Recognition of Impact of Emotional Labour on Quality Service Delivery: A Study of Some Hotels in South East Nigeria

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Abstract: The main objective of this study was to investigate the extent to which managers and service employees of hotel organizations in Nigeria have recognized emotional labour as a critical factor in quality service delivery and customer satisfaction. We also investigated the relationship between emotional labour (surface acting (SA), deep acting (DA),) and service quality, and customers’ emotional satisfaction. Data were gathered by the use of structured questionnaires designed in Likert format, and interviews. The focus groups were customer-contact employees, managers and customers of the selected hotels. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 17.0 software. Formulated hypotheses were tested using regression and Correlation methods, analysis of variance (ANOVA), Z-test and t-test for tests of significance. Analysis revealed that emotional labour (SA, DA) was found to have significant relationship with service quality, and customers’ emotional satisfaction. While SA has negative relationship with the above variables, DA has positive relationship. In the 1 to 3-star hotels, service quality and customer satisfaction were found to be low and below expectations. Employees of different grades of hotel perceive and perform emotional labour differently. It was observed that emotional labour as a construct is unfamiliar to service employees hence, they have not accorded adequate recognition to emotional labour as critical factor in quality service delivery. Our conclusion is that performance of emotional labour has significant impact on service quality and customer satisfaction. The realities of emotional labour are not yet clearly understood by majority of hotel employees and managers in the selected hotels. The implication is that the emotional demands of frontline jobs and their emotional contributions towards sustainability and economic success are not appreciated. Above findings have serious human resource implications for the hotel industry in Nigeria. We recommend that hotel organizations should re-design and plan the emotional content and context of their human resources practices to reflect the crucial role emotional labour plays during service encounters.

Keywords: Emotional labour; Emotional satisfaction; Service encounters; Service quality.

I. INTRODUCTION

In a business environment of heightened consumer expectations, and stiff competition, tourism and hospitality organizations look for ways to excel in service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty, competition, and performance. In the hotel industry, successfully satisfying customers’ needs and wants is much more than providing room and/or board no matter the class of the establishment. It requires humanist aspect of high standard.

In the hotel industry, face-to-face transactions have the greatest power to make an impression on the guest. Here the customer/guest can undertake a full assessment of people, their manner, appearance and general behaviour. Therefore, the personal contact that takes place must be of superior quality. The service employees need to be able to put themselves in the other person’s shoes, in other words, they should be able to empathize with the customers; put up friendly and cheerful face at all times in a way that is not going to be seen as just an act, but seen to be or at least appear sincere (Power, 1992). The service employee must deliberately involve his/her feelings in the situation. He must perform emotional labour.

Emphasis should be on guest’s total experience. Customer experience includes interactions with an organization’s people, processes or systems; feelings or emotional responses generated by the interaction (Thompson, 2007). Customer experience is the most important factor in gaining customer loyalty (Brandi, 2006). Service experience is therefore, an essential element in the transaction.

The skill with which emotional labour is performed impacts on perception of service quality (Provis et al, 2003; Parasuraman et al, 1988). The handling of difficult and unruly customer requires the active suppression and/or masking of one’s own emotion while simultaneously expressing an alternate emotion. The service worker is expected to be upbeat and positive in the face of criticism and complaints (Provis et al, 2003). He is expected to wear cheerful face, beaming “professional smile” no matter the situation.

Jobs in the hotel/hospitality sector are particularly vulnerable to emotional labour demands as they are characterized by an underlying expectation for employees to display a positive disposition, even when faced with situations that normally elicit negative emotional reactions such as being inpatient, over-demanding or irate.

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customer (Hoel and Einarsen, 2003; Pizam, 2004). Hospitality service environment is so challenging because some of the customers arrive at the establishments with negative emotions while attempting to run away from unpleasant situations encountered at their homes, workplaces, society etc. Many a time, these customers use hotel workers as inanimate objects (scapegoat) for venting their frustration.

Thus, customer service work is increasingly trying. To manage emotional labour, managers must hire employees who can cope with the stress caused by dealing with difficult and awkward customers. Emotional labour must be managed on a day-to-day basis and at any point of encounter (moment-of-truth) between service employee and the customer. Every hospitality/hotel organization experiences “moment-of-truth” in thousands every day. The way a manager/employee perceives and recognizes his job content has a great influence on how he performs his job.

In the hospitality/hotel industry, it is not unusual to hear service employees complain of customers being awkward, over-demanding, and abusive (physically, verbally), difficult, angry, aggressive, unruly etc. It is also not unusual to hear customers complain of service workers being rude; abusive, unresponsive, snobbish etc. Sometimes, it is observed that service workers argue with customers. The researcher in this study was privileged to have personally observed such complaints as mentioned above from both staff and customers, and arguments between guests and employees while working in the hospitality establishments as a manager. Such scenario described above indicates possible lack of emotive work skills and non-recognition of the realities of emotional labour and the importance of emotion regulation required during service encounter. This points to the fact that performance of emotional labour, a critical factor in the delivery of quality service and customer satisfaction has not been properly addressed. Problems relating to emotional labour are human resource issues that deserve serious attention and this is the main reason that necessitated this study.

**Objectives of the study**

The main objective of the study was to determine the extent to which managers and employees of hotel organizations have recognized the realities of emotional labour, its role in the delivery of quality service and customer satisfaction. The study also examined the relationship between employees performance of emotional labour (surface acting and deep acting), service quality and customer satisfaction. The study investigated if differences exist in perception, recognition and performance of emotional labour between and among various grades of hotel (1-star to 5-star).

**Research Questions**

To guide the study, three research questions were formulated as follows:

1. Have the managers and employees of hotels recognized emotional labour to a great extent as a critical factor in quality service delivery and customer satisfaction?
2. Is there significant relationship between performance of emotional labour (SA; DA) and service quality and customer satisfaction?
3. Do significant differences exist in perception, recognition and performance of emotional labour between and among various grades of hotel (1-star to 5-star)?

**Statement of hypotheses**

For the purpose of guiding the study, three (null) hypotheses were formulated as follows:

1. Managers and employees of hotel organizations have not significantly recognized emotional labour as a critical factor in delivery of quality service and customer satisfaction.
2. Employees’ performance of emotional labour (surface acting; deep acting) has no significant relationship with quality service delivery and customer satisfaction.
3. Significant differences do not exist in perception, recognition and performance of emotional labour between and among various grades of hotel (1-star to 5-star).

**Significance of the Study**

A study of this nature has practical significance in many aspects. This work would further broaden our vision, knowledge and understanding of the topic, bringing to the surface the characteristics, subtleties and centrality of emotional labour in service excellence particularly in Nigeria and some other countries where emotional labour has long been neglected. As at the time of this study, there was no direct evidence that a study of this nature has been conducted in Nigerian hotels. The study reveals how differently each grade of hotels treats emotional labour. Understanding of the attitudes and behaviours of front-line workers towards their work and customers will help management come to terms with the overall experiences their customers have with their employees they deal with on any transaction. Paying adequate attention to such a construct as emotional labour and adopting appropriate management strategies by operators would improve employees’ attitude, behaviour and service quality. It is essential that organizations are also aware of the emotional labour demands of their service employees so that they can find ways to provide support to their workers and help them deal with the impacts of emotional labour. The service workers need to be adequately prepared bearing in mind that during service interaction the manager may not have the opportunity to shade away or re-call defective service.
II. BRIEF REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This sub-section of the work deals with a brief review of related literature covering the relevance of emotional labour in service encounter, and customer satisfaction.

**Emotional Labour in Service Encounter**

Emotional labour is at the heart of service, and quality service is the lifeblood of the hospitality industry (Davidoff, 1994; Ligander and Straudvit, 1997). Service is the critical area for competitive differentiation and the level of service quality is the key factor in determining customer satisfaction and overall customer loyalty (Enz and Siguaw, 2000; Johnson and Woods, 2008). In the lodging industry, it is a service-excellence focus that is the source of any sustainable competitive advantage. A key component of the service excellence focus is the moment of customer-provider interaction. Consequently, a key aspect of the work performed by most workers in the hospitality is the display of organizationally-sanctioned emotions (Davidoff 1994).

Hochschild (1983) sees emotional labour increasingly relevant, given the particular demands of service jobs. These jobs depend heavily on workers’ ability to manage their emotions and that of others (Wharton, 2009; Kruml and Geddes, 2000; Wu and Yuan, 2012). Performance of emotional labour poses a serious challenge to service workers. Part of the challenge is that service workers must often conceal their real emotions when guests give them a hard time, and they must continue to smile through negative feedback from guests (Chu and Murrmann, 2004).

Empirical studies confirm the significance of emotional labour in the encounter. This perspective shared by Grandey (2000); Ashforth and Humphrey (1993); Morris and Feldman (1996) further explains the role of emotional labour in service industries. Their common perspectives are:

a) That emotions play critical role in the delivery of service excellence and customer loyalty and

b) That organizations ensure this delivery of quality guests’ service most often by implementing organizational display rules, which serve as guide for appropriate employee behaviour in every interaction with the guest.

The service management literature provides us with four factors that make emotional labour relevant to the service encounter (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993). Firstly service workers are at the customer-organization interface and represent the organization to the customer. Secondly, service transactions usually involve face to face transaction between service workers and customers. Thirdly, because of high uncertainty in the encounter created by customer participation these encounters have a dynamic and emergent quality. Fourthly, due to the intangibility of the services offered in the encounter it can be difficult for customers to evaluate service quality. Taking these four factors into account, emotion has significant potential for impacting on services encounter – through emotional interactions.

The relevance of the effective performance of emotional labour in service encounter is further demonstrated in relation to customer’s perception of service quality. Ferguson, Bulan, Erickson and Wharton (1997) suggest that the primary task of workers who provide high quality service is not to produce material good; but to produce speech, action, and emotion that symbolize one’s willingness to do for the client or customer. This is consistent with the service management literature that the social interaction of an exchange and the physical environment in which it occurs are used by consumers as service quality cues (Grove and Fisk, 1989; Anderson et al, 2003).

In the hospitality/hotel industry, managing emotions (showing happiness and empathy, not fear, or anger) Is an important facet in customer retention strategies. Managing emotions results in good customer performance (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993). Emotional expressions such as smiles and friendly comments can lead to good work performance (Grandey, 2000). Aldermann, (1995); Pugh, (1998) found a positive relationship between emotional displays of bank tellers and customer satisfaction. This study suggests that positive emotional expressions will result in higher customer service performance.

Moi and Dean (1999) concluded from their study that service quality is represented by three dimensions in the hospitality industry, namely, employees (behaviour and appearance) tangible and reliability. The best predictor of overall service quality is the dimension referred to as ‘employees’. This study confirms employee behaviour as a critical factor in service excellence.

Langhorn (2009) examined the influence of emotional intelligence and emotional labour on the quality of service offered by servers in the restaurant. Among others, the key findings of this study are that there is a positive relationship between the emotional expression of the customer and a range of service cues; and that the emotional competences of the server are positively related to the positive emotional expression of customers in regard to a range of service cues. Based on the findings of the study, Langhorn recommends that service organizations need to plan the emotional content and context of their operations or brands and decide how the environment and personal interactions will look and feel in pursuit of that design.

The implication of the above findings is that if the service provider serves with smile, the customer will equally smile, while on the other hand if the service provider is grumpy and heavy-handed, the customer will be unhappy. These findings support the findings of Pugh (2001) on emotion contagion which suggest that
exposure to an individual expressing positive or negative emotions can produce a corresponding change in the emotional state of the observer.

According to Lee (2009) emerging research on customer loyalty shows that an organization’s success is closely linked to its ability to create the kind of exceptional customer service experience that leads to repeat business. If service workers are angry, demoralized or just plain disinterested, no amount of training will affect the service climate this emotional state creates. Customer service research shows that 68% of customers defect from a firm because they were treated with an attitude of indifference (Lee, 2009). Thus, 68% of what leads to customer defection is related to emotion – or in this case, the lack of emotion. The connection between emotional labour and customer service is obvious, thus, the economic consequences of not addressing customer-contact employees’ emotions can be disastrous to an organization.

**Customer Satisfaction**

Customer satisfaction depends on a product’s perceived performance in delivering value relative to buyer’s expectations (Kotler et al, 2006). If the products performance falls short of the customers’ expectations, the buyer is dissatisfied. If performance matches expectations, the buyer is satisfied. If performance exceeds expectations, the buyer is delighted. The customer-centered firm seeks to deliver high customer satisfaction relative to competitors. For customer-centered firms, customer satisfaction is both a goal and a major factor in the survival and economic success (Kotler et al, 2006).

Customer satisfaction is defined by Anderson et al (1997) as an “overall evaluation of a firm’s products or services.” As demonstrated by researches in service management, the development of long term relationships between customers and service providers is also influenced by social aspects (Goodwin and Gremler, 1996). Employees’ handling of interactions with customers strongly influences the level of commitment a customer develops towards a service provider. The level of satisfaction the customer experiences with the services provided also contributes to the customer’s commitment to the firm (Hennig-Thurau et al, 2002). Based on findings from studies, it is argued that customers have expectations with regard to the behaviour of service employees in interaction situation and that, when these are exceeded, the level of customer satisfaction with the service provider is positively influenced.

Increasingly companies are realizing that emotion regulation during employee-customer interaction is the core of a service experience that influences customers’ perception of service quality that leads to satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Chu, 2002). For example according to Chu (2002:7), in the employee handbook of a deli store, two of the items in the company’s mission statement made clear how important customer satisfaction is to the company’s economic success and how employees behaviour affects customer satisfaction;

As the role of emotion is gaining attention as a central element in service quality management researches on the effects of emotions on satisfaction with service quality are being conducted. Recent studies suggest that emotion is a fundamental attribute in satisfaction and that customer’s satisfaction should include a separate emotional component (Gonin et al, 2000; Wong, 2004). Liljander and Strandvik, (1997) argue that customer satisfaction includes both affective (emotional) and cognitive components. These authors found that negative emotions have a stronger effect on satisfaction with quality than positive emotions.

Wong (2004) reports relationship between emotion and customer behaviour, which support previous findings of Bagozzi et al, (1999), Liljander and Strandvik, (1997); and relationship between emotional satisfaction and customer loyalty which supports findings by Bitner et al, (2000). Research evidence shows that dissatisfaction with service encounters can lead to an array of behaviours that have negative impact on organization particularly its bottom-line (Kennedy, 2008). Research evidence also shows that anger and other related negative emotions are heightened during service failure and recovery encounters.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section presents the methods used in the study. It deals with the following: research design, description of the study population, sample size determination, data collection instrument, and its administration, test of validity and reliability, and method of data analysis. This study is a descriptive research; hence, a survey method was adopted. Descriptive data are typically collected through a questionnaire, an interview, observation (Gay, 1976) and recorded events and documents.

**Population of the study and Sampling Procedure**

The population for the study comprised of both junior and senior staff of hotel establishments in the South-Eastern zone as well as customers of the selected establishments. Hotels of one (1) to five (5) star classification were used in this study. A total of thirty one (31) hotels were selected for the study. The total population for the senior/management staff and service employees were 122 and 441 respectively.

A non-probability sampling method was adopted in choosing the establishments for the study. In this study stratified sampling was used to determine individual company’s sample size with regards to customer service employees and managers. By applying the stratified method, and using the Bouley’s (1964) population allocation formula, we determined sample size for each hotel. In this study random sampling method was used to select the customer-contact employees and managers. From each establishment, respondents consisted of
male and female staff that has at least two years work experience in the industry. Due to the heterogeneous nature of the study population, the Taró Yamane’s formula given by Alugbuo (2005) was used to determine the sample size from the hotels selected for the study. Applying this formula, sample sizes for customer-contact employees and managers were 210 and 94 respectively. In each company, the Bouley’s (1964) population allocation formula given by Okeke (1995) was used

**Sample Size Determination for Customers**

Customers of the selected hotels were chosen using random sampling method. In social science research where simple random sampling is involved, the sample size determination can be determined by employing the probability proportional to size (PPS) sampling method (Nyariki, 2009). The sample size is calculated using a standard formula, given by Freund and Williams (1983). Thus, sample size for customers of the selected hotels was 81.

**Data Collection Instrument and Administration**

The primary data in this study were collected through structured questionnaires and oral interview. In this study, the Likert-type scales were used. According to Gay, 1976; Kerlinger, 1973), a likert scale asks an individual to respond to a list of statements by indicating whether he or she strongly agrees (SA), agree (A), undecided (U), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD) with the statement. Each response is associated with a point value and an individual’s score is determined by summing the point values for each point value; 4, 3, 2, 1 and 0 were assigned to strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), disagree (D), strongly disagree (SD) and not applicable (NA) respectively to positive responses to positive statements. For negative statements the point values were reversed, strongly agree was assigned one (1).

Likert scaling is a bipolar scaling method, measuring either positive or negative response to a statement (Hall, 2010). When a four-point scale is used by eliminating the middle option of “undecided or neither agree or disagree”, it is referred to as a forced choice method. In this study the forced choice method was adopted to minimize central tendency error.

**Designing the Research Instrument**

In this study some already developed, pre-validated and reliable scales were adapted in addition to scales developed by conducting pilot studies and extensive literature search. Attitude statements for the study were generated through in-depth interviews and discussions with the operators of the industry (focus group) and lecturers in the field of hospitality. Validity and reliability tests were conducted for the modified scales. The questionnaires were designed following procedure described by Hall (2010).

At the end of the attitude statement generation and questionnaire designing exercise, three questionnaires emerged; one for customer-service employees, one for supervisors and managers and one for customers. These questionnaires are presented in the Appendix – B. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for internal consistency was used to determine reliability of the research instrument. Procedures described by Gliem and Gliem (2003) and Onunkwo (2002) were adopted.

Emotional labour scale developed by Brotheridge and Lee (1998) was used. The scale is composed of sub-scales that measure dimensions of emotional labour – the duration and frequency of customer interaction, the surface acting (SA), deep acting (DA), and emotional dissonance. The Deep Acting sub-scale assesses how much an employee has managed his feelings to comply with display rules while the Surface Acting, sub-scale measures the extent to which the employee has to express emotions that are not felt. Brotheridge and Lee (2002) report high coefficient alpha for DA and SA sub-scales as .89 and .80 respectively. Naring, Briet and Brouwers (2007) report alpha coefficient of .79 and .81 for SA and DA respectively. Groth et al (2009) report alpha coefficient of .90 and .92 for DA and SA respectively. The sub-scale for emotional labour job recognition in this study had a reliability coefficient alpha value of 87.

**Questionnaire for Customers**

The questionnaire for customers has two subscales, one measuring overall perceived service quality and the other measuring emotional satisfaction experienced by the customers. It is presented as Appendix C. A four-item overall service quality scale developed by Dabholkar, et al (2000) and reported by Wong (2004) was employed. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of reliability for this component measure of overall service quality was .94 (Wong, 2004).

To capture emotional satisfaction, the measure adopted by Reynolds and Beatty (1999) reported and used by Wong (2004) was adapted. The composite reliability coefficient for the emotional satisfaction sub-scale was .86. Customers were asked to indicate their feelings with respect to the quality of service.

The questionnaire for managers and supervisors has two (2) sub-scales measuring: (1) extent of managers’ knowledge and recognition of the realities and importance of emotional labour in service excellence, and (2) their perception with regards to how customer-service employees perform emotional labour in their respective organizations. Validity and reliability tests were conducted. Reliability coefficient (Cronbach’s alpha) for these sub-scales was 0.86 and 0.77 respectively.
Data Analysis Techniques

Descriptive statistics for the study variables were determined. This involved calculating mean scores, mode, standard deviation and simple percentages for each attitude statement and sub-scales. Data were also presented in frequency distribution tables. Inter-correlation coefficients were determined for the study variables using the Spearman rho correlation model. The Spearman rho is appropriate when the data present an ordinal scale (non-parametric correlation (Gay1996). The model is used for multiple ordered response categories which include bond ratings, opinion surveys with responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In this sub-section we present and interpret data collected from the field work. Also presented in this chapter are discussions of research findings. Results of analysed data were presented in frequency distribution tables. Analysis of data was conducted using (SPSS 17.0) regression, ANOVA, Pearson r and Spearman rho correlation models, Z and t-statistics. Tests of significance at p = 0.05 were equally conducted. Means, modes and standard deviations were calculated for each sub-scale and according to star classifications (i.e. 1 to 5-stars).

Data gathered in this study were presented in this order: customer-contact employees’ responses, customers’ responses, and managers’ responses. Descriptive statistics for these responses are presented in Appendix B for Tables 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3.

As observed from the Table 4.1, service workers in the 1-star hotels use surface acting much more frequently than others. While those in the 5-star use it less frequently than others. The mean score and mode for 1-star were 3.45 and 3 respectively, meaning that the employee use surface acting often times during service interaction. For the 1, 2 and 3-star hotels, (mean = 1.68, 1.87 and 2.09 respectively, and mode = 2) the implication is that their employees rarely use deep acting as strategy for managing emotional labour during service encounter. For the 5-star hotel class (mean and mode = 2.53 and 3 respectively), their service employees often times use deep acting during service encounters. In this regard any mean from 2.5 and above indicates that emotional labour is recognized. A mean between 3.0 and 3.5 indicates that often times emotional labour is recognized as an important element in quality service delivery. The mean score for this variable ranges from 1.24 to 2.33 for the 1 to 5-star classes. The mode for 2 to 5-star classes was 2. A score of 2 indicates rarely.

Customers Responses

Descriptive statistics for customer’s responses with regards to service quality and emotional satisfaction are presented in Table 4.2. Any mean below 2.5 indicates that the quality does not meet expectation and is not acceptable. Any mean between 2.5 and 3.0 denotes acceptability, any mean between 3.0 and 3.5 indicates that quality exceeds requirements and a mean above 3.5 denotes outstanding quality. Generally, as the mean score goes up, the higher the extent of what the scale measures. Customer’s emotional satisfaction was very low in the 1-star, low in the 2 star hotels, fairly low in 3-star hotels. For 4 and 5 star hotels, their customers derive high level of emotional satisfaction (means = 2.50 and 2.57, for 2 and 3-star hotels respectively).

Descriptive statistics with regards to how managers and service employees perceive and recognize emotional labour as a critical element in service excellence are presented in Table 4.3. Any mean below 2.5 indicates that emotional labour is not recognized as an important element in quality service delivery. That is, the respondents disagreed to its importance as a critical element in quality service delivery. A closer look at these data revealed that managers of four (4) and five (5) star hotels with mean of 2.52 and 2.57 respectively have recognized emotional labour (EL) as a critical element in quality service delivery. Those mangers in 3 star hotels (mean = 2.32) have fairly recognized EL as an important element in quality service delivery. It is only the 5-star that has a mode of 3 while others have a mode of 2 which represents disagreement to the importance of emotional labour in quality service delivery and customer satisfaction.

Descriptive statistics for observed level of performance of emotional labour by service employees are used to describe how efficiently and effectively the customer-contact employees perform emotional labour as observed by their hotel managers. Any mean score below 2.5 indicates ineffective and inefficient performance of emotional labour. The majority view in this regard is that the customer-contact employees are not effectively performing EL, particularly in 1-3 star hotels with mean ranging from 1.71 to 2.24. The mode for their response options was 2. In the five star hotels, customer-contact employees meet organizational requirements, (mean = 2.5, mode = 3). The four-star hotel class scored a mean 2.36 which is not significantly different from the expected mean of 2.5; meaning that the 4-star hotel class employees are meeting organizational requirements. The implication of the above analysis is that 1 to 3-star hotel employees are performing below expectation. For the 5-star class, at least 50% of the time they meet organizational expectations.

Testing of Hypothesis

In this section of the report the results of the hypotheses tested are presented.

Hypothesis1

This hypothesis stated thus: Managers and employees of hotel organizations have not significantly recognized emotional labour as a critical factor in delivery of quality service and customer satisfaction.
To test and ascertain if Management and service employees have recognized emotional labour as a critical factor in quality service delivery, test of significance was conducted in two parts. In the first part (b), managers’ responses were tested while in the second part (a) responses of customer-contact employees were tested for each class of hotel separately. Having separated the scores into two parts, test of significance was conducted at p = 0.05, using Z-statistic. For the recognition of importance of emotional labour, the mean scores for 1, 2, 3 and 4-stars were 1.24, 1.65, 2.0 and 2.06 respectively. Test of significance conducted revealed that the means for 1 to 4-star hotels were significantly lower than 2.50. For 3 and 4-star hotels, Z value calculated was 4.74 and 4.35 respectively. For the 5-star the mean was 2.33. Test of significance revealed that 2.33 was not significantly lower than 2.5 (Z = 1.56) and customer-contact employees of the 5-star hotel class have recognized emotional labour as a critical factor in quality service delivery. The overall mean for customer-contact employees was 2.18. Test of significance conducted revealed that 1.87 was significantly lower than 2.5.

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 stated thus: There is no significant relationship between emotional labour and service quality and customer satisfaction. To test this hypothesis, regression analysis was conducted. The result revealed a significant relationship between emotional labour and service quality as our “p-value” for both cases of Surface Acting and Deep Acting against Overall Service Quality shows a lesser value (i.e. 0.000 for each) where the decision rule states that if p-value ≤ 0.05, reject H0 and accept the alternative (H1). In this case, we are rejecting H0 and concluding that there is significant relationship. The result also showed that surface acting does have a negative and weak influence on overall service quality (Pearson correlation (r) = -0.390. Coefficient of determination (r²) multiplied by 100 gives 15.2%. While deep acting does have a positive and weak influence on overall service quality (Pearson correlation (r) = 0.201. Coefficient of determination (r²) multiplied by 100 gives 4.0%

The result of the analysis also revealed a significant relationship between emotional labour and emotional satisfaction as our “p-value” for both cases of Surface Acting and Deep Acting against Emotional Satisfaction showed a lesser value, p-value = 0.000 for surface acting against emotional satisfaction, while for the case of deep acting against emotional satisfaction, p-value was 0.034. The decision rule states that if p-value ≤ 0.05; reject H0 and accept the alternative (H1). In this case, we are rejecting H0 and concluding that there is a significant relationship.

The result also showed that surface acting does have a negative, and weak influence on emotional satisfaction (Pearson correlation (r) = -0.387. Coefficient of determination (r²) multiplied by 100 gives 15%. While deep acting does have a positive and weak influence on emotional satisfaction as our Pearson correlation (r) was 0.165. Coefficient of determination (r²) multiplied by 100 gives 2.7%.

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 stated thus: There are no significant differences between one class of hotel and another with regards to the following variables: (I) Emotional labour (SA, DA), (ii) Managements recognition of importance of emotional labour (v) Customer contact employees’ recognition of importance of emotional labour (vi) Customers’ emotional satisfaction

This hypothesis was tested in two parts. In the first part, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine if there are differences between one hotel class and another. The ANOVA results revealed that there are significant differences between one hotel class and another. Further analysis was conducted to identify the specific variables (listed in Table 4.3) where the differences occurred. The summary of the results presented in Figures 4.3 to 4.6.

Differences occurred between 1-star and 2, 3, 4 and 5-star hotels in 33%, 84.6%, 85.7%, and 93.33% of the tested variables respectively. Differences occurred between 2-star and 3, 4, and 5-star hotels in 46.67%, 66.67%, and 73.33% of the tested variables respectively. Also differences occurred between 3-star and 4, and 5-star hotels in 33.33% and 33.33% of the tested variables respectively. Differences occurred between 4-star and 5-star hotels in 33.33% of the tested variable

The mean scores for the managers’ responses for each class of hotel was not significantly different (or lower) than 2.5, the expected mean. Test of significance was conducted using t-statistic at p = 0.05. Result of the test of significance revealed that mean scores of 1.67 and 2.0 for 1 and 2-star classes respectively were significantly lower than 2.5. Hence, we conclude that with respect to 1 and 2-star hotels, the managers have not recognized emotional labour as a critical factor in quality service delivery. For 3, 4 and 5-star hotel classes, their mean scores 2.32, 2.52 and 2.57 respectively were not significantly different from 2.5. Hence, we conclude that managers of 3, 4, and 5-star hotels have recognized emotional labour as a critical factor in quality service delivery.

V. DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between emotional labour (independent variable) as performed by customer service employees, and service quality, and customers’ emotional satisfaction (dependent variables). The two dimensions of emotional labour (surface acting and deep

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acting) were investigated in this study. Each of these dimensions has consequences on employee’s job outcomes. The following sections present discussion on the outcomes of these two dimensions of emotional labour.

Work outcomes of Surface Acting

Surface acting is used by service employee to hide negative emotions or fake felt emotions, expressing emotions that one does not feel (Keilly, 2008; Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002; Hochschild, 1983). A long term use of surface acting leads to emotional dissonance. In this study, it was found out that service employees of 1, 2 and 3-star hotels always use surface acting (means 3.45, 3.29, 2.90 respectively) while 4 and 5-star employees use surface acting often times. The general picture is that service workers at all levels use surface acting during service interaction with customers. In this study it was found that surface acting has negative relationship with employees’ attitude to service work.

During one of the interview sessions, a restaurant waitress said thus: “sometimes it is impossible to force out smile from me because of the way the customers treat us; treating us like their house girls…….” In another interview session a bar waiter said thus; “…………an old man like me, do you expect me to laugh when small boys come here and use derogatory words on me, I don’t laugh when such happens…..”

Such scenario as observed from the field work, a situation where service employees find it difficult to smile can lead to deterioration of service quality. Emotional contagion theory confirms that if a service provider serves with smile, the customer will equally smile, while on the other hand if the service provider is grumpy and heavy handed, the customer will be unhappy. Emotional contagion suggests that exposure to an individual expressing positive or negative emotions can produce a corresponding change in the emotional state of the observer (Pugh, 2001; Chu, 2002).

Performance of emotional labour contributed significantly to the poor quality of service complained about by hotel customers in Nigeria. These findings are of significance to hotel organizations as the use of surface acting leads to emotional exhaustion which can lead to deterioration of service quality because of the amount of effort it takes to maintain a smiling face by service providers while coping with difficult customers who believe that they are always right, and take the place of a second boss to the service provider.  

Work Outcomes of Deep Acting

In terms of deep acting which is associated with emotive effort, the present study observed that it has positive relationship with service quality (rho=.173), and customer satisfaction. Deep acting (or emotive effort) involves modifying the inner feelings, acts as buffers to negative effects of emotional dissonance (Yalcin, 2010; Rafaei & Sutton, 1987). Hence, it creates feelings of job satisfaction, in other words, deep acting leads to positive job outcomes and low emotional exhaustion. Also, in the present study, it was found that service employees of the 4 and 5-star hotels use deep acting most of the times (58%), while 1 to 3-star service employees rarely use deep acting during service encounters. The positive job outcomes of deep acting (Hochschild, 1983) can only benefit those who use it often times and not those who rarely use it. Given the findings in this study, service employees of 1-3 star hotels and the organizations are likely not to benefit from the positive effects of deep acting.

Service Quality and Customers’ Emotional Satisfaction

Emotional labour is at the heart of service which is the key area for competitive differentiation. The level of quality service is the key factor in determining customer emotional satisfaction (Enz and Siguaw, 2000; Johnson and Woods 2008; Wharton, 2009; Murraman, 2004). Researchers have found that there is positive relationship between emotional labour and customer service, customer emotional satisfaction, and customer loyalty (Groth et al, 2009; Anderson et al, 2003; Almossawi, 2008; Hochschild, 1983). Findings from the current study are consistent with previous studies. Surface acting has negative relationship with emotional satisfaction and service quality (Spearman’s rho = -380 and -388 respectively); while deep acting has positive relationship with emotional satisfaction and service quality (rho= -.173). These findings suggest that any hospitality/hotel organization that fails to address customer-contact employees’ emotion is likely to provide poor quality service to its customers.

Statistical analysis in the current study revealed that customers to 1 to 3-star hotels indicated that they rarely derive emotional satisfaction, while customers to 5-star hotels often times derive emotional satisfaction. These findings suggest that managers in the 1 to 3-star hotels have not recognized emotional labour as a critical factor in quality service delivery; hence, they have not seriously addressed emotions of their customer-contact employees.

VI. CONCLUSION

One remarkable conclusion that can be drawn in this study is that emotional labour has significant impact on employee’s job outcomes, particularly on service quality and customers’ emotional satisfaction. If emotional labour is managed properly, superior quality of service would be delivered. What was observed in this study was that it was not properly managed. Not only that emotional labour as a construct is unfamiliar to hotel practitioners (managers and customer-contact employees), they are yet to come to terms with the realities
of emotional labour, hence, they have not set emotional labour management as corporate priority. The practitioners are not yet cognizant of the changing concept of service from technical delivery (product view) towards focusing on how it is delivered (process view) and the competitive environment of the hotel industry.

**Implications of the Study**

Understanding emotional labour will place operators of hotel organizations in a better position and enable them formulate policies that will help their organizations compete effectively in a dynamic business environment. Unfortunately, majority of the managers have not come to terms with the realities of emotional labour, hence, the emotional demands on front-line employees towards sustainability and economic success are not appreciated. This is a human resource problem that deserves serious attention within the context of Nigeria’s hospitality industry.

**Contributions of the Study**

This study provides valuable contribution to the literature on emotional labour in the industry, and in particular it serves to create awareness and understanding as to how emotional labour (surface acting, deep acting) affect the service employees and their job outcomes, and emotional contribution. The study has exposed the realities of emotional labour to management of hotel organizations. Understanding proclivities of emotional labour will help organizations to develop procedures and policies that will help them achieve improved service quality, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

To the academics and researchers, the study provides them with a framework (model) to understand the role of emotions in the service contexts. Researches regarding emotional labour have been conducted in some industries in Nigeria but not specifically in the hotel industry. The developed framework can serve as a guide and pedestal to other researchers. Having analysed the data according to grades of hotels, operators in each class would come to terms with how emotional labour is performed by their service employees, and managed by the managers.

**Recommendations**

Within the context of the Nigeria’s hotel industry, this study investigated the concept and consequences of emotional labour. Based on the objectives and findings in this study we therefore, recommend that hotel organizations should plan the emotional content and context of their operations in recognition of the emotional demands faced by service employees. Also organizations should review their job descriptions, selection criteria and contents of training programmes for service workers and adopt selection mechanism that aims at achieving the best person-job-fit.

**REFERENCES**


APPENDIX A

Key Questions for Service Workers

I. Surface Acting (SA). α = .90
   1. I hide my feelings so as to appear cheerful and pleasant at work.
   2. Even when I am angry at work I pretend to be happy.
   3. Most times I show feelings that are different from how I feel inside me.
   4. I spend most of my work day hiding my true feelings/emotions about situations at work

II. Deep Acting (DA). α = .92
   1. Make effort to make my inner feelings match my facial expressions even under tension.
   2. I try to experience the emotions that I most show.
   3. I treat customer’s “awkward behaviour” as normal behaviour

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III. Emotional Labour Job Perception/Recognition By Service Workers α = .87
1. My job requires me to be nice to customers no matter how they treat me.
2. My job requires that I manage customers’ feelings/emotions.
3. I don’t smile at customers when they annoy me.
4. My job requires me to remain calm and cheerful to customers no matter my situation.
5. I don’t hide negative feelings when a customer annoys me.
6. My work requires that I provide comfort to people/customer who are in crises.
7. My job involves managing feelings/emotions as critical aspect of my job.

Key questions for managers
I. Recognition of Importance of Emotional Labour by Managers—scale α = 86

Customer-service employee’s job requires him/her to:
1. Display natural/genuine emotions during service interactions all the time.
2. Display emotions he does not feel
3. Hide inappropriate emotions during service encounter.
4. Feel emotion he must display during service transaction.
5. Remain calm and nice no matter how the customer treats him.
6. control/manage emotions of customers
7. Display variety of emotions
8. Avoid dealing with difficult people on daily basis.
9. The work of customer service worker is stressful
10. The work of a customer-service worker can have negative effect on his well being.
11. The work of a customer-service worker can get him emotionally exhausted
12. For customer service employee, emotional display is not as important as technical skill in delivering superior service qualities.
13. Difficulties encountered by customer-service employees are part of their job role and does not require special reward/commendation.

II. Management Perception of E.L. Performance by Service Staff α = 77

Experience in this company shows that:
1. Most customer-service employees remain calm and cheerful when dealing with difficult customers during service encounter.
2. Most customer-service employees are emotionally stable
3. Most customer-service employees are nice to customers no matter how they are treated.
4. Most customer-service employees easily get upset with angry customers.

Key Questions for Customer
I. Overall service quality. α = .94
1. This company offers excellent overall service quality
2. The quality of interaction is poor.
3. This company delivers superior service in every way.
4. I am not satisfied with their services.

II. Emotional Satisfaction Sub-scale. α = .86
1. I am happy with their service
2. I am disgusted with their service
3. I am not pleased with their service
4. I enjoyed the interaction

APPENDIX B: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Table 4.1 Descriptive statistics for Surface Acting & Deep Acting

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<th>Mean</th>
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Source: Research data 2014
Table 4.2 Descriptive statistics for recognition of importance of emotional labour.

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Source: Survey data 2014

Table 4.3 Descriptive Statistics for Overall Service Quality and Emotional Satisfaction

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Source: Survey Data 2014