

Exhaustion from the Emotional Labour of Frontline Employees in the Hospitality Industry in China

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Abstract

Emotional labour is the effort employees put into expressing emotions required by the organisation and curtailing the expression of those emotions that are not. The work of frontline employees in the hospitality industry is typically reliant on emotional labour because they have direct contact with and interaction with customers; therefore, this process is more likely to lead to high levels of emotional expression. Current research shows that excessive emotional expression or repression can lead to emotional exhaustion, which is also a common problem faced by frontline hospitality employees. This study attempts to explore the consequences of exhaustion from the emotional labour experienced by frontline employees in the hospitality industry and propose solutions for the employers. The study will collect data from one-on-one interviews with five frontline employees from the hospitality industry in China.

Attestation of Authorship

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, nor does it contain material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma from a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgments.”

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Signature:

Acknowledgments

I am grateful for the continued support and assistance of my supervisor Dr Roy Smollan. I would also like to thank the frontline employees of the hospitality industry who participated in my research for their valuable contribution to this research.

The ethics approval was given by AUTECH, the approval number is 20/116, the date of approval is 11 May 2020.

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Chapter One: Introduction

As a developing country, China has experienced rapid economic growth that has led to increased demand for leisure and entertainment. Part of this growth is reflected in China's hospitality industry. Some hospitality industry employees have face-to-face interaction to customers, especially those frontline employees who play an important role in the provision of services (Pienaar & Willemse, 2008). Frontline employees represent an organisation's image and enhance its authenticity through advocacy (Bettencourt & Brown, 2003). Authenticity is shown when the quality of service provided matches the quality advertised by the organisation.

Emotional labour (EL) can be explained as a process that involves identifying the emotional requirements of the job and utilizing these in an endeavour to meet the emotional needs of customers in service encounters (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003). As a service industry, a large portion of the work of the hospitality industry involves EL, especially in frontline employees who are in direct contact with customers. Wong and Wang (2009) also mentioned that employees in the hospitality and tourism industries in particular face demands from EL because their job requires them to express emotions such as warmth, friendliness, and happiness. However, a high emotional demand will cause negative consequences, which will be explored in this study.

Lv, Xu and Ji (2012) mentioned that emotional exhaustion occurs when an employee's emotional resources are exhausted. Some researchers have demonstrated the relationship between EL and emotional exhaustion. "Surface acting" refers to the disguise and management of the emotion while the inner true emotion will not change (Lee & Ok, 2014), while "deep acting" refers to the active mobilization of the inner emotion and the change of emotion inside and outside (Grandey, 2003). Surface acting is positively correlated with emotional exhaustion, while deep acting is negatively correlated with emotional exhaustion (Lv et al., 2012; Rathi, Bhatnagar, & Mishra, 2013).

Zapf (2002) also pointed out that surface acting in EL increases emotional demand. Therefore, frontline employees in the hospitality industry are at great risk of emotional exhaustion in a

working environment requiring high emotional demand, and the consequences of emotional exhaustion should be taken seriously.

Current research explores some of the consequences of emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion is positively correlated with turnover intention in the hospitality industry (Lv, Xu & Ji, 2012; Rathi, Bhatnagar, & Mishra, 2013). Yavas, Babakus, and Karatepe (2008) found that emotional exhaustion of frontline hotel staff was closely related to turnover intention in Turkish hotels. Further, these researchers found that emotional exhaustion in industries which are engaged in EL is also negatively associated with organisational commitment and job satisfaction. The current research on the consequences of emotional exhaustion is not comprehensive in the hospitality industry in China, and there is a lack of targeted research on this group of frontline employees. Therefore, the first aim of this study is to explore the consequences of exhaustion from emotional labour of frontline employees in the hospitality industry in China. These consequences include turnover intention, absenteeism, and job performance.

Furthermore, some researchers have studied factors related to the negative consequences of EL and have put forward relevant suggestions. For example, Shani et al. (2014) studied the factors that lead to surface acting, such as an unsupportive work environment, lack of training for emotional labour, high frequency, duration, and repetition of the employee's contact with customers, and physical challenge the employee faces at work. They also suggested that providing a supportive work environment and EL training for employees can help reduce the occurrence of surface acting. Moreover, China is a country with a collectivist culture, which values the group rather than the individual, and this culture prioritises harmony and cooperation within the group (Allen, Diefendorff & Ma, 2014). Therefore, the influence of the working environment on employees is very prominent in the cultural background of Chinese collectivism (Xu, Martinez & Lv, 2017). Ogbu Edeh (2020) mentioned that there is a positive correlation between managers giving employees appropriate rewards and employees' deep acting.

However, previous studies on EL in the hospitality industry have put forward suggestions aimed

at all employees in the hospitality industry rather than frontline employees, so another purpose of this study is to offer some suggestions for the situation and description of the frontline employees.

According to the above description, there are two research questions in this study:

Question one: What are the consequences of exhaustion from the emotional labour of frontline employees in the hospitality industry in China?

Question two: How can employers manage the emotional labour of employees to reduce their emotional exhaustion?

Based on these two exploratory questions, this study conducted one-to-one interviews with two restaurant waiters, one motel receptionist and two motel managers, and collected and analysed relevant data.

First, this study will provide a literature review of the nature of EL, focusing on the causes and consequences of emotional exhaustion in the hospitality industry, in particular its frontline employees. Secondly, the research methods are presented, including data analysis considerations, Thirdly, the results are described The final chapter contains the discussion, limitations, and suggestions for further research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Emotional Labour

The Concept of Emotional Labour

The term emotional labour (EL) was proposed by Hochschild (1983, p. 7), who defined it as “emotional management in order to create a publicly visible face and body display,” which is “sold for wages and therefore has exchange value.” Moreover, Hochschild (1983) discussed three main characteristics of EL. First, EL requires employees to have direct contact with customers. Secondly, EL requires the employee to create an emotional state in the customer. Thirdly, employees’ emotional expression is affected by the organisation’s “display rules” and requirements. Organisational display rules refer to the emotions that managers expect employees to express to customers, such as warmth, friendliness, and caring. In subsequent studies, some researchers have found that EL points not only to interactions between employees and customers, but also to interactions between employees, supervisors, and other colleagues. Ogbu Edeh (2020) mentioned that when the supervisor rewards the employees and uses a positive method of management, this has a positive effect on the employees who carry out EL. Moreover, Tews, Michel, and Stafford (2019) examined how an employee’s emotion can be affected by the behaviour of his/her colleagues, such as colleagues’ support or abuse.

EL is also defined as the adjustment and expression of expected emotions in the work of employees to meet the requirements of emotional expression (Grandey, 2000). Emotional expression requirements are influenced by general social, professional, and organisational norms (Grandey, 2000). For example, employees need to maintain a friendly and positive attitude when dealing with customers. Zapf (2002) also used the term “emotional work” to refer to EL as the behaviour requiring interaction with customers, and the expression of emotions to conform to organisational rules. For example, Seymour (2000) mentions the

standardized work of fast food employees, who serve customers according to the standards of behaviour required by the fast food restaurant. Chu and Murrmann (2006) defined EL as emotional management that generates a friendly attitude towards customers which is closely related to guest satisfaction and which increases their loyalty in the hospitality industry. Some researchers also agreed that the purpose of EL is to display appropriate emotions in the hospitality sector, to create customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and positive word of mouth marketing (Van Dijk et al, 2011; Jung & Yoon, 2014; Shani et al, 2014).

Emotional regulation refers to the physiological arousal and cognitive evaluation produced by individuals when they control their emotional expression to follow the rules of expression (Kogovsek & Kogovsek, 2014). Emotional regulation occurs when individuals choose what emotions they have, when emotions occur, and how they express emotions (Grandey 2000; Gross, 1998). The process of emotional regulation includes both the regulation of one's own emotions, and the regulation of others' emotions by encouraging or requiring them to do so. (Burman, Green & Shanker, 2015; Niven, Totterdell & Holman, 2009). In service encounters, emotions are expressed in order to influence the emotions, behaviours, and attitudes of others (Kogovsek & Kogovsek, 2014). In order to be able to influence the emotions of others, it is necessary to accurately perceive the feelings of others. Salovey and Mayer (1990) proposed the term emotional intelligence. In research published in 1997, they referred to emotionally intelligent people who can accurately perceive the feelings of others, manage emotions in themselves and affect the emotions of others. Therefore, employees not only need to express their emotions in accordance with their occupational requirements (e.g., treat every customer with friendliness and warmth) but also need to affect the emotions of customers by perceiving their feelings, in order to achieve the organisational purpose to satisfy their customers.

Surface acting, deep acting, and genuine expression

Emotional regulation can be achieved by surface acting, deep acting, and genuine expression (Zapf, 2002). Hochschild (1983) also pointed out that employees usually conduct EL through surface acting or deep acting.

Surface acting means to manage and pretend to have the emotions, while the inner emotions do not change (Lee & Ok, 2014). Surface acting involves only visible expressions and appears as the suppression of real feelings and produces unconvincing emotional expressions which do not accord with organisational rules (Dahling & Perez, 2010; Grandey, 2000). For example, Seymour (2000) pointed out that fast food employees who follow a standardized script are performing surface acting, because the social skills and behaviour of the employees when communicating with guests are based solely on the standards, not real emotions. Dahling and Perez (2010) defined surface acting as pretending to have no feelings or suppression of feelings. Grandey (2003) further explained that in surface acting, service employees deliberately mask their inner negative emotions with false-positive expressions. For example, when a waitress faces frequent demands or unfriendly attitudes from customers, they still need to be patient, friendly, and warm on the surface, even if they have negative emotions inside. However, Zapf (2002) showed that mechanical surface acting is not enough to show expected emotions according to specific rules, and surface acting will have negative effects. This is because it requires extra effort for employees to suppress their true emotions and express the emotions expected by the organisation. Frequent surface acting will affect the mental health of these employees due to long-term suppression of their emotions Rathi et al. (2013).

In deep acting, employees feel the need to work hard to express positive emotions to customers and to suppress the expression of negative emotions. This is a real internal change (Grandey, 2003). Deep acting requires the expression of expected behaviour as well as the adjustment of inner feelings by evoking memories and thoughts, thus triggering the desired emotions (Lee & Ok 2014; Zapf, 2002). For example, an employee may express enthusiasm when they meet familiar customers because employee knows their needs and preferences and know how to satisfy those customers before being asked, similar to friendship. Deep acting is having a strong motivation to try to show the expected emotions (Diefendorff, Croyle & Gossler, 2005; Van Dijk et al., 2011), and so, even though these employees feel they have to express the expected emotions, they are willing to do so. The method by which actual feelings

are managed is by actively changing one's feelings to evoke true expression of emotions, which conforms to organisational rules (Dahling & Perez, 2010; Lee & Ok, 2014). Yang (2019) also discussed that, when performing deep acting, employees manipulate or change their inner states to express positive emotions and behaviours. For example, when there is a conflict between employees and customers, employees will carefully explain the causes of problems and suggest solutions to customers, understand their needs, and provide services according to their requirements. Thus, customer satisfaction can be achieved when employees conduct deep acting, and deep acting also can be associated with high scores for in-service evaluation by customers (Sohn & Lee, 2012). This is because employees' deep acting can create appropriate emotions (Chu & Murrmann, 2006) and real emotions (Diefendorff et al, 2005). Therefore, the deep acting of employees can help to improve customer satisfaction, and the emotional expression of employees will have a positive effect. For example, when ordering food, the employee of the restaurant will often meet customers' different requirements, such as customers may not like a certain raw food in the ordered dish. If the employee can respond in a friendly manner and make adjustments for the customers, and also express their concern and follow up by asking whether the dish meets the requirements of the customers when they taste the food, customers will not only improve their service satisfaction due to the friendliness and care of employees but also give good comments to employees, which in turn encourages employees to behave in this way.

“Genuine expression” refers to how emotional labour allows one to experience and express real emotions spontaneously and sincerely (Yang, 2019). The employees do not need to consciously attempt to manage their emotions (Grandey, 2000). In other words, employees may naturally feel what they are expected to express without having to adjust their emotions. The employees naturally convey positive emotions when they have pleasant conversations with customers, and do not hide negative emotions when they have disagreements with customers (Yang, 2019). Compared with deep acting which is the result of an individual's efforts to adjust his or her inner feelings, genuine expression is the expression of natural inner feelings. Therefore, for employees, genuine expression does not require any effort to regulate

their emotions. Such natural and sincere expression of emotions in the face of customers is more likely to meet customers satisfaction.

Frontline Employees in the Hospitality Industry

The Concept of the Frontline Employee

“Frontline employees in the hospitality industry” refers to service employees who work in direct contact with guests (Anderson, Provis, & Chappel, 2003; Hochschild, 1983), such as reception employees in a hotel and employees who take orders in a restaurant. In other words, the frontline employee is the staff member who directly communicates with the guests.

The Importance of the Frontline Employee

The hospitality industry is a broad sector within the service industry. It involves accommodation, food and beverage services, event planning, and theme parks. A key characteristic of customer service in the hospitality industry is intangible (Baum, 2002) because customer service involves emotional demands such as the expectation of employees to be friendly, warm, and tolerant when communicating with guests. The emotional expressions of employees cannot be replaced with machines (Baum, 2002). Therefore, Onsøyen, Mykletun and Steiro (2009) maintained that employees are the core of the service process.

Forné (2015) asserts that frontline employees are critical to the customer experience in the hospitality industry. One reason for that is because a customer’s first impression of an enterprise is the performance of frontline employees. Moreover, frontline employees are the point of contact between customers and the organisation, therefore can be seen as the source of the company's service differences or competitive advantages (Tsaur & Tang, 2013). Hartline and Ferrell (1996) also demonstrated frontline employees can enhance the competitive advantage. However, since frontline employees are responsible for satisfying and retaining customers, their tasks are more likely to require particularly high levels of emotional labour (Li, Wong, & Kim,

2017). For example, frontline employees are required to always maintain a friendly and positive service attitude when facing customers and patiently respond to the requirements of each customer. Intangibility is considered to be one of the main characteristics of service (Wolak, Kalafatis, & Harris, 1998), and the hospitality industry not only provides intangible products to customers, but it also shows how employees treat customers. Therefore, the hospitality industry involves the EL of employees.

Emotional Exhaustion

The Concept of Emotional Exhaustion

“Emotional exhaustion” in the context of this research refers to the state of exhaustion caused by excessive emotional demands in dealing with customers or clients according to professional requirements (Saxton et al., 1991). Emotional exhaustion is considered to be a key component of job “burnout” (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). Maslach and Jackson (1981), pioneers of the research of job burnout, defined burnout as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that often occurs in people who work in human service institutions. Job burnout is a psychological syndrome that involves the long-term emotional and interpersonal stress that individuals experience at work, and subsequent reactions to tasks, organisations, colleagues, clients, and themselves (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). Bakker, Demerouti, and Euwema (2005) proposed that high workload and high emotional demands would lead to job burnout of employees. For example, the hotel industry often operates a 24/7 business model. In the case of improper management, employees may be expected to work for too many hours, which leads to excessive workload and emotional demands being placed on those of employees, leading to burnout. Cropanzano, Rupp and Byrne (2003) also pointed out that emotional exhaustion is a form of tension caused by work pressure. For example, employees who work without adequate training may experience great stress due to their unfamiliarity with the job, leading to burnout. Emotional exhaustion often occurs in service industries, where the demands of work are primarily related to emotional expression.

The Causes of Emotional Exhaustion

Brotheridge and Lee (2003) noted that surface acting is positively correlated with emotional exhaustion. Grandey (2003) also believed that there is a direct positive path between surface acting and emotional exhaustion. Further, Totterdell and Holman (2003) found that surface acting easily leads to emotional numbness and emotional exhaustion. Surface acting is concerned with external emotional expression, rather than the real feelings of the individual. Because surface acting is a temporary emotional disguise, it consumes the extra emotional energy it takes for employees to suppress their true emotions. When their true emotions are suppressed, employees are more likely to experience emotional exhaustion. Deep performance focuses on the individual's behaviour and inner feelings, and through the positive psychological process, the inner and outer expressions of emotions are consistent, enhancing the sense of achievement of employees. Therefore, researchers believe that surface acting is positively correlated with emotional exhaustion, while deep behaviour is negatively correlated with emotional exhaustion (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003; Grandey, 2003; Totterdell & Holman, 2003).

Based on the above description, surface acting can lead to emotional exhaustion, and Shani et al. (2014) described four factors that can lead employees to surface acting. These are the relationship between managers and employees; the physical demands of work; training for emotional labour; and frequency, duration, and repetition of the employee's contact with customers.

The relationship between managers and employees

Shani et al. (2014) proposed that when managers lack empathy and show indifference towards employees, their management style will lead to employees' surface acting and reduce the occurrence of deep acting. Furthermore, Kogovsek and Kogovsek (2014) demonstrated that in daily work, the relationship between managers and employees is very important and managers must treat employees fairly, treat employees well, respect employees, and give employees professional support and guidance. Cole and Bedeian (2007) also pointed out that the management style of leaders has an impact on the emotional exhaustion of employees. This is

especially true when employees face challenges at work and the help of managers and other colleagues will reduce the employees' negative emotions. Conversely, if the manager's management style is autocratic or other colleagues are indifferent, this creates an unsupportive work environment which can affect employees' self-confidence and negative emotions, which will cause employees to perform surface acting and thus lead to emotional exhaustion (Shani et al., 2014). In China's collectivist culture, which values social interdependence and group cohesion, positive communication in the workplace can act as a “buffer” to protect employees who experience emotional labour from negative outcomes, such as intentional departure from the organisation (Xu et al., 2017).

The physical demands of work

Some jobs involve physical demands, and so the physical condition of employees will affect the level of acting (Shani et al., 2014). Further, there is a degree of discussion in some of the literature about the physical challenges that hotel workers must face, such as unplanned responses to guest needs, long and unbalanced working hours, long shifts, and manual heavy lifting (Iun & Huang, 2007; Pizam & Shani, 2009). The exhaustion and fatigue that result from high physical demands can prevent hotel staff from performing genuine expressions and deep acting, and, in many cases, they end up performing only surface acting (Shani et al., 2014). Thus, the physical demands of work are related to emotional exhaustion.

Training for emotional labour

Shani et al. (2014) found that employees generally lack relevant training because managers believe that due to the high employee turnover rate in the service industry, they are only willing to pay to train employees in the most basic skills necessary. Emotional training is often ignored by employers, but many researchers argue that it is necessary and effective. For example, Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001) tested the effect of training on reducing burnout, in particular the effect of emotional training on employees, and found that the training had some effect on reducing burnout. Moreover, Lee and Ok (2014) also proposed that training can make people more positive about the situation they are in, and training can help employees understand

how to adjust their emotions so as to improve their ability to regulate their emotions.

Frequency, duration, and repetition of employee's contact with customers

Maslach et al. (2001) also found that when an individual's main work is to deal with other people's problems, the more direct, frequent, and lasting their interactions are, the more prone they are to emotional exhaustion and job burnout. Johnson and Spector (2007) showed that frequent surface acting increased emotional exhaustion, while frequent use of deep acting reduced emotional exhaustion. Therefore, a high load of work demands increases the emotional demands on employees, so that employees cannot continue to express real emotions, and choose to disguise emotions to achieve organisational requirements, but this will cause emotional exhaustion.

In some studies, researchers have found that EL has a bright side. For example, Bærenholdt and Jensen (2009) found that EL has a positive impact on a person's behaviour and status as a customer. The EL of employees softens the attitude of customers to service providers because customers feel they can empathise with their fatigue and effort. Pizam and Shani (2009) indicated that when employees' EL receives a positive response and praise from customers, the whole process of EL will form a virtuous cycle. However, EL can also produce some negative consequences.

Consequences of Emotional Exhaustion

There have been many studies on the consequences of emotional exhaustion. Rathi et al. (2013) proposed that emotional exhaustion of employees would increase the rate of employee turnover and reduce the organisational commitment of employees. Goodwin, Groth, and Frenkel (2011) studied the relationship between EL, turnover rate and employee performance. They found that surface acting leads to emotional exhaustion and harms employee turnover and performance. Emotional exhaustion is a function of job burnout, and research has shown that when employees' job burnout occurs, their life satisfaction and the rate of absenteeism are also affected (Lambert, Hogan, & Altheimer, 2010). This is because the emotional exhaustion of employees will not be

improved immediately after work, the bad emotional state caused by work will continue to impact on employees' lives outside of work, so it may affect their life satisfaction and lead to the idea of avoiding work.

Turnover intention

“Turnover intention” is the possibility that a person expects to leave the organisation in the future (Vandenberg & Nelson, 1999). Turnover intention is one of the important antecedents of actual resignation (Elangovan, 2001). Employees may consider leaving when they feel they may not be able to, or do not want to, meet the emotional needs of the job. Most studies have found that there is an obvious correlation between EL and turnover intention. Grandey (2000) believed that, over a long period of time, emotional regulation may affect withdrawal behaviours such as absenteeism and turnover. Besides, those who need to engage in high levels of surface acting may be more inclined to seek a different job. This is because surface acting to achieve the emotions that the organisation requires forces the employees to disguise their real emotions. This is more likely to lead to emotional exhaustion, which leads the employees to have negative thoughts about the work. Mishra and Bhatnagar (2010) showed that employees who experienced emotional problems at work were more likely to express their intention to their managers or employers to leave the organisation. Yavas, Babakus, and Karatepe (2008) also found that emotional exhaustion was closely related to turnover intention.

Job performance

Employee performance refers to behaviours that contribute to the achievement of organisational goals (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002). Previous research has found a link between surface behaviour and emotional exhaustion, with surface behaviour leading to emotional exhaustion. Moreover, when employees are in a state of emotional exhaustion, they are unable to express more sincere emotions, and thus surface acting will appear, creating a circular loop of behaviour (Totterdell & Holman 2003). The research of Goodwin et al. (2011) demonstrated that surface acting has a significant indirect effect on job performance through emotional expression, and they believe that surface acting was negatively correlated with job performance. They found that service

employees' emotional expression moderated the relationship between surface behaviour and job performance. In other words, surface acting reduces the likelihood of satisfactory emotional expression in a customer service interaction, especially in a highly interactive customer service job. For example, in some restaurants in China, the employees will warmly welcome customers when they come and thank them when they leave. However, the employees ignore the feelings of customers when customers sit in the restaurant and just mechanically take orders for them. Therefore, if the employee does not feel the emotion required by the customer during the interaction with the customer, then the surface acting may lead to inconsistent or insincere performance of these emotions in the interpersonal relationship, thus resulting in the decline of service performance.

Absenteeism

Emotional exhaustion may increase a person's likelihood of getting sick. Therefore, emotional exhaustion may lead to voluntary or involuntary absenteeism (Swider & Zimmerman, 2010). Absenteeism is when an employee does not show up for work. There are many reasons for absenteeism, such as illness, transportation problems, family emergencies, or just a day off. The specific reasons for absence can be divided into involuntary and voluntary absenteeism. Involuntary absences are often caused by circumstances beyond a worker's control, such as illness, injury, unexpected traffic problems, or the need to care for a sick family member. Voluntary absenteeism refers to an employee's decision not to go to work on grounds that most employers consider inappropriate or even illegal, such as asking for leave and attending social events (Rhodes & Steers, 1990). Lambert, Hogan and Altheimer (2010) proposed that burnout is positively correlated with absenteeism. The negative effects of burnout can lead to illness absences or temporary absences from work. Burnout from work is an unpleasant experience and employees may choose to be absent to escape the work environment (Lambert et al, 2010). Employees may need a break to refresh themselves.

However, the impact of emotional exhaustion on employees in different work areas is also different. Therefore, this study will explore the consequences of exhaustion from the EL of frontline employees in the hospitality industry from three aspects: turnover intention,

absenteeism, and job performance.

Chapter Three: Method

Methodology

This study uses an interpretive methodology. “Interpretive methodology” refers to the process of analyzing and explaining the causes and processes of phenomena according to the underlying information (Matua & Van Der Wal, 2015). Research in the methodology of interpretation focuses on achieving a deeper understanding of experience (Flood, 2010), discovering the hidden meaning of experience (Speziale, Streubert & Carpenter, 2011), while also taking into account the diverse backgrounds of participants. Grant and Giddings (2002) revealed the relationship between researchers and participants in interpretive methodology research. By contacting and interacting with participants, the researcher tries to understand the experiences of participants and give meaning to the information described by participants (Grant & Giddings, 2002). The researcher needs to focus on how participants described their experiences and how they interpreted their behaviour; the researcher needs to pay attention to participants’ description of their experiences and their interpretation of their behaviour, so the researcher is the listener and interpreter for the participants (Grant & Giddings, 2002).

The research object of this study is frontline employees in the hospitality industry, who have different experiences and work in different environments, such as restaurants and hotels. Also, this study selected samples from frontline employees in the hospitality industry and conducted interviews. The researcher analysed and interpreted the participants’ experiences.

Research Design

This study attempts to explore the consequences of exhaustion from the EL of frontline employees in the hospitality industry and propose solutions for employers. The study collected data from one-on-one telephone or online interviews with five frontline employees from the hospitality industry in Jinan, China. In this study, five participants were selected from the information published on the Zhaopin website (a staff recruitment website) and from

professional networking through direct recruitment to illustration. The process of looking for potential participants can be divided into two parts:

1. The researcher posted the information on the Zhaopin website which related to the study (purpose, research background, criteria for selecting participants, and contact information of researchers) so if potential participants saw the information, they could contact the researcher directly.
2. The researcher actively searched and screened participants according to the criteria for selecting participants and got in touch with those who met the criteria through phone calls and emails. The researcher contacted 10 people and got responses from five.

Finally, the researcher found three hotel frontline employees (one hotel front desk staff and two motel managers) and two restaurant frontline employees (waitresses) by actively searching and screening. They are aged between 23 and 28, two males and three females, and have worked for between two and five years. The main responsibilities of the two motel managers involve the work of receptionist and managing the other front desk employees, so they can provide a different perspective as an employee and as a manager. Those participants confirmed by phone and email that they agreed to participate in interviews for the study, and the participants were interviewed by phone and online video at scheduled times. There are 13 questions (Appendix 1), and each interview was between 30 and 90 minutes long. The average length of the five interviews was 60 minutes.

The interview questions mainly involve employees' work status, their professional attitude and emotional challenges, their real feelings and negative consequences, the impact of interactions between employees and colleagues on their emotions. They also gave some advice as to how managers could help employees manage their emotions. First, the researcher asked participants about their work status to learn more about the participants' workload and work environment. Secondly, the researcher asked the participants about the emotions they expressed at work and the emotions they felt in their hearts, because the emotions they expressed at work often complied with the requirements of the organisation, while the emotions they expressed in their

hearts were often the opposite of the emotions they expressed. Therefore, when employees express their emotions according to the requirements of the organisation, their true feelings and emotions may be suppressed. This causes employees emotional challenges and leads to negative consequences, which is also one of the focuses of this study. Moreover, participants were asked how they interact when encountering emotional challenges with other colleagues and managers. This is because when employees face emotional challenges, their interactions with other colleagues also has an impact on their emotions, so the influence of other colleagues' behaviour and language should also be explored when studying how managers can help employees manage their emotions. Finally, participants were asked for their suggestions on how managers should help employees to manage their emotions because, as another research objective, the advice of employees on the methods of managing EL is valuable, since employees know what their emotional problems are, and what kind of help they want.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. In order to protect the privacy of participants, this study will not disclose their names and other personal information.

Data Analysis

The interview transcripts were thoroughly examined through thematic analysis to determine the participants' framework of views on the consequences of emotional exhaustion and recommendations for emotional management.

Braun and Clarke (2006) pointed out that thematic analysis is a means of identifying, analyzing, and reporting data patterns. The thematic analysis involves six steps (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These are familiarising oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report.

This study conducted data analysis according to these six steps:

Familiarising oneself with the data

After collecting the data, the researcher transcribed the recordings and followed the notes from the interviews to create a complete interview transcript. Moreover, the researcher gained insight

into the information provided by the participants through repeated reading.

Generating initial codes

Based on the research objectives and interview transcripts, the researcher looked for potential information and summarised and generalised the initial codes (Table 1). As this study is concerned with the experience of emotional labour, the factors that lead to emotional exhaustion are also summarised and labelled.

Table 1. Initial codes

Impact on job performance
Increase in absenteeism
Increase in the likelihood of resignation
A long work shift and heavy workload
Frequent contact with customers
The need to keep a professional attitude
Self-adjustment
Asking colleagues or managers for help
Manager and colleagues support
Training in emotional management

Searching for themes

After summarising and analysing the information, four themes were determined: the cause of emotional exhaustion, the consequence of emotional exhaustion, how to deal with emotional challenges, and methods of managing EL. 'Ways to deal with emotional challenges' involves how the participants themselves respond to emotional challenges. 'Methods of managing EL' involves the methods participants suggested that employers or managers could utilise to help

employees manage their emotions.

Reviewing themes

Through re-analysis, the researcher was satisfied that the two key themes were how to deal with emotional challenges, and how to manage emotions.

Defining and naming themes

Finally, the four names of themes are causes of emotional exhaustion, consequences of emotional exhaustion, ways to deal with emotional challenges, and methods of managing EL.

Chapter Four: Findings

An analysis of the descriptions of the five participants (one motel receptionist, two motel managers, two restaurant waitresses) revealed causes of emotional exhaustion, consequences of emotional exhaustion for the hospitality frontline employees, ways to deal with emotional challenges, and suggestions for managing emotions. The findings are shown in Table 2. The comments of the participants are described below, and quotes from the participants are used to express the views of the participants more clearly and fully.

Table 2: Summary of findings

Themes	Codes	Description
Consequences of emotional exhaustion	Impact on job performance	Decreased work performance, for example, low efficiency, more likely to make mistakes in the work.
	Increase in absenteeism	Emotional exhaustion can increase absenteeism. Asking for time off is sometimes the employee's way of avoiding work.
	Increase the likelihood of resignation	The emotional exhaustion of the employees will lead to the idea of turnover intention, thus increasing the turnover intention.
Causes of emotional exhaustion	A long work shift and heavy workload	Too much emotional demand leads to emotional exhaustion.
	Frequent contact with customers	Too much emotional demand leads to emotional exhaustion.
	The need to keep a professional attitude	The employees suppress their true emotions and fake the required emotions, which requires additional emotional expenditure.
Ways to deal with emotional challenges	Self-adjustment	The employees rely on their ability to regulate their own emotions.

	Asking colleagues or managers for help	Take the initiative to seek emotional comfort and help from colleagues or managers.
Methods of managing EL	Manager and colleagues' support	Provide work advice and emotional support to the employees.
	Training in emotional management	Provide regular emotional management training.

Cause of Emotional Exhaustion

A long work shift and heavy workload

Through the analysis of participants' descriptions, it is found that in some hospitality businesses, employees' working hours are unevenly distributed or employees' workload is too heavy, which are two of the reasons that eventually lead to emotional exhaustion because, under such working conditions, employees do not have enough time to rest and adjust their emotions.

Restaurant waitress #1 said:

Sometimes our working hours are not arranged properly, especially during the holidays when we are very busy. But the number of employees is limited, so we work more hours, and that usually lasts until the end of the holidays and festivals. I was so tired of smiling at each customer for so long.

Motel manager #2 said:

Since we have a small staff, I often have to do the reception work as well as the housekeeping, so my workload is heavy ... my workload is really huge, and I need to respond to the needs of every customer, so I often get irritable. And I only get one day off a week and this is one of the reasons for getting more negative emotions because I don't have enough time to adjust my emotions.

Frequent contact with customers

In a constantly busy work environment, employees have more frequent contact with customers, and they need to continuously respond to customer demands, which leads to a high level of emotional demand from employees, and finally leads to emotional exhaustion.

Motel receptionist #1 said:

When there are a lot of customers, sometimes the customers arrive but the room is not ready, and the customers may have to wait for a long time. I feel a lot of pressure because it's my job to communicate with each customer, even though it's not my job to clean the room.

Restaurant waitress #2 said:

In addition to the rest time, I had to constantly respond to the needs of customers during work, and there was almost no time to stop and wait ... I'm happy to communicate with my guests, but sometimes I feel upset as well as I cannot really handle their needs.

The need to keep a professional attitude

According to the analysis, the professional attitude of the frontline employees in the hospitality industry is also related to emotional exhaustion. Employees need to maintain a professional attitude (for example, having a positive manner while responding to unreasonable demands from aggressive customers). Therefore, when they have negative emotions, they need to suppress those real emotions and express positive emotions to face customers. As a result, employees need to make extra efforts to disguise their emotions, so they are more likely to suffer from emotional exhaustion.

Waitress #1 said:

When I meet difficult guests, I will try to suppress my emotions and solve problems with the professional attitude of hospitality management, but I will still feel very uncomfortable inside. I greet guests with professionalism even though

I may be exhausted and upset.

Motel receptionist #1 said:

... my workload will increase due to increase number of customers, but I need to keep my professional attitude and respond to the requirements for every customer.

Consequences of Emotional Exhaustion

Impact on job performance

Most participants reported that emotional exhaustion among frontline employees had a significant impact on performance. After carrying out a high workload of emotional labour, employees will have a negative attitude towards work or can't cope with their tasks, which leads to a decrease in work performance. The following quotes are from the motel's front desk managers:

Motel manager #2 said:

After I respond to customers' demands continuously or for a long time, I feel that I have less patience to communicate with the following customers with my full attention, and my work becomes perfunctory. I know this is not supposed to happen, and I know it may affect customer satisfaction, but I can't control my negativity.

Motel manager #1 said:

For me, emotions don't affect me very much. However, in my experience, I have found that when my colleagues are in negative emotions, it usually affects their performance, for example, low efficiency, and they are more likely to make mistakes at work

Increase in absenteeism

Frontline employees who work long hours in one day or work long hours for several days consecutively may experience emotional exhaustion and may be tempted to ask for time off. When frontline employees are in a state of busy work for a long time, they will not only feel tired but will also have a negative emotion after excessive emotional expenditure, which will lead to thoughts of avoiding work.

Waitress#1 from the restaurant said:

I become so tired of smiling at each customer for so long, therefore, when sometimes the thought of having to work the next day, makes me want to escape from work. I have taken sick leave because of it, even though I wasn't sick...

Increase the likelihood of resignation

Frontline employees who experience many negative emotions at work, or suppress their real emotions for a long time, will have an increased tendency to quit their jobs. Employees need to express their emotions to meet customer requirements and keep a professional attitude, even they may not be happy inside. Therefore, employees may have to suppress their real emotions, and a long period of suppression will lead to emotional exhaustion. Participants also mentioned that interactions with colleagues at work have a significant impact on emotions. Two participants said they had thoughts about quitting.

Waitress #2 from the restaurant explained:

We are very busy with our daily work. According to the requirements of our work, we should be friendly and warm to every customer. Sometimes, we will meet some customers with a rude attitude. However, when I was in a bad mood due to an unfriendly customer, my colleagues would take the initiative to help and comfort me, so I am very grateful to them, otherwise, I might have quit my job.

Motel manager #2 said:

To be honest, I have thought about quitting, because sometimes I feel like I can't handle the job because of the excessive emotional effort or physical exhaustion,

but I need this job at the moment.

Ways to Deal With Emotional Challenges

Emotional self-regulation

Most participants choose to adjust their emotions when faced with emotional challenges, but this method may not be successful, because the ability and method to regulate emotions differs between individuals.

Waitress #1 said:

When I meet difficult guests, I will try to suppress my emotions and solve problems with the professional attitude of hospitality management, but I will still feel very uncomfortable inside.

Motel manager #1 said:

First of all, I know the nature of my job. I have to meet different customers and meet their needs every day. I also have to manage my subordinates well. Even if I feel angry or upset, I will adjust my emotions as soon as possible. I don't want these bad emotions to affect my work and my colleagues.

Of course, it's not difficult for me to adjust my emotions quickly.

Asking colleagues or managers for help

Some participants also felt that asking colleagues for help was an effective way to deal with emotional problems.

Motel manager #2 said:

When I find myself unable to deal with these negative emotions, I tell my employers and friends and they will help me.

Restaurant waitress #2 said:

I usually talk to my colleagues about these challenges and see if anyone could help me out. And it is helpful.

Methods of Managing EL

Manager and colleagues' support

Through the analysis of the interview narratives, all participants confirmed the important role of managers and colleagues in supporting employees. When an employee is faced with a challenge at work, support from the manager or colleagues can help the employee regulate his or her emotions such as emotional support and advice, which will ensure the employee's performance is improved in the future. The following are the different perspectives of managers and employees:

“Emotional support” refers to the emotional encouragement or comfort given by colleagues or managers to employees when they are faced with challenges so that employees can feel cared for and reduce their negative emotions at work.

Waitress #1 said:

In my experience, managers should better manage their employees' working hours and rest time so that they can have the energy to serve customers.

When employees have emotional problems, managers should take the initiative to understand their situation and give support to make them feel cared about.

Motel manager #1 said:

Employers should have good communication with each employee. The negative emotions generated by work can affect employees' self-confidence, therefore, encouragement and support from employers are important. In my experience, my employer often asks me about my work, and he is always caring and encouraging which help me combat negative emotions from work.

“Advice support” means that when an employee is faced with emotional challenges due

to work problems, colleagues or managers provide solutions or suggestions to work problems immediately, so that employees can deal with these problems, thus reducing their emotional stress and negative emotions.

Waitress #2 said:

I think the support of my manager and colleagues is very important, especially when I am faced with unfriendly customers, I will feel helpless and angry. If other colleagues help me, I will feel that I am cared for and understood, and I can adjust my emotions more quickly. Therefore, I think managers have the responsibility to give advice, encouragement, and support to employees in a timely manner, which can reduce their work pressure and help them regulate their emotions.

Motel manager #2 said:

They should always respond to the changes in employees' emotions, ask about the situation of employees, make reasonable work allocation to reduce work pressure, give appropriate encouragement and substantial rewards. When I have a problem at work, my employer will try to help me and give me advice to help me solve the problem.

Training in emotional management

After sorting out the participants' statements, it was found that participants all support the addition of emotional training or coaching. Effective employee emotional training can help employees maintain a positive work attitude and provide them with better and more professional services, thus the training or coaching will ensure and improve customer satisfaction and generate more profits. The following are the different perspectives of managers' and employees' suggestions about training content and management style:

Motel receptionist #1 said:

I think effective methods of managing emotion for us is necessary because negative emotions really affect us and affect customer experience ... I think it is

very important to train us how to adjust our emotions quickly. I am not a person who can easily adjust my emotions ... I think the company should add emotional management training to the general training when we just joined the company, so as to reduce the emotional problems we will face in our future work.

Motel manager # 2 said:

Effective methods help us to manage our emotions to have a positive work attitude, improve our work enthusiasm, help us to provide better and more professional services, and create more value. And effective emotional management can improve cooperation among colleagues and work efficiency. For example, the training should include ways of adjustment and controlling emotions.

Some participants also gave specific ways for managers to help employees' emotions. The financial constraints of business ownership is one of the reasons why the hospitality business does not pay attention to or carry out training in emotion management. One participant mentioned that employees should be offered emotional management training or emotional guidance once a year or every six months as the company's funds allow so that the company can not only understand employees' recent emotional state but also provide training and guidance for employees with different emotional problems. Further, participants also advised employers and managers to learn how to deal with emotional problems. In this way, the managers and employers can provide coaching to the employees, offer one-on-one advice and emotional counselling to employees, and in this way employers and managers can resolve employees' emotional problems in a timely way in their daily work.

Chapter Five: Discussion

There are two aims of this study. The first aim is to explore the consequences of emotional exhaustion of frontline employees in the Chinese hospitality industry, including decreased job performance, higher absenteeism, and turnover intention. The second aim is to identify the methods of managing EL to reduce emotional exhaustion. This section will discuss the findings of this study and previous relevant studies.

The Consequence of Emotional Exhaustion

Negative impact on job performance

This study pointed out that emotional exhaustion of frontline employees hurts their job performance. Participants mentioned that after experiencing high emotional needs, they will fake their emotions and appear apathetic towards customers. Such actions would have a negative impact on customer satisfaction. When frontline employees cannot express sincere emotions after emotional exhaustion (Totterdell & Holman 2003), they cannot meet the requirements of customers, and thus customer satisfaction is affected. This result is also consistent with the research results of Goodwin et al. (2011), who not only proposed that surface acting is negatively correlated with job performance, but also mentioned that the interaction between employees and customers after surface acting will reduce customer satisfaction.

In addition, frontline employees will show negative performance at work when they experience emotional exhaustion. This can be seen in reduced work efficiency and increased frequency of errors.

In other words, employees may have negative emotions towards their work and themselves, such as losing confidence in themselves and their sense of achievement, thus affecting their work performance. This point was also mentioned in Maslach and Jackson's (1981) study that emotional exhaustion reduces one's sense of accomplishment.

Moreover, the degree of emotional influence on employees is different and depends on the employees' ability to regulate their own emotions. When employees are unable to adjust their emotions in time, it will harm their subsequent work performance.

Increase in absenteeism

The study found that emotional exhaustion among frontline workers increased the rate of absence. After analysis, it is found that the absenteeism of frontline employees is not only due to physical sickness from emotional exhaustion but is also because emotional exhaustion makes employees detest going into work. This point was consistent with the research of Lambert et al. (2010). Job burnout makes people choose to escape from work because they experience unpleasantness at work.

The study also found that emotional exhaustion causes extreme physical exhaustion. When employees are unable to recover and adjust their emotional state, they will appear psychologically reluctant to resume work, thus may temporarily leave the workplace. When an employee is absent from work, it increases the workload of other employees, which can spread emotional exhaustion to other employees, creating a vicious cycle for the hotel industry.

Increase in turnover intention

The study found that frontline employees with emotional exhaustion were more likely to leave their jobs. Many researchers have demonstrated that emotional exhaustion is positively correlated with turnover intention (Babakus & Karatepe, 2008; Li et al., 2012). Frontline employees who experience emotional exhaustion may feel unable to control the job or do not want to do it anymore and may intend to leave.

According to the results of the study, it is understood that the occurrence of this phenomenon is related to the emotional self-regulation ability of frontline employees. When employees experience emotion burnouts and such negative state is allowed to accumulate, the idea of leaving or giving up the job will increase accordingly.

Also, when emotional exhaustion occurs, an employee's sense of accomplishment will be

reduced and they will feel less appreciated for their work. As a result, they will have less confidence at work and be more prone to leaving.

Methods of Managing EL

Manager and colleagues to provide support

This study found that the support provided by managers and colleagues plays a crucial role in the emotional regulation of frontline employees. Several participants mentioned that the support of managers and colleagues, or being listened to by managers or colleagues, helped them relax when facing emotional challenges. Cole and Bedeian's (2007) research also agreed that management style has an impact on employees' emotional exhaustion.

Moreover, when employees have support from managers and colleagues, they will be more willing to express their sincere emotion to customers. Some researchers have said that managers responsible for staff and treatment of employees, will not only affect employees' emotion regulation (Kogovsek & Kogovsek, 2014), but will also affect employees' emotional expression (Shani et al., 2014).

Further, this study also found that managers and colleagues could support frontline employees in two ways: advice support and emotional support.

Advice support: When frontline employees encounter emotional challenges, they may become restless when they encounter technical or professional difficulties in their work. Kogovsek and Kogovsek (2014) suggest that providing professional support and guidance to employees has a positive effect on their emotional regulation. Therefore, if the manager or colleague can offer timely suggestions to help employees solve their problems, it will not only solve their work problems but also appease their emotions.

Emotional support: When frontline employees experience negative emotions from work, the understanding and emotional comfort and encouragement from managers and colleagues are very important for the emotional regulation of employees. Since everyone is working in the same work environment and will encounter more or less the same problems, managers and

colleagues can better understand employees' emotions and know how to comfort and encourage employees. Shani et al. (2014) also mentioned the importance of encouraging and providing a supportive work environment for employees.

Provide training about managing emotions

The study found that training in emotion management was needed. The research of Shani et al. (2014) also confirmed the positive effect of training for managing emotions. In the analysis of participants' descriptions, it was found that the ability of frontline employees to self-regulate emotions was related to emotional exhaustion.

Frontline employees in the hospitality industry should maintain a professional attitude to face customers. However, this study also found that this may lead to employees suppressing their real emotions for an extended time, leading to emotional exhaustion. If employees have a strong ability to identify and manage their own emotions, emotional exhaustion could be reasonably avoided.

However, through analysis, the ability to self-regulate emotions differs between employees. Therefore, it is beneficial for them to receive training on emotional management to improve their ability to regulate their emotions. To solve this problem, this paper proposes two training programs:

The first programme provides employees with regular (every six to twelve months) online emotional management training and emotional counselling. Kim (2008) also noted the importance of continual training for EL. But this approach can be costly for hospitality industry owners.

The second type of programme provides emotional management training for employees when they enter the company and allows managers to attend the training regularly (e.g., every year). Managers can provide emotional coaching or counselling for employees at any time, which also helps to identify the emotional problems of employees in a timely way. The cost to the owners under this method is relatively small. Jung, and Yoon (2014) also suggested that providing counselling may prevent the emotional problems in advance.

Arrange employees' working hours and workload reasonably

The study found that employees' emotional exhaustion was sometimes caused by working extensive long hours and taking on too great a workload. Shani et al. (2014) mentioned that long or frequent contact with customers would lead to surface behaviours, while frequent surface behaviours would lead to emotional exhaustion (Johnson & Spector, 2007).

According to the above analysis, the emotional exhaustion of frontline employees will have a negative impact on the hospitality industry and employees themselves, and the final loss is likely to be greater than the cost savings. Therefore, it is necessary for employers to arrange employees' working hours and workload reasonably.

Chapter Six: Limitations of this Study, Implications for Future Research and Conclusion

Limitations of this Study and Implications for Future Research

The participants of this study include waitresses, receptionists, and managers. The sample selection is small and limited, and the research results may not include all the frontline sectors of the Chinese hospitality industry. Therefore, more comprehensive samples of China's frontline sectors can be selected for future studies in this field, or frontline sectors other than those involved in this study can be selected as samples. Moreover, this study collected data through online interviews. During the interviews, it was found that because the participant's location during the interview is unable to be controlled by the researcher, there could be conflicting demands on the participant during the interview resulting in difficulties entering into in-depth communication.

Besides, the research conducted for this study found that there are few studies on the training of emotional workers in the hospitality industry in China, and the training suggestions proposed in this study are only based on theory. Therefore, future studies can explore how to carry out and practice the training of EL in the hospitality industry. Previous studies have found that the results of emotional labour may differ between the collectivist culture of China and the individualist culture of western countries (e.g., Allen et al, 2014; Xu et al., 2017). Further, most of the current research on emotional labour comes from western countries. Therefore, future research on emotional labour in China can be compared with existing research and extended to explore the different factors affecting emotional labour and the final consequences against the background of Chinese culture.

Conclusion

With the continuous development of China's hospitality industry, the occupational requirements for frontline employees are increasingly high. As the positions of frontline employees have high emotional demands, it is inevitable for them to have some emotional problems in such a working environment. Therefore, it is essential for the sustainable development of China's hospitality industry to pay attention to the emotional situation of frontline employees. This study discussed the consequences of emotional exhaustion of frontline employees and outlined some methods to help them manage their emotions. The following three viewpoints were proposed:

First, frontline employees play a vital role in the hotel industry, and the problems they face as emotional workers cannot be ignored. This is especially true as they represent the direct impression of the hospitality industry to customers, frontline employees play a significant role in the performance and development of the hospitality industry.

Second, under the influence of emotional exhaustion, frontline employees in the hospitality industry will have reduced work performance, increased rates of absenteeism, and increased turnover intention. It was also found that the negative effects of emotional exhaustion affect not only the employees themselves but ultimately the performance of the hospitality industry.

Third, in the context of China's cultural emphasis on harmony within groups, support from managers and colleagues, as well as training and guidance in emotional management, can effectively help frontline employees regulate their own emotions, so as to reduce the occurrence of emotional exhaustion of employees. Moreover, employers and managers can reasonably allocate employees' working hours and workload, which can also reduce the possibility of employees' emotional exhaustion.

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Appendix 1

INDICATIVE QUESTIONS

1. Could you please describe your job? (e.g. What do you do at work?)
2. How busy are you at work?
3. What emotions you experience when you are dealing with customers?
4. Why do you think you have these emotions?
5. What are the major emotional challenges you face in dealing with customers?
6. How do you deal with the challenges?
7. What are the major emotional challenges you face in dealing with colleagues and managers? How do you deal with the challenges?
8. How do you feel when you serve customers frequently?
9. What do you think are the consequences of dealing with these challenges and frequent customer contacts? (e.g. job performance, absenteeism, resignation)
10. Do your colleagues support you when you deal with these emotional challenges when dealing with customers?
11. Does your manager or other managers support you when you deal with these emotional challenges when dealing with customers?
12. What actions do you think your manager or employer should take to help employees manage their emotions and reduce the negative consequences?
13. Do you believe that getting training in emotional management will help you in your work life? Why?

Appendix 2



Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

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19 May 2020

Roy Smollan
Faculty of Business Economics and Law

Dear Roy

Ethics Application: 20/116 Exhaustion from the emotional labour of frontline employees in the hospitality industry

Thank you for submitting your application for ethical review. We are pleased to advise that the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) approved your ethics application at their meeting on 11 May 2020, subject to the following conditions:

1. Inclusion of China in the title;
2. Reflection of the potential for a conflict of interest and issues around confidentiality and job security given recruitment is being undertaken from a small pool of personal networks;
3. Confirmation of the exclusion criteria and inclusion of this in the Information Sheet;
4. Clarification and provision of more detail (who will be providing this and who will be paying) about the counselling and ensure this information is in the Information Sheet;
5. Amendment of the data storage and Consent Forms from the researcher's personal computer to it being downloaded to an external storage device and stored with the primary supervisor/applicant;
6. Provision of the translations of the Information Sheet and Consent Form;
7. Clarification of who is doing the translations as the name of the Confidentiality Form appears to be different to that of the researcher;

Please provide us with a response to the points raised in these conditions, indicating either how you have satisfied these points or proposing an alternative approach. AUTEC also requires copies of any altered documents, such as Information Sheets, surveys etc. You are not required to resubmit the application form again. Any changes to responses in the form required by the committee in their conditions may be included in a supporting memorandum.

Please note that the Committee is always willing to discuss with applicants the points that have been made. There may be information that has not been made available to the Committee, or aspects of the research may not have been fully understood.

Once your response is received and confirmed as satisfying the Committee's points, you will be notified of the full approval of your ethics application. Full approval is not effective until all the conditions have been met. Data collection may not commence until full approval has been confirmed. If these conditions are not met within six months, your application may be closed and a new application will be required if you wish to continue with this research.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, we ask that you use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

We look forward to hearing from you,

(This is a computer-generated letter for which no signature is required)

The AUTEC Secretariat
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

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