

ACADEMIC WEEKLY DIGEST

#HOSPITALITYatSurrey



THE SMILING 'MASKS'

EMOTIONAL LABOUR IN HOSPITALITY

High-contact hospitality services involves intense interactions between employees and customers, requiring the employees to manage how they present their emotions, which is called emotional labour. [Dr Tracy Xu](#), together with her collaborators, conducted a meta-analysis of emotional labour and its predictors and outcomes in the hospitality literature.

Have a great week!

What's in this issue:

**EMOTIONAL
LABOUR:
HOSPITALITY
EMPLOYEES IN
THE SMILING
'MASKS'**

Emotional Labour: Hospitality Employees in the Smiling 'Masks'

DR TRACY XU

Emotional labour is expressed through two forms of strategies, including surface acting and deep acting. While surface acting is about 'putting on a mask' to fake the expected emotions, deep acting involves actually feeling and experiencing the expected emotions. We perform a meta-analysis of the existing empirical research on the link among surface acting and deep acting and the antecedents and outcomes in hospitality related sectors.

We found that emotional labour is related to predictors such as personality, emotional intelligence, customer orientation and social support, as well as related to attitudinal, behavioural, and customer-related outcomes such as job satisfaction, service performance and customer satisfaction. Importantly, surface acting is found to be ineffective and is normally detrimental to employees, organisations, and customers and deep acting is positively related to the outcomes.



Therefore, hospitality organisations should promote deep acting among their service employees. Given their positive effect on deep acting, extraversion, emotional intelligence and customer orientation can be the preferred qualities that organisations in the hospitality industry look for in a candidate during recruitment. Training on the philosophy of 'service with a real smile' needs to be implemented to help employees better understand customers' needs and expectations. Employees can also be advised that deep acting not only benefits customers through good service, but also improves their own service quality and well-being.

How is wearing the emotional mask different from wearing the pandemic mask? This could be a next research question!

FURTHER READING

Xu, S., Cao, Z., & Huo, Y. (2020). Antecedents and outcomes of emotional labour in hospitality and tourism: A meta-analysis. *Tourism Management*. Advance online publication.

Link: bit.ly/3p7PpE3