Emotional Intelligence Becomes The Main Predictor Of Emotional labor Ability On Customer Satisfaction

Ginanggih[*], Joeliaty, & Sunu Widianto

Faculty of Economics and Business, Padjadjaaran University, Bandung, Indonesia

Abstract

Emotional intelligence and emotional intelligence refers to the process of regulating feelings and expressions in response to emotion regulation as an authentic display of employees in serving customers. The existing literature has provided strong evidence for the impact of customer-focused emotional labor. However, an empirical examination of the mechanisms underlying this relationship is largely different from previous studies. This research focuses on employees' emotional intelligence in regulating emotions to make customers satisfied with the services provided. This article reports on a study examining the role of emotional labor in channeling the impact of emotional intelligence on customer satisfaction. Specifically, the study measured the emotional intelligence of service employees and customers with in-depth acting to find out how relational relationships occur. The sample size in this study was 232 respondents. Data analysis was carried out using Structural Equation Model (SEM-PLS) 4.0 with outer model measurements: convergent validity, discriminant validity, reality test, and inner model measurement; Coefficient Determinant of (R2), Significance (t-value) and model fit test using R square, Q square, SRMR, Goodness of Fit Index. Results show that employees who are emotionally intelligent and able to regulate their expressions and feelings will increase the influence on customer satisfaction.

Keywords: costumer satisfaction, emotional intelligence, emotional labor

1. Introduction

Emotional intelligence, as an individual's ability to identify his own emotions and the emotions of others and thereby form beneficial relationships with others, plays a vital role in emotional labor (Musa et al., 2023; Sukmawati E, 2009). Emotional intelligence can help change employee attitudes and behaviour in jobs that involve emotional labor, thereby reducing job stress and increasing job satisfaction. It is essential for employees in the service industry (Gershon & Pellitteri, 2018) . Service employees need to take an enthusiastic and friendly attitude when serving customers, even if they are in a bad mood or face some problematic customers (Groth & Grandey, 2012; Kundro et al., 2022; Nguyen & Stinglhamber, 2020; X. Zhan et al. al., 2020) . Emotional intelligence strategies offer manifestations for employees to apply emotional intelligence as a trait-like ability (Mcclellan & Diclementi, 2014) . Employees with high emotional intelligence will adopt deep-acting strategies rather than surface-acting strategies to display the emotions preferred by the organization in their service interactions with customers. (Guy & Lee, 2015) .

Previous literature has discussed a lot about the emotional intelligence of frontline employees at work. It is essential for organizations to continually improve in recruiting and employing emotionally intelligent employees to represent the organization to customers, which will be a reflection of the organization because the relationship between employees and customers is what determines the good/bad of a service provider organization. Previous literature has focused on relationships between employees and customers which involve positive emotional displays to make customers satisfied (Elganas & Sheppard, 2019; Guy & Lee, 2015; Lee et al., 2020; Lee & Madera, 2021) .

The focus of this research is to collaborate on how previous research has linked emotional intelligence in its regulation using surface-acting emotional labor, which makes customers feel satisfied with the service with a smile. (Swancott & Davis, 2022) . But in other research, it is said that by using a smile alone, it is not sure that the customer will be satisfied because by simply regulating a smile, the customer can detect whether the smile is genuine or fake, so it needs to be

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[*] Corresponding author.

E-mail address: ginanggih20001@mail.unpad.ac.id

strengthened by how sincere the smile is made to the customer(Chen et al., 2019; Lee & Madera, 2019; Y. Zhan et al., 2016) .

Suppose emotional intelligence alone is not enough to regulate service workers' emotions and emotional intelligence with just a smile. In that case, customers can detect fraudulent service, and whether emotional intelligence can understand a condition of oneself and others sincerely regulate feelings, namely acting deeply towards customers, will generate customer satisfaction. Thus, this study's focus examines how emotional intelligence's influence on customer satisfaction is mediated by emotional labor (deep acting).

2. Research Methods and Materials

This research is quantitative, using a causal research model, which is a model that aims to analyze the relationships between one variable and another (Hair, 2018) . The scope of discussion in this study is the effect of emotional intelligence on customer satisfaction through deep-acting emotional labor. Report data is processed in PLS-SEM to state the proposed model as outer model measurement: convergent validity, discriminant validity, reliability test, and inner model measurement; Coefficient Determinant of (R2), Significance (Hair, 2018) . The research examines the mechanism of employee emotional intelligence that underlies the emotional-customer satisfaction work association. The findings from this study provide evidence that is highly consistent with the hypothesis. In particular, research finds that at the employee and customer levels. Emotionally intelligent employees can regulate feelings authentically in providing services. In particular, when an emotionally intelligent employee will be able to use deep acting or deep acting during work sessions. And in relation to customers, employees involved carry out emotional regulation in depth to make customers feel well served for the sincerity of the services provided so that customers feel satisfied.

3. Result and Discussion

The research results are shown in table 1. Namely that there is a significant influence of emotional intelligence on increasing customer satisfaction with a path coefficient (0.329) and p-value (0.000 <0.05). Nonetheless, the existence of emotional intelligence in increasing customer satisfaction has a moderate effect at the structural level (f square = 0.196). Then at each level of dynamic intelligence ability, it will increase customer satisfaction. The magnitude of the lower and upper limits on the effect on customer satisfaction lies between 0.248 to 0.429. Training programs and improvement in emotional intelligence are needed because it is considered very important. When employees of online transportation services have a high level of emotional intelligence, customer satisfaction will increase to 0.429.

Table 1. Testing (Direct Effect)

hypothesis	Path Coefficient	P-Value	Lower limit	Upper limit	f-square
H1 Emotional intelligence -> Customer satisfaction	0.329	0.000	0.248	0.429	0.196
H2 Emotional intelligence -> Deep acting	0.564	0.000	0.492	0.735	1.163
H3 Deep acting -> Customer satisfaction	0.342	0.000	0.301	0.532	0.584

Namely that there is a significant influence of emotional intelligence on the increase in Deep Acting with a path coefficient (0.564) and a p-value (0.000 <0.05). Then the existence of emotional intelligence in improving Deep Acting abilities has a strong influence at the structural level (f square = 1.163). Then at each level of emotional intelligence, it will increase the employee's Deep Acting ability. The magnitude of the lower and upper limits on the effect on depth acting lies between 0.492 and 0.735. The need for training programs and improvement in emotional intelligence is considered very important. With online transportation services, emotionally intelligent employees will improve their excellent acting skills to increase to 0.735.

There is a significant effect of Deep Acting on increasing Customer Satisfaction with a path coefficient (0.342) and p-value (0.000 <0.05). Then the existence of Deep Acting in improving Customer Satisfaction has a reasonably strong influence at the structural level (f square = 0.584). Then the Deep Acting ability, which is carried out, increases customer satisfaction and provides a good assessment of the driver. The magnitude of the lower and upper limits on favourable customer treatment affects customer satisfaction between 0.301 and 0.532. There is a need for a training program and an increase in emotional labor, namely Deep Acting, because it is considered very important. When employees of online transportation services improve their ability for Deep acting, customer satisfaction will increase to 0.532.

Table 2. Hypothesis Testing (Mediation)

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	P-Value	Lower limit	Upper limit	Upsilon V
Emotional intelligence -> Deep acting -> Customer satisfaction	0.370	0.000	0.219	0.485	0.136

Deep acting plays a significant role as a mediating variable, namely by mediating emotional intelligence on customer satisfaction with the path coefficient mediation (0.370) and p-value (0.000 <0.05). Then at the structural level the role of deep acting mediation is classified as medium mediating influence but is close to high with upsilon (v=0.136), (Lachowicz et al., 2018) . The size of the lower limit and the upper limit on the deep acting mediation role on customer satisfaction lies between 0.219 to 0.485. The need for training programs and improvements in emotional labor, namely deep acting because it is considered very important where when employees of online transportation services increase their ability to act in depth emotional labor it will increase customer satisfaction. then the mediating role of deep acting on customer satisfaction will increase its effect up to 0.485.

Emotional labor Deep acting significantly plays a role as a mediating variable, namely by mediating emotional intelligence on customer satisfaction. Then the mediating role of this deep acting emotional labor is classified as the mediating influence of the medium which is close to high. The need for training programs and be selective in choosing employees who are good at managing emotions. because it is considered very important where when employees of online transportation services are emotionally intelligent, it will increase the emotional labor of deep acting, because the more employees are able to regulate emotions and increase their ability to act deeply, the mediation role of deep acting on customer satisfaction will also increase influence.

4.1. Theoretical Implications

This research provides new results for (Swancott & Davis, 2022) where the results of the research are not just smiling, but how sincere the employees' smiles are that have regulated their emotions with emotional intelligence. Then the perspective taking framework by being one of the few studies to examine perspective taking in the context of customer service. Emotional intelligence and visceral action are work domain variables, which differ from outcomes that are usually examined from perspective taking such as interpersonal attitudes and between employees and customers (Guy & Lee, 2015; Lee & Madera, 2019, 2021) . One of the most important theoretical contributions of the current research is the examination of the relational implications of employees and customers in emotional intelligence. The current research provides evidence for the hypothesized interpersonal processes; that is, a consistently supported relationship between emotional intelligence and customer satisfaction can at least be attributed to the mediating role of deep acting emotional intelligence on employees' emotional regulation strategies. Thus, how customers treat service employees may not be solely rooted in dispositions or inclinations solely on emotional intelligence, but may also reflect cognitive inferences and relational judgments that customers draw by observing service employees' specific emotion regulation strategies. Thus, the current findings suggest that our understanding of the mediating effects of emotional intelligence can benefit from applying social interaction models of emotion regulation (Grandey et al., 2015; Grandey & Melloy, 2017) and integrating interpersonal perspectives. The social interaction model has been used in previous research to demonstrate the affective relationship between employees and customers for example, (Swancott & Davis, 2022) , and the current research is one attempt to capture the behavioral responses of customers to different emotional intelligence strategies. Although it has been found that service with a smile makes customers satisfied (Swancott & Davis, 2022) , our findings suggest that this relationship may only exist when the employee's smile is genuine (Chen et al., 2019; Choi & Kim, 2015) .

This research demonstrates the relationship between employees' emotional regulation strategies and emotional intelligence in employees' ability to regulate emotions. According to these findings, it is important for service providers and HR managers to recruit emotionally intelligent employees and maintain and even enhance the ability of employees to carry out deep acting emotional intelligence towards customers and possible use. It is believed that companies have realized the important role of employees in building employee-customer relationships (Y. Zhan et al., 2016) . These findings indicate that the way service employees regulate their emotions from their intelligence can serve as a support during service interactions and can be a useful focus to further enhance customer and service employee interactions to be pleasant and to make service quality good as evidenced by customer ratings of customer satisfaction with the services provided. Furthermore, this study provides another reason for service employees and companies to pay attention to selecting employees who have good personalities and are emotionally intelligent and carry out emotional intelligence training.

4. Conclusion

The following conclusions are obtained based on the results of the analysis and studies carried out in this study regarding the influence of emotional intelligence on customer satisfaction, which is mediated through deep-acting emotional labor in online transportation services in the city of Bandung. Emotional intelligence has a significant and moderate effect on customer satisfaction, which means the need to recruit emotionally intelligent employees because it is considered very important. When employees of online transportation services are emotionally intelligent, it will increase customer satisfaction in performing their services. Emotional intelligence has a significant and high influence on deep-acting emotional labor, which means an employee needs emotional intelligence because it is considered very important. When employees of online transportation services are emotionally intelligent, it will increase their ability towards deep-acting emotional labor. Emotional labor Deep acting has a significant effect on customer satisfaction. Where when employees of online transportation services increase their ability to perform in-depth, customer satisfaction will increase. Emotional labor Deep acting significantly plays a mediating variable, namely by mediating emotional intelligence on customer satisfaction. Then the mediating role of this deep-acting emotional labor is classified as the mediating influence of the medium, which is close to high. The need for training programs and selection in choosing employees well at managing emotions. Because it is considered very important that when employees of online transportation services are emotionally intelligent, it will increase the emotional labor of deep acting because the more employees can regulate emotions and increase their ability to act sincerely, the mediation role of deep acting on customer satisfaction will also increase influence. This research only focuses on an employee who is emotionally intelligent in carrying out emotional regulation in depth; it is crucial for further research to analyze how the relational relationship between employees and customers both from the beginning of the causality of emotion regulation occurs. Then this study inputs assessment data as an indicator of customer satisfaction; the researcher did not conduct a survey of customers, so it is difficult to clarify how customers interpret emotions and emotional regulation of service employees and whether they form positive or negative relational perceptions about employees who act with their emotional labor. Recommendations for further research are to survey customers who experience the service to find out how the customer perceives the level of employee ability to regulate emotions carried out by the service.

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