

## **The Impact of Empowerment on Emotional Labour: A Conceptual Framework**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This conceptual paper investigated the importance of employee empowerment and its impact on emotional labour in securing success of service delivery. This study advocates that empowerment is essential and also a key factor in the development of service quality and customer satisfaction. It is predicted that employees who are empowered and display suitable positive emotions at work may be able to manage their emotional labour efficiently. Therefore, the major goal of this paper was to develop and propose a conceptual framework on the impact of empowerment and positive emotions on emotional labour. It aimed to help marketers and managements to have a better understanding of empowering front-line employees in the organisation. Accordingly, this study conceptualised the relationships between empowerment, positive emotions, and negative emotions with deep acting, surface acting and expressions of naturally felt emotions. The model was developed based on the extent literature in services marketing, organisational behaviour and services management literature. Meanwhile, structural equation modelling was proposed to analyse the relationships among the predicted antecedents with their outcomes. The paper foresees contribution in services marketing literature as well as hotel management literature on the importance of empowering employee and its impact on emotional labour.

*Keywords:* Empowerment, emotional labour, service quality, customer satisfaction, front-line employees

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Employee is always regarded as an important ingredient in maintaining sustainable competitive advantage of an organization. This is especially important in the current uncertain economic climate and highly

talented competitors. The review of literature and evidence from empirical research has stressed on the importance of customer-contact employees in the provision of service quality and customer satisfaction. Similarly, the provision of the 'moment of truth' by customer-contact employees is critical in ensuring high service quality which can further contribute to customer satisfaction. Previous literature has also emphasised on the influence of service quality and customer satisfaction in relation to employee management; however, not much evidence is available to highlight the impact of management strategies, such as empowerment on service quality and customer satisfaction, specifically from the customers' perspectives. Jain and Jain (2005) claimed that generating an emotional bonding with customers could bring to the establishment of a competitive advantage which promises continuous survival of an organisation. Similarly, Grayson (1998) posited that the articulation of certain emotions typically forms part of employees' job requirement, particularly in the performing services job. To date, however, very little is known about and less empirical work has been carried out on the area of employees' emotions and its influence on customers. It appears that service employees, especially those who are dealing face-to-face with customer, require suitable emotions which could help them perform well in organisations. In more specific, the performance delivered with an engagement of the right emotions will lead them to perceive service as important

and to ensure that customers' expectation is met and eventually leads to customer satisfaction.

The concept of 'emotional labour' has been widely discussed in marketing literature. Emotional labour notion requires employees to regulate their emotions in conforming to organisational display rules. Obviously, managing emotions is difficult, especially at work, where employees face a large number of customers with different types of attitude and behaviour.

## RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The behaviour of the service provider plays an important role in customer evaluations of service (Bitner, 1990; Hartline *et al.*, 2000). Thus, the attitudinal and behavioural responses of these service providers are important because of the interactive nature of service delivery. In general, these responses affect customers' perception of the service encounter and judgement on service quality can be either positive or negative (Bitner, 1990). Empowerment of employees who are employed as parts of management strategies to achieve organisational objectives appears to be on the rise in the organisation. It is often described as the act of giving people the opportunity to make decision at the workplace (Vogt, 1997) or the act of granting power to the person being empowered (Menon, 2001).

Some evidence of empowerment (for example ability, willingness, competence, control) possessed by the employees has contributed to customer satisfaction in the service encounter (Bitner *et al.*, 1990;

Bateson, 1985). Several studies carried out in the recent years examined the notion that appropriate individual displays of feelings have a strong impact on the quality of service transactions (Grandey & Braubeger, 2002; Kleinke *et al.*, 1998; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987, 1989, 1990; Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989). Indeed, a service organisation is dependent on the emotional display of the service provider so that the expectation of the customer can be met (Lashley, 2002). For that reason, service encounters undoubtedly require the service provider to be engaged with an emotional display which is often termed as 'emotional labour' which carries an exchange value.

This type of emotional labour could affect both the service provider and customers in different ways, either positively or negatively. However, this study was more concerned with the impact of empowerment on emotional labour. It is argued that management techniques, like empowerment, could assist in creating an appropriate 'inner psychological state that is in harmony' or suitable with positive emotion in the service encounter (Lashley, 2002). In fact, empowerment is claimed to have a positive impact on both attitudinal and behavioural responses of service provider (Chebat & Kollias, 2000).

Drawing from services marketing and management theories, this paper proposed exploring the effects of empowerment and emotion that are suitable in a high contact service. Despite its widespread importance in delivering service excellence to customers and also a growing amount of

attention in the academic literature on the topic, little is known about the importance of empowerment and its outcomes. Moreover, almost none empirical research has attempted to validate the impact of empowerment on emotional labour. In essence, this paper will try to find out the impact of empowerment on each individual emotional labour facet, namely, surface acting, deep acting and the expression of naturally felt emotions. This paper made use of some previous service marketing theories as the organising framework to propose the drivers or antecedents of emotional labour and its selected outcomes.

Hence, the purpose of this paper was to propose a conceptual framework to study the impact of empowerment on emotional labour and its associated outcomes. Besides empowerment, two other variables, positive emotions and negative emotions, were also included and proposed to be related to emotional labour. In addition, emotional labour was proposed to be related to outcomes, such as service quality, customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendation. Consequently, this paper proposed a structural equation model to test these relationships and also validate the proposed empowerment impact on emotional labour. Thus, it was the main purpose of this paper to demonstrate that empowerment has the potential in reducing the effect of emotional labour, which may lead to better organisational performance.

The organisation of this paper is as follows: First, the research background of the study is considered. Next, the review

of literature is discussed, and the empirical evidence, which supports the present proposed framework and hypothesised model, is also reviewed. Subsequently, the explanation on the proposed structural model, as well as proposed methodology, is provided. Following this, discussions and suggestions for future empirical research are presented. Finally, this paper concludes by giving a discussion on the conclusion.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The previous section has developed an understanding of the importance of customer contact employees and their role in the service organisation. The underlying assumption is that the employees are able to deliver a good quality of service if they are motivated, informed, empowered and well-rewarded by the organisation they are working for. Another key criterion that plays an important role in the performance of employees is the management of emotion during service delivery. As mentioned earlier, the emotions of employees have, to some degree, an influence in shaping their behaviour, attitude and performance. Thus, this section explores the concepts and issues of emotions in further detail with a specific focus on emotional labour which is the main concern of this study. This section also provides some debates on the potential link between empowerment and display of employees' emotions, particularly the emotional labour of employees.

Research on the emotions has only recently begun to examine the role of emotions and their effects in workplace

(Brief & Weiss, 2002), despite its pervasiveness and inseparability in the human experience and organisational life (Glomb & Tews, 2004). The role of emotions in the workplace, for example, has gained more attention in the last decade (Hochschild, 1983; James, 1989; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987, 1989, 1991; Van Manen & Kunda, 1989; Wharton, 1993). The outcomes suggest that the way an individual displays feelings has "a strong impact on the quality of the service transaction, the attractiveness of the interpersonal climate and the experience of emotion itself" (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993, p. 88). 'Emotional labour' is one of the significant areas that has received increased attention from research on emotional areas that have been studied so far. In particular, emotional labour has a special place and relevance in the service encounter (Bowen *et al.*, 1990; Bowen & Schneider, 1988; Brown *et al.*, 1991) because the performance of customer service providers is regularly seen as strongly affecting customers' perceptions of product quality of goods (Bowen *et al.*, 1989). Nevertheless, not much research has been conducted in relation to the role of emotional labour and its impact on customers. Most research concentrates on the negative impacts of performing emotional labour (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Pugliesi, 1999) from the employees' point of view without considering the positive side of it. Moreover, most research still focuses on conceptual or theoretical basis. Additionally, where such research

has been undertaken, it has typically been conducted in the context of a developed country which has apparently overlooked the developing countries where cultural and value differences may be of particular importance.

Emotional labour is first viewed by Hochschild (1979, 1983) as the performance of various forms of emotion work in the context of paid employment. She defines emotional labour as, "the management of feelings to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display" (p.7). This definition implies that emotional labour is a process of emotion management in which individuals regulate their true emotions by displaying what they perceive as right and acceptable to put on show in the workplace. These concepts accentuate on how emotions and their expression are actively generated and managed in the context of social constructions (Thoits, 1989). On the other hand, Ashforth and Humphrey, (1993, p. 90) define it as, "the act of displaying the appropriate emotion (i.e., conforming to display rules)". Morris and Feldman (1996a), however, define emotional labour as "the effort, planning, and control needed to express organizationally desired emotion during interpersonal transactions" (p. 987). This definition, according to these two authors, is underlined by four assumptions that they regard as warranting more attention. The assumptions include (1) interactionist model of emotion; (2) degree of effort or 'labour' (p.988) needed in expressing emotions; (3) expression of emotion that now becomes a market place

commodity and finally, (4) standards or rules that dictate how and when emotions should be expressed.

The conceptualization of emotional labour is famously introduced by Hochschild (1983).

Following this, three most influential conceptualizations of emotional labour were established by several organisational theorists like Ashforth and Humphrey (1993), Morris and Feldman (1996a) and Grandey (2000) who have also contributed to the confusing nature of an emotional labour definition. Following this, the recent effort in renewing and redeveloping the conceptualization was made by other authors like Zapf (2002) and Glomb and Tews (2004).

In general, each of these conceptualizations made judgements that emotions are being managed at work so that the displayed rules could be met as stated by the organisation's outcomes of emotional labour. Each of these studies also showed contradictions in terms of how to define and conceptualize emotional labour. These contradictions, according to Brotheridge and Lee (1998), will create difficulties for future researchers. For example, Hochschild's work outgrowth from the dramaturgical perspective of customer interactions (Goffman, 1959; Grove & Fisk, 1989), where the customer is the audience, the employee is the actor, and the work setting is the stage. This outlook on behaviour concentrates on customer interface as providing the performance stage for employees which involves impression

management skill. In addition, Hochschild's perspective proposed two main ways for actors to manage emotions; through surface acting, where employees regulate the emotional expression and through deep acting, where employees attempt to modify feelings in order to express the desired emotion. In line with this, Grandey (2000) argued that emotional labour acts as a process of regulating feelings and expression of emotions in order to achieve organisational goal. This regulation of observable expressions of emotions is done through surface acting and deep acting. Moreover, Ashforth and Humphrey (2003) and Diefendorff *et al.* (2005) suggested that the expression of naturally felt emotion also forms a part of emotional labour. Thus, based on these conceptualizations (Grandey, 2000, Diefendorff *et al.*, 2005), the current paper proposed a model of emotional labour, including factors hypothesized in association with surface acting, deep acting and the expression of generally felt emotion.

Accordingly, this paper attempted to shed light on the issue by looking at the important factors affecting on emotional labour. It is argued in this paper that there are several components or factors that may influence the emotional labour as perceived by customers. Hence, drawing on the services marketing and management theory, empowerment and positive emotions was expected to positively influence emotional labour and have positive effect on the outcomes, such as service quality, customer satisfaction and word of mouth recommendations. The relationships

between the constructs of the conceptual framework, model and derivation of relevant hypotheses are discussed in the following section.

#### *Antecedents and Outcomes of Emotional Labour*

Conger and Kanungo (1988) defined empowerment as "a process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organisational members through the identification of conditions that foster powerlessness and through their removal by both formal organizational practices and informal techniques of providing efficacy information" (p. 471). A qualitative study conducted by Greasley *et al.* (2005) revealed that an empowerment of employees could provoke a strong emotional response. The emotional responses are prompted when employees feel that they are a valuable member of staff; when management takes into account their suggestions and values their effort. This brings a great sense of satisfaction, feel a high level of self-esteem at the same time and thus, really take pride in their work. Based on this, Greasley *et al.* (2005) argue that there is a clear relationship between empowerment and self-esteem, indicating that this perceived "softer" emotional response can have practical consequences. Similarly, Nykodym *et al.* (1994) found that empowered employees are able to reduce conflicts and ambiguity because they are more capable and in better control (to a certain extent) at their workplace. They also suggested that this situation has been helpful in reducing

employees' emotional strain. Thus, it appears that the empowerment of employees is capable of reducing the negative feelings or negative emotions of employees. In line with this, it is therefore reasonable to consider that empowerment may have an influence in reducing the impact of emotional labour. In particular, it could be argued that empowerment of employees will have a positive relationship with expression of naturally felt emotions, as well as deep acting and negative relationships with surface acting. Thus, the following hypotheses are suggested:

H<sub>1a</sub>: Perceived empowerment of employees is positively related to expressions of naturally felt emotions.

H<sub>1b</sub>: Perceived empowerment of employees is negatively related to surface acting.

H<sub>1c</sub>: Perceived empowerment of employees is positively related to deep acting.

Lazarus (1993) defines affectivity as a general tendency to experience a particular mood (e.g. to be happy or sad) or to react to objects (e.g. jobs, people) in a particular way or with certain emotions. There are two kinds of affectivity, which are positive and negative. Whenever someone feels enthusiastic, active and alert, then that person is considered to have positive affectivity (Morris & Feldman, 1996a). In contrast, negative affectivity includes a variety of aversive mood states like anger, contempt, disgust and fear

(Watson & Tellegen, 1985). Previous research has provided evidence (Morris & Feldman, 1996b), where both positive affectivity and negative affectivity are correlated with emotional labour. Typically, positive emotional expressions lead to better customer service performances. Thus, it makes sense to suggest that individuals that are high on positive emotions may do less deep acting and are able to express their naturally felt emotions. Similarly, individuals high on negative emotions may do more surface acting and may not be able to express their emotions naturally. Therefore, it can be argued that affectivity is very important in performing emotional labour. Based upon these ideas, the following hypotheses were constructed:

H<sub>2a</sub>: Perceived positive emotions of employees are positively related to expression of naturally felt emotions.

H<sub>2b</sub>: Perceived positive emotions of employees are negatively related to surface acting.

H<sub>2c</sub>: Perceived positive emotions of employees are positively related to deep acting.

H<sub>3a</sub>: Perceived negative emotions of employees are negatively related to expressions of naturally felt emotions.

H<sub>3b</sub>: Perceived negative emotions of employees are positively related to surface acting.

H<sub>3c</sub>: Perceived negative emotions of employees are negatively related to deep acting.

Grandey (2000) argued that surface acting and deep acting are two distinct methods in performing emotional labour. Deep acting may help employees to act in more appropriate manners compared to surface acting. Surface acting, for example, was found to be negatively related with job satisfaction. On the other hand, deep acting appears to be related to job satisfaction (Gosserand, 2003) because individuals may feel a sense of personal accomplishment when they display suitable emotions. Surface acting was found to have a strong relationship with display rules requiring the hiding of negative emotions (Grandey, 2000). In contrast, deep acting was found to be more related to display rules that require the expression of positive emotions. Expressions of naturally felt emotions require individuals to ensure their emotional expressions coincide with organisational display rules and expectations. Delivering high quality of service, as well satisfying the customers, is typically what the organisation expects to achieve. Thus, it could be argued that expressions of naturally felt emotions can promote service quality and customer satisfaction and thus lead customers to promote the organisation through words of mouth. Similarly, it is assumed that employees who perform deep acting may face the same situation where these employees who try to experience and display desired emotions may help deliver service quality and customer satisfaction due to their high levels of positive emotions.

In general, it is proposed that expressions of naturally felt emotions and deep acting

may have positive impacts on service quality, customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendations. However, surface acting may, on the other hand, have negative impacts on these outcomes. Thus, the following predictions are made:

H<sub>4a</sub>: Expressions of naturally felt emotions is positively related to service quality

H<sub>4b</sub>: Expressions of naturally felt emotions is positively related to customer satisfaction

H<sub>4c</sub>: Expression of naturally felt emotions is positively related to word-of-mouth recommendation.

H<sub>4a</sub>: Surface acting is negatively related to service quality.

H<sub>4b</sub>: Surface acting is negatively related to customer satisfaction.

H<sub>4c</sub>: Surface acting is negatively related to word-of-mouth recommendation.

H<sub>4a</sub>: Deep acting is positively related to service quality.

H<sub>4b</sub>: Deep acting is positively related to customer satisfaction.

H<sub>4c</sub>: Deep acting is positively related to word-of-mouth recommendations.

Firms have sought to differentiate themselves through the quality of service interactions with customers as competition has intensified. Certainly, emotional labour has implications for service quality (Korczynski, 2002). Apparently, emotional labour can be seen as relevant in four of the five dimensions in the



SERVQUAL model of Parasuraman *et al.* (1991). According to Korczynski (2002, p.139), this model proposes that ‘frontline employees’ appearance and demeanour should be positive for customers, that they should demonstrate willingness to help customers, that they should be courteous to customers and appear trustworthy and they should show individual empathy towards customers. Similarly, Bailey and McCollough (2000) also contend that three of these five dimensions, namely, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, have potentially high emotional content. Thus, if management is determined to ensure that customers receive high service quality, they must also be concerned with emotional labour (Korczynski, 2002). Based on the above discussions, it could be asserted that emotional labour could potentially be positively associated with service quality.

H<sub>5a</sub>: Service quality is positively related to customer satisfaction.

Service quality has long been associated with achieving customer satisfaction (Gilbert & Horsnell, 1988), as well as word-of-mouth recommendations. Meanwhile, a considerable amount of research has concentrated on service quality dimensions as the major determinants of customer satisfaction (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988; Brown *et al.*, 1993; Zeithaml *et al.*, 1996). Hurley and Estelami (1998) argued that service quality and satisfaction are distinct constructs and there is a causal relationship between the two. As such, it is expected that perceptions of service quality affect

feelings of satisfaction, which reciprocally influences customer satisfaction. Similarly, it is argued that customers who are satisfied with the delivered service may promote and tell others about the service and the organisations. It is therefore convenient to propose that:

H<sub>5b</sub>: Service quality is positively related to word-of-mouth recommendation

H<sub>5c</sub>: Customer satisfaction is positively related to word-of-mouth recommendation

#### *Conceptual Framework*

Based on the preceding discussions and literature reviews, the proposed conceptual framework of the present paper, shown in Fig.1 including 21 main hypotheses, was proposed to be tested. The antecedents of emotional labour are identified as empowerment, positive emotions and negative emotions. Hypotheses 1 – 3 reflect the influence of the key driver antecedents on individuals’ emotional labour facet, respectively. Meanwhile, hypotheses 4 - 6 identify the effects of surface acting, deep acting and expressions of naturally felt emotions on service quality, customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendation, respectively. Finally, hypothesis 7 proposes a linkage between service quality, customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendations, as well as a linkage between customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendations.

The intent of the proposed conceptual framework is to advance knowledge based

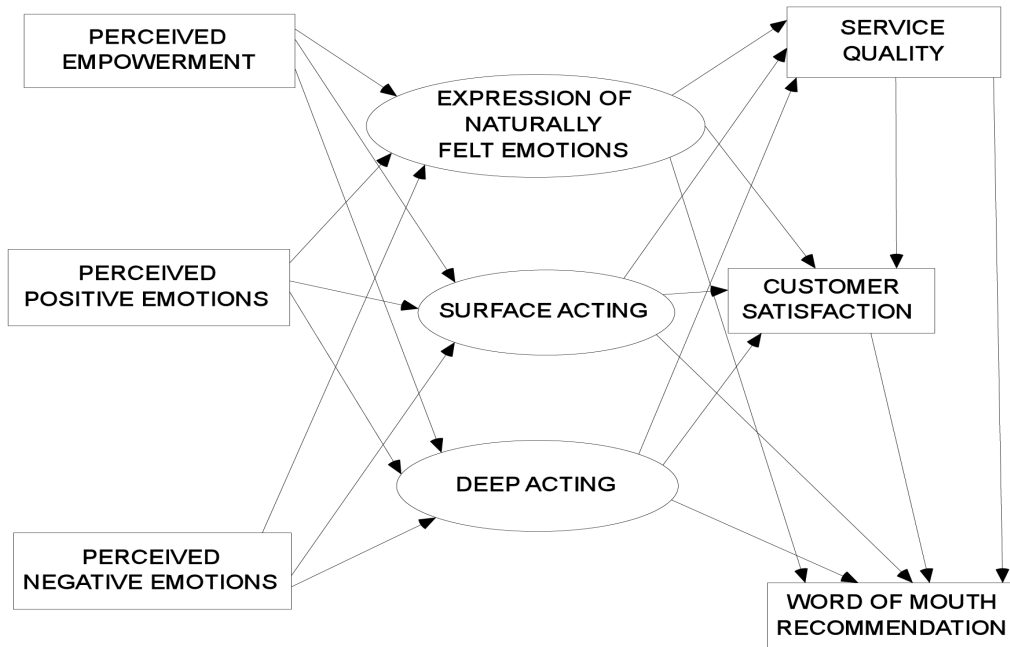


Fig.1: Proposed Structural Model – Emotional Labour Antecedents

on the impact that empowerment may have on emotional labour and to provide a comprehensive emotional labour model for the service industry.

**PROPOSED METHODOLOGY**

The paper proposed using the quantitative method, i.e. survey to collect the data. As noted earlier, one of the goals of the paper was to develop the structural equation model. This was achieved by specifically hypothesizing each measure which represents each construct in the model that has not been previously explored in the literature.

The structural equation modelling approach, using a two-step process, was proposed for this research. This involved

testing the proposed measurement model and the structural model or path analysis (Bollen, 1989, Schumacker & Lomax, 1996). First, a series of confirmatory analysis was conducted to check the factor structure of all scales. Multiple indicators for each proposed construct were proposed to be applied in the measurement model. Using Anderson’s (1987) equation, the proposed measurement model could be articulated as:

$$t = \Lambda \xi + \delta$$

where  $t$  is a vector of  $i$  indicators (such that  $t_i = \tau_i$  from the composition model),  $\xi$  is a vector of  $k$  organizational constructs,  $\Lambda$  is an  $i \times k$  matrix of pattern coefficients relating each indicator to its posited underlying

construct, and  $\delta$  is a vector of indicator-specific errors (Anderson, 1987, p. 530).

Once the individual construct has been assessed, the hypothesized structural model is tested to examine the proposed relationships among the latent variables. The structural model for the proposed relationship between empowerment and emotional labour and its associated outcomes can be articulated as:

$$\eta = \mathbf{B} \eta + \mathbf{\Gamma} \xi + \zeta$$

According to Joreskog and Sorbom (1984, p. 15),  $\eta$  is a vector of  $c$  dependent (endogenous) empowerment constructs,  $\xi$  is a vector of  $d$  independent (exogenous) emotional labour construct,  $\mathbf{B}$  is  $c \times c$  matrix of coefficients that represent the effects of endogenous constructs upon one another,  $\mathbf{\Gamma}$  is a  $c \times d$  matrix of coefficients representing the effects of the exogenous constructs upon the endogenous constructs, and  $\zeta$  is a vector of  $c$  residuals (errors in equations, random disturbance terms).

Fig.1 above shows a structural model for three independents or exogenous and their interactions as a cause of one dependent. In this model, empowerment, positive emotions and negative emotions are treated as exogenous constructs, while surface acting, deep acting, expression of naturally felt emotions, service quality, customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendations are regarded as endogenous constructs.

## DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

This paper is expected to contribute to the current understanding of the empowerment and its interface with emotional labour dimensions and related outcomes. In particular, it is expected that experiencing emotional labour can be reduced or moderated through the empowerment of the employees, as well as suitable positive emotions. More specifically, suitable empowerment practices designed by the organisation may demonstrate effectiveness in service quality contribution, customer satisfaction and consequently service excellence. Reduced level of emotional labour, particularly through expressions of naturally felt emotions and deep acting, is expected to have positive and significant influence on service quality, customer satisfaction, as well as word-of-mouth recommendations.

Thus, employees who perform well due to the positive and natural emotions are expected to influence the customers' perceptions of the services delivered. Similarly, it is presumed that employees who perform deep acting will also contribute to service quality and customer satisfaction. Having said this, employees who view participating and give their fair share will tend to value the service more favourable since they have established social relationships with the organisation in general and with the customers in particular. The employees' positive emotions are also expected to

have positive relationships with service quality, customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendations. Meanwhile, employees who display positive emotions are expected to influence the customers to view services favourably and this will further lead to positive service experience as well excellent service. Similarly, it is predicted that employees who maintain negative emotions will not be perceived favourably by customers. Emotional labour, ultimately and in particular, expression of naturally felt emotions and deep acting, are predicted to have significant positive relationships with service quality, customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendations.

A conceptual framework of empowerment and emotional labour proposed here could serve as a basis for further empirical research and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of these two concepts. This paper intended to extend the conceptual framework and investigate within the hotel service environment. Hotel organisations are deemed to be suitable to test the model as the industry has become one of the most competitive industries among the service industries. Its competitiveness has therefore forced hotels to find ways to attract new customers and retain existing ones. Moreover, due to the nature of the hotel industry (i.e. highly intangible, perishable, heterogeneous and highly variable), it therefore demands a special attention because of the difficulty in meeting customers' demands. Additionally, this is particularly important as customers nowadays have higher expectations, less

tolerance, and greater sense of significance and power and growing affluence.

This paper was expected to contribute to the theoretical advancement in the field of services marketing and hospitality and tourism industry by empirically testing the structural model to develop a concept of emotional labour in the hotel industry. Theories which are related to the role of employee empowerment have been widely discussed, but almost none has empirically tested these theories in particular and its antecedents in the hospitality industry.

From a practical standpoint, the findings of the study are anticipated to be useful in planning appropriate marketing strategy for an organisation. The management can utilise the findings to satisfy the needs and wants of the customers, and thus exceed their satisfaction by delighting them.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has deliberated that empowerment is significantly associated with an interest in gaining competitive advantage. Empowerment is suggested to be a technique to reduce the emotional labour experienced by employees who will contribute to higher service quality, greater customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendations. The proposed model would serve as a foundation for understanding front-liners in greater detail. Similarly, it was important to test the hypotheses proposed in this paper as very little evidence available to understand the potential impact of empowerment on emotional labour.

Additionally, the ideas behind the study would expectantly play a role in contributing to the new body of knowledge to several disciplines, including service marketing, organisational behaviour as well as hotel literatures. In particular, it would provide some guidelines on the potential impacts that empowerment could have on emotional labour. Hopefully, the current theoretical framework will provide a basis for more theory-based research in this area. Similarly, the expected findings of the research are hoped to benefit practitioners by providing the potential influence that empowerment may have in reducing the impact of emotional labour among the front-line employees. This paper hopes to lay groundwork for future research on emotional labour and empowerment phenomenon in the services literature, while offering practical recommendations to managers on how to deliver service excellence. Thus, it was crucial for the proposed framework to be tested so that its validity could be provided.

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