

THE EFFECTS OF EMPATHY AND PERSPECTIVE TAKING ON EMOTIONAL LABOR AND BURNOUT

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Abstract

The hospitality industry requires the use of emotions in the workplace. As one dimension of service quality (SERVQUAL), empathy is considered a key aspect of high-quality service and hospitality employees are advised to be empathetic to customers as well as colleagues (Min et al., 2015). However, there exists one unanswered question: Is emotional involvement necessary for high-quality service? That is, prior studies have overlooked the effect of two different emotional states, empathy and perspective taking of hospitality employees.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationships of empathy and perspective with key attitudinal outcomes, emotional labor, and burnout. Close interaction with customers highlights the role of emotion in the hospitality industry. Understanding the role of emotional or cognitive understanding of others' situations (feeling others' pain-empathy vs. cognitively understanding others' situations-perspective taking) will shed new light on employee burnout and service performance.