

## Optimizing Customer Outcomes by Managing Employee Emotional Display

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**Purpose** - Employee emotional display toward customers (EED) has been demonstrated to be an important determinant of successful service delivery. Past studies focused either on selected drivers or outcomes of EED. This research uses data from multiple sources (front-line employees, managers, and customers) to investigate how service companies should manage their frontline employees' emotional display to optimize customer outcomes such as customer satisfaction and loyalty. The influence of various organizational and employee variables on key EED dimensions and customer outcomes is modeled and empirically determined for different service contexts.

**Design / Methodology / Approach** - We conducted qualitative interviews with customers, employees, and managers to identify potential drivers of EED. The role of these drivers will be measured in a large-scale, multilevel field study in about 50 German fast-food restaurants involving triadic data from the customer, employee, and management level for three contexts. SEM is used to determine the relative impact of model parameters.

**Findings** - Findings will be presented at the conference (field work will be conducted in spring 2012).

**Research implications:** Findings will integrate knowledge on employee emotional display and its link with customer outcomes.

**Practical Implications** - Results will provide service providers with a road map to optimize their customers' satisfaction and other outcomes by systematically managing their employees' emotional display, taking into account the specifics of their service context.

**Originality / Value** - Drawing on a unique data set from multiple sources, we are the first to test the links between drivers of EED, EED itself, and customer outcomes, an important issue for service research.

## Options for Dealing With Incompatible Industrial Service Buyers

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**Purpose** - This study investigates how and why different ways of dealing with discordant expectations of industrial service buyers take place. In particular, differences in expectations concerning the contents of service offerings and how such differences are handled by the industrial service producer are addressed.

**Design / Methodology / Approach** - The study draws on practice-theory and examines the cumulative data gathered during a two-year longitudinal study of managerial representatives from five multinational manufacturing firms engaged in the addition of services to their traditional goods offerings.

**Findings** - The paper develops a conceptual framework of four central practices for dealing with discordant buyer expectations and explains the conditions for their application in practice.

**Research limitations / Implications** - The study provides an original conceptualization of how and why incompatible expectations of industrial service buyers are handled in practice by industrial service producers, serving as a useful starting point for a reconceptualization of service marketing and sales practice.

**Practical / Social implications** - The conceptual framework provides guidance for managerial understanding and decisions regarding the active and reactive responses to discordant buyer expectations.

**Originality / Value** - This paper provides a novel conceptualization of how and why industrial service producers handle industrial service buyers with discordant expectations.