Emotional Labor Of Service Employees And Organizational Leadership In Global Service Management Quality In Future Trend

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Abstract: In this study, the concept of the "service market" is no longer limited to traditional mainstream industries such as food, dining, tourism, or hospitality. Instead, these industries have extended into a broader range of societal sectors. Various industries have now developed into customer service management sectors, addressing the needs of different social classes. Additionally, institutions such as K-12 schools, universities, adult continuing education centers, and private tutoring institutions have become an integral part of the service management landscape, playing a role in its development and promotion. Naturally, there is a close and interactive relationship between frontline employees and customers in these service settings.
Keywords: Labor, service market, customers, employees, service management.

INTRODUCTION

Numerous online and offline surveys highlight the importance of customer service in maintaining customer retention and loyalty, enhancing industry reputation, and establishing distinct cultural concepts across different sectors. Customer interaction experiences vary across industries, leading to other feedback processes. For instance, direct interactions in the industry emphasize emotional engagement, as many customers still prefer communicating with real service personnel. Through direct communication, businesses can better understand varying customer needs and provide emotional and social support. On the other hand, indirect interactions focus more on product usability and support rather than emotional communication. In today's society, AI-driven online chat services are perceived as "convenient." However, in cases where further assistance is needed, customers must still rely on human service representatives. The retail industry was among the first to adopt indirect customer interaction through AI-driven chat windows, gradually extending these services to returns and after-sales support—Amazon being an early example. However, in the education sector, schools prioritize human-to-human interactions, ensuring that students and parents receive direct communication from staff. Regardless of whether customer service is delivered through direct or indirect interactions, workforce allocation and training remain critical. Global service management companies, such as Amazon, especially emphasize training employees to enhance emotional intelligence and customer impact. This focus on internal training has become a necessary task across various industries, including retail, finance, and education, as high-quality service ultimately leads to satisfied customers. Over the past decade, literature on service management has been relatively scarce, with most global management research focusing on business operations and economic issues. However, in the post-pandemic era, industries are becoming increasingly competitive within the service management sector, each striving to distinguish itself and earn customer trust and loyalty. These significant changes over the past decade have underscored the growing importance of service industries in different social strata.

In an era of intensified competition, businesses must identify their unique strengths, address industry shortcomings based on customer feedback, and effectively market their services. This study explores customer experiences across various service management industries and provides insights into the future development of the global service sector.

Research Question:
How does the emotional labor of service employees influence organizational leadership in shaping the quality of global service management in future trends?

In what ways can organizational leadership strategies evolve to better support the emotional labor of service employees and enhance the quality of global service management in the future?

Literature Review

The quality of customer service varies across different cultural contexts, influencing how services are delivered and perceived. For example, in many Asian countries, tipping is traditionally nonexistent. However, due to the influence of Western service cultures, some service industries in Asia have started placing tip jars at service counters, allowing satisfied customers to leave gratuities voluntarily.A stark contrast between Eastern and Western service practices can be seen in gas stations. In most Asian countries, approximately 90% of gas stations, whether publicly or privately operated, employ attendants to assist customers with refueling at no additional charge. In contrast, gas stations in Western countries typically do not offer this service, requiring customers to refuel their vehicles independently, which eliminates the expectation of tipping. This difference highlights a fundamental distinction in service culture between the East and the West.Similarly, in some Asian barbecue restaurants, staff are trained to assist customers with grilling to prevent potential safety hazards caused by excessive flames. Despite this additional service, tipping remains uncommon. On the other hand, in Western barbecue restaurants, customers are typically responsible for grilling their food, with little to no assistance from staff.These cultural differences raise important questions regarding the adaptability of service models across regions. If Asian countries were to adopt Western-style self-service fueling, would customers accept it? Conversely, if Western countries introduced fuel attendants who expected tips, would this align with the existing tipping culture? Furthermore, should Asian service industries begin encouraging tipping practices similar to those in Western countries? While there is no absolute right or wrong approach in service management, it is crucial to implement service practices that align with local cultural expectations without alienating customers. Finding ways to enhance service culture within specific cultural contexts while maintaining customer satisfaction is an essential challenge in service management.One notable characteristic of Western service industries is the prevalence of self-service models. For example, self-check-in at airports allow customers to complete the check-in process independently. However, for individuals unfamiliar with technology, such as elderly customers, these self-service options may take significantly longer to navigate. In contrast, high-interaction service models, such as those in healthcare or financial advisory services, provide direct human assistance, which often results in shorter service times and more comprehensive emotional support. Additionally, real-time customer feedback during these interactions is crucial for improving service quality.Medical and financial service industries particularly highlight the significance of customer experience in service interactions. According to Bitner et al. (2007), customer experiences in service industries—whether through direct or indirect service—significantly impact customer perception and satisfaction. When customers engage in a service, they experience a combination of rational, emotional, perceptual, and tangible factors, all of which shape their overall impression. Service interactions vary in intensity. Some require minimal interaction, such as self-service technologies, while others involve prolonged contact with service personnel, as seen in healthcare and financial services (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2021). Bitner et al. (2007) emphasize that service encounters play a critical role in shaping customer experiences, regardless of the level of interaction. Furthermore, Zaharia & Schmitz (2020) highlight that service experiences stem from multiple dimensions, including rational, emotional, perceptual, physical, and psychological aspects. This study focuses on three key elements of service interactions: service employees, customers, and technology. Additionally, it explores seven major aspects of service experiences: Emotional dynamics between customers and service employees、 Service employee management、 Service environment perception、 Customer engagement mindset、 Self-service and technology、 Service failures and recovery strategies、 Customer relationship management。

Customer and Service Personnel Emotions

The interaction between frontline customer service personnel and customers is a crucial indicator of service quality. The overall customer experience is largely shaped by these frontline employees, making them a key factor in customer satisfaction and relationship evaluation (Hole, Y., & Snehal, P. , 2019). Extensive quantitative and qualitative research has been conducted in many Western countries to analyze customer experiences. Emotions play a critical role in both direct and indirect service interactions, and the importance of frontline service personnel in managing these emotions is increasingly recognized (Hole, Y., & Snehal, P. & Bhaskar, M., 2019). Across both Western and Asian industries, emotional

intelligence training has become a necessary component of service management. Whether dealing with teenagers, older adults, or individuals with physical or mental disabilities, frontline service personnel must uphold the principle of prioritizing customer service. The ability to manage emotional fluctuations caused by various situational changes is essential, as service personnel must not allow external factors to disrupt their professional behavior or emotional stability.

Academic literature has identified two major categories of emotional responses in service interactions: emotional contagion and emotional labor. Within different organizational cultures, businesses aim to foster positive emotional contagion, where employees' positive attitudes and emotions enhance customer experiences. However, if emotions are not effectively managed, service employees may experience emotional labor, where the strain of maintaining a professional demeanor under stress leads to burnout or dissatisfaction. Managing these emotional aspects is essential to sustaining high-quality customer service and maintaining a positive service environment.

i). Emotional Contagion

In the service process, emotional contagion is the first impression customers receive when interacting with frontline service personnel. Through facial expressions, speech pace, and body language, service employees convey warmth and attentiveness or, conversely, coldness and neglect. These non-verbal cues are integral to everyday human communication and are particularly crucial in customer service interactions. The clarity of communication, tone of voice, and eye contact can significantly influence whether a customer feels acknowledged and valued. The ability of service personnel to encode, transmit, and deliver emotional messages effectively (Feine, J., Gnewuch, U., Morana, S., & Maedche, A., 2019) determines the success of emotional contagion in customer interactions. When customers are feeling uncomfortable or dissatisfied, the right emotional signals from service staff—such as empathetic expressions and reassuring gestures—can create a positive emotional shift. This, in turn, enhances customer satisfaction and increases the likelihood of return visits, making emotional contagion a critical factor in customer retention and loyalty. In customer service interactions, context is a crucial factor. Effectively conveying language and ensuring customers receive and accept it is key, with emotional contagion being a significant aspect of these real-life interactions (Pugh, 2001; Tsai & Huang, 2002). Employees play a vital role in expressing emotions, as service interactions often involve substantial transactions. Therefore, ensuring customers feel comfortable and happy during these transactions is an important training focus for organizations (Coles et al.,2019). There are also clear guidelines (Display Rules) in organizational training on how to professionally express emotions in various situations.

The definition of this emotional code mainly emphasizes two key aspects: first, the way customer service staff express emotions impacts how the customer feels, and the messages conveyed through facial expressions and body language are closely connected (Alabak et al., 2020). Second, the emotional expression of customer service staff is intentional (Intention), requiring effort (Efforts) to achieve the desired behavioral outcomes (McRae & Gross, 2020). While different companies and organizations may have unique customer service guidelines, a common expectation is that employees greet customers with warmth and a friendly smile. Customer service staff, who are on the front lines, play a crucial role in determining whether customers will return and make repeat purchases (Alabak et al., 2020).

Past studies have found that psychological feelings, store environment quality, customer mindset and purchasing intention, the organizational atmosphere, the personal characteristics of customer service staff, commitments made by staff to customers, and the busyness of the store are all factors that may be influenced by the emotional expressions of customer service staff and, in turn, affect customer feelings. Customer service staff's smile, tone of voice, and eye contact directly influence customers' positive evaluations of the service they receive. This is also a key recommendation for companies and organizations aiming to improve customer satisfaction (Gabriel et al.,2023).

ii). Emotional Labor

Emotional labor is a critical consideration for customer service staff when interacting with customers. As individuals come from diverse family and cultural backgrounds, their emotional regulation varies. However, front-line customer service staff must navigate the appropriate emotional state required to manage the emotions triggered by customer interactions (Iwakabe et al., 2023). Two key concepts of emotional labor apply to customer service personnel: surface acting and deep acting. The main distinction

between them lies in how authentic emotions are expressed (Iwakabe et al., 2023). Surface acting focuses on outward emotional expressions, where employees may display emotions that do not align with their true feelings. This can lead to inauthentic emotional expressions and, over time, emotional dissonance and stress (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983). On the other hand, deep acting involves altering internal emotional states to genuinely express appropriate emotions. This approach fosters a more authentic and consistent emotional expression, in contrast to surface acting (McRae & Gross, 2020). As a result, deep acting allows customer service staff to express emotions more sincerely (Lam et al., 2020). Recent research has found that service orientation, organizational support climate, problem customer handling incidents, and the personal characteristics of service employees across different industries influence the state of emotional labor (McRae & Gross, 2020). These factors, in turn, affect adaptive sales behavior and sales performance. Emotional labor may also be influenced by the service climate within a company, which impacts service quality ((Delhom et al., 2021).

Abargil & Tishby (2021) further emphasized that supervisory support—whether for employees' work, emotions, or relationships with colleagues—moderates the effect of emotional labor on service performance. Goldman & Rousmaniere (2021) conducted a study of service staff and their immediate supervisors, finding that problematic customers increase employees' emotional labor burden, which subsequently reduces their positive service behaviors. Delhom et al., (2021) observed that service employees with positive emotions are more likely to use deep acting strategies when interacting with customers, whereas those experiencing negative emotions tend to adopt surface acting strategies. (Delhom et al., 2021) conducted a longitudinal study to examine the impact of daily positive and negative emotions on the emotional labor of frontline service personnel. Additionally, Grecucci et al., (2019) found that personal traits (e.g., extraversion) moderate the relationship between emotional labor strategies and service performance. Goldman (2021) explored the relationship between emotional labor and its effects on emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

Future Research

Today, most scholars focus on job positions where employees' emotional expression and interaction are less prominent, such as general clothing store employees, cashiers in various retail settings, and shoe store staff interacting with customers (Choi & Kim, 2020). However, some jobs involve longer interactions, leading to more in-depth conversations and interactive services, such as hairdressers, physical therapists, and beauticians. Do the effects and mechanisms of emotional contagion differ across these various service industries? Currently, the predominant method for measuring the emotional expression of customer service personnel involves researchers acting as mystery shoppers, secretly observing and recording employee behavior before quantifying their findings. While most aspects of emotional performance can be assessed using standardized scales, is qualitative analysis also considered in practice? What conclusions have been drawn? The sincerity and appropriateness of emotional expression are critical factors in customers' evaluations of service personnel and influence their likelihood of returning. Therefore, this quantitative measurement model still requires further refinement. Additionally, negative emotions displayed by customer service personnel—such as indifference, anger, or neglect—can directly and indirectly affect customer emotions. How customers respond to these emotions and how service providers should manage such situations remains an underexplored topic. Under what conditions do positive and negative emotional contagion patterns emerge? What are their direct and indirect effects on the relationships between service staff and customers? How do customers respond, and how can these interactions be improved? From Hochschild's (1983) foundational work on emotional labor, more research is needed in this field. As the global economy shifts away from being finance-centered, the service industry plays an increasingly vital role, necessitating deeper exploration of emotional labor. Previous research has identified various antecedents, consequences, mediators, and moderating factors that influence the emotions of customer service staff and impact customer retention (Kharouf, 2020). Studies have also shown that customer service employees' emotional regulation strategies affect their task environment, job autonomy, work resources, social interactions with colleagues, managers, and customers, as well as the physical work environment (Johns, 2006). However, further research is needed to deepen our understanding of these dynamics. Finally, emotional labor refers to an individual's management and regulation of emotions (Hochschild, 1983). During service interactions, when

employees' genuine emotions conflict with the emotional expressions required by their company, their emotional display can be affected, ultimately influencing the customer's service experience (Choi and Kim, 2020). Despite the importance of this topic, few studies have explored the relationship between emotional labor and emotional contagion. Future research should investigate this relationship further, including potential mediating and moderating variables. This is an innovative service performance that has gradually been widely used in the machines of different dealers. With the advent of the AI era, more and more companies are also using this self-service and technology as a new interface to cater to customers in different regions with different languages and time differences. Due to the high labor cost, the company can save marketing costs by using automated machine services, which can also give customers a different creative and professional image of the company. The customer service personnel of each company can serve customers more professionally at the more interactive distance required in each specific situation. The rapid development of information technology has further brought many revolutionary innovations to self-service. Companies can also effectively use technology interfaces to improve service workflows, increase service efficiency, reduce operating costs, serve more customers, provide more functional benefits to customers, and enhance the company's overall performance. Technology-based service delivery systems (TDSs) can be rapidly grown and become more mature, while also changing the role of technology in the interaction between customers and companies. The global service industry has introduced technology into human service interactions. In addition to reducing personnel costs and increasing operational service efficiency, it can also improve customer satisfaction through technological services. Previous research suggests that both customers and employees can improve the quality and satisfaction of overall service encounters by using technology (Crawford, 2023). Further argued that customers' use of technology-based service encounters can be considered self-service technology. Self-service technology means that consumers complete all procedures by themselves through information technology platforms, such as airlines providing airport check-in services without the need for contact and interaction with service personnel (Luccioni, Viguier, & Ligozat, 2022). Generally speaking, SSTs include four categories: Internet, interactive kiosks, interactive voice systems, and mobile services (Huang & Zhao, 2024). Self-service technology has become an increasingly mature research area in the field of service marketing. Many studies have also pointed out that many scholars have explored how its innovative features directly or indirectly affect customers' willingness to use automated service systems, and also show that it plays an important role in the entire service delivery process (Bacchini & Lorusso ,2019). Many studies have focused on the effects of using automated service systems on customer behavior. The impact of the wait time includes: customer perception of waiting time (Bacchini & Lorusso, 2019), customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction, and customer loyalty (Crawford, 2023). In addition, due to the development of the Internet, many studies in the past have focused on how customers evaluate website service quality (E-service Quality) and developed appropriate scales (Bacchini & Lorusso ,2019). Since website service quality is very important, many studies have focused on exploring whether website service quality will directly or indirectly affect customer satisfaction and loyalty (Beatty, 2024). However, since the types of automated service systems today are no longer limited to the Internet, customers may use different automated service systems at the same time to complete all services. Therefore, Choi and Kim (2020) developed a new scale to measure the service quality of automated service systems, which comprehensively measures the service quality of the company's overall automated service system.

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