



Enhancing emotional performance and customer service through human resources practices: A systems perspective☆



Allison S. Gabriel ^{a,*}, Arik Cheshin ^b, Christina M. Moran ^c, Gerben A. van Kleef ^d

^a School of Business, Virginia Commonwealth University, 301 West Main Street, PO Box 844000, Richmond, VA 23284-4000, United States

^b Department of Human Services, University of Haifa, Eshkol Tower 715, Haifa 3498838, Israel

^c Marsh, Berry, & Co., Inc., 28601 Chagrin Blvd. Ste. 400, Woodmere, OH 44122

^d Department of Psychology, University of Amsterdam, Weesperplein 4, 1018 XA Amsterdam

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Emotional performance
Emotional labor
Emotional intelligence
Interpersonal emotion management
Human resources
Systems HR
Customer service

ABSTRACT

Although many scholars and practitioners articulate the importance of managing employee emotions in service-based organizations, research related to the intricacies surrounding human resource (HR) practices targeted at employee emotional performance has failed to keep up. This is surprising, given the strong links established between employee emotional performance (i.e., expressive behaviors congruent with emotional expectations) and customer service outcomes such as customer satisfaction, intentions to return, and recommendation intentions. In light of this gap, in the current review we adopt a systems perspective of HR and develop an integrated model highlighting how HR practices related to three broad HR domains—skill-, motivation-, and opportunity-enhancing—should elevate emotional performance by increasing the motivation and ability of service employees to engage in intrapersonal and/or interpersonal emotion regulation. Departing from a “more is better” approach, we theorize how different combinations of the three HR domains may yield beneficial outcomes depending upon (1) the extent to which rewards are tied to emotional labor and (2) the nature of typical employee-customer exchanges. In doing so, we articulate which HR practices are likely mandatory, and which can be viewed as substitutable. Implications for measurement and applications to customer service are discussed.

© 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

As the service industry continues to grow (Henderson, 2012; Ryan & Ployhart, 2003), organizations are faced with the challenge of providing exceptional customer service to generate bottom-line outcomes (Liao & Chuang, 2007). In doing so, organizations have relied on front-line employees to be the face of the organization, delivering ‘service with a smile’ via emotional labor (i.e., regulating one’s emotions to adhere to emotional display expectations; Hochschild, 1983) to positively influence customer outcomes (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Grandey, 2000). One way organizations can influence emotional labor is via human resource (HR) practices (Pugh, Diefendorff, & Moran, 2013) such as training how to display appropriate emotions or incentive structures that reward emotional performance. Yet, despite the importance of HR systems, integrative theory for HR systems applied to emotional labor is underdeveloped.

☆ At the time of print, Allison S. Gabriel will be at the Department of Management and Organizations, Eller College of Management, The University of Arizona, 1130 E. Helen Street, Tucson, AZ 85721-0108. We thank editors Doug Pugh and Mahesh Subramony as well as two anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback during the review process.

* Corresponding author.

URL’s: asgabriel@email.arizona.edu (A.S. Gabriel), acheshin@univ.haifa.ac.il (A. Cheshin), christina.saluan@gmail.com (C.M. Moran), G.A.vanKleef@uva.nl (G.A. van Kleef).

Pugh et al. (2013) reviewed what is known in regards to the impact HR has on emotional labor, revealing that the majority of research has been qualitative (e.g., Leidner, 1993; Poster, 2011; Sutton, 1991; Winiecki & Wigman, 2007) or focused on one organizational influence at a time (e.g., Diefendorff & Croyle, 2008; Grandey, Foo, Groth, & Goodwin, 2012; Holman, Chissek, & Totterdell, 2002; Totterdell & Parkinson, 1999). Although focusing on HR practices in isolation and/or qualitatively offers benefits, these approaches hardly speak to the intricacies of how HR practices work conjointly, leaving many questions unanswered. Will performance management systems be effective at eliciting desired displays in the absence of training? Is compensation for emotional performance (e.g., tips, commission) necessary when employees are given autonomy regarding the emotions they display to customers? Can we train employees who have been selected without emotional abilities in mind? What is lacking is a focus on how different HR practices interact to affect employees' emotional labor and, subsequently, emotional performance and customer service.

To explore this area and address a call raised by Pugh et al. (2013), we build from the strategic management literature to explore how bundles of HR practices enhance emotional labor, ultimately influencing emotional performance (i.e., emotional displays that are congruent with organizational expectations; Bono & Vey, 2007) and customer service. Expanding upon models of emotional labor (Grandey, 2000; Grandey & Gabriel, 2015), we address how HR practices may affect employees' emotional abilities (e.g., emotional intelligence, emotional labor self-efficacy, emotion demands–abilities fit) and motivation to engage in intrapersonal and interpersonal emotion regulation. Extending ideas by Jiang, Lepak, Han, et al. (2012), Jiang, Lepak, Hu, et al. (2012) (see also Lepak, Liao, Chun, & Harden, 2006), we argue that HR practices are nested within HR domains that affect: (1) knowledge, skills, and abilities related to emotional labor (*skill-enhancing*), (2) motivation and effort to perform (*motivation-enhancing*), and (3) opportunities to contribute (*opportunity-enhancing*). Our guiding model which we elaborate on is displayed in Fig. 1.

2. Overview of emotional performance in service occupations

Emotional performance occurs when employees display emotions congruent with the expectations of the work role (Bono & Vey, 2007; Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). In understanding what factors influence emotional performance, many researchers study *emotional labor*, or processes related to employees managing their emotions to meet such organizational expectations (Hochschild, 1983). Most models of emotional labor entail a three-part process involving emotional display rules, emotion regulation, and emotional displays (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003; Grandey, 2000; Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). In many service jobs, employees are expected to conform to integrative display rules, where positive emotional expressions are encouraged and negative emotional expressions are discouraged (Wharton & Erickson, 1993); such positive emotional displays should bring people (i.e., employees and customers) together.

Research has considered factors that affect an employee's ability to adhere to display rules. For instance, researchers have considered emotional intelligence, or one's ability to identify and understand one's own and others' emotions (Salovey & Mayer, 1989). Strong links exist between emotional intelligence and emotional performance (Gabbott, Tsarenko, & Mok, 2011; Lopes et al., 2004), with evidence demonstrating that emotional intelligence is the strongest predictor of performance (Joseph & Newman, 2010) and customer satisfaction (Giardini & Frese, 2008) in emotional labor jobs. Additional abilities include one's fit with the job's emotional

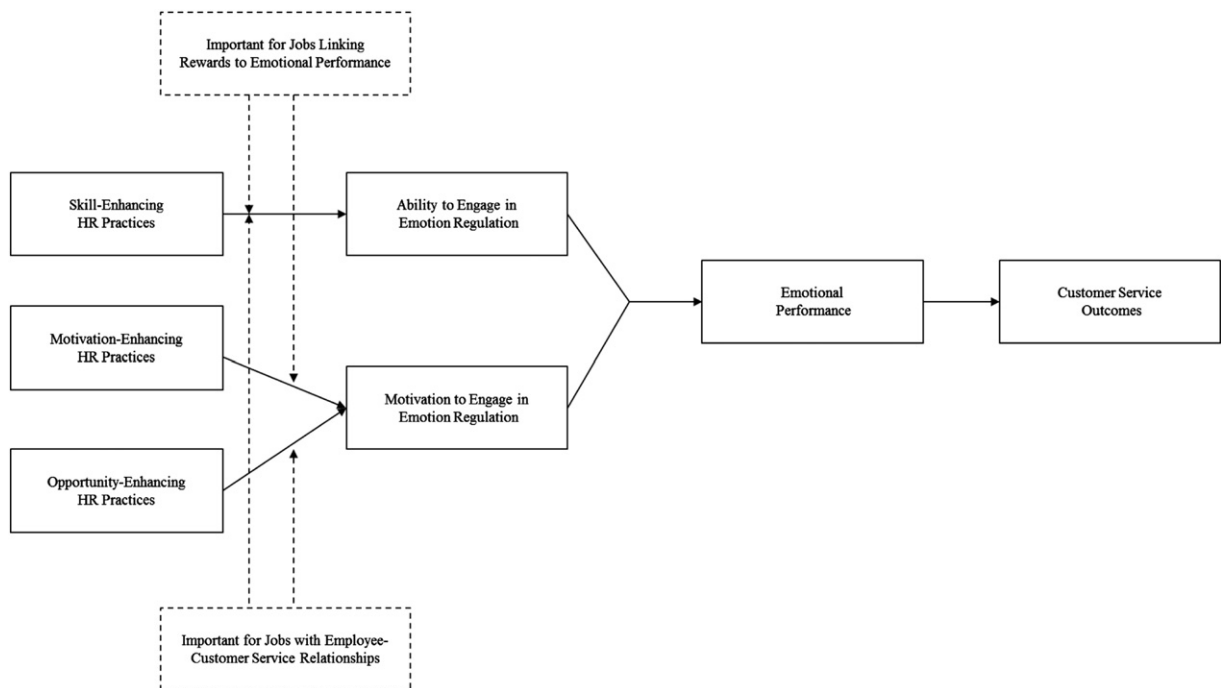


Fig. 1. Theoretical Model Note. In the above model, emotional performance is achieved as a function of skills (i.e., ability to engage in emotion regulation) \times (motivation + opportunity) / 2. Dashed lines/boxes represent contingencies surrounding the effectiveness of different HR practices.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/879612>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/879612>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)