



ISSN Print: 2394-7500  
ISSN Online: 2394-5869  
Impact Factor: 5.2  
IJAR 2017; 3(7): 943-953  
www.allresearchjournal.com  
Received: 05-05-2017  
Accepted: 06-06-2017

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## Impacts of emotional labour on employee job performance in hotels in south east, Nigeria

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### Abstract

The purpose of this research work was to investigate impacts of emotional labour on service employees' job performance in hotels. Emotional labour is a critical factor in determining quality of service interaction between the customer-service employee and customer. Data were gathered through questionnaire. Formulated hypotheses were tested using regression analysis and Spearman's (rho) correlation model. Analysis revealed that emotional labour dimensions (SA, DA) were found to have significant relationships with service quality, customer's emotional satisfaction, job commitment and job satisfaction. In the 1 to 2-star hotels above study variables were rated below average. In all the study variables the 5-star hotels were rated higher than the others. The overall picture from the findings was that employees' job satisfaction was low. Based on above and other findings, it is predicted that the quality of customer experiences in these hotels is below expectation and that emotional labour has not been properly addressed. We therefore recommend that hotel organizations should recognize the emotional management demands faced by their service employees.

**Keywords:** Emotional exhaustion, emotional satisfaction, job commitment, job satisfaction, service quality,

### 1. Introduction

The consequences of emotional states in the workplace, both behavioural and attitudinal, have substantial significance for individuals, groups, and society (Weiss, 2002). There can be many consequences for allowing negative emotions affect one's general attitude or mood at work. Specific workers, such as service providers are expected to react to unruly behaviours directed towards them, and when faced with situations that normally elicit negative emotional reactions such as being impatient, over-demanding or irate customer (Hoel and Einarsen, 2003; Pizam, 2004) [38] with non-aggressive and courteous behaviour. They engage in what is termed "emotional labour" by demonstrating polite and pleasant manners regardless of the customer's behaviour (Ben-Zur and Yagil, 2005; Provis *et al*, 2003) [5]. Hochschild (1983) coined and popularized emotional labour. He defines the term to mean "the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display" intended to produce a particular state of mind in others; emotional labour is sold for a wage and therefore, has exchange value). It requires that workers manage their private feelings in order to show the "desirable" work-related emotion.

Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) [4] define emotional labour in behavioral terms as the act of displaying the appropriate emotions for the organization. Morris and Feldman (1996) define emotional labour as the effort. The common viewpoint embodied in these definitions is that the appropriate emotion is desired by the organization. Hochschild (1983) coined these terms "surface and deep acting in relation to emotion regulation strategies. In surface acting, the employee modifies only the expressive aspect of the emotion, while in deep acting the employee attempts to align privately felt emotions with normative expectations to bring the outward expression of emotion in line with that required by the organization. Above viewpoints have received the support of Gross (1998) [40]; John & Grandey, (2004) [40, 41]; Cosette and Hess (2009); Brotheridge and Lee (2003) [10]; Diefendorff *et al* (2005); Wharton (2009) [75]; Morris & Feldman (1993). Surface acting has been found to have negative consequences on employees (what Hochschild calls emotive dissonance) because of the disparity between the felt emotion and the expressed emotion.

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Performance of emotional labour requires emotion work skill. According to Guy, Newman, and Mastracci (2008)<sup>[32]</sup>, it includes analysis and decision making in terms of the expression of emotion, whether actually felt or not as well as its opposite; the suppression of emotions that are felt but not expressed. More specifically emotional labour comes into play during communication and interaction between worker and customer.

The skill with which emotional labour is performed impacts on perception of service quality (Provis *et al*, 2003; Parasuraman *et al*, 1988). The handling of difficult and unruly customer requires the active suppression and/or masking of one's own emotion while simultaneously expressing an alternate emotion.

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

To manage emotional labour, managers must hire employees who possess necessary skills and personalities, who can cope with the stress caused by dealing with difficult and awkward customers. Emotional labour must be managed on a day-to-day basis and at any point of encounter (moment-of-truth) between service employee and the customer. Every hospitality organization experiences "moment-of-truth" in thousands every day.

Hochschild's suggestions generated the attention of later researchers who actually confirmed that emotional labour has some negative consequences on service workers. Guy *et al* (2008)<sup>[32]</sup> report that emotional exhaustion (burnout), cynicism, and ineffectiveness was present in their study participants. Grandey (2000; Brotheridge and Grandey 2002;)<sup>[27, 9]</sup> all report that surface acting has been linked to negative psychological and physical health outcomes including burnout in the form of increased emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, reduced personal accomplishment, job dissatisfaction, depression, anxiety, psychosomatic complaints and intention to resign. Burnout can lead to deterioration in the quality of service provided and appears to be a contributor to turnover, absenteeism and low morale (Provis *et al*, 2003; Morris and Feldman, 1996; Zapf Vogt, 1999; Maslach and Jackson, 1981)<sup>[81, 55]</sup>. Given the critical role emotional labour plays in quality service delivery and the negative effects associated with the performance of emotional labour, it is imperative that service employees are trained to cope with the demands associated with the performance of such labour, so that their well-being is not affected and subsequent interactions with customers are not tarnished.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

A work situation with chronic, overwhelming demands such as frontline jobs that contribute to exhaustion or cynicism erodes one's sense of effectiveness. Sense of accomplishment would disappear (Maslach *et al*, 2001)<sup>[55]</sup>, followed by feelings of inefficiency, poor professional self-esteem and growing sense of inadequacy (Maslach and Leiter, 1997; Schaufeli and Enzman, 1998)<sup>[56, 55, 19]</sup>. In such situations, expectations of good service is that they go unmet, thus alienating the customer because the employee is no longer able to manage his emotion or the emotions of

others (Zapf, 2002)<sup>[80]</sup>. Brotheridge and Grandey, (2002)<sup>[9]</sup> found that surface acting enhances worker's feelings of depersonalization, while reducing their sense of personal accomplishment at work. In general, those who report high levels of emotion regulation with customers may be less satisfied with their job (Grandey, 2000)<sup>[27]</sup>.

Grandey (2000)<sup>[27]</sup> suggests that performance of emotional labour over a long run may affect withdrawal behaviours such as leaving the work floor, absenteeism, and turnover. Leaving the work floor to cope with their emotions, may diminish quality of service and the impression the customer has about the organization. In customer service jobs, it is essential that employees be available to customers. As suggested by Cordes and Dougherty, (1993)<sup>[15]</sup>; Maslach and Pines (1977) and supported by the burnout literature, it is likely that working in job that demand high levels of emotional labour (such as in the service jobs) may result in withdrawal behaviours.

To perform emotional labour effectively, service worker must be committed. Work commitment is seen as the internalization of values about the work or the importance of work according to the individual. It is seen as satisfaction with work in general and the perception a person has about the need satisfying of his/her work (Kanungo, 1970; Hackett, *et al*, 2001)<sup>[42]</sup>. Highly job committed individuals make the job a central part of their personal character. Besides, people with high job commitment focus most of their attention on their job. Job commitment is grouped into four diverse categories: (a) work as a central life interest, (b) active participation in the job, (c) performance is central to self-esteem, and (d) performance is compatible with self-concept (Ramsey *et al*, 1995)<sup>[68]</sup>. Job commitment is positively related to job satisfaction, organizational climate perceptions, work effort and performance. Empirical evidence has shown that commitment to one's job is usually accompanied by greater work motivation and a desire to make the organization more effective and prosperous as well as to exert visible effort beyond what is traditionally expected in their jobs (Mowday, Porter and Steers, 1982). In a study of business-to-business salespeople, Singuaw, Brown and Winding (1994) demonstrated that the degree of commitment salespeople exhibit, influence their orientation towards the customer.

Researchers argue that salespeople who are committed to their employers would be more likely to support the organization's goals regarding the development of customer satisfaction. Kelly (1992)<sup>[44]</sup>, Noor and Muhamad, (2005)<sup>[61]</sup>, and Kelly, (1992)<sup>[44]</sup> also demonstrate that committed employees are more likely to support the organization as it attempts to build long-term customer relationship. This is reflected in the salespeople's willingness to engage in customer-orientation behaviour (Noor and Muhamad, 2005)<sup>[61]</sup> and in their efforts to make the organization more effective and prosperous (McElroy *et al*, 1999; Uygur and Kilic, 2009)<sup>[58, 72]</sup>. Based on findings from various studies it is suggested that commitment to one's job is positively related to job satisfaction, customer orientation behaviour, organizational climate perceptions, work effort and performance. According to McElroy *et al*, (1999)<sup>[58]</sup>, job commitment is negatively related to absence, withdrawal intentions and turnover as well as lateness and leaving work early (Uygur and Kilic, 2009)<sup>[72]</sup>.

The foregoing have shown that the connection between emotional labour and customer service, customer emotional

satisfaction and customer loyalty is obvious, thus, the economic consequence of not addressing customer-contract employee's emotions particularly during service interactions can be disastrous to an organization. Customer service jobs demand high level of commitment and job satisfaction.

### 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Emotional labour has both positive and negative consequences. Numerous studies have addressed the unfavourable consequences of emotional labour, with the most often cited outcome being burnout and job dissatisfaction. Emotional labour can undermine job satisfaction (Guy *et al.*, 2008; Hochschild, 1983; Mendele, 2011) [32, 59] and has been linked to such problems as generalized stress reactions, substance abuse, headaches, severe dysfunction, absenteeism, poor self esteem, depression, cynicism, role alienation, self-alienation, emotional deviance and inauthenticity (Hochschild, 1983; Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993; Erickson and Wharton, 1993; Leidner, 1993; Fineman, 1993; Cossette and Hess, 2009; Guy *et al.*, 2008; Grandey, 2000) [4, 76, 32, 27]. The extent to which individuals experience stress in any situation is determined by processes like cognitive appraisal and by general coping strategies. Stroebe and Jones (2001) define cognitive appraisals as the evaluative process that determines why and to what extent, a particular situation is perceived as stressful.

Relationship between emotional labour and job satisfaction has been examined by several studies. It is argued that emotional labour (surface acting) would have negative relationship with job satisfaction (Hochschild, 1983; Grandey, 2000) [27]. However, empirical findings have yielded mixed results for this assumption (Wharton, 2009) [75]. Negative correlations between emotional labour and job satisfaction have been reported by Morris and Feldman (1997), Pugliesi, (1999), Bulan, Erickson and Wharton (1997) [20, 21] and Parkinson, (1999). On the other hand, Wharton (1993) [71], and Adelman (1995) [1] found positive correlation between emotion work and job satisfaction. Pugh (2001) [66] suggests that expressing positive emotions may affect customer's emotions and contribute to service transactions. Receiving positive feedback from clients may also increase the sales and in a way, employees experience greater job satisfaction.

On the other hand, since performing deep acting reduces the discrepancy between one's real feeling and feelings that he/she is required to display, individuals who mostly deep act will be buffered against these negative effects of emotional dissonance (Yalcin, 2010) [79]. Deep acting involves modifying the inner feelings and successful managing of customer interaction and gives the employee a sense of personal accomplishment and work competence. Hence, it creates feelings of job satisfaction.

In addition it is reported in emotion regulation literature that the symptom of emotional exhaustion is strongly associated with work hours rather than emotional labour, for both service workers and non-service workers (Wharton, 1993; Kotler *et al.*, 2006) [71, 46]. Researchers suggest that employees often find it difficult to manage their emotions after working for ten hours straight (Kotler *et al.*, 2006) [46].

It is observed that some hotels in South East Nigeria run twelve (12) hour shift per day. Their front line employees perform emotional labour and are likely to experience and display both negative and positive consequences associated

with emotional labour such as emotional exhaustion, low job commitment and job dissatisfaction. Their organizations also experience consequences of emotional labour.

There is research evidence that cultures differ in their appraisal of, and emotional responses to emotion-eliciting situations at work (Roseman, Dhawan, Rettek, and Naidu (1995) [70]; Cooper, Doucet, and Pratt, 2003; Matsumoto, 2006; Karim, 2010) [13, 57, 43]. Elinav and Sharon (2007) [18] found from their study that cross-cultural differences have influence in the coping strategies and perception of positive and negative aspects of emotional labour. Nigeria's culture differs from other cultures where researches mentioned above were conducted on emotional labour, its effects, coping and regulation strategies.

As at the time of this research, there was no direct evidence that a research on emotional labour has been conducted in Nigeria within the scope of this study. A research on emotional labour has been conducted in Nigeria by Jimoh (2008) [39] but not in the hospitality industry and his work focused on "conscientiousness and job tenure as predictors of job performance. This study therefore, focused on emotional labour, its consequences and job outcomes.

### 1.3 Objectives of the study

The major objective of this study was to find out how performance of emotional labour by customer-contact employees through surface (SA) and deep acting (DA) mechanisms affects their job performance behaviours and outcomes. In the course of this study, therefore, we investigated the effect of:

- (1) Surface acting on service quality.
- (2) Deep acting on service quality
- (3) Surface acting on emotional satisfaction of customers to the establishments.
- (4) Deep acting on emotional satisfaction of customers to the establishments.
- (5) Surface acting on job satisfaction of service employees.
- (6) Deep acting on job satisfaction of service employees.
- (7) Surface acting on service workers' job commitment
- (8) Deep acting on service workers' job commitment
- (9) Surface acting on emotional exhaustion and its extent
- (10) Deep acting on emotional exhaustion and its extent

### 1.4 Statement of the Hypotheses

The following hypotheses stated in null (Ho) were formulated based on the objectives of the study to guide this research work:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between surface acting and service quality.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between deep acting and service quality.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between surface acting and emotional satisfaction of customers to the organizations.

**H<sub>04</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between deep acting and emotional satisfaction of customers to the organizations.

**H<sub>05</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between surface acting and job commitment of service employees

**H<sub>06</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between deep acting and job commitment of service employees

**H<sub>07</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between surface acting and service employees' job satisfaction

**H<sub>08</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between deep acting and job commitment of service employees.

**H09:** The extent of relation between surface acting and emotional exhaustion is low and not significant.

**H10:** The extent of relation between surface acting and emotional exhaustion is low and not significant.

## 2. Brief Review of Related Literature

In general, the interaction between service employees and customers is considered an essential part of both customers' assessments of service quality and their relationship with the service provider (Bitner 1990; Gwinner, Gremler, and Bitner 1998; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1988) [6]. Empirical studies confirm the significance of emotional labour (Surface acting and deep acting) in the encounter. Morris and Feldman (1996) further explain the role of emotional labour in service industries.

In Deep Acting the employee attempts to align privately felt emotions with normative expectations or to bring the outward expression of emotion in line with them as required by the organization (Wharton, 2009; Diefendorf *et al.*, 2005; Hochschild, 1983; Grandey, 2000; Gross, 1998) [29, 27, 40]. Deep acting is an antecedent-focused emotion regulation strategy whereby the service agent reappraises the situation, modifies his feelings to match required display, in order to seem authentic to the customer ("faking in good faith") Kiely, 2008; Grandey, 2000) [27]. Mann, (1999) puts it succinctly, thus; "feelings are actively induced as the actor psyches him/herself into the desired person." For example, flight attendants are trained to cognitively reappraise disorderly adult passengers as children so as not to become infuriated with their seemingly infantile behaviour (Hochschild, 1983; Keily, 2008). Another deep acting strategy suggested by Kiely (2008) is trained imagination whereby the employee focuses on involving thoughts, images and memories to induce the desired emotion. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) [4] view the service worker as an "actor performing on stage for an often discriminating audience".

Hochschild (1983) coined these terms "surface acting (SA) and deep acting (DA)" in relation to emotion regulation strategies. Surface acting is a form of response-focused emotion regulation where the employee manipulates only the expressive aspect of the emotion (Gross, 1998; John and Gross, 2004; Grandey, 2000; Cosette and Hess (2009) [29, 40, 41, 27]. Surface acting is used by service employee to hide negative emotions or fake felt emotions. Surface acting can be seen as acting in bad faith as the service agent is going through the "motions of emotions (Diefendorff, Croyle and Gosserand, 2005).

In surface acting, negative emotion is masked with a fake positive emotion expression (Brotheridge and Lee, 2003; Grandey, 2003) [10] by using unnatural and artificial body language and verbal communication, for instance, smiling and using a soft tone of voice help someone show emotion that he does not feel, or hide emotion that he feels (Keily, 2008, Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002) [9]. Employees who continue to perform surface acting are likely to feel inauthentic and, over time, experience emotional exhaustion and adopt depersonalization as a defensive mechanism (Brotheridge, 2003; Grandey, 2000) [10, 27]. Surface acting may be beneficial and desirable to organizations so that customers or clients always observe the expressions that are mandated, even when the employee may feel differently. Kruml and Geddes, (2002) found that employees who engage in surface acting are more emotionally exhausted

than those who adhere to display rules by deep acting. People feel drained and used-up, and unable to unwind and recover (Zapf, *et al.*, 2001).

In summary, burnout is an indication of employees' growing inability to adequately manage their emotions when interacting with clients (Zapf *et al.*, 2001). It has been proposed that frequently face-to-face interactions that are intense, emotionally charged, and of long duration are associated with higher levels of emotional exhaustion, which is a key dimension of burnout (Zapf, 2002) [80].

When a worker suffers from cynicism (a dimension of burnout) he uses cognitive distancing, developing an indifferent attitude, and feels discouraged and depersonalized. In the helping professions, depersonalization often refers to treating clients as objects and becoming apathetic with regard to their welfare (Zapf, 2002) [80]. It results in negative callous or excessively detached responses to the very people whom the worker is supposed to be helping (Maslach *et al.*, 2001) [54]. The worker may resort to dehumanizing attitudes towards the recipients of their services.

### 2.1 Customer's Emotional Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction depends on a product's perceived performance in delivering value relative to buyer's expectations (Kotler *et al.*, 2006) [46]. If the products performance falls short of the customers' expectations, the buyer is dissatisfied. If performance matches expectations, the buyer is satisfied. If performance exceeds expectations, the buyer is delighted. The customer-centered firm seeks to deliver high customer satisfaction relative to competitors. For customer-centered firms, customer satisfaction is both a goal and a major factor in the survival and economic success (Kotler *et al.*, 2006) [46].

Customer satisfaction is defined as an "overall evaluation of a firm's products or services." As demonstrated by researches in service management, the development of long term relationships between customers and service providers is also influenced by social aspects. Employees' handling of interactions with customers strongly influences the level of commitment a customer develops towards a service provider. The level of satisfaction the customer experiences with the services provided also contributes to the customer's commitment to the firm (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2002).

Recent studies suggest that emotion is a fundamental attribute in satisfaction and that customer's satisfaction should include a separate emotional component (Wang *et al.*, 2010; Wong, 2004) [733].

These authors argue that customer satisfaction includes both affective (emotional) and cognitive components. These authors found that negative emotions have a stronger effect on satisfaction with quality than positive emotions.

Wong (2004) [73] reports relationship between emotion and customer behaviour, and relationship between emotional satisfaction and customer loyalty which supports findings by Bitner *et al.*, (2000) [6]. Research evidence shows that dissatisfaction with service encounters can lead to an array of behaviours that have negative impact on organization particularly its bottom-line (Kennedy, 2008) [45]. Studies conducted by Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, (2006); Rafaeli and Sutton, (1989) [69], Langhorn (2003) [48], Tsai and Huang, (2002), support this view.

The level of quality service is the key factor in determining customer satisfaction (Enz and Siguar, 2000; Johnson and

Woods, 2008; Hochschild, 1983; Wharton, 2009, Kruml and Geddes, 2000; and Murrman, 2004) <sup>[19, 75, 40, 41, 27]</sup>. The relevance of the performance of emotional labour in service encounter is further demonstrated in the customer perception of service quality (Ferguson *et al*, 1997; Grove and Fisk, 1989; Provis *et al*, 2003; Pugh, 2001; Langhorn, 2009; Lee, 2009) <sup>[66, 48]</sup>. Emotional labour relates to key dimensions of service quality such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance and confidence (Groth *et al*, 2009; Parassuraman *et al*, 1988; Almossawi, 2008).

### 2.3 Emotional Labour and Job Satisfaction

Relationship between emotional labour and job satisfaction has been examined by several studies. Negative correlations between emotional labour and job satisfaction have been reported by Morris and Feldman (1997), Pugliesi, (1999), Bulan, Erickson and Wharton (1997) <sup>[20, 21]</sup> and Parkinson, (1999). On the other hand, Wharton (1993) <sup>[71]</sup>, and Adelman (1995) <sup>[1]</sup> found positive correlation between emotion work and job satisfaction. Empirical evidence shows that surface acting is negatively related to job satisfaction. Surface acting is mostly accompanied with the feelings of emotional dissonance and unauthenticity. Earlier researches on the consequences of emotional labour focused more on potential psychological impacts on the employees who perform emotional labour. The most often cited consequences are emotional exhaustion and job dissatisfaction. However, empirical research has found mixed and contrary results (Wharton, 2009) <sup>[75]</sup>. Wharton found that workers who perform emotional labour report greater job satisfaction than workers who do not perform emotional labour. Adelman (1995) <sup>[1]</sup> reports that table service employees who expressed real smiles at work, and didn't feel "false," had more job satisfaction than those who reported faking emotions.

### 3. Research Methodology

This section of the study deals with the following: research design, description of the study population, sample size determination, data collection instrument, and its administration, test of validity and reliability, and method of data analysis. This study is a descriptive research; hence, a survey method described Gay (1996) was adopted.

#### 3.1 Population of the study and Sampling Procedure

The population for the study comprised of both junior and customers to selected hotel establishments in the South-Eastern zone. Hotels of one (1) to five (5) star classification were used in this study. A total of thirty one (31) hotels were selected. The total population for the service employees was 441. A non-probability sampling method was adopted. Stratified sampling was used to determine individual company's sample size with regards to customer service employees. By applying the stratified method, and using the Bouley's (1964) population allocation formula given by Okeke (1995) <sup>[64]</sup>, we determined sample size for each hotel. Random sampling method was used to select the customer-contact employees. From each establishment, respondents consisted of male and female staff that have at least two years work experience in the industry. Due to the heterogeneous nature of the study population, the Taro Yamane's formula given by Ogbuoshi (2006) <sup>[63]</sup> was used to determine the sample size from the selected hotels.

Applying this formula, sample sizes for customer-contact employees was 210.

Sample size for customers was determined by employing the probability proportional to size (PPS) sampling formula, (Freund and Williams (1983) given by (Ogbu, 2008) <sup>[62]</sup>. The sample size was 81.

#### 3.2 Data Collection Instrument and Administration

The primary data were collected through structured questionnaires and oral interview. In this study, the Likert-type scales were used. According to Gay, 1996 a Likert scale asks an individual to respond to a series of statements by indicating whether he or she strongly agrees (SA); agree (A); disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD) with the statement. Other response options used were: never (0), rarely (1); sometimes (2); often (3), and always (4). Each response was associated with a point value and an individual's score was determined by summing the point values for each point value; 4, 3, 2, 1 and 0 were assigned to always, often, sometimes, rarely and never respectively where appropriate to positive responses to positive statements. For negative statements the point values were reversed, always was assigned one (0).

#### 3.3 Designing the Research Instrument

In this study some already developed, pre-validated and reliable scales were adapted in addition to scales developed by conducting pilot studies and extensive literature search. Attitude statements for the study were generated through in-depth interviews and discussions with the operators of the industry (focus group) and lecturers in the field of hospitality. Validity and reliability tests were conducted for the modified scales. The questionnaires were designed following procedure described by Hall (2010) <sup>[34]</sup>.

At the end of the attitude statement generation and questionnaire designing exercise, two questionnaires emerged for customer-service employees and the other for customers. The questionnaires are presented in the Appendices. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for internal consistency was used to determine reliability of the research instrument. Procedures described by Gliem and Gliem (2003) <sup>[24, 25]</sup> and Onunkwo (2002) <sup>[65]</sup> were adopted.

Emotional labour scale developed by Brotheridge and Lee (1998) <sup>[8]</sup> was used. The scale is composed of sub-scales that measure dimensions of emotional labour – the duration and frequency of customer interaction, the surface acting (SA), deep acting (DA), and emotional dissonance. Brotheridge and Lee (2002) <sup>[9]</sup> report high coefficient alpha for DA and SA sub-scales as .89 and .80 respectively. Groth *et al* (2009) report alpha coefficient of .90 and .92 for DA and SA respectively. The questionnaire for customer-service employees has three (3) sub-scales measuring: use of surface acting and deep acting, job commitment and job satisfaction. Reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) for job commitment and job satisfaction sub-scales were 0.79 and 0.93 respectively. The reliability coefficient for service quality and emotional satisfaction were 0.94 and 0.86 respectively.

#### 4. Data Analysis and Results

Descriptive statistics for the study variables were determined. This involved calculating mean scores, mode, and standard deviation for each attitude statement and sub-scales. Test of hypotheses were conducted using Z-test,

regression analysis and Spearman’s (rho) correlation models. In the analyses that follow, as the mean score goes up, the higher the extent of what the scale measures. In this analysis also, any mean score that is below 2.5 (expected/average mean) does not meet expectation.

4.1. Questionnaire return rates of study respondents are presented in Tables 4.1.

The profile of the study respondents indicated that for the customer service workers, 45.2% were males, while 54.80% were females. Their ages range from 20yrs to 40yrs and above. 22.37% of the respondents specialized in catering and hotel management. The job tenure for hotel employees ranged from 2 years and above at customer contact positions.

**Table 1:** Questionnaire Return Rates

Star	Customer-service Employees		Hotel Customers	
	Distributed	Returned	Distributed	Returned
1	48	38(79%)	32	24(75%)
2	54	42(77.78%)	36	28(77.78%)
3	58	46(79.3%)	35	26(74.3%)
4	56	48(85.7%)	34	24(70.60%)
5	57	45(79%)	30	22(73.33%)
Total	273	219(80.2%)	167	124(74.25%)

Source; survey data 2015

**4.3 Service Employees’ Responses**

Concerning the use of surface acting, mean score and mode for 1-star were 3.45 and 3 respectively, meaning that the employees use surface acting often times during service interaction. As observed from the Table 4.2 service workers in the 1-star hotels use surface acting much higher extent than others. While those in the 5-star use it at lesser extent than others. The overall mean, standard deviation and mode were 2.82, 0.70 and 3 respectively. This result indicates that often times majority of the employees use surface acting as emotional labour coping strategy. Its usage is above average. Table 4.2 also presents descriptive statistics for use of deep acting by service employees as emotional labour coping strategy. For the 1, 2 and 3-star hotels, ( mean = 1.68, 1.87 and 2.09 respectively, and mode = 2) the implication is that their employees sometimes use deep acting as strategy for managing emotional labour during service encounters. For the 4-star (mean = 2.44) and 5-star hotels (mean = 2.53), indicate that their service employees often times use deep acting during service encounters.

**Table 2:** Descriptive statistics for use of deep acting and deep acting as strategies by service contact employees.

Hotel Grade	Sample Size (n)	Deep Acting			Surface Acting		
		Mean	SD	Mode	Mean	SD	Mode
1	38	1.68	.50	2	3.45	.52	3
2	42	1.87	.50	2	3.29	.50	3
3	46	2.09	.56	2	2.90	.57	3
4	48	2.44	.54	2	2.5	.50	3
5	45	2.53	.47	3	2.11	.53	2
Overall	219	2.14	.60	2	2.82	.70	3

Table 3 presents data as to the extent of job commitment exhibited by service employees. The 1-star has the lowest mean score (mean =1.51) and a mode of 2 indicating that majority of their service employees indicated that they are sometimes committed to their job. The means scores for 1 -3 star hotels are below expected average mean of 2.5. The 5 star hotels scored the highest mean of 2.75 and a mode of 3,

meaning that often times their service providers are committed.

Table 4.3 also presents data on the level of employees’ job satisfaction. Considering the mean scores, only the five star hotels scored a mean of 2.66 and a mode of 2 meaning that a good number derive job satisfaction however, majority of the service employees indicated that they sometimes derive job satisfaction. For the 1-star class, with average mean score of 1.42 and mode of 1, the implication is that the majority rarely derive job satisfaction. Job satisfaction in 1 to 3 star hotels is below expectation.

**Table 3:** Statistics for Job commitment and job satisfaction of customer-contact employees.

Hotel grade	Sample Size (n)	Job Commitment			Job Satisfaction		
		Mean	SD	Mode	Mean	SD	Mode
1	38	1.51	.67	2	1.42	.95	1
2	42	2.29	.55	2	2.01	.86	2
3	46	2.35	.55	2	2.26	.64	2
4	48	2.50	.54	2	2.36	.68	2
5	45	2.73	.65	3	2.66	.67	2
Overall	219	2.28	.70	2	2.17	.83	2

Source: Study data 2015

Data presented in Table 4.4 indicate the extent to which customer contact employees agree or disagree that they experience emotional exhaustion as they perform their role as service providers. With respect to emotional exhaustion, the mean score ranged from 2.81 to 3.26 and mode of 3 suggesting that often times the service employees experience emotional exhaustion, however, the 1-star hotel employees experience more exhaustion than the rest.

**Table 4:** Statistics for emotional exhaustion experienced by customer-contact employees

Hotel Grade	Sample Size (n)	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mode
1	38	3.26	.61	3
2	42	3.21	.62	3
3	46	2.98	.66	3
4	48	2.83	.60	3
5	45	2.81	.63	3
Overall	219	3.0	.65	3

Source: survey data 2015

Table 5 presents statistics for the perceived overall service quality and emotional satisfaction derived by customers. Any mean below 2.5 indicates that the quality is below average; it does not meet expectation and is not acceptable. Any mean between 2.5 and 3.0 denotes acceptability, a mean between 3.0 and 3.5 indicates that quality exceeds requirements and a mean of 3.5 and above denotes outstanding quality. Service quality in 4 and 5 star hotels (with means of 2.61 and 2.60 respectively) is slightly above average, therefore they meet expectation. Customer’s emotional satisfaction is very low in the 1-star, low in the 2 star hotels, moderately low in 3-star hotels. For 4 and 5 star hotels, their customers derive high level of emotional satisfaction (means = 2.50 and 2.57, for 4 and 5-star hotels respectively). Data in the above Table 4.5 revealed that more than 50% of the customers to 4 and 5 star hotels agreed that the service quality meets their requirements. The quality of service in 1-3 star hotels does not meet their

customer’s requirements. This is the majority opinion by the customers.

**Table 5:** Statistics for Overall Service Quality and Emotional Satisfaction

Hotel Grade	Sample size (n)	Service Quality			Customers’ Emotional Satisfaction		
		Mean	Standard deviation	Mode	Mean	Standard deviation	Mode
Star		$\bar{X}$	SD				
1	24	1.63	.55	2	1.60	.73	2
2	28	2.0	.53	2	2.20	.50	2
3	26	2.31	.62	2	2.40	.60	2
4	24	2.61	.62	3	2.50	.62	2
5	22	2.60	.61	3	2.57	.65	3
Overall	124	2.23	.69	2	2.23	.70	2

Source: Survey Data 2015

**Test of Hypotheses**

The hypotheses were tested using regression analysis and Spearman’s correlation model. Table 4.6 summarizes the results of hypotheses testing. Surface acting has negative relationship with service quality, emotional satisfaction, job

commitment, and employees’ job satisfaction; while deep acting has positive relationship with the above variables. Both surface acting and deep acting have positive relationship with emotional exhaustion. Surface acting has fairly stronger relationship than deep acting.

**Table 6:** Summary of Results of Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses as Stated	Decision	Direction	Strength of Relationship
No. 1 There is no significant relationship between surface acting (SA) and service quality	Reject H <sub>0</sub>	Negative	Weak rho = -0.390**
No.2 There is no significant relationship between Deep acting (DA) and service quality	Reject H <sub>0</sub>	Positive	Weak rho = 0.193**
No.3 There is no significant relationship between surface acting and customers’ emotional satisfaction.	Reject H <sub>0</sub>	Negative	Weak rho = -0.387**
No.4 There is no significant relationship between deep acting and customer’s emotional satisfaction.	Reject H <sub>0</sub>	Positive	Weak rho = 0.173**
No.5 There is no significant relationship between surface acting and employee’s job commitment	Reject H <sub>0</sub>	Negative	Weak rho = -0.483**
No.6 There is no significant relationship between deep acting and employee’s job commitment	Reject H <sub>0</sub>	Positive	Weak rho = 0.362**
No.7 There is no significant relationship between surface acting and employee job satisfaction.	Reject H <sub>0</sub>	Negative	Strong rho = -0.518**
No.8 There is no significant relationship between deep acting and employee job satisfaction.	Reject H <sub>0</sub>	Positive	Weak rho = 0.342**
No. 9 There is no significant relationship between surface acting (SA) and emotional exhaustion	Reject H <sub>0</sub>	Positive	Weak Rho = 0.256**
No. 10 There is no significant relationship between deep acting (DA) and emotional exhaustion	Reject H <sub>0</sub>	Negative	Weak Rho = -0.217**

Key: \*\* correlation (Spearman’s) is significant at the 0.01 level ( 2-tailed).

**Discussion and Implications of Findings.**

The two emotional labour dimensions investigated in this study were surface acting and deep acting. Each of these dimensions has consequences on employee’s job outcomes. The following section presents discussion on the outcomes of these two dimensions of emotional labour.

**Job outcomes of Surface Acting and deep acting**

A long term use of surface acting leads to emotional exhaustion (Keilly, 2008; Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002; Hochschild, 1983) [9]. In this study, it was found out that service employees of 1, 2 and 3-star hotels always use surface acting (means 3.45, 3.29, 2.90 respectively) while 4 and 5-star employees use surface acting often times. The general picture is that service workers at all levels use surface acting during service interaction with customers. It was also found that surface acting has negative relationship with service quality, customers’ emotional satisfaction, employees’ job commitment and job satisfaction. These findings are consistent with pervious empirical studies (i.e. Morris and Feldman, 1997; Grandey, 1999, Kruml & Geddes, 2000, Yalcin, 2010, Wharton, 1993) [71, 79]. Findings

in this study support empirical evidence which show that surface acting has positive relationship with emotional exhaustion (Brotheride 2003; Grandey, 2000) [27]. Employees who continue to perform surface acting are likely to feel inauthentic over time and adopt depersonalization (Grandey 2000) [27] (an anti-service syndrome) as defensive mechanism.

Emotional exhaustion is capable of alienating the customer because the employee is no longer able to manage his emotions or the emotions of others (Zapf, 2002) [80]. As customer service jobs are deleterious to service providers (Maslach *et al*, 2001; Wharton, 2009; Ang *et al*, 2010; Hochschild, 1983; Ashforth and Tomink, 2000; Johnson & Woods, 2008; shellenbarger, 2008; Moris and Feldman, 1993) [55, 75, 4, 40, 41] affective well-being of service employees is negatively affected. Research evidence shows that emotional labour is at the heart of service which is the key area for competitive differentiation. The level of quality service is the key factor in determining customer emotional satisfaction (Enz and Siguar, 2000; Johnson and Woods 2008; Wharton, 2009; Murraman, 2004) [19, 40, 41, 75]. Above findings have significant implications to both service

employees and hotel organizations as emotional exhaustion can lead to deterioration of service quality and emotional satisfaction of customers.

Concerning deep acting which is associated with emotive effort, the present study found out that it has positive relationship with service quality, customer's emotional satisfaction, employee job satisfaction and commitment. Deep acting (or emotive effort) involves modifying the inner feelings, acts as buffers to negative effects of emotional dissonance (Yalcin, 2010; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987) [79]. Hence, it creates feelings of job satisfaction, in other words, deep acting leads to positive job outcomes and low emotional exhaustion. As revealed in this study, service employees use deep acting at low extent during service encounters. The positive job outcomes of deep acting (Hochschild, 1983) can only benefit those who use it often times and not those who rarely use it. Given the findings in this study, service employees of 1- 3 star hotels and the organizations are likely not to benefit from the positive effects of deep acting.

Statistical analysis in the current study revealed that service employees of 1 to 3-star hotels indicated that they are rarely committed and derive emotional satisfaction at a very low extent, while customers to 5-star hotels moderately derive job satisfaction. Researchers have demonstrated that job commitment and job satisfaction are antecedents of quality service and customers' emotional satisfaction, organizational performance and long-term customer relationship (Kelly (1992) [44], Singuaw *et al* (1994), Muhamad, (2005), and Kelly, (1992) [44]. It is not surprising, therefore, to observe from this study that perceived service quality and emotional satisfaction do not meet customers' expectations.

Quality service has been linked with job commitment and job satisfaction. Morale is closely linked to the concept of job satisfaction and job commitment. Employee morale is essential to the effectiveness of service delivery by customer-contact employees (Coote, 2009; Linz, 2006). In this study, job satisfaction was found to be positively correlated with overall service quality and customers' emotional satisfaction. Our findings are consistent with that of previous researches. In this study job satisfaction scores are low for 1 and 2-star hotels. These results reflected in the service quality and customers emotional satisfaction for 1 & 2-star hotels. For 1 & 2-star hotels, service quality was low and customers' emotional satisfaction was also low. The implication is that the 1 & 2-star hotels are likely facing a challenge to improve the morale of their service employees. Therefore the issue of service workers' emotions must be addressed to improve their morale (job commitment, job satisfaction).

## 5. Conclusion

Findings in this study are consistent with previous studies by other researchers. Whether employees put in long or short hours at work, they experience emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion erodes worker's effectiveness. Above findings suggest that point-of –encounter (moment of truth) is not adequately managed and customers expectations are not met often times. The implication of these findings is that any hotel organization that fails to address customer-contact employees' emotion is likely to provide poor quality service to its customers.

## 6. Recommendation

Problems relating to management of employees' emotions are human resource issues that deserve serious attention. Organizations should recognize the emotional management demands faced by their service employees and prepare them proactively in order to ameliorate negative consequences and job outcomes which are not favourable to quality service delivery.

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#### **Appendix A: Question Items on the Questionnaire Surface Acting (SA). $\alpha = 90$ .**

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

#### **Deep Acting (DA). $\alpha = 92$**

1. Make effort to make my inner feelings match my facial expressions even under tension.
2. I try to experience the emotions that I most show.
3. I treat customer's "awkward behaviour" as normal behaviour.

#### **Job Satisfaction Sub-scale. $\alpha = .93$**

1. All-in-all I am not satisfied with my job.
2. In general I do not like my job.
3. In general I like working here

#### **Job Commitment Scale. $\alpha = 79$**

1. Nothing in my life matters more than my job.
2. My job gives me all the happiness/ satisfaction that I need.
3. I am not very much excited about my work.
4. Most times when I come to work, I don't feel like going.
5. I am very much involved in my job.
6. My job is not part of me.

#### **G. Burnout/Emotional Exhaustion Sub-scale. $\alpha = 80$ .**

1. I leave work most times feeling tired/run-down/used-up.

2. After a busy, tough work day, I feel tired facing another new day on the job.
3. I feel burnout/worn out from my job.
4. My job gets me frustrated/discouraged.
5. My work puts strain/stress on me.
6. Serving people directly does not put much stress on my.

**Overall service quality.  $\alpha = .94$**

1. This company offers excellent overall service quality
2. The quality of interaction is poor.
3. This company delivers superior service in every way.
4. I am not satisfied with their services.

**B. Emotional Satisfaction Sub-scale.  $\alpha = .86$ .**

1. I am happy with their service
2. I am disgusted with their service
3. I am not pleased with their service
4. I enjoyed the quality of interaction

**Key:** Points on the rating scale.

1. NA = Not Applicable: meaning so lacking and does not meet expectation, there is nothing to assess; or Never.
2. SD = Strongly Disagree: Meaning very poor quality and does not meet expectation. Not emotionally satisfied. Or Rarely.
3. D = Disagree: meaning emotionally not satisfied and does not meet expectation; or Sometimes.
4. A = Agree: meaning quality meets requirements, and is acceptable; or often times.

SA = Strongly Agree; meaning that quality exceeds requirements and is outstanding; or Always.