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## **A Case Study Exploring the Impact of Valuing Practices and Emotional Labour on the Well-being of one Senior Leader**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This article examines the theoretical frameworks of valuing practices and emotional labour in relation to a managerial position within a Higher Education setting. Positive aspects of these frameworks are explored along with challenges that can be faced by those striving to implement these management strategies in their practice. The methods used provided both qualitative and quantitative data via key vocabulary and phrases related to valuing practice and emotional labour as identified through observation and semi-structured interview, and the frequency of key vocabulary being used. The study takes the form of a case study. There is one participant who is a Higher Education employee working in a senior managerial position, line managing a small number of staff. This individual was chosen in order to explore their use of valuing practices and emotional labour within his management approaches. Analysis of the data identified a higher range of vocabulary relating to valuing practices than emotional labour. Overall conclusions are that valuing practices support the well-being of both leaders and staff through the motivation that is inspired by knowledgeable praise. Yet the possible risks of valuing practices should also be considered, such as non-engagement of staff. Emotional labour risks the well-being of leaders more so due to a difference in organisation and individual beliefs and ethos.

### **KEYWORDS:**

Valuing practices, emotional labour, well-being, path-goal theory, emotional intelligence, leadership

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## Introduction

Within the United Kingdom Higher Education (HE) sector, the valuing of staff, via staff surveys, follow up action plans and reports and working groups that staff can volunteer to be part of, is largely effective (Duncan, 2014, p. 39). Duncan (2014) goes on to suggest that this is due to staff being able to demonstrate skills, which otherwise are not exhibited during their day to day role. This can be true of those working in non-leadership positions as well as those in senior leadership roles. Valuing practices is defined as being "the praise and recognition of those to whom we look for leadership being a significant factor in determining the extent to which an individual feels valued for their skills, experience and effort" (Iszatt-White, 2009, p. 447). From the 2017 staff survey at one United Kingdom (UK) HE institution, it is evident that employees feel confident and comfortable sharing ideas and developing practice within immediate teams. What this implies is that staff are most secure within their own small team relationships. However, responses from staff regarding faculty interactions show a definite decrease in confidence with sharing ideas. This confidence decreases further with University-wide interactions. This seems to suggest that there is a relationship between the confidence staff feel with the distance from immediate colleagues. This in turn mirrors the responses of staff regarding line managers, which were largely positive. Responses from this survey influenced this article, as the aim is to explore how one line manager interacts with his staff in order to understand why they might be viewed positively by those they lead.

Throughout this article, two theoretical frameworks, those of valuing practices (Iszatt-White, 2009) and emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983; Iszatt-White, 2009), will be explored in relation to leadership and management. The focus will be on how these frameworks influence, not only on the managerial approaches, but also on the well-being of those implementing these leadership strategies within an educational setting. Emotional labour has traditionally been studied in commercial contexts and is commonly implemented by those front facing members of staff, who model the 'service with a smile' style of customer service (Hochschild, 1983; Iszatt-White, 2009, p. 448). According to Constanti and Gibbs (2004), emotional labour is an under researched area within HE, making this article relevant in its field. Traditionally, emotional labour has been defined as a suppression of true feelings to create a caring and safe atmosphere for clients (Hochschild, 1983). Yet, when examining emotional labour as a leadership strategy, (Grandey, 2000 cited in Larimi et al., 2014, p. 177) suggests that it is an "emotion regulation mechanism by which staff express certain required sentiments of their defined role as an employee and as the corporate culture of an organisation". This was developed further by Bolton and Boyd (2003, p. 289) with their use of the term 'skilled emotional managers', who they believe are able to "recognise a distinction between emotional work which occurs in response to the requirements of an employer or job role" (Iszatt-White, 2009, p. 451).

Valuing practices, unlike emotional labour, is not traditionally linked to a particular sector (White & Mackenzie-Davey, 2003; Iszatt-White, 2009; Stumpf et al., 2013; Duncan, 2014; Rogers & Ashforth, 2014; White, 2015; Baggett et al., 2016; White, 2016), suggesting that its use is commonplace within a wide range of sectors. For the purpose of this case study, This article aims to identify if emotional labour is adopted by those in leadership positions in order to enable valuing practices (Iszatt-White, 2009) within a HE setting, and the impact that such leadership strategies can have on the well-being of the individual delivering them.

## **Conceptual framework**

As identified by Borman and Motowidlo (1993) in Iszatt-White (2009, p. 447), an employee feels unappreciated when their efforts are not recognised and praised, resulting in withdrawal, therefore having a negative impact on performance. Therefore, staff need to feel valued and appreciated. However, valuing practices appear to go hand in hand with emotional labour, as praising staff without an accompanying smile, might also impact negatively on staff moral and output (Iszatt-White, 2009). This demonstrates a connection to the emotional intelligence of the leader, meaning that they have an ability to work effectively with others and lead change (Goleman, 1998, p. 84). The component of emotional intelligence being used alongside emotional labour in this instance is empathy. When praising staff with a smile demonstrates the leader's consideration of the feelings of the employee (Goleman, 1998, p. 89), giving the employee an indication that they care. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) in Iszatt-White (2009) go on to suggest that it is the role of the leader to develop a sense of being valued with 'emotional labour' (Hochschild, 1983) being of great importance in achieving this. Goleman (1998) identified emotional intelligence to be twice as important in successful leadership than technical skills and cognitive abilities (p. 89).

Emotional labour and valuing practices, are linked to path-goal theory of management. According to Northouse (2016), path-goal theory suggests that leaders motivate followers towards achieving goals through their behaviour, which ultimately focuses upon follower motivation, meaning that performance and job satisfaction are subsequently enhanced (Northouse, 2016, p. 115). There are four path-goal behaviours: directive, supportive, participative and achievement orientated (Phillips & Phillips, 2016). Directive behaviours are often wrongly considered to be negative in nature because it can appear to be controlling or autocratic. Similarly, participative behaviours can appear to suggest weakness in the management style (Phillips & Phillips, 2016, p. 150). However, directive behaviours are intended to be more instructional. Supportive behaviours show concerns for employees, while participative behaviours allow

employees to be involved with decision making. Achievement orientated behaviours focus on the setting of goals and an expectation that these goals are achieved (Phillips & Phillips, 2016, p. 150). These behaviours mirror valuing practices well, as instruction and support are required in order for employees to achieve. This encourages participation in decision making allowing employees to feel valued. Goal setting enables staff to experience aspiration and therefore job satisfaction (Iszatt-White, 2009; Northouse, 2016). Yet some of these behaviours also suit emotional labour. When directives are given by leaders but the goals are set from further up the management hierarchy, this could lead to strain on the individual line managers and staff (Hochschild, 1983). This is because there is a responsibility for achieving directives with little control over the criteria for achieving them. An example of this might be when a line manager is tasked with enforcing specific Professional Development Review targets that have been decided higher up the management chain.

Crawford (2014) believes that within an educational setting, leadership ultimately focuses upon the organisation, where "leadership should be seen as part of an understanding of organisations (Ogawa & Bossert, 1997) and not just as a personality trait of an exceptional individual" (p. 6). The suggestion is that leadership is about having an overview of the wider vision of the organisation. This links directly to Hochschild's (1983) theory of emotional labour, where those disseminating the beliefs and ethos of an organisation are expected to "suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others" (p. 20). The implementation of emotional labour, though, can result in negative psychological consequences, such as low self-esteem and burnout in those individuals implementing the strategy (Hochschild, 1983; Maxwell & Riley, 2017). It was identified by Gimlin (1996) that "emotional labour can also undermine a worker's sense of professionalism", as well as an individual's personal job satisfaction (Bulan, Erickson & Wharton, 1997; Parkinson, 1991; Pugliesi & Shook, 1997) in Pugliesi (1999, p. 130). However, Pugliesi (1999) also found that emotional labour did not always result in negative outcomes for employees, when it is "experienced as self-enhancing or when workers are in control of their emotion management" (p. 130). Therefore, if emotional labour enables a line manager's goals to be met, personal emotions could well be managed (Phillips & Phillips, 2016).

Constanti and Gibbs (2004) argue that it is the front-line employees in a HE setting that are required to use emotional labour, as opposed to those in management positions, thus enabling successful delivery of service to customers (p. 243). It can be assumed that 'management' within their research referred to those individuals who do not have immediate contact with the consumer, which differs to the focus managerial group of this study, line managers, who do have immediate contact with the customer through teaching and student representative meetings. This viewpoint presented by Constanti and Gibbs (2004) could also be construed as emotional labour only being

a useful strategy between customer and front-facing staff, rather than between line managers and those they lead.

According to White and Mackenzie-Davey (2003), the question “What makes employees feel valued by their employer?” is rarely asked by researchers, yet research in this area has become more prominent in the last seventeen years (White & Mackenzie-Davey, 2003; Iszatt-White, 2009; Stumpf et al., 2013; Duncan, 2014; Rogers & Ashforth, 2014; Baggett et al., 2016; White 2015; White, 2016). This suggests that there has been a shift in understanding the well-being of employees, thus demonstrating the positive impact that ‘authentic appreciation’ (White, 2015) has on employees’ level of job satisfaction.

In order to reflect upon the valuing of employees, it is important to consider what being valued in the workplace looks like. According to White and Mackenzie-Davey (2003), there are three key ‘clusters’ in determining how an employee feels valued – fairness, environment and inclusion. Stumpf et al. (2014), identify intrinsic rewards, which promote an individual’s ‘self-worth and intrinsic motivation’ (p. 21) as being a crucial factor in employees feeling valued. Baggett et al. (2016) identify supportive and recognition behaviours. These behaviours, termed by Baggett et al. (2016, p. 817) as ‘words of affirmation’ tie in with path-goal theory (Northouse, 2016; Phillips & Phillips, 2016) as the importance of communication and the delivery of supportive praise is highlighted as positive leadership strategies used by those in positions of leadership.

To conclude, the definition of valuing practices presented in the introduction (Iszatt-White, 2009), is in line with the wider research in what it means to be valued in the workplace. Furthermore, path-goal theory (Northouse, 2016; Phillips & Phillips, 2016) is recognisable in the behaviours explored by Baggett et al. (2016). Emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983) on the other hand can have a negative impact on a senior leader’s personal well-being and job satisfaction, with low self-esteem and burnout (Hochschild, 1983; Maxwell & Riley, 2017) being evident as well as a sense of professionalism being undermined (Gimlin, 1996). Yet, if self-managed and used to enable ‘self-enhancement’ (Pugliesi, 1999), emotional labour can be a positive management strategy, which enhances valuing practices in the workplace.

## **Research design**

### **Sample**

This study was intentionally in-depth as a case study within HE. Therefore, it required the selection of one leader from a HE educational setting who was known to employ particular management techniques. Purposive sampling was used because this drew on personal researcher knowledge of and interest in emotional labour and valuing

practices techniques, as well as making a judgement about approaching a suitable participant. Thus a Line Manager from a HE context was 'hand-picked' with a specific purpose in mind, which reflected their particular qualities and were relevant to the topic (Denscombe, 2003).

### **Positionality**

In tackling the research question: what impact does valuing practices and emotional labour have on the well-being of a senior leader? the approach used was that of pragmatism. In this research, it is the research question that is primarily important and therefore qualitative and quantitative data provides a broad understanding. Therefore, a pragmatist viewpoint was adopted as fundamentally it is about what works best to answer the research question rather than a 'world view' (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, p. 713). A mixed methodology using both types of data enabled methodological triangulation of data, thus enhancing its validity (Denscombe, 2003). Selecting this method also helped to eradicate bias from the study, therefore leading to more accurate conclusions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011).

### **Selected methods**

The focus of this research was on how a leader uses valuing practices (Iszatt-White & Mackenzie-Davey, 2003), how emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983; Iszatt-White, 2009) might be part of this process, and the impact that this can have on well-being. Therefore, carrying out an observation enabled such behaviours could to be seen in use. This was followed by an interview with the participant in order to capture his own views of such managerial techniques, and understand what led him to this approach to management.

### **Observation**

Thomas (2017 p.226) identifies observation as being one of the most important methods of data collection for social researchers, as it enables the researcher to gather "live" data from naturally occurring social situations" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011, p. 456). Thus, ensuring that data collection is of a first-hand nature, as opposed to second hand accounts, (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 456), providing a more valid source of information and making data more authentic. Denscombe (2003, p. 192) also states that there are some circumstances where it is best to observe what actually happens. This mirrors the wider literature as in both of the influential pieces of research informing this study (Hochschild, 1983; Iszatt-White, 2009) observations were carried out as part of the data collection process.

For the purpose of this study a structured observation was selected, as this enabled particular behaviours to be observed (Thomas, 2017, p. 226) which relate to valuing

practice (Iszatt-White & Mackenzie-Davey, 2003) and emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983; Iszatt-White, 2009). This form of observation provides quantitative data as the 'structured observer breaks the social situation down into separate bits' (Thomas, 2017, p. 226). When carrying out a structured observation, the researcher takes on a 'passive, non-intrusive role' (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 459), allowing only the incidences being studied to be noted down, making this form of observation extremely focused and less likely to be open to researcher bias (Thomas, 2017; Cohen et al., 2011; Denscombe, 2003).

However, as with any form of data collection, it is vital for the researcher to be aware of potential bias and consider how this can be avoided. As identified by Denscombe (2003, p. 194) observations use memory and perception, meaning that the records of one researcher may differ from another. It is possible to avoid such differences in data, by ensuring that a rigorous observation schedule is in place, thus avoiding discrepancies in the data (Denscombe, 2003). It was therefore also necessary to maintain a complete and rigorous audit trail of the data.

For the purpose of this study, frequency count recordings (Thomas, 2017, p. 226) or event sampling (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 460) were collected from the structured observations. For ease of data collection, the observations were divided into 22 separate entities, which corresponded with the agenda items for the meeting where the observation took place. For each observation sheet, selected behaviours and phrases linked to the behaviours were listed, yet space was provided underneath for additional actions and or phrases to be recorded, which were then put into a spreadsheet.

### **Analysis of observation**

Each observed behaviour under the categories were counted within each of the 22 separate agenda items. This formed a frequency distribution of the behaviours related to valuing practices and emotional labour. These responses from the structured observations therefore provided discrete quantitative data, which was then presented in the form of a bar chart as making percentage representations would have been nonsensical (Austin, 2017).

### **Interview**

As previously stated, in order to obtain rigorous and valid data, a mixed methods approach to the research were adhered to. Therefore, in order to strengthen the observations of valuing practices and emotional labour during a formal meeting situation, the participant was interviewed, enabling a more in depth insight into the participants understanding and reflection of both valuing practices (Iszatt-White, 2009) and emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983), thus complementing the position of pragmatism.

The chosen interview approach was that of a semi-structured interview, as pre-planned questions were asked, with the freedom of following these up if more detail

is required (Thomas, 2017). Before undertaking the interview, a rapport with the participant was established through having a pre-conversation not related to the interview. The researcher is represented as a neutral observer, who wishes to discover more about leadership strategies and their impact (Thomas, 2017). An interview schedule was used, listing the issues to be covered during the interview (Thomas, 2017) as well as possible extension questions and prompts. It is important to acknowledge that the questions were not presented to the participant prior to the interview taking place, this was a deliberate decision in order to achieve "spontaneous, rich, specific and relevant answers from the interviewee" (Kvale, 1996, p. 145 cited in Cohen et al., 2011, p. 424).

### **Analysis of interview**

The data collected from the interview were transcribed and then analysed using content analysis. The first process was to identify the main categories of the data in relation to the frameworks (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 570) within this initial coding, there may be identification of behaviours from path-goal theory (Northouse, 2016; Phillips & Phillips, 2016). Once the transcript has been coded in this way, topics within each identified category were listed with frequency of their appearance. Next, issues were allocated to the identified categories. Finally, these groups were commented upon and their messages reviewed (Cohen, 2011, pp. 570–572). On completion of the analysis of both the observation and the interview, responses given in the interview were matched to the behaviours demonstrated in the observation (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 554).

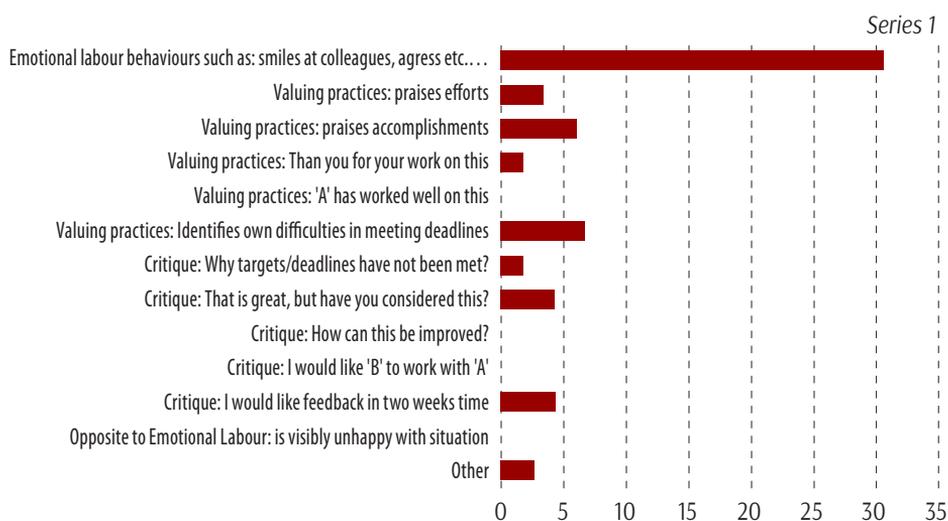
### **Ethics**

Ethical considerations for this small-scale study are in line with the processes and procedures of the institution with an ethics form, participant information sheet and consent form being completed by the participant before any research was carried out. In order to avoid the participant of this research to be identified, both the audio recording of the interview as well as the transcript were saved in such a way that anonymity was achieved and on completion of the transcript, the audio recording destroyed.

### **Findings from observations**

The meeting observed was of a formal nature, consisting of members of the Academic Audit and Review Committee, where University wide issues were discussed. The participant had the role of Chair. There were eleven people present in total, including the participant and the researcher, however, the other nine colleagues present in the meeting were not subject to the observation, other than how the participant responded to them. The meeting ran for 1 hour 25 minutes, which was shorter than the 2 hours scheduled, and the meeting started on time. There was one colleague taking minutes of the meeting.

During the meeting, it was observed that the participant demonstrated open body language – sat back in his chair, hand either positioned on the mouse of his laptop in order to access the materials discussed or resting on his chin, poised in thought. According to the work of Birdwhistell (1955) in Gkorezis, Bellou and Skemperis (2015, p. 1005) “nonverbal communication accounts for 60 to 93 percent of overall effective human communications”. When colleagues spoke, the participant ensured that eye contact was given, this sometimes meant moving his body slightly to face the person speaking. According to Sundaram and Webster (2000, p. 381 cited in Gkorezis, Bellou & Skemperis, 2015, p. 1007), “the cues of casual smiling, light laughter, forward body lean, open body posture and frequent eye contact are perceived as conveying intimacy and non-dominance – the characteristics commonly associated with friendliness and courtesy.” This suggests that the body language presented by the participant during the meeting was purposeful in a bid to make other members of the meeting feel at ease and unthreatened. The only time the participant appeared less assured, in both his verbal and non-verbal communication, was when the Dean of the faculty in which he works spoke. Here, there was a tendency to allow her to take the leading role, even though she was not chairing the meeting. This raises the question, if the Dean had not been present, might the participant have expressed his opinions on matters more freely? This observation suggests an element of emotional labour being evident in terms of the participant enforcing the values of the University, as opposed to his own personal values (Hochschild, 1983), particularly when interacting with the Dean.



**Figure 1. Frequency of displayed behaviours related to valuing practices and emotional labour**

The data from the observation (Figure 1) clearly identifies emotional labour being used by the participant in his leadership role, with evidence of both verbal and non-verbal communication. Non-verbal cues, such as smiling, nodding of the head in agreement appear to be used most frequently, suggesting that as part of the participant's practice as leader, listening to colleagues takes an important role in leadership.

Valuing practice behaviours were observed through praising colleagues' accomplishments as well as their efforts on completing tasks with examples such as:

"Thank you very much, I think it is largely positive".

"That is interesting, pass this on as a recommendation of good practice".

(From observation notes)

Another observation of the participant praising a colleague on the successful chairing of a meeting was made, demonstrating the empathy component of emotional intelligence as well as behaviours of valuing practices. An interesting observation which links directly to path-goal theory (Northouse, 2016; Phillips & Phillips, 2016) is that the participant identifies his own difficulties in meeting deadlines, not through a lack of trying, but because of the restrictions of circumstance. This behaviour could be seen as directive as it suggests concerns for colleagues and therefore gives an air of approachability and understanding. It could also be implied from this response that emotional labour is rejected in favour of taking a more understanding approach to the pressures of the workplace.

### **Findings from interview**

When first considering the data from the interview, Nvivo software was used to create a word cloud (Figure 2). This task enabled identification of the keywords that were used frequently during the interview, which could then be analysed in more detail. Predictably, valuing practices was a frequent word combination, as were emotional labour, due to the focus and nature of the study, they were also heavily present in the questioning as well as common in the participants responses. Words that appear in the word cloud that are of interest are those with positive connotations, and could be associated with supportive behaviours of path-goal theory (Phillips & Phillips, 2016), such as praise, positive, recognition, space and trust.

Alongside these, contrasting words such as stress, criticism, annoyed and absorbing appear. However, it is unclear through the word cloud if these words relate to personal experience as an employee, or description of the participant's own leadership. This required further exploration via the transcript. Words related to leadership, such as management and leader are present as are actions such as conversations, email, respond, debate and talking, all of which are communicative actions and could be linked to supportive, participative and achievement orientated behaviours of



It is therefore evident from the early stages of the interview that the previous observations of the participant chairing a meeting, mirror the views that he has expressed during interview. Not only are there clear links between his leadership approach and his opinions, he is making direct links to staff well-being and how valuing practices can indeed enhance this in the workplace. This demonstrates similarities to the conclusions drawn by Iszatt-White (2009) regarding “the idea of the “happy, productive worker”” (p. 463). However, further questioning during the interview regarding motivation and if the attributes being praised impacts on staff well-being and therefore performance, would have strengthened the discussion and provided a more valid response with which to draw conclusions.

**Nodes**

Name	Source	Reference	Created On	Created B	Modified On	Modified B
Praise and recognition	1	12	06/11/2017 22:4	JP	09/11/2017 15:3	JP
Employee's well-being	1	2	06/11/2017 22:4	JP	09/11/2017 15:3	JP
Why valuing practices	1	7	06/11/2017 22:4	JP	09/11/2017 15:3	JP
Aggressive and assertive managememe	1	6	06/11/2017 22:5	JP	09/11/2017 15:4	JP
Trust	1	6	06/11/2017 22:5	JP	09/11/2017 15:5	JP
allow for human error	1	3	06/11/2017 22:5	JP	09/11/2017 15:3	JP
Justification for feedback	1	9	06/11/2017 22:5	JP	09/11/2017 15:3	JP
Impact	1	5	06/11/2017 22:5	JP	09/11/2017 15:4	JP
knowledge	1	7	06/11/2017 22:5	JP	09/11/2017 15:3	JP
manager behaviour	1	15	06/11/2017 23:0	JP	09/11/2017 15:4	JP
employee participation	1	2	06/11/2017 23:3	JP	09/11/2017 15:5	JP
communication	1	8	06/11/2017 23:3	JP	09/11/2017 15:5	JP
Manager reflection	1	7	09/11/2017 15:2	JP	09/11/2017 15:4	JP
Respect	1	3	09/11/2017 15:4	JP	09/11/2017 15:4	JP
Emotional labour experience	1	7	09/11/2017 15:4	JP	09/11/2017 23:0	JP
Emotional labour impact	1	3	09/11/2017 15:4	JP	09/11/2017 15:5	JP
manager well being	1	2	09/11/2017 15:5	JP	09/11/2017 15:5	JP

**Figure 3. NVIVO shot of coding from the interview transcript**

Returning to the behaviours of path-goal theory (Northouse, 2016; Phillips & Phillips, 2016), participative behaviour is certainly evident from the interview transcript. For example, were the participant states that “people like Etienne Wenger implicitly suggest the importance of recognition in terms of building a community”. Use of the word ‘community’ implies that the participant believes that his role as leader is to bring people in the workplace together and offer opportunities for them to contribute to the development of policies and practice.

This is further supported later on within the transcript, where he provides detail of an experience when working in school as a Deputy Head Teacher. The participant gave employees a ‘voice’, yet this particular example highlights particular points. Following a path-goal theory style of leadership, where participative behaviours are exercised,

does not always impact positively on the leader. Allowing participation of staff runs the risk of employees veering away from the ethos or vision of the organisation, as was highlighted in the transcript.

At this point emotional labour comes into play as the organisation's values require revisiting and promoting. Yet, this puts the leader at risk of de-valuing staff and therefore decreasing levels of motivation amongst them. Well-being is therefore jeopardised for both the staff, who now feel that their opinions are not valued, and the manager who is enforcing the values of the organisation as well as seeing his or her action impacting negatively on staff. However, this example did not see the participant's well-being put at risk as he was not deceiving himself of his own beliefs. This participant was 'surface acting' (Hochschild, 1983), meaning that he was deceiving those he had allowed to participate (p. 36).

It is also evident from the transcript that trust is an important part of the participant's ethos as a leader. He reflects on both the experiences that he has had working with a manager who trusted staff as well as some of his own personal leadership experiences. From the analysis, links between trust and the path-goal behaviours of participative and achievement orientated (Phillips & Phillips, 2016) can be made. For example, when the participant states "In the workplace, my best managers treated me with, praise recognition and recognising the value of my work. So that kind of refines it into a specific context, of thinking, 'Okay, these people know what they're doing'. Erm, and I like working for them and I'd like to be the sort of person that I like to work for". Here, the participant bases his own management strategies on personal lived experiences (Kempster, 2009), even though the interview briefly touched on this, it was not the focus of the research question. However, enabling the participant to reflect on these past experiences, enabled him to consider his own approach to leadership, particularly valuing practices.

Another interesting aspect which came out through the interview was the idea of knowledge, how important knowledge is for a leader and how the most impactful praise and recognition was supported with the knowledge behind it. This was evident where the participant explains how a Head Teacher that he worked for carried out knowledge based praise and the impact that this had on him personally. This was an observation made by Iszatt-White (2009, p. 457) as being particularly important in valuing practices and one that the participant explored in some depth, for example, where he states: "I mean there's a kind of philosophy in those strategies, and effective strategies are (Pause), to give, knowledgeable praise rather than just praise". According to Iszatt-White (2009), it is this additional knowledge that contributes to staff feeling valued as it makes the praise appear 'authentic' (p. 457). During the observed meeting, there was evidence of the participant delivering knowledge based praise where, during the observation he praised a colleague on successful chairing of a meeting and

again where he identified a good model of practice demonstrating a link between values and practice.

Analysis identified emotional labour being more evident in the participant's school career than in his University career, "I've found many more tensions within school leadership than within University leadership" (interview transcript). Justification was offered for this response "I think there are almost ideological positions in schools that don't quite exist at University to the same degree". Throughout his reflections of emotional labour, words such as absorbing and annoyed that were highlighted on the word cloud (Figure 2), suggesting a negative impact on personal well-being for the leader. Alongside this, communication can impact negatively on well-being. This again was highlighted when discussing the importance of knowledge based praise, where the participant goes on to state that "Because [of] the fire-fighting in your own job and the emails and the d'ng, d'ng, d'ng of keeping the students happy, absorbs so much time, that there isn't really space [to always offer knowledgeable praise]". Therefore, suggesting that there is an element of emotional labour within the HE sector regarding expectations of students, requiring surface acting to managing this.

It is also evident from the analysis that staff communication, particularly email communication can impact negatively on valuing practices; "the one thing which can lead to non-valuing practices is the simple weight of email conversations that we have. Because one of the things I find with emails especially, is you never write an email, no-one reads an email in the tone of voice you thought you wrote it in". (interview transcript). The participant, goes on to suggest that "we're just banging things out [emails]. That's where you get discourse, which certainly isn't valuing practices. And I think the spoken discourse in the workplace is often of higher quality than the email discourse". This leaves me questioning Iszatt-White's (2009) suggestion that "Valuing practices are inherently communicative and, by their nature, embedded in the day-to-day work of leadership" (p. 455), From the findings, it could be suggested that this statement should be refined to 'valuing practices are inherently communicated verbally and embedded into the day-to-day work of leadership'.

## **Conclusion**

Through the literature and analysis of both an observation and an interview of a senior leader in a HE setting, it is evident that valuing practices can be an effective leadership framework to follow. More often than not, its use supported staff well-being as well as the personal well-being of the leader. However, it is apparent that knowledgeable praise motivates and inspires staff more so than praise alone (Iszatt-White, 2009). Furthermore, valuing practice can be seen as a series of behaviours, such as those identified

in path-goal theory (Northouse, 2016; Phillips & Phillips, 2016). This suggestion is supported by Duncan (2014), who states that “Valuing staff is a complex, multidimensional and dynamic issue. It is as much about behaviour and organisational culture as it is about basic terms and conditions” (p. 42). Therefore, valuing staff is very personal to the individual leader and organisation as a purposeful management technique.

As identified in the data analysis, there are elements of risk involved in implementing valuing practices, in terms of employee non-engagement, taking advantage of the space and trust provided by the leader. Yet according to the participant, such negative responses are rare. This is something that was also identified in Iszatt-White’s (2009, p. 457) study, suggesting that mostly, valuing practices in the workplace has a positive impact on staff. It is also suggested by the response from the participant during the interview, that in order to maintain positivity amongst staff responding well to the space and trust offered by valuing practices, that those abusing this trust are dealt with accordingly (p. 457), often requiring a different management strategy, which mirrors the finding of Iszatt-White (2009, p. 457). This change in approach, often becomes more directive (Phillips & Phillips, 2016) and supportive in nature.

Emotional labour is also evident in leadership practices, but possibly less so in the evidence from the data collection. In order to examine this aspect of leadership in more detail, interviews with other leaders in the faculty, as well as more longitudinal observations, would have exposed more evidence of this. However, from the evidence collected, it has been identified that there is a possibility that emotional labour can impact negatively on a leader’s well-being, but it can also support the delivery of valuing practices as the organisation’s values provide a clear structure of expectations.

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