheds light on the power of the person on the receiving end of the EL, suggesting that if the receiver has greater power and influence over the individual experiencing the emotion, the greater adherence to the display rules set by the organisation. Put simply, if a lower-level clerk is engaging with a senior manager, the power differential is likely to mean the clerk is more likely to display the required behaviours stipulated in the rules, regardless of whether the emotions they feel are on par. Still on the topic of power, Tieden et al. (2000, p. 572) argues that the display rules expected from an individual are derived from their power status within the organisation. Strong emotions of anger and pride, are generally associated with higher power positions and it is expected that the individuals within these positions exhibit these emotions. On the other end of the spectrum, Tieden et al. (2000, p. 572) contends that emotions of guilt and sadness are affiliated with individuals of lower power. Put simply, it is expected that individuals exhibit emotions in accordance to their hierarchical standing, and the display of these relevant emotions, reinforces power and status differentials, whereby creating a perpetuating cycle and cementing organisational norms.

Underpinned from the empirical research of Weiss and Cropanzano (1996, cited in Grandey 2000, p. 103), Grandey makes a compelling argument for the inclusion of
emotional events in her model of EL. Grandey (2000, p.102) believes that customer interaction expectations paint more of an incessant view of employee expectations and a habitual obligation for them to regulate emotions. Whereas, “acute events at work have an immediate impact on an employee’s emotions” (p. 103). She differentiates between positive and negative events, arguing that a negative event, such as an argument with their partner, may affect the emotional state of a person and may require greater emotional regulation to remain on par with display rules (p. 103). On the end of the scale, a positive event, such as receiving praise, may positively influence the individual to meet organisational display rules, whereby reducing the need for emotional regulation. Burch et al. (2013, p. 124) express that leaders in an organisation may not just be the recipient of an emotional event, but may also be required to create an emotional event for others, but fails to explain this notion further. We suspect that leaders may need to create emotional events for their followers, if the creation of these events is not in harmony with display rules, they may still act as a precursor to EL.

Rubin et al. (2005) do not consider emotional events as a part of their EL construct. We speculate that perhaps the authors see acute emotional events to be a part of the customer interaction expectation precursors, and therefore, depict emotional events to be encompassed within this and not as a separate antecedent. We see this differently, especially in the project management context, where working in such emergent, chaotic and turbulent environments, are likely create acute emotional events that immediately impact the PM, the project team and the wider web of stakeholders. As most of the previous EL research has been conducted on comparatively stable and static service industries where interactions are scripted and repetitious (Ashforth & Humphrey 1993, p. 94; Diefendorf et al. 2005, p. 343), perhaps this prevented the wider adoption of this element into possible antecedents to EL. We agree with Grandey’s (2000, p. 103) logic that emotional events, outside of chronic customer expectations, are a real and pertinent aspect of the workplace that requires exploration.

Job-specific characteristics

In their EL formulations Rubin et al. (2005, p. 196) make reference to job characteristics as potential antecedents to EL. Job-specific demands may impact the emotions felt by the individual versus the perceived emotions demanded by the organisation (Humphrey 2000, p. 248). Incongruence between emotions felt and emotions required may bear presence to EL (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 196). These authors appear to be greatly influenced by Morris and Feldman (1996, p. 999), whom speculated that the level of job autonomy and control over interactions greatly affect need for emotional regulation, and therefore, indirectly impact EL.

Autonomy: The autonomy of one’s job “refers to the extent to which role occupants have the ability to adapt display rules to fit their own interpersonal styles” (Morris & Feldman 1996, p. 999). In her research into the EL experienced by front-line service workers, Wharton (1993, p. 228) concluded that roles with greater autonomy are at less risk of the negative consequences of EL than those with low autonomy roles. This makes sense, as EL is considered laborious due to the “employee’s regulation of emotional expression is organizationally directed” (Morris and Feldman 1996, p. 999), having greater discretion and freedom of emotional expressivity may reduce the dissonance felt.

In contrast, Grandey (2000, p. 107) sees job autonomy as a potential moderator to EL, arguing that the more autonomy one has in their job, the more it minimises the stress of the EL process, although she does leave the door open by suggesting that organisational
characteristics may also be regarded as antecedents. Our position on job autonomy being an antecedent, a moderator, or both in the emotional regulation process remains open and we take a flexible approach to this element, as we see merit in both sides of the argument and wish to remain elastic in our research into the project management context.

Control: The notion of control and autonomy have sometimes been used interchangeably in EL research (cf. Pugliesi 1999, p. 143), however, we argue them as two distinct elements. The degree of control an employee has in their role relates to their ability to “change tasks or otherwise limit interactions with customers if they are not feeling the required emotion” (Bono & Vey 2005, p. 222), whereas autonomy pertained to the autonomy of emotional expressivity the role allows. Logically, if an employee was able to remove themselves from interaction, they also remove themselves from the possibility that their felt emotion in the interaction may differ to what is expected of them from the company display rules.

In summary, the environment of the individual, seems to shapes the emotional state of the individual and acts as a potential trigger to EL. Job related characteristics and interactions expectations on the PM may create emotions that differ from those perceived to be required on the job and this dissonance is a precursor to EL (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 192). At this point, it is important to acknowledge that a lone antecedent may not stir up enough dissonance to cause a feeling of unease in the individual, the aggregate of antecedents’ counts (p. 200). This suggests that inter-relationships exist between and within antecedent categories.

Thus far, emotional regulation and labour comes across as a linear process (Grandey 2000, p. 105); antecedents trigger dissonance, and the effort required to regulate emotions may result in EL. Yet at each stage of this process, the strength and effect of emotions may be tempered (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 200). The next section will discuss possible moderators to the emotional regulation process and how these may calm or exacerbate emotions and EL.

Moderators
Grandey (2000, p. 105) explains that individual and organisational characteristics should be incorporated into future EL research and suggests, albeit briefly, the potential for these factors to act as moderators along the emotional regulation process. Perhaps to keep her framework linear and simplified (p. 105), removes herself from going into depth, urging others to take up the challenge. Rubin et al. (2005, p. 200) does take up on this challenge by building on Grandey’s framework and going into detail about how moderators can affect the emotional regulation process at different points, yet they only circle around individual factors having the potential to moderate. Organisational factors are completely omitted from their research without reason, yet we take the position of Grandey (2000, p. 107) that the organisation itself is a “very important factor in understanding emotion management”, and as such, have organisational factors into the integrated framework from which we base our understanding. Furthermore, the potential for this social factor to influence the emotions felt and further expressed by an individual embody the interactionist approach to EL that we argued our support on earlier in this paper (Section 3.2.3.)

Organisational factors
Grandey (2000, p. 107) argues that the “situation in which employees work may affect the level and type of emotional labor in which they engage”. Within this organisational
culture category, Grandey (2000, p. 107) points to the ability of supervisory and colleague support to possibly temper EL, both in the degree of possible dissonance felt and in the behaviour undertaken to regulate emotions. The organisational factors that we refer to more formal support networks within a company. Informal support networks will be addressed a little further on in this section of the report.

Formal networks: In her research into the EL felt by paramedics, Boyle (2005, p. 48) argues that the ability of the managers and co-workers to identify dissonance in fellow employees and provide support to minimise this dissonance works to return the employee to an emotionally normative state, mitigates the stressful effects on the individual and ensures the quality of the service interaction. This sentiment is echoed in a separate study on the EL experienced by teachers, where Mittal and Chhabra (2011, p. 64) found that supervisory support mediated EL, and by doing so, reduced mental fatigue on the individual. If an employee feels they management backing and co-worker support in the emotional duties of their role, it is more likely that the employee’s inner emotions will be more at harmony with the displays expected of them (Shcubroeck & Jones 2000, p. 182). This manifests itself in more genuine emotional displays and less EL is required to regulate their emotions back in line with company expectations (Grandey 2000, p. 107). Put simply, greater support, at different hierarchical levels within a company, can be understood to reduce perceived emotional dissonance felt by an employee and also induce a more genuine or DA behavioural response, which indirectly reduces negative EL outcomes, such as stress, on the employee.

Informal networks: Informal networks are a subculture of organisational culture, and underpinned by a dramaturgical perspective of emotions from Goffman (1959, cited in Boyle 2005, p. 47), the author explains that “emotional culture can be observed within three ‘regions’ – front-or onstage, backstage and offstage”. Front stage refers more to the formal networks explained previously and offstage, to emotions that are expressed outside of the organisational environment, but the backstage emotions occur with other members of the organisation on a more informal level. Taking the analogy of acting on stage for a moment, backstage can be thought of as an area where an actor needs not act anymore and can engage with others more freely without fear of managerial retribution. Within an organisation, this may be the tea or break room, where employees can discuss matter with each other more informally and away from the display rules required of them.

In their research into alleviating the burden of EL, McCance et al. (2013, p. 408) concluded that the communication of an emotionally significant event with others reduced the emotional dissonance felt by individuals. Whilst the authors’ empirical research conducted in a controlled laboratory environment, their main argument that the social sharing of emotive events may mediate dissonance and EL is backed up by Abraham (1998, p. 229). In this sense, informal networks being an outlet for the sharing of emotional events may act as a buffer to mediate dissonance and also moderate the amount of EL felt by the individual.

Individual factors

It is not just work related factors involved with EL, personal characteristics that are brought to work also affect EL (Grandey 2000, p. 105). The underlying notion is that personal characteristics shape how emotions are displayed within the workplace and may therefore affect EL (Humphrey 2000, p. 244). Grandey (2000, p. 105) presupposes, albeit briefly, identifies individual factors may temper the extent of EL felt, including gender, emotional expressivity, emotional intelligence and affectivity. Rubin et al.
(2005, p. 200) identifies with the last two from Grandey’s work, yet drops the first three without justification and instead picks up role internalisation as a mediating factor. To maintain a flexible exploration into our context of EL as felt by PMs, we will keep all factors as foundation on which to base our knowledge, yet accede that these factors are not exhaustive and remain open our research.

**Gender:** Gender is the only demographic that seems to be examined with any rigour in EL research (cf. Bono & Vey 2005; Zammuner & Galli 2005; Nixon 2009; Hwa 2012; Mittal & Chhabra 2011; Hochschild 1983). The key sentiment behind this gender argument is that women are societally assumed to be caregivers and have greater empathy (Larson 2008, p.47), are better at building relationships (Hwa 2012, p. 123) and undertake more emotional regulation than men (Grandey 2000, p. 106). Empirical research of gender in EL seems to have yielded divergent results thus far. Whilst Johnson (2004, cited in Hwa 2012, p. 123) and Mittal and Chhabra (2011, p. 64) drew a similar conclusion that women are more prone to deep acting strategies. Bono and Vey (2005, p. 224) and Zammuner & Galli (2005, p. 274) find that gender did not really affect or have a relationship with EL.

**Emotional expressivity:** Emotional expressivity is somewhat related to gender, as there is the notion that men intrinsically of lower emotional expressivity than women (Grandey 2000, p. 106). Outside demographics, the ability to articulate emotions is also pivotal for leaders as emotions may be used to motivate fellow workers (Humphrey et al. 2008, p. 158). The motivating power of expressing emotions sees it as a an essential part of a transformational leadership style (Bass & Avolio 1994, cited in Humphrey et al. 2008, p. 159), which sees expressivity as somewhat of a strategy that can be utilised. With regard to EL, it has a potential moderating effect, as those with high emotional expressivity are thought to be more adept to harmonising felt emotions with required display rules, whereby reducing dissonance and the potential for emotions to be laboriously regulated back in line with organisational requirements (Grandey 2000, p. 106).

**Affectivity:** The affectivity of an individual refers to their temperament (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 203). Grandey (2000, p. 107) explains that “positive affectivity is related to enthusiasm and optimism, whereas negative affectivity is related to pessimism and averse mood states”. As it is a defining individual characteristic, it cannot be switched off and on at will in the workplace, but it does affect the states felt by the individual at work (Schaubroeck & Jones 2000, p. 168). Rubin et al. (2005, p. 203) furthers this sentiment, explaining that the affectivity of a person may moderate or exacerbate the perceived dissonance felt. For example, an employee with high affectivity characteristics is likely to display enthusiasm and cheerfulness, which are more likely to be more harmonious with positive display rules, whereby diminishing perceived dissonance between emotions genuinely felt and those expected by the company (Schaubroeck & Jones 2000, p. 167) Furthermore, a positive affectivity may also serve to buffer employees from negative possible outcomes of EL “due to the link between trait and effective coping” (Bono & Vey 2005, p. 230). Put simply, a naturally exuberant individual may be able to better bounce back and avoid possible EL outcomes than those who have a tendency to experience emotions of despair and worry. Conversely, when perceived display rule requirements differ from an employee’s innate temperament, dissonance may be exacerbated, increasing the likelihood that the employee incurs EL in order to regulate emotions back in line with workplace requirements (Grandey 2000, p. 107; Schaubroeck & Jones 2000, p. 167). In this sense,
individual affectivity may moderate or aggravate the potential EL of emotional regulation in the workplace.

**Role internalisation:** The level of role internalisation is the depth to which an employee incorporates and embodies the values and purpose of the job (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 201). Ashforth and Humphrey (1993, p. 103) motion that organisational culture can be imparted onto an employee over time, so that they fall and behave more in line with display rules. This implicitly assumes the individual has a lack of self-control in the matter and long exposure to display rules is positively related to role internalisation. Rubin et al. (2005, p. 201) acknowledges this sentiment, yet adds a self-control counterbalance, arguing that the degree of internalisation may also be a conscious career choice by an individual. Taking a project management example, the greater a PM internalises their role, emotional expectations are embodied and become almost habitual, which moderates dissonance between emotions felt and perceived requirements. In this sense, “emotional expression is not a chore but rather second nature; it is what they do” (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 201). Along the emotional regulation process, greater role internalisation may mitigate the emotions conjured from the situation, the internal dissonance felt and increase the likelihood of genuine behaviour, which is less emotionally laborious than deep or surface acting strategies (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 202).

**Emotional Intelligence:** EQ pertains to the ability to “read, monitor, and understand one’s own and other’s emotions; to differentiate between positive and negative aspects of emotions; and to use one’s knowledge about emotions to inform one’s thoughts and guide one’s behaviours” (Salovey & Mayer 1990, cited in Humphrey 2000, p. 244). The understanding of internal emotions is important, as self-appraisal looks to determine the root of the feeling, the cause of the feeling, the intention of the emotional sender and the requirement of the situation before eliciting an emotional response that is best for the situation (Burch et al. 2013, p. 122). This self-appraisal of mood in light of the situation may directly alleviate dissonance, which flows on to potentially alleviate EL (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 203). A high EQ may also indirectly shape the motivated behaviour (p. 203) as well as picking up on success of the behaviour, suggesting a potential reciprocal informing relationship between EQ and motivated behaviours (Grandey 2000, p. 106). EQ is particularly important for those in leadership positions, as they are often in positions to induce emotional contagion to those that follow (Burch et al. 2013, p. 122). The authors explain, “employees care a great deal about what their leaders think, and thus they scrutinize their leaders’ emotional expressions for clues as to their leaders’ true attitudes” (p. 123). Therefore, in order to induce the most appropriate emotions for their team, a leader most self-appraise their own feelings and choose the most appropriate behaviour, not just for themselves in the situation, but for those around him or her (p. 124). As an example, a PM who may feel anger towards supplier delivering news about a delay, may decide to express these feelings, despite display rules to maintain a pleasant demeanour, by yelling at the supplier. Other team members may interpret that the aggressive behaviour of the PM makes it okay for them to display such behaviour in future. The potential for emotional contagion makes EL more complex for leaders, as they are more restricted in what behaviours they can exhibit, as to only transfer emotions and behaviours that are for the good of the team and company (Burch et al. 2013, p. 123).

In summary, demographic and personality characteristics, including gender, affectivity, the level of role internalisation, emotional expressivity and emotional intelligence are
traits that employees bring to the workplace have the ability to moderate, or exacerbate the emotional regulation process, whether it buffering the situational cues, shaping emotional dissonance or guiding the behaviour of the employee. EL literature suggests only a one-way informing relationship between moderators and the rest of the emotional regulation process, depicted by the relationship arrows in the integrated framework. As potential moderators of EL, their presence may indirectly influence the potential outcomes experienced by the individual as a result of EL. The next section, possible outcomes, looks to the consequences of EL on the individual and/or the company and is the final element in the emotional regulation process.

Possible outcomes

While research into possible antecedents of EL have begun to clear the mystery surrounding the phenomena, there still remains a haze surrounding the possible outcomes of EL on the individual experiencing it and the organisational cluster of the individual (Harris 2002, p. 557). This is fair enough, as interrelated variable relationships, some with moderating or exacerbating potential, the myriad of contexts researched and the different research approaches taken by academics may make developing clear-cut causal arguments and generalising about outcomes of EL more of an ideal than an achievable reality. Morris and Feldman (1997, p. 1001) eloquently expresses this concern, stating that “one of the reasons why there may be so much confusion surrounding the possible consequences of performing EL is the incomplete way in which the construct has previously been operationalised”. Yet, academics do draw consensus that EL will have an effect on the individual experiencing it and/or the company the employee is in (Bono & Vey 2005, p. 224).

The majority of EL research has generally focused on negative and potentially damaging outcomes of individuals experiencing EL (Morris & Feldman 1996, p. 1000). Yet positive outcomes may also be experienced, for example, Wharton (1993, p. 226) concluded that EL may produce positive outcomes for the individual, such as enhanced job satisfaction, but it is dependent on the motivated behavioural strategy utilised. EL may also reap tangible benefits for employees, such as monetary rewards (Wong & Wang 2009, p. 256). EL outcomes are not strictly bound to the individual and may flow-on to effect the organisation both positively and negatively (Wong & Wang 2009, p. 256; Ashforth & Humphrey 1993, p. 96; Grandey 2000, p. 103; Rubin et al. 2005, p. 204). As work may not stop the moment the employee leaves the vicinity, EL consequences may have deep reaching effects on the employee’s family and social circles (Wharton & Erickson 1993, cited in Harris 2002, p. 557).

The primary outcomes of EL on the individual experiencing it. As identified by Rubin et al. (2005, p. 204), centre around three interrelated categories; job attitude, job behaviour and the psychological well-being. The degree of positive outcome or negative outcome relates to the type of behavioural strategy utilised by the individual (Hwa 2012, p. 123). Recalling the earlier argument in this paper that acting strategies are deemed more laborious than genuine displays, and within this, surface being more laborious than deep acting, an employee that utilises a surface acting strategy is likely to result in greater negative outcomes felt (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 204). Descriptions of the relationships of EL with these three outcome divisions will be addressed first. Flow-on effects from the employee to others in the company will also be addressed where relevant, although we draw the boundary at the company and do not look to the potential outcome of the wider social circle of the individual.
**Job attitudes**

EL may affect the attitudes that an employee holds to their role. Subsuming the research of previous EL authors, including Hochschild (1983), Ashforth & Humphrey (1993), Morris & Feldman (1996) and Grandey (2000), Rubin et al. (2005) point to EL potentially influencing job attitudes regarding satisfaction, cynicism, turnover intention and commitment.

**Job satisfaction:** Job satisfaction is commonly referred to as litmus test for employee contention at work (Grandey 2000, p. 104). There is no agreement as to whether job satisfaction is positively or negatively affected by EL (p. 104), which perhaps is due to the different operationalisations and approaches to EL research that Morris and Feldman (1997, p. 1001) point to. Hochschild (1983) was a strong advocate that the laborious nature of continually having to change or suppress felt emotions will have deleterious effects on employees in the long term, a sentiment echoed in the works of Abraham (1998), Bono and Vey (2005) and Morris and Feldman (1997). Offering an alternative view, the separate works of Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) and Wharton (1993) stress that EL may enhance job satisfaction by providing emotional depth to a routine job or by giving employees the impression of autonomy in the behaviours they deem appropriate in the workplace. In their own research into the EL felt by university lecturers, Ogbonna and Harris (2004, p. 1198) raise a pragmatic point that perhaps other researchers have taken for granted. The authors suggest that the acting that goes along with emotional role displays may extend into job satisfaction measurements in order for the individuals to maintain a positive disposition that they believe is expected of them. All in all, there is general consensus that an emotionally laborious job will affect the satisfaction of employee in it, yet there is openness as to whether this relationship is positive or negative.

**Cynicism:** Related to job satisfaction, Rubin et al. (2005, p. 205) contends that employees who continuously fake or readjust their emotional displays in line with company requirements may feel that their emotions are disregarded by the company. In the long-term, this may result in antagonistic feelings towards the company and may further affect the performance of the employee and those around him (p. 205).

**Turnover intention:** Similar to cynicism, feelings that emotions are disregarded by the company, or perhaps the health and psychological well-being of the employee due to an emotionally laborious role may increase the likelihood that the employee seeks another role with labour (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 205). In particular, Grandey (2000, p. 105) asserts that employees that “need to engage in high levels of surface acting may be more inclined to desire a different job”. With Harris (2002, p. 570) and Wharton’s (1993, p. 227) view of the positive potential of EL, it could also be argued that the intention to leave a role may indeed be reduced if EL positively impacts the attitude of the employee towards their role.

**Organisational commitment:** Related to the other elements of job attitudes, an intensely emotionally laborious role may negatively influence the commitment of the employee to the organisation. Similar to the turnover argument, if an employee feels their emotions are meaningless to the company, that they are not being true to themselves, or that emotional acting it is taking a toll on their well-being, they are more likely to detach emotionally from interactions and blame the company for this detachment (Westaby 2010, p. 169; Grandey 2002, p. 104; Zapf et al. 2010, p.385). In this sense, organisational commitment may be maintained or strengthened if the employee feels little EL whilst keeping behaviours aligned to company requirements.
Rubin et al. (2005, p. 206) cautions that working in heavy EL roles may cause “health and psychological strain”. In particular, the authors point to stress, burnout and other somatic symptoms as potential outcomes that affect the physical well-being of an employee (p. 206).

**Stress:** During her first investigation into the EL of air hostesses, Hochschild (1983) concluded that employees who feel emotions that are different to what is expected of them are more likely to feign these feelings and act as a means of coping. The laborious nature of acting is likely to be stressful on the employee and may affect the psychological well-being of the employee (Hochschild 1983, p. 187). The stress with which we refer to is not purely work-task related, such as role ambiguity, but also the strain that emotional requirements within the workplace may have on the individual (Zapf 2010, p. 396) that occurs in the short-term (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 207). Prior research into EL suggest emotional stress is a common outcome for employees that perceive emotional dissonance and surface and deep act as a coping mechanism for this dissonance (Mittal & Chhabra 2011, p. 64; Westaby 2010, p. 169; Wong & Wang 2009, p. 256). If an employee is unable to overcome stress felt from emotional requirements of the role in the short-term, it may build up and result in burnout (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 207). Stress may also have organisational repercussions, such as emotional detachment, employee turnover, stress-leave and job performance (Briner 1999, p. 324). This suggests that the psychological well-being of an employee is interrelated to other potential EL outcomes, as it may effect and be affected by job attitudes or job related behaviour (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 204).

**Burnout:** Burnout is a unique type of stress syndrome, characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment (Cordes & Dougherty 1993, p. 621). Where stress is looked at more in the short-term, burnout may be a long-term consequence of the inability to handle short-term stressors (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 207). Of these three burnout characteristics, Rubin et al. (2005, p. 207) and Morris and Feldman (1996, p. 1002) primarily focus on emotional exhaustion, suggesting that long-term EL is likely to lead to a depletion of emotional energy (Cordes & Dougherty 1993, p. 623), which further triggers depersonalisation and negatively affects personal accomplishment. Long-term DA may result in emotional exhaustion, as the employee continuously emotionally invests themselves in the interaction (Jackson, Schwab & Schuler 1986, cited in Morris & Feldman 1996, p. 1002), whereas, SA by suppressing inner emotions and faking displayed behaviour, may also lead to burnout (Kruml & Geddes 2000, p. 184; Hwa 2012, p. 123). Interestingly, Krumel and Geddes (2000, p. 186) suggest that more experienced workers are able to surface act without the typical detrimental effects to their psychological well-being typically. In essence, both DA and SA strategies have been argued to hold a relationship with burnout in prior research, yet the potential link between burnout and genuine displays has not been readily identified, suggesting that genuine behaviour may be as emotionally laborious and not negatively affect the long-term stress of an employee.

Wong and Wang (2009, p. 250) contend that burnout symptoms may also have a reverse flow through possible motivated acts and to affect the individual state of an employee, depicted by the feedback loop arrows in the integrated model. The authors contend that emotional exhaustion may render an employee unable to display the required emotions of the job, whereby conformance to display rules is disregarded in favour for a less laborious display of inner feelings, known as emotional deviance.
**Somatic symptoms:** Schaubroeck and Jones (2000, p. 182) argue that EL may result in physical consequences on the individual experiencing it. Binge drinking, alcoholism, headaches and sexual dysfunction were identified by Hochschild (1983) as potential physical manifestations of EL. Mann (1999, p. 369) links EL with short-term consequences of indigestion, heartburn, exhaustion and changes in appetite. On the extreme side, Mann (2007, cited in Westaby 2010, p. 157) linked long-term EL with cancer and heart disease. Of course, this is not to say that EL will purely cause, cancer or sexual dysfunction, but that EL may add to these outcomes.

*Job related behaviour*

Rubin et al. (2005, p. 208) explains that a potential outcome from EL may be that the employee withdraws themselves as a means to reduce the laborious nature of continuously regulating emotions. Underpinned heavily by Grandey (2000), the authors identify turnover, absenteeism, organisational citizenship and performance as job-related behaviours that may be affected by an employee withdrawing, physically or emotionally, from their role (p. 205). The potential for EL to influence job-related behaviour is of particular importance to the organisation, as it may result in increased costs and/or time to rectify the situation.

**Performance:** As a means to distance themselves from the potential strain that EL has on an individual, employees may distance themselves from their role (Grandey 2000, p. 105). Recalling Goffman’s (1959, cited in Boyle 2005, p. 47) imagery of workplace roles having onstage, backstage and offstage areas, distancing one-self may see the employee remove themselves from their onstage role and retreat backstage. As an onstage performance is required for interaction with a customer audience, retreating backstage makes them unavailable for interaction and affects the overall performance of the individual as perceived by the customer and the organisation (Grandey 2000). Withdrawal behaviour may also manifest itself by employees using onstage time to conduct non-job related tasks, which also affects both employee and company performance (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 208).

**Absenteeism:** As a short-term withdrawal strategy from the potential strain that EL may cause, an employee may retreat offstage for extended periods of time. Firth and Britton (1989, cited in Cordes & Dougherty 1993, p. 639) argued that emotional exhaustion and decreased personal accomplishment, aspects of burnout, resulted in increased absenteeism of employees in EL roles. Absenteeism is understandably an important company concern, as the physical withdrawal of employees from their role may affect organisational performance.

**Turnover:** Leaving the role, or company, may be a long-term withdrawal strategy from emotionally laborious roles (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 205. Grandey (2000, p. 105) argues that employees who engage in high levels of SA as a behavioural strategy, are more likely to leave the role. This argument is related to her belief that suppressing inner felt emotions and faking behaviour may make the employee feel uncomfortably spurious and that SA is more likely to yield stressful outcomes for the employee (p. 101). For the organisation, employee turnover requires greater time and cost in finding replacements and is likely to affect performance in the short-term whilst sourcing and training replacements.
Conceptual framework summary

To briefly recap and a means to draw together the role of the integrated framework in our exploratory research, Grandey’s (2000) and Rubin et al.’s (2005) theories of the process of emotional regulation have been integrated as a means to provide a solid foundation to our research. Adopting one framework over the other may miss key facets to our understanding and inhibit our exploratory design too early on. Both frameworks are, in their most generic sense, similar. Antecedent situational cues stir an individual state, which evokes a behavioural response, which if emotionally laborious, may result in consequences felt by the individual. Moderating factors may work along the emotional regulation chain at several points to mediate the potential feeling of EL. We argue that by understanding EL within the process of emotional regulation, we put ourselves in the best position to answer our research aims of explore whether PMs experience EL and if so, using the emotional regulation process to identify the possible dimensions of it. Before delving into gathering data to answer our research questions, we provide a brief commentary on the nature of previous EL research as a means to show how trends in prior research do not sit perfectly with our philosophical considerations, which further justify the need for exploration in our research.

3.2.7. Final comment on the nature of emotional labour research

As a final commentary on the literature reviewed as a part of this research, we felt it was important to reflect upon the overwhelming trends of prior EL research prior to conducting our own full exploration. Of the prior EL research that gathered empirical data, the methodology employed is heavily tilted towards quantitative approaches, table in Appendix 1. Furthermore, there appears to be a strong favouritism towards the use of self-administered surveys for the purpose of data collection by EL researchers. EL academic heavyweights Morris and Feldman (1996, p. 1004), whose work has underpinned many others, including Grandey (2000), Rubin et al. (2005), Diefendorf et al. (2005) and Harris (2002), amongst others, even explicitly suggested that quantification of the dimensions of EL was needed in future research. The quantification trend carries with it philosophical assumptions as to how EL has been, and should be, understood and operationalised.

Although not readily identified by authors of published works, there is a general momentum towards objectivist ontological assumptions, whereby it is assumed that EL can be distinctly viewed by the researcher from their looking glass. Implicit within this, is the assumption that emotions research can be tested and generalised with positivistic traditions and that data collection methods that keep the researcher at arm’s length will yield theories of EL that may be replicable and further tested for validity. This is evident by the trends towards statistical regression of collected data that yield causal explanations and generalisable theories of emotions related phenomena. This treats emotions as testable hypothesis and assumes that they are somewhat static and replicable amongst contexts. Yet, similar to the views held by Ashforth (2000, p. xi) and Liu and Perrewé (2005, p. 72), we view emotions as deeply personal to the individual experiencing them, socially constructed and ever-changing or dynamic, suggesting that trends in methods previously employed may not be perfectly congruent with the problem under investigation. Although rather a polemical thought, these positivistic trends towards emotions may just skim the surface of the phenomena, losing the significance and depth that may come with a more constructivist philosophical approach (Liu & Perrewé 2005, p. 71). Awareness of assumptions held by academics has helped us identify potential weaknesses in prior research, such as leaving the subject at arm’s
length and treating emotions as generalisable, leaving deeper aspects of EL phenomena potentially reachable by a constructivist/interpretivist philosophical approach under, or unexplored.

The aim of this EL commentary is certainly not to denounce prior approaches. Prior research holds great value in our exploratory research, as evidenced by utilising previous conceptualisations as a foundation for our understanding before exploration of our research purpose of the possible experience of EL by PMs. More so, we believe it is important to recognise the trend in EL research and how this sits differently with our approach. During the literature review process, two trains of thought were stirred. On one hand, we felt a strong underlying current to follow the quantitative trend and adopt a survey data collection method, as it seemed to be the one most proliferated and accepted in the area of research we wished to focus on. However, implicit with this approach is an understanding that emotions exist in an observable reality that the researcher may remain detached from. Our philosophical beliefs lean more towards a constructivist view of emotions and only through engagement with how our subjects construct their reality, may we have the means to understand the phenomena.

Acknowledgment of trends in EL research was important for us, as to avoid the trap of assuming that the trend in prior research offered the only viable solution for our own research and we were conscious not to drop our own philosophical assumptions in order to follow fashionable philosophies incongruent with our views. Furthermore, with very few prior studies being underpinned by the same philosophical and methodological standpoints as our own, the social construction of the EL phenomena and qualitative methodological approaches to this perhaps remains under, or perhaps unexplored, whereby further justifying an exploratory approach to our research.

With a solid basis for understanding PMs and EL and approaches of previous academics in such fields, we now look to conduct our own data gathering to answer our research questions.
4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Methodological choice

4.1.1. Research design

The objective of this thesis is to explore the potential presence of EL as experienced by PMs and to identify the dimensions of it along the emotional regulation process. The review of research methodology literature has suggested that qualitative research approach is highly applicable for an exploratory research purpose (Bryman & Bell 2011; Saunders et al. 2012; Stebbins 2001). Mack et al. (2005, p.1) argue that the main advantage of qualitative research is that it provides holistic textual illustrations of how individuals understand a particular research issue. The authors assert that qualitative approach is also useful in recognizing intangible factors, such as social norms and socioeconomic status, as well as a ‘human side of an issue’ within given research, including behaviours and emotions (2005, p.1). Taking into account the nature of our research subject, EL, and the environment we aim to research it in, project management qualitative research methodology seems to be highly applicable.

Saunders et al. (2012, p.163) observe that qualitative research is usually used in studies that adopt interpretive philosophy. The authors reason that ‘researchers need to make sense of the subjective and socially constructed meanings expressed about the phenomenon being studied’ (p.163). Qualitative research is often attributed to naturalistic since researchers need to function within a specific research setting, project management in our case, in order to attain thorough understanding of the researched issue. This sentiment is also echoed by Bryman and Bell (2011, p.403) who reason that qualitative approaches are usually employed when researchers are interested in a detailed picture of what is happening in the environment in which the phenomena takes place.

It is common that many qualitative studies adopt inductive approach as it matches the naturalistic nature of a research (Saunders et al. 2012, p.163; Wong & Wang, 2009, p.251). However, for some qualitative studies, Saunders et al. (2012, p.549) argue that it might be beneficial to approach the research with theoretical perspective, thus applying elements of both induction and deduction. In our research we commence with a deductive approach by using the previous EL frameworks as a foundation for our own research. An inductive approach is then used to interpret the data.

The qualitative approach will better enable us to capture the subjective perception and interpretation of emotional labour by PMs within their job roles. Bryman and Bell (2011, p.404) assert that ‘qualitative research tends to view social life in terms of processes’. This could be achieved by conducting semi-structured interviews ‘by asking participants to reflect on the processes leading up to or following on from an event’ (Bryman & Bell 2011, p.404).

Saunders et al. (2012, p.163) also argue that data collection techniques should not be rigid, so that questions may develop and adjust throughout the research. Semi-structured interviews are particularly advantageous in gaining an in-depth understanding of the research context. As Bryman and Bell (2011, p.467) assert, semi-structured interviews allow flexibility in interview process and enable to focus on respondents’ perspective, how they frame and understand researched problem. Mack et al. (2005, p.4) point out another advantage of qualitative approach, particularly employing semi-structured interviewing data collection technique, for exploratory purposes. Firstly, it allows the
use of open-ended questions and does not force respondents into rigid answer frames, enabling participants to answer in their own words – something that quantitative method prohibit. Secondly, it allows interviewers to probe answers and enables respondents to further elaborate on them. This is especially valuable for studies that follow interpretivist epistemology, where the researcher needs to interpret how participants understand researched phenomena within a specific context and needs to adopt an empathetic stance, as to see the social world through the eyes of participants (Bryman & Bell 2011, p.402). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews are a typical element of a flexible research design which, in turn, is distinctive for interpretivists (Saunders et al. 2012, p.378).

4.1.2. Research strategy

Qualitative studies may implement various research strategies, such as case study research, grounded theory, ethnography etc. We believe case study research is most appropriate for our research objective, as it enables to explore various perspectives within specific researched setting (Lewis 2003, p.52). Adopting a case study research strategy Yin (2009, p.18) stresses the significance of studying a researched phenomena within specific context. We believe this to match exactly with our research objective of exploring whether PMs experience EL, and if so, the dimensions to this in their emotional regulation process. Hartley (1994, cited in Cassell & Symon 1994, p.211) claims that case study approach is applicable in studying social processes within certain organisational context, especially of new or under-researched phenomena. Yin (2009, p.11) points out that case studies usually provide answers not only to ‘what’ questions but also to ‘how’ and ‘why’ research questions. For this reason the author contends that a case study research strategy is highly appropriate for exploratory studies. According to the typology suggested by Bryman and Bell (2011, p.62), we argue that we are a revelatory case since there is no prior research done in the field we frame our research. However, we do recognise that we are a small-scale case study in terms of sample size. Bryman and Bell (2011, p.67) distinguish several types of level of analysis in a case study; societies, organizations, groups and individuals. As we intend to study the potential for PMs to experience EL, we assert that our unit of analysis lies within level of individuals.

Although EL has been studied before, primarily within service industries, the specific context of our research, the project management environment, might require a slightly different research approach than previous EL research designs. Harris (2002, p.561) argues that in this case the research design should be similar to grounded theory approach. However, whilst grounded theory develops a theory inductively from a set of data without rigidly defined concepts, Harris (2002, p.561) argues for the use of a more pragmatic perspective from Turner (1981). Turner (1981, p.232) appeals for ‘tentative labelling’ of a researched phenomena, and thus, tentative deduction of key concepts before data collection that will then be used to underpin inductive theory development. Therefore, the key concepts in our research, such as EL, display rules, emotional dissonance, surface and deep acting etc. were outlined before the interviews took place. We affirm that such a semi-grounded theory approach secures a more controlled process in inductive theory building.

4.1.3. Sample criteria

Company sample criteria

The purpose of this study is to research whether PMs experience EL and the possible dimensions to the emotional regulation process. Based on our background as well as the
sentiments that emerged from literature review, we believe that project environment might potentially have an impact on emotional regulation process of PMs. Hence, we decided not to focus solely on highly projectified organizations or on traditionally organized companies that undertake projects, since it might lead to one-sided results and potentially restrict the exploratory purpose of our research. Thereby, in our research, we sought both project oriented and traditionally organized companies that undertake projects. We believe this enables us to better explore whether project management environment does have particular influence on emotional labour of PMs, and if it does in what way. We also purposed for different industries in order to get more dimensional perspective.

A convenience sampling method was used to seek companies to participate in our study. This method was chosen due to our pragmatic concerns of lack of time and resources to build up a larger base of potential participants in our research. The convenience sampling was based on the professional experience contacts of the researchers. We acknowledge that convenience sampling may not present us with the most representative sample and thus may not allow generalizing (Bryman & Bell 2011, p.190); however, in the nature of exploratory research we are undertaking, generalisation is not our purpose. Furthermore, as EL has never been looked at within project management context as yet, convenience sampling still holds salience in our case (Bryman & Bell 2011, p.190). We also had elements of snowball sampling within our research, as one of the contacts initially approached was unable to participate in our study due to strict media policies. This contact provided us with details of another PM who was willing and able to part-take in our research.

Except for the one company mentioned above that could not take part in our research, all other companies that we contacted agreed to participate. We ended up having three companies which agreed to take part in our research, two of them projectified and one not. The non-projectified company operates in the stevedoring industry, two other companies are project oriented, with one operating in financial industry and another one in defence industry.

**Respondent sample criteria**

The first contacts with the companies were established by e-mails to the PMs senior management. If the companies showed their interests to participate we sent them our research proposal (Appendix 5) stating the premises and aim of our research as well as basic criteria for respondents willing to participate. The latter include several prerequisites. Firstly, the participant is to be an active PM currently employed by the company. Secondly, they must be currently running a project. Based on these criteria we asked the senior management contact to select PMs that would fit our criteria. Two out of three companies offered one respondent each while the third company provided us with six interviewees. In the end, we had a pool of eight respondents, consisting of one woman and seven men, all PMs. We believe this number and diversification of respondents is sufficient for our explorative research purpose. We do acknowledge that our respondent sampling might be a subject to certain biases. The reason for that is when we first contacted each company we used our personal contacts and our contact persons were senior project personnel within those companies. Thus they provided us with the details PMs who we could contact in order to secure interviews. This potentially could lead to the biased selection of respondents from the companies’ side, such as selecting only the most successful or optimistic PMs. However, we believe that even if such bias took place it would not corrupt our data collection and further analysis.
Interview respondents and companies

Because of privacy reasons we do not disclose names of the respondents in our research. Instead, respondents are identified by their years of experience as PMs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent (years of experience)</th>
<th>Job title</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Projectified/non-projectified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>Project manager</td>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>Projectified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>Project manager</td>
<td>Defence</td>
<td>Projectified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Project manager</td>
<td>Defence</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years</td>
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<td>Defence</td>
<td>Projectified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 years</td>
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<td>Defence</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 years</td>
<td>Project manager</td>
<td>Stevedoring</td>
<td>Non projectified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>Project manager</td>
<td>Defence</td>
<td>Projectified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 years</td>
<td>Project manager</td>
<td>Defence</td>
<td>Projectified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Interview respondents and companies

Non-response analysis and limitations

As indicated earlier, out of all the companies we contacted only one company was unable to participate in our research due to their internal communications policy. Though, the person we contacted within that company offered us contact of another company that would be potentially willing to participate. All the rest companies we contacted gave their consent to participate in our research and provided us contact details of available and interested PMs. All in all we interviewed eight PMs.

We realize that our respondent pool is somehow limited in number and in no way is representative across project management field. However, we believe that this sample is enough and suitable for our explorative research purpose and as Stebbins (2001, p. v) argued the aim of exploration is never to generalize but rather to accurately represent social research.

4.1.4. Interview procedures

Before conducting the interviews we prepared an interview guide which will be covered further in this section. We contacted each participant individually to set a date and time that was convenient for them. The respondents were asked to book one hour of their time for the interview. We aimed, though, to interview them during their working hours to be able to keep interviewees in the context of their organisational role. This was strategic, as to enable the participant to conjure up work life experiences more readily from their location within the workplace, as to yield us greater insight into the phenomena we wish to explore.

As we were located in Sweden during the time we were doing our research, we were unable to conduct face-to-face interviews, thus we decided to opt for telephone interviews. Saunders et al. (2012, p.404) argues that telephone interviews are more advantageous in terms of data collection speed, low cost and convenience. We do
realize that telephone interviews often fail to establish personal contact and trust with respondents which may lead to reliability issues of our data collection. Thereby, we always did our best to create an informal atmosphere while talking to our respondents, so they would feel comfortable answering questions and sharing their experiences. Before asking questions, we introduced each participant with the background of our research and asked for their permission to record the interview. All participants consented to being recorded. At the conclusion of the interview, nondisclosure information was clarified, any confidentiality issues straightened out and we assured participants that their identity would not be revealed in our research without their consent. Interviews lasted from 31 minutes to 52 minutes.

Payne (1999, p.90) claims that ‘interviews are dyadic interactions’. In our case, there were usually three participants – an interviewee and two interviewers. For the majority of the interviews, both interviewers were present. However, we interviewed each participant individually, as we wished to maintain an informal environment for the comfort of our respondents, akin to an interview strategy used by Bechhofer et al. (1984) (cited in Bryman & Bell 2011, p.474). The authors suggest that when multiple researchers interview one respondent, it is better to adopt the roles of ‘active’ and ‘passive’ interviewers. The ‘active’ researcher will actually conduct the interview while the ‘passive’ researcher will have a supportive role, taking notes and intervening only to change direction of conversation or to ask questions not covered by an ‘active’ interviewer. In our opinion, such strategy is very appropriate for semi-structured interviews and made our respondents feel more relaxed and not being outnumbered by interviewers. Before each interview we agreed who will be ‘active’ and ‘passive’ interviewer but we did not assign either questions or themes to each of us. Each conversation was recorded and transcribed and no third party had access to either recordings or transcriptions.

It should be also mentioned that some of the respondents asked to send them our interview guide prior to our appointment in order to familiarize themselves with types of questions we intended to ask. We had to refuse in doing so since we did not want them to know possible questions in advance and thus would receive more natural and unconstrained answers, although to appease the potential tension of the participants pre-interview, we provided a basic description of wanting to hear of experiences when emotions are expressed in the workplace and affirm that we were not after particular names or details on the project. Some of the participants also contacted us post-interview adding some new information they found pertinent to the questions asked during the interview.

**Interview guide design**

Saunders et al. (2012, p.377) argue that unstructured and semi-structured interviews best fit an exploratory research purpose. In our case, we chose semi-structured interviews, as they allow more control over interview process but at the same time provide researchers with rich contextual understanding (Saunders et al. 2012, p.378). Another reason for choosing semi-structured interviews was that they highlight interviewee’s perspective and always provide freedom in answering questions. Prior to conducting the interviews, we developed a basic interview guide (Appendix 4) which included a list of specific themes to cover (Saunders et al. 2012, p.385). However, we did not follow the interview guide strictly, and gave ourselves the freedom to adjust our questions with the direction the discussion takes, adding new questions and excluding irrelevant ones. A conscious effort was made as to not ask questions that would lead the
respondent, since we were interested in how interviewees themselves interpret the questions. Bryman and Bell (2011, p.473) argue that interview guide does not have to be presented in the form of written text, thus we used our conceptual framework for developing the guide. It did not have a rigid structure, rather outlined themes that we derived from our framework and wanted to cover in the course of our interviews; this allowed us to adjust the questions to the course conversation took.

We always started interviews with introducing ourselves and the research topic so respondents feel comfortable in answering further questions. After mutual introductions we asked our respondents about their experience as PMs and whether they acquired any kind of professional qualifications (e.g. APM, PMI etc.) along the way. We also asked to describe the environment they have to work in, whether it might have a potential effect on their emotional states. Always keeping in mind our first research question ‘Do PMs experience emotional labour?’ we first asked interviewees to tell us stories when they were experiencing emotions in the workplace under different settings. If we interpreted these stories as constituting the EL that we sought we probed deeper with follow up questions regarding the possible emotive events that could have triggered those emotions and level of control respondents had over them. We also probed the questions about how respondents felt in those situations and how they subsequently behaved under those circumstances, as well as the potential outcomes they might have experienced. At this point, it should be mentioned that we were very conscious about not asking direct questions in order not to lead respondents with their answers. We also attempted to ask our participants about the factors that could have mitigated or exacerbated the experienced emotions and their consequences. Finally, since our framework included various connections between categories (Figure 1) we attempted to determine whether those links were valid. For this reason, we tried to mingle elements of different categories in one question to see how respondents attempt to answer it.

Based on the typology suggested by Bryman and Bell (2011, p.477), the main types of questions we asked our respondents included:

- Introducing questions – asking to tell a story from their experience
- Follow-up questions – asking to elaborate on the previous answer
- Specifying questions – asking to be more precise in a discussed issue
- Interpreting and summarizing questions – paraphrasing and summing up what has been said by interviewee
- Indirect questions – asking for respondent’s own view
- Direct questions – used mainly as a follow-up question to get a better understanding of a discussed theme.

**Interview bias**

Saunders et al. (2012, p.381) identify several sources of bias that can take place in semi-structured interviews – interviewer and interviewee biases. The authors contend that interviewer bias occurs when an interviewer tries to impose his or her own opinion and frame of reference on the respondent through the posed questions. We acknowledge that since in our study we favoured Morris and Feldman (1996, p. 1004) interactionist perspective of EL, whereby each organisational role has a degree of social expectations during interactions, the performance to which may invariably evoke EL, we approached interviews half-anticipating that respondents do experience EL, henceforth, the incorporation of a sub research question in our work. We do, however, make conscious attempts to minimize potential of guiding our participants with our own biases, by
avoiding direct and closed questions and often asked respondents to give examples and tell stories from their experience. The interviewer bias may occur during data interpretation stage also, when a researcher has to interpret the responses and thus might be rather subjective in analysing responses (Saunders et al. 2012, p.381). We tried to avoid such situation by thoroughly coding interview transcripts individually and cross checking with the codes of the other researcher.

The interviewee bias may occur when respondents are compelled to participate in interviews by their managers and employers (Payne 1999, p.90). In this case, the interviewees may be reluctant to participate and thus will provide very limited answers, waffle or simply refuse answering particular questions (Payne 1999, p.90). All respondents who agreed to participate in our research seemed to be genuinely interested in it, were rather open minded and we believe did not try to sabotage the interviews. Saunders et al. (2012, p.381) emphasized that participating in an interview, especially semi-structured, is ‘an intrusive process’, thus interviewees might be rather cautious to discuss some particular topics or relate them to their experiences. We tried to mitigate this circumstance by creating an informal environment and asking first general questions that would make respondents feel more relaxed. In line with our ethical stance, if tension was felt by the interviewer from the response of the participant after probing a particular area, we would move the interview along, as to keep the participant comfortable, open, honest and willing to participate with us.

We are conscious about other biases that might occur within our study. For instance, respondents’ cautiousness to provide open answers and share the examples from their professional life might lead to somehow corrupted results of our studies. That is why we always informed our interviewees about the confidentiality of our research. Efforts were made to tailor our interview questions to participants and their job context whilst avoid certain terminology or slang that may puzzle the respondents. We always encouraged them to explain in their own words what emotions they were displaying in a particular situation, how they were feeling about a scenario and the like, never forcing their answer into certain framework. Such approach allows us to interpret how respondents really experienced a particular phenomena without putting them into frame of specific terminology and maintaining our research ethics.

4.1.5. Ethical guidelines

Mack et al. (2005, p.8) assert that qualitative researchers, just as any other researchers interacting with people, should impeccably follow research ethics. ‘Research ethics deals primarily with the interaction between researchers and the people they study’ (Mack et al. 2005, p.8). The authors claim that the research participants and not the research question should be of first priority. If it came to a choice between doing harm to respondents or to the research, research is to be the proverbial sacrificial anode. Fortunately in our research it never came to such drastic measures, we believe this is because we consciously maintained a high level of research ethics throughout our study. Firstly, prior to starting the interview process we provided minor background information about our research purpose to interviewees making sure that they understood the objective of our study was to tap into their experiences, not know the details of their current projects. Although, care was taken at this point as to not overtly bias the interviewees by detailing the nature of EL and the founding emotional regulation framework. Secondly, all interviewees were asked for consent to record the interview for further analysis when the time was initially scheduled and also just prior to the interview being conducted. None of interviewees objected in doing so. The
interview recordings and transcriptions have been kept confidential and were used only for our analysis purposes. Thirdly, after the interviews were done we inquired whether our respondents preferred to stay anonymous or consented for us to identify them by their first name in our research. Some of the participants preferred to remain anonymous, so we decided to identify each of them by his or her years of experience as a PM. For those who wished to remain anonymous, we sought again sought consent for experience to be used as a descriptor. In this way we secured all the necessary privacy for our research participants. Finally, as some of the company’s preferred to not disclose their names, participating companies will be identified by the industry they operate. As a matter of due diligence, the wording of the company and industry description in our research was confirmed with the relevant authorities at each company. Another ethical concern, identified by Saunders et al. (2012, p.241) is maintenance of objectivity throughout the whole research process. On data collection stage we ensured that we collected, recorded and transcribed the complete set of data available, in order to avoid subjectivity in data selection.

4.2. Data analysis

4.2.1. Data analysis strategy

In our research, we found Template Analysis (TA) to be an appropriate approach to analysis of qualitative data. Waring and Wainwright (2008, p.86) observe that TA is a fairly recent data analysis strategy in qualitative research and emerged from more rigid approaches such as Grounded Theory and Phenomenological Analysis. King (2007) argues that TA “refers to a particular way of thematically analysing qualitative data”. TA implies the design of a ‘coding template’ based on themes and categories revealed from the collected data (King 2007). There are several reasons why TA is particularly suitable for our research. Firstly, it combines inductive and deductive qualitative approaches (Saunders et al. 2012, p.572), which relates to the ‘semi-grounded theory approach’ we argued in favour of in our research methodological choice. This means that codes can be predefined and then modified in the course of analysis. The codes that we use in our analysis were identified in the framework presented in the literature review section. Secondly, Waring and Wainwright (2008, p.86) debate that, unlikely to Grounded Theory, TA is not embedded in its realist methodology. The authors point out that TA can be implemented within a wide range of methodologies and epistemological positions and thus is appropriate for various research purposes. King (2007) claims that TA is particularly suitable for studies following constructivist ontology, the position we favoured in our research. Third, TA allows more flexible approach in analysing data (Waring and Wainwright 2008, p.86). It is less structured and prescriptive than Grounded Theory since it does not forbid the prior identification of the codes to analyse the data (Saunders et al. 2012, p.572).

King (2007) distinguishes several key steps to proceed with TA. A priori of theme is first identified to direct the analysis. It is important to keep in mind how extensive original template is. If too many predefined themes are selected, the template might delude analysis and limit exploration of more relevant themes and categories. However, limited amount of codes will result in excessive quantity of rich and complex data. In our original template we identified five main themes and thirty codes. We believe this amount of codes will enable us to derive the most of the collected data. We used numerical coding for the categories and subcategories in our framework and alphabetical coding for the links between those categories so it is easier to differentiate the codes.
The second step, is to transcribe the interviews (King 2007). TA does not require an extremely thorough transcription with a record of ups and downs of intonation and pauses timed to very second. Yet, it does require transcription of everything that was said, since it is impossible to be sure in advance what parts of what was said will prove to be relevant and what not. As such, all interviews were thoroughly transcribed and double checked for errors.

Third, code the collected data and develop initial template (King 2007), figure in Appendix 3. The parts of the transcripts that are relevant to the research questions should be identified and coded respectively. If those codes can be related to a particular theme they should be attached to the latter. If the discovered code cannot be related to any of the predefined themes a new one should be created or existing one modified. As it will be shown further, the key themes within our template remained relatively unchanged while some categories were revised.

Fourth, modify the template (King 2007), figure in Appendix 4. Saunders et al. (2012, p.573) debate that the initial template will be reviewed as a part of the qualitative data analysis. In our research we used following ways to modify our initial template – insertion of new codes, deletion of existing codes, merging/segregation of initial codes, change of higher-order classification.

Finally, the final template is to be used for data interpretation and the writing up of findings. The final template includes five themes and thirty four codes. Whilst interpreting the data, we were conscious that the frequency of occurrence of a particular category may not indicate its level significance. The frequent occurrence of a certain theme might imply that this theme deserves a more detailed study, but because of the nature of qualitative analysis and interpretivist standpoint favoured in this research, it must never be considered as an evidence of itself (King 2007).

### 4.2.2. The quality of the research

The quality of research findings is of paramount importance for a qualitative study (Saunders et al. 2012, p.194). Thus we, as researchers, must verify and assess the quality of our study according to certain criteria. The main quality criteria that research methodology literature refers to are reliability and validly of the research (Bryman & Bell 2011; Saunders et al. 2012; Stebbins 2001). Reliability usually centres around replicability, whether the same findings would be produced by another researcher with similar understanding of the research problem, using the same methodological approach (Stebbins 2001, p.25). Saunders et al. (2012, p.192) distinguish a number of threats to reliability. Firstly, participant error posits to any factor that may affect the participants’ performance, such as asking to complete a survey just before lunchtime (Saunders et al. 2012, p.192). We tried to mitigate the participant error by allowing our interviewees to choose the time that was appropriate to them. Participant bias may also discredit reliability, by preventing open and transparent responses (Saunders et al. 2012, p.192).

When participants were contacted by email to arrange an interview time, they were advised to book a conference room in order to avoid office open space, as we believe it may inhibit them from providing open and honest answers about the personal issue of emotions, without anxiety of being overheard. Finally, the researcher bias and error, which refers to any factors that can affect researcher’s recording and interpretation of collected data, respectively may be present (Saunders et al. 2012, p.192). We mitigated these threats by discussing each step of our study and then cross-checking each other’s written parts throughout the research process.
However, reliability by itself is not sufficient to warrant good research quality (Saunders et al. 2012, p.193). The second criterion is validity and its two types are distinguished: internal and external validity. Saunders et al. (2012, p.193), however, point out that internal validity is not applicable for exploratory studies. Validity in exploratory research is usually referred to the requirement to gain precise understanding of the researched phenomena (Stebbins 2001, p.25). Stebbins (2001) argues that validity in exploration should be approached differently compared to the one in confirmation studies. Confirmatory studies usually require each research to meet both criteria of reliability and validity whilst exploratory studies accept that ‘the most authoritative statement about validity and reliability can only be made down the road in the wake of several open-ended investigations’ (Stebbins 2001, p.26). Conscious effort was taken at each step of the research process to protect the validity of our study, however, since this is essentially the first time EL is looked at within project management context, further must be conducted within this field for validity to improve. Furthermore, validity in exploration depends on the sample representativeness (Stebbins 2001, p.26). Sample representativeness can be achieved in different ways and one of them is snowball sampling. We used elements of snowball sampling in our research, however, according to Stebbins (2001, p.26) ‘sample representativeness in an exploratory study is usually less than perfect, mainly because perfection on this matter is often an impossible goal’.

Saunders et al. (2012, p.192) point out that validity and reliability are more of a positivist nature and interpretivist researchers often give preference to other quality criteria such as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Bryman and Bell (2011, p.395), offer a different perspective, claiming that credibility and transferability parallel internal and external validity, respectively, whilst dependability corresponds to reliability. According to Bryman and Bell (2011, p.398) confirmability centres on researchers’ objectivity. The authors also note that complete objectivity is almost unattainable in business research, but it can be verified by auditors. We believe that our supervisor can be considered as an external auditor and all his remarks and suggestions were taken into considerations by us during the research process.
5. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data gathered from our sample of PMs yielded some results that are on par with previous EL research, suggesting that the integrated framework presented earlier in our research may hold a degree of salience in the project management context also. However, previous research and EL conceptualisations do not seamlessly marry over to our context. The data gathered from our pool of PMs yielded new insights as to the particular dimensions, and interrelationships between dimensions, during the emotional regulation that PMs undergo in the workplace, some of which have not been identified in previous research. This is understandable, as our literature review identified, prior research mainly focused on front-line routinised service industries, where the employee would arguably be under different forces than those experienced by a more senior PM in an environment characterised by turbulence and emergence (Clarke 2010, p. 6).

Our findings are explored in line with our research aims of understanding the possible EL experienced by PMs and identifying the possible dimensions of their emotional regulation process. The individual state and following motivated behaviours of the PMs from their stories are first explained and work to answer our research question of whether PMs experience EL. Following this, and to answer the sub research question of our paper, antecedents and moderating factors of the emotional regulation process of PMs is examined, with close attention paid to the categories specific to the project management context. Finally, the possible consequences of emotional regulation on the PM are explored. Together, these dimensions seek to answer our sub research question regarding the possible dimensions of the emotional regulation process pertinent to PMs.

The main findings of the gathered data are illustrated in Figure 3. This figure is an illustration of the final template analysis performed during analysis. The elements of the figure represent the themes expressed during the interviews and are not intended to be exhaustive. Furthermore, the linkages between elements are not intended to show a causal relationship, but indicate that a relationship between the categories may exist. The coded numerical template is found in Appendix 4.

5.1. Individual state and motivated behaviours

Previous EL literature circled the individual state of an employee as the trigger to EL (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 194). For front-line service workers, where the majority of emotional research has been conducted, when a situation conjures an inner emotion different to the perceived emotional requirement of that situation, they are motivated to regulate their felt emotion in line with perceived requirements to avoid organisational repercussions, such as punishment (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 194). The act of this regulation constitutes the laborious aspect of EL (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 194). Key to this crude explanation of EL is the ability of the perceived emotional requirement to create an inner tension that the individual regulates through their behaviour, as to remain aligned with this perceived requirement. The employer sets the display requirements for interactions, yet ultimately, these are determined by what the customer expects from the interaction (Briner 1999, p. 330; Burch et al. 2013, p. 123). The ability of emotive requirements “authorised by the employer” (Grandey 2002, p. 100) to shape behaviours was present in the data collected from PMs, but it held a significantly lower degree of importance in emotional regulation than with previous service industry focused research. This suggests other forces outside of company expectations shape the PMs emotional regulation process, which will influence the potential experience of EL.
Figure 3. Emotional regulation process framework for PM context
Where prior research indicated that the perceived emotional requirement was purely set and authorised by the employer (cf. Burch et al. 2013, p. 123), our findings indicate that the PM has more power in what they perceive the emotional requirement to be for the given situation. This perhaps stems from the PM being akin to a CEO of a temporary organisation (Turner and Müller 2003, p.5); they themselves take a greater role of setting the perceived emotional requirement for a given situation. This is not to say that the organisational display rules did not influence the PM, generic corporate behavioural guidelines were acknowledged by all PMs to shape their behaviours to a degree. Yet the overarching theme was that the PM had a big portion in determining the emotional requirement for the situation at hand.

Moreover, the perceived emotional requirement being set by the PM, and not higher up in the hierarchies, may stem from the unique environment the PM works in. Employees in service roles, such as supermarket cashiers, have highly routinised interactions with customers, which enables the employer to shape and confine behaviours (Rubin et al 2005, p. 200). The PMs, on the other hand, spoke of interactions with a greater variety of stakeholders and in an array of situations, which would make it very hard for a company to set the specific emotional requirements of every situation that a PM faces. Put simply, the highly irregular work lives of a PM make it hard to set rigid display rules to be imposed by top management. Rather, it seems the PM is given the license to determine what is required for the situation. Broad corporate behaviour policies underpin the PM, yet they still possess the dexterity to determine the emotional requirements for the situation at hand, which consequently shapes their behaviour, which we argue will indirectly affect the level of EL they may experience.

The perceived emotive requirement for a particular situation is determined by what is best for the project. From all of interviewees, we consistently picked up the theme that the well-being of their project lay at the very heart of their behaviour, despite the emotions they may actually harbour towards the situation. The sense of purpose is expressed by one PM in the below quote is echoed in similar ways by others:

My goal to make sure that the objective is achieved. (PM 4 months)

The driver of this theme is that the PM is intensely focused on delivering their project, with their feelings and behaviour shaped by what they deem best for ensuring project success. Shaping ones feelings and behaviour in accordance to the perceived requirements of the situation is precisely what Grandey (2000, p. 99) refers to in her framework as emotional regulation, suggesting that the very heart of the emotional regulation process for PMs is consistent with existing theory. In the project management context, however, the perceived emotional requirement is determined by what is best for the project, as deemed by the commander of the project; the PM. The ability to set the own perceived emotive requirement for a situation independently, may buffer against what Hochschild (1983, p. 7) described the “management of feeling”. Greater control over understanding situational requirements early on in the emotional regulation process, may buffer against the experience of EL from the sequential behaviours.

The sequential behaviour of the PM from their individual state is chosen in accordance to what the PM deems as best for their project. What is deemed best for the project stems from how the PM can best maintain the project team and stakeholders towards achieving the objectives of the project. Speaking about their role, one PM comments:

We need to get the job done and we’re held fully responsible and accountable for getting the job done through other people. (PM, 25 years)
Thus, whilst tasks within the project may not be performed by the PM directly, their responsibility comes from motivating and managing the people directly engaged with the project tasks. As another PM notes:

[It] is how to make sure that everybody is on board and make sure that everybody stays on board. And also understand what the project is all about, what the scope is, what your objectives are and make sure you can motivate people in that way that they fully cooperate with you. (PM, 4 months)

In this sense, the perceived emotive display requirement is whatever is best for ensuring the project stakeholders remain aligned to the project and are motivated towards achieving the objectives of the project. The sequential behaviour of the PM enacts the perceived emotional display requirement, so as to draw alignment and motivation from the project stakeholders. For this reason, the behaviour displayed by the PM can be understood as strategic, as it aims to get the best out of project stakeholders towards achieving project objectives, for which they are ultimately responsible. Put simply, the PM is in a position to understand the perceived emotional requirement to get the best out of a given situation and is motivated to display these behaviours in order to positively influence overall project well-being.

The findings presented so far hold a degree of salience with previous EL research. For service workers, the motivation to behave in accordance with perceived requirements, regardless of felt emotion, was to avoid organisational punishment customer (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 196). Service encounters are generally short in duration, with the closure of one customer interaction heralding the cessation of display requirement until a new customer kicks off the next interaction (Burch et al. 2013, p. 121). The PM, however, is on-show for the entire duration of the project with a more established group of stakeholders. So whilst the behaviour of the PM can be understood as to be motivated to achieve the project and avoid failure and consequent organisational repercussions, as does service employees, the long-term nature of the project and interactions herewith in means that the PM must behave with more foresight. As one PM notes:

There can’t be the temptation to charge around and tell people ‘you do this, you do that’ and quite aggressively try to get things done, you have to get more strategic because as a long term strategy it doesn’t work. (PM, 4 months)

Having the ability to set the perceived emotional requirement for a situation does not automatically mean that the emotions felt will be the same as those required. If this were the case, then there would be no dissonance felt by the PM under any circumstance and EL would not be an issue. Instead, the inner feelings conjured within the PM are innate and separate to their assessment of emotive display required for the good of the project. This became evident by the numerous stories that PMs offered up which, without interviewer coercion, detailed what EL researches identify as emotive dissonance. The experience of dissonance is particularly important in our research, as of all three states, it is considered the most likely trigger to a behaviour that emotionally laborious to the individual experiencing it. PMs also told stories of how their felt emotions matched those required of a particular situation and this harmony made them more inclined to display genuine behaviour to the situational audience. On the other extreme, stories where inner emotions overpowered perceived display requirements also emerged from the interviews. This suggests that the PM experiences coincide with the three individual states theorised in EL literature, that of emotive dissonance, emotive harmony and emotive deviance. According to prior research (cf. Grandey 2000; Rubin et al. 2005),
the experience of these states by an individual, particularly emotional dissonance, is likely to trigger a behavioural response that is emotionally laborious on the individual.

The next few sections further delve into the stories imparted to us during the interviews in order to show how from these three individual states, the PM makes a conscious decision as to the appropriate behaviour to enact in accordance with what they perceive to be best for the project and whether this behaviour took an emotional toll on the PM. Together, these first-hand accounts from the PMs regarding their individual state and strategic behaviour work to answer our research purpose, by gauging whether EL is experienced in the working lives of PMs. Further in the findings, when we turn to the possible antecedents, moderators and consequences of emotional regulation, we seek to answer our second research question of identifying the possible dimensions of the emotional regulation process pertinent to PMs.

### 5.1.1. Emotional dissonance

In one of the few areas that EL researchers find agreement, emotional dissonance motivates behaviour towards either surface or deep acting in order to realign one’s self back with perceived display requirements (Brotheridge & Lee 2003, p. 365; Grandey 2000, p. 1000; Rubin et al. 2005, p. 194).

Without leading the interviewee through the questions asked, all of the PMs shared experiences of emotional dissonance. The behavioural response of the PM is strategic, as to induce the best possible outcome for the project from the situation. Consistent with EL literature, in an emotionally dissonant state, the PM chooses a behavioural response to surface or deep acting, depending on the circumstance, audience and what they deemed best for the project in that situation.

The audience, with whom the PM is interacting with, is a key consideration to their individual state and their consequential behavioural response. It should be made clear that the audience is not the only factor that shapes behaviour and other antecedents certainly have their influence, yet it is one factor that PMs from different companies, background and experiences all draw their stories around. This is perhaps due to the commonality of these audience groups in the context of project management, that is, each PM has senior management to report to, a project team behind them and a customer, whether it be internal or external, to deliver to.

#### Surface acting as a response to emotive dissonance

The majority of PMs interviewed point towards feigning their behavioural response in particular situations where emotional dissonance is felt, implying that it is an essential part of their role. SA was performed by the PM to their project team, customer and senior management, but each was performed with different strategic intent, stemming from the overall sense of purpose towards project well-being.

PMs told stories of experiencing emotional dissonance from situational cues with their project team. They believed the appropriate behaviour was to surface act. Feigning behaviours for the good of the project circled around three strategies, shielding negativity from the team, sparking action or maintaining plain sailing.

PMs gave very similar recounts to SA as a shielding strategy, suggesting this is a rather common occurrence in project management and is a typical strategy a PM enacts for the well-being of the project. Two PMs claim:

You don’t always want to [...] show the amount of stress that you’re under [...] it has to be a different way that you flow down to the team because you don’t want
to make them feel disheartened and what they’re doing is not worth it [...] it has to be a level of pressure on, but you don’t put them under the same level of stress that PMs [...] might be under. (PM, 4 years)

I am kind of protecting them to an extent, from what comes down from the higher management [...] so that they can do what they do, they can get on, you don’t necessarily have to suffer the same level of pressure that I’m suffering if it makes them do the job better. (PM, 20 years)

These findings suggest that issues flowing downstream from senior management may create negative pressure-related emotions for the PM. The perceived project emotional requirement for interactions with their team is more of a positive and calmer disposition, so as to shield them from the same pressure exerted onto the PM. In this sense, what is perceived to be best for the project is to keep the team focused and motivated on their tasks and not to be burdened by the downstream pressure. Whilst still harbouring the inner felt tensions, on the surface, the PM simulates calm during interacting with the project team. The strategy of sustaining an even keel for the team is illustrated by another PM:

From a project manager point of view, in that setting, in a team setting, he has to be very anchored, very composed [...] normally when an issue is going in, he has to be in an anchor position. (PM, 4 years)

Whilst SA has generally been given a bad rap in academia, as faking behaviour is seen as somewhat deceptive (Mann 1999, p. 364), these instances from the project management context hold no such negative connotation. SA shielded the project team from unnecessary triggers to their individual state. It also was a strategic move to mitigate the potential for the negative emotions to spread to the team via contagion and affect their motivation towards the project. Continuing the seafaring analogy, SA helped the PM maintain an even keel for the team and stay on course during storms.

The suppression of negative emotions in order to display more positive behaviours was not the only SA strategy utilised by PMs. In some instances, SA was employed by the PM to display what would be considered more of a negative behaviour in response to a particular situation. As one PM demonstrates:

I can think of a guy, who wasn’t shall we say, taking incoming calls, so although not emotionally involved, the best thing for the project was to give this guy a tough time, so, a dressing-down [...] So I had to get a little, appear to be, angry, [...] where deep inside, I wasn’t really angry because I was having a pretty good day, But there are times where you’ve got to appear to be angry. (PM, 20 years)

From this example, the felt emotion was rather positive, yet the perceived project emotional requirement was one more towards annoyance and irritation as to get the project member back to fulfilling the obligations of their job. In order to enact what was perceived to be best for the project, the PM strategically feigned a more aggressive behaviour as to spark action from the team member.

Unlike front-line service industry EL research, where the employee is rather submissive to the customer and is required to show only positive behaviours (Diefendorff 2005, p. 340; Morris & Feldman 1996, p. 988;), the PM may purposely feign negative behaviour through SA as a strategy to regulate themselves in line with the required situational display. The suppression of positive emotion for the display of negative is a rather unchartered aspect in EL research and has not extensively been covered by a large number of academic works.
The data presented so far demonstrate how the PM may be required to feign positive or negative emotion, depending on the situational requirement. However, what is best for the project may also call for the PM to suppress felt emotions and surface act a neutral behaviour. As one PM explains:

I have, on many occasions, just can sting my tongue, not saying a thing because I decided that it was not a productive thing to do. (PM, 9 years)

When experiencing emotional dissonance with customers or senior management, the PM experiences a different perceived project emotional requirement than requirements alluded to with their team. The perceived display requirement when interacting with customers was identified by nearly all PMs as one that portrays confidence and control. As two PMs comment on their behaviour when the customer is their audience:

Inside, I might be, I might be shitting myself because I don't know what to do, but in that setting with the customer, you have to portray a level of confidence that you have something in control. (PM, 4 years)

I feel there's the illusion of the swan-like on the surface, but our legs pedalling underneath the water [...] as a PM you're trying to give an air of leadership and an air of confidence, but inside, you might be panicking that you need to lead the team. (PM, 20 years)

In these instances, the PM feels an internal state of anxiety and perhaps also helplessness, yet the perceived emotional requirement for the good of the project is to display that project is under control. The strategy to regulate ones felt emotions of anxiety with required emotions of stability is to surface act and simulate the appropriate relaxed and confident behaviour. Another PM makes a similar reference to need to demonstrate control to the customer during changing scopes, but from a unique angle:

It’s difficult one to balance because the project team probably wants to see you being frustrated about it, they want to see that I’m getting annoyed with the customer and I am getting annoyed, but it’s one of those things that you can’t. You still have to jump through the hoops they are asking us to jump through [...] that’s what we've been asked to do. I’m sure they do suspect that I’m frustrated because if I weren’t, I wouldn’t be human. (PM, 4 months).

This PM raises two interesting points in their comment. Firstly, there are competing display expectations in this one situation. The project team is expecting the PM to display frustration at the customer for continually changing the project scope, yet on the other, assumedly the customer is expecting a more calm display, as intimated by the previous customer interaction stories. Competing display expectations do not appear to be looked at in great detail in previous EL research. In this context, however, two different audiences are expecting two vastly different displays from the PM in the same situation. The behaviour enacted by the PM is ultimately deemed by what is best for the project, which in this situation is to SA a positive demeanour whilst suppressing the negative emotions of frustration.

The other interesting point from this comment is that although SA a positive demeanour, the PM eludes that the team is still able to pick up on genuinely felt emotions. This suggests that SA may not be completely fool-proof to the audience. The response of another PM, when asked whether their suppression of emotion was able to be picked up by others, notes:
If I really didn’t want a member of the team to know what I’m feeling, I would be able to hide it. So to some extent, instead of saying the whole “I’m annoyed”, you can convey that through the way you react without saying much. (PM, 9 years)

Whether genuine emotion is picked up by the team because they suspect its presence, or whether the PM may purposely want their emotion to seep out, as to show allegiance with their team or to get their genuine feeling across is purely speculative. Yet it does offer an interesting insight to the potential degree of SA. Granted that SA is deemed emotionally laborious to an individual (Grandey 2000, p. 101; Rubin et al. 2005, p. 195) and genuine displays as EL free (Mann 1999, p. 365) or carrying a comparatively small EL with it (Ashforth & Humphrey 1993, p. 94; Diefendorff 2005, p. 399), it is not entirely inconceivable that the simultaneous display of faked and genuinely felt emotions may mitigate the potential emotionally laborious consequences on the individual as compared to a purely SA behaviour.

Further to this, EL research locates the laborious aspect of SA being that people generally do not like acting fake in a situation (Grandey 2000, p. 101). Data gathered in from PMs does not disconfirm or confirm this, yet what does come across strongly is that the strategy behind the SA provides benefit to the project, and henceforth the PM. Acquiring benefits via SA towards the overall purpose the PM has to the project may buffer these laborious feelings of fakery.

**Deep acting as a response to emotive dissonance**

SA is not the only behavioural response a PM enacts in a dissonant state. Congruent with prior EL research, the PM may consciously try to experience the appropriate emotion for the situation. Whereas SA was considered more fake and may be recognised as more fake by the audience, making it somewhat more of a risky behaviour (Hochschild 1983), DA offers up a more genuine behavioural response, by the individual getting emotionally involved in the situation to bring about a self-reappraisal of felt emotions (Diefendorff et al. 2005, p. 340).

Similar to a SA behavioural response, the choice of the PM to undertake DA was based on its potential strategic benefit towards the project. This again strengthens the notion of what is best for the project strongly guides the emotional regulation process of the PM. From the data gathered, DA was chosen as a strategy to ensure commitment and motivation with the project team. Evidence of DA amongst interactions with senior management or external customers was not present in the data gathered; however, in the nature of exploration and unwillingness to generalise, we do not believe that the lack of presence in our data means the potential relationship can be ruled out completely.

With interactions with their project team, PMs were seemingly more comfortable to DA than with any other audience. Indeed, no strong evidence was gathered from our interviews that identify DA with senior management or customers, suggesting that the emotional investment that comes with DA (Hochschild 1983) held greatest purpose within their project team. This is understandable, as the PM is highly involved with the project team at each and every step of the project lifecycle and both supports and finds them as a source of support during the project (Artto & Dietrich 2007, p. 10). As will be explained further in organisational support factors, the close emotional proximity of the PM to the team may sway them more towards DA during dissonant states. As one PM explains:
The person has a conflict of priorities and is afraid he won’t meet a deadline and was emotional and kind of complaining “If I have to do this, then I can’t be able to do that” [...] I said “talk to your manager, try to see how we could come to a solution in order to meet a deadline and I will give him a call as well”. And in the end, that’s what I did [...] for the best possible solutions in order to meet a deadline. (PM, 4 months)

Although the PM is understood to harbour feelings of frustration towards the situation, what is best for the project is to resolve the problem so that the task meets its deadline, but also to ensure the audience is still on board and motivated towards the project. The PM takes a DA approach to consciously try to experience the appropriate emotions for the situation and act them out accordingly, making DA more of a constructive and genuine behavioural response in times of dissonance than a SA approach may yield. DA being a more constructive behavioural response is alluded to by another PM:

If I know that someone on the project team is under stress, I would probably handle it before putting anything else on the plate. I would discuss with them to find out whether he was able to carry it. The temptation of the PM may be to look at rules and responsibilities from the level of the law. You have to look how much he’s got on his plate, you wonder about stress and strain. (PM, 4 months)

Here, the PM demonstrates emotional flexibility by actively placing himself in the shoes of their audience to try and understand where the member is coming from. In both of these DA examples, the PM recognises that to get the best out of the flailing member from that situation, they must understand the audience and experience the appropriate emotional response for the situation. DA may also hold long-term strategic intent, as to ensure the member remains onboard and committed to the project.

DA was also enacted by PMs as a means to spread positive emotions and motivate the team during times of project trouble. As another PM explains:

When someone comes to you with bad news, you have to let the guys know that you are going to try and find a way through this together; you can’t just leave it with somebody to deal with that problem. You have to show that you are proactive “okay, this is bad news you are telling me now, but let’s look at the positive side, let’s see how we can resolve this situation” [...] you have to create a positive environment so that people feel they can come and tell you information, because as a project manager, you entirely depend on managing that information and if you have a bad attitude to people bringing this information that quickly reflects on the project and control. (PM, 2 years)

What was best for the project in the face of obstacles was for the PM to revaluate their own attitude and focus the team towards overcoming the problem. Taking a DA approach, the PM motivated the team to resolve the issue and prevent the spread of negative emotions that may derail the team. A long-term strategy is also at play, as the PM looks to foster open communication channels to capture future problems early on.

Similar to problems experienced in other EL research, we were unable to clearly decipher whether DA was emotionally laborious for the PM enacting the behaviour. Morris and Feldman (1996) theorise that DA would be less laborious on the individual than SA, as DA works to reduce dissonance by readressing the emotions felt. Our data seems to be in line with this argument, whereby the PM actively regulates their felt emotion in line with perceived requirements, which reduces the level of dissonance, making the display more natural and potentially less emotionally laborious on the PM.
Other emotional dissonance findings

In their conceptualisation of EL, Rubin et al. (2005, p. 195) made a prominent argument that continuous DA may feedback and potentially reduce the dissonance, whereby the expressed behaviour may feedback to influence felt emotion. Put simply, repeatedly experiencing the appropriate emotion for a situation may, over time, reduce the dissonance felt on the onset. This feedback was illustrated by a loop between behaviour and individual state in Figure 1. Our data, however, did not find such a relationship to exist. We suspect this may be due to the nature of project management. Rubin et al. (2005) appears to be influenced by research into EL of front-line service industries, which are likely to have highly routinised short interactions with one audience (Burch et al. 2013, p. 121). Conversely, the turbulent nature of projects and interaction requirements with various levels of stakeholders (Maylor et al. 2006, p. 664) may mean that the same exact situation may not present itself continuously. Therefore, the lack of routine in situational cues for the PM is likely to mean that DA may not feedback to inform the individual state, as is arguably present in routinised service contexts.

Prior EL literature and evidence gathered from the PM context thus far, infers that emotional dissonance stem from feeling an emotion that differs to the emotion required for the situation. This assumes that the perceived requirement of the situation is to display or express a particular emotion. Yet, as one PM points out from the comparison of the PM role to their previous role:

In the previous role, I’ve been a [omitted for confidentiality reasons] and I was chained to my desk and not really walking around and speaking to people. There is actually an emotional strain to that. (PM, 6 months)

Emotional dissonance may occur when the perceived requirement is to actually show no emotions. We believe this is evidence of a potential widening of the definition of dissonance; we refer to it as ‘reverse emotional dissonance’. We hazard a thought that reverse emotional dissonance may still lead the individual towards wither a SA or DA behaviours, though the key part we wish to get across here, is that EL may not purely stem from having to conform to express emotions and behaviours required. EL may also stem from a dissonant state where the individual feels an emotion, but the display expectation is for the emotion to be suppressed.

Summary of emotional dissonance findings

In brief, our data provides evidence that PMs experience emotional dissonance, a key component of EL. Similar to previous EL research, under experiences of emotional dissonance, the PM is motivated to regulate emotions in line with perceived emotive requirements through either SA or DA. Perceived emotive requirement relate to what is best for the project and the consequential behavioural response chosen takes this into account, as well as, the audience the PM is acting to. For interactions with their project team, evidence gathered suggests that SA is enacted to shelter their team from negativity, spark action or to suppress emotions entirely. SA may be a motivated behaviour with customers and senior management, as they trigger a different perceived emotional requirement, primarily centring on needing to appear in control and confident. DA was seen as a more constructive behavioural response, as it is utilised to keep the team onboard and motivated towards the project.

Acting in general entails the devaluing of felt emotion (Hochschild 1983, p. 12), which holds a negative connotation to it. Yet, acting may be the most appropriate behavioural strategy for the PM to enact for the well-being of the project. Reaping the
benefits of stakeholder engagement on the project may actually buffer the PM from the negative outcomes generally associated with SA and DA. As such, unlike the negative sentiment that may be held regarding acting in the workplace, the behavioural acting associated with emotional dissonance may not actually be laborious to a PM.

5.1.2. Emotional harmony

Emotional harmony exists when the emotions felt correspond with the perceived emotional requirement in the situation (Rafaeli & Sutton 1987, p. 32). In a state of harmony, the behavioural response is to exude the genuinely felt emotion. Several PMs told stories of situations where company awards recognising top performers. For the PM, these awards were a source of pride for their team and the perceived emotional requirement in these situations was to express this pride. As one PM comments:

It’s a pride for your team and you definitely feel some emotional attachment to these awards [...] it has a positive effect on motivation and morale. (PM, 2 years)

From the story, we ascertained that what was best for the project was to recognise the achievement of the recipient of the award, with the PM feeling a similar emotion of pride. The genuine display a strategic element of motivating and enhancing morale, suggesting that recognition of pride by the PM may be contagious to the team.

There is an implicit assumption in the literature that overall, the perceived emotional requirement by a company is one of positivity (cf. Morris & Feldman 1996, p. 988; Diefendorff et al. 2005, p. 340), henceforth, for harmony to exist, the felt emotion must also be positive. The interviewees told of experiences that fall under the definition of an emotional harmonious state, yet not all emotionally harmonious states contained positive emotions. PMs told of certain situations where the perceived emotional requirement may be of a negative emotion, hence, their behavioural display was also on the negative side. A PM told the story of when a project member continuously failed to complete their tasks, to the point where it was affecting the work of others:

There are individuals within the team who don’t get the picture. There have been occasions where I will go at them with both barrels. (PM, 20 years)

In this context, what was best for the team and the project was to get this member back onboard and performing up to the level that was expected of them. The perceived emotional requirement was then one of more aggressiveness. The PM appears to have felt this frustration towards the project member, whereby suggesting harmony between the negative emotion felt and the negative emotion required for the situation. The resulting behaviour was a genuine display of anger or irritation as a means to spark action and have them performing to standard again.

This harmony of negative emotions felt did not just occur within the project team, but was also evidenced with interactions with external parties. In one detailed story, a PM explained that their supplier continuously failed on delivering a particular product for the project. The first few failures were accepted by the PM as miscommunications. When it began to critically affect the project, the PM needed to express the urgency:

I communicated to the supply chain that this is unacceptable, either something has to be done in terms of performance, in terms of the information being passed through, because the information that they sent us that gets pulled through, and a lot of work gets put into it so it is unacceptable. (PM, 4 years)

The perceived emotional requirement was one of urgency, as the supplier’s failure to deliver their component of the project was starting to affect overall. The PM felt
pressure from senior management to rectify the situation. Although display expectations are generally thought of as encouraging positive emotions and behaviours with customers (cf. Diefendorff 2005, p. 340; Morris & Feldman 1996, p. 988), what the PM deemed best for the project in this situation seemingly outweighed the customer display expectations. To communicate this urgency to the customer, the PM exhibited a genuine display of dissatisfaction to spark action from the supplier and recover the project.

From the evidence gathered of emotional harmony from our pool of PMs, there was little evidence that EL resulted from displays of genuine behaviour. This is somewhat different to the findings of Wong and Wang (2009, p. 250), whom argued that the conscious effort to express genuine behaviour that is still in line with display rules may have a laborious effect on the individual. Yet, we do not rule out the possibility of EL being associated with genuine behaviour under emotional harmony states. Instead, we believe that the benefits to the project, and henceforth the PM, stemming from the genuine behaviour in harmonious states may outweigh the possible effects of EL.

**Summary of emotional harmony findings**

Emotional harmony exists when the felt emotion of a PM matches the perceived emotive requirement of the situation. Against the grain of the majority of prior EL research, our data suggests that emotional harmony may exist for both positive and negative emotions, depending on the situation at hand. The consequential genuine behavioural response of the PM in a state of emotive harmony is to express the positive or negative emotion. What is key here is that what is best for the project determines whether a harmonious state exists between emotions felt and those perceived to be required for the situation. The expression of genuinely felt emotions is said to be less laborious on an individual than an acting behaviour (cf. Ashforth & Humphrey 1993, p. 94; Diefendorff 2005, p. 399), and we find support for this with our data that PMs may experience EL from displaying genuine behaviour. However, the strategic benefit the PM receives from displaying genuine behaviour in a particular situation looks to outweigh the possible consequences of EL. Similar to emotional dissonance, we suspect that the strategic intent and overall sense of purpose of the PM towards the project in states of emotive harmony may negate the EL experienced by a PM in the emotional regulation process.

**5.1.3. Emotional deviance**

The data gathered in our research found evidence of emotional deviance, whereby the PM discards perceived emotional requirements and expresses naturally felt emotions. The sentiment held by Wong and Wang (2009, p. 250), that that emotional deviance may be intentional or unintentional, is echoed in our data with examples of both present. Emotional deviance and sequential genuine behaviour can be used intentionally as a strategy during interactions with customers, with one PM explaining:

In terms of the PM, in terms of the customer point of view, in terms of my customers [...] it’s a balance between being emotionally free and being composed as well. Because in some cases, the way I have in the past gotten very close to my customers, by being emotionally free and telling him “look, my team is difficult, we’re having problems, we’re trying, I’m struggling with this”, and it’s actually worked to my advantage, we’ve had the customer come in and helped me out and it built a stronger relationship. (PM, 4 years)

Throughout the interviews, there was an overwhelming sense that the perceived display requirement with customers was one of calm, composure and control. This perceived
emotional requirement is alluded to by the PM from the above story, yet the inner felt emotions of helplessness and anxiety intentionally outweighed the perceived requirement, resulting in a genuine display of helplessness to the customer. Expression of genuine weakness in the situation was a strategic and intentional manoeuvre by the PM as to tap the knowledge of the customer for the good of the overall project.

From this story, it is hard to pinpoint whether EL was present. To do so would have been, we feel, far beyond the limits of valid interpretation. Instead, we speculate that emotive deviance may be more laborious in interactions with customers, as the power in the relationship is generally more to the end of the customer. Consistent deviance from customer display expectations may stress the PM, as it may demonstrate lack of project control, end up in customer complaints and intervention from senior management.

The PM may also experience emotional deviance during interactions within the project team. Referring to an incident where emotions got the better of a PM, they explained:

I think I felt quite stressed in that situation, I felt quite annoyed but also I felt bad, for a moment I may have lost control and had an argument, rather than being constructive and having a constructive discussion. I feel guilty about that for a short while but I was able to recover it. (PM, 6 months)

The notion of losing control suggests that the emotional deviance was unintentional and the felt emotions uncontrollably outweighed the perceived project emotional requirement in that situation. The result of this deviance were short-term feelings of guilt, perhaps signalling a deviation from internalised principles of the PM, which suggests that the unintentional deviance from the perceived requirements of the situation resulted in short-term EL on the PM. Unintentional emotional deviance was not a common theme in the data and is understood to be an undesirable state, as PMs have a professional responsibility to manage their emotions and that the project must get done through the stakeholders engaged in the project. As another PM puts it:

As soon as emotion gets into things, the actual story or message you’re trying to get across gets lost and you want to manage that. (PM, 12 years)

We suspect that unintentional emotional deviance occurs when the felt emotions of the PM rapidly and strongly outweigh their ability to sit back and gauge the perceived emotive requirements for the situation. The consequences of unintentional emotional deviance are likely to be emotionally laborious on the PM, but appear to be infrequent in the day-to-day lives of PMs, as it carries with it a connotation of losing control both emotionally and with the project; an undesired state for a PM.

Summary of emotional deviance findings

Data gathered suggested that emotional deviance was present, but was certainly less frequent than emotional dissonance or harmony. This is perhaps because deviance may be understood as losing control of the situation, which is rarely a state the PM wishes to be in. Although, emotional deviance may be used intentionally and strategically in order to elicit help from stakeholders. Intentional deviance carries with it a knowing that perceived requirements are disregarded and this divergence may be emotionally laborious on the PM. Unintentional emotional deviance also looks to carry an aura of EL with it, as emotional outbursts may generate a lack in confidence from the audience in the PM, or inner felt anxiety post-behaviour. This suggests that unintentional deviance from perceived emotional display requirements carries it strong short-term outcomes for the PM, but we suspect from the infrequency of unintentional emotional deviance displays, it may not affect the possible long-term EL experienced by PMs.
5.2. Situational Antecedents

As opposed to Grandey (2000, p. 102) and Rubin et al. (2005, p. 196), who distinguished interaction expectations, emotional events and job-specific characteristics as three main antecedents of EL, our research revealed a slight reshuffling of high-order thematic classifications. An extra anterior element of the project environment was also identified as a key antecedent in the PM context. These categories will be explained in this section, with arguments from interviews supporting the modifications in the structure of the situational antecedents for use in the PM context. Data collection strongly suggested that interaction expectations may act as a predecessor of the emotional regulation process and indirect trigger of EL. Whilst we draw favour with Grandey (2000, p. 102) that frequency, duration and variety of interactions are important precursors, we depart from her clustering of display rules within this category. Instead, our data strongly suggests that that display rules can be considered as a separate situational antecedent, which will be covered further in this section.

5.2.1. Interaction expectations

Our findings concur with the assertion of Morris and Feldman (1996, p. 989), whereby interaction frequency is a critical cue to the presence of EL, but it must be considered alongside the variety and duration of the interactions. The nature of the PM role requires that the work be done through other people at every stage of project cycle, which arguably exposes PMs to an extensive amount of interactions with multiple stakeholders, both internal and external. All interview participants established their constant and heavy engagement expectation with a broad audience in daily situations:

I must talk to a hundred people a day. (PM, 20 years)

Evidence emerged that heterogeneity of interactions PMs are required to perform in, may be partially attributed to the environment they operate in. The project environment is considered highly chaotic and constantly changing (Dolfi & Andrews 2007, p. 667). This sort of environment needs PMs to be flexible and responsive in their behaviour and emotional displays every minute whilst on the job. However, several interviewees claimed that project environment turbulence is one an attraction of a PM role, suggesting it perhaps may not be a strong antecedent to EL. As one PM explains:

You don’t have to do the same thing twice. (PM, 25 years)

Unlike prior EL research primarily performed on routine service industry roles, most of the interactions for the PM are not scripted, occur almost simultaneously and often among different types of stakeholders, which requires PMs to constantly switch their emotions and behaviour in accordance with the situation at hand. As two PMs explain:

You can go from one meeting where you are talking about late delivery and you try to answer why is it late and that’s where you can become emotional. And 5 minutes later you can be addressing a bunch of graduates who just joined the company telling them how great we are. (PM, 2 years)

I’m dealing with a whole bunch of people, different educations, different social backgrounds, different levels of intelligence, at times of the day and night. I’m required maybe congratulate someone on having done a very good job and then, may, well, have to turn around bust someone’s arse for screwing something up. (PM, 20 years)

Thus, in support to the theories of Grandey (2000, p. 102), interaction expectations of the PM may act as antecedents to EL. The more interactions PMs are exposed to, the
greater are frequency, duration and variety of emotions they have to display. The constant switching of emotions and behaviour associated with these interactions may increase the potential dissonance between naturally felt and the perceived project emotional requirement. Consistent with the theories of Morris and Feldman (1996, p. 989), greater interaction expectations on the PM may directly increase emotional dissonance felt, which may indirectly result in a behavioural response that is emotionally laborious for the PM.

5.2.2. Display expectations

Display rules are explained as common standards regulating the expression of emotions required by the role and set by the employer (Ashkanasy & Humphrey 2011, p. 217). Such definition implies quite rigid control over displayed emotions of employees from the business. Our findings revealed that PMs, from both projectified and not projectified companies, have rather weak display expectations imposed on them and as such, PMs are not subject to strict emotional regulations from senior management.

The main expectation is obviously to be professional in what you are doing but there’s no pressure to be at a particular side of PM. (PM, 9 years)

PMs must manage projects through people and have the responsibility and accountability to decide what is better for a project. Thus, we suggest that PMs have certain display expectations, depending on a particular situation, and not solid rules imposed on them as would be expected by lower-level employees. Based on data collected, we argue that display expectations include company expectations, professionalism and audience expectations. Such expansion of the category allowed us to promote this element in the high-order classification thematic analysis and consider it as a distinct situational antecedent to the possible experience of EL by PMs.

Company expectations: Data gathered in our research suggests that display expectations can be both explicit and implicit. In addition to explicit company behaviour documents, PMs learn how to behave in certain situations from their colleagues, supervisors and mentors on an implicit level. A key notion coming from the interviews was that the company expects its PMs to often act as anchor to their teams, provide stability and display confidence. However, as PMs are constantly engaged in interactions with different levels of internal and external stakeholders they are also expected to have different approaches dealing with them. This usually requires tailoring your behaviour according to the power of particular stakeholders.

You deal with what your VPs and SAPs in a different way than you would deal with your team. So, each stakeholder has its own method of managing it basically. (PM, 4 years)

However, company expectations depend on the situation and PMs can be expected to present not only positive emotions, but also negative ones if the situation calls for it. Interestingly, these negative emotions may also be need displayed to stakeholders who have power, such as customers. As one PM explains:

From my point of view I was fully entitled to my emotional outburst. (PM, 4 years)

In this particular case, the supplier failed to fulfil their obligations numerous times, which began to critically affect the project timeline and budget. To get the project back on track and deal with an underperforming supply chain provider, we argue that there was a company expectation on the PM to display disappointment to the supplier,
alluded to within the sense of entitlement to the emotional outburst by the PM acting on behalf of his company. As the PM felt an inner frustration at the situation, emotional harmony existed between the perceived project emotional requirement and the felt emotions of the PM, making the behavioural response one of genuine emotions. In this sense, the PM’s behavioural response was warranted by inner felt emotions and supported by the company. The sense of entitlement over the outburst suggests that the situation was not emotionally laborious for the PM. However, such behaviour may be considered unprofessional by the supplier, as may not have matched their expectations as the audience. PMs often need to make a choice between competing expectations of stakeholders based on what is better for their project overall. Our findings concur with findings of Tieden et al. (2000, p. 572) who argued that in order to display naturally felt emotions individuals needs to have a relatively high power position themselves in the interaction.

Professionalism: The professional responsibility of the PM was a strong theme that emerged from the interviews. Professionalism and its relationship with EL is not a new concept and was covered by Harris (2002), although his work on the EL of barristers suggests that genuine emotional displays of professional people may actually be considered unprofessional, with barristers taking preference more towards SA or DA behavioural responses. In the PM context, there was a distinct sentiment that as a professional, a certain level of emotional professionalism at all times:

As a project management professional you treat people the way you would like to be treated. It is a professional organisation and you’re not going to be rolling up your sleeves and getting into boxing matches with people. […] Corporate professional environment doesn’t inhibit you in terms of what you can say and do. You are given the role. (PM, 12 years)

Similar to Harris (2002, p. 567), the expectation of the role is to be passionate, yet there is a thin line between being emotionally expressive and maintaining professionalism. Yet, unlike Harris (2002, p. 567), professionalism does not shape the PMs behavioural response more towards acting and away from genuine expressions. As one PM explains:

It is never a personal attack on somebody […]. And I think as long as you leave things on the professional level and don’t get personal, you shall feel empowered to say it if it won’t personally offend someone. (PM, 2 years)

If the PM and their audience have the same professional expectation from the situation, PMs may be more expressive with their emotions. A sense of emotional liberty that the professionalism understanding implies may reduce the dissonance felt, or push the individual state of the PM from a dissonant to a more harmonious state, with the consequential behaviour to be one more towards genuine behaviour than SA. With genuine behaviour producing less potential EL than SA (Morris & Feldman 1996, p. 988), the professionalism of the PM and other stakeholders may take personal feelings off the table, leaving more freedom for emotional expression on a professional level.

Power of the audience: The interviews indicated that driver of antecedents circled more around the expectations and power of the audience than the expectation of the company. The power of the audience is not a new sentiment in EL research and was first described by Morris and Feldman (1996, p.998). In their work, the authors argue that if the role receiver has greater power than the employee, the employee is more likely to adhere to display rules (p. 998). We agree with this sentiment, but argue that the power of the audience is particular salient to the project management context, as the PM is at the heart of the project, with stakeholders with greater power than the PM, and
many with less power. This power relationship becomes particularly evident when PMs interact with the final customer of their project:

You still have to jump through the hoops they [customers] are asking us to jump through. You can’t steal a moment to justify the attitude that we’ve done the best […] you have to jump through all those hoops because that’s what we’ve been asked to do. (PM, 6 months)

From the interviews, there is a strong sentiment that in situations where the audience held the greater power, PMs are often more inclined to surface act in order to portray a different picture. Instead, the PM may feel that instead of going into the meeting and complaining of project issues, they must display a more a more composed disposition, toe the party line, display control and confidence. As one PM honestly explains:

Inside, I might be shitting myself because I don’t know what to do. But in that setting with the customer, it’s a balance with trying to portray a level of confidence that you have something in control. (PM, 4 years)

The power of audience is likely to shape the behavioural response of the PM towards SA, as there is a requirement to display calm, whilst potentially harbouring inner feelings of anxiety. However, the power of audience over the PM may also shape the behavioural response of the PM more towards a DA strategy:

If I’m getting a report from the customer that there is some issue, I have to get frustration across the team, not only the subject matter but also the emotions the customer is feeling. (PM, 6 months)

From this example, we argue that there is an implicit expectation from the customer to pass on the frustrations from the project obstacles onto the project team. To get across these frustrations to the team, the PM puts themselves into the shoes of the customer and consciously tries to experience the frustrated feelings of the customer in order to pass them onto the team to spark action.

Offering a new insight to the power of the audience not covered by Morris and Feldman (1996, p. 998), our data revealed that power is not the only determinant of audience expectations. PMs need to understand not only the power behind their audience, but also their personality in order to holistically understand the situation:

You have to adapt your style to match the personalities as well as the roles in which people play. […] You need to be able […] to understand that person as well as the role behind it. (PM, 20 years)

Summary of display expectation findings

PMs have to make snap judgements of both the power and personality of their audience in order to decide what is better for the project. Our findings revealed that the emphasis on company’s display expectations, which may have proved more pertinent in the focus of service industries in prior EL literature, seems to be of less value in project management context. Instead, the expectations of the audience seem to be of more of an influencing factor on the individual state and consequential behavioural response of the PM, making the audience an indirect element of EL. PMs often must choose which expectations hold the highest value for project-wellbeing and balance them accordingly.

5.2.3. Job characteristics

Linked to display expectations, another possible antecedent of EL in the emotional regulation process of PMs is job specific characteristics. Our findings support the
arguments of Humphrey (2000, p. 248), whereby, job specific demands may impact the emotions felt by individual versus those expected by organization. Thus, this potential dissonance between naturally felt and organizationally required emotions may require an emotionally laborious behavioural response to realign the individual with the expectations of the situation. Coinciding with the EL theory of Rubin et al. (2005, p. 197), our data indicates indicate that job characteristics, namely autonomy and control can be considered as EL antecedents in the PM context.

**Autonomy:** Our findings also support the position of Morris and Feldman (1996, p. 999), who argue that the level of job autonomy and control over interactions may indirectly impact EL by stirring a need for emotional regulation. All the respondents confirm that they have quite high level of emotional autonomy in their jobs, which may be attributed to what Mischel (1997, cited in Humphrey 2000, p. 246) categories as a rather weak display situation. These notions are expressed when a PM asked the question regarding whether they are required to display certain emotions to stakeholders:

> To be honest, I don’t necessarily follow a guideline or road map in terms of that. In general it is kind of my own feeling that I put in place when I see something is potentially going to slip and it is based on my own gut feeling and experience that I react on it. (PM, 4 months)

Interviews indicate that autonomy in the emotions that PMs display often depends on the power of audience and their expectations as well as the level of required professionalism. Commenting on the expectations of customers, one PM explains:

> I guess they expect to be passionate about things and sometimes it may manifest itself in over-display of emotions sometimes […] I think it’s an expectation to be passionate and if it comes across emotional, as long as it is kept in check and professional I don’t think anyone will have problem with that. (PM, 2 years)

In this sense, the greater emotional autonomy the PMs feel in their job, the more comfortable and expressive they may be with a wider range of emotions. Having the ability to express more emotions in a weak display situation may reduce the dissonance felt between inner emotions and those perceived to be required by the situation. A reduced dissonance is likely to result in less emotionally laborious behaviours.

**Control:** Unlike the level of autonomy, our data suggests that PMs may have little control over limiting or changing interactions. Such a situation may be attributed to the nature of their job, as PMs are often described as mini CEOs (Turner and Müller 2003, p.5) and as the primary focal point in the stakeholder network. A common theme from the interviews was that when things start going wrong in project, problems flow to the PM, regardless of whether it is under their direct control or not. As one PM expresses:

> At some point of project life cycle it can be crashed and people start to come to project managers to solve the problem or to blame them. (PM, 4 months)

As the PMs are engaged heavily throughout the project life cycle and are exposed to a multitude of interactions each day, they may find it difficult to remove themselves from interactions with stakeholders. Where a service worker may seek solace from customer situations by going away from the counter, a PM may not have that luxury. A greater frequency of interactions and emotive events increases the potential for emotional dissonance to be felt, whereby, indirectly increasing the need for emotionally laborious behaviours to be performed to regulate emotions back in line with expectations.
There is a common sentiment amongst interviewees that due to the nature of their role, PMs often have to deal with issues that don’t fall under their direct responsibilities. This sense of responsibility to resolve issues is explained by one PM:

Even though it’s not part of the project management role, but it probably is, because the project manager is there to deliver the project. There’s not many tasks you can say, ‘it’s not my job’. (PM, 25 years)

Interestingly, the lack of control over interactions did not just happen on the workplace stage, but also off-stage, as one PM explains:

At the end of the day [...] you never really get away from work and that’s probably quite a difficult thing, being a bit of a workaholic, to get away from it. So you have to make conscious decisions not to deal with someone, or if you get a crappy email at a certain time of night, just to say ‘I’m not going to deal with it now, and I’m not going to let it ruin my evening’. (PM, 12 years)

This suggests that where other roles have distinct cut-off points for customer interactions and display expectations, the PM may be required to be on-stage and performing the role of PM even when physically away from the work environment.

Whilst acknowledging that all problems flow downstream to the PM, this wasn’t indicated as a bad thing. There was a somewhat of a broad contentment with the necessity to deal with all project related problems and the lack of control over interactions. We suspect that this is because the PM will be abreast of the current project situation, foresee future bumps in the road and equip them to the knowledge to make decisions to ensure project well-being. So whilst this antecedent may create a greater number of situations a PM must emotionally regulate in, suggesting it may perhaps also increase the likelihood of emotionally laborious behavioural strategies, this may be taken in the stride of the PM, as the antecedent provides greater holistic clarity as to the overall health of the project. This again suggests that the overall sense of purpose towards the delivery of the project may bugger the EL felt by the PM.

**Summary of job characteristics findings**

Based on the collected data, we assert an inverse relationship exists between job specific characteristics and display expectations. The weaker display expectations are the more level of autonomy of emotional display PMs possess. However, weak display expectations does not guarantee control over interactions for the PM. Lack of control over interactions, however, seems to be a personal preference of PMs. Whilst a lack of control over interactions may result in an increased number of emotive events, which may trigger a dissonant state and indirectly evoke EL, it is likely to provide the PM with greater holistic control over the project. This suggests that EL is taken in the PMs stride, with their overall purpose towards delivering the project of greater focus to the PM.

**5.2.4. Emotional events and project environment**

The findings of our research also support argument of Grandey (2000, p.103), whereby emotional events have a direct impact on individual’s emotions and thus, may be considered as EL antecedents. However, in the project management context, there was ample evidence that the number of emotional events may have a direct relationship with the environment PMs operate in. The project environment is obviously an antecedent contextually specific to PMs, and arguably others involved in projects, however, we assert that it offers a refreshing take on the influence of the work environment on EL. Whereas the majority of prior research has been conducted on comparatively stable and
static service industries where interactions are scripted and repetitious (Diefendorf et al. 2005, p. 343; Burch et al. 2013, p. 161), an environment classified as turbulent, complex and emergent (Clarke 2010, p. 6), arguably carries weight as a potential antecedent of EL to those working within it. Thus, we introduce category of project environment as a new situational antecedent in our framework. The data revealed that emotive events and project environment are rather closely linked, so for clarity sake, they will be examined together.

From the stories of the PMs in the interviews, it was clear that emotional events, both positive and negative, may stir the individual state and trigger the emotional regulation process. When a negative event triggers a dissonant individual state, there was a strong sentiment that the PM may need to suppress their felt emotion and feign their behaviour through surface acting in order to keep an even keel for the team and anchor the project.

On the other hand, positive emotions usually result in emotional uplifts, lead to harmonious individual state and, consequently, to genuine behaviour. Our findings support the thoughts of Burch et al. (2013, p. 124), whereby individuals may not only act as a recipients of emotional event but may also create emotive events for others. The majority of PMs told stories of how they often create such positive emotional events for their team members as a motivational act and part of contagion strategy to ‘get the job done’. As one PM explains:

> There is also personal side, you can really take out someone for a coffee and say ‘you are doing a really good job’. And use that as motivator as well, [...] people want to do a good job, and if they get a feedback from others about their good job, that’s really important. (PM, 2 years)

The data indicated that PMs’ environmental surroundings may act as a signal from which an individual state is stirred. Based on our findings we argue that project environment as a situational antecedent is influenced by project integration in the company, project type and scale as well as the stage at which the project is in.

**Project embeddedness:** How deeply projects are embedded in a company is determined by, but certainly not limited to, two factors – systems support and organisational support towards the project. Key to this, is how projectified the company is. As our sample yielded both projectified and not projectified companies we were able to see a striking difference within our sample of respondents as to of how the level of projectification stirs PMs’ emotional states and causes EL. PMs within projectified companies asserted that depth of project planning and level of project control reduces number of negative emotive events. As one PM demonstrates:

> I think we’ve got a quite a strong [...] project culture but being aerospace and defence, you do have to be fairly regular and process driven. [...] process by which we carry out the work, throughout the project, is fairly well written down, so most people know what’s expected of them. [...] I don’t think it [emotional strain] happens very often for it to be taking a toll on me. (PM, 25 years)

The interviews from our sample indicate that non-projectified companies have a completely different environment. One particular company represented in our sample had little to no embedded processes and project management function was perceived as temporarily tacked onto the core business of the company. Often such companies do not have resources and in-house capacity to have a separate project management department and have to bring in project management professionals. Such ‘off-the-shelf project teams’, as one respondent described it, have hard times to understand and adjust to new
environment and often have to create processes ‘on the hop’. PMs may not have the level of complete organisational support or back office systems required to deliver projects efficiently and under such conditions, a project may very quickly run astray. In such turbulent and chaotic project environments (Clarke 2010, p. 6), a lack of integration and ineffective project planning systems may lead to increased number of negative events for the PM. As the PM from a non-projectified company explains:

I am currently in […] a company that has no, virtually zero processes […] At the end of the day, they’re [company employees] not here to deliver project, they’re a stevedoring company they’re about putting boxes on ships. (PM, 12 years)

Furthermore, the lack of broad acceptance or understanding as to the role of projects in a non-projectified company may also be a source of negative emotive events for the PM. As the PM in the non-projectified company demonstrates:

We’re dealing within an existing operational terminal, the guys are trying to do their day-to-day stuff and maybe don’t understand what we’re trying to do and just the thought creates some conflicts at time. Everybody probably wants to get to the same position at the end, it’s just people dealing with change differently. (PM, 12 years)

In this sense, unlike a projectified company that has the systems and support in place for the project, a PM in a non-projectified organisation may experience an increased number of emotive events stemming from the project environment, or lack thereof. The inter-relationship between the depth of project embeddedness in a company and emotive events presumptively increases the likelihood a dissonant state for a PM, whereby indirectly triggering an emotionally laborious behavioural response from the PM.

**Project stage:** Interviews suggest that project stage can also act as a situational cue. Interviewed PMs assert that later stages of project cycle have more control mechanisms and thus, more stability which results in decreased number of emotive events. Collected evidence also implies that on each stage of project cycle projectified companies possess more control mechanisms to reduce the number of emotional events.

The initial stages is quite chaotic […] because the requirements are not maybe fully defined yet. […] That phase may run for the first two-three, three to four months. Then you enter a little bit more stability, […] it becomes a lot more controlled. […] So you have control, it’s not completely chaos. (PM, 4 years)

Stability in the project understandably reduces the number of potential for acute events to have a direct and immediate effect on the emotions of a PM. Stability implies that an individual state will not be stirred, therefore emotional regulation need not be completed by the PM, whereby reducing the potential for EL to be experienced by the PM.

**Project type and scale:** The majority of respondents mentioned that type and scale of projects they manage influences a lot their behaviour and individual state. Most of the interviewed PMs were engaged in either development or production projects. Such projects were described as innovative, technically complicated and turbulent in nature. Unsurprisingly, complex projects, are likely to be chaotic for the PM to manage, presumably offer less control for the PM in the situational cues cropping up, triggering stirred individual state, which suggests a relationship between project complexity and EL. As one PM illustrates:

The bigger the job is, and the more complex the job is, especially in development, what happens is, everything goes wrong. And it’s not because
you’ve not done anything right, or you’ve done anything wrong, it’s because that’s what development is. (PM, 4 years)

Summary of emotional events and project environment findings:
As a brief, from the interviews conducted, a strong theme emerged of the project environment as an antecedent for the potential EL experienced by PMs. On the macro side of things, the level to which a company is projectified and has the support systems in place to aid the PM may reduce the number of emotive events a PM may experience. Conversely, a non-projectified company is likely to be more emotionally laborious for a PM, as the lack of systems and company support for the project may create a greater emotive events for the PM and greater potential for a dissonant state to be felt.

Antecedent summary:
Collected data suggest that situational antecedents of EL within project management context include interaction expectations, display expectations, job specific characteristics, emotional events and project environment. On one hand, our findings support the position of Rubin et al. (2005, p. 200), whereby a lone antecedent can rarely stir the individual state enough to start emotional regulation process, it is usually the cumulative effect of antecedents that may be emotionally laborious on the individual. Yet, beyond this, the particular and distinct situation that the PM finds themselves in warrants the reshuffling and entrant of new antecedent dimensions into the emotional regulation framework for the PM context. The project environment is of particularly importance to the emotional regulation process for a PM, as is the power of the audience in the situational display expectations. Unlike previous EL research conducted in static industries, these characteristics appear to be unique in an industry characterised by constant change and turbulence. We assert that the inclusion of the environment in which a PM is contained provides a more holistic understanding as to the antecedent forces that may trigger a behavioural response from a PM that is emotionally laborious.

5.3. Moderators
The data gathered in our research supports Grandey’s (2000, p. 105) argument that individual and organisational factors may moderate the emotional regulation process and therefore, affect EL experienced by an individual. Further to this, we draw consistency with Rubin et al.’s (2005, p. 200) research, with evidence that individual factors may moderate the emotional regulation process at different points along the process. Yet, the findings of our research do not exactly marry across to the prior conceptualisations of EL that Grandey (2000) or Rubin et al. (2005) put forward, suggesting that the EL and emotional regulation that a PM undergoes, may be moderated by a different mix of individual and organisational elements than those experienced by front-line service employees.

5.3.1. Individual factors
Where together Grandey (2000, p. 105) and Rubin et al. (2005, p. 200) theorised that gender, emotional expressivity, emotional intelligence, affectivity and role internalisation may mediate EL, the findings of our research draw only some consistency with these theories. Rather, we find evidence of a different and particular mix of individual moderators that influence the emotional regulation process of a PM.

Gender
The differences in the emotional mechanics of men and women seem to capture the interest of academics, making it a common variable of EL research (Grandey 2000, p.
Upon reflection of our data, a conscious decision was made to remove gender as an individual factor. This is not to say that we did not find evidence that gender is relevant. We speculate, as do other academics (cf. Hwa 2012, p. 123; Mittal & Chhabra 2011, p. 64; Schaubroeck & Jones 2000, p. 168) that gender influences the individual state directly, mixes with other factors to moderate or exacerbate the emotional regulation process. In our data, however, participants did not point to their gender as a behavioural factor and overall, we feel the gender theme did not lie at the heart of their EL stories.

**Emotional Intelligence**

The EQ of a PM was a very strong theme picked up from every interview conducted. Initially, this theme was alluded to from the questions asked by the interviewers, but as the interviews progressed far beyond these questions, PMs themselves brought up the theme implicitly and explicitly by reflecting on the ability of their EQ to help them gauge a situation prior to behavioural acts. Continuous reference to the EQ theme made it a high priority of our individual factor thematic analysis.

EQ was identified in previous EL conceptualisations of Grandey (2000, p. 106), Rubin et al. (2005, p. 202), so in this sense, our research reflects the findings of these earlier studies. However, in line with the argument presented by Burch et al. (2013, p. 122), EQ plays a greater role in EL for those in leadership positions. This sentiment resonated loudly in our data; with PMs recognising the importance of EQ in their role:

You can’t be a PM without a high emotional intelligence. (PM, 4 years)

When trying to get the best out of people, you need somebody with emotional intelligence to be able to tap that and quite quickly, you have to stay in touch with your guys, their success and failures is your success and failures, so you have to get the best out of them by adapting your behaviour to accommodate their emotions as well. (PM, 20 years)

There is a sense from the literature that EQ relates to how an individual gauges the personality of their audience, but offering a new angle to this, one PM notes that understanding the role and potentially even the power behind the role is also an important component of EQ. Indicated in Figure 3 by relationship line A, this suggests that EQ moderates the perception of the situation, by gauging the power of the audience in the particular situation before committing to behaviour:

Engaging with stakeholders, you need a degree of emotional intelligence to understand them and to understand their personalities, as well as, the role that person has to play. (PM, 20 years)

EQ encompasses the ability to identify to the emotions in others and also to react in a way that induces a desirable outcome from the audience (Burch et al. 2013, p. 160). A similar notion was expressed a follow-up email from one interviewee:

If I feel that an individual needs support then I would express more sympathy, try to empathise and/or show more pleasure with their performance/work than I would in general. I don’t find this at all draining and actually trying to help and support members of the team is one part of the job I really enjoy! (PM, 9 years)

The PM uses their EQ to understand the audience requirements, which in this example, was a need for support. The PM then consciously tries to feel this emotion, which is a form of DA, as to best provide this required emotional support. In this sense, the EQ of the PM moderated their individual state and directed the behaviour to more of a DA.
strategy. This relationship is demonstrated in Figure 3 by the relationship line B. The empathetic connection of the PM trying to experience the emotions of the team member provides a source of self-satisfaction to the PM, which may buffer against the any potential negative EL outcomes of DA.

There is also evidence from the data to suggest that a backward flow exists from the behavioural strategy to inform EQ and other individual factors. When discussing the need to sometimes suppress emotions, a component of SA, one PM explains:

Something that may have upset me years ago, I would now wouldn’t be happy about it either, but it wouldn’t affect me to the same level [...] you do begin to realise that some things that happen are not personal and early on, when still building your emotional intelligence, you can take it quite personal when it’s not necessarily personal. (PM, 9 years)

Two interesting facets exist in this comment. Firstly, it suggests that a strong EQ may reduce the dissonance felt in a situation. A decreased dissonance in a situation may shift the behavioural response from SA to DA, which has a less emotionally laborious effect on the PM. In this sense, a strong EQ may reduce EL by reducing perceived dissonance in a situation. This relationship is illustrated on Figure 3 by relationship line B.

Secondly, there is a strong link between the individual factors of experience and EQ, which suggest that inter-relationships exist between individual factors. Other PMs mention a similar relationship between EQ and experience:

How I would’ve dealt with situations and projects emotionally originally to how I would now is definitely developed. You can’t be taught that. You can go to all the courses in a day, but it’s really the experience with how situations arise and see how your peers or people that you work with being in certain circumstances. (PM, 12 years)

Inter-relations existing between category elements is not new, as it was argued to be present with antecedents (cf. Rubin et al. 2005, p. 196). However, inter-relationships between individual factors from our data provides evidence of what Grandey (2000, p. 107) could only theorise about. The inter-relationship between individual factors will be looked at in greater detail further in the findings.

**Physical condition**

PM physical condition was an emerging theme which has not been covered in EL research thus far. By physical condition, we refer primarily to tiredness and fatigue, as they may impact the emotional regulation process. As one PM explains:

You have to be able to switch quite quickly between positive and negative in terms of dealing with people. Sometimes that could be difficult. For me, if I’m tired I can find that quite difficult. (PM, 9 years)

In this manner, a weak physical condition may affect the ability of the PM to judge a situation, gauge what is best for the project or enact the most appropriate behavioural response for the situation. Failure to judge the situation may result in increased felt dissonance. Inability to gauge what is best for the project may mean a wrong behaviour is exhibited, or perhaps that the appropriate behaviour is enacted, but not to the degree required to fulfill what was best for the project. Ergo, the physical condition of a PM may exacerbate the potential for EL to occur. This effect is represented in Figure 3 by relationship lines A, B and D. We also speculate that if EL is felt by the PM, this would
lead to a snowball effect of increasing tiredness affecting the ability to switch roles and EQ of the PM, which may further affect their individual state and behavioural response.

**Career intention**

There is evidence that the career aspirations of PMs may be another moderating factor in the emotional regulation process. PMs with a strong career driver appeared more likely to emotionally invest in their role, suggesting a greater likelihood to try and regulate emotions in accordance with what is required of the situation, also known as DA. As this PM explains:

I’m quite eager, I want to move forward, so my emotions are always ‘me me me’ kind of thing, and it has to be tempered, or balanced with what the company is, what the company is trying to look for. (PM, 4 years)

This quote also suggests the potential of emotional deviance to occur, as they note that their emotions may be of great importance and therefore, require display. Although, this is speculative, it intuitively makes sense. If the PM feels that inner emotions hold more weight than perceived emotional requirements, they are more likely to experience emotional deviance and their response is likely to be one of genuine behaviour. This relationship is expressed in Figure 3 at relationship line B.

The overarching sense of purpose towards project success was evident in all PMs, yet those with strong career aspirations may have an extra incentive to inhibit the possibility of negative EL outcomes affecting their job. As one PM notes:

It’s a job that will define my career so you’ve got to stick it out. (PM, 12 years)

This suggests that a strong career intention of a PM may moderate the potential consequences of EL, as the PM has a higher sense of purpose towards fulfilling their career aspirations. This creates the potential for a new relationship existing between individual factors and outcomes and is expressed in Figure 3 at relationship line E.

**Experience**

The experience that an individual brings to the workplace has not been identified in previous literature as a possible moderator to EL. Yet, we find significant evidence from our data that the experience of a PM may moderate at several points of the emotional regulation process and therefore, may moderate EL as well. Experience circled around three main areas, job/company, education and life experience.

**Job experience:** Experience within the job was certainly a strong theme coming from the data. Within it, PMs explained that time strengthened their ability to understand the role, situational cues and what was best for the project. The comments of one PM demonstrate this best:

As you get more experienced you get a better idea of a way to react to a certain situation [...] I’ve seen other project managers who just explode and shout and you can see the reaction from the team and it’s not a positive reaction. From your own experience in different situations, you get a better sense of when is the right time to get angry, or when is the right time to show kindness, or when is the right time to ignore it. (PM, 9 years)

Put in the context of our emotional regulation framework, it seems as though job experience has enhanced the ability of the PM to understand the situational cues and the perceived emotional requirement in a particular situation. This then better guides their behavioural response in order to get out what is best for the project from the situation.
The moderating effect of job experience on the emotional regulation process is illustrated by the relationships lines at points A and B in Figure 3.

**Formal education:** The ability to navigate the emotional aspect and regulation process in the workplace may also be strengthened by formal education, as one PM explains:

I find, that having just done an APM course, I have an understanding of that, but at some point, it reinforces what I’d be doing as an individual anyway [...] I haven’t, until recently, until I’ve done this course, had any guidance from our management, on how to adapt my persona or performance or emotional intelligence, that’s come from me. (PM, 20 years)

**Life experience:** The PM goes on to explain that their prior life experience in the military, where emotional detachment was a requirement, was brought with them to their PM career. A comfort in emotional detachment enabled the PM to better detach himself from the possible emotional burdens of their role as a PM:

I’ve managed to be able to switch on and off, appropriately [...] I do go home at night and haven’t aged quite a lot. (PM, 20 years)

This suggests two things. Firstly, life experience that the PM brought to the role enabled them to detach emotionally from the role more easily. Detachment may make SA easier for the PM to enact, without incurring the high EL generally associated with this type of behavioural response. The key facet here is that detachment from emotions may mitigate the PM from feeling fake in the situation, which is regarded as the laborious element of SA (cf. Grandey 2000, p. 101). In this sense, experience may moderate the behavioural response of a PM, represented in Figure 3 by relationship line D.

Secondly, within this comment is the motion that experience interacts with the role internalisation of the PM, suggesting that experience interacts with other individual factors in the emotional regulation process. Indeed, this interrelationship is also evidenced by other interviews, such as experience and EQ, explained by another PM:

You have more life knowledge and experience to see ‘this one doesn’t matter’, or, ‘this one we are fighting for’, or ‘if we don’t do something about this it’s going to have a bigger impact’. (PM, 9 years)

**Summary of experience findings:**

Overall, whilst experience may independently affect the emotional regulation process, there is also ample evidence that it works with other individual factors to reduce dissonance felt, as was the example of EQ. Experience may also interact with the individual role factor, which may make seemingly emotionally laborious behavioural responses evoke little negative outcome on the PM.

**Personality**

The EL conceptualisations of Grandey (2000, p. 106) and Rubin et. al (2005, p. 203) placed affectivity and expressivity as separate individual moderating factors in the emotional regulation process. We argue that they relate to the personality of an individual and with a new emerging theme of general personality traits from our data, believed they would be best coupled under the one umbrella of personality.

**Affectivity:** Prior EL research identifies affectivity is a key individual difference that may be related to EL (Grandey 2000, p. 107). Although interviewees were not explicitly asked questions of how they rate their own affectivity, as to avoid what Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 226) refer to as social desirability bias, we interpreted their affectivity
from their overall tone and temperament through the stories they told us throughout the interview. Overall, the temperament of PMs was more towards motivation and optimism, than pessimism and reluctance, which according to Grandey (2000, p. 207), places them in more of a positive affectivity category. Motivation and optimism can be extracted from this PMs reaction to a negative situation:

You’ve then got to be again, put a positive spin on it, say ‘okay, yep, I’ve caught all ten problems, but guys, we’ve got ten problems we need to fix now. Last week, we only had two problems, but I’ve found another eight, let’s fix more of them to get this ready to go out the door’. (PM, 25 years)

It would appear that the positive affectivity of the PMs interviewed helped reduce perceived dissonance, as they were more likely to already feel emotions of optimism and motivation in the face of adversity. This suggests a moderating relationship at point A and B of Figure 3. Whilst we accept the evidence of the moderating potential may be limited, Bono and Vey (2005, p. 230) suggest that affectivity may also cushion any of the negative consequences of EL, as it is likely those with a positive affectivity will bounce back from adversity more easily.

**Emotional expressivity:** Expressivity also holds a part in the personality of a PM that may moderate EL during the emotional regulation process. The emotional expressivity of PMs was also evident in almost all the stories told to us, whereby emotions were utilised to incite a particular reaction with the audience, such as motivating team members, or creating an aura of confidence to customers. The ability for PMs to be emotionally expressive in a way that inspires and stimulates stakeholders, may reduce EL felt, as their emotions are strategically expressed to get a favourable audience reaction in line with what is best for the project. Consistent with Humphrey et al. (2008, p. 159), emotional expressivity can be positive or negative, what is key is that the particular emotions expressed by a PM in a situation had the ability to fulfil the strategic intent behind the expression. Emotional expressivity impacts the ability for the PM to meet perceived project emotional requirements, whereby creating a relationship in Figure 3 at point B. In a situation where the display expectation is to show a negative emotion in order to spark action within a flailing employee, one PM explains:

I do, yes, not all project managers do. Some people, it depends on their makeup, depends on their nature... if you agree with someone that they’re going to deliver a particular report by the end of the month [...] if they fail to deliver it and haven’t told me [...] I don’t have a problem saying ‘I’m pretty disappointed you didn’t come and tell me it was late, and it was late’. Whereas, other project managers may frown on that”. (PM, 25 years)

**General traits:** Finally, there was evidence that the general personality traits of a PM, beyond those of expressivity and affectivity, may be related to EL. Such traits include extraversion and agreeableness. Two PMs reflect on these individually:

I enjoy these interactions [with stakeholders] and I try to enjoy working with people who do their job and try to make a difference [...] Overall, the ups and downs are part of the job, and I enjoy the job overall and it doesn’t have a negative impact on that perspective. (PM, 9 years)

I’m not the kind of person who is working only with authority and slamming on the table when things are not done. I have a softer approach. (PM, 4 months)
It is possible that the general personality traits of a PM may make them more open or skilled at meeting perceived project emotion expectations, demonstrated by relationship line B in Figure 3, whereby potentially reducing dissonance and therefore potential EL.

**Summary of personality findings:**

The personality of the PM, may influence how they first see a situation and the inner felt emotions in response to that situation. As the individual state then influences the motivated behavioural response, personality factors that moderate the perceived dissonance are likely to influence PMs more towards DA or genuine behaviour. Conversely, personality traits that exacerbate dissonance felt are likely to shape the behavioural response of the PM more to SA. In this sense, the personality factor that a PM brings to the role may moderate, or exacerbate, the view of the situation or the individual state felt, suggested by the relationship at points A and B in Figure 3, and may indirectly lessen or exacerbate the level of EL experienced by the PM.

**Role**

Rubin et al.’s (2005, p.201) concept of EL argued that the extent an employee identified with their role, may moderate EL. Role internalisation was also argued to be a potential moderator to EL and the emotional regulation process by Rafaeli and Sutton (1987, p. 32), who suggested that the greater an employee identifies with their role, the more likely they are to DA or experience less dissonance. The data gathered in our research finds congruence with these views, but two other themes related to the role emerged intently from the interviews; switching capability and role acceptance. The culmination of these role facets may moderate how the PM perceives the situation and how capable they are to emotionally regulate, whereby making them a potential moderator to EL.

**Role internalisation:** Rubin et al. (2005, p. 202) theorise that the greater extent an employee identifies with their role, the more attached to the role they become, resulting in a meshing of self identity and work identity. The more one identifies with their role, the less challenging they may feel the emotional requirements of the role to be, after all, “it is what they do” (Rubin et al. 2005, p. 201). The sentiment of the PM internalising the identity and requirements of the role is encapsulated in the comment of one PM:

> The project manager has got to love the project. If he doesn’t, he shouldn’t be doing it. He should be doing something else. Okay, he’ll have difficulties in the project, but that’s, that’s the role that’s chosen being a PM. (PM, 25 years)

From this quote, the PM accepts that there are challenges associated with his role as PM and their comment of needing to love the project suggests a meshing of self with the role. Harmonious with the theory of Rubin et al. (2005, p. 201), our data suggests that a strong internalisation of the PM role may directly moderate the perception of the dissonance in a situation, as coping with the situation ‘is what they do’. This relationship is identified by relationship line B in Figure 3. A reduced dissonance would potentially lead the PM more towards a DA behavioural response, or remove the dissonance completely, creating a more harmonious individual state and prompting genuine behaviour, either which have less EL associated with these responses.

Interestingly, within role internalisation, another important aspect not covered in prior EL research with any depth, is the possibility that in order to transform into the role, one may need to detach from the ‘self’. Taking the analogy of theatre to explain this notion with clarity, some interviewees consciously detached from their ‘self’ in the workplace in order to step into the role of PM. Just as a actor embodies the role of their character on-stage, the PM may also do this on the workplace stage. As one PM explains:
We all have roles to play, that’s what we get paid to do, we’re like actors on the stage. I’m a project manager when I get paid here, but when I go home and go out with friends, I’m someone completely different [...] So you have a role to play within the piece of theatre we do, so you adapt your performance to match the role, as if you’re actor taking up that role. (PM, 20 years)

Detachment of self from the role seems as sort of defense mechanism to ensure the PM does not get too emotionally invested to a point where it is detrimental. Detachment of self, and the emotions that come with it, may be strategic, as one PM explains:

As soon as emotion gets into things, the actual story or message you’re trying to get across gets lost and you want to manage that. (PM, 12 years)

In this sense, detachment of self is performed so as to best fit in with the acting requirements of the role. This may come across as somewhat dishonest or that the PM is not being true to the stakeholders they interact with. Yet the detachment is done with good intentions, as to protect the PM from possible burnout from constant emotionally laborious interactions, or taking their personal emotions out from the situation in order to keep focused on what is best for the project.

**Switching capability:** The switching capability of an individual in their particular role is arguably more important in the PM context than say, that of a front-line service worker. It is not a far stretch of the imagination to understand that similar interactions with similar customers may not need an employee that is able to switch roles and shift emotions quickly. For PMs, however, the evolving nature of their environment, engagement with various levels of stakeholders and different, and often competing, emotional demands required from different situations, makes the switching capability of the PM of strong importance in their ability to emotionally regulate and deal with EL. Switching occurs on a multiple levels. Continuing the theatre analogy, switching occurs within theatre areas; between onstage, backstage and offstage. Secondly, there is the switching that occurs on-stage between the roles.

When switching between the onstage role and the offstage self, there was a strong notion from the interviews that the ability to successfully transfer between these areas of the workplace, comes with experience. As one experienced PM explains:

I wouldn’t want to get too emotionally involved if I’ve had a different sort of opinion with someone at work one time, I wouldn’t be taking that home with me. When I go home at night, I seldom, if ever, talk about work. You’re allowed to switch off [...] I work longer hours than I get paid, so when I walk out of here, I switch off and that took a lot of years of experience and hard knocks to be able to do that. (PM, 20 years)

The ability to switch from the onstage persona of a PM, back to the offstage self relates to the level of detachment the individual feels is necessary for the role. The sense of entitlement to detachment the self from the role makes a clear distinction between when the PM is on-stage in their role and when they can shut down and return to being themselves. The ability to switch off entirely and leave work at work, may moderate possible EL outcomes, suggesting a relationship at line E in Figure 3. Although making a clear detachment from the onstage responsibilities to offstage may not be perfectly clear for a PM, as expressed a PM:

You do sort of leave work at work. I’ve tried to do that but it’s becoming increasingly difficult. Sometimes you take a lot of work home and end up spending a lot of energy at home thinking about work, not necessarily doing, but
thinking about it. Something I try very hard not to do but it is becoming more difficult the more time you spend in project management. (PM, 2 years)

In this sense, the ability to detach may have a relationship with the level of control a PM has on their interactions. The ability to switch onstage and offstage may create a clearer distinction for the PM to set boundaries for interactions, whereby reducing possible emotive events, especially those that may occur away from the actual work environment. This moderating relationship is expressed by line A in Figure 3.

At this point, there is a temptation to suggest that the experience, both life and job, of the PM may enable them to detach more easily from the emotional requirements of the role, which would likely reduce EL experienced by the PM. Indeed such a relationship between individual factors may exist; however, the ability to detach may stem from something greater than just the experience of the individual, such as the project environment and type of project the PM is engaged with.

Continuing the theatrical analogy, during the day, the PM may also seek solace backstage, such as their office or desk, to regulate emotions and overcome the possible outcomes of EL from their onstage performances. Commenting on how to regulate emotions from one interaction to prepare for the next, two PMs explain:

You’ve got to keep putting all the different hats, on and off, and just being able to control the emotion. And it’s probably something that I’m quite good at, that I can switch. I can walk out of one room and into another, and just almost park the frustration or the experience of emotion that I’ve just had. And I think you have to in this game, or you’ll be constantly fighting with everyone. (PM, 12 years)

You just come from an emotionally charged situation where you face the prospects of declaring war, and the next minute you walk into some bunch of graduates just about to start their career, and the last thing you want to do is to tell them about that problem [...] if you’re getting emotional which I do, leave that behind for your next session by going back to the desk. (PM, 2 years)

The ability to leave regulate emotions and behaviours from one interaction before commencing the next interaction may reduce EL felt in the next interaction. Taking the theatrical analogy to explain this, the experience of the second PM mentioned above looks to the ability of the PM to shed the possible negative felt emotions or behaviour from the first interaction backstage, before appearing onstage again with a new audience of graduates, where the perceived emotive requirement of the PM would be exude behaviours related to optimism and motivation. If a PM were unable to effectively shed the negative emotion in preparation for the next scene with the graduates, they may carry this negativity onstage, whereby feeling a greater dissonance between the negative emotion felt and the optimistic emotion required, whereby requiring a behavioural response that would feign the feelings of optimism. In Figure 3, this relationship is denoted by line B. In this sense, inability to switch between interactions may directly influence the dissonance and indirectly induce EL from a SA behavioural response.

In addition to being able to switch from onstage to offstage and backstage, PMs may switch between multiple roles onstage. The notion an individual playing the role of multiple selves in order to cope with job demands finds favour with the theory of Morris & Feldman (1996, p. 568). As different audiences may expect different displays, there are multiple shades to the PM role. As PMs eloquently expresses:

I’d adapt my performance to talk to people. I mean, I’ve got many roles to play. I’m a father, grandfather, brother, son, husband, friend and workmate [...] while
Everyone’s at the core, an individual, what other people would display all depends, in their perspective, from a workplace relationship. (PM, 20 years)

Similar to the onstage to backstage switching of roles, the PM may need to switch immediately between roles whilst onstage. The ability of the PM to emotionally regulate rapidly from one interaction to the next whilst remaining on stage may moderate the perceived dissonance for the next interaction. In this sense, the switching capability of the PM, whether it be whilst onstage, or backstage or offstage, may moderate the perceived dissonance felt in the next interaction, whereby indirectly mitigating the potential for EL to be experienced by the PM from the next interaction. This relationship is denoted by line B in Figure 3.

**Acceptance of role:** Acceptance to which we refer to, relates to the ability for the PM to not let continuous events stir their individual state, which indirectly mitigates the potential for EL. Alternatively, not accepting the situation may evoke continuous emotional events for the PM, resulting in the greater potential for a dissonant state and EL to affect the PM. This notion is illustrated by the comments from the interviews:

The benefit of organising the business this way outweighs my problems that I have in the project. All the projects are benefitting from the organisation being organised this way that I’m not benefitting from. So, taking the bigger picture into account is better for business and I completely acknowledge that it’s not very good for my project. (PM, 2 years)

It does frustrate you thinking ‘there’s a lot easier ways to do that’ [...] but because the bigger business does not want to go down that route, doesn’t suit them for various reasons, it’s hindering how the projects get delivered. And that was very frustrating at the start of this project, and even to a degree now [...] at a certain point in time, you’ve got to understand that that’s what it is, that’s what you’re getting, there’s no point fighting against it anymore because you’re just going to frustrate yourself and every time you’ve got to get a new contract or a new purchase order raised, you’re going to be getting upset. (PM, 12 years)

From both of these examples, acceptance of the situation into the role of the PM was paramount to prevent emotional events from stirring the individual states of the PM in the future. As alluded to in the second example, prior to accepting the situation, a poor systems support application in part set up a situation that continuously resulted in a dissonant state for the PM. Although the example does not provide details on whether SA or DA were enacted as a behavioural response, the sheer fact that the situation created dissonance is enough to ascertain that had a degree of EL is present. Acceptance that the PM was unable to change the situation, whereby accepting it as a part of their role, moderated the feelings of the situation and individual state of the PM, suggested by relationship lines A and B in Figure 3.

**Summary of role findings:**

Where we find some harmony in the individual factors identified in previous research and those pertinent to the possible EL experienced by PMs. For example, similar to Grandey (2000, p. 106), we found EQ, emotional expressivity and affectivity to be salient moderators to EL in the project management context. However, we also found many differences that warranted the inclusion of new categories, or the expansion of the initial template. The switching capability and acceptance of the role were strong themes that emerged from the interviews, warranting us to expand Rubin et al.’s (2005, p. 201) original role related moderator to include these findings. Furthermore, experience,
career intention and physical condition, which were argued to have the potential to moderate EL at various points were new themes that emerged from the data that warrant inclusion into the emotional regulation process for PMs.

### 5.3.2. Organizational factors

Contrary to the theory of Grandey (2000, p. 107), our research did not find solid evidence of organisational support tempering EL. Yet, what did emerge, was company support working with the individual factors of the PM to moderate or exacerbate at several points of the emotional regulation process. Support may be offered from three levels within the organisation, senior management, co-worker and inter-team support.

**Senior management:** Senior support was primarily provided to PMs in the form of formal support, such as councils and forums. Yet, these types of support do not occur in ‘real-time’ of emotional regulation, as it is unlikely a forum occurs each time the PM is required to regulate emotions. Instead, management may offer support informally and unscheduled, taking place when regulation is required by the PM. A lack of proper formal support, may lead to frustration for PMs, as eloquently explained by one PM:

> You can escalate it [...]and when they can explain back to you ‘we’d like to change it [...] but for now you’ve got to live with what you’ve got [...]’ then you go ‘okay it’s not perfect’ and you can then relay that information. (PM, 12 years)

From this sentiment, we assert that managerial support, even when not fixing the exact problem of the PM, may work to towards the acceptance of the role, which may moderate further up to the perception of the situation and the individual state of the PM.

Evidence emerged that senior support may influence a number of individual factors, benefits of which can potentially moderate situational antecedents. For instance, PMs with little experience told stories of how the support of more experienced senior managers was sought during times of peril and how the support of senior managers strengthened the EQ of the PM, which served to moderate their perception of situations prior to behavioural responses. This suggests a link between the organisational support and individual factors of the PM. The quote from one PM illustrates this relationship:

> I am able to actually stand up and answer questions [...] it is a mixture of the support system that I set up. (PM, 4 years)

**Co-worker support:** Co-worker support is appears to be primarily informal and grounded on friendship basis and not PM-to-subordinate basis. PMs said that they often have informal chats with their colleagues with whom they have friendly relations and who ‘know the situation’. As one PM explains:

> Obviously people, you know what they’re like when they’re in the coffee shop, you kind of have a, you express your feelings [...] ‘yep, you’re annoyed with that, so am I, what are we going to do?’ (PM, 12 years)

The support from co-workers looks to provide an outlet for PMs to get emotions off their chest. We suspect that such interactions take place at the backstage, such as the coffee shop, where PMs may feel more comfortable shedding their PM role ‘skin’. Co-worker support may also influence individual factors. PMs tend to be more open expressing their emotions when they feel supported by co-workers and thus this enhances their emotional expressivity as an individual factor. As one PM explains:

> There’s probably a kinship across various project managers, who I’ve worked with [...] in the last eight to ten years […], so you can now go talk to them and
you can have a whinge about such and such not happening quick enough and bounce ideas off. (PM, 25 years)

**Project team:** Collected data suggests that project team is an important element of organizational support. All interviewees asserted that they build friendly informal relations within their team members, often treating them as a family. The majority of PMs claim that they don’t see themselves above the team, but part of the team:

You just have to do things on a team level, where you are perceived as one of the guys. (PM, 4 years)

Being a ‘project teamer’ is a conscious choice PMs make to secure their team members’ support in the future. If there is an issue at a senior level that the PMs must deal with, having the team fully behind the PM eases the burden on the PM, as one explains:

With my team, I always wanted to be seen as one of the guys and if an issue did hit, at a senior level that I had to deal with, they would go out of their way to help me and that has always been the case for me (PM, 4 years)

Overall, there was a sentiment that it is quite important to get ‘emotionally invested’ in the team for the good of the project. We suspect that such a strategy may help to reduce number of negative events that can trigger emotional regulation process.

Evidence emerged that PMs also encourage their team members to be open in displaying their emotions as a strategic manoeuvre. As one PM illustrates:

I need my team to be very emotionally free [...] That allows me to make very quick judgment calls in terms of what is the issues, the direction they [...] come from, do I need to prioritise my next move based upon that issue? (PM, 4 years)

In this sense, the PM creates a forward link between the individual and the project team and uses the information ascertained back from the project team to judge the situation and perceived project emotional requirement for the situation. This suggests the presence of a forwards and backwards relationship between organisational support and individual factors, which works to moderate up points A and B in Figure 3.

**Organisational support findings:**

Our findings revealed that organizational support on each level may reduce the perceived emotional dissonance felt by a PM, which is likely to indirectly reduce the potential of the PM experiencing EL. Moreover, organizational factors may enhance individual factors such as emotional intelligence and emotional expressivity which, in turn, the benefits of which may further moderate along the emotional regulation process. There is also presence of a forward relationship existing between individual factors and organisational support, suggesting that the PM may strategically use their individual factors, such as EQ, to ascertain information for use gauging of a situation and perceived emotive requirement along the emotional regulation process.

**Summary of moderator findings:**

Overall, our findings suggest that unique mix of individual and organisational factors and relationships with other parts of the emotional regulation process may exist in the project management context. Individual factors of experience, personality, physical condition, career intention and EQ of the PM emerged as important factors that the PM brings to the workplace that may moderate EL. Furthermore, the ability of the PM to internalise, switch between and accept the role was pertinent to the ability to moderate along the emotional regulation process.
Looking at the relationship between individual factors and the regulation process, we draw favour with Rubin et al. (2005, p. 193) that individual factors may moderate the perception of a situation, the individual state and possible motivated acts, represented by relationship lines A, B and D in Figures 1 and 3. Yet, relationship C, Figure 1, was found no support in our data, but a new relationship may exist between individual factors buffering possible EL outcomes, indicated by relationship line E in Figure 3.

Interestingly, whereas the work of Grandey (2000, p.107) suggested a direct moderating relationship between organisational factors and the individual state and possible motivated acts, we found no such relationship to be present in our data. Instead, a two-way relationship between organisational factors and individual factors looks to be present, with the information used from the organisational factors to support the individual factors in moderating at several points along the regulation process of PMs.

5.4. Possible outcomes

Before we delve into the outcomes experienced by PMs as a result of EL, we acknowledge that unlike previous EL research that was able to delineate and confirm exact outcomes of EL (cf. Brotheridge & Lee 2003; Hwa 2012; Kruml & Geddes 2000; Mittal & Chharbra 2011), such clear and precise outcomes of EL were unable to be ascertained from our data. We suspect that this can be put down to the nature of our research. These previous works all required participants to answer survey questions related to EL outcomes, the structure of the surveys implicitly assumes that EL has outcomes for the individual. We only probed PMs when stories told pointed to potential EL outcomes experienced. We also suspect that partial attribution may be to the inability to recall precise outcomes from an emotional regulation process at the time we were conducting the interview. To an extent, there is the potential that perhaps the PMs were unwilling to admit to outcomes. However, we argue that this is a very minor extent, as we believe all PMs were very open and honest with us during the interviews. Furthermore, there was the temptation for when a PM mentioned an element that coincidentally was a part of our initial framework, such as ‘burnout’, to immediately attribute that to a possible EL outcome. We were conscious to interpret the meaning behind the word and to only report outcome findings that we interpreted to be directly related to the experience of EL in the emotional regulation process. To take the wording of the interviewee at face value and not understand the meaning behind the word, we feel would have been against the validity of interpretation.

Nevertheless, our findings did reveal that EL outcomes might have potential feedback to individual factors. As one PM explains:

When I walk out of here, I switch off and that took a lot of years of experience and hard-knocks to be able to do that. (PM, 20 years)

There is a sense that these constant ‘hard-knocks’ feedback to inform the individual factors that a detachment from the role may be required to buffer against future emotional regulation. This suggests the presence of a feedback loop between possible outcomes and individual factors, indicated by relationship line F in Figure 3. The presence of this feedback loop was implied from another angle by one PM:

I actually enjoy the stress [...] I actually requested for this opting because I knew that it was a basket case, but I enjoy that. (PM, 4 years)

From this comment, we infer that the stress that comes regulating emotions within the workplace may feedback to strengthen the personality and career aspirations of PMs. Interestingly, where stress is commonly perceived as a purely negative outcome of EL
(cf. Grandey 2000, p. 104; Lewig & Dollard 2003, p. 366), the sentiment from this PM is that is actually a desirable outcome that spurs the PM along, suggesting a link with other possible EL outcomes, such as job satisfaction. The inter-relationship between outcomes is also represented on the negative side by another PM, whose comments we interpret to demonstrate an interaction between stress, job satisfaction, cynicism, turnover intention, organisational commitment and performance:

You’re driving home going ‘why the hell did I accept this job […]? I must have been mad. It’s definitely affecting this project and the company, what my future decision will be at the end of this. (PM, 12 years)

What was resoundingly clear in our data, however, is that any possible outcomes of EL on PMs, primarily negative outcomes, affected the PM offstage. As one PM explains:

You don’t sometimes know if you’re coming or going […] you’re driving home and your head is jumping from heaps of different circumstances and it’s definitely something you feel that, you kind of do it to get your job done, but at the end of the day […] that draining feeling is still within you […] I use the drive home to talk to myself […] go through every circumstance and justify to myself why I made that decision. (PM, 12 years)

The delayed onset of outcomes on PMs may be attributed to two factors. Firstly, it may be that due to the heavy interaction expectations of the job, the PM is unable to unpack these outcomes until days, or projects end. Or perhaps, the PM is unwilling to deal with these possible outcomes whilst onstage and in their role, preferring to deal with them offstage in order to maintain a level of professionalism and control over emotions. Whilst there is evidence of negative outcomes of EL on PMs, there is also the sentiment that it comes part and parcel with the role of a PM. As one PM explains:

It’s one of those things the PM definitely has to deal with. (PM, 25 years)

More pertinent to the outcomes, we believe, is that the benefits of performing emotionally laborious behavioural strategies, primarily SA, outweighed the potential negative effect of the EL on the PM. Earlier in the findings, stories emerged of how PMs would enact particular behavioural responses in order to spark a desired reaction from the audience. For example, SA a more aggressive behaviour to get action from a flailing project member. In this instance, getting the member back onboard and performing with expectations was what was best for the project, and therefore best for the PM. In this sense, the EL associated with SA may be outweighed by the benefits the SA delivered to the project and the PM. Taking another example to cement this notion, in a state of emotional deviance where the particular PM strategically expressed feelings of helplessness and disregarded the audience expectation of being in control, the strategic benefit of showing helplessness benefitted the project by having the customer help overcome the problem. The benefit to the project directly benefits the PM, as the primary responsibility holder. Therefore, the potential EL associated with expressing this emotion may be outweighed by the benefit of greater support from the customer towards the good of the project.

Throughout the findings, we have constantly reiterated that the behavioural responses of the PM from a stirred individual state were enacted with strategic intent towards the health of the project. This suggests, that despite behavioural responses being potentially emotionally laborious on the PM, the overall benefit to the project has direct flow-on effects to the PM. This sentiment is echoed resoundingly by the comments of one PM:
Their success and failures is your success and failures, so you have to get the best out of them by adapting your behaviour to accommodate (PM, 20 years)

In this sense, we understand the potentially emotionally laborious behavioural responses of PMs to deliver overall positive consequences to PMs. In line with the notions of Grandey (2000, p. 104) and Rubin et al. (2005, p. 204), we suspect that these benefits to the project point to a positive outcome of EL at the categories of job attitudes, health and psychological well-being and job related behaviour, represented as categories in Figure 3. Yet, we hazard to speculate further as to the specific codes that constitute the elements within these categories, as we feel it would go beyond the meaning of intended by the respondents in the interviews and possibly verge on misinterpretation on our part. Instead, we affirm that the overall sense of purpose towards the good of the project underpins the behavioural responses of PMs. Behavioural responses of SA, DA or genuine behaviour strategically work to elicit a desired response from the audience towards the good of the project. The benefits to the project from the behavioural response also flow to the PM, whereby suggesting that emotionally laborious behavioural responses may deliver positive outcomes to the PM in terms of job attitudes, job behaviour and overall well-being and outweigh the possible detrimental effects commonly associated with EL.
6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

6.1. Findings

The main research question, and primary aim of our research, posits around ‘Do PMs experience EL?’ A further research question, of ‘What are the possible dimensions of the emotional regulation process, as experienced by PMs?’ was also posed in our research. To answer these research questions, a review of previous EL related literature was conducted, as to form a solid basis of understanding prior to our data collection. The literature review revealed the fragmentary and cursory nature of EL research and the openness of the problem in the PM context, whereby justifying the need for exploration. The design of the research was thoroughly developed in order to provide the best basis for exploration and the empirical evaluation of the research questions we posed.

Looking at the primary research question first, our findings strongly suggest that PMs do experience EL. In the literature review, we argued in favour for the socially constructed view of EL offered by the interactionist perspective, where EL is ‘the effort, planning, and control’ required to enact perceived emotional demands during interpersonal transactions’ (Morris & Feldman 1996, p. 90). During the interviews, and without prompting, each PM told of experiences where they had to regulate their inner felt emotions in line with the perceived emotive requirement of the situation. The match between the definition underpinning our research and the data gathered suggests that PMs irrefutably experience EL.

However, we somewhat depart from the theories of Briner (1999, p. 330) and Burch et al. (2013, p. 123) amongst others, in what constitutes the perceived display expectation from a situation. In service industries, where the majority of EL research has taken place, display expectations derive strongly from the display rules set by the employer (Diefendorff et al. 2011, p.170). Yet in the PM context, our findings indicate that the PM has greater control in determining the perceived emotional requirement. With PMs being regarded as a mini CEO of the project (Turner & Müller 2003, p.5), to an extent, PMs set their own display rules for interactions.

The perceived emotional requirement for a situation was determined by what was best for the project. This is understandable, as the primary objective of the PM is to deliver the project, so what is good for the project is invariably good for the PM. Yet, this does not mean that just because the PM sets the perceived emotional requirement that their inner felt emotions will be automatically congruent. Indeed, the findings of the research suggest that PMs regularly feel in states of dissonance and deviance, as well as harmony, with a different level of EL associated to each. The complete degree to which a PM experiences EL at any one time is harder to ascertain, due to the transitory nature of emotions and panorama of varying EL conceptualisations, yet within each state, the evidence of our study definitively suggest that EL is experienced by PMs.

Emotional dissonance: Coinciding with previous EL conceptualisations (cf. Brotheridge & Lee 2003, p. 365; Grandey 2000, p. 1000; Rubin et al. 2005, p. 194), our findings suggest that when the felt emotions of a PM differ from those perceived to be required for the situation, the behavioural response to regulate back in line with requirements, is to act. However, there was a strong sentiment that acting responses to a stirred individual state had an overarching strategic intent by the PM towards the overall good of the project.
SA was chosen as a behavioural response by a PM to strategically incite a desired response varied considerably according to the particular audience. The data suggests that for the project team, SA was enacted to shielding negativity, spark action or maintain plain sailing. Interactions with customers and senior management required a different SA style, with PMs choosing to feign behaviours to demonstrate control and confidence. The similarity of stories that different PMs, with different experience levels, from different companies and undertaking different projects, suggests that SA is a rather common occurrence and is a typical strategy a PM enacts for the well-being of the project. Interestingly, our findings suggest that being at the heart of projects with numerous stakeholders; PMs may experience competing display expectations. This seems to be in contrast to EL studies to date, which somewhat assume that only one display expectation is exerted on an individual (cf. Burch et al. 2013, p. 123). Furthermore, SA may not be completely fool-proof or water-tight and the PM may concurrently express genuine emotions to the audience whilst SA, whether intentional or unintentional. We believe this to be a new notion in EL research that challenges the assumption that only one behavioural response is enacted during emotional regulation.

On the DA side, our findings suggest are similar to that of that a PM undertakes a DA approach when a more genuine behavioural response is required (Diefendorf et al. 2005, p. 343). DA is primarily performed when the audience is the project team, suggesting a familiarity with the team encourages more deep felt regulation of emotions. Strategic intent notions underpinning the revaluation of feelings associated with DA again clearly indicate that PMs act in a manner that elicits the greatest potential benefit for the good of the project.

According to Brotheridge and Lee (2003, p. 365), Grandey (2000, p. 100), Rubin et al. (2005, p. 194), amongst others, in states of emotional dissonance, SA and DA behavioural responses are deemed to be emotionally laborious to individuals. Our findings, in contrast, suggest that the acquisition of benefits through the strategic use of acting responses towards the overall good of the project may, to an extent, buffer the EL associated with DA and SA and mitigate possible outcomes of associated with these responses for the PM.

**Emotional harmony:** A match between the emotions felt by a PM and those required for the situation at hand was a common theme amongst the stories told by PMs during our interviews. Dissimilar to the notions of Diefendorff et al. (2005, p. 340) and Morris and Feldman (1996, p. 988), our findings suggest that emotional harmony may exist even when the perceived emotional requirement of the situation is not a positive emotion. If the perceived project emotional requirement is to display a more negative sort of emotion, such as frustration, and this is felt by the PM, the PM will express this frustration in their behaviour. Our data indicated little evidence that an emotionally harmonious state and consequential display of genuine behaviour is laborious on a PM. This is different to the findings of Wong and Wang (2008, p. 250), yet we again assert that the benefits to the project, and henceforth the PM, stemming from the genuine behaviour in harmonious states may negate the negative aspects of EL experienced in the emotional regulation process.

**Emotional deviance:** The disregarding of perceived project emotive requirements for expression of felt emotion was also used intentionally as a strategy by the PMs, although to a significantly less extent than harmony or dissonance. Similar to the findings of Wong and Wang (2008, p. 250), the expression of genuine feelings from a deviant state was found to be intentional or unintentional. Intentional deviance carries
with it a strategic intent to elicit a desired response, which may mitigate EL from consciously deviating from perceived expectations. Unintentional deviance, however, signals the loss of control in the situation carries with it a greater EL associated it. The infrequency of unintentional deviance from the stories of PMs suggests that it conflicts with their requirements of professionalism and is an undesired state for the PM to be in.

To answer the sub research question and secondary research aim of the possible dimensions of the emotional regulation process as experienced by PMs, on the basis of stories told during the interviews that had element of EL to them, further probing to the dimensions of this EL was conducted. It is important to reiterate that probing to dimensions of the emotional regulation process was only conducted after the interview participant alluded to the experience of EL in their stories. This was intentional, as to ensure that only the dimensions related to EL were explored, not other facets that have nothing to do with EL or the regulation of emotions. In keeping with the objectives of our research and the structure in which findings have been presented thus far, the dimensions of the emotional regulation process will be discussed in the order of antecedents, moderators and outcomes.

**Antecedents:** The findings of our study lend some support to antecedents theorised and empirically tested in prior research. Similar to the conceptualisations of EL by Grandey (2000, p. 102) and Rubin et al. (2005, p. 196), evidence emerged from our data as to anterior dimensions if interaction expectations, job specific characteristics and emotional events, although a slight reshuffling of categories was required to accurately portray what emerged from our data. Of paramount importance to the PM, were situational cues from the project environment. Similar to prior EL research, the PM environment is a unique antecedent characteristic in the PM context that so strongly interacted with other antecedents to shape the situational cues that may stir a PMs individual state, to warrant its inclusion as a dimension. The inter-relations of antecedents that emerged from our data also support the arguments of Rubin et al. (2005, p. 200) that a lone antecedent can rarely stir the individual state enough to result in EL behaviours from an individual.

**Moderators:** Supporting the notions put forward by Grandey (2000, p. 105) and Rubin et al. (2005, p. 200), individual factors may moderate the EL felt by a PM at multiple stages along the emotional regulation process. The inclusion of a number of new moderating dimensions, including experience, role and career intention, suggests that the breadth of individual factors that shape the EL felt by a PM is wider than those of previously studied contexts. Within the role dimension, the detachment of self from the PM role was an interesting facet to emerge. The detachment of self implied that PMs may purposely undertake acting strategies as a preferred behavioural response to an individual state.

Similar to Rubin et al. (2005, p. 200), individual factors may influence the perception of a situation, the individual state and possible motivated acts along the regulation process, which were demonstrated to have moderating or exacerbating potential on the EL experienced by a PM. Although, unlike Grandey (2000, p. 107), we found no support that organisational factors moderate directly to the individual state or behavioural response. Instead, organisational support was found to have a two-way relationship to individual factors and therefore, may influence the moderating or exacerbating potential of individual factors on the EL experienced by a PM.

**Possible outcomes:** Whereas the majority of EL conceptualisations suggest a linear flow from antecedents, to individual state, to behavioural response to outcomes (cf.
Grandey 2000, p. 101; Rubin et al. 2005, p.193), our findings indicate that the outcomes from EL may actually serve to inform the individual factors of the PM. For example, negative outcomes of stress on a PM fed back to the individual factors to make the PM detach the self from the role, as a means to mitigate the future effects of EL on the PM. Similar to Grandey (2000, p. 104), we find that the outcomes felt by PMs from EL interact amongst one another, so similar to antecedents, it is the culmination of outcomes that bear an effect on the PM.

Importantly, we conclude that the overarching theme that presented itself throughout the entire emotional regulation process, that the overall sense of purpose to the project shaped the behavioural responses of the PM, may mitigate the negative effects generally associated with EL. Behavioural responses to a stirred individual state were enacted to elicit a desired response from the audience toward the good of the project. Benefits that emotionally laborious behaviour delivers to the project, and henceforth the PM who is responsible for the project, clearly implies that EL may actually produce positive outcomes for the PM in terms of job attitudes, job related behaviour and well-being. Although, we concede that this outcomes require further exploration.

6.2. Limitations

There are several limitations in this research that we would like to acknowledge. Firstly, due to pragmatic concerns, convenience sampling was used and we acknowledge that results obtained may not be generalisable. However, we emphasise that as we are doing initial explorative research, it was never the intention to generalise our findings. Secondly, our sample size is quite small and we concede that having 6 out of the 8 respondents from the same company may be somewhat of a limitation, yet we offer a counterargument to this, as the experiences of PMs are different and we believe each offered us a valuable insight into answering the research questions in our work. Whilst these two factors perhaps do not enhance sample representativeness, Stebbins (2001, p.26) argues that sample representativeness in exploration cannot be perfect and is often considered to be an unattainable goal. Furthermore, despite a possible weak sample representation, by undertaking a constructivist qualitative research design, dissimilar to the majority of previous EL positivistic quantitative approaches, Stebbins (2001, p. 41) contends that conclusions resulting from dissimilar approaches may have greater chance of being valid those underpinned by speculation and trend. A conscious attempt was made to diversify our sample and include both projectified and non-projectified companies, which allowed us to reveal environment specific antecedents of EL. Finally, our research is based on perceptions and interpretations of both researchers and respondents. We acknowledge that our limited practical and academic experience may have narrowed the depth of our understanding and interpretation of collected data. Nonetheless, as Stebbins (2001, p.5) argues, these flaws in sampling and representativeness, as well as other potential limitations, tend to be mitigated throughout a number of subsequent exploratory studies, in a process known as concatenation.

6.3. Significance and contribution

EL has been widely studied within front-line service related fields and far less within professional groupings (Harris 2002, p.553), including PMs. This study has cast a new light on EL experienced by PMs. The academic and practical implications of our research findings are presented in this section.

One of the major academic contributions of this study is that it employed qualitative research methodology whilst most of the prior EL researches gave preference to
quantitative methods with inherent survey data collection techniques (see Appendix 1). In our research, we collected empirical data by means of semi-structured interviewees, which we believe are more appropriate in researching such subtle matter of emotions. Interviews allow researchers to gain a deeper insight in the research context, which we believe may fall short of achieving.

In the course of our study, we developed a contextual framework that may be used as a basis for future research of EL and its outcomes within project management. Within this framework, we identified key job-specific cues that may trigger EL as well as factors that can moderate it. The mentioned above cues and moderators were gauged from specific characteristics of PM role and project environment. This will allow practitioners to have a better understanding of the nature and origins of EL outcomes. Within the potential individual and organizational moderating factors, we discovered the bilateral connection that has not been previously identified in prior conceptualisations of EL.

We believe that our research has provided valuable academic and practical foundations, yet concede that further studies in this area must be conducted.

6.4. Future research directions

From the insights delivered from our study, we believe there are several streams of future research to be taken up within EL research in general and also in the PM context. Our suggestions for future research centre around only the major issues that we feel need to be addressed in further works.

Looking at EL research in the PM context first, we suggest that future researchers undertake a similar research effort into the potential experience of EL by PMs and investigation of the particular dimensions of the emotional regulation process pertinent to the PM context. As our research is the first in this context, and arguably one of the few EL works undertaking a constructionist qualitative approach, the limitations in sampling size, generalisability and representativeness that we conceded to in the previous chapters, may be overcome by greater explorative contributions to research through concatenation (Stebbins 2001, p. 5). Stebbins (2001, p. 12) takes the analogy of a linking chain to explain how exploratory concatenation occurs when a multitude of studies draw together to accumulate in grounded theory. Further research in the EL experienced by PMs may work to create these links so that a more generalisable framework to the emotional regulation process of PMs may be created in future. In order to overcome the issues we faced with participants recalling stories of EL in the workplace, we also urge future researchers to explore the phenomena using a more longitudinal research design. Furthermore, in the research of EL experienced by PMs and the possible dimensions to their emotional regulation process, we urge future researchers to investigate more deeply the relationship between benefits attained for the project from the strategic intent behind behavioural responses and its effects on outcomes for the individual.

We believe our findings also generated insights to EL that may also be present outside the context of PMs. Of particular interest, was the notion from our data that the emotional dissonance definition may be expanded to include what we labelled ‘reverse emotional dissonance’. Our findings also suggest, contrary to the majority of prior EL research, that more than one behavioural response may be exhibited by an individual within the one interaction, whether intentionally or unintentionally. We believe this is
an interesting stream of thought generated in our data and urge future EL researchers to keep this in mind when conducting their own research.

6.5. Final remarks

Our research strongly supports the notion that PMs do indeed experience EL. We believe sufficient evidence of this was gathered from our interview data to sufficiently answer our primary research question in the affirmative. Further to this, our research has identified categories of antecedent, moderators and outcomes that work towards understanding the dimensionality of the EL of PMs throughout the entire emotional regulation process. We believe a specific and unique mix of dimensions influence the emotional regulation process of PMs. As such, and similar to Harris (2002, p. 576), we humbly believe our EL research to be somewhat evolutionary and revolutionary. Evolutionary, in the sense that whilst some dimensions PM regulation process may be bound specifically to the PM context, such as a project environment antecedent, other dimensions, such as EQ as a potential moderator, echo the empirical findings and theories of prior EL researchers. Revolutionary, in the sense that our research also pointed to potentially new facets of EL that we believe have not been identified in prior EL research to date, namely the potential for reverse emotional dissonance and the enactment of more than one behavioural response at the one time. Yet, as our exploratory research an initial undertaking in this particular field of enquiry, we urge future academics to concatenate and build upon our work in order to have greater insight to the EL experienced by PMs within their emotional regulation process in the workplace.
References


Appendix 1 Trends in prior EL research

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<th>Methodology</th>
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<td>Quantitative</td>
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Appendix 4 Interview guide design

1. Initial house-keeping: Get consent for recording

2. Researcher background:
   2.1 Introduce ourselves
   2.2 Why we are doing the research
   2.3 What we are aiming for with the research

3. Interviewee background:
   3.1 How many years have you been a project manager?
   3.2 Any PM Certifications?
   3.3. Describe the environment you work in
       3.3.1 Perceived level of emotional autonomy?
       3.3.2 Perceived level of control over interactions?

4. Gathering the stories and experiences of the PMs

   Could you please tell us of a time when you had to manage your emotions on the job
   
   Does this story point to H1?
   
   Yes
   
   Reframe question – get another story
   
   No
   
   Probe further with questions

   Antecedents
      
   Individual state
      
   Behaviour
      
   Outcomes
      
   Moderator

   Details about the situation
      
   What did the project require?
      
   How did the PM behave?
      
   How did you feel afterwards?
      
   Why did you handle it the way you did?
   
   What do you bring to the PM role?

   How did the PM feel?
      
   Short-term
      
   Long-term

* Gather stories of managing positive emotion also, not just negative *

** Allow the participant to tell the story, follow their cues to ask deeper questions **

5. Final comments and house-keeping:
   5.1 Thank participant for their time
   5.2 Gain consent for the use of their name/details in the work
The research work is for the final part of Management. Research will be conducted from but the course is conducted with two other institutions; and Politecnico di Milano (Italy). The research is purely for academic purposes and is not done on behalf of, or sponsored by, another company or institution. Further information regarding the Masters course can be found at http://www.mspme.org/

**Topic:** An exploration into the emotional labour of Project Managers

**Premise:** Project managers operate in high-stress environments and are responsible for ensuring that technical aspects of a project, such as quality, risks, safety, scope and costs, are kept on track. They are also responsible for the softer side of managing interpersonal dynamics within cross-functional teams, with senior management and with stakeholders. Traditional project management focuses on these technical skills and there are more courses offering an arsenal of PM tools than you can poke a stick at. Yet what makes a good project manager stand out from the pack, is their ability to simultaneously and effectively deal with both the hard 'technical' and soft 'people' leadership. Research regarding the leadership qualities required by project managers and the characteristics of such leaders has been well researched in academia. Yet, the effects of non-stop leadership in high-stress and rapidly changing environments on project managers have not been given the academic spotlight they should. Enter, emotional labour.

In its most basic sense, emotional labour is exerted by a person when they plan and control their display of emotion in an organisational environment. Nurses, for example, may have to display feelings of empathy to patients to show they care, whereas service workers may portray a sunny disposition to gain customer loyalty. Police officers, on the other hand, may need to show assertive emotions in order to control a situation.

We see project managers needing to display these sorts of feelings, and more, in order to motivate their team towards project goals. As well as controlling when and the volume at which to display emotions. Yet, we believe that this emotional labour may come at a price to the project manager, such emotional exhaustion or negative moods, and at an extreme, cause burnouts and decreased job satisfaction. The flow on affect of this for an organisation, may be an unmotivated project team or the loss of a project manager at a critical point in the project.

Effective project management is a shared responsibility and is vital for organization success. Identifying the presence of emotional labour on project managers and its effects on the individual and the project begins to pave the way for strategies to be devised that help the project manager, the project team and the organisation itself.

**Methodology:** Our research is exploratory in nature and we will have a small sample size (due to research time constraints). It is a bit of a pilot study in a sense, as emotional labour has
never been looked at in the field of project management. As preliminary research in a new field, the aim is to identify whether emotional labour is present in project managers and from there, looking at the elements of emotional regulation process project managers might incur.

In mid to late November, we will be conducting semi-structured telephone/Skype interviews with participants at a time that suits them. Interviews are envisaged to be no longer than a half hour. There will also be some email communication to set up an interview time, provide research scope and for any required follow-ups post-interview. However, we will keep this to a minimum, as we don't want to be a burden here.

Questions asked to participants will be focused on the topic of emotional labour, and not in reference to the particular project the participant is engaged with. As an example, participants will be asked to describe a situation in which the display of emotion had to be controlled on the job, whether this controlling of emotion was done to the benefit of or affected the project, as well as, how it affected the participant on a personal level.

Again, the aim of the research is not to gather data on company specifics or the project a company is executing, but to speak with real-life project managers who are currently employed with the company, are presently engaged in projects and are willing to participate in our research.

**Confidentiality:** If it's an issue, facts, such as the company name and other information may be made anonymous or altered to protect company secrets or individual integrity. Our thesis supervisor will be the only other person who is allowed full access to our raw data. Just so we upfront, once we defend our thesis to the Academic Review Board at the University, it becomes a publicly available document (standard practice in academia), but again, companies and/or participants may remain anonymous or the names can be altered. Alternatively, if the company wishes for an agreement of secrecy concerning the data gathered from participants, we can do this also.