




Emotional labour: The effects of genuine acting on employee performance in the service industry



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Orientation: Customers' perceptions of service quality are influenced by the emotions exhibited by service personnel in service contacts. Hence, organisations expect service employees to portray emotions that are desired by the employer, in addition to their job expertise.

Research Purpose: This paper demonstrates how emotional labour, which can have both functional and dysfunctional consequences for the individual and their organisations, is not restricted to interactions at the customer-organisation interface but is becoming increasingly prevalent within all organisational communications.

Motivation for the study: Boundary spanners play an important role for both the organisational reputation and customer satisfaction. However, literature on how emotional labour influences the way service employees execute their duties within the customer-service industry remains insufficient.

Research approach, design and method: This qualitative research purposively chose eight participants affiliated with the racecourse industry. Data was analysed thematically.

Main findings: The study shows that genuine acting by hospitality boundary spanners helps them to act willingly, hence, less stressful. The findings further suggest that putting on an emotional mask has a negative effect on frontline employees as this makes them feel aloof from the events they encounter at work due to emotional disconnections caused by masking their true emotions.

Practical/Managerial implications: Service employees should perceive customer care as a psychological characteristic that requires a balance between voluntary self-management and employee's regulation of consumers.

Contribution: This study extends the body of knowledge about the impacts of emotional labour, specifically the effects of genuine acting on hospitality employees. This contributes towards suggesting emotional labour coping strategies that can be implemented to mitigate possible negative consequences.

Keywords: emotional labour; boundary spanning; emotional labour; employee performance; genuine acting; hospitality; racecourse; surface acting; service industry.

Introduction

Background and organisational overview

This article's contribution lies in the application of the notion of emotional labour to racecourse customer-service industry. 'Horse racing' is a prominent activity in South Africa, with races held on a regular basis all throughout the country. The sport has a long and illustrious history in South Africa, dating back to 1797, although the first race club meeting was recorded in 1802. The National Horse Racing Authority, formerly known as The Jockey Club of South Africa (established in 1882), is the country's governing organisation for horse racing. Phumelela Gaming and Leisure Limited and Gold Circle are the two entities in charge of horse racing in South Africa, with this study focusing on Gold Circle.

The mission statement of Gold Circle is 'to promote the thoroughbred racehorse through operating the sport of horseracing, wagering and gaming facilities, related leisure activities and media management' (Gold Circle Annual Report, 2019). Gold Circle's vision is 'to be the leader in horseracing and wagering in Africa and to command a significant position in the gaming industry' (Gold Circle Annual Report, 2019). Gold Circle is a private company and was established in 2002. The purpose of Gold Circle's business is to run racecourses and training centres for the benefit of the thoroughbred racing industry in the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape, as well as

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operate wagering shops to facilitate betting on horse racing and other athletic activities. In the aforementioned provinces, Gold Circle owns and runs five racetracks. Apart from its core business, Gold Circle is a community-oriented organisation that is involved in a number of charitable and social projects. The Vodacom Durban July and the J&B Met, South Africa's two most commercial and well-known horse races, are organised by Gold Circle and held at Gold Circle racecourses. The Vodacom Durban July is held annually on the first Saturday of July at Greyville racetrack, and the J&B Met is held annually on the last Saturday of January at Kenilworth racecourse. Each year, more than 100 000 individuals attend these racing events (Gold Circle Annual Report, 2019).

Gold Circle also offers a diversification of services for customers. The organisation operates 1000 limited pay-out machines around KwaZulu-Natal. According to BEE Powerdex, Gold Circle is rated AA. As a result, Gold Circle places a great emphasis on previously disadvantaged persons, and Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) is strong within the industry. Gold Circle employs over 2600 full-time and part-time workers, with 86% of them being African, mixed race or Indian. In addition, Gold Circle is a partner in the Phumelela-Gold joint venture. This joint venture provides access to international racing activities as well as Tellytrack, amongst other things. The majority of the organisation's earnings come from commission on tote bets within the combined South African tote. Gold Circle has roughly 200 race meets per year, with KwaZulu-Natal hosting more than the Western Cape. Gold Circle has exclusive control of horseracing in KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape, with two of South Africa's most renowned racing events held in these regions.

Gold Circle emphasises the importance of employees and organisational members on a regular basis (Gold Circle Annual Report, 2019). The organisation places a high priority on human resource development and satisfaction to enhance employee motivation. The Tourism, Hospitality, and Sports Education and Training Authority (Theta) contributes a large sum of money to Gold Circle for training every year. Employees and organisational members are continually emphasised by Gold Circle (Gold Circle Annual Report, 2019). As a result, Gold Circle is willing to invest for human capital and provide services to ensure that employees are always motivated. This is to ensure that the organisation's operations are always ethical and efficient, starting at the lower levels of the organisational hierarchy. Gold Circle also constantly conducts surveys to identify employee and stakeholder needs. This is carried out to ensure that the requirements, opinions and perceptions of employees are considered whilst planning and developing human resources.

Service creation and consumption are relatively intangible, inseparable and heterogeneous, making it difficult for customers to distinguish service quality from the quality of the relationship during service delivery' (Pugh, Groth, & Hennig-Thurau, 2011). As a result, 'rather than only evaluating the discrete service or product being supplied,

customers' evaluations of the nature of the service contact become crucial to the whole experience of service interaction. The organisation has a great stake in how the service employee behaves in service interactions as the service employee works on the organisation's boundary and performs boundary-spanning roles (Sandmann, Jordan, Mull, & Valentine, 2014). Tushman and Scanlan (1981) present boundary spanning as mostly referring to 'the extent by which organizational units and teams are linked to relevant external resources through their communication relationships'. Therefore, businesses try to monitor and control the interactions between their service employees and their clients, resulting in service workers being the target of a great deal of managerial attention. Managerial attempts to motivate service employees for providing quality customer service have been the subject of organisational initiatives in numerous service sector disciplines (Chiwawa & Wissink, 2021; Pugh et al., 2011).

As customers' perceptions of service quality are influenced by the emotions exhibited by service personnel in service contacts, organisations expect service employees to portray emotions that are desired by the employer, in addition to their job expertise (Chiwawa & Wissink, 2021). As felt emotions differ from those intended by the organisation, it takes effort on the part of the employee to express the appropriate emotions as directed by the organisation. Emotional labour is the term used to describe this type of work. Researchers are becoming increasingly interested in the utilisation of emotional labour in the workplace (Scott & Barnes, 2011). As a result, a thorough comprehension of the notion and its role in the nomological system is required. This study, therefore, attempts to explain how emotional labour influences the way sales employees execute their duties.

The concept of emotional labour

According to Lazanyi (2010), emotional labour is characterised by two main regulation strategies: surface acting and deep acting. Emotion and rationality are considered by many practitioners to be mutually exclusive concepts as encapsulated in the generally held belief that there is no place for emotions in today's rational, task-oriented work environments (Lazanyi, 2010). This illustrates that emotions and their expression are, in fact, controlled and managed in organisations by a wide range of formal and informal means, ensuring that certain emotions are expressed, whilst others are suppressed. Very often, employees are expected to conform to these expectations about emotional display even when they conflict with inner feeling (Scott & Barnes, 2011). When this conflict results in individuals suppressing genuine emotion or expressing fake emotion, the work or effort involved in doing so is termed emotional labour. This demonstrates how emotional labour, which can have both functional and dysfunctional consequences for the individual and their organisations, is not restricted to interactions at the customer-organisation interface but is becoming increasingly prevalent within all organisational communications.

Hochschild (1983) defines emotional labour as the regulation or management of emotional expressions with others as part of one's professional work role. Emotional labour is parallel to physical labour; both are exertions that tend to require a lot of effort, but emotional labour is effort around emotions and tends to be dominant in service or caring work and physical labour is the effort with the body and tends to be dominant in non-service domains. This article adopts Hochschild's definition that depicts emotional labour as the process of managing feelings and expressions to fulfil the emotional requirements of a job. Emotional labour refers to the invisible and often undervalued work involved in keeping other people comfortable and happy (Ramachandran, Jordan, Troth, & Lawrence, 2011). Emotional labour is, therefore, the projection of certain emotions in the context of a job performance in service industries. This article seeks to explore the consequences of genuine acting on employees in the service industry.

According to Hochschild (1983), there are three types of emotional labour, which are surface acting, deep acting and genuine acting. Employees performing the boundary-spanning roles need to balance their productivity and the way how customers perceive the organisation in terms of customer hospitality. The dominance of the customer over the production/service employee, and as a result of this, increasing use of emotional labour in the workplace furthers the need to understand what emotional labour is. In this regard, the present article reviews the literature to explain the concept 'emotional labour'. In explaining emotional labour and its nomological network, the article discusses the factors that affect and are affected by it.

Hochschild (2003) asserts that conceptualisation of emotional labour involves impression management of service employees. These employees put effort to express emotions acceptable by customers. According to this perspective, the discrepancy between felt and expressed emotion is related to job stress and burnout. Emotion work is the starting point for the understanding of emotional labour. Hochschild (2003) used the term emotion work to refer to any attempt to modify the experience or expression of a consciously felt emotion. When the individual performs emotion work as a required part of her or his actual job performance, it is called emotional labour. Callahan and McCollum (2002) claim that the term emotional work is appropriate for situations in which individuals are personally choosing to manage their emotions for their own not compensated benefits. The term "emotional labour" is appropriate only when emotion work is exchanged for something such as a wage or some other types of valued compensation. Callahan and McCollum (2002) remark that not only such actions are performed for a wage, they are also under the control of others. Thus, in organisational settings, emotional labour is under the control of organisations.

Based on these definitions, evaluating emotional work based on deep or surface acting would be the most appropriate for the study's purpose and objectives and consequently classified emotional labour as deep or surface acting throughout the

investigation. Surface acting refers to the act of expressing emotions just on the surface in order to follow norms and regulations. To put it another way, employees use deceptive emotions like tone of voice, facial expressions and movements to make their emotions appear real in order to generate emotional expressions that comply with organisational norms. They control their behaviours to ensure that their feelings and attitudes appear to comply with rules and expectations, which means that they fake emotions to make them appear genuine when they are not. Employees correct and control emotional expressions in the execution of surface acting, and the employees who engage in deep acting make an attempt to internalise the emotion (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). Boundary spanners manage to feel the emotions required as social norms or organisational needs whilst pursuing organisational goals.

Genuine and surface acting

Lazanyi (2010) defines genuine acting as a process where emotions being felt match the displayed emotions. Being a service employee is not all about displaying emotions that are not genuine, and some service employees do actually display their felt or genuine emotions because they enjoy their job. These employees find the required behaviour interesting, rewarding and positively challenging, and their motivation is oriented towards intrinsic rather than extrinsic rewards (Mahoney, Buboltz, Buckner, & Doverspike, 2011). According to Smith (2014), employees who employ genuine acting use minimal mental effort when they display their truly felt emotions and this requires less effort from the employee when compared with surface or deep acting.

Zhang, Wu and Henke (2015) assert that deep acting and surface acting have yielded contrary outcomes in a number of studies.

Even when employees are experiencing unpleasant emotions, they fake or suppress their sensations and seem to be experiencing happy emotions. Members of the organisation display their thoughts reflectively and mechanically through surface acting, without attempting to connect their true feelings with the company's needs (Grandey, 2000). As a result, surface acting is a passive approach to emotions, managing emotional expression just on the surface, not within (Scott & Barnes, 2011). Surface acting causes negative consequences such as work stress and emotional dissonance (Hochschild, 1983), and employees who engage in surface acting lose touch with their human nature and are more likely to burn out and defect (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Grandey, 2000). Hence, negative outcomes may result in lower service quality and a tarnished corporate image, not just for individuals but also for organisations.

Deep acting, on the other hand, entails going above and beyond to manage internal feeling in order to comply with organisational standards or regulations, and it denotes more active emotional control than surface acting (Hochschild, 1983). To put it another way, rather than fabricating emotions,

they express the ones they have, and more precisely, they strive to recall past experiences, ideas and images linked with that emotion (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). Smith (2014) argues that genuine acting may be the best form of acting for the individual because employees do not have to pretend to be something that they are not. Employees are more likely to be satisfied in a job where they do not have to wear a mask during working hours' (Smith, 2014).

Guiding theoretical framework

This study was guided by the boundary spanners model proposed by Weerts and Sandmann (2010). Boundary spanners are members of an organisation who act as a link between a unit and its surroundings, and these units could be groups of people separated by geography, hierarchy or function (Cross & Parker, 2004). The term 'boundary spanner' is a broad term that encompasses a variety of meanings. The seminal definition by Leifer and Delbecq (1978) presents boundary spanners as 'persons who operate at the perimeter or boundary of an organisation, doing organisational activities, and relating the organisation to factors outside it'. Consistent with the preceding definitions, Zhang et al. (2015:87) posit that 'boundary spanning individuals are organisational members who function at the peripheral of an organisation and act as exchange agents between the organisation and its external environment'.

The boundary-spanning theory has five main constructs, namely 'technical', 'socioemotional orientation', 'technical-practical orientation', 'community orientation' and 'organisational orientation' (Sandmann et al., 2014). The technical variable is the extent to which an individual's behaviours are focused on converting inputs into outputs in a way that improves an organisation's or group's performance (Sandmann et al., 2014). The degree to which an individual's activities support the development of others' knowledge, skills, talents and needs, as well as the reward system and authority structures that exist in a team or organisation, is referred to as socioemotional orientation (Zhang et al., 2015). The degree to which an individual's behaviours are aligned with the interests of the community, a unified body of individuals with common interests outside the individual's organisation is referred to as community orientation, whereas organisational orientation refers to the degree to which individuals' behaviours are aligned with their organisation's overarching mission, vision and interests (Zhang et al., 2015).

Weerts and Sandmann (2010:643) identified social closeness and task orientation as the two variables that differentiate the ways boundary spanners 'lessen conflict and promote spanning goals (establishing a link between the organization's internal networks and outside information sources)'. 'Task orientation' refers to a person's formal employment role and how it affects his or her interactions with others. Boundary spanners may take on a leadership or advocacy role for boundary crossing, leading to a socioemotional or leadership task orientation. Others will concentrate on technical and practical issues. Personal traits and skill sets of persons in

connection with others may also have an influence on the tasks that spanners execute. Variations between 'personal traits and skill sets' could be influenced by these differences. The second domain, social closeness, is defined as 'the extent to which the individual is aligned with the external partner in relation to the company that he or she represents' (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010). Social closeness is influenced by an individual's position, just as it is by task orientation, but other personal and organisational factors, such as personal and professional background, experience, disciplinary expertise and loyalty, also play a role (Cross & Parker, 2004).

Research design and methodology

This study employed a qualitative research methodology because of its ability to allow the researcher to solicit an in-depth understanding about certain experiences and processes. This was achieved by establishing the feelings of the participants, their opinions and the reasons behind the practices they perform. The approach was also adopted because of its suitability to exploring the meaning, purpose or reality of people's attitudes and behaviours (Harper & Thompson, 2012). Accordingly, this method was perceived to be suitable for this research because the study sought to investigate the acting attitudes and behaviours that are required to be displayed by sales assistants. The research setting was the Greyville racecourse in Durban, South Africa.

The target population in this study comprised the 305 sales assistants categorised as 'betting assistants', 'cashiers' and 'supervisors/managers'. The sample size was eight participants, comprising two supervisors, three cashiers and three betting assistants. Sales assistants who have been in the organisation for at least 1 year were targeted in this study because this period was considered long enough to provide in-depth information on the topic under study. Participants were purposively chosen because the researchers wanted to include only those deemed suitable to provide information needed to answer the main research questions. The researchers used semi-structured in-depth interviews in this study as they enabled the researchers to gain an access to the participants' in-depth perceptions and opinions and to gain insight into the research problem under study from the participants' viewpoints. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data collected from the interviews as the study is qualitative in approach. Ethical procedures were observed by obtaining a gatekeeper's letter from the concerned racecourse, and an ethical clearance was obtained from the University of KwaZulu Natal.

Findings and discussion

According to the findings of this research, some of the racecourse employees realise that their genuine feelings do not always conform to their duties. Employees modify their display of emotions by deep acting or surface acting because one's original and natural feeling is suppressed. Deep acting and surface acting are the two common different types of acting. Employees in surface acting adjust their displays

without shaping inner feelings, whereas individuals in deep acting strive to modify feelings to match the appropriate display rules.

Accordingly, deep acting can be referred to as 'faking in good faith' because the goal is to appear genuine to the audience whilst surface acting can be referred to as 'faking in bad faith' because the employee follows the displayed guidelines in order to keep their job, not to benefit the consumer or the company. Surface acting, deep acting, genuine acting and emotional labour coping mechanisms emerged as themes from the data.

Surface acting

The findings revealed that service employees find surface acting as the most stressful type of emotional labour hence they disconnect their displayed emotions from their felt emotions. The study found that the effects of surface acting on sales assistants included feeling emotionally drained, anxiety and anger, low self-esteem, fatigue, decreased performance, feeling absent minded at work, clash of beliefs, mood swings and feeling of being dishonest to oneself.

The findings further suggest that putting on an emotional mask has a negative effect on sales assistants at the racecourse because it makes them feel absent-minded or aloof from the events they encounter at work because of emotional disconnections caused by masking their emotions. The findings also indicate that putting on a mask negatively affects sales assistants' moods and beliefs that they may hold of being true to themselves. The following verbatim confirms this position:

'When you know that you are not yourself how can you work, and even have a good day at work, and perform well? I believe in being myself and staying true to myself rather than forcing myself to be someone else. So, if I am going to get to work and, obviously I get to work with this bad mood of being angry or whatever mood I am in ... I am obviously not going to have a good day at all.' (Participant 2: supervisor, 2020)

Emotional labour, therefore, reveals that display rules may cause workers to show an unfelt emotion, causing emotional dissonance, which can lead to undesirable job outcomes like emotional exhaustion and burnout (Diefendorff, Morehart, & Gabriel, 2010). This outcome agrees with Diefendorff, Croyle and Gosserand (2005), who indicate that employees are more inclined to fake necessary emotions when they are experiencing bad feelings. Grandey (2003) supports this claim by demonstrating that awareness of display norms is positively associated with deep acting but not with surface acting. This backs up the assumption that deep acting is a reaction to work demands, whilst surface acting is a reaction to work events rather than general rules. Surface acting and deep acting may, however, moderate the relationship between awareness of display rules and emotional displays.

This study also shows that pretending to have emotions that are not truly felt by the sales assistants has negative effects on

sales assistants and their performance at work. Pretending to have emotions not truly felt leads to being misjudged, which in turn affects performance at work and self-esteem negatively. This came to light when one of the participants had the following to say:

'It is hard to pretend that one is in a good mood when you know deep down in your heart that you are angry or having a bad day because something happened at home. My work and performance get affected in a negative way because it feels like I am trying to be someone I am not.' (Participant 7: betting assistant, 2020)

Another participant had the following to say, in concurrence with the above quote:

'Faking a good mood sometimes causes anxiety because the pressure does not only come from the customers, but we sometimes get pressure from the supervisors and the management.' (Participant 4: cashier, 2020)

In the same vein, employees stated that putting on an emotional performance can be emotionally demanding because customers are not always as nice as sales assistants are towards them:

'It is emotionally demanding because you constantly have to suppress your emotions but at the end of the day it's your job. This leaves you tired.' (Participant 1: betting assistant, 2020)

In addition, not having to put on an act encourages sales assistants to become enthusiastic to carry out their work and to work hard, and as a result, it increases their performance. The above findings are in line with the findings by Mahoney et al. (2011), who reported that employees who employ genuine acting in their attitude and emotion instead find the required behaviour interesting, rewarding and positively challenging. The motivation of such genuine acting by employees is oriented towards intrinsic rather than extrinsic rewards. The findings, therefore, suggest that not putting on an act in order to deal with customers exerts pressure for pretending on employees.

The findings of this research further suggest that putting on an emotional act results in negative effects on hospitality employees because they end-up experiencing low self-esteem and fatigue. This experience is worsened by the fact that some customers do not reciprocate the appropriate emotional acts that racecourse employees display in order to serve customers better. This was confirmed as one of the interviewees had the following to say:

'Faking a good mood sometimes causes anxiety because the pressure does not only come from the customers, but we sometimes get pressure from the supervisors and the management.' (Participant 3: cashier, 2020)

However, the study found that although displaying true emotions when dealing with customers has positive effects on sales assistants, displaying truly felt negative emotions works against the interests of the organisation. According to the responses presented above, faking a good mood has negative effects on sales assistants and in particular faking a

good mood causes anger and anxiety. Unfortunately, this anger and anxiety are sometimes taken out on the wrong people or objects.

Genuine acting

Contrary to the research finding presented above, not all employees require to pretend their emotions to meet the organisational expectations of presenting a happy mood. This is because some of the employees are naturally nice over and above the emotions expected by the organisation. Most participants interviewed appeared to be positive people and expressed the view that they normally experience the emotions required by Gold Circle. One participant stated that:

'I am a positive person by nature so showing positive emotions does not have any negative effects on me. But the fact that I have to try to display certain feelings that I may not have at that time makes me somehow feel undermined.' (Participant 1: Betting assistant, 2020)

In agreement with the above perception, another betting assistant said:

'I am genuinely a nice person and I never have to try hard to experience the emotions that are required by Gold Circle. This has no negative effect on me unless someone provokes me and then it becomes difficult to experience expected emotions.' (Participant 2: Supervisor, 2020)

The findings above suggest that most of the Gold Circle sales assistants have a positive attitude towards life, and therefore trying to experience the actual emotions that are required by the Gold Circle has no effect on them. Nevertheless, sales assistants, sometimes, feel undermined by the process of trying to actually experience emotions that they do not have but expected to show at work.

Social and emotional support

Participants said that they receive social and emotional support although this support is not formalised and instead happens automatically because of the environment:

'Whenever I have a problem that I cannot handle by myself I do seek for support from my colleagues but otherwise I don't allow work problems to ruin my day. I let things go easily.' (Participant 6: Betting assistant, 2020)

The above statement is supported by the supervisor who said that:

'Obviously as employees we are always there to support each other emotionally whenever there is a need. For example, when I first started at Gold Circle a customer was irritated because I kept repeating what he was saying when I was taking his bet, just to make sure the bet was correct. He swore at me and I got emotional, my colleagues came to me, told me I did nothing wrong and I should not take it personal the customer is just a grumpy customer.' (Participant 2: supervisor, 2020)

The findings suggest that the environment at the Gold Circle Greyville Racecourse allows for the development of positive

relationships between colleagues such that they are able to depend on each other in times of need. The findings further suggest that Gold Circle rotates staff so that they do not work with the same people all the time, and this helps them create social support relationships at the Gold Circle Greyville Racecourse.

Emotional labour coping strategies

This research's findings suggest that service employees do not receive any emotional labour-coping strategies or instructions from the employer. As a result, it is difficult for employees to know what to expect in an organisation that does not provide them with guidance about the stressors they may encounter, especially if those stressors can be as personal such as emotions. Brook (2009) suggests that organisations should make it their priority to inform employees about the use of emotional labour in a workplace and should also inform them about the benefits and consequences that are aligned to emotional labour. This would help employees to be aware of and also to weigh up whether the benefits outdo the consequences and vice versa. Brook (2009) further states that it is important that employees are aware of the emotional dissonance and the coping strategies that can be used to ensure their own well-being.

The findings of this current study, however, indicate that despite the absence of structured emotional labour coping strategies by the employer, the racecourse employees support each other emotionally and that this plays a vital role in ensuring that their emotions are positive most of the time, which is critical in increasing performance.

Similar to the above finding, Choi and Kim (2015) reported that emotional support has positive effects on increasing a sense of personal accomplishment, which leads to increasing performance. However, the study by Choi and Kim (2015), also found that emotional support that employees received from their superiors have a greater effect on reducing the negative consequences of emotional labour than the emotional support of colleagues.

In tandem with Weerts and Sandmann (2010), 'this study also notes that social closeness, coupled with task orientation, define how boundary spanners reduce conflict whilst promoting spanning goals. Boundary spanners may take on a leadership or advocate role when it comes to boundary crossing, resulting in a socioemotional or leadership task orientation. Others will focus on technical and practical considerations. Personal characteristics and skill sets of individuals in relation to others may have an impact on the tasks that boundary spanners complete. Apart from just individual positions and task orientation influencing social closeness, other personal and organisational elements, such as personal and professional background, experience, disciplinary knowledge and loyalty, were also found to play a role.

Recommendations

The study recommends that the service employees should make the work atmosphere good by developing relationships with their colleagues which leads to developing supportive structures. Since the Racecourse does not have formalised emotional labour coping strategies, the hospitality employees should rely on each other for social support and emotional support. The study also recommends that line managers be also available as team members to assist sales assistants with emotional support. It is further recommended that service employees should perceive customer care as a psychological characteristic that requires a balance between voluntary self-management and employee's regulation of consumers.

Conclusion

The purpose of the study is to explore the consequences of emotional labour, in particular the effects of genuine acting on employees at the racecourse to inform and suggest emotional labour coping strategies that can be implemented to mitigate possible negative consequences. To summarise, the study's findings show that different types of emotional labour have different consequences for employees in the hospitality industry.

Because sales assistants are required to detach their expressed emotions from their actual emotions, surface acting appears to be the most demanding sort of emotional labour compared to other types. Both deep and surface acting appeared to have a positive influence on the attitude, mood and performance of sales assistants.

Surface acting is a technique employed by service employees to mask bad feelings or to express emotions that they do not feel. Emotional dissonance and weariness are linked to long-term usage of surface acting. Service employees appear to constantly use surface acting, according to this study. During service interactions with consumers, service professionals at all levels use surface acting more than deep acting according to the general image. Emotional weariness results in poor service quality and low morale. Surface-acting employees are more likely to feel inauthentic over time and resort to depersonalisation as a justification mechanism. This study suggests that the use of surface acting has a significant impact on the well-being of service employees and the quality of services given at racecourses. These findings are important for racecourses because emotional exhaustion can lead to a decrease in service quality because of the amount of effort required by service providers to maintain a smile while dealing with difficult customers who believe they are always right and act as a second boss to the service provider.

Also, the participants indicated that the linkages between deep/surface acting and emotional labour work involvement impact customer stewardship in one way or another. An observation from the research sample shows that in emotional labour, deep acting, on the other hand, had no moderating

effect. This shows that some of the deep-acting employees are already self-regulating in their customer service. Customer care is a psychological characteristic that salespeople perceive, and it includes elements such as voluntary self-management and salesperson's regulation of consumers. Sustainable social contexts and structures are required to achieve this. Human behaviours require thinking and feeling. As a result, research on employee feelings is just as vital as a study on cognitive and emotion is essential in organisations because feelings are based on human emotions. The ability to manage with emotions is linked to interpersonal relations in this period of high job stress. Understanding the concept of 'emotional labour' and its role in the nomology network will aid in the explanation of many workplaces behavioural concerns.

This concludes that the service employees make the work atmosphere good by developing relationships with their colleagues that lead to developing supportive structures. However, the racecourse does not have formalised emotional labour-coping strategies. The hospitality employees relied on each other for social support and emotional support. This study found that line managers were also available as team members to assist sales assistants with emotional support.

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Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

Authors' contributions

N.F. N. and N.C. contributed to the conceptualisation, design and implementation of the research, to the analysis of the results and to the writing of the manuscript. H.W. did data curation, resources collection, supervision, edited and validated the manuscript and funding acquisition.

Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

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Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available upon special request from the corresponding author (N.F.N.).

Disclaimer

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