

The Role of Emotional Labor in Services: How Employee Emotional Labor Influences Organizational Outcomes

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The Role of Emotional Labor in Services: How Employee Emotional Labor Influences Organizational Outcomes

Karyn Ling Wang

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of
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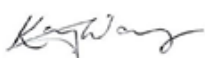
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Emotional labor concerns the intrapsychic experience of managing feelings and displays in order to produce appropriate emotional displays for the purposes of work. Most of the emotional labor literature concerns how its performance affects employee outcomes, such as strain and burnout. However, the commonly held assumption that emotional labor is performed for the benefit of the organization has received less attention, with largely inconsistent findings. In this thesis, I present three disparate studies that examine the relationship between employee emotional labor and customer service outcomes more closely. In the first study, I test whether the inconsistent findings regarding the effects of surface acting on customer outcomes can be, in part, attributed to the conceptualization of surface acting and the moderating role of the service context. In the second study, I examine whether the commonly assumed, but rarely tested, concept of nonconscious emotional labor can be triggered by standard priming procedures and compare the effects of nonconscious emotional labor strategies with their conscious counterparts across a variety of social, cognitive, and affective service outcomes. Finally, in the third study, I consider the role of customer judgment processes and emotional intelligence in determining the extent to which employee's surface acting is detrimental to customer service outcomes. Results suggest that suppressing negative emotions, but not faking positive emotions, has a negative impact on customer service outcomes, but only in service contexts that are highly personalized and when the customer and employee do not have an established relationship. Nonconscious reappraisal is associated with largely beneficial outcomes across a range of service outcomes, compared to their conscious counterparts, but nonconscious suppression is associated with poorer outcomes. Processes that enable more automatic and heuristic judgments predicts more accurate inferences regarding the affective performance of employees, but only when emotional intelligence is also high. The theoretical and practical implications of these findings are discussed.

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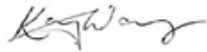
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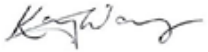
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Abstract

The Role of Emotional Labor in Services: How Employee Emotional Labor Influences Organizational Outcomes

Emotional labor concerns the intrapsychic experience of managing feelings and displays in order to produce appropriate emotional displays for the purposes of work. Most of the emotional labor literature concerns how its performance affects employee outcomes, such as strain and burnout. However, the commonly held assumption that emotional labor is performed for the benefit of the organization has received less attention, with largely inconsistent findings. In this thesis, I present three disparate studies that examine the relationship between employee emotional labor and customer service outcomes more closely. In the first study, I test whether the inconsistent findings regarding the effects of surface acting on customer outcomes can be, in part, attributed to the conceptualization of surface acting and the moderating role of the service context. In the second study, I examine whether the commonly assumed, but rarely tested, concept of nonconscious emotional labor can be triggered by standard priming procedures and compare the effects of nonconscious emotional labor strategies with their conscious counterparts across a variety of social, cognitive, and affective service outcomes. Finally, in the third study, I consider the role of customer judgment processes and emotional intelligence in determining the extent to which employee's surface acting is detrimental to customer service outcomes. Results suggest that suppressing negative emotions, but not faking positive emotions, has a negative impact on customer service outcomes, but only in service contexts that are highly personalized and when the customer and employee do not have an established relationship. Nonconscious reappraisal is associated with largely beneficial outcomes across a range of service outcomes, compared to their conscious counterparts, but nonconscious suppression is associated with poorer outcomes. Processes that enable more automatic and heuristic judgments predicts more accurate inferences regarding the affective performance of employees, but only when emotional intelligence is also high. The theoretical and practical implications of these findings are discussed.

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“Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
May read strange matters. To beguile the time,
Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,
But be the serpent under't.”

— Shakespeare

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Overview of this Thesis

1.1 Research Background and Motivation

In most service industries, employees are required to display certain emotions and conceal others while performing their role (Diefendorff, Croyle, & Gosserand, 2005; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1989). These display rules typically emphasize the expression of positive emotions and the concealment of negative emotions, although some jobs, such as those of infringement officers and debt collectors, may require the reverse (Sutton, 1991; van Gelderen, Heuven, van Veldhoven, Zeelenberg, & Croon, 2007). However, employees may find that their feelings are not always aligned with these expectations, necessitating the regulation of emotions to produce the appropriate displays. As a research topic in the management literature, *emotional labor* is concerned with employees' management of feelings and/or emotional displays as part of their work role, and the consequences of these efforts on the employees themselves and on the organization.

In her seminal book on emotional labor, Hochschild (1983) asserted that the performance of emotional labor can fuel employee alienation and estrangement. As such, the emotional labor research has been characterized by its focus on employee burnout and well-being outcomes, such as emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (e.g., Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; but see Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Mesmer-Magnus, DeChurch, & Wax, 2012 for meta-analytic review). However, another central assumption of Hochschild's (1983) work remains largely under-investigated in the emotional labor literature: that the performance of emotional

labor benefits organizations. The display of appropriate emotions by frontline personnel (e.g., smiling) is associated with positive customer outcomes such as service quality perceptions, return intentions, and recommendations to friends (Pugh, 2001; Tsai & Huang, 2002), which are inevitably linked with increased revenue (Heskett, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 1997). Further, the links between employee emotional labor and well-being outcomes can affect withdrawal behaviors that can cost the organization through lost productivity due to absenteeism or turnover (Goodwin, Groth, & Frenkel, 2011; Nguyen, Groth, & Johnson, in press).

Recent research has uncovered some of these links between emotional labor and organizational outcomes (Chi, Grandey, Diamond, & Krimmel, 2011; Grandey, 2003; Groth, Hennig-Thurau, & Walsh, 2009; Totterdell & Holman, 2003), yet several issues still remain unaddressed. Thus, the general purpose of this thesis is to explore the impact of employee emotional labor on organizational outcomes. In fulfillment of this purpose, I present three largely disparate empirical studies, each focusing on a different aspect of the emotional labor–organizational outcomes relationship. Together, these studies move towards a better understanding of the complexities underlying relationships between emotional labor and organizational outcomes.

1.2 Contributions

As stated previously, this thesis contributes to the literature by investigating how employee emotional labor influences organizational outcomes in the service industry. In Chapter 2, I present an overview of the relevant literature and detail theoretical arguments linking employee emotional labor with customer organizational outcomes. In doing so, I highlight how different aspects of this employee emotional labor–customer outcomes relationship have yet to be addressed in the literature.

Chapter 3 presents the first study. This study explores the relationship between one commonly examined employee emotional labor strategy, surface acting, and customer-rated service satisfaction outcomes. In terms of theory, this study contributes to the literature by examining two potential reasons why employee surface acting has a largely inconsistent relationship with customer service outcomes. First, while the emotional labor strategy of surface acting refers to the misalignment between employees' internal experiences and their external displays (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983), there are many ways in which this misalignment can occur. In this thesis, I examine the effects of two unique surface acting strategies, faked positive emotions and suppressed negative emotions, on customer satisfaction. Second, while the service context can change the relationship between employee emotional labor strategies and customer outcomes (Grandey & Diamond, 2010; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1990), very few studies have examined service context as a boundary condition. Therefore, I also contribute to the literature by examining how employee surface acting interacts with service personalization and customer-employee relationship strength to predict customer service outcomes.

The first study, presented in Chapter 3, focuses on whether different forms of surface acting (i.e., faking and suppressing) uniquely contribute to customer service outcomes. In Chapter 4, I address a related question: must employees deliberately engage in effortful emotional labor in the management of their emotions, or can they manage these emotions more automatically? Scholars have often argued that the management of emotions can occur nonconsciously (Gross, 1998; Mauss, Bunge, & Gross, 2007), but this has not been a focus of the relevant literature until more recently (Mauss, Cook, & Gross, 2007; Williams, Bargh, Nocera, & Gray, 2009). The focus of the second study, presented in Chapter 4, is to examine whether employees can be

primed to engage in two distinct emotional labor strategies (reappraisal and suppression) and the effects of these nonconscious strategies compared to deliberate efforts across a range of social, cognitive resource, and affective service outcomes. In doing so, I examine whether priming is a viable alternative to deliberate efforts to manage emotions in the workplace. As far as I am aware, this is the first study to investigate whether nonconscious emotional management can be effectively used to manage not only internal experiences of emotion, but also social interactions. Finally, I measure the effects of conscious and nonconscious emotion management strategies across indices of cognitive resource depletion, which is often used as an explanatory mechanism to describe the effects of employee emotional labor, but is rarely assessed (Goldberg & Grandey, 2007).

In the third study, presented in Chapter 5, I turn my attention to the customer's perception of employee emotional labor, and examine why customers mistakenly believe that employees are genuine in their emotional performances when they are actually engaging in surface acting. In this third study, I adopt dual-process theory (Evans, 2008) to argue that customers tend to be more accurate in their perceptions of employees' emotional performance when they rely on intuitive or heuristic processes, rather than systematic processes that require elaborate processing. I also argue that the extent to which heuristic processes are beneficial and systematic processes are harmful to accuracy perceptions depends on the critical role of the observer's emotional intelligence. This study contributes to the literature by explicitly considering the role of dual-process theories in the formation of observer judgment and inferences that stem from emotional displays. While observer judgment and inferential processes are often highlighted in interpersonal or social-functional accounts of emotions (Keltner & Haidt,

1999; Van Kleef, 2009), researchers have seldom considered the processes responsible for the formation of such judgments, and why errors occur.

1.3 Organization of the Thesis

I structure the remainder of the thesis as follows. First, in Chapter 2, I present a general theoretical background to the relationship between emotional labor and customer service organizational outcomes. Here, I outline definitions of key terms and review prior research in order to formulate the broad aims and overarching research questions that serve to guide the three empirical studies presented in the thesis. These three studies are presented in separate chapters—Chapters 3 to 5—and are structured in the form of a management journal publication, including introduction, method, research, and discussion sections. Each study is prefaced by a unique review of the most pertinent background literature for the formulation of the aims and hypotheses of the study in question. Each chapter is concluded with a discussion of the findings, their implications for theory and practice, and avenues for future research.

The study presented in Chapter 3 investigates the relationships between employee surface acting (i.e., faked positive and suppressed negative emotions), perceptions of the employee's customer orientation, customer satisfaction, and the moderating influence of service personalization and customer-employee relationship strength. All data was collected using the dyadic procedure recommended and utilized by Groth et al. (2009) to minimize common method bias and retrospective recall effects. I tested the proposed moderated mediation model using regression analysis. The sample consisted of student customers and service employees from a wide variety of service contexts.

Chapter 4 presents an experiment in which I actively instructed or primed a sample of undergraduate students to engage in appraisal or suppression. Specifically, students were asked to play the role of service employees and were asked to serve confederate customers who appeared annoyed and frustrated with their service provision. The experimental design allowed me to assess whether priming concepts associated with reappraisal or suppression could lead participant employees to manage their emotions effectively during the service task, and how this compared to active efforts to reappraise and suppress emotions on a range of social, cognitive, and affective organizational outcomes.

In Chapter 5, I use the dual-process theories to consider why customer perceptions of inauthentic employee service employees (i.e. employees who surface act) are often inaccurate. I argue that judgments regarding employees' emotional performance are most accurate when guided by heuristic processes, rather than systematic processes, and consider the moderating role of emotional intelligence in this relationship. I measure emotional intelligence and adopt an experimental design to assess this hypothesis in an undergraduate student sample.

I present the conclusions of this thesis in Chapter 6. Specifically, I reiterate and compare the findings across the three studies in order to discuss the general contributions, limitations, and future research implications generated by this thesis.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Background

2.1 Introduction

Interactions between frontline employees and their customers are an essential element of service delivery. The quality of these interactions is a key driver of organizational success, predicting positive organizational outcomes such as customers' service quality perceptions, customer satisfaction, and loyalty to the service provider (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988; Seth, Deshmukh, & Vrat, 2005). One particularly valued aspect contributing to positive customer service experience is the display of valued emotions by service employees, such as a friendly smile. Friendly emotional displays can influence important organizational outcomes such as customer satisfaction ratings and willingness to return to the store (Hennig-Thurau, Groth, Paul, & Gremler, 2006; Tsai & Huang, 2002). Given these positive outcomes, perhaps it is not surprising that organizations encourage employees to smile and display friendly emotions through the use of formal and informal display rules that emphasize the appropriate expression of positive and concealment of negative emotion in the workplace (Diefendorff & Richard, 2003).

It may be difficult, however, for employees to constantly experience the emotions they are required to display for customers. Workplaces and workplace events are capable of inducing emotional reactions in employees (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), and often these emotional reactions are not congruent with display expectations. For instance, deviant or aggressive customers (Grandey, Tam, & Brauburger, 2002; Harris & Reynolds, 2003), conflict with coworkers (Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhour,

2001; Lim, Cortina, & Magley, 2008), as well as the fluctuating nature of moods (Beal & Ghandour, 2011) are all capable of inducing negative affective experiences in employees that make it difficult to experience the emotions they ought to display. In these circumstances, employees need to intervene and deliberately manage their emotional experiences and/or displays in order to maintain display rules and produce required displays.

In this chapter, I outline the definitions of key terms and constructs pertinent to the thesis, namely emotions and emotional labor. Following this, I present an overview of research conducted in the field of emotional labor. I specifically focus on the links between employee emotional labor and customer outcomes, as well as the theories used to explain these links. Next, I suggest gaps in current knowledge about the relationship between employee emotional labor and customer outcomes, which serve as the motivation for the three empirical studies. Finally, I close this chapter by highlighting the contribution of this thesis to the existing literature.

2.2 Definition of Emotions

In order to better understand employees' effortful management of emotions to produce desired displays, it is first important to consider what emotions are. The purpose of this section is to provide a strong grounding on emotions to better detail the concept of emotional labor—the key focus of the thesis. It is not within the scope of the thesis to review all that is known about emotions, nor is it helpful to present the accepted theoretical position of the field, as no single theory currently holds this status. Instead, I wish to highlight the theories of emotions best able to shed light on the emotion management process underlying emotional labor.

First, it is noteworthy that some researchers use the terms *affect*, *emotion*, and *mood* interchangeably, while others use these concepts to refer to specific types of emotional experience (Gross, 1998). In general, affect is used as a broad encompassing term to describe any emotional feeling or moods an individual may be experiencing. Emotions refer to specific, intense, and acute affective responses to emotion-eliciting events. Moods, on the other hand, refer to largely nonspecific and diffuse affective states that are typically characterized by lower intensity and longer durations.

The idea of emotions comes intuitively to many, describing a feeling-state characterized by subjective experience, biological reactions, and nonverbal expression. Yet a precise definition of emotion is difficult to pinpoint. The concept runs into definitional problems since emotions are often defined tautologically (Elfenbein, 2007). This definition is further complicated by the issue of levels of analysis. Emotions exist not only on neurological and biological levels, but also on cognitive, behavioral and cultural levels (Turner, 2009). Depending on the research perspective, then, definitions of emotions may range from ones of coordinated series of neurological and physiological activity, to ones of subjective and conscious experience and their associated behavioral responses. While research in emotional labor is also approached from different levels, perhaps owing to these different conceptualizations of emotion, I approach the topic of emotional labor from a psychological perspective (Grandey, Diefendorff, & Rupp, 2013; Grandey, 2000; Gross, 2002). Within this approach, emotions are commonly referred to as a series of cascading adaptive responses to the environment (Ekman, 1992; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985).

While the psychological approach to emotion also encompasses a number of different perspectives, most accounts agree on a number of key features (Ekman, 1992; Elfenbein, 2007; Frijda, 1986; Gross, 1998; Lazarus, 1991b; Weiss & Cropanzano,

1996). These key features are often arranged in an input-output model. First, the emotion process begins when the individual registers an emotion-eliciting cue or stimulus. This stimulus may be an external or internal event that is salient to the individual. Second, the individual evaluates the event for its significance to the self. These evaluations can be automatic or may be cognitively appraised for meaning to the self. Together, the evaluation processes triggers four processes that facilitate adaptive responding to the emotion-eliciting cue: (a) the emotional experience or subjective feelings associated with the appraisal of the emotion-eliciting event; (b) the physiological or bodily response to the emotion-eliciting event; (c) the action tendencies and motivational readiness of motor responses to engage with the emotion-eliciting event; and (d) the verbal and nonverbal expressive cues associated with the emotional experience. In summary, while the precise definition of emotions and processes underlying emotional experience may differ between theories, these accounts share the assumption that emotions consist of a series of physiological, cognitive, and behavioral responses to an event.

While there is no doubt that the emotion-generation process often unfolds quickly and automatically following emotion-eliciting events, researchers also highlight the capacity of individuals to intervene in the emotion-generation process to regulate their own experience and display of emotions (Frijda, 1986; Gross, 1998). In particular, Frijda (1986) argued that exposure to emotion-eliciting events not only triggers the primary emotion-generation process (see above), but also automatically triggers the secondary emotion-regulatory systems, which allow individuals and group norms to override natural responses. In other words, individuals are not constantly at the whims of their emotions, but can actively shape how they experience and express them. Many contemporary accounts of emotion integrate both automatic emotion generation and the

individual's control over emotion in the same model (e.g., Elfenbein, 2007). Indeed, several researchers have questioned whether emotions are ever not regulated, though it is likely that the relative dominance of automatic processes, as opposed to regulated processes, operates on a continuum (see Gross, 1999).

The capacity of individuals to shape their automatic experiences and expressions of emotion is known as "emotion regulation." Gross (1998) defines emotion regulation as "the process by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions" (p. 275). It is important to note that emotional regulation literature primarily concerns the management of *emotions*, and not with other forms of affect. Emotions elicit the full spectrum of downstream processes (including physiological, behavioral, and nonverbal responses) that need to be actively managed to ensure they are not experienced nor expressed. Moods, on the other hand, tend to be diffuse and color cognitions only. However, moods can influence and bias cognitions underlying benign events such that they become emotion-eliciting (Rothbard & Wilk, 2011).

In his seminal work, Gross (1998) proposed a process model of emotion regulation that summarizes and captures the vastly different approaches to emotion management previously explored. In this process model, Gross (1998) argues that specific emotion regulation strategies can be, more or less, effectively deployed across unique stages of the emotion-generation process. On the broadest level, these emotion regulation strategies can be classified as *antecedent-focused* or *response-focused*. Antecedent-focused emotion regulation refers to the variety of strategies that focus on stalling the emotion-generation process, such that the behavioral, experiential, and physiological changes accompanying emotions are altered before becoming fully activated. For instance, selecting the situations to which one is exposed, changing one's

attentional focus through distraction, or cognitively reappraising and changing the underlying meaning of an emotion-eliciting event are all capable of stalling natural emotional responses through early interventions in the emotion-generative process, and consequently changing the trajectory of the emotional response. On the other hand, response-focused emotion regulation primarily refers to response modulation strategies that focus on directly altering the experiential, behavioral or physiological components of emotions after they occur. In contrast to antecedent-focused emotion regulation strategies, response-focused strategies occur late in the emotion-generative process, when the natural experiential, behavioral, and physiological responses to emotion-eliciting events have already been fully activated. As such, the individual is often limited to changing their outward verbal or nonverbal behaviors, but the underlying experience of the original emotion remains unchanged.

2.3 Definition of Emotional Labor

People need to regulate their emotions in order to ensure the attainment of important self and social goals (Gross, 1998). For instance, one may feign delight and surprise upon receiving a lousy gift from a friend in order to maintain social cohesion, or one may attempt to decrease feelings of nervousness when meeting an admired figure for impression management. Instances of emotion regulation also extend to organizational life. In the workplace, employees need to manage their displays in order to comply with formal and informal emotion display rules to ensure the attainment of organizational rewards and to minimize organizational punishment (Diefendorff, Richard, & Croyle, 2006; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987, 1989). For instance, a customer service representative may need to provide “service with a smile” in order to comply

with organizational policy, or a debt collector may need to communicate anger in order to collect money from debtors (Hochschild, 1983; Sutton, 1991).

Emotional labor may be considered a specific type of emotion regulation, whereby the individual manages or modifies their emotions as part of the work role and for a wage (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983). The boundary between emotional labor and emotion regulation is not clearly defined; however, it is generally accepted that emotional labor occurs for a wage and in a work context, as opposed to in aid of general social cohesion (Grandey et al., 2013). Customer service is a prime example of a field where emotional labor is required. Employees in these roles are required to provide friendly service with a smile because it is both a formal and informal job requirement (Diefendorff et al., 2006). Such emotional labor is performed in the work context, and is frequently monitored and evaluated by organizational members (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1989). The demands placed on employees to manage emotional displays in this context may be contrasted with organizational members working on, for example, a marketing project, where integrative displays (such as happiness) may be desirable, but are ultimately not linked to performance or financial gain, and are not formally evaluated. In this thesis, I focus on the emotion management of customer service representatives as a clear example of employee emotional labor.

As mentioned previously, emotional labor is approached from different levels or perspectives in the literature. In understanding the nature of emotional labor, it is important to clarify these different perspectives, as well as detailing the perspective I employ in this thesis. Grandey, Diefendorff, and Rupp (2013) discuss three lenses through which the concept of emotional labor may be investigated: emotional labor as an occupation requirement, emotional labor as emotional displays, and emotional labor as an intrapsychic experience. These perspectives differ in their conceptualization,

measurement, and focus with regard to emotional labor. While no single perspective is considered to be “correct,” each perspective tends to lend itself to a particular discipline. In the following sections, I elaborate on these three lenses for understanding emotional labor.

2.3.1 Emotional labor as an occupational requirement

The conceptualization of emotional labor as an occupational requirement evolved from Hochschild’s (1983) early sociological work on service industries, in which she first defined emotional labor as “the management of feelings to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display,” specifying that “emotional labor is sold for a wage and therefore has exchange value” (p. 7). From this perspective, emotional labor is largely analogous to physical or cognitive labor, and is seen as the commoditization of feelings in the service industry.

This perspective continues to influence, and be influenced by, the sociology literature. In focusing on the occupational requirement to display emotions, researchers from this perspective typically use qualitative research methods to explore and describe the consequences of being employed in these types of occupations (Glomb, Kammeyer-Mueller, & Rotundo, 2004; Hochschild, 1983; Wharton, 1993). More recently, researchers have moved towards the individual level to capture differences in the perception of display rule requirements (Diefendorff & Greguras, 2009; Diefendorff & Richard, 2003; Gosserand & Diefendorff, 2005) or experimentally manipulated display rule requirements to examine their unique impact on employees (Goldberg & Grandey, 2007). Researchers working from this perspective, specifically from sociology backgrounds, propose that the management of emotions is beneficial for organizations, but detrimental to employees. Specifically, Hochschild (1983) proposed that prolonged

acting can cause a person to feel alienated and estranged from their own emotions, which leads to employee burnout and stress. However, there is limited evidence that jobs with strong display requirements, thus eliciting the need for employees to engage in emotional labor, are directly associated with detrimental employee outcomes (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Wharton, 1993). While there is little doubt that display requirements lead to the performance of more emotional labor (Diefendorff & Richard, 2003), the literature suggests that employees' emotion management strategies are more predictive of deleterious employee outcomes than the display requirements themselves (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Gosserand & Diefendorff, 2005).

2.3.2 Emotional labor as emotional displays

The conceptualization of emotional labor as emotional displays stems from the early organizational behavior theorists interested in the *display* of emotions as part of the work role (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987, 1989). Notably, Ashforth and Humphrey (1993, p.88) defined emotional labor as the “display of expected emotions by service agents during service encounters.” This conceptualization differs from previous accounts by Hochschild (1983) by shifting the emphasis from the *management* of emotional displays by employees, to the emotional display itself. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) argued that conscious effort to manage emotions is not necessarily required in order for employees to display the expected emotions. Further, this shift in focus has been influential in the organizational literature, which is more focused on behavioral compliance for the benefit of customers and the organization, rather than employees' internal experiences of managing emotions.

In choosing to focus on the display of emotions, researchers from this organizational perspective often investigate the antecedents of emotional displays

within organizations, such as the use of organizational strategies to maintain emotional displays via selection, socialization, and performance management systems (e.g., Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). Owing to the focus on organizational implications, research in this area is also concerned with the consequences of displaying emotions as part of the work role. As such, this perspective actively incorporates research on the influence of emotions in social interactions and impression management to describe the effects of employee emotional displays on customers, which is considered a critical aspect of job performance (Rafaeli, 1989). Studies show that displays of positive emotions by service employees largely predict higher customer satisfaction and intentions to return (Pugh, 2001; Tsai & Huang, 2002). At the same time, the positive relationship between employee displays and positive organizational outcomes is likely to be mediated by customer inferences (Barger & Grandey, 2006) and moderated by features of the service context (Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988), as well as influenced by the underlying authenticity of the emotional displays (Grandey, Fisk, Mattila, Jansenc, & Sideman, 2005; Groth et al., 2009).

2.3.3 Emotional labor as intrapsychic experience

In contrast to the perspectives focusing on jobs requiring the management of emotional displays, or focusing on the display itself, the intrapsychic experience of emotional labor sees a return to Hochschild's (1983) original work documenting employees' internal experience of managing their emotions on the job. The intrapsychic experience perspective largely builds off Hochschild's (1983) use of the dramaturgical framework to describe the types of strategies employees use when managing their emotions. As such, this perspective focuses on the "effort, planning, and control needed to express organizationally desired emotions" (Morris & Feldman, 1996, p.987) and the

“process of regulating both feelings and expressions of organizational goals” (Grandey, 2000, p. 97). As such, this perspective emphasizes individual differences in the *process* and *effort* required to manage appropriate displays in the workplace. Further, active attempts by Grandey (2000) to ground emotional labor strategies within the emotion regulation framework (Gross, 1998) lend this perspective to particular influence in psychology-related areas.

The intrapsychic account of emotional labor largely focuses on employees’ use of two emotion management strategies: deep acting and surface acting. These terms were originally developed by Hochschild (1983), drawing on Stanislavsky’s acting methods, in her initial conceptualization of emotional labor. Employees engaged in deep acting actively attempt to experience desired emotions, either by reinterpreting the situation or by actively recalling past situations that aroused the emotions required for the job. As a result of feeling the required emotions, external displays fall in line with internal emotional experiences. Surface acting, on the other hand, refers to employee strategies that are solely focused on controlling the visual display of appropriate emotions, without active attempts to experience those emotions. In other words, employees who surface act manipulate emotional displays in order to present facial expressions that are not actually felt.

As highlighted by Grandey (2000), the emotional labor strategies of surface and deep acting have strong parallels to Gross’s (1998) process model of emotion regulation, such that emotional labor can be conceptualized as emotion regulation in the workplace. In particular, active attempts by employees to feel organizational display rules (deep acting) resemble the antecedent-focused emotion regulation strategies described by Gross (1998). In trying to feel the positive emotions required for the job, Hochschild (1983) documents how employees often turn their attention to focus on less

troubling elements in the environment, or change the internal and personal meaning of the source of upset, both of which are considered antecedent-focused emotion regulation strategies. Likewise, the tactics used by employees who surface act resemble Gross's (1998) response-focused emotion regulation strategies. Attempts by employees to manipulate their external displays by faking their smile or masking their feelings represent response-focused emotion regulation strategies.

By focusing on employees' efforts and internal processes in creating the appropriate emotional displays, the intrapsychic account can be readily incorporated into previous accounts of emotional labor and the emotion regulation literature. Instead of focusing on the jobs that require individuals to display appropriate emotions, and the personal and organizational consequences of displaying those emotions, this account holds that the way in which employees try and display these emotions play a critical role in determining their outcomes. Indeed, evidence suggests that the underlying strategies used by employees in their management of emotions on the job predict both individual and organizational outcomes (e.g., Beal, Trougakos, Weiss, & Green, 2006; Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Chi et al., 2011; Groth et al., 2009, but see Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012 for meta-analytic review).

I borrow from all three perspectives in guiding my conceptualization of emotional labor and in formulating the general aims of this research. Perhaps most importantly, I largely adopt the emotional labor as an intrapsychic experience perspective with regard to the operationalization of the emotional labor construct. In other words, I consider the influence of employee efforts and strategies to feel and/or express emotions; in doing so, I draw heavily on the theories and concepts used in the emotion regulation literature (Gross, 1998). As explained previously, emotional labor

can be seen as a specific form of emotion regulation (Côté, 2005) in that it is an occupational requirement and employees must comply with display rules, or risk punishment (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1989). As such, the context in which emotional labor is distinguished from emotion regulation draws heavily on the literature of emotional labor as an occupational requirement. Finally, I borrow from the emotional labor as emotional displays perspective in guiding my research aims. The general aim of this thesis is to investigate the impact of employee emotional labor on customer and organizational outcomes. To do so, I consider how the internal experience associated with performing different types of emotional labor are consequently manifested in employees' emotional displays, and the impact of these displays on subsequent customer attribution and inferential processes.

2.4 Employee Emotional Labor and Outcomes

Most emotional labor research within the field of management investigates the effects of surface and deep acting on individual well-being outcomes. Both Hochschild (1983) and Grandey (2000) proposed that emotional labor affects employee burnout, which can be defined as a psychological stress syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and a sense of diminished personal accomplishment (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Jackson, Schwab, & Schuler, 1986). It is widely acknowledged that surface acting is related to higher levels of depersonalization and emotional exhaustion (Bono & Vey, 2005; Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; see Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; and Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012 for meta-analytic review). Surface acting also predicts lower levels of personal accomplishment and one's sense of authenticity (Bono & Vey, 2005; Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). Further, surface acting is associated with

poorer affective well-being outcomes (Johnson & Spector, 2007; Scott & Barnes, 2011), such as feeling emotionally drained and numb (Totterdell & Holman, 2003), as well as more frequent somatic complaints (Moïra Mikolajczak, Menil, & Luminet, 2007). Surface acting is also associated with poorer job-related well-being outcomes such as lower job satisfaction (Côté & Morgan, 2002; Johnson & Spector, 2007; Judge, Woolf, & Hurst, 2009; Liu, Prati, Perrewé, & Ferris, 2008; Pugh, Groth, & Hennig-Thurau, 2011) and higher job withdrawal (Goodwin et al., 2011; Scott & Barnes, 2011).

While surface acting largely predicts deleterious personal and job well-being outcomes, empirical evidence for the effects of deep acting is more mixed. For example, deep acting is likely to lead to positive outcomes such as a sense of personal accomplishment and authenticity (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). However, Grandey (2003) found a small positive relationship between deep acting and emotional exhaustion. Other studies indicate that deep acting does not have a relationship with emotional exhaustion or depersonalization (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Totterdell & Holman, 2003). Further, deep acting is not consistently associated with job satisfaction (Johnson & Spector, 2007; Judge et al., 2009; Liu et al., 2008).

The consistent association between surface acting and deleterious employee well-being outcomes may be driven by surface acting being a response-focused emotion regulation strategy (Grandey, 2000). As described previously, response-focused regulation strategies occur late in the emotion-generative process, when the emotion is already fully underway and the individual is left to temper the behavioral responses stemming from the emotional experience. Response-focused strategies such as surface acting, therefore, cannot change the underlying experience of the emotion, only its associated display. Since individuals must continuously monitor their displays to ensure that they are aligned with display requirements and to ensure that inner experiences are

not leaked, successful surface acting is thought to involve considerable effort. The expenditure of such effort is associated with personal costs (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998; Baumeister & Thierney, 2011; Hobfoll, 1989). Social-psychological research shows that that response-focused strategies, such as suppression, deplete resources (Richards & Gross, 2000), and the loss or threatened loss of resources is associated with poorer well-being outcomes (Hobfoll, 1989). Further, the incongruence between felt and displayed emotions in surface acting can contribute to feelings of inauthenticity, which are also associated with stress outcomes (Erickson & Wharton, 1997; Erickson & Ritter, 2014).

Deep acting, on the other hand, involves antecedent regulation strategies, whereby the individual intervenes early in the emotion-generative process in order to attempt to really feel the emotions that ought to be displayed. Antecedent regulation strategies are associated with lower levels of effort in that employees do not need to continuously monitor their emotional performance, since feelings become aligned with required displays. This lower expenditure of effort ought to be associated with fewer detrimental outcomes. Furthermore, the relative alignment between feelings and displays also minimizes the internal tension that contributes to feelings of inauthenticity. This, again, should lead to fewer deleterious outcomes. Together, the lower expenditure of effort and relative alignment between internal feelings and external displays ought to minimize, but not entirely prevent, negative outcomes. However, researchers also argue that the effort used by deep actors for the successful management of emotions through authentic means may contribute to feelings of personal accomplishment (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). The minimal expenditure of effort used in deep acting, as well as strengthened accompanying feelings of authenticity and personal accomplishment, may contribute to its largely inconsistent or null relationships

with individual well-being outcomes (e.g., Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Johnson & Spector, 2007; Judge et al., 2009; Totterdell & Holman, 2003 but see Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012 for meta-analytic review).

Following in the footsteps of early sociological research documenting the intrapersonal effects of emotional labor, researchers have primarily continued investigating the effects of emotional labor on well-being-related outcomes. In fact, a meta-analysis of over 30 years of emotional labor research found that that over 80% of existing emotional labor literature concerned employee well-being outcomes (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). By comparison, however, there is only scant empirical evidence on the direct effects of emotional labor strategies on organizationally relevant outcomes, such as customer perceptions of service quality (Groth et al., 2009) or customer tipping (Chi et al., 2011). This bias in examining the outcome of emotional labor occurs despite Hochschild's (1983) central assumption that emotional labor is performed by employees for the benefit of customers and for the organization. The question of whether the performance of emotional labor actually benefits customers and organizations is surprisingly under-investigated. Evidence suggests that smiling, in general, is associated with positive customer outcomes (Pugh, 2001; Tsai & Huang, 2002), which in turn is associated with increased organizational performance (Heskett, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 1997), and organizations enforce display rules under the assumption that smiling enhances organizational outcomes (Diefendorff & Richard, 2003). However, little is known about whether and how the strategies used by employees to manage their smiles are associated with organizational outcomes. Therefore, the general aim of this thesis is to further detail and clarify relationships between emotional labor and customer and organizational outcomes.

In the following section, I review existing evidence on the links between employee emotional labor and organizationally relevant outcomes. I begin by describing the general effects of employee emotional displays on customer outcomes, before discussing the available empirical evidence linking employee emotional labor strategies on customer outcomes.

2.5 Emotional Labor and Service Outcomes

In service provision, emotional displays play an important role in influencing the customer's judgment of a service. Unlike goods and objects, which can be evaluated by direct evidence in forms such as style, color, and functionality, services are essentially intangible performances, making them particularly difficult to evaluate (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985). In the absence of this tangible evidence to evaluate quality, customers rely on an assortment of other cues in determining the quality of a service. Within the marketing literature, it is well established that the actions of customer service representatives play a critical role in predicting positive service outcomes (Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 1994; Heskett et al., 1997). Positive customer experiences are driven not only by employees' competence in the technical aspect of service delivery, but also by their courtesy, demeanor, and friendliness (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991; Bitner, Booms, & Mohr, 1994; Bitner, Booms, & Tetreault, 1990; Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1993). Given the difficulty of evaluating services and the social nature of the interactions they involve (Gutek, 1999), customers often consider the experience of interacting with employees as the service itself (Bitner, Booms, & Tetreault, 1990; Heskett, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 1997; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985). In other words, the interpersonal aspects of service delivery may function as a proxy for the assessment of the service (Parasuraman et al., 1985),

and customers may use positive employee displays as an indication that the company cares for its customers, especially when customers are not equipped to judge the quality of the service (Groth, Hennig-Thurau, & Wang, 2013).

While there is growing evidence connecting employee emotional labor with organizational outcomes, this body of work is considerably smaller than the literature focused on well-being outcomes. Within the literature, there are three main views on how employee emotional labor influences customer outcomes. First, from a resource depletion perspective, the effort required to maintain emotional displays may deplete the employee's ability to engage in other aspects of cognitive control required for the successful execution of service-related tasks (Baumeister et al., 1998; Goldberg & Grandey, 2007; Richards & Gross, 2000). I document the resource depletion perspective and evidence for this perspective in section 2.5.1. Second, from the perspective of emotion contagion, customers catch the emotive displays displayed by employees, and this may influence subsequent judgment processes. I describe the emotion contagion perspective and evidence for this perspective in section 2.5.2. Finally, from the perspective of emotions as social information, customers may make social inferences from the emotional displays of employees, which in turn influence their judgment and decision making. I discuss the emotions as social information perspective and evidence for this perspective in section 2.5.3.

2.5.1 Resource depletion as a mechanism

As explained previously, researchers believe that the continuous effort expended to manage emotional displays in surface acting depletes resources and contributes to poorer employee well-being outcomes (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Goldberg & Grandey, 2007; Grandey, 2003; Liu et al., 2008). On the other hand, the alignment between

feelings and displays in deep acting requires fewer resources to sustain, and is therefore less depleting for employees. Baumeister's research on ego depletion suggests that resource depletion has an impact on cognitive performance (Baumeister et al., 1998; Hagger, Wood, Stiff, & Chatzisarantis, 2010; Muraven, Tice, & Baumeister, 1998). Specifically, these studies show that effortful self-regulation impairs performance on any subsequent tasks also requiring substantial self-regulation. This suggests that all effortful processes draw upon a common pool of resources for their successful execution. For example, in a series of studies, Baumeister and colleagues (Baumeister et al., 1998; Muraven et al., 1998) showed how self-regulatory tasks, such as eating radishes instead of chocolate, as well as the suppression of emotions and thoughts, impair subsequent acts requiring self-control and volition, such as on tasks requiring persistence.

In terms of the emotional labor literature, it is believed that the increased draining of resources as a result of surface acting may lead to lower on-the-job performance. For instance, the depletion of resources may affect cognitive performance in service tasks requiring problem solving and customer-oriented behavior, thus affecting customer and organizational outcomes. In a simulated service environment study, Goldberg and Grandey (2007) experimentally manipulated the display rules to which participant employees were subjected, either emphasizing the display of enthusiasm and concealment of frustration, or encouraging autonomous emotional displays. The authors found that the performance of surface acting, but not deep acting, mediated the effects of display rules on self-reported exhaustion and task performance. Specifically, those who were required to display enthusiasm and hide frustration made more errors during the service task, but only when they engaged in surface acting. These

findings suggest that the performance of surface acting is depleting and utilizes resources that can otherwise be used to improve other aspects of service performance.

It is also possible that the depletion of resources following emotional labor leads to poorer performance by acting on employee well-being. According to the service marketing literature, reduced well-being and job satisfaction among frontline service employees will invariably lead to reduced performance in their role of serving customers (Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 1994; Heskett, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 1997). Specifically, in the service profit chain, dissatisfied and burnt-out employees are more likely to withdraw and leave the organization. High employee withdrawal behavior makes it unlikely that employees will gain the necessary technical and service experience required to perform their jobs effectively, which is likely to lower customer satisfaction (Leiter, Harvie, & Fizzell, 1998; Parker & Kulik, 1995; Vahey, Aiken, Sloane, Clarke, & Vargas, 2004).

Despite the solid theoretical grounding for the links between emotional labor, resource depletion, well-being and customer outcomes, the links between these concepts have rarely been the focus of explicit empirical investigations (see Goldberg and Grandey (2007), for exception). In the next section, I explain how emotion contagion may explain the effects of employee emotional labor on customer outcomes, and detail the evidence for this theory.

2.5.2 Emotion contagion

Theories of emotion contagion describe the flow of emotions from one individual to another, with receivers “catching” the sender’s displayed emotions (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994; Schoenewolf, 1990). Research in emotional labor often focuses on the two-stage *primitive emotional contagion* process (Hatfield et al.,

1994), whereby individuals first automatically synchronize their facial expressions, followed by the experience of those mimicked emotions through facial feedback (Hatfield et al., 1994). It is believed that the transference of positive emotions from employees to customers may be conflated by customers as a sign that they are satisfied with the service experience, leading to more positive service evaluations. Indeed, social-psychological research shows that moods can ‘color’ and influence judgment processes (Forgas, 1995), especially in service settings where decisions are of little personal relevance and do not require in-depth consideration. The moods experienced by customers as a result of emotion contagion processes may be used as a heuristic to ‘how I feel about it,’ which is then interpreted as their reaction to the service (e.g., Barger & Grandey, 2006; Pugh, 2001). In other words, when a customer “catches” the emotions of the employee, customers may then begin to evaluate the service in terms of their own mood. If a customer’s mood is improved, he or she may attribute this outcome to the service encounter, leading to more positive service quality judgments.

Much of the early research documenting links between emotional labor and customer outcomes examined the effects of smiling and similar nonverbal behavior from employees on customer outcomes (e.g., Ford, 1995; Pugh, 2001; Tsai & Huang, 2002). Evidence suggests that positive emotional displays such as maintaining eye contact, greeting customers, and smiling are associated with customer reports of positive mood, good service quality, and positive behavioral intentions (i.e., willingness to return to the store and recommendations to others) (Ford, 1995; Mattila & Enz, 2002; Pugh, 2001; Tsai, 2001). Critically, more recent studies investigating the positive association between employees’ displayed behavior, such as smiling, and favorable customer service evaluations find that these effects are mediated by changes in customer affect (Barger & Grandey, 2006; Tsai & Huang, 2002).

The above findings suggest that positive emotional displays from employees can elicit similar feelings in customers, which subsequently color customer judgment processes. However, the evidence in support of the emotion contagion perspective largely concerns the effects of employee emotional *displays* on customer outcomes. This operationalization of employee emotional labor is consistent with an understanding of employee emotional labor as emotional displays. However, this does not capture the extent to which employees' internal regulatory efforts affect customer outcomes. In other words, such studies do not capture the "labor" aspect of emotional labor. The emotion as social information perspective, discussed in the following section, provides a better account of how employees' internal regulatory efforts influence customer outcomes.

2.5.3 Emotions as social information

There is growing evidence that emotions influence not only intrapersonal, but also interpersonal processes. Emotions play an important role in guiding social interactions, both implicitly and explicitly, by signaling our goals to others (Frank, Ekman, & Friesen, 1993; Keltner & Haidt, 1999). Emotional displays elicit attributions about their sender, which in turn affect the observer's own internal states and behavioral dispositions. Often, these emotional displays are used as interpersonal inference cues. For example, individuals who smile are judged to be more trustworthy and elicit greater cooperation from others compared to non-smiling individuals (Scharlemann, Eckel, Kacelnik, & Wilson, 2001). People who smile are also better liked, seen as more intelligent, and perceived to be warmer than those who do not smile (Lau, 1982). Together, this body of research suggests that the display of positive emotions is

associated with more positive social attributions and ‘approach’ behaviors by others (van Kleef, Dreu, & Manstead, 2010).

Social-psychological research suggests that the quality of emotional displays also plays a role in interpersonal inferences. Authentic smiles are often characterized by the activation of the zygomatic major and orbicularis oculi facial muscles, and can also be distinguished from inauthentic smiles in their onset, apex and offset (Ekman & Friesen, 1982). Further, it is believed that the underlying emotional experiences of the individual can leak and interfere with the quality of the smile. Although it is debatable whether people can accurately distinguish authentic from inauthentic smiles (Bond & DePaulo, 2006; Ekman, O’Sullivan, & Frank, 1999), inauthentic positive displays are associated with less favorable social judgments regarding the person’s honesty, pleasantness, and likeability (Frank et al., 1993; Surakka & Hietanen, 1998), as well as trust and cooperation (Krumhuber, Manstead, Cosker, Marshall, Rosin, & Kappas, 2007).

In terms of emotional labor, the incongruence between feelings and displays in surface acting may increase leaking of underlying emotional experience on facial displays, or weaken the activation of the muscle groups responsible for the authentic smile, leading to more inauthentic-seeming displays. On the other hand, the alignment between feelings and displays in deep acting can mitigate the influence of any leaked emotions, and is more likely to result in authentic emotional displays. If detected by customers, perception of inauthentic smiles may lead to negative interpersonal judgments that can affect service quality perceptions. In support of this, Grandey (2003) found that surface acting is negatively correlated with coworkers’ ratings of affective performance, including displays of sincerity, enthusiasm, warmth, friendliness and

courtesy. Further, Hennig-Thurau, Groth, Paul, and Gremler (2006) found that surface acting is associated with lower levels of customer-employee rapport in a lab setting.

Interestingly, neither Grandey (2003) nor Hennig-Thurau et al. (2006) investigated the relationship between employee emotional labor strategies and customer reactions in actual service exchanges or field settings. Studies that did investigate such settings often found more complex relationships between employee emotional labor and customer outcomes. For instance, Groth et al. (2009) found that while deep acting was directly associated with more positive perceptions of the employee's customer orientation, surface acting did not predict customer outcomes. Instead, the effect of employee surface acting was moderated by customer surface acting detection accuracy to predict customer orientation. Specifically, employee surface acting only predicted lower perceived customer orientation when customers accurately reported that the employee was surface acting. This finding underscores the importance of customer perceptions in determining the service consequences of employee emotional labor. Further, Chi et al. (2011) reported that the effects of employee surface acting on customer tips were moderated by individual differences in extraversion. Specifically, surface acting predicted higher tips, which can be seen as a function of service quality, when the employee was extraverted, as opposed to introverted. This finding therefore underscores the importance of individual differences in predicting the outcomes associated with employee emotional labor.

In summary, given the difficulty of evaluating service experiences, customers often turn to the emotional performance of the service employee as a proxy for the assessment of the service itself (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Notwithstanding the growing body of evidence and theoretical mechanisms establishing the connection between employee emotional labor and customer organizational outcomes, several questions

remain. In the following section, I detail pertinent issues that have yet to be resolved in the emotional labor literature, namely the conceptualization and operationalization of emotional labor, as well as the theoretical mechanisms used to explain their associated effects.

2.6 Contributions of the Thesis

In the previous sections, I have presented both empirical evidence and theory linking employee emotional labor with customer outcomes. In doing so, I also highlighted a number of boundary conditions and caveats that add complexity to the relationship between emotional labor and customer outcomes. In the following sections, I introduce some of the more pertinent remaining issues in the emotional labor literature and introduce the present studies designed to shed light on these issues to better understand the emotional labor–customer outcomes relationship.

2.6.1 Contributions of Chapter 3

Although both surface and deep acting continue to dominate current conceptualizations of emotional labor, their associated measures suffer from some inherent limitations. First, the measures do not distinguish between the discrete emotions being regulated (Côté, 2005; Glomb & Tews, 2004). Although most service settings emphasize positive displays and concealment of negative displays, there is increasing recognition that other roles, such as those of bill collectors and police officers, require displays of negative emotions (Sutton, 1991), or even the maintenance of neutral displays (Troughakos, Jackson, & Beal, 2011). The specific emotions being displayed and concealed can play an important role in determining individual and organizational outcomes. Secondly, the measures of surface and deep acting group

similar, but conceptually distinct, strategies under a single umbrella term. For instance, surface acting measures both faking and suppressing emotions, while deep acting measures both cognitive reappraisal as well as attentional deployment (Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012; Mikolajczak, Tran, Brotheridge, & Gross, 2009). This is problematic because people use a variety of strategies to regulate their emotions, and these different strategies may be associated with different effects on both employees and customers (Diefendorff & Greguras, 2009; Mikolajczak et al., 2009; Parkinson & Totterdell, 1999).

In Chapter 3, I empirically test whether the measurement and conceptualization of surface acting influence its relationship with customer-rated outcomes in a field setting. In this study, I assess employee surface acting using Glomb and Tews' (2004) Discrete Emotions Emotional Labor Scale, which measures the unique effects associated with the faking and suppression of discrete emotions. Using this scale, I am able to tease out the unique effects of specific employee emotional labor strategies (faking vs. suppression), rather than measuring both these strategies under the umbrella of surface acting, which captures only the general misalignment between internal feelings and external displays. Furthermore, I am able to isolate the impact of regulating the valence of emotions (i.e. regulating either positive or negative emotions) rather than assuming that the impact of emotional labor is consistent across all emotions being regulated.

Further, Chapter 3 investigates whether features of the service context moderate the effects of these unique emotional labor strategies. Researchers have often noted the heterogeneous and dynamic nature of services and their potential influence on the employee emotional labor–customer outcomes relationship (Grandey & Diamond, 2010). Yet, to my knowledge, no studies have investigated this potential moderating

impact of service context. In my first study, I specifically investigate the moderating role of service personalization, which captures the extent to which services can be adapted to the unique needs of the customer (Bowen, 1990; Lovelock, 1983; Surprenant & Solomon, 1987). I also investigate the moderating impact of customer-employee relationship strength, which captures the interpersonal closeness or personal bonds between customers and employees (Gutek, Bhappu, Liao-Troth, & Bennett, 1999; Gutek, 1999).

In examining these proposed relationships, the first study adopts the methodology recommended by Groth et al. (2009), directly investigating the dyadic relationship between employee self-reported surface acting and customer self-reported service satisfaction immediately following their service interaction. This provides a vigorous assessment of a momentary service exchange as it occurs, without disrupting the service interaction and minimizes problems associated with common method bias. The findings from the first study suggest that only employees' suppressed negative emotions have a negative impact on customer outcomes; faked positive emotions do not predict customer outcomes. Further, the relationship between employee suppressed negative emotions and customer outcomes is moderated by service personalization and relationship strength. Together, these results highlight the importance of considering unique emotional labor strategies with the specific emotions being regulated and service context in describing the relationship between employee emotional labor and customer outcomes.

2.6.2 Contributions of Chapter 4

Another issue overlooked when examining employee emotional labor strategies concerns the possibility that emotional labor can be elicited without much conscious

deliberation and effort. The possibility that emotional labor can occur without employees' conscious awareness was pertinent in Ashforth and Humphrey's (1993) conceptualization of emotional labor as observable displays. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) argued that appropriate emotions can be displayed by employees without deliberate and active emotional management. As the authors illustrate, a nurse may feel concern and sympathy for an injured child without the need to surface or deep act. By appealing to social identity processes, Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) argue that the automatic regulation of emotions prompted by strong social and occupational norms may also be considered relevant aspects of the emotional labor process.

Like other self-regulatory efforts, individuals may automatically engage in emotion regulation processes without much conscious effort (Gross, 1998). The automatic engagement of emotional labor is especially strong in situations with strong cultural and social norms regarding the appropriate display of emotions (Mauss, Cook, et al., 2007), such as the display rules found in organizational settings (Diefendorff et al., 2006). Further, experimental studies show that concepts associated with reappraisal are capable of being primed, and can be just as effective as active effort to reappraise on a physiological level (Williams et al., 2009). Importantly, non-effortful attempts at managing emotions may be considered more efficient and utilize fewer resources (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999). As such, nonconscious emotional labor potentially holds the key to delivering the organizational benefits of service with a smile, but without their associated costs on the individual performing the emotional labor.

In this section, it is important to highlight similarities and differences between more automatic or nonconscious forms of emotion regulation and the concept of genuine emotions. While there are certainly instances whereby individuals actively and effortfully manage their emotions and other instances whereby emotions seem to arise

spontaneously and rather naturally, the processes between emotion generation and regulation are so highly intertwined that some scholars have argued that emotion generation and regulation are the same thing (Frijda, 1986). Given that individuals are subject to strong socialization processes to regulate emotions from infancy (Gross, 2007) and the routinization of scripts (Abelson, 1981; Gollwitzer, 1999), one could question whether emotions are ever not regulated. Ultimately, it is difficult to draw a clear line between emotion and emotion regulation, and it is not the aim of this thesis to do so. However, by automatic or nonconscious emotion regulation, I largely refer to the process whereby individuals seem to nonconscious or automatically engage in emotion regulation in a situation that would otherwise prompt different emotional reactions, as opposed to the process whereby individuals consciously deliberate their regulatory effort prior or during the service situation.

In Chapter 4, I empirically test whether concepts associated with emotional labor can be primed such that employees automatically manage their emotions. As far as I am aware, this is the first study to investigate whether priming can be effectively used to automatically elicit emotion management in service settings. In following the idea that distinct emotion management strategies may yield distinct findings, I specifically focus on the effects of priming reappraisal and suppression, compared to explicit instructions reappraise and to suppress, across a range of social, cognitive, and affective organizational outcomes. To test this, I designed an experimental study with participants playing the role of service employees and confederates playing the role of customers.

In addition to testing whether automatic emotional labor is viable in service settings, the second study presented in this thesis also contributes to the literature by investigating the interpersonal impact of automatic emotional labor. While there is evidence to suggest that emotional regulation has the potential to modify self-reported

anger (Mauss, Cook, et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2009), it is not known whether this tempered subjective experience is associated with social consequences. Yet, understanding whether nonconscious emotional regulation is effective in changing other people's perceptions of the individual is important because emotions are often modified in the presence of others and for others (Gross, 1998). Therefore, this study contributes to the literature by investigating whether automatic attempts to manage emotional experiences are effective not only in altering the experience of the emotions, but also whether they are also effectively translated across social interactions. Finally, I explicitly consider cognitive resource depletion as a criterion of interest. While the effects of emotional labor have often been inferred from resource perspectives, this has rarely been measured (see Goldberg & Grandey, 2007 for exception). In this study, I measure the impact of automatic emotional labor on employees' subsequent anagram performance and task error in order to infer the effects of emotional labor priming on resource depletion processes.

The findings from the second study suggest that nonconscious reappraisal has a positive effect on a range of social, cognitive and affective outcomes associated with service delivery compared to conscious reappraisal. Interestingly, those primed with automatic suppression performed more poorly on these outcomes compared to those who engaged in effortful suppression. I discuss these findings with regard to the automaticity literature (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999), as well as the potential effects of ironic processes associated with suppression (Wegner, 1994).

2.6.3 Contributions of Chapter 5

The study presented in Chapter 5 aims to uncover the processes that determine how employee emotional labor is accurately or inaccurately perceived by customers.

Customer perceptions of employees' emotional displays are critical in determining the direction in which employee emotional labor is associated with customer outcomes (Groth et al., 2009). For instance, surface acting strategies only negatively affect organizational outcomes when customers accurately perceive those employees to have engaged in surface acting (Groth et al., 2009). Despite the critical role of such customer inferences in social-functional accounts of emotions (Keltner & Haidt, 1999; Van Kleef, 2009), the field of emotional labor has largely not yet explored why customers react differently to employee displays, the mechanisms responsible for these different judgments, and why errors occur.

In Chapter 5, I focus on dual-process theory (Evans, 2008) as an explanatory mechanism to describe why customers are driven to make more or less positive inferences regarding the affective performance of surface acting employees, and why errors occur. Dual-process theory describes how judgments are driven by two complementary, but at times conflicting, forces: the relatively fast, frugal, and automatic heuristic processing style, and the deliberative, analytical, and sequential systematic processing style. Further, a customer's emotional intelligence—that is, their ability to recognize and regulate emotions in themselves and others (Salovey & Sluyter, 1997)—is likely to affect the way in which an employee's emotional labor influences customer outcomes. Researchers in emotional labor have not actively considered human judgment and decision-making theories, nor their interactions with emotional intelligence, to explain why customers are led to perceive employees' displays as relatively authentic or inauthentic. The incorporation of such accounts may be a pivotal step in the emotional labor literature in advancing understanding of the mechanisms driving customer inferences from employees' emotional labor.

From the findings of this third and final study, I argue that heuristic processes lead to more accurate perceptions of employee surface acting than systematic processes do. This is based on evidence suggesting that the processing of nonverbal communication is often better suited to more automatic processes (Ambady & Rosenthal, 1992; Gilbert & Krull, 1988; Patterson & Stockbridge, 1998). Critically, I propose that the extent to which heuristic processes are beneficial, and systematic processes detrimental, depends on the customer's emotional intelligence. Using experimental procedures, I find that the use of heuristic processes leads to more accurate perceptions of employees' surface acting, but only when emotional intelligence is high. Further, I find that the use of systematic processes leads to less accurate perceptions, but only when emotional intelligence is low.

2.7 Summary

In summary, I have used this chapter to highlight and detail existing knowledge of the relationships between employee emotional labor and customer service outcomes. Despite advances in the field of emotional labor, there are several questions that remain to be addressed. In this thesis, I explore whether unique emotional labor strategies influence customer service experiences and the moderating role of service context. I also explore the possibility of automatic or nonconscious employee emotional labor on customer outcomes. Finally, I consider the role of customer judgment processes and emotional intelligence in how effectively employees' attempts to manage their emotions are transmitted through dyadic interactions. In doing so, this research makes a number of substantive empirical and theoretical contributions to the literature.

Chapter 3

Buffering the negative effects of employee emotional labor:

The moderating role of employee–customer relationship strength and personalized services ¹

The impact of emotional labor on customer outcomes is gaining considerable attention in the literature, with research suggesting that the authenticity of emotional displays may positively impact customer outcomes. However, research investigating the impact of more inauthentic emotions on service delivery outcomes is mixed (see Chi, Grandey, Diamond, & Krimmel, 2011). This study explores two potential reasons for why the service outcomes of inauthentic emotions are largely inconsistent: the impact of distinct surface acting strategies and the role of service delivery context. Drawing on social-functional theories of emotions, I surveyed 243 dyads of employees and customers from a wide variety of services to examine the links between employee surface acting and customer service satisfaction, and whether this relationship is moderated by relationship strength and service personalization. The findings suggest that faking positive emotions has no bearing on service satisfaction, but suppressing negative emotions interacts with contextual factors to predict customers' service satisfaction, in line with social-functional theories of emotions. Specifically, customers who know the employee well are less sensitive to the negative effects of suppressed negative emotions, and customers

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in highly personalized service encounters are more sensitive to the negative effects of suppressed negative emotions. I conclude with a discussion of theoretical and practical implications.

3.1 Introduction

The quality of the interaction between employees and customers is a key determinant of important customer outcomes (Bitner, Booms, & Tetreault, 1990; Heskett, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 1997). Research has increasingly focused on the impact of employee displays, with evidence suggesting that “service with a smile” can lead to better service experiences for customers (Kim & Yoon, 2012; Pugh, 2001). However, the burgeoning field of emotional labor shows that not all smiles are created equal. In general, emotional labor strategies that result in more genuine displays (i.e., deep acting) have been linked to better customer outcomes (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011).

However, there does not seem to be a clear pattern of findings regarding less genuine displays (i.e., surface acting) on customer outcomes (Chi, Grandey, Diamond, & Krimmel, 2011; Groth, Hennig-Thurau, & Walsh, 2009). This inconsistency deserves attention with regard to the conceptualization and measurement of surface acting and the role of contextual moderators. First, frequently used surface acting scales group distinct emotion regulation strategies together, potentially masking the unique effect of each distinct strategy. In this study, I disentangle the unique effects of two different strategies often combined in commonly used surface acting measures: faking positive emotions and suppressing negative emotions (Glomb & Tews, 2004). Second, the relationship between surface acting and customer outcomes may also be driven by the context in which inauthentic displays are presented. As noted by Grandey and Diamond (2010), the emotional labor literature has largely ignored service features that can change the way in which employee emotional labor is related to employee and customer

outcomes (e.g., mode of communication, temporal relationships between customers and employees, interactional autonomy, and interactional complexity). This inattention to boundary conditions is surprising given that the interpretation of emotions is sensitive to context (Keltner & Haidt, 1999; Van Kleef, 2009) and the heterogeneous nature of service organizations (Solomon, Surprenant, Czepiel, & Gutman, 1985). Therefore, I examine two contextual features of service delivery that can change the relationship between employee surface acting and customer outcomes. First, I examine whether surface acting matters more or less to customers who know the employee well, compared to customers who consider the employee a complete stranger. Second, I investigate whether surface acting matters more for customers in personalized services (e.g., a doctor's visit) as opposed to less personalized services (e.g., fast-food restaurant).

In sum, the purpose of this study is to clarify the link between employee surface acting and customer outcomes. The first goal is to examine and compare the role of two distinct surface acting strategies, faked positive emotions and suppressed negative emotions, in influencing service satisfaction. Second, I examine whether two contextual variables, relationship strength and service personalization, interact with surface acting to shape customers' service satisfaction. I focus on service satisfaction as the outcome variable because it captures general cognitive and affective responses to a single service episode (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Oliver, 1993) and predicts a wide range of financial outcomes (Gupta & Zeithaml, 2006). I draw on social-functional theories of emotions—the notion that emotions act as a communication medium in interpersonal interactions by shaping attitudes and behaviors (Keltner & Haidt, 1999; Van Kleef, 2009)—to test the hypotheses, in particular the Emotions as Social Information (EASI) framework

(Van Kleef, 2009), which highlights the role of inferential processes and contextual factors in determining the social consequences of emotions.

3.1.1 Theoretical background: Emotional labor as a regulatory process

Emotional labor describes the process by which employees regulate feelings and expressions in order to comply with display rule expectations (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983). In the initial conceptualization of emotional labor, Hochschild (1983) proposed two types of employee emotional labor strategies: deep acting and surface acting. Deep acting refers to active attempts by employees to experience desired emotions, and the resulting displays are considered to be more authentic. On the other hand, surface acting refers to manipulating emotional displays in order to present appropriate emotional expressions that are not actually felt, and the resulting displays are considered to be less authentic.

Surface and deep acting continue to dominate current conceptualizations of emotional labor, but existing measures suffer from some limitations. First, they do not distinguish between the discrete emotions being regulated (Côté, 2005; Glomb & Tews, 2004). Second, they combine similar, but conceptually distinct, regulation strategies under a single global measure of surface acting, even though each strategy may be associated with unique effects (Mesmer-Magnus, DeChurch, & Wax, 2012; Mikolajczak, Tran, Brotheridge, & Gross, 2009). Given the inconsistent pattern of results regarding surface acting in the customer service literature (see Chi et al., 2011), I examine the relative impact of two surface acting strategies: faking positive and suppressing negative emotions. Both faked and suppressed emotions are usually combined in surface acting measures despite some evidence suggesting that these strategies partition into two distinct factors (Glomb & Tews, 2004).

Given that both faked positive and suppressed negative emotions are surface acting strategies, both can exert a negative impact on customer outcomes (Chi et al., 2011; Grandey, Fisk, Mattila, Jansenc, & Sideman, 2005; Groth et al., 2009). However, faking positive emotions is qualitatively and conceptually different from the suppression of negative emotional experiences. Even though the expression of positive emotions may constitute a form of emotional dissonance (Hochschild, 1983), people generally strive to experience positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2009), and the display of positive emotions, regardless of felt emotions, can enhance the experience of positivity (Fredrickson, 2009; Larsen, Kasimatis, & Frey, 1992) and promote upward spirals within the organization (Heskett et al., 1997). On the other hand, the inhibition of negative emotions is associated with physiological effort (Gross, 1998), psychological strain (Gross, 1998), and the subsequent experience of negative affect (Wegner, 1994). In addition, emotional suppression can result in poorer interpersonal outcomes such as lower rapport (Butler et al., 2003) and poorer relationship quality (Srivastava, Tamir, McGonigal, John, & Gross, 2009). It is possible that such interpersonal consequences of suppressing negative emotions are driven by the leaking of underlying emotional experiences that can interfere with the authenticity of resulting displays (Ekman & Friesen, 1982; Ekman, Friesen, & O'Sullivan, 1988). Thus, it is possible that the magnitude and/or direction of effects between faked positive and suppressed negative emotions differ between service contexts.

3.1.2 Theoretical background: Emotional labor and service satisfaction. A social-functional account of emotions

Research in emotional labor shows that inauthentic displays affect customers' service experience and their attributions about the employee (Grandey et al., 2005; Groth et al., 2009; Hennig-Thurau, Groth, Paul, & Gremler, 2006). Such findings

underscore the importance of emotions as a communication medium that coordinates social interactions and guides interpersonal behavior (Ekman, 1993; Keltner & Haidt, 1999). In light of these social-functional approaches to emotions, I propose that employee emotional labor strategies can impact customers' judgment, such as service satisfaction.

I draw on the EASI model by Van Kleef (2009) as the foundation of the study. This model details how emotions by a sender affect the attitudes and behaviors of an observer and suggests that employee emotional displays influence customer outcomes via a series of inferences whereby customers consciously interpret emotional cues² (Van Kleef, 2009). Findings in social psychology suggest that inauthentic displays are associated with less favorable judgments regarding the person's honesty, pleasantness, and likeability (Frank, Ekman, & Friesen, 1993; Surakka & Hietanen, 1998), as well as trust and cooperation (Krumhuber et al., 2007). Since emotional labor strategies can impact the authenticity of the resulting emotional display (Grandey et al., 2005; Groth et al., 2009), employee emotional labor may result in negative interpersonal processes that affect service judgments.

The EASI model (Van Kleef, 2009) suggests two moderating forces that can affect observer inferences: information processing and social-relational factors. First, enhanced motivation to thoroughly process emotional information can strengthen the effect of observer inferences. Second, social-relational factors, such as norms regarding the appropriateness of emotional displays, can affect such inferences. Employee-

²The EASI model also proposes that emotional displays can influence interpersonal outcomes via emotional contagion (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994). However, evidence suggests that the effects of employee emotions on customers tend to be mediated by conscious processes rather than unconscious emotional contagion (Brown & Lam, 2008; Hennig- Thureau et al., 2006). As such, we focus on the customer inference mechanism proposed by the EASI model in testing the employee emotional labor–service satisfaction link.

customer relationship strength and service personalization not only represent moderating forces of the EASI inferential process but are also some of the most common service dimensions. Service organizations often focus on standardization to decrease costs or on personalization to meet the unique needs of customers (Bowen, 1990; Lovelock, 1983). In addition, repeat customers can get to know particular employees quite well (Guttek, Bhappu, Liao-Troth, & Bennett, 1999).

Despite relationship strength and service personalization being identified as key service dimensions and their fit with the EASI model, both of these contextual variables have been overlooked in the emotional labor literature (Grandey & Diamond, 2010). In the following section, I draw on the EASI framework to examine how employee–customer relationship strength and service personalization may strengthen or weaken the effects of employee surface acting.

3.1.3 Theoretical background: Relationship strength

The strength of the relationship between an employee and customer can be defined as the intensity and depth of their relationship, reflected in the frequency of contact as well as personal rapport between both partners (De Cannière, De Pelsmacker, & Geuens, 2009; Gremler & Gwinner, 2000). Relationship strength generally reflects how strongly a customer feels about the service relationship with an employee; therefore, strong relationships are more likely to endure and are less vulnerable to breakdown (Barnes, 1997).

How might the presence of relational bonds between an employee and customer influence service satisfaction? I argue that customers in strong service relationships are less likely to process emotional information that contradicts their existing views and beliefs about the employee, consistent with research on confirmation bias that describes

the tendency for individuals to favor information that confirms existing beliefs (Nickerson, 1998). Service relationships are characterized by high levels of trust, emotional attachment, and sometimes even friendship (Coulter & Ligas, 2004; Gutek et al., 1999). Given that the cues associated with deceit and inauthentic smiles are somewhat ambiguous and prone to error (Ekman & O'Sullivan, 1991; Groth et al., 2009), customers in strong relationships may be more likely to “see what they want to see” and process emotional information in a way that does not threaten their relationship. Thus, they may be more inclined to overlook and/or dismiss signs of inauthentic emotional displays. On the other hand, customers encountering unfamiliar service employees are not constrained by existing beliefs and the interpretation of emotional information may not be subject to such distortions.

I propose that the effect of employee surface acting on service satisfaction is moderated by employee–customer relationship strength. I predict that customers in weak relationships are likely to rely on emotional information displayed during service delivery, resulting in lower customer satisfaction if they encounter inauthentic emotional displays. Customers in strong relationships, on the other hand, are not expected to process the emotional information from inauthentic displays to the same extent, resulting in a weaker relationship between surface acting and customer satisfaction. Although faked positive emotions and suppressed negative emotions may exhibit different patterns of association with customer satisfaction, I do not specifically delineate different hypotheses for these two surface acting strategies. While I anticipate an interaction between inauthentic emotional displays (i.e., both faked and suppressed emotions) and relationship strength in predicting service satisfaction, I do not have a strong theoretical basis from which to predict how faked positive emotions will differ from suppressed negative emotions in the interaction (i.e., whether they differ by

magnitude of slope, effect size, etc.). As such, I examine the overall pattern of interactions between faked positive emotions, suppressed negative emotions, and relationship strength in predicting service satisfaction, and explore any potential differences post hoc.

Hypothesis 3.1 Relationship strength moderates the negative relationship between (a) employee faked positive emotions, (b) employee suppressed negative emotions and service satisfaction in that the negative relationship is weaker for customers with a strong relationship with the employee, compared to those with a weak relationship with employees.

3.1.4 Theoretical background: Service personalization

A second service characteristic neglected in the emotional labor literature is the level of service personalization (Cunningham, Young, Ulaga, & Lee, 2004; Grandey & Diamond, 2010). Highly personalized services involve higher levels of employee judgment, customization, and personal contact, and the personal treatment of customers is often essential (e.g., medical visit). On the other hand, speed and reliability are usually prioritized in less personalized (i.e., standardized) services (e.g., movie theater).

The degree to which a service is personalized influences what customers expect from services. In order to achieve favorable customer perceptions in personalized services, organizations usually encourage employee involvement and emphasize the development of employee competence and positive attitudes (Bowen, 1990). On the other hand, services that require little employee involvement (i.e., less personalized services) normally focus on speed, reliability, efficiency, and lower prices (Bowen, 1990; Lovelock, 1983). The importance of

considering service personalization in relation to employee emotional displays was highlighted by Sutton and Rafaeli's (1988) seminal study in which they failed to find a relationship between friendly employee displays (such as greetings, smiling, and thanking the customer) and sales in a sample of convenience stores. In a follow-up qualitative study, the authors suggested that because convenience stores emphasize speed and efficiency, customers "just want to get in and out quickly . . . [they] don't care if the clerk is perky" (Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988, p. 474).

The study builds on Groth et al. (2009), who tested the moderating role of service type between surface acting and customer outcomes. These authors, however, did not find any significant interactions, which possibly reflect conceptual and measurement issues in their study³. For example, Groth et al. examined the interaction between service type and a global measure of surface acting, whereas in this study I examine faked positive emotions and suppressed negative emotions as more nuanced emotional labor strategies. As mentioned previously, it is possible that each strategy is associated with unique effects and it is possible that the type of service interacts with one strategy but not the other.

Therefore, I propose that the degree to which services are personalized moderates the relationship between surface acting and service satisfaction. Given that the display of positive emotions and attitudes can be considered particularly

³ Groth et al. (2009) coded "service type" as interpersonal contact based on Bowen's (1990) taxonomy, but they did not account for other aspects of the personalization construct. It is possible that the combined ratings of employee judgment, service customization, and contact provide a more accurate measure of the service personalization construct. Service type was also measured dichotomously in Groth et al.'s study, whereas we use a 5-point measure that more closely approximates a personalization versus standardization continuum (Cunningham et al., 2004) and maintains the information and statistical power lost by dichotomous measures.

important in more personalized services (Bowen, 1990), I believe that the negative impact of suppressed negative emotions and faked positive emotions on service satisfaction is stronger in more personalized services. Less personalized services, on the other hand, focus on efficiency and value rather than on the emotional performance of the employee. Thus, employee faked positive and suppressed negative emotions are expected to have a weaker relationship with service satisfaction in less personalized services. Again, I do not provide specific hypotheses regarding potential differences in the pattern of association between faked positive emotions, suppressed negative emotions, and service personalization on service satisfaction since there is no strong theoretical basis from which to predict how faked positive emotions will differ from suppressed negative emotions in this context. As such, I examine the overall pattern of interactions between faked positive emotions, suppressed negative emotions, and service personalization in predicting service satisfaction, and I explore any differences post hoc.

Hypothesis 3.2 Service personalization moderates the relationship among (a) employee faked positive emotions, (b) employee suppressed negative emotions and service satisfaction in that the negative relationship is stronger for customers in highly personalized services, compared to less personalized services.

3.2 Method

3.2.1 Participants

I surveyed customers and service employees immediately following a service exchange. Thus, the unit of analysis was the employee–customer interaction. Customers were either 1st-year university students who had volunteered for the study in exchange

for course credit or participants recruited through a snowballing procedure. The employee sample consisted of those individuals who served the participating customers in the service transaction.

I distributed 282 employee–customer dyadic surveys, of which 247 were returned, constituting a response rate of 88%. However, four pairs of questionnaires were excluded from data analysis due to substantial amounts of missing data or because customers had not followed the instructions. Thus, the final sample size was 243. Customers had a mean age of 24.77 years ($SD=10.26$), and 68% were female. Service employees had a mean age of 27.26 years ($SD=10.41$), and 58% were female, with a mean job tenure of 3.60 years.

3.2.2 Procedure

Students received a packet containing three matching customer–employee questionnaires, a cover letter explaining the nature of the study, and detailed instructions for data collection. I asked participating students to use one set of the customer–employee questionnaire themselves and to distribute the remaining two sets to other people, including at least one working adult. I restricted each customer and employee to participate once in order to ensure unique employee–customer dyads in the data. All questionnaires were sealed, and participants were asked not to view the contents prior to the study.

I asked customers to take the pair of employee and customer questionnaires to their next face-to-face service encounter outside the university. Immediately following that service interaction, customers asked the employee who had served them to fill out a short survey. If the employee agreed, he or she was handed a short letter explaining the nature of the study and the confidentiality of their responses. Both the customer and the

employee then simultaneously filled out their respective questionnaires. Upon completion, employees deposited their questionnaires in a sealed envelope, and then handed them back to the customer, who returned the completed survey pairs to the researchers.

All survey pairs were coded so that I could subsequently identify employee–customer dyads. In addition, both surveys asked for the name of the organization and the date, time, and length of the service interaction; this information was used for cross-referencing to ensure the legitimacy of the data. I also asked customers to describe the service encounter in one open-ended question to assess whether they had followed the given procedure. The break-down of service types visited by customers is as follows: specialty stores (e.g., clothing, footwear, electronics), 19.8%; fast-food restaurants, 15.6%; supermarkets, 10.3%; cafés, 9.1%; restaurants (table service), 8.2%; department stores, 7.8%; convenience stores, 6.6%; trade, 6.2%; professional services, 4.5%; other, 11.9%.

3.2.3 Measures

Employee measures

I assessed employee *faked positive* and *suppressed negative* emotions by adapting the Discrete Emotions Emotional Labor Scale (DEELS; Glomb & Tews, 2004). The original measure asks respondents whether their display of 14 discrete emotions was genuine, faked, or suppressed on a scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely). To minimize survey length, I selected three positive emotions (happiness, enthusiasm, and concern) and three negative emotions (irritation, anger, and contempt).

I also adapted the stem to refer to the specific service encounter, rather than asking about behavior in general⁴.

Customer measures

I measured *service satisfaction* using four items adapted from Hennig-Thurau et al. (2006) and Gremler and Gwinner (2000). This measure was assessed on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) and included items such as “I like this service experience.” I could not identify a suitable published measure of employee–customer *relationship strength* and thus measured this variable with a combination of four items—two items from Coulter and Ligas’s (2004) measure of customer relationships, frequency of contact in the past year, and overall length of the relationship. Given that the relationship strength scale was not an established measure, I explored the properties of this scale⁵. The exploratory factor analysis showed that the four items load on a single factor that accounted for 55.5% of shared variance. Therefore, I standardized and combined the four items to construct the relationship strength measure, with higher numbers indicating a closer relationship with the employee.

To measure *service personalization*, I asked customers to describe their service interaction in an open-ended question. The response to the open-ended item was combined with the name of the service store (as provided by the customer and cross-referenced with the employee) and given to four postgraduate students unfamiliar with the study. They were asked to rate each service on the following three key dimensions

⁴ We did not assess *faked negative* or *suppressed positive* emotions, and we did not ask about feelings of distress and fear because they are unlikely to occur in our sample.

⁵ On average, customers reported having interacted with the same service employee on 5.9 occasions in the past year ($SD = 16.94$) and had known the employee for 1.44 years ($SD = 3.17$). About half (51.2%) interacted with an employee they did not know, whereas 49.8% reported knowing the employee to varying degrees.

derived from Bowen's (1990) definition of personalized services: (a) customization, (b) employee discretion, and (c) personal contact. These three dimensions are frequently used for service classification purposes (e.g., Cook, Goh, & Chung, 1999; Cunningham et al., 2004; Lovelock, 1983; Silvestro, Fitzgerald, & Johnson, 1992). All items were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale. Ratings of these three items were combined to form a scale ranging from 1 (low personalization) to 5 (high personalization). The intraclass correlation coefficient Type 2 (ICC2) was .93, indicating a high level of consistency between the four raters.

Controls

I controlled for employee positive and negative affect using the 10-item international short form of the Positive and Negative Affect Scales (Thompson, 2007) and for employee age due to its association with emotional labor (Bono & Vey, 2005; Duke, Goodman, Treadway, & Breland, 2009; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). I also controlled for employee's experience and expression of genuine positive and negative emotions from the DEELS (Glomb & Tews, 2004). Finally, I controlled for the length of the service interaction, as it is likely to affect variables of interest (e.g., customers may have more opportunities to assess employee surface acting during longer service interactions).

3.4 Results

Means, standard deviations, intercorrelations, and internal consistency estimates are shown in Table 3.1. I conducted hierarchical regression analyses (see Table 3.2) to test all hypotheses, following the recommendations of Cohen and Cohen (1984) and Aiken and West (1991).

Table 3.1 Means, Standard Deviations, Intercorrelations, and Internal Consistency Estimates

Measure	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1 Interaction length (minutes)	12.24	16.62	-										
2 Employee positive affect	3.29	0.84	.14*	(.83)									
3 Employee negative affect	1.81	0.63	-.06	-.10	(.76)								
4 Genuine positive emotions	3.14	0.91	.26**	.37**	-.08	(.65)							
5 Genuine negative emotions	1.67	0.75	-.07	-.15*	.38**	-.01	(.65)						
6 Employee age (years)	27.26	10.41	.15*	.17*	-.03	.02	-.11	-					
7 Faked positive emotions	2.60	1.09	-.04	.09	.22**	.23**	.20**	-.07	(.76)				
8 Suppressed negative emotions	2.02	1.08	.01	-.08	.33**	.09	.40**	-.15*	.34**	(.84)			
9 Relationship strength ^a	0.01	0.73	.06	.14*	-.03	.12	.01	.27**	.03	-.10	(.71)		
10 Service personalization	2.26	0.86	.54**	.21**	-.05	.17**	-.01	.27**	.02	.01	.11	(.93)	
11 Service satisfaction	4.03	0.78	-.05	.31**	-.22**	.21**	-.26**	.13*	-.01	-.22**	.33**	.10	(.92)

Note: Values in parentheses along the diagonal are internal consistency estimates.

^a Items were standardized prior to constructing mean composite due to different response scales.

* $p < .05$ (two tailed), ** $p < .01$ (two tailed).

Table 3.2 Results of Hierarchical Linear Regression Analysis for the effects of Employee Surface Acting on Service Satisfaction

Step and Variable	β	<i>SE</i>	ΔR^2
Step 1: Control Variables			.20**
Interaction length	-.11	.01	
Employee positive affect	.20**	.06	
Employee negative affect	-.11	.08	
Genuine positive emotions	.21**	.06	
Genuine negative emotions	-.19**	.07	
Employee age	.01	.01	
Step 2: Main effects			.10**
Faked positive emotions	.02	.05	
Suppressed negative emotions	-.08	.05	
Relationship strength	.32**	.06	
Service personalization	.09	.06	
Step 3: Interactions			.04*
Faked positive \times Relationship strength	-.05	.06	
Suppressed negative \times Relationship strength	.17**	.06	
Faked positive \times Service personalization	-.01	.05	
Suppressed Negative \times Service personalization	-.14*	.05	
Total R^2			.34

Note. β represents the standardized regression coefficients for each step in the regression equation.

* $p < .05$ (two tailed), ** $p < .01$ (two tailed).

Employee suppressed negative emotions interacted with relationship strength to predict service satisfaction ($\beta = .17$, $p < .01$). I plotted this interaction for those who had strong (+1SD) and weak (-1SD) relationships with the employee, as shown in Figure 3.1. Suppressing negative emotions had a negative relationship with service satisfaction when relationship strength was low ($\beta = -.13$, $p < .05$), but not when relationship strength was high ($\beta = .12$, $p = .10$), supporting Hypothesis 3.1b. There was no significant interaction between faked positive emotion and service satisfaction, failing

to support Hypothesis 3.1a. Post-hoc analyses shows that the simple slope for faked positive emotions, when relationship strength was low, was not significantly different from 0 ($\beta = .05$; $p = .42$). Therefore, the pattern of findings suggests that while suppressed negative emotions predicted lower service satisfaction when relationship strength was low, this was not the case for faked positive emotions.

Employee suppressed negative emotions interacted with service personalization to predict service satisfaction ($\beta = -.14$, $p < .05$). Figure 3.2 shows the interaction for highly personalized services (+1SD) and less personalized services (-1SD). Suppressed negative emotions had a negative relationship with service satisfaction when services were highly personalized ($\beta = -.13$, $p < .05$), but not when services were less personalized ($\beta = .06$, $p = .18$), supporting Hypothesis 3.2b. Faked positive emotions did not interact with service personalization to predict service satisfaction, failing to support Hypothesis 3.2a. Post-hoc analysis suggests that the simple slope for faked positive emotions, when service personalization was high, was not significantly different from 0 ($\beta = .03$; $p = .69$). The pattern of findings suggests that while suppressed negative emotions predicted lower service satisfaction in highly personalized services, this was not the case for faked positive emotions.

3.5 Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine the link between employee surface acting and customer outcomes. Drawing on social-functional theories of emotions, I developed and tested a model that examined the interaction between two surface acting strategies, faking positive emotions and suppressing negative emotions, and contextual factors of the service exchange to predict service satisfaction. I found that both the strength of employee– customer relationships and service personalization interacted

Figure 3.1 Interaction between employee suppressed negative emotions and relationship strength on service satisfaction.

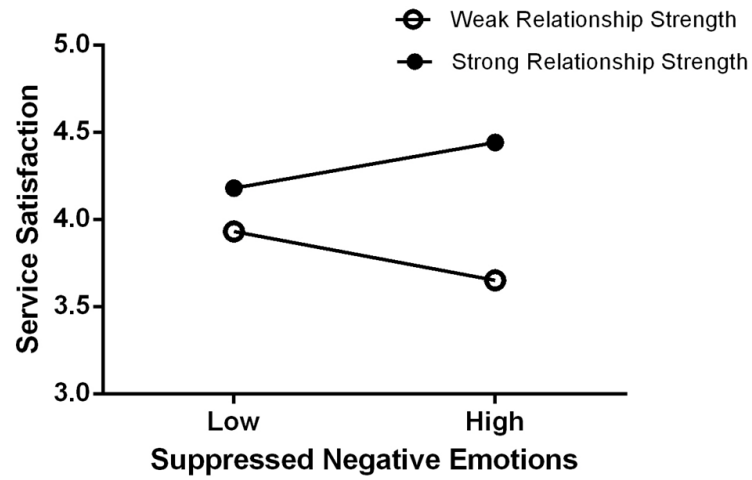
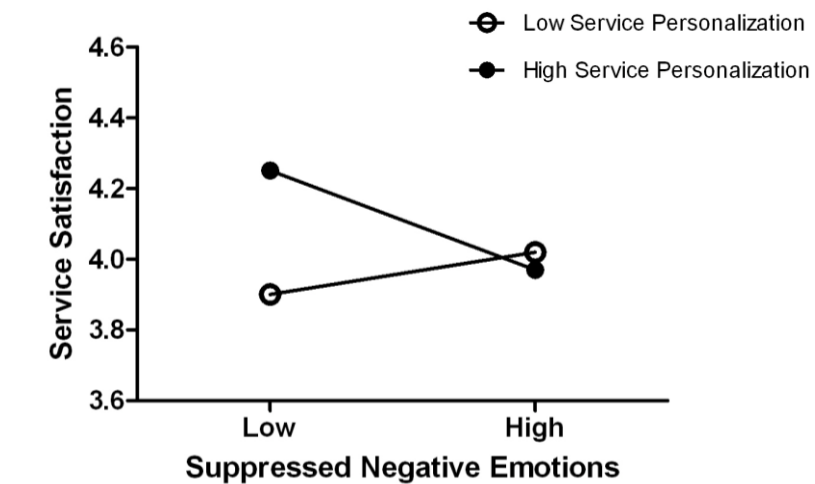


Figure 3.2 Interaction between employee suppressed negative emotions and service personalization on service satisfaction.



with suppressed negative emotions but not with faked positive emotions to predict customer service satisfaction.

3.5.1 Theoretical contribution

The study provides several important theoretical contributions to the emotional labor literature. Most importantly, the study is one of the first to integrate social-functional perspectives of emotions, which is gaining increased attention (Côté, Van Kleef, & Sy, 2013), with research in emotional labor and research in service management. The study not only details how the emotional labor of employees influences service judgments but also highlights how the service context itself influences such judgments. Namely, I find that the relationship between employee suppressed negative emotions and customer outcomes depends on contextual features of the service exchange, such as relationship strength and service personalization. The influence of these two contextual service delivery features are both theoretically grounded in socialfunctional theories of interpersonal emotions (Van Kleef, 2009) and have been identified as important contextual features in the emotional labor literature (Grandey & Diamond, 2010) and service literature (Bowen & Ford, 2002). Thus, the study highlights the utility of integrating different perspectives for novels insights into the existing literature.

Consistent with the EASI model (Van Kleef, 2009), which posits information processing and social-relational factors as moderators of customer inferences, I found evidence that strong relationships between employees and customers buffer against the detrimental effects of suppressed negative emotions. These findings are also consistent with research on confirmation bias, which suggests that customers in strong relationships may seek and interpret information in ways that support their existing beliefs (Nickerson, 1998). People who do not have a strong relationship with the employee may be more inclined to process emotions at face value, leading to more

accurate observations regarding the employee's emotional display and lower service satisfaction.

The findings also show that suppressed negative emotions only result in decreased service satisfaction in personalized service; thus, service standardization may buffer organizations from the negative impact of suppressed negative emotions. Interestingly, qualitative evidence shows that customers do not necessarily value the emotional displays of employees in some service settings (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1990). The results reflect the predictions of the EASI model (Van Kleef, 2009) and the service marketing literature (Bowen, 1990; Lovelock, 1983) in suggesting that service norms regarding emotional displays influence the relative impact of emotional labor. As discussed previously, I found a significant interaction between surface acting and service personalization, in contrast to Groth et al. (2009). These differences may be driven by factors including the loss of power due to dichotomous coding by Groth et al., different conceptualization and measurement of the construct, and/or the more nuanced measurement of surface acting. Together, the findings on the role of context in moderating the relationship between surface acting and customer outcomes highlights the role of attentional processes that can distort the perception and interpersonal influences of emotion.

Another important contribution of the study is to examine the unique effects of two different strategies, faking positive emotions and suppressing negative emotions, which are often combined in commonly used surface acting measures. Although I did not specifically hypothesize differences between the effects of faking positive emotions and suppressing negative emotions, since there was no theoretical guidance as to how these differences will specifically manifest in the interaction and simple slopes, the findings show that not all surface acting strategies are the same. I find that while

suppressing negative emotions is associated with detrimental customer service consequences in some contexts, faked positive emotions were not. Given that both these strategies are often combined in surface acting measures, this research provides an important step in highlighting the need to distinguish between fine-grained emotional labor strategies.

Why might suppressed negative emotions result in unfavorable service evaluations but not faked positive emotions, despite both representing surface acting strategies? The findings associated with suppressed negative emotions may be explained by social-psychological research demonstrating that inauthentic displays are most likely to be perceived as such when individuals try to conceal conflicting emotional information (Ekman & Friesen, 1982; Ekman et al., 1988). It is believed that the internal experience of conflicting emotional states can tamper with the quality of the resulting display (e.g., a smile tainted by a slight furrowing of the eyebrows), leading to heightened perceptions of inauthenticity. Within the context of the study, smiles can have a negative influence on service judgments when employees are experiencing negative emotions. It is possible that the underlying negative emotional experiences of employees who felt but attempted to hide negative emotions “leaked” and interfered with the quality of their smiles, leading to a heightened sense of inauthenticity by customers. These observations complement social-psychological research linking emotion suppression with poorer interpersonal outcomes such as lower rapport (Butler et al., 2003) and poorer relationship quality (Srivastava et al., 2009). As such, the suppression of negative emotions can have a negative impact on interpersonal processes that affect service judgments. The lack of effects associated with faked positive emotions further suggests qualitative differences between the surface acting strategies. Faked positive emotions are inauthentic and, according to social psychological

literature, should be associated with less favorable social judgments regarding the person's pleasantness, trustworthiness, and likeability (Frank et al., 1993; Krumhuber et al., 2007; Surakka & Hietanen, 1998). However, the findings did not show a discernible influence of faked positive emotions on customer satisfaction. According to other theories, such as the facial feedback hypothesis (cf. Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994; Larsen et al., 1992), the display of faked positive emotions may, in turn, yield positive feelings, thereby resulting in more genuine displays. However, given that only the expression of genuine positive emotions, not fake positive emotions, predicted higher customer satisfaction, the findings cannot be readily explained by appealing to such theories.

From a social-functional perspective of emotions, the findings suggest that employee faked positive emotions are not as authentic as genuine positive emotions, but also not as inauthentic as suppressing negative emotions. One potential explanation is that people are often inaccurate in recognizing deception and inauthentic smiles (Ekman & O'Sullivan, 1991; Groth et al., 2009). Faked positive emotions are likely to contain features of inauthentic smiles (e.g., peculiarities in symmetry, apex, onset, offset), lending such smiles to be perceived as inauthentic by some customers. Compared to suppressed negative emotions, however, faked positive emotions involve less of an inherent contradiction between feelings and displays. Therefore, faked positive emotions suffer less from the active inference from conflicting negative experiences, potentially lending these smiles to be perceived as authentic by others. Therefore, faked positive emotions lack some of the vital cues in the detection of inauthentic smiles, thereby leading these inauthentic smiles to be missed by others. Together, these findings highlight the need for researchers to examine the interpersonal effects of more nuanced emotional labor strategies.

3.5.2 Practical implications

Research generally shows that surface acting leads to negative consequences (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011), but there is growing evidence that this is not always the case (Grandey, 2003; Pugh, Groth, & Hennig-Thurau, 2011). The study adds to this literature by suggesting three ways in which the negative effects of employee surface acting can be averted. First, the results show that suppressed negative emotions, but not faked positive emotions, have a discernible impact on customer outcomes. Therefore, organizations and managers are advised to differentiate between these two processes and focus more of their attention on the former rather than the latter. The findings also show that the display of genuine negative emotions lowers customer satisfaction. Thus, organizations may be advised to focus on mitigating negative experiences in the first place, so employees do not express genuine negative emotions or do not need to invest cognitive resources to suppress those negative emotions. Managers, however, should concern themselves with promoting genuine positive expressions of their service employees, which drive higher customer satisfaction.

Second, the findings suggest that even suppressed emotions are not inevitably associated with poorer outcomes (e.g., in more standardized services). Given that emotional management depletes resources (Baumeister, Vohs, & Tice, 2007), the findings suggest employees delivering fairly standardized services may divert resources otherwise used to control emotions to other tasks, without necessarily jeopardizing service satisfaction. Finally, strong relationships with customers may buffer the negative effects of suppressed negative emotions. This highlights the need for organizations to cultivate environments that foster such relationships, provided that the context is suitable. Providing interpersonal training and building a climate that rewards

employees for establishing and strengthening customer bonds may mitigate the negative impact of suppressing negative emotions.

3.5.3 Limitations and future research

In order to capture the dyadic nature of emotional labor in field settings, I asked customers to present employees with a survey after their interaction. This, however, changes the role of the customer in the service interaction, and employees may have responded differently. Also, customers may have been reluctant to approach service providers who provided poor service or whose emotions did not match expectations (i.e., employees who faked positive and/or suppressed negative emotions). However, the means of employee faked positive ($M = 2.6$, $SD = 1.1$) and suppressed negative emotions ($M = 2.02$, $SD = 1.1$) provide no evidence for this, and if this had occurred, it is likely that the findings reflect conservative estimates. In using the snowballing procedure to gain a more representative sample, the data may have also been nested. Though these and other influences may have affected the findings, I believe they are a necessary compromise to minimize recall bias and to capture service encounters as they occur in real time.

In this study, I focus on the interpersonal and contextual dynamics operating in service environments that can affect the relationship between employee emotional labor and customer service outcomes. In doing so, I highlight the need for researchers to better integrate social-functional theories of interpersonal emotions with research in emotional labor. Researchers also need to consider the role of more-nuanced emotional labor strategies and the discrete emotions being regulated in how they influence resulting authentic display, and how these displays are subsequently interpreted by customers. One avenue is to explore the role of more nuanced strategies in deep acting.

In deep acting, employees may engage in attentional deployment or in cognitive change (Grandey, 2000; Gross, 1998), and it is possible that such strategies may result in different customer outcomes. Future research might also extend the assessment of relationship strength to employees as emotional labor strategies can vary depending on the target (Diefendorff & Greguras, 2009), such as expressing more genuine emotions around familiar others (Matsumoto, 1991). Thus, relationship strength could potentially be conceived as an antecedent of emotional labor strategies when measured from the employee's perspective.

3.6 Conclusion

In this study, I attempt to understand how employee surface acting and the circumstances under which employee surface acting influences customer outcomes. My findings contribute to the literature by underscoring the importance of examining the different effects of unique emotional labor strategies on customer service satisfaction. Furthermore, my findings also detail the boundary conditions under which the detrimental customer outcomes arising from employee's use of surface acting can be averted. Together, this set of findings paints a more nuanced picture of the interpersonal effects of emotions and of employee emotional labor on customer outcomes.

Chapter 4

Must emotion regulation always be effortful? The effects of nonconscious emotion regulation on service outcomes

Recent evidence suggests that the regulation of emotions can be nonconscious and just as effective as conscious attempts to control emotion. Across two experiments, I assess the viability and the effects of nonconscious emotion regulation compared to their conscious counterparts across a variety of social, cognitive resource, and affective outcomes in a simulated service environment. In the first study, priming participants to engage in reappraisal (a unique deep acting strategy) resulted in higher confederate-rated customer service quality, fewer task errors and better performance on anagrams, as well as lower experiences of low-intensity negative affective experiences, compared to those instructed to reappraise. On the other, priming participants to engage in suppression (a unique surface acting strategy) resulted in lower confederate-rated customer service quality, more task errors and poorer performance on anagrams, as well as heightening the experience of high-intensity negative affective experiences, compared to those instructed to suppress. Practical implications, future direction, and limitations are discussed.

4.1 Introduction

For most employees, the regulation of emotions at work is an integral part of providing “service with a smile.” The successful regulation of emotions is commonly conceptualized as effortful with employees deliberately engaging in self-control to actively manage their emotions (Muraven et al., 1998). While such efforts lead to

beneficial outcomes for organizations (Pugh, 2001; Tsai & Huang, 2002), these effortful acts are often associated with costly outcomes for the employee, including burnout, strain, and psychosomatic symptoms (Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011).

Must emotion regulation always be effortful? The self-regulation literature has been largely characterized by studies on intentional, deliberate, and effortful acts of self-control. Despite this, there is increasing evidence that people can engage in self-regulatory behavior without conscious awareness across a variety of domains, suggesting that such behaviors can be elicited automatically (Bargh & Morsella, 2008). Indeed, Gross (1998, p. 275) maintains that “emotion regulatory processes may be automatic or controlled, conscious or unconscious.” However, automatic and nonconscious emotion regulation has received scant attention in the emotional regulation literature until recently. Studies by Mauss, Cook, and Gross (2007) and Williams, Bargh, Nocera, and Gray (2009) show that regulatory behaviors such as perspective taking and emotion control can be successfully primed to regulate emotional experiences, suggesting emotional regulation can be under the control of nonconscious processes. Since these behaviors are elicited automatically, they are thought to impose fewer demands on working memory (Anderson, 1985) and can operate in parallel with other ongoing processes. Therefore, nonconscious emotional labor potentially holds the key to delivering the organizational benefits of service with a smile, but without their associated costs.

In this paper, I examine the utility of priming concepts associated with two unique emotion regulation strategies that map onto the emotional labor concepts of deep and surface acting, respectively: reappraisal and suppression,. Both reappraisal and suppression are critical constructs in the emotion regulation literature due to their relative positioning in the emotion generative process (Grandey, 2000; Gross, 1998).

Importantly, researchers have suggested that these nonconscious strategies exhibit different patterns of findings. While there is little theoretical or empirical doubt that the nonconscious deep acting strategy of reappraisal leads to largely beneficial outcomes (Mauss, Bunge, et al., 2007; Mauss, Cook, et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2009), the effects of nonconscious surface acting strategy of suppression remain unclear, even in theory. While nonconscious processes operate more efficiently (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999), others have argued that the underlying conflict between feelings and displays persist in nonconscious suppression and continues to undermine and disrupt social, cognitive, and affective functioning (Mauss, Cook, et al., 2007). As such, nonconscious reappraisal may be largely associated with beneficial whereas nonconscious suppression may be largely associated with detrimental social, cognitive, and affective outcomes.

Across two studies, I experimentally manipulate automatic emotional regulation by using priming techniques (reappraisal in Study 4.1; suppression in Study 4.2) and assess its impact on the social, cognitive resource, and affective outcomes of service delivery in a simulated service setting. This study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, I extend the literature by examining the viability of nonconscious emotional regulation in a simulated service environment. Second, as far as I am aware, this is the first study to investigate the relative impact of conscious versus nonconscious reappraisal and suppression in a service context across three broad outcomes of interest – namely social, cognitive resource, and affective outcomes.

In terms of social outcomes, I investigate the effects of nonconscious emotional regulation on customer perceptions of service quality. While nonconscious emotional regulation has the potential to modify *self-reported* anger (Mauss et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2009), it is not known whether this is effectively translated to social situations. Understanding whether nonconscious emotional regulation is effective in changing

others' perception of the individual is important since emotions are often modified in the presence of others and/or for others (Gross, 1998). In measuring customer rating of employee performance, I investigate whether the emotional control elicited through priming is effectively translated into social perceptions.

In terms of cognitive resource outcomes, I investigate the effects of nonconscious emotion regulation on employee task error and subsequent performance on an anagram task. Both these tasks require cognitive resources for its successful completion and may reflect the level of resources depleted in their management of emotions for the service task. While the effects of emotional labor have often been inferred from resource perspectives, explicit measures are rare (see Goldberg & Grandey, 2007 for exception). In this study, I discern the impact of emotion regulation primes on cognitive resource depletion processes compared to their conscious counterparts.

Finally, I investigate the impact of emotion regulation primes on employee job-related negative affect as the affective outcome. Affective outcomes are gaining increasing recognition in the management literature because they are capable of eliciting action tendencies that consequently impact organizational effectiveness (Spector & Fox, 2002). In particular, negative affect can also serve as a trigger for employee well-being outcomes, which is a key focus in the emotion regulation and labor literatures (Grandey, 2000; Gross, 1998).

In sum, the aim of this chapter is to explore the social, cognitive, and affective service outcomes of engaging in nonconscious and conscious emotion regulation during service delivery. In order to achieve this, I first present a broad overview of the nonconscious and emotion regulation literatures. I then introduce my first study focusing on the effects of conscious versus nonconscious reappraisal (study 4.1). I

present my hypotheses before detailing the methods used to test my hypotheses.

Following this, I present the results of study 4.1 before moving to briefly discussing the findings. Next, I introduce my second study focusing on the effects of conscious versus nonconscious suppression. I present the hypotheses and detail the methods used to test these hypotheses. I then present the results, followed by a brief discussion of these findings. I conclude the chapter with a general discussion of the overall findings, and its implications to research and to practice

4.1.1 Nonconscious self-regulation for successful goal pursuit

In order to successfully follow social norms and achieve long-term goals, individuals often need to resist natural impulses and engage in self-control (Baumeister, Vohs, & Tice, 2007). This involves trying to resist expressing one's natural reactions to emotional events and/or feigning emotions in order to display those emotions that are expected. *Emotion regulation* refers to any goal-directed processes, deliberate or automatic, whereby individuals influence "which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions" (Gross & Thompson, 2007; Gross, 1998). In other words, emotion regulation is a goal-directed process that functions to alter the intensity, duration, and type of emotion being experienced.

Successful emotion regulation is required in virtually every aspect of one's life, none more so than at work. In order to succeed in a customer service job, or to keep one's employment, employees not only need to engage in physical and cognitive labor, but they must also engage in emotional labor in order to comply with display rules (Diefendorff et al., 2006). These display rules, such as smiling to customers or hiding negative emotions, serve as work goals to employees. In order to meet these goals, employees need to actively manage their emotional displays and/or feelings in order to

ensure that they provide “service with a smile” (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003; Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983).

In the workplace, the emotion regulation literature is largely concerned with the effects of deep acting and surface acting. Deep acting refers to employee efforts to actively experience desired emotions, whereas surface acting refers to manipulating emotional displays in order to present emotional expressions that are not actually felt (Hochschild, 1983). This body of work suggests that surface acting strategies largely predict deleterious employee outcomes such as higher emotional exhaustion (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Brotheridge & Lee, 2002), higher turnover, and lower performance (Goodwin et al., 2011). Deep acting strategies, on the other hand, is linked to positive employee outcomes such as employee well-being (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Brotheridge & Lee, 2002) and performance (Groth et al., 2009).

The effects of deep and surface acting have been attributed to their relative positioning in the emotion generative process (Gross, 1998). Deep actors actively try to stem the onset of an emotion by changing the underlying emotional experiences through, for example, changing the underlying meaning of the emotion-triggering event through reappraisal and reinterpretation. Deep acting acts on the emotion-triggering event before the unwanted emotions have been fully activated, and therefore targets are able to change their emotion trajectories early in the emotion-generation process. As such, deep acting strategies are considered *antecedent-focused* in nature. In these situations, employees only need to intervene and engage in self-regulatory efforts in the beginning stages of the emotion-generative process to thwart the undesired emotion from becoming fully developed. Once this has been achieved, only minimal self-regulatory efforts are required to sustain the regulated emotion.

On the other hand, surface actors only aim to change the expressive displays associated with feeling certain emotions through, for example, suppressing their underlying experiences. Surface acting strategies only target the expression of emotions and not its underlying experience. As such, surface acting strategies can only be used when the emotion is already under way and the emotive-generative process has been successful in producing the undesired emotion. Surface acting strategies are considered *response-focused* in nature, and an employee needs to continuously engage in self-regulatory efforts to prevent the experienced emotions from being displayed by inhibiting emotional experiences. Therefore, in comparison to antecedent-focused deep acting strategies, response-focused surface acting strategies require more resources to sustain desired emotional displays, which ultimately diminish the target's capacity to engage in self-regulatory efforts that are implicated in performance and well-being.

While the emotion regulation literature to date has been primarily focused on conscious and deliberate efforts to curb natural tendencies and exercise self-control (Baumeister et al., 2007), some of the research over the past three decades has shown that such self-regulatory efforts can be elicited nonconsciously, that is, without conscious awareness (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999). It is well established that features in the environment can successfully trigger a series of cascading processes that lead to the pursuit of cue-relevant goals without the individual being consciously aware of their influence (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999; Bargh & Morsella, 2008). This has been demonstrated in a variety of domains. For instance, the presence of business props (e.g., briefcases as opposed to backpacks) elicits competitive behaviors (Kay, Wheeler, Bargh, & Ross, 2004). Fitzsimons and Bargh (2003) found that thinking of friends, compared to thinking of coworkers, leads to more helping behaviors. These nonconscious processes are based on mechanisms similar to conscious self-regulation in

goal-pursuit, such as increasing perseverance on the task (Shah & Kruglanski, 2003) and enhancing positive affect towards the goal (Custers & Aarts, 2005).

The self-regulation required to achieve goals consumes resources even for simple tasks such as making choices (Tice, Baumeister, Shmueli, & Muraven, 2007; Vohs et al., 2008). In trying to successfully manage emotions at work, employees must engage in the onerous task of actively comparing their current displays with display rules, and subsequently aligning displays to those requirements (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003). This active monitoring and adjustment process operates within the confines of working memory and requires conscious processing (Vohs et al., 2008), which can be depleting. However, by virtue of operating outside of conscious awareness, nonconscious goals can serve to guide behavior more “efficiently.” According to Custers and Aarts (2010), the mechanism by which nonconscious goals operate is akin to the ideomotor principle: that through prior learning, the activation of the idea of a behavioral act or outcome programs the individual to act. As such, the scent of a citrus cleaning agent predicts cleaning behaviors (Holland, Hendriks, & Aarts, 2005), words associated with cooperation induces people to work together (Bargh, Gollwitzer, Lee-Chai, Barndollar, & Trötschel, 2001), and pictures of libraries lead to people speaking more softly (Aarts, & Dijksterhuis, 2003). Since the pursuit of these goals are triggered outside of conscious awareness, goal monitoring becomes unconstrained from the limitations of working memory and can lead to better performance (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999; Zapf, 2002). For example, researchers report that nonconscious processes may be responsible for enhanced decision making outcomes (Dijksterhuis, Bos, Nordgren, & van Baaren, 2006). As such, the pursuit of nonconscious goals may have the capacity to elicit goal-directed behaviors with fewer

self-regulatory costs to the individual, leading to the retention of resources for other self-control tasks (Anderson, 1985; Latham, Stajkovic, & Locke, 2010).

4.1.2 Nonconscious emotion regulation

Nonconscious goals are capable of eliciting automatic self-regulatory efforts towards goal attainment across a variety of domains (Bargh & Morsella, 2008), and recent evidence suggests that emotion regulation is also capable of being elicited nonconsciously. Studies show that participants can be successfully induced to nonconsciously reappraise their negative experience of anger (Mauss, Cook, et al., 2007) and anxiety (Williams et al., 2009). Despite the links between emotion regulation and nonconscious processes, there is a paucity of research examining whether unconscious emotional regulation strategies can be primed in service settings. In this chapter, I specifically focus on the effects of reappraisal (i.e., deep acting) and suppression (i.e., surface acting) strategies on a variety of social, cognitive resource, and affective outcomes that impact the individual and the organization. I focus on reappraisal and suppression because they are by far the most commonly investigated emotion regulation strategies examined in prior research (Gross, 2001). The effects emotional labor may also be unique to the specific strategy being utilized (Glomb & Tews, 2004). Thus, in order to avoid confounding the activation of different nonconscious goals, I specifically focus on these distinct strategies.

This chapter also focuses on both nonconscious reappraisal and suppression because of their relative positions in the emotion generative processes (i.e., antecedent- or response-focused). In light of Wegner's (1994) ironic processes theory, Mauss, Bunge et al. (2007) suggested that nonconscious response-focused strategies, such as suppression, may exhibit a maladaptive profile by increasing negative emotions and

stress responses because the underlying emotional experiences may continue to require regulatory effort and result in conflict. On the other hand, nonconscious antecedent-focused regulation strategies, such as reappraisal, may result in a more adaptive profile (i.e., decreasing the experience of negative emotions and facilitating healthy physiological functioning). It is believed that nonconscious antecedent-focused emotion regulation can directly target and alter the experience of those emotions and therefore preventing emotional conflict from occurring. Despite these claims, nonconscious suppression has yet to receive empirical attention. In this chapter, I assess the relative impact of nonconscious reappraisal, compared to deliberate reappraisal, in the first study (Study 4.1), and the relative impact of nonconscious suppression, compared to their deliberate suppression, in the second study (Study 4.2).

4.2 Study 4.1: Nonconscious versus Conscious Reappraisal

Experimental studies into self-control processes suggest that conscious efforts to reappraise may not be as depleting as other emotion regulation strategies (Richards & Gross, 1999). Yet, the active alignment of internal feelings with expected displays requires some regulatory effort (Beal et al., 2006; Liu et al., 2008). The nonconscious pursuit of reappraisal may consequently lead to comparatively better social, cognitive, and affective outcomes by placing fewer demands on working memory. While direct evidence for this link is scarce, the literature on habitual and chronic reappraisers might provide clues to the effects of nonconscious reappraisal. According to Bargh and Chartrand (1999) nonconscious goal pursuit can be acquired through repetition and habit formation, and the repeated pursuit of specific strategies should enable it to become automatic or nonconsciously enacted. Likewise, Williams et al. (2009) asserts

that chronic use of specific strategies results in individuals automatically engaging in those strategies across a variety of emotionally-evocative situations.

Studies show that individual differences in reappraisal are associated with beneficial affective, social, cognitive, and well-being outcomes (John & Gross, 2004). In other words, those who habitually use reappraisal, and are therefore those more likely to automatically engage in reappraisal, are more likely to experience beneficial life outcomes compared to those who do not consistently use reappraisal. Williams et al. (2009) showed that low trait reappraisers experienced the greatest benefits following the priming of reappraisal compared to those explicitly instructed to engage in reappraisal. These authors reason that high trait reappraisers were most likely to automatically engage in nonconscious reappraisal across a variety of emotion-eliciting events and therefore priming nonconscious reappraisal would be less beneficial since they were likely to use this as their default strategy. These findings suggest that chronic or habitual users of appraisal strategies experience better social, cognitive, affective, and life outcomes compared to those who do not consistently use reappraisal strategies.

In this study, I examine the service outcomes associated with priming reappraisal, compared to explicit instructions to reappraise. I propose that nonconscious reappraisal leads to resources being used more efficiently, thus resulting in fewer errors and better performance on subsequent tasks. The more efficient use of resources may also enable nonconsciously reappraisers to better able to focus on the interpersonal and service performance aspects, resulting in better evaluations of service performance by customers. In addition, it is possible that nonconscious reappraisal enable processes that benefit social functioning through the development of rapport and closeness between interaction partners (Gross & John, 2003). Finally, nonconscious reappraiser may be less aware of the negative emotions arising from the service episode, since emotional

situations are automatically reinterpreted to be less provocative, thereby leading to dampened experiences of negative affective states following the service performance.

Hypothesis 4.1 Individuals primed to engage in unconscious reappraisal will (a) be rated more favorably by customer confederates in terms of service quality; (b) experience lower levels of negative affect; and (c) make fewer task errors and solve more anagrams compared with those who engage in conscious reappraisal.

4.2.1 Method

Participants

Forty-two undergraduate students (22 female, mean age = 21 years) participated in this research for partial fulfillment of research requirements for an introduction to management course. 25 participants had prior service experience (mean experience of 1.3 years).

Procedure

Participants were recruited for a one-hour study on performance in service interactions. Upon arrival, they were randomly allocated to one of two conditions. The study took place in two separate rooms. In the first room, participants were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire. In addition, those allocated to the priming condition received a scrambled sentence challenge, while those allocated to the explicit condition received explicit instructions to reappraise. All participants were trained to familiarize themselves with the service task. The second room was equipped with a desk, chair, price list, scale, order forms, writing utensils, and a video-recorder. Participants performed the service simulation in this second room followed by post-study measures and debrief.

Training: Participants arriving for the study were greeted by a female researcher who administered the pre-survey and trained all participants for the study. Participants were told that researchers had created a post-office simulation in order to study service jobs. The researcher explained all the materials participants would be required to use in order to do perform the simulated service encounters: a generic process map of typical post office transactions, a standard service script, a price list, and order forms. The researcher went through the process map and generic service script with participants, which detailed the general steps for processing orders (e.g., greeting, asking for information, informing customers of prices, thanking customers, etc.). Next, the researcher explained how to fill out the order forms and calculate prices for various services. Participants were informed that they would be evaluated on their performance of the service task. Participants were then given 5 minutes to review all the materials on their own, and were then provided with an opportunity to ask questions. Next, the researcher led participants to the simulation room, and demonstrated how to use the equipment. She provided all participants with an opportunity to role-play to ensure that all participants were familiar with the script. The researcher asked if there were any further questions and left the room.

Post-Office Simulation: During the service simulation, each participant engaged in three service interactions, each with a different customer. Each customer requested two to three items to be posted, and the participant had to consult the various materials provided (e.g., price list and scales to determine the price). After the three interactions, a male research assistant entered the room to collect the order forms and study materials and participants completed a post-study measure of job-related emotions, as well as an anagram task (see measures section below). After participants completed the survey, they were debriefed and introduced to the confederates playing the customers.

The first customer interaction was designed to be a ‘typical’ customer experience to ensure participants were familiar with the service process and to serve as the baseline performance score. The second and third customer interactions, however, were designed to be demanding on the participant. Specifically, during the second encounter, the customer had a hostile and irritable tone (e.g., “Look, I’m in a rush. I have these items to post. So get it done quick – I don’t want you wasting my time.”). Throughout the interaction, the customer complained that the participant was too slow at their job and calculated the prices incorrectly in a condescending and annoyed tone. In the third encounter, the postal items were specifically designed to fall just over the price bracket which resulted in a higher price for the customer. The customer then argued for the item to be calculated at a lower price with increasing agitation.

The customers were played by professional actors, two male and two female, specifically recruited for the study. Actors were provided with a two-hour basic training session to ensure that they were familiar with the script. During this training, I also calibrated performances across actors such that intensity and expressed emotions were consistent across performers and performances. The actors randomly rotated in the roles they played to counterbalance actor and gender effects across all conditions. Actors were blind to the condition for the participants, and after each performance, rated the performance of the participant (see measures section below).

Manipulations

Priming Stimuli: To prime participants with reappraisal strategies, I adapted the Sentence Unscrambling Task (Bargh & Chartrand, 1997). The sentence unscrambling test is, by far, the most widely used procedure to investigate the effects of priming (Latham et al., 2010) and has been successfully used in previous studies investigating

the effects of priming emotion regulation strategies (Mauss et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2009). The procedure was therefore largely informed by previous validated studies investigating emotion regulation priming. The sentence unscrambling task requires participants to construct grammatical four-word sentences from five-word jumbles. This task was attached to the end of the pre-study survey; participants were told that it was a “linguistic task.” Participants were asked to complete a task where ten of the 19 sentences were embedded with a single emotion reappraisal words, such as reinterpret, reframe, and perspective. The target emotion reappraisal words were adapted from Williams et al. (2009), who investigated the effectiveness of priming reappraisal across two experiments. The control group consisted of explicated instructions to reappraise the situation. I told participants in this group the following:

This is a customer service job. Some customer service organizations require their employees to provide “service with a smile” in spite of all circumstances – this is a requirement here. In order to do your task well, it is important that you express friendliness, warmth, and show positive emotions to your customers. Our motto here is to feel your smile. As the customer service provider, it is your role to smile and it is incredibly important to always appear to be friendly, enthusiastic and show positive emotions all the time – but we don’t want you to just “put on a smile” to the customer, we want you to actually feel your smiles. Try and think of your role as an opportunity to help someone else. Sometime during the task, you may get negative feelings or reactions. You may even get bored, irritated or stressed during the task. But in these situations, try and reassess the situation. For example, even if you have having a bad day think “there is no reason to take it out on the customer.” And put yourself in the shoes of the customer – maybe they’re having a bad day and this is your opportunity to help them. It is not always easy being happy but we would like you to make a strong effort to actually feel the happiness and enthusiasm you display to customers.

Measures

I administered both pre- and post-study surveys to all participants. In addition, each actor completed a short survey of the service they received after each of the three service encounters.

Employee measures. The pre-study survey included demographic questions such as age, gender, and service experience. Following the service simulation, the post-study survey asked participants to indicate their *negative affective experience* to the service task (i.e., to what extent did the service task make you feel...) on a ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely). I selected four emotions from the Job-Related Affective Well-Being Scale (Van Katwyk, Fox, Spector, & Kelloway, 2000). Two were high-intensity negative affective experiences (anger and fury), two were low-intensity negative affective experiences (gloomy and fatigued).

Customer measures. Following each service encounter, the research confederates who assumed the role of customers filled out a service quality measure adapted from Brady and Cronin (2001). The three-item measure asked customers to indicate the extent to which the overall quality of the service was superior, of high quality, and above standard.

Cognitive resource-depletion: I established an index of participant cognitive resource depletion through a combination of two variables. I firstly administered an anagram task to all participants immediately following their three service interactions. In the anagram task, participants had five minutes to rearrange five letters to make an English word. Second, in completing the order forms, participants were required to record whether customers intended to post a letter or a parcel, its destination, and the weight of each the item. Upon completion of the service encounters, I collected all completed order forms and counted the number of errors made on the order forms.

Both the anagram task and errors made on form reflect cognitive resource availability. The successful completion of the anagram requires skill, effort, and self-regulation, with inverse scores serving as an index of resource depletion, as evidenced by the use of such measures by Baumeister and colleagues (e.g., Baumeister et al., 1998, Gailliot, Plant, Butz, & Baumeister, 2007; Gailliot, Schmeichel, & Baumeister, 2006; Muraven et al., 1998). Furthermore, the accurate completion of order forms required cognitive effort, and coding for task error have been used as an index of cognitive resource depletion (Goldberg & Grandey, 2007). I standardized and combined the two variables to construct an index of cognitive resource depletion, with higher scores indicating more cognitive resource depletion, and lower score indicating more available cognitive resources at the participant's disposal.

4.2.2 Results and discussion

I used ANCOVA, with service experience as the covariate, to assess all hypotheses. Previous service experience may enable participants to be more familiar with reappraisal, as well as enable participants to more effectively manage service interactions. Therefore, I controlled for its impact in all analyses.

There was a significant main effect of experimental condition on customer-rated service quality, when controlling for previous service experience $F(1, 36) = 4.29$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .07$. As seen in Table 4.1, customer-rated service quality was higher when participants were primed with reappraisal, compared to those explicitly instructed to reappraise, supporting Hypothesis 4.1a. Participants primed with reappraisal did not experience less high-intensity negative emotions compared to those instructed to reappraise $F(1, 39) = .76$, $p > .05$; but did experience less low-intensity negative emotions than those instructed to deep act when controlling for previous experience,

$F(1, 39) = 4.89, p < .05, \eta^2 = .11$, thereby partly supporting Hypothesis 4.1b. Finally, there was a significant main effect of experimental condition on the cognitive resource depletion index, $F(1, 37) = 4.40, p < .05, \eta^2 = .08$, with those explicitly instructed to reappraise making more errors during the service task, and solving fewer anagrams than those primed to reappraise, supporting Hypothesis 4.1c.

Table 4.1 Mean Service Quality, High-Intensity Negative Emotions, Low-Intensity Negative Emotions, and Cognitive Resource Depletion (SEM) as a Function of the Reappraisal Condition

Experimental Condition	Service Quality	High-Intensity Negative Emotions	Low-Intensity Negative Emotions	Cognitive Resource Depletion
Nonconscious Reappraisal	3.32 (.12) _a	1.99 (.20) _a	1.71 (.22) _a	-0.23 (.14) _a
Conscious Reappraisal	2.96 (.12) _b	1.92 (.19) _a	2.39 (.21) _b	.19 (.14) _b

Note. High-Intensity Negative Emotions denotes the experience of anger and fury. Low-Intensity Negative Emotions denote feeling gloomy and fatigued. I standardized errors made during the task and performance on anagram task (inverted) to construct a mean composite index of cognitive resource depletion. Means in same column with different subscripts differ significantly at $p < .05$.

In Study 4.1, participants primed with reappraisal were rated by customers as demonstrating superior service quality. Furthermore, they experienced less low-intensity negative emotions, relative to those instructed to consciously reappraise. Finally, those primed to reappraise were not as cognitively resource depleted compared to those instructed to reappraise, as indicated by their better performance on anagrams and fewer task error. Together, these findings support the idea that nonconscious reappraisal may be more efficient than conscious attempts at reappraisal, as reflected in enhanced service delivery, reduced negative affect, and fewer errors and better performance in related tasks. The findings compliment previous research showing that

nonconscious processes can be used for successful emotion regulation (Mauss, Cook, et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2009). Furthermore, the findings are largely consistent with the beneficial social, cognitive, affective and life outcomes associated with habitual reappraisers, who are likely to engage in such strategies automatically (Gross & John, 2003; John & Gross, 2004). Together these findings suggest that nonconscious reappraisal is capable of enhancing a range of social, cognitive, and affective outcomes compared to its conscious counterparts.

The above findings highlight the utility of priming nonconscious reappraisal, but the question of whether all forms of nonconscious emotion regulation remains to be answered. Specifically, it remains to be known how nonconscious *suppression* affects employee and performance outcomes. As mentioned previously, conscious suppression requires the expenditure of self-control resources through continuous monitoring and ongoing self-correcting efforts to ensure that expressions are aligned with display rules. If nonconscious processes are more efficient, nonconscious suppression may be capable of enhancing social, cognitive, and affective outcomes associated with service delivery compared to effortful suppression. On the other hand, Mauss et al. (2007) proposed that nonconscious suppression is associated with a more maladaptive profile of findings. Despite operating on a nonconscious level, nonconscious suppression may nevertheless be associated with emotional conflict, and the utilization of resources to ensure that the underlying emotional experiences are not displayed.

In short, while Study 4.1 showed that nonconscious reappraisal is capable of enhancing social, cognitive resource, and affective outcomes, it is not known whether these beneficial effects hold for nonconscious suppression. While nonconscious suppression may enhance outcomes by consuming fewer cognitive resources, the internal conflict between projected and felt emotions may nevertheless be associated

with the expenditure of cognitive resources, which can lead to detrimental outcomes. In Study 4.2, I examine the effects of conscious and nonconscious suppression.

4.3 Study 4.2: Nonconscious versus Conscious Suppression

While researchers have established nonconscious reappraisal as a viable alternative to more deliberate emotion regulation strategies, there have been recent calls for the investigation of a wider range of nonconscious emotional regulation strategies (Mauss, Cook, et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2009). The focus of the second study is to assess the relative impact of nonconscious suppression on social, cognitive resource, and affective outcomes, compared to its conscious counterpart.

It is possible that nonconscious suppression enhances employee and performance outcomes by imposing less onerous demands on working memory for successful emotion regulation. Evidence for this is scarce, but Scott, Tech, and Wagner (2012) found that decreased variability in the performance of surface acting across a two week period predicted more beneficial work outcomes, such as higher job satisfaction and decreased work withdrawal, compared with individuals who were highly variable in their performance of surface acting. Variability in surface acting may be akin to automaticity in that it is consistently used across a variety of emotionally-evocative situations (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999; Scott et al., 2012). It is possible that the beneficial outcomes associated with consistently performing surface acting may be driven by nonconscious processes as nonconscious suppression may use fewer resources than deliberate suppression, and prove to be beneficial to employees. Although Scott et al. (2012) found beneficial effects associated with consistent surface acting, surface acting consists of both faking and suppression (Glomb & Tews, 2004). Research indicates that the effects of surface acting may be specific to the unique

strategy, with suppression, but not faking, being largely associated with detrimental outcomes (Wang & Groth, 2014). Therefore, it is possible that the effects of automatic suppression differ from the effects of automatic surface acting.

Researchers have speculated that nonconscious attempts at suppression may be associated with more detrimental outcomes and lead to ironic processes that subsequently increase the mental accessibility of emotions being suppressed (Mauss, Cook, et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2009). Specifically, Mauss et al. (2007) argued that nonconscious suppression may subsequently increase negative emotions and encourage poorer physiological responses because the underlying conflict between feelings and displays continues to be experienced in nonconscious suppression. Since emotions reflect a valued aspect of one's self-concept (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993), discrepancies between experienced feelings and projected emotional displays can lead to experiences of inner conflict, inauthenticity, and psychological distress (Erickson & Wharton, 1997; Hochschild, 1983). When individuals consciously suppress emotions or are instructed to suppress emotions, the inner conflict and discomfort arising from suppressing may be cognitively labeled and reinterpreted as arising from job requirements (Lazarus, 1991a). However, if individual engages in suppression nonconsciously, this appraisal process may be thwarted. As such, these individuals may be more susceptible to the continuous experience of negative emotions over longer periods of time.

According to Wegner and colleagues (Wegner 1992; 1994; Wenzlaff & Wegner, 2000), suppression induces two separate mental processes – a conscious and effortful operating processes that searches for anything other than the unwanted thought, and a nonconscious ironic monitoring processes that seeks out occurrences of the very thought that is unwanted. The operation of the nonconscious ironic monitoring process enables

the very thought that is unwanted to extreme accessibility and continues to operate even when suppression is discontinued. This process is thought to prevent habituation processes that weaken the impact of the suppressed thought, and instead promote sensitization to the suppressed thoughts (Wegner & Zanakos, 1994). According to Wegner and Zanakos (1994), those who automatically and chronically engage in suppression may develop heightened sensitization processes that make them hyper-vigilant to suppressed thoughts and enhance the ironic effects of suppression, leading the unwanted thoughts to rebound with greater intensity. In other words, unlike nonconscious reappraisal that enables reappraisal mechanisms to operate more efficiently by consuming less resources, the nonconscious suppression may enable ironic processes to become more efficient at the expense of the individual.

Consistent with these accounts, habitual suppressors (i.e., those who are likely to engage in nonconscious suppression) experience higher negative affect and engage more rumination (Gross & John, 2003). Habitual suppressors also suffer from cognitive and social impairments, as well as decreased well-being (John & Gross, 2004). Furthermore Egloff, Schmukle, Burns, and Schwerdtfeger (2006) showed that individuals who retroactively reported that they automatically engaged in suppression during anxiety-provoking events not only experienced more stress (measured physiologically) but also experienced cognitive impairments. Together, these findings suggest that those consistently suppress across time and across a variety of situations, and therefore most likely to engage in suppression nonconsciously, experience detrimental social, cognitive resource and, affective outcomes, compared to those who do not habitually engage in suppression.

In light of the above findings, I expect that nonconscious suppression heightens resource loss to affect their experience of negative affect, their performance on

subsequent anagrams and task performance, and their service delivery, resulting in poorer customer satisfaction (Goldberg & Grandey, 2007).

Hypothesis 4.2 Individual primed to engage in unconscious emotion suppression will (a) be rated more poorly by customer confederates in terms of service delivery; (b) experience heightened levels of negative affect; and (c) make more task errors and perform more poorly on subsequent anagrams, compared with those who engage in conscious emotion suppression.

4.3.1 Method

Participants

40 undergraduate students (28 female, mean age = 19.75 years) participated in this study for partial fulfillments of research requirements for an introduction to management course. 26 participants had prior service experience (mean experience of 2.36 years)

Procedure and measures

The procedure for Study 4.2 was identical to that of Study 4.1 in the training and post-office simulation, with the exception of differences in the manipulation materials.

Manipulations

Priming Stimuli: To manipulate automatic surface acting, I adapted the Sentence Unscrambling Task, in which participants were required to construct grammatical four-word sentences from five jumbled words. This task was attached to the end of the pre-study survey. Participants were told that it was a “linguistic task.” For the implicit suppression condition, participants were asked to complete a task where ten of the 19

sentences were embedded with suppression items, such as “hide,” “covered,” and “mask.” The conscious suppression condition consisted of explicated instructions to engage in suppression. I told participants in this group the following:

This is a customer service job. Some customer service organizations require their employees to provide “service with a smile” in spite of all circumstance – this is a requirement here. In order to do your task well, it is important that you express friendliness, warmth, and show positive emotions to your customers. Our motto here is “put a smile on your face.” As the customer service provider, it is your role to smile – put on a happy performance for the customer. It is incredibly important to always appear to be friendly, enthusiastic, and show positive emotions all the time. It is extremely important for the sake of quality customer service that if you have any negative feelings or reactions, please try your best to not let those feelings show. Instead, you should hide and mask your negative emotions. Even if you get bored, irritated or stressed, don’t ever let customers know you are feeling bad – instead put on a smile and be friendly.

4.3.2 Results and discussion

As with Study 4.1, I used ANCOVA with service experience as the covariate. There was a significant main effect for experimental condition on customer-rated service quality, $F(1, 34) = 4.80, p < .05, \eta^2 = .08$. As shown in Table 4.2, customer-rated service quality was higher when participants were instructed to consciously suppress, compared to those primed with unconscious suppression. This supports Hypothesis 4.2a. Also, participants primed with suppression experienced more high-intensity negative emotions, such as anger and fury, than those instructed to surface act, $F(1, 37) = 4.95, p < .05, \eta^2 = .11$, but did not differ in their experience of low-intensity negative emotions compared to participants instructed to suppress, $F(1, 37) = 1.88, p > .05$. Therefore, Hypothesis 4.2b was partly supported. Finally, there is a significant main

effect of experimental condition on errors, $F(1, 36) = 6.97$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .14$, with those explicitly instructed to suppress being less depleted than those primed to suppress, thus supporting Hypothesis 4.2c.

Table 4.2 Mean Service Quality, High-Intensity Negative Emotions, Low-Intensity Negative Emotions, and Cognitive Resource Depletion (SEM) as a Function of the Suppression Condition

Experimental Condition	Service Quality	High-Intensity Negative Emotions	Low-Intensity Negative Emotions	Cognitive Resource Depletion
Conscious Suppression	3.48 (.16) _a	1.63 (.25) _a	2.39 (.21) _a	1.73 (.22) _a
Nonconscious Suppression	2.98 (.16) _b	2.42 (.25) _b	1.71 (.22) _a	2.17 (.22) _b

Note. High-Intensity Negative Emotions denotes the experience of anger and fury. Low-Intensity Negative Emotions denote feeling gloomy and fatigued. I standardized errors made during the task and performance on anagram task (inverted) to construct a mean composite index of cognitive resource depletion. Means in same column with different subscripts differ significantly at $p < .05$.

Study 4.2 shows that unconscious suppression is associated with poorer service delivery, as rated by customers, compared to explicit instructions to suppress emotions. Furthermore, nonconscious suppression predicted poorer performance on subsequent anagrams, and more errors during the task, suggesting that these participants become depleted following nonconscious suppression. These findings suggest that, rather than facilitating performance by using fewer cognitive resources in order to manage affective experiences, nonconscious suppression may be more detrimental performance by using more cognitive resources than active attempts to suppress negative emotions.

One potential explanation comes from research showing that negative emotions can gain increased accessibility following efforts to suppress their experience (Gross &

John, 2003; Wegner, 1994). This is, in part, evidenced by heightened experiences of anger and fury following nonconscious suppression. It is possible that nonconscious suppression enabled the ironic processes that heighten the subsequent experience of the suppressed emotion to become more efficient, therefore amplifying its associated negative effects on resource consumption and performance.

4.4 General Discussion

Organizational display rules often leave employees with one of two options. Employees can either choose to exert effort and regulate emotions to comply with expected display rules at the expense of utilizing resources that impair subsequent self-control tasks and contributes to strain (Goldberg & Grandey, 2007; Grandey, 2000). Alternatively, employees can choose not to regulate their emotions and show their internal feelings, such as getting angry at abusive customers, which may result in organization punishment (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987; Sutton, 1991). In this paper, I explore a potential third option – nonconscious emotional regulation.

Drawing on the literature on emotion regulation and nonconscious processes, I examined the utility of priming concepts associated with one antecedent- and one response-focused emotion regulation strategy on a variety of social, cognitive, and affective outcomes associated with service delivery. In Study 4.1, I compared the effects of priming concepts associated with reappraisal (antecedent-focused) while in Study 4.2, I compared the effects of suppression (response-focused) to their respective conscious counterparts. I found that the antecedent-focused strategy of reappraisal was associated with beneficial outcomes across a variety of social, cognitive, and affective domains, whereas the response-focused strategy of suppression was largely predicted maladaptive outcomes.

4.4.1 Theoretical contribution

My findings enhance our understanding of the ways in which people manage their emotional displays at work and its associated impact on customers and employees. While there is a growing body of literature examining the performance implications of emotion regulation at work (Chi, Grandey, Diamond, & Krimmel, 2011; Groth et al., 2009; see Hülshager & Schewe, 2011 and Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012 for meta-analysis), there is also growing recognition that self-control can be activated nonconsciously (Dijksterhuis & Aarts, 2010). While the emotion regulation literature has long discussed the potential for such regulatory efforts to become routinized and automatic (Gross, 1998), empirical evidence for such phenomena have been scarce.

In testing the viability of nonconscious emotion regulation in this study, the reactions of the customer to employees is a pivotal step in progressing the literature. Recent evidence suggests that appraisal can indeed be pursued automatically with priming, and is capable of regulating internal experiences of emotion, as measured through self-report and physiological symptoms (Mauss et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2009). Yet, exercising control over emotions is a social act, and the viability of nonconscious emotion regulation not only lies in self-experience, but also in social performance.

In this Chapter, I found that nonconscious reappraisal was associated with better customer-rated performance. It is possible that those who engaged in nonconscious reappraisal had more authentic smiles, since participants were unaware of exerting conscious control over their emotions. However, my findings suggest that this enhanced customer-rated performance may have been driven by the utilization of fewer cognitive

resources as a result of nonconscious processes, as reflected by the cognitive resource index (i.e. better performance and anagram and fewer task errors).

On the other hand, my results suggest that nonconscious suppression is associated with poorer customer-rated performance. Despite automatic processes being associated with more efficient processes (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999; Latham et al., 2010), nonconscious suppression predicted poorer service performance. The adverse consequences of nonconscious suppression on service delivery may be driven, in part, by the heightened use of resources. In support of this, my findings suggested that nonconscious suppression was associated with poorer cognitive resource depletion scores (i.e., more task errors and poorer performance anagrams). This suggests that nonconscious suppression predicted more resource loss during the service task, when compared to active attempts to suppress, which is already thought to be especially depleting for employees (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Grandey, 2000).

The findings on the social impact of nonconscious reappraisal and suppression speak to the importance of examining both antecedent- and response-focused nonconscious emotion regulation strategies. My findings largely support the claims made by Mauss et al. (2007), who suggest that nonconscious antecedent-focused strategies exhibit different profiles to response-focused strategies. Specifically, Mauss et al. (2007) suggested that nonconscious antecedent-focused regulation strategies, such as reappraisal, may result in a more adaptive profile by decreasing the experience of negative emotions and facilitating healthy physiological functioning by directly targeting the experience of those emotions. In support of this, I found that nonconscious reappraisal predicted lower experiences negative emotions following interactions with difficult customers. Again, this finding may reflect the utilization of fewer resources by nonconscious performers of reappraisal. Alternatively, this finding can also indicate that

individuals who nonconsciously reappraised emotions were less aware of conflicting negative emotional states in the first place.

On the other hand, Mauss et al. (2007) suggested that nonconscious response-focused strategies, such as suppression, may exhibit a maladaptive profile by increasing negative emotions and poorer physiological responses because the underlying emotional experiences may continue to require regulatory effort and result in conflict. In support of this, I found that those primed with suppression experienced heightened negative emotions compared to those who deliberately suppressed negative feelings. The heightening of negative emotional experiences in nonconscious suppression may be attributed to ironic effects that subsequently increase the experience of suppressed negative emotions (Wegner 1992; 1994; Zenzlaff & Wegner, 2000).

As stated previously, individuals who automatically engage in suppression may develop heightened sensitization processes that make them hyper-vigilant to suppressed thoughts, leading the unwanted thoughts to rebound with greater intensity (Wegner & Zanakos, 1994). As such, those primed with nonconscious suppression may consequently have heightened experiences of the negative emotions being suppressed. Such findings are consistent with reports that chronic suppressors experience heightened accessibility of the emotions being suppressed (Gross & John, 2003). This heightened experience of negative emotions following nonconscious suppression may make it increasingly difficult for employees to maintain affective displays. As a result, employees may be required to further engage in effortful emotion regulation to not only display appropriate emotions but to also minimize the increasingly accessible experience negative emotional experiences. Furthermore, heightened negative emotional experiences might be prone to leakage and the detection of inauthenticity by

customers (Ekman & Friesen, 1982; Groth et al., 2009), resulting in poorer ratings of customer performance.

According to Gross and John (2003, p. 348), those who habitually use a strategy may do so “automatically, without much conscious awareness or deliberation” and it is interesting to note that the findings reported in this study draws strong parallels to the findings on habitual reappraisers and suppressors (Gross & John, 2003; John & Gross, 2004). Specifically, Gross and John (2003) found that habitual reappraisers experienced more positive social outcomes and more hedonic emotions whereas habitual suppressors were more likely to experience negative emotions, ruminate, and experience cognitive memory impairments (Gross & John, 2003; John & Gross, 2004). Habitual suppressors also reported having fewer close relationships and being less liked by peers (Gross & John, 2003; John & Gross, 2004). Together, these findings suggest that nonconscious reappraisal and suppression may be, in part, implicated in the social, cognitive, and affective consequences associated with habitual emotion regulation.

4.4.2 Practical implications and limitations

One important implication of the findings is that the performance of emotional labor can be activated automatically and serve to guide behavior in a similar ways to deliberate efforts to manage emotions. The findings support recent studies showing how emotions are capable of being managed automatically and also support the idea that some forms of emotional management can be largely cost-free, whereas others can be largely detrimental (Mauss, Bunge, et al., 2007). Further, the effects of nonconscious reappraisal and suppression on indices of cognitive resource depletion may have important implications for organizations. Nonconscious emotion regulation may not only benefit and harm organizations through customer perceptions of service quality,

but may also affect objective task performance and problem solving in organizations. Finally, the results of the analysis indicate that nonconscious emotion regulation also influences employee's experiences of negative affective experiences. Such negative affective experiences are known to influence workplace deviance behaviors (Spector & Fox, 2002) and personal well-being outcomes (Van Katwyk et al., 2000). Therefore, the effects of nonconscious emotion regulation can also influence organizational behaviors that ultimately affect performance and turnover (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998).

Evidence suggests that routine practice can drive the enactment of nonconscious behaviors (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999; Bargh, Gollwitzer, Lee-Chai, Barndollar, & Trötschel, 2001; Gollwitzer, 1999). For example, individuals who were socialized to regulate emotions from early childhood were more likely to become proficient at automatically regulating their emotions (Mauss, Cook, et al., 2007). If this is the case, social norms can effectively serve as a prime for individuals to engage in specific emotion regulatory acts. Organizations are capable of fostering environments that communicate implicit rules, values, and expectations about the provision of services and service quality (Schneider, Wheeler, & Cox, 1992; Schneider, White, & Paul, 1998). If organizations are able to cultivate a service climate that communicates the importance of emotional displays through deep acting, and engage in efforts to minimize the use of surface acting, it is possible that such norms are capable of being expressed automatically to the benefit of the organization.

In this study, I compared the effects of conscious and nonconscious emotional labor. I did not include a control or 'no regulation' condition. This might make the findings somewhat more difficult to interpret (e.g., did participants engage in emotion regulation when instructed?). However, I recorded all service interactions between employees and customers and there was no evidence of employees being uncivil or

projecting their feelings towards confederates. In other words, video evidence suggests that all participants exercised emotion control. Also, I believe that the strong experimental situation (i.e., playing the role of the service provider in a simulated, yet complex and realistic, service experience) made the inclusion of a control condition unfeasible. That is, if I had not provided participants with either explicit rules or priming, given the implicit norms regarding service provision, participants would have nevertheless tried to control their emotional expressions and experiences. Future studies may try to account for this by, perhaps, encouraging participants to express their feelings and using this condition as a comparison group.

Another possibility that may explain the findings concerns experimenter or demand characteristics that may have affected participants' experience of negative emotions across conditions, and therefore tamper with the validity and interpretation of the findings. I attempted to limit this by ensuring that the confederate actors were blind to the experimental sessions. Such confounds can be potentially addressed by controlling for the experience of negative emotions when interacting with confederate customers. However, doing so will interrupt the interaction between participants and confederates, compromise the trajectory in which emotions naturally develop, and the external validity of the study. Further, it would be quite difficult to disentangle the effects of different emotion regulation strategies on the trajectory in which emotions develop. For instance, reappraisal should stall the actual development of negative emotions in the first place since it is an antecedent-focused emotion regulation strategy.

Another potential limitation concerns the absence of a manipulation check to discern whether concepts were indeed primed. As stated by Latham, Stajkovic, and Locke (2010) the priming literature rarely determines whether the nonconscious is indeed affected by the priming stimuli." One reason for this is because the nonconscious is

difficult, if not impossible, to directly measure and indirect tests may pose more questions than answers. Despite this, Thematic Apperception Tests (TAT) and Implicit Association Tests (IAT) may be potential indirect avenues of measuring if priming procedures were indeed successful. Variants of the IAT can be used to measure the efficiency and the underlying accessibility of the underlying mental representation (Bargh & Chartrand, 1997). Shantz and Latham (2009) successfully used the TAT to measure the accessibility of a prime. Specifically, the researchers found that need for achievement imagery was significantly higher following the prime of a woman winning a race than in the control condition. Measuring the mental processes mediating primes is important but under-investigated in the priming literature, and future studies can benefit from investigating these intermediate processes.

Despite clearly instructing participants to engage in reappraisal and suppression, it is possible that participants did not follow such instructions and instead employed their own strategies. As such, manipulation checks for the conscious conditions, e.g. self-report, may have also been useful in discerning the intermediate processes. In addition, it is possible that participants primed to engage in nonconscious emotion regulation in fact engaged in conscious emotion regulation. It is possible that the priming of concepts associated with suppression and reappraisal may induce individuals to become more susceptible to engaging in these strategies through their own volition, such that these previously primed concepts now become “naturally felt emotions.” Ultimately, it is difficult to ascertain how exactly primed concepts become enacted and its linkages with deliberate conscious effort, though the use of IAT and TAT, mentioned previously, will assist in determining the mediating pathways through which primes take effect.

Finally, while suppression-related primes can limit the expression of negative affective experiences during the service task, particularly in light of uncivil customers, it might have also curtailed the display of positive emotions towards customers as well. As a result, poorer customer-service performance evaluations may reflect diminished expressions of positive affect, rather than the proposed mechanism of ironic processes. Yet, in the context of emotions, suppression refers to conscious or nonconscious efforts to decrease the display of *experienced* emotions. In the service simulation, it was unlikely that participants would experience positive emotions in the presence of uncivil customers that could be suppressed as a result of priming. Furthermore, suppression is associated with rebound effects and the suppression of positive emotions should also be reflected in heightened positive affective experiences following the service interaction, which I did not find. In fact, I only found evidence of increased high-intensity negative emotions (anger and fury) following suppression primes, consistent with the well-documented ironic effects of suppression (Wenzlaff & Wegner, 2000). Although there were limited opportunities to suppress genuine experience of positive emotions, it was nevertheless still possible and could complicate the interpretation of findings.

In this study I compared conscious emotion regulation strategies with their nonconscious counterparts. I did not directly assess how nonconscious reappraisal compared to suppression. Consistent with Mauss et al (2007) I find that nonconscious suppression exhibits a maladaptive, and nonconscious reappraisal exhibits an adaptive, profile, but only in relation to their conscious counterparts. The question of whether nonconscious suppression and reappraisal exhibits a similar pattern of findings in relation to one another remains. Finally, while I appeal to the literature on habitual reappraisers and suppressors in order to shed light on the potential outcomes associated with nonconscious reappraisal and suppression, I did not assess habitual reappraisal and

suppression in this study. According to Williams et al. (2009), the habitual engagement of emotion regulation strategies should render such processes to become more automatic. Williams et al. (2009) finds that priming concepts associated with reappraisal is more beneficial to non-habitual reappraisers because habitual reappraisers tend to automatically engage in nonconscious reappraisal across a variety of situations. Future studies may also wish to examine whether this is true for nonconscious suppression.

4.5 Conclusion

In service settings, employees' management of their emotions is pivotal in ensuring organizational success. Much of the emotional labor literature centers on effortful processes to control the expression of emotions (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012). However, in light of research showing the viability of nonconscious processes in controlling regulatory efforts (Dijksterhuis & Aarts, 2010), this research sought to examine whether nonconscious emotional labor is a viable option for controlling affective displays during service delivery. The findings from two studies suggest that nonconscious processes are capable of controlling the display of emotions in the workplace and enhance social, cognitive, and affective aspects of service performance. The control of emotions in the workplace through conscious and nonconscious means enhances our understanding of self-control processes in the workplace and highlights the potential for nonconscious influences in everyday life.

Chapter 5

It doesn't look right: Evidence of dual processes in the judgment of inauthentic emotions in service settings and the critical role of emotional intelligence

Emotional displays play a critical role in guiding interpersonal interactions and social judgments processes between employees and customers. The perception of inauthentic employee emotional displays by customers predicts poorer customer outcomes, but the perception of emotions in others are often inaccurate and errors are common. In this study, I ask if customers are always aware of employees' inauthenticity and explore the circumstances under which customers are more or less likely to be accurate in their perceptions. Across two experiments, I consider the role of dual-processes in human cognition and emotional intelligence in driving accurate customer perceptions of employee emotions. The findings from experiment 5.1 suggests that customers are more likely to be accurate in their perceptions of employee inauthentic emotional displays when guided by automatic and intuitive heuristic processes, but only with emotional intelligence is high. The findings from experiment 5.2 suggest that customers are more likely to be inaccurate when guided by analytical and systematic processes, but only when emotional intelligence is low. Together, these findings highlight the importance and potential of dual-process theories and emotional intelligence in social-functional accounts of emotions.

5.1 Introduction

Service organizations often enforce strong display requirements on frontline staff to ensure that service is provided with a smile. In complying with these display

requirements, employees can be authentic or inauthentic in their emotional performance to customers. This raises the question to what extent customers are aware of the employee's inauthenticity. While there is little doubt that customer judgments regarding the authenticity of employee emotions play a strong role in service quality perceptions (Grandey et al., 2005; Groth et al., 2009), such judgments are surprisingly difficult to make and are often prone to errors (DePaulo, 1992; Ekman et al., 1999). Despite recent developments in the emotions literature emphasizing the critical role of these judgments in determining the social outcomes of displayed emotions (Van Kleef, 2009), surprisingly little is known how these judgments are made, the mechanisms responsible for them, and why errors occur.

When tasked with any judgment situation, including social judgments, people typically rely on one of two processes (Evans, 2008). They can rely on heuristic processes to make rapid and intuitive judgments that require little deliberation (e.g., stereotyping). Alternatively, they can rely on systematic and deliberative processes to critically analyze relevant information in working memory to arrive at a judgment. These dual-processes play a crucial but, at times, competitive role in a range of social reasoning, judgment and decision making phenomena, including stereotyping and moral judgments (Evans, 2008; Haidt, 2001). Despite the pervasive influence of dual process theories in explaining phenomena from a variety of psychological domains and the clear links between emotional interpretation and heuristic processing (Evans, 2008), such accounts have yet to be explicitly considered in the emotions literature. Dual process theories may hold the key to not only predicting the social judgments stemming from the emotional performance of service providers but also in understanding why errors occur.

I propose that the quality of social judgments in regards to accuracy and errors stemming from feigned employee emotional displays depend on the relative influence of heuristic or systematic processes. In other words, customers' accuracy in perceiving the authentic or inauthentic emotional display of service employees' emotions depend, in part, on whether customers engage in heuristic or deliberative processes when judging the employee's emotional performance. Evidence largely suggests that the perception of nonverbal behavior is largely automatic and requires minimal cognitive processing (Ambady & Rosenthal, 1992; Hatfield et al., 1994). Furthermore, Evans (2008) noted that emotions seem to be intrinsically linked with fast and intuitive heuristic-based systems. In following this line of argument, I propose that emotional information is tied with heuristic processing and that social judgments stemming from the emotional displays of others are most accurate when guided by heuristic processes. Furthermore, I propose that inducing individuals to adopt a systematic and analytical processing style for emotional displays may undermine accuracy.

I contend that the extent to which heuristic processing benefits the veracity of emotional judgments, and the extent to which systematic processing impairs accuracy, may critically depend on the quality of emotional schemas that enable people to readily understand emotional information. In other words, the extent to which judgments facilitate and impair accuracy may depend on the individual's ability to accurately perceive emotions in others and to use that information to enhance thought (Mayer, Roberts, & Barsade, 2008), or emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is important to both employee's use of emotional labor and customer's perception of emotional labor (Daus & Ashkanasy, 2005; Grandey, 2000; Joseph & Newman, 2010). Despite this, empirical studies tend to focus on the intrapersonal effects of emotional intelligence on employee well-being outcomes (Johnson & Spector, 2007; Moïra

Mikolajczak et al., 2007; Totterdell & Holman, 2003) rather than the role of emotional intelligence in dyadic service interactions. In this study, I focus on the role of emotional intelligence in customer judgment processes. Specifically, I examine the moderating role that emotional intelligence plays in the relationship between customers' processing strategy and their assessment of the emotional performance of service employees.

In sum, I argue that individuals are less likely to develop favorable impressions of employees who feign emotions in their service provision when engaging in heuristic processing; and that these effects are strengthened when the perceiver's emotional intelligence is high. I designed two experimental studies to test these propositions. The chapter unfolds as follows. First, I provide a broad literature review on the critical role of dual process theory and emotional intelligence in the social perception of emotions. Next, I introduce my first study and my first hypothesis. I detail my methods and test if inducing heuristic processing for emotional information leads to less favorable impressions of service providers who feigned emotional displays, and the role of emotional intelligence in moderating the strength of this relationship. I present my results, followed by a brief discussion of the findings. Next, I introduce my second study and my second hypothesis. I detail my methods and I test if inducing systematic processing for emotional information lead to more favorable impressions of employees who feign emotional displays, and the role of emotional intelligence in moderating this relationship. I present my results, followed by a brief discussion of the findings. I conclude this chapter with a general discussion of the findings across the two studies, and the implications of those findings to theory and practice.

5.1.1 Socio-functional perspective of emotions

Researchers have long recognized the critical role of facial displays in interpersonal and social functioning (Keltner & Haidt, 1999; Van Kleef, 2009). Socio-functional accounts of emotion have been successfully used to predict and explain the effects of displaying discrete emotions such as sadness, anger, and happiness across diverse fields such as leadership, negotiations, and service interactions (van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2004; Van Kleef et al., 2009). A key feature across these socio-functional perspectives is that the display of emotions triggers judgment processes in observers about the internal experiences and motivations of the sender (see Van Kleef, 2009, for more information). For example, the display of inauthentic positive emotions is associated with less favorable judgments regarding the person's honesty, pleasantness and likeability (Ekman et al., 1990; Frank et al., 1993; Surakka & Hietanen, 1998), as well as trust and cooperation (Krumhuber et al., 2007).

Despite the commonalities between different socio-functional perspectives of emotions, most accounts do not delineate how inferences are developed in the first place, and whether these inferences are accurate given the display of others. This is especially pertinent since emotional displays can be feigned for impression management and to conceal the truth (DePaulo, 1992; DePaulo et al., 2003; Ekman & O'Sullivan, 1991). Individuals may be particularly prone to feigning emotions in situations where they are expected to project certain displays. For example, service employees may be especially motivated to provide "service with a smile," despite not feeling that way at any given moment, because it is considered an occupational requirement (Diefendorff et al., 2006). Displays of positive emotions largely predict beneficial customer outcomes such as time spent in store and loyalty intentions (Pugh, 2001; Tsai & Huang, 2002), but fake positive emotions can signal that service providers are unmotivated to help customers, manipulative in their impression management, or insincere in their

recommendations (Grandey et al., 2005; Groth et al., 2009). Furthermore, perceptions of service employee inauthenticity predict lower service provider friendliness and customer satisfaction (Grandey et al., 2005). It is therefore crucial for individuals to accurately determine the veracity of employee's emotional displays, especially since these inferences play a critical role in guiding social life.

Despite the importance of detecting inauthentic displays, it is surprisingly difficult to determine whether observed facial displays are genuine or feigned in any social context (DePaulo, 1992; Ekman et al., 1999). While people seem able to differentiate between truthful and dishonest communications, most are only able to do so at a level slightly above chance (Bond & DePaulo, 2006). Inaccurate detection of feigned displays seems to be driven by the lack of consistently reliable cues that indicate deception (DePaulo et al., 2003), and the tendency for people to believe others (Millar & Millar, 1997). Therefore, judgments and inferences stemming from other's feigned emotions seem particularly prone to error.

5.1.2 Dual process accounts of judgment and decision making

How do people decide if an observed facial display is genuine or inauthentic? In order to clarify the underlying mechanisms of the inferential processes triggered by emotional displays, and why errors might occur during that process, I draw upon dual-processes perspectives of judgment and decision making. Across the psychological literature, researchers have suggested that there are two distinct inferential processes in making judgments and decisions that often complement one another, but at times play a competitive role (Evans, 2008; Kahneman, 2011). First, heuristic processing is characterized by the relatively automatic, intuitive, and fast processing of information in judgment and decision-making. On the other hand, systematic processing is

characterized by the relatively controlled, deliberative, analytical, and slow processing of information. Despite the pervasive influence of dual process accounts in explaining a variety of judgments and social phenomena, these theories are rarely discussed when describing how inferences are formed from others' emotional displays. This is particularly surprising given the traction of social-functional accounts of emotions, which explicitly considers the role of judgments, attributions, and inferences in the interpersonal effects of displayed emotions (Van Kleef, Homan, & Cheshin, 2012).

On most tasks, dual-processes work in tandem and without conflict. Yet, in some cases, promoting heuristic processes (by constraining working memory) can lead to superior outcomes, especially on integrative tasks (Hoffmann, van Helversen & Rieskamp, 2013; Markman, Maddox & Worthy, 2006). For instance, Hoffmann et al. (2013) found that cognitive load improved performance on similarity-based tasks involving multiple-cues. Furthermore, Markman et al. (2006) showed that reducing working memory resources enhances performance on holistic and information-integration tasks. The superiority of expert judgments is also characterized by intuitive heuristic-based responses, rather than deliberate analytic thought. For instance, Klein's (1999) "recognition-primed decision" model describes the tendency for experts to rely on automatic, non-conscious pattern matching, rather than careful and considered analytical thought. Furthermore, Reyna (2004) documented the progression from computational analytical reasoning styles to intuitive gist-based reasoning styles as novices become experts. More recently, Dijksterhuis and colleagues claimed that non-conscious decision making leads to superior performance (Dijksterhuis et al., 2006). Taken together, this research suggests that, at the very least, heuristic-based processes can lead to superior judgments under some circumstances.

One question that remains unanswered is which processing style is superior when it comes to making judgments regarding feigned emotional displays. I assert that the processing of emotional information results in better outcomes with heuristic processing. According to Evans (2008), emotions are linked with heuristic rather than systematic processes, and recent work has explicitly contrasted the fast and intuitive heuristic-based systems driven, in part, by emotions with a slower and more deliberative cognitive style characteristic of systematic processes (Haidt, 2001). Researchers in the emotions field often appeal to the innate nature of emotions, its universality in the spontaneous emotional expressions across cultures (Ekman, 1993), and its critical functions in not only motivating action for survival, but signaling such motivations for others in order to rapidly coordinate social interactions (Keltner & Haidt, 1999; Turner, 2009). Others speak to the seemingly effortless and automatic flow of emotions between interaction partners that facilitates emotional recognition and understanding (Hatfield et al., 1994). Coupled with evidence that automatic judgments on nonverbal information are typically very accurate (Ambady & Rosenthal, 1992; Kenny, Horner, Kashy, & Chu, 1992), judgments regarding others' display of emotions seem to be primarily driven by automatic, reflective, and impulsive tendencies characteristic of heuristics processes, rather than the controlled and analytical characteristics associated with systematic processes.

One of the reasons why judgments regarding the veracity of emotion-based information are ideally suited towards heuristic processing pertains to the limited processing capacity associated with systematic processing. Conscious thinking and deliberation characteristic of systematic processing is constrained by the confines of working memory (see Miller, 1956). These features of systematic processing can undermine the performance of complex tasks that rely on multiple cues. On the other

hand, heuristic processing is not confined to the limitations of working memory and therefore assumed to have greater processing capacity (Dijksterhuis, 2004; Dijksterhuis & Nordgren, 2006). As such, complex judgments are thought to be more accurate under heuristic processing, as evidenced by studies showing how heuristic processes can assist performance in complex tasks such as lie detection (Reinhard, Greifeneder, Scharmach, 2013). Furthermore, research suggests that heuristic processes may be more apt at weighing information cues (Dijksterhuis & Nordgren, 2006) and less prone to top-down processing. Together, this evidence suggests that heuristic processes may be beneficial to the judgment of complex information requiring multiple cue judgments, as is the case with emotion information. Being unconstrained by the demands of working memory, heuristic processes may be better able to capture the global or gestalt array of subtle and often fleeting emotion and nonverbal cues indicative of inauthenticity. Systematic processing, on the other hand, depends on working memory capacity and is often characterized by sequential processing. It is difficult to conceive how individuals might perform these complex tasks – detecting and understanding the vast configuration of subtle nonverbal cues across various communication channels – accurately and in real time if relying on working memory alone.

From the above, I conclude that the processing of emotional information is more ideally suited for heuristic processes. Indeed, evidence largely suggests that imposing irrelevant cognitive distractions that occupy working memory, which prevents systematic processing and induces heuristic processing, can improve accuracy for emotional or nonverbal judgment tasks (Gilbert & Krull, 1988). Likewise, Patterson and Stockbridge (1998) showed that cognitive demands improve judgments of nonverbal information when participants are instructed to form general impressions of the target, compared to those instructed to carefully examine nonverbal cues. Therefore,

individuals may make better and more accurate inferences regarding the emotional displays of others when they rely on heuristic processing.

5.1.3 The Moderating role of emotional intelligence

While there is evidence that heuristic processes can lead to superior judgments in some tasks (Gilbert & Krull, 1988; Hoffmann et al., 2013; Patterson & Stockbridge, 1998), this relationship is generally contingent on an individual's relevant experience. For example, Klein's (1998) research on decision making suggests that the superior performance of experts is characterized by their ability to automatically extract and match patterns of cues from their environment to existing knowledge structures. This approach requires a degree of familiarity with the area of judgment, and relies on the "correct" associations between cues and meaning (Klein, 1989). Individuals who do not possess the necessary associations, or possess suboptimal associations, cannot engage in such pattern recognition. For instance, Beilock, Carr, MacMahon and Starkes (2002) found that experienced golfers putted better and right-footed experienced soccer players dribbled better when distracted (i.e., working memory resources occupied, thus inducing automatic processes). In other words, heuristic processes are capable of driving accurate judgments when individuals have the relevant schemas for their accurate interpretation (Evans, 2008).

In the context of emotion recognition, this raises the questions of whether there are people better experienced at recognizing and understanding the emotions of others. One potential factor that makes people better at recognizing emotions in others is their emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence concerns the "ability to carry out accurate reasoning about emotions and the ability to use emotions and emotional knowledge to enhance thought" (Mayer et al., 2008, p.511). Emotional intelligence is

fundamentally a set of mental *abilities* concerning emotional concepts that vary between individuals within a population. While there are several variants on the conceptualization and operationalization of emotional intelligence (see Mayer et al., 2008 for discussion of these issues), one core aspect of emotional intelligence is a person's ability to correctly perceive and identify emotions in others. People differ in their ability to decode and recognize the nonverbal emotions signaled by others, and their ability to use this information to further their understanding of the individual, the situation, and themselves.

Despite the importance of emotional intelligence to both employee's use of emotional labor and customer's perception of emotional labor (Daus & Ashkanasy, 2005; Grandey, 2000; Joseph & Newman, 2010), there is surprisingly little empirical research investigating the effects of emotional intelligence on the emotional labor process. Of these limited studies, most focus on the intrapersonal effects of emotional intelligence on employee well-being outcomes (Johnson & Spector, 2007; Moïra Mikolajczak et al., 2007; Totterdell & Holman, 2003) rather than the role of emotional intelligence in dyadic employee-customer interactions.

In this chapter, I explicitly consider the role of emotional intelligence as a moderator of customer judgment processes. As mentioned previously, I suggest that the perception of emotional information is ideally suited towards automatic intuitive and heuristic processes rather than analytical systematic processes (Evans, 2003; Haidt, 2001). However, the extent to which heuristic processes enhances performance depends on the individual's history of relevant experience and schemas for the accurate interpretation of information (Beilock et al., 2002; Klein, 1999). Therefore, I propose that heuristic-processes lead to more accurate customer perceptions of service employee emotional displays, but only when customer emotional intelligence is high. Individuals

with higher emotional intelligence should possess the necessary cognitive infrastructure and schemas to take advantage of pattern matching that enables heuristic-based processes to be effective. As such, heuristic-processes should lead to more accurate interpretation of employee emotional displays, but only when customer emotional intelligence is high. Furthermore, given that emotional intelligence concerns the ability for individuals to recognize the nonverbal behaviors of others, it may offer a protective function when systematic processing is induced.

I test the central ideas of this paper across two experimental studies by using manipulations known to induce both heuristic and systematic processing styles. I also assess how emotional intelligence interacts with these dual processes to influence customer judgments regarding the performance of a service employee displaying inauthentic emotions. In the first study, I test whether cognitive depletion, which is known to foster switching to heuristic-based processes, leads to more accurate subjective judgments regarding the affective performance of an inauthentic service employee, and how this interacts with emotional intelligence. In the second study, I test whether negative moods, which induces people to adopt systematic processing styles, leads to less accurate subjective judgments regarding the affective performance on an inauthentic service employee, and the role of emotional intelligence in moderating this relationship. In the following section, I present the arguments leading to the first study and hypothesis.

5.2 Study 5.1: Cognitive load in judgments of affective performance

5.2.1 Introduction

It is generally accepted that systematic processing is driven by and depends on working memory processes (Evans, 2003, 2008). Working memory, however, is a finite

resource, only capable of processing a limited number of items simultaneously (Baddeley, 1992). When cumulative demands or cognitive load exceeds that limitation, the rate and amount of information that can be processed systematically is reduced (Sweller, 1988), and systematic processing suffers. In support of this, high cognitive load, which occupies working memory, can disrupt performance on target tasks that rely on systematic processing, but not affect performance in heuristic-based tasks. For example, cognitive load impairs performance in sequential rule-based tasks but not on tasks that rely on global similarity-based judgments (Hoffmann et al., 2013; Markman et al., 2006). Cognitive load similarly impaired performance on utilitarian moral judgments (judgments based on minimizing harm and maximizing gains) but had little influence on non-utilitarian moral judgments that rely on emotional responses (Greene, Morelli, Lowenberg, Nystrom, & Cohen, 2008). Finally, the depletion of self-control resources affects the controlled stereotype responses, but does not impact automatic stereotype responses (Govorun & Payne, 2006). Furthermore, there is mounting evidence that high cognitive load can “shift” individuals to engage in heuristic processing to the benefit of tasks that rely on automatic or heuristic-processes (De Neys, 2006; Evans & Curtis-Holmes, 2005). For instance, cognitive load enhances interpersonal judgments based on nonverbal behavior (Gilbert & Krull, 1988; Patterson & Stockbridge, 1998), as well as improve the performance of experienced golfers and soccer players (Beilock et al., 2002). Together, the above findings suggest that working memory demands impair performance on tasks that rely on systematic processes, but enhance performance on tasks that rely on heuristic processes.

As stated previously, the processing of emotional information is ideally-suited to heuristic processing, but only when individuals possess a history of relevant experience, such as high emotional intelligence. Depleting cognitive resources on a peripheral task

should then engage heuristic processes and enhance their perception of other's emotional performance for individuals with high emotional intelligence. In order to gauge the accuracy of interpersonal judgments in service settings, study participants were asked to watch a video depicting a customer service interaction, whereby the employee had faked positive and suppressed negative emotions. Since the employee in the video is engaging in inauthentic displays, lower ratings of the employee's affective performance may be considered more accurate, whereas higher ratings may be considered inaccurate. Thus, I hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 5.1 There is an interaction between cognitive resource depletion and emotional intelligence such that cognitive resource depletion leads to more accurate ratings of employee's affective performance (i.e. lower ratings of affective performance) when emotional intelligence is higher.

5.2.2 Method

Participants

Fifty-nine undergraduate students participated in this research for partial fulfillment of an introduction to management course. One participant was excluded from analysis because the person experienced problems with the audiovisual content of the experiment. Another participant was excluded due to a very high level of subjective fatigue prior to the self-control resource depletion task. Therefore, the final sample consisted of fifty-seven participants (34 female, $M_{age}=19.82$ years, $SD = 5.43$).

Design and procedure

Upon arriving at the lab, participants were randomly allocated to private computer cubicles where they remained for the entire study. Participants then completed

a measure of emotional intelligence which is described below in the measurement section. Next, participants completed a resource depletion task described below.

Afterwards, participants were asked to watch a video depicting a service interaction, and were subsequently asked questions regarding the affective performance of the service employee.

Cognitive resource depletion task. Participants were randomly allocated to either the low or high cognitive resource depletion condition. I used a similar task to that of Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, and Tice (1998) whereby participants were presented with a standard passage of text (a paragraph from the University's Occupational Health and Safety procedures) and told to report instances of the letter *e*. In the high cognitive depletion condition, the task was made more difficult through the manipulation of font and rules. Specifically, participants in the high cognitive depletion condition were told that they were required to count the times the letter *e* appeared in the paragraph if it was not adjacent to another vowel or one extra letter away from another vowel. Furthermore, the standard passage of text was written in cursive script and the letters lightened, hence making the task more difficult. In contrast, participants in the low cognitive depletion condition were given the same passage of text in clearly legible text with good contrast and resolution, and were told to count the number of times the letter *e* appeared at the beginning of a word, thus making the task less cognitively taxing.

Service interaction video. Upon completing the cognitive resource depletion task, all participants were asked to watch a two-minute video depicting a service interaction between a female employee and female customer. This video had been used and validated in previous research, and was used with permission from those authors (please see Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006 for detailed description of actor training). In the

video, the employee faces the camera to ensure full view of their facial displays and service performance. The video also captures the back of the customer's head for context. Importantly, the service employee was a trained actor who engaged in surface acting throughout the interaction to create emotional displays low in authenticity. In addition, the service interaction is spoken in German, thereby controlling for the potential influence of the interaction's verbal context. As reported in the measures section below, none of the participants in the sample reported speaking German at or above a conversational level.

Measures

Prior to engaging participants in the cognitive resource completion task, I assessed their emotional intelligence. To do so, I used pictorial stimuli from the Montreal Set of Facial Displays of Emotion (MSFDE; Beaupré & Hess, 2005) and audio stimuli from the Diagnostic Analysis of Nonverbal Accuracy (DANVA; Norwicks & Duke, 1994). All pictorial stimuli from the MSFDE were created using a directed facial action task and coded using the Facial Action Coding Systems (FACS) to assure identical expressions across actions (see Beaupré & Hess, 2005 for more information). Participants were exposed to 24 greyscale facial displays by four actors (two male, two female) depicting either a happy, sad, angry, or fearful expression. Each photograph was presented for five seconds before disappearing; participants were then asked to select the displayed emotion from one of four options (happy, sad, angry, fearful). Next, participants were asked to complete the paralinguistic assessment of emotional intelligence using audio stimuli from the DANVA. Specifically, participants were asked to listen to 24 audio clips in which an actor (one male, one female) said "I am going out of the room now but I'll be back later" at different levels of emotional intensity

reflecting happiness, sadness, anger, or fear. Each audio clip was played once before participants were moved onto the next screen and asked to select the corresponding emotion (happy, sad, angry, fearful).

Finally, after watching the video segment depicting a service encounter, participants were asked to complete a survey that consisted of the dependent variable, affective performance, as well as manipulation checks and control variables. To measure *affective performance*, I adapted Grandey's (2003) measure. This scale captures the extent to which the service employee was friendly, warm, and sincere to the customer on a 5-point scale (*1 = strongly disagree* to *5 = strongly agree*). I also asked participants to indicate their level of cognitive load using the NASA-TLX (adapted from the, Hart & Staveland, 1988) for manipulation check purposes. Specifically, participants were asked to indicate the extent to which the task was mentally demanding, effortful, discouraging, and their level of successful performance on the task on a sliding scale. Similarly, I asked participants to indicate their subjective assessments of fatigue with the anchor terms 'not at all fatigued—very fatigued', 'very alert-very drowsy', 'clear-headed-muzzy-headed', 'fresh-tired' on a sliding scale (adapted from Williamson, Feyer, Mattick, Friswell, & Finlay-Brown, 2001). Furthermore, I asked participants to indicate their experience of state negative mood to control for any possible effects of cognitive depletion on moods (adapted from the PANAS, Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). In addition, I asked participants about their fluency with the German language with a single item ("Please indicate your level of fluency in the German language") and rated on a scale of 1 (*I don't understand German at all*), 2 (*I only know a couple of words in German but not enough for conversation*), 3 (*I can somewhat understand German*), 4 (*I am fluent in German*), or 5 (*German is my native language*). All participants in the sample indicated that they either did not

understand German at all, or that they only understand a few words, but not enough for conversation. I asked also demographic questions such as the participant's age and gender.

5.2.3 Results and Discussion

I conducted a one-way ANOVA to ensure that the resource depletion manipulation was successful in inducing subjective experiences of fatigue in participants. The analysis indicated that, prior to the resource depletion task, there were no pre-existing differences in fatigue between groups, $F(1, 55) = .68, p = .41$. After the resource depletion task, however, the high-cognitive-resource-depletion condition experienced significantly higher levels of fatigue, compared to the low-cognitive-resource-depletion condition, $F(1, 55) = 4.10, p < .05$. Furthermore, the high-cognitive-resource-depletion condition experienced significantly higher levels of cognitive load than the low-cognitive-resource-depletion condition, $F(1, 55) = 43.78, p < .01$. Together, these findings suggest that the manipulations were successful in elevating subjective experiences of an increased and resulting depletion effects.

I conducted hierarchical linear regression analysis to test the hypothesis (see Table 1). I controlled for gender due to its link with emotional intelligence (Joseph & Newman, 2010). I also controlled for the experience of negative affective experiences to examine the unique effects of cognitive resource depletion, and not potential peripheral effects on negative affect.

In the first step, I entered gender and negative mood as control variables. In the second step, I entered experimental condition (dummy-coded) and emotional intelligence as main effects. In the third step, I entered the interaction term between emotional intelligence and experimental condition. I multiplied the standardized main

variables to create the interaction term in order to reduce multicollinearity between the main effects and interaction terms (J. Cohen & Cohen, 1984). The findings did not reveal any significant main effect of experimental condition (cognitive resource depletion) or customer emotional intelligence on perceptions of employee's affective performance, but there was a significant interaction between cognitive depletion and customer emotional intelligence, $\beta = -.34$, $p < .01$ (Figure 5.1). Simple slopes test suggested cognitive depletion leads to lower perception of affective performance (i.e., less error), but only for customers with high emotional intelligence ($\beta = -.30$, $t = -2.18$, $p = < .05$). On the other hand, cognitive depletion had no influence on perceptions of affective performance for customers with low emotional intelligence ($\beta = .23$, $t = .16$, $p = .10$).

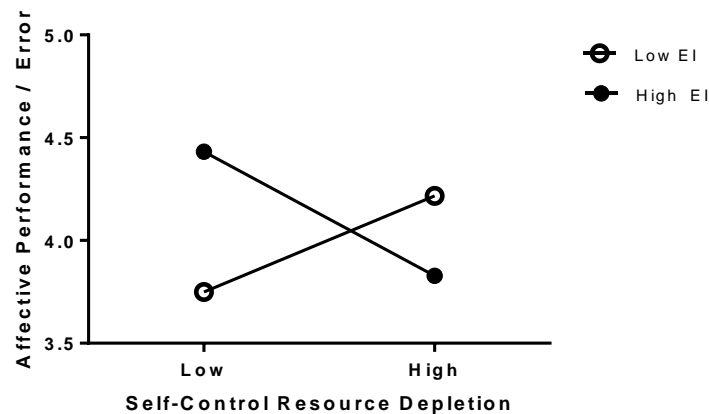
Table 5.1 Results of Hierarchical Linear Regression Analysis for Study 5.1. The effects of cognitive resource depletion and emotional intelligence on perceptions of employee's affective performance

Step and Variable	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Step 1: Control Variables			
Gender	-.28*	-.27	-.03*
Negative mood	-.03	-.01	.02
Step 2: Main effects			
Cognitive Resource Depletion		-.04	-.06
Emotional Intelligence (EI)		.08	.05
Step 3: First Stage Moderated Mediation			
Cognitive Resource Depletion \times EI			-.34*
R ²	.07	.08	.19*

Note. Figures represent standardized regression coefficients. * $p < .05$ (two-tailed).

Gender coded (male = 1; female = 2). Cognitive resource depletion coded (low depletion = 1; high depletion = 2).

Figure 5.1 Interaction between cognitive resource depletion and emotional intelligence (EI) on affective performance.



Note. Higher affective performance denotes more inaccurate inferences regarding the performance of the service employee.

The findings suggest that the depletion of cognitive resources interacted with emotional intelligence to predict participant's accuracy in detecting the emotional performance of the service employee. Consistent with the hypotheses, I found that cognitive depletion predicted more accurate customer judgments regarding the affective performance of service personnel, but only when emotional intelligence was high, not when emotional intelligence was low. These findings lend support to the idea that demands on working memory from depleting tasks lead individuals to engage in heuristic processes for the judgment of emotional information, which enhances the quality of inferences based on emotional information, but only for those with high emotional intelligence.

Although these findings are consistent with the theoretical predictions discussed earlier, they could potentially be explained through alternate mechanisms. For example, the literature on ego depletion may predict that the loss of self-control resources compromise vigilance, thereby decreasing accuracy in their assessment of the service employee. While this might not explain why depletion leads those with higher

emotional intelligence to become *more accurate*, it is nevertheless important to rule out such an alternative explanation. In examining the full implications of dual-process theory and, as further evidence of the proposed causal mechanism, I conducted a second study in order to assess how the judgments of emotional information changes when systematic processes, rather than heuristic processes, are dominant. Specifically, I engaged participants in systematic processing through a negative mood induction. Importantly, negative moods are not implicated in self-control resource depletion (Baumeister et al., 1998; Richards & Gross, 1999), thereby minimizing the influence of this potential confound.

5.3 Study 5.2: Negative Mood Induction in Judgments of Affective Performance

5.3.1 Introduction

Study 1 established that imposing cognitive demands leads individuals with high emotional intelligence to become more accurate when assessing the emotional performance of service personnel who had faked positive and suppressed negative emotions. I drew on dual process theories to suggest that cognitive demands detract individuals from systematic processing of emotional information, thereby heightening heuristic processing. The goal of Study 2 is to extend these findings by examining the full implications of dual process theory in understanding human judgments regarding emotional information. Specifically, I examine how prompting systematic processing of emotional information through negative mood induction interacts with emotional intelligence to predict judgments regarding the affective performance of employees who fake positive and suppress negative emotions.

Unlike systematic processing, which can be largely constrained through cognitively demanding tasks, it is more difficult to suppress heuristic processing. However, it is possible to heighten systematic processing through the experience of different moods. Converging evidence from different research domains suggests that the experience of different affective states has a pronounced impact on the way information is processed (Bless & Schwarz, 1999; Bless, Clore, et al., 1996). According to Bless and colleagues (Bless, Schwarz, & Kemmelmeier, 1996; Bless, Clore, et al., 1996), negative moods signal environmental threats and encourage more detail-oriented, bottom-up, and systemic approaches, which can be adaptive in problematic situations. On the other hand, positive moods signal that the environment is safe and benign, leading people to engage in more automatic processes that call for less effort. The literature examining the effects of mood induction on judgments draws some strong parallels to heuristic and systematic processing. Specifically, those experiencing negative moods tend to engage in analytical and systematic reasoning, whereas the experience of positive mood leads individuals to rely on stereotypes, heuristics, global, and automatic systems (Bless, Schwarz, et al., 1996; Bless, Clore, et al., 1996; Clark & Isen, 1982; Isen, 1984, 1987, 1999; Schwarz, 1990).

Given the above literature, negative mood induction is believed to engage individuals in more systematic processing. However, as previously mentioned, the processing of emotional information may be ideally suited towards more intuitive and heuristic processes (Gilbert & Krull, 1988; Patterson & Stockbridge, 1998). This raises the question of how negative mood inductions may affect interpersonal inferences regarding employees who fake positive and suppress negative emotions in their service performance. I propose that negative mood induction will lead to less accurate perceptions of affective performance. As mentioned previously, the serial and sequential

nature of systematic processing may actively undermine and interfere with the veracity of emotion-based judgments by constraining the processing of emotional information in a gestalt manner. Furthermore, working memory is likely to be ill-equipped to accurately process the influx of complex, subtle cues across vast non-verbal communication channels in real time⁶.

However, the extent to which negative moods worsens interpersonal inferences may depend on the participants' emotional intelligence. As mentioned previously, emotional intelligence concerns a person's ability to correctly perceive and identify emotions in others. While systematic processes are generally ill-equipped for the processing of emotional information, those with higher emotional intelligence may nevertheless be able to recognize the veracity of emotional displays of others even when systematically analyzing nonverbal cues because they have a better explicit understanding of the cues that constitute inauthenticity. On the other hand, those with lower emotional intelligence might be largely unable to engage in recognize these explicit cues when systematically processing emotion information. As such, higher emotional intelligence may buffer the extent to which veracity judgments are worsened under systematic processing.

Given the above, I propose that the induction of negative moods leads to less accurate judgments regarding the affective performance on a service employee, but only when a person's emotional intelligence is low. Again, participants were asked to determine the affective performance of a service employee engaged in surface acting,

⁶ Evidence suggest that negative mood may also have a direct effect on judgments and decision making in itself (e.g. Forgas, 1995). Specifically, mood congruence effects may enhance scepticism and increase the perception of more inauthentic emotional displays (Forgas & East, 2008). However, mood congruency effects would predict negative mood induction to enhance the accuracy of emotion judgments in our study, which we do not predict.

whereby higher assessments regarding the employee's affective performance is considered to be more inaccurate. Thus, I hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 5.2 Negative moods leads to more inaccurate ratings of employee's affective performance (i.e. higher ratings of affective performance) but only when emotional intelligence is low.

5.3.2 Method

Participants

Sixty-four undergraduate students participated in this research for partial fulfillments of research requirements for an introduction to management course. Five participants were excluded from analysis because they experienced problems with the audio or visual content of the experiment. Therefore, the final sample consisted of fifty-nine participants (27 female, $M_{\text{age}} = 19$, $SD = 4.48$). Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: low negative mood induction or high negative mood induction.

Design and procedure

I used the same design and procedures as in Study 1, with the mood induction being the only difference between the two studies. Participants were randomly allocated to a private computer cubicle where they first completed the emotional intelligence measure followed by the mood induction task. Participants then watched the video with the same service interaction used in Study 1. Afterwards, they completed a survey that contained measures of the performance of the service employee as well as control and demographic variables.

Mood Induction. The mood induction to induce momentary negative mood was identical to that used and validated in previous published research (Inzlicht & Gutsell, 2007; Schmeichel, Vohs, & Baumeister, 2003; Vohs, Baumeister, & Ciarocco, 2005; Vohs & Schmeichel, 2003). Participants were randomly allocated to the low or high negative-mood-induction condition. In the high-negative-mood-induction condition, I asked participants to watch a short video (two to three minutes) from Mondo Cane depicting how nuclear contamination of the ocean has adversely impacted a turtle population. The video shows a turtle in a state of disorientation, confusing the desert for the ocean, and subsequently dying. This video has been used in previous published research to induce momentary negative mood (Inzlicht & Gutsell, 2007; Schmeichel et al., 2003; Vohs et al., 2005; Vohs & Schmeichel, 2003). In the low-negative-mood-induction condition, I asked participants to watch a short video (two to three minutes) showing puppies at play. While such videos have been successfully used to induce positive emotions such as amusement and contentment (Fredrickson & Levenson, 1998; Fredrickson, Mancuso, Branigan, & Ugade, 2000), prior studies show that watching neutral videos can induce negative affective states such as boredom that can subsequently lead participants to engage in systematic processes. Videos inducing positive affect may therefore be considered a viable alternative control since they do not lead to the experience of aversive mood states. Furthermore, the elevation in positive moods following the video may be successful in alleviating those randomly allocated to the low negative mood condition of prior negative moods.

Measures

I used the same measures as in Study 1. In addition, I asked participants to indicate their subjective experience of negative moods prior and following the mood

induction task as a manipulation check. I also asked participants to indicate their subjective experience of fatigue after the mood induction manipulation to control for any possible effects of mood induction on working memory processes. Finally, I asked participants about their fluency with the German language, their age, and gender. Again, all participants indicated that their German language abilities were below basic conversational abilities.

5.3.4 Results and discussion

I conducted a one-way ANOVA to ensure that the negative mood induction video was successful in inducing those affective states in participants. Results show that prior to the negative mood induction videos, there were no pre-existing differences between conditions in terms of negative affective experiences $F(1, 57) = .69, p = .41$. However, after the mood induction videos, participants in the high-negative-mood-induction condition experienced significantly higher levels of negative affect, compared to low-negative-mood-induction condition $F(1, 57) = 26.24, p < .01$, suggesting that the manipulations were successful in elevating state negative affect in participants.

I conducted hierarchical linear regression analyses to test all hypotheses. I entered the experimental condition a dummy variables, and standardized all variables to reduce multicollinearity between the main effects and interaction terms. The findings did not reveal any significant main effects for negative mood induction ($\beta = -.17, p = .20$) or emotional intelligence ($\beta = -.07, p = .65$), nor any significant interactions between negative mood induction and emotional intelligence ($\beta = .01, p = .97$) in predicting perceptions of the service employee's affective performance.

The findings suggest that neither negative mood induction, emotional intelligence, nor their interaction predict customer assessments of the employee's

service affective performance. One potential explanation for the absence of a significant effect concerns the dummy coding of the mood induction condition. Analysis revealed that the mood induction video successfully induced overall negative affective states in participants, but individuals may be more or less sensitive to the negative mood induction videos. In other words, dummy coding may obscure individual differences in actual negative mood following the mood induction videos, and this variance may be better accounted through a between-person approach. Thus, I conducted an additional analysis using I used post-video negative mood as the independent variable, while controlling for pre-video negative mood.

I used hierarchical linear regression analysis (see Table 5.2) and controlled for gender given its links with emotional intelligence (Joseph & Newman, 2010). Given that I am interested in the unique effects of negative moods, and not the effects mood induction may have on working memory, I controlled for post-subjective fatigue. I also controlled for pre-existing differences in negative mood at the start of the study. I entered negative affective experiences following the negative mood induction video and customer emotional intelligence as the independent variables, and I entered their standardized interaction term in the final step.

I did not find significant main effects of negative mood or emotional intelligence, but there was a significant interaction between participants' negative mood and emotional intelligence in predicting their perceptions of employees' affective performance (see Figure 2). Simple slopes tests suggest negative moods has no effects on perceptions of affective performance for those with high emotional intelligence ($\beta = -.12$, $t = -.59$, $p = .56$) but has a marginally positive effect for those with low emotional intelligence ($\beta = .33$, $t = 1.89$, $p = .06$). Given that the employee is engaged in surface

acting, higher assessment of their affective performance indicates less accuracy in the judgments regarding the employee's affective performance.

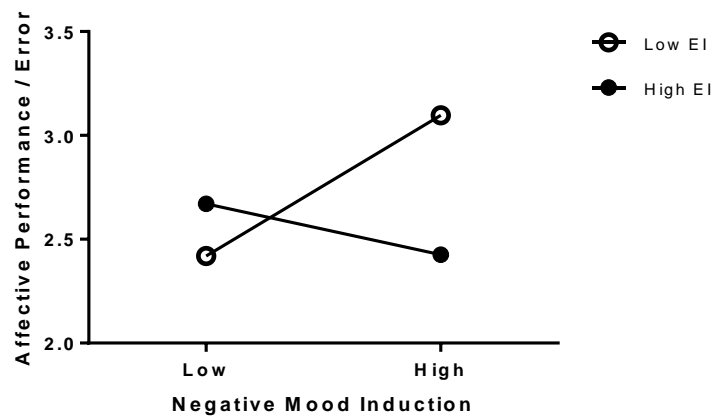
Table 5.2 Results of Hierarchical Linear Regression Analysis for Study 5.2. The effects of negative mood and emotional intelligence on perceptions of employee's affective performance

Step and Variable	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Step 1: Control Variables			
Gender	-.01	.06	.06
Subjective Fatigue	.11	.13	.09
Pre Negative Mood	-.23	-.42*	-.38*
Step 2: Main effects			
Post Negative Mood		.07	.01
Emotional Intelligence (EI)		-.27	-.11
Step 3: First Stage Moderated Mediation			
Post Negative Mood \times EI			-.32*
R^2	.05	.10	.17*

Note. Figures represent standardized regression coefficients. * $p < .05$ (two-tailed).

Gender coded (male = 1; female = 2). Cognitive resource depletion coded (low depletion = 1; high depletion = 2).

Figure 5.2 Interaction between negative mood induction and emotional intelligence (EI) on affective performance.



Note. Higher affective performance denotes more inaccurate inferences regarding the performance of the service employee.

The above reported findings suggest that emotional intelligence interacts with negative mood to influence the veracity of emotion perception. In explaining this finding, I appeal to the potential role of emotional intelligence in buffering the detrimental effects of systematic processing induced by negative mood. However, in manipulating negative mood, I induced positive mood as a control. As mentioned previously, positive mood may induce more heuristic processing and it is possible that changes in positive mood may interact with emotional intelligence to predict more accurate perceptions of emotions. To test this, I controlled for post-subjective fatigue and pre-existing differences in positive mood at the start of the study. I entered positive affective experiences following the positive mood induction video and customer emotional intelligence as independent variables, and I entered their standardized interaction term in the final step. However, I did not find significant main effects for positive mood ($\beta = -.06$, $t = -.34$, $p = .73$) or emotional intelligence ($\beta = -.06$, $t = -.44$, $p = .66$). I also did not find a significant interaction between participants' positive mood and emotional intelligence in predicting their perceptions of employees' affective performance ($\beta = -.18$, $t = -.97$, $p = .34$).

The aim of the second study was to investigate whether emotional intelligence may play a compensatory role when individuals are induced to process information in a more systematic manner. I attempted to induce participant systematic processing through negative mood induction. However, the analysis showed that the dummy-coded negative mood induction condition did not interact with emotional intelligence to predict customer perceptions of affective performance. Instead, individual differences in the experience of negative moods following the mood induction video interacted with emotional intelligence. The findings suggest that the experience of negative moods may lead to more inaccurate perceptions regarding the employee's affective performance, as

reflected through more positive assessments of service employees' affective performance, but only for those participants with low emotional intelligence. On the other hand, for participants with high emotional intelligence, the experience of negative moods had a minimal influence on the customer's perception of the employee's affective performance. These findings support the hypothesis that emotional intelligence can play a compensatory role when the processing of emotional information is shifted towards more analytical and systematic approaches associated with systematic processing. However, I did not find an interaction between positive mood and emotional intelligence in enhancing the veracity of emotion judgments.

5.5 General Discussion

Research in emotions has increasingly recognized the social and communicative functions of emotional displays. Displays of genuine positive emotions have a positive impact on outcomes whereas displays of inauthentic positive emotions lead to more detrimental customer outcomes (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006), but this link critically depends on customer perceptions (Groth et al., 2009). Judgments regarding the veracity of emotional information are often ambiguous and prone to errors (Bond & DePaulo, 2006; DePaulo, 1992) and even inauthentic displays of positive emotions may have a benign effect on customer outcomes when customers do not perceive their emotional displays to be inauthentic (Groth et al., 2009). This raises the question of whether customers are always aware of the employee's authenticity, and the factors that drive the accurate perception of employees' emotions in customers.

In this paper, I examined how dual theory perspectives and customer emotional intelligence influence the accurate perception of employee displays of positive emotions by customers. The findings reported in this study support the central idea that the

reading of emotions in others is best guided by heuristic processes, rather than systematic processes, when individuals possess the mental schemas for their accurate interpretation. In the first study (study 5.1), I found that the depletion of cognitive resources, which enhances the reliance on heuristic processes and detracts the use of systematic processes (De Neys, 2006; Hoffmann et al., 2013), predicted more accurate perceptions of employee's affective performance when emotional intelligence was high. In the second study, I used negative emotions to induce more systematic processing styles. I found that negative mood induction only predicted less accurate perceptions of employee's affective performance when emotional intelligence was low. In other words, high levels of emotional intelligence protected against the negative effects of systematic processing induced by negative moods. Together, the above findings highlight the critical role of emotional intelligence and processing styles in driving customer's accurate perceptions of employee emotions in customer service settings.

5.5.1 Theoretical contributions

Social-functional perspectives of emotions are being increasingly utilized in the organizational literature to explain how the emotional displays of an individual influences the cognitions and behaviors of observers (Van Kleef et al., 2012; Van Kleef, 2009). Social functional perspectives have been used to explain the outcomes of anger displays in negotiations (Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2004) and to discuss how employee emotional labor influences customer outcomes (Côté, Van Kleef, & Sy, 2013). While social-functional accounts of emotions detail the process by which sender emotions influences observer appraisal processes, they do not consider whether the perceptions of emotions are accurate in the first place. This is an important consideration since individuals are capable of regulating emotional displays for personal

gain at the expense of the perceiver (DePaulo, 1992; DePaulo et al., 2003; Ekman & O'Sullivan, 1991). Moreover, the detection of inauthentic displays is surprisingly difficult despite its importance to interpersonal interactions (DePaulo, 1992; Ekman et al., 1999). Therefore, the processes that drive the accurate perception of emotions are a critical, but under-investigated, aspect in the emotions literature.

In this study, I investigated how dual process theory and emotional intelligence drive the accurate perception of others' emotional displays. The findings were consistent with previous research in emotions that show how the perception of nonverbal information is often accurate under intuitive and automatic responses (Ambady & Rosenthal, 1992; Hatfield et al., 1994). From this, I propose that relying on rule-based and analytical approaches characteristic of systematic processes may actively undermine and interfere with the veracity of emotion-based judgments, especially when emotional intelligence is low. In finding that heuristic processing was associated with more accurate perceptions of employee's emotional displays when emotional intelligence is high, and systematic processing associated with more inaccurate perceptions when emotional intelligence is low, this study provides empirical support for the rarely tested idea that emotions are linked with heuristic rather than systematic processes (Evans, 2008). While studies in dual processes have investigated how emotion-based judgments are not interrupted by cognitive load (Greene et al., 2008), studies have rarely investigated how heuristic processes may benefit, and systematic processes harm, the accurate perception of emotions.

Adopting a heuristic and intuitive approach to the processing of emotional information does not benefit performance in and of itself; instead, the utility of relying on heuristic processing depends on the individual's emotional intelligence. The findings reflect research conducted in the field of expert performance (Beilock et al., 2002;

Reyna, 2004). Research in this field suggests that the superiority of expert performance is characterized by the automatic and intuitive application of relevant knowledge structures and schemas, rather than deliberate analytic thought (Klein, 1999). In other words, heuristic processes may only benefit performance when individuals possess relevant schemas. Similarly, I found that heuristic processes only benefited performance when individuals are high in emotional intelligence and possess the necessary cognitive infrastructure or schemas to automatically decode and recognize the nonverbal emotions signaled by others.

Interestingly, evidence suggests that systematic processing only predicted less accurate perceptions when customer emotional intelligence was low. In other words, the findings suggest that high emotional intelligence can play a compensatory role when individuals are induced to rely on systematic processes. I proposed that individuals with high emotional intelligence may nevertheless be better able to detect inauthenticity under systematic processing conditions because they have better explicit knowledge of emotional information. Alternatively, it is possible that heuristic-based processes may continue to play a background role and exert influence in the interpretation of emotional information. While it is relatively easy to suppress systematic processing by imposing cognitive demands, it is more difficult to suppress the largely automatic effects of heuristic processes. Researchers suggest that in the case of ambiguous judgment situations, heuristic processes may continue to exert influence, even when individuals are instructed to rely on systematic processing (Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994). Since judgments about the veracity of emotions may be considered ambiguous and prone to error (Bond & DePaulo, 2006; DePaulo et al., 2003), my findings may be indicative of background heuristic processes that continue to play a pervasive role in judgments regarding the veracity of emotional displays. Specifically, high emotional intelligence

may continue to guide background heuristic processes to buffer interpersonal judgments from being impaired under systematic processes.

5.5.2 Practical contributions

The provision of high-quality customer service is considered a competitive advantage in service industries (Schneider & Bowen, 1995). Organizations often enforce display rules to ensure employees provide “service with a smile” or risk organizational punishment (Diefendorff et al., 2006; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987, 1989). This leaves the employee with two options: to either display genuine smiles or to feign their smiles. Evidence suggests that feigned smiles are indeed different from genuine smiles (Ekman & Friesen, 1982), and customers are able to detect these subtle differences in customer interactions (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006). However, errors are common, and there is increasing evidence that feigned smiles are only detrimental to customer service outcomes when customers notice (Groth et al., 2009), and only under certain circumstances (Chi et al., 2011; Grandey et al., 2005). The present findings contribute to this literature by explaining the circumstances that facilitate or impair customers’ awareness of employee feigned emotions.

The finding that customers’ accuracy in the perception of employee emotional labor can be influenced by different cognitive processing styles holds important practical implications for managers. Evidence suggests that customers are somewhat able to detect whether employees are feigning their fake emotions (Groth et al., 2009; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006; Study 3.1 of this thesis), and this study documents the circumstances when customers are most likely to be correct in their emotion detection. In terms of practical implications, it would be difficult and unethical for service organizations to determine and categorize customers on the basis of their processing

styles, and their emotional intelligence in service settings. However, the findings do call into question practices commonly utilized by service organizations. For instance, many service organizations, particularly retail settings, employ lighting and music to attract customers. It is possible that these environmental features may deplete resources, induce heuristic processes in customers, and lead to more accurate perceptions of employee displays. The findings of this study therefore not only emphasize the need for service managers to not only focus on emotional display and performance by employees to ensure that faking is not apparent but also on managing customers' subjective experiences of the service. There is growing recognition in the service literature that customers are not only the consumers of service, but also act as co-producers in the service delivery process (Bettencourt, 1997; Wikström, 1996; Vargo & Lusch, 2008), meaning that service managers play a critical role in shaping customers' expectations of the service delivery process (Bowen, 2006). Careful consideration of the servicescape (Bittner, 1992) or the appearance and aesthetic quality of service employees (Nickson, Warhurst, Witz, & Cullen, 2001) may induce different processing styles in customers, making them more or less likely to detect faking in employees.

5.5.3 Limitations and future research implication

The present findings provide numerous insights into how individual differences (i.e., emotional intelligence) combine with cognitive mechanisms to predict the veracity of emotion-based judgments. Despite the contributions made to social-functional perspectives of emotion and the services literature, a number of future research avenues remain. I manipulated cognitive resource depletion in order to induce heuristic processes, in line with previous studies (e.g., Hoffmann et al., 2013). However, such manipulations are often used in studies of ego-depletion, which may provide an

alternative theoretical mechanism to explain the effects. Ego-depletion describes the tendency for previous acts of self-control to impair performance on subsequent tasks requiring self-control. The loss of self-control cognitive resources may compromise vigilance and therefore decrease the accuracy in their assessment of the service employee. However, it is difficult to see how depletion may lead customers to be more accurate in their perceptions when they are high in emotional intelligence. This finding suggests that ego-depletion effects were not responsible for the findings. Yet, to rule out other potential confounding influences, future researchers may wish to employ other methods to induce heuristic processing. For instance, instead of presenting a two-minute service interaction that is more amenable to systematic analysis, researchers may present a very “thin slice” of an interaction between an employee and customer, and consequently ask participants to rate the affective performance of the employee based on their first impression (Ambady & Rosenthal, 1992; Patterson & Stockbridge, 1998).

The findings of the second study suggest that the experience of negative moods can induce systematic processing to decrease the accuracy of customer perceptions when customer emotional intelligence is low. At first, I failed to find a significant interaction between the negative mood induction condition and emotional intelligence. As discussed previously, I used a video from *Mondo Cane* which depicts animals suffering. Although this had been successfully used to elicit negative emotions in past studies (Inzlicht & Gutsell, 2007; Schmeichel et al., 2003; Vohs et al., 2005; Vohs & Schmeichel, 2003), not all individuals are equally susceptible to the experience of negative emotions, and this may obscure effects. Therefore, I used the experience of negative emotions following the video, whilst controlling for prior negative moods, as the independent variable. This individual differences approach should yield more accurate assessment of the extent to which individuals engaged in systematic

processing, rather than assuming all participants who watched the negative mood induction video engaged in similar levels of systematic processing.

It is also possible that the use of videos depicting puppies at play in the low negative mood condition affected the finding. As described in the method, I used a positive mood video to ensure that negative mood states such as boredom were not induced, and to ensure that prior negative mood states did not affect systematic processing. It is possible that the positive mood video was associated with unintended consequences and future studies should incorporate a neutral video to test this. Interestingly, by including the positive mood video as a control, I was able to examine the effects of positive moods on the veracity of emotion judgments. As mentioned in the introduction, while negative emotions are thought to induce systematic processing, positive emotions are thought to induce heuristic processing (Bless, Schwarz, et al., 1996; Bless, Clore, et al., 1996). As such, the findings involving the interactions between positive emotions and emotional intelligence ought to resemble the findings reported in Study 5.2. However, I failed to find any main effects or interactions. It is possible that the lack of findings associated with positive moods concerns the asymmetrical effects of positive and negative affect. It is generally recognized that negative affect elicits greater physiological, cognitive and behavioral responses than positive affect, and that the effects of negative affect are generally more salient and pervasive than positive affect (Taylor, 1991). As such, the negative mood induction video may have easily elicited processes akin to systematic processing, compared to attempts to elicit heuristic processing through positive mood induction. Further, since the study was initially designed to test the experimental manipulation, rather than quasi-experimental in investigating self-reported negative affect following mood induction, I was primarily concerned with the utility of the negative mood induction video rather

than the effectiveness of the positive mood induction video. Together, this suggests that the negative mood induction video may have more readily induced systematic processes because negative events are generally more salient and more pervasive. To counter these asymmetrical effects, future research may benefit from a more careful selection of positive mood induction videos or the use other methods to induce positive emotions such as active recall. Further, future studies may benefit from larger sample sizes since the power to detect effects is reduced if the effect of positive mood induction is weaker than negative mood induction.

The experience of negative mood triggers cognitive processing styles akin to systematic processing (Bless, Schwarz, et al., 1996; Bless, Clore, et al., 1996). However, the experience of moods may also be associated with mood congruency effects that enhance skepticism. For instance, Forgas and East (2008) reported that negative mood induction heightened participant perceptions of inauthenticity, whether or not the individual was inauthentic. It is unlikely that such findings explain the effects of the current study, since heightened negative emotions should then have enhanced accuracy given that the video in the current study portrayed an employee who feigned emotions. Instead, I found that the experience of negative moods decreased accuracy when participants had low emotional intelligence. This finding suggests that mood congruency effects were not responsible for the finding. Yet, to rule out alternative mechanisms, future researchers may wish to induce systematic processes by asking participants to carefully and systematically analyze the facial displays of employees in their assessments of affective performance (Patterson & Stockbridge, 1998).

Finally, I did not examine the influence of heuristic and systematic processes directly on perceptions of authenticity by employees. It is possible that the findings reflect biases in the perception of affective performance regardless of the quality of the

smile. In other words, individuals who engaged in cognitively depleting tasks may have been in a stressful state and more likely to believe that the employee was not providing good service. On the other hand, those induced with negative moods may have engaged in mood repair and therefore may have been more likely to see the positive aspects of the service performance. However, this explanation is problematic since I did not find main effects of the manipulation and instead found that such manipulations interacted with emotional intelligence to predict affective performance ratings. Despite this, it might be ideal in future studies to ask participants to rate the affective performance of employees portraying more authentic displays of emotions to rule out any potential effects of biased responding.

5.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, employees' attempts at managing their emotional displays are not always effectively translated across to customers. Errors are often made: sometimes customers are accurate in their perception of emotional displays, other times, customers are inaccurate in their perceptions. These perceptions play a critical role in customer perceptions of service quality (Groth et al., 2009). Therefore, it is important to understand the individual differences and circumstances under which customers are more or less likely to be accurate in their perceptions of employee displays. The findings highlight the critical role of emotional intelligence and cognitive processing styles in determining the veracity of emotional information, but additional research is needed to produce insights into how emotions are social communicated between dyads.

Chapter 6

Discussion

In this chapter, I summarize the findings from the three studies presented in this thesis and discuss their theoretical and practical contributions to the field. I then outline some of the limitations associated with these studies, before suggesting opportunities for future research.

6.1 Summary

Much is known about the relationships between emotional labor, strain, burnout, and well-being outcomes (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; but see Hülshager & Schewe, 2011 and Mesmer-Magnus, DeChurch, & Wax, 2012 for meta-analytic review). On the other hand, relatively little is known about the relationships between employee emotional labor and customer outcomes in dynamic service settings, despite the positive relationship between customer outcomes and organizational performance (Anderson, Fornell, & Lehmann, 1994; Anderson, Fornell, & Mazvancheryl, 2004; Bernhardt, Donthu, & Kennett, 2000; Hallowell, 1996). The focus of this thesis is to address three previously unexplored aspects of the emotional labor–customer outcomes relationship that add to our understanding of the mechanisms driving the effects of employee emotional labor on customer outcomes, and the boundary conditions that moderate these effects.

In order to begin addressing these unknowns in the literature, I first presented an overall literature review that detailed what we currently know about emotions. This included discussions on the process of managing emotions socially and in the

workplace, and the effects of emotional labor on employees and organizational outcomes. I then proceeded to highlight the mechanisms driving the effects of employee emotional labor on customer outcomes. Following this overall review, I detailed issues relevant to the emotional labor–customer outcomes relationship that continues to remain obscure or unclear. These issues motivate the three empirical studies presented in this thesis. I summarize these motivations and the findings of the three studies below.

Chapter 3 sought to understand and explain the often inconsistent relationship between employee surface acting and customer outcomes in dyadic settings (Chi et al., 2011). I proposed that these inconsistencies in the link between employee surface acting and customer outcomes are primarily driven by two factors: the conceptualization and measurement of employee surface acting, and the service context. Using a dyadic survey procedure, thereby minimizing common method bias and recall effects, I found that only employees' suppressed negative emotions led to negative customer inferences. Displays of faked positive emotions did not have an impact on customer inferences about the employee's service performance. Further, the effects of employees' suppressed negative emotions were not inevitably linked with poorer customer outcomes. Strong relationships between customers and employees, as well as less personalized services, buffered the negative effects of employees' suppressed negative emotions. These features of the service context also buffered the effects of customer inferences on service satisfaction. Specifically, customers remained satisfied with the service, even if they had inferred that the employee was not particularly customer-oriented, when strong relationships were present or in the context of more standardized services. These findings highlight the importance of investigating the distinct emotional labor strategies and the importance of service context as a boundary condition in linking employee emotional labor with customer outcomes.

The findings from Chapter 3 support the idea that different types of surface acting (i.e., faking or suppressing) predict different customer service outcomes. This finding motivated me to explore whether different types of emotional labor processes could also predict different customer outcomes. In Chapter 4, I focused on whether distinct emotion regulation strategies could be automatically and nonconsciously pursued. Further, I compared the effects of nonconscious emotional labor with effortful attempts to engage those strategies, across a range of social, cognitive resource, and affective service outcomes. To test this, I used an experimental procedure to prime nonconscious emotion regulation in a simulated service setting, in which participants played the role of employees to confederate customers. Findings suggested that nonconscious appraisal leads to improved social, cognitive resource, and affective outcomes for the employee and the organization compared to deliberate attempts to reappraise. Conversely, nonconscious suppression led to more detrimental social, cognitive resource, and affective outcomes for the employee and organization compared to deliberate suppression. These findings underscore the importance of considering employees' habitual and automatic pursuit of emotion regulation in service contexts.

Finally, Chapter 5 sought to investigate the processes driving customer inferences that stem from employee emotional labor. In this study, I borrowed from dual-process and emotion theories to hypothesize that heuristic processes, as opposed to systematic processes, lead to more accurate customer inferences about employees' emotional performance, but only when the customer's emotional intelligence is high. First, I experimentally induced high cognitive load, biasing customers towards heuristic processing. Findings showed that customer inferences were more accurate (i.e., more negative inferences from employee surface acting) under high cognitive load and when emotional intelligence was high. Second, I experimentally induced negative mood,

biasing customers towards systematic processing. Findings showed that customer inferences were less accurate when negative mood was elevated and emotional intelligence was low. These findings not only highlight the utility of considering dual-process theories in the study of social inferences stemming from emotions, but also underscore the active role of customers in determining the effects of employee emotional labor.

In sum, this thesis has presented results from three empirical studies that clarify the empirical and conceptual relationships between employee emotional labor and customer outcomes. While employee emotional labor and customer outcomes are indeed linked, this set of studies paints a more nuanced and complex picture of their relationship. Specifically, in this thesis, I highlight how different conceptualizations of emotional labor, boundary conditions, and the development of customer inferences can influence the relationship between employee emotional labor and customer outcomes. Now that I have summarized and reviewed the findings presented in this thesis, in the following section, I discuss the theoretical contributions made to the literature.

6.2 Theoretical Contributions

As mentioned previously, this thesis sought to clarify the relationship between employee emotional labor and customer outcomes. Specifically, the focus was to examine the process by which employee emotional labor influences customer outcomes by extending previous empirical work in light of theories guiding the field. The links between employee emotional labor and organizational outcomes are a key feature of prominent theoretical models (Grandey, 2000); however, empirical research suggests that the relationship between employee emotional labor and customer service outcomes may be less direct in dynamic service settings (Chi et al., 2011), and particularly

sensitive to the social functions of emotions (Van Kleef, 2009). The relationship between employee emotional labor and customer outcomes may therefore be more complex than first thought since it involves a dynamic exchange in nonverbal information between customers and employees. Specifically, the relationship may be influenced by the quality of emotional labor by the employee, how customers perceive the nonverbal information, and the context in which the emotions are displayed. In this thesis, I considered the role of different conceptualizations of emotional labor, boundary conditions, and customer inferences in understanding why emotional labor is not always directly associated with customer outcomes. This thesis therefore builds on previous theory by taking an important step in highlighting the complexities underlying the relationship between employee surface acting and customer service outcomes.

In Chapter 3, I investigated the unique impact of discrete emotion regulation strategies typically encompassed under surface acting. My findings suggest that not all surface acting strategies have the same impact on customer outcomes. In fact, only suppressed negative emotions predicted detrimental service outcomes; faked positive emotions did not influence customer service outcomes. The findings of this study underscored the importance of considering the underlying *quality* of employee emotional labor and emphasized the idea that not all attempts to manage one's emotions for the purposes of work are equally effective on customers.

The idea of qualitative differences in employee emotional labor is not new. This idea can be traced back to Hochschild's (1979) distinction between surface and deep acting based on the amount of effort that went into managing one's emotions. The findings presented in Chapter 3, however, draws further distinctions between the quality of smiles between different types of surface acting – that not all types of faking are detrimental and that the quality of faking critically depends on whether and which

emotions are suppressed and amplified. This finding helps explain why surface acting often does not have a direct relationship with customer outcomes (Chi et al., 2011).

The idea that only suppressed negative emotions, as opposed to faked positive emotions, predict poorer customer outcomes is supported by research in social psychology. This research suggests that the experience of emotional conflict and the active suppression of felt experiences are likely to leak and interfere with the quality of emotional displays (Ekman & Friesen, 1982; Ekman, 1988), thus heightening customer awareness of employee inauthenticity. Employees who fake positive emotions are also being inauthentic, but these employees are not experiencing conflicting emotional states. This absence of conflict in faked positive emotions may enable the resulting display to be perceived as more authentic.

The finding that only suppressed negative emotions, and not faked positive emotions, affected customer service outcomes contributed to theory by highlighting the benefits achieved by using more fine-grained measures of emotional labor, rather than solely relying on integrative measures of surface acting and deep acting. Additionally, this finding also suggests the possibility of qualitative differences in deep acting that may alter its relationship between customer service outcomes. In fact, future researchers may indeed find that some high quality forms of surface acting may be more beneficial to employee and customer outcomes than low quality deep acting. As such, this research largely questions the usefulness of generalizing surface acting as being largely detrimental, and deep acting as largely beneficial to employee and customer outcomes.

Chapter 3 also highlighted the benefits of integrating social-functional perspectives of emotions in the emotional labor literature. In Chapter 3, I used the EASI model to not only explain the links between employee surface acting and customer service outcomes but to also highlight how social-relational and information processing

factors that potentially moderate the relationship between employee surface acting and customer outcomes. The finding that strong relationships and standardized services protected against the detrimental effects of suppressed negative emotions highlights the extent to which the social context influences nonverbal communication. This suggests that social relationships between employees and customers and the social norms surrounding the service context may influence information/emotional processing and customer expectations, which consequently change the way in which suppressed negative emotions are perceived.

Service context has long been recognized to play a salient role in the relationship between employee emotional labor and service outcomes. For instance, Sutton and Rafaeli (1988) failed to find a positive relationship between friendly employee displays (such as greetings, smiling, and thanking the customer) and customer ratings in a sample of convenience stores because customers in those contexts valued speed and efficiency, not positive attitudes. While researchers have emphasized the need to investigate such contextual moderators (Grandey & Diamond, 2010), it has seldom been the focus of empirical research. As such, Study 1 also contributes to the broader emotional labor literature by considering the circumstances under which context alters the relationship between employee emotional labor and customer outcomes. This is a pivotal step in progressing the emotional labor literature by providing a more nuanced understanding of the effects of emotional labor by actively incorporating the broader social environment in which emotional labor occurs.

Chapter 4 contributes to the theory of the field by considering the impact of nonconscious emotional regulation in service settings and on service outcomes. In doing so, this study provided an important step towards bridging the different literatures on emotion regulation, emotional labor, self-control processes, and automaticity. As

discussed previously in the literature review, researchers have long discussed the possibility that employees may engage in emotional labor without conscious awareness, especially when prompted by strong social and occupational norms (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Gross 1998). While such features are highly salient in service settings (Diefendorff et al., 2006), the possibility that emotional labor can be triggered automatically, and the effects of this automatic emotional labor, has not been empirically investigated, despite evidence that concepts associated with emotion management are capable of being primed (Mauss, Cook, et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2009).

In Chapter 4, I investigated whether concepts associated with emotional labor can be primed such that employees automatically manage their emotions. I specifically focused on the effects of priming reappraisal and suppression, compared to explicit instructions reappraise and to suppress, across a range of social, cognitive, and affective organizational outcomes. To test this, I designed an experimental study with participants playing the role of service employees and confederates playing the role of customers. As far as I am aware, this is the first study to investigate whether priming can be effectively used to automatically elicit distinct emotion management in service settings and the effects of these primes on customer service evaluations. In bridging diverse perspectives from different literatures, I was been able to make distinct theoretical contributions to each field.

In terms of the emotional labor literature, I extend upon the ideas tested in Study 3.1 in investigating whether distinct emotion management strategies yield distinct findings. More importantly, Study 3.2 contributes to the theory by considering the relative influence of habitual or automatic emotion regulation strategies in workplace settings. Currently, the emotional labor literature only considers the impact of effortful

emotion management strategies that require active self-control. However, people often manage their emotions automatically and without conscious and considered thought (Bargh & Williams, 2011). The study, therefore, contributes to the emotional labor literature not only by highlighting the potential for emotions to be regulated nonconsciously in service organizations, but also by comparing the effects of these nonconscious processes to effortful attempts to regulate emotions.

Chapter 4 also contributes to theory by extending the effects of nonconscious emotion regulation beyond internal experience of emotion (as investigated by Mauss, Cook, et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2009). Since the regulation of emotions often occurs in the presence of others (Gross, 1998), understanding the social consequences of nonconscious emotion regulation is important. In this study, I investigated the effects of nonconscious reappraisal and suppression on customer rated affective performance. This extends the effects of nonconscious emotion regulation on others' perception, which is an important aspect of the social function of emotions, and emotion regulation.

Another important contribution concerns the findings associated with both nonconscious reappraisal and nonconscious suppression. Researchers have speculated on potential differences in effects between nonconscious antecedent-focused strategies (e.g., reappraisal) and response-focused strategies (e.g., suppression) (Mauss, Bunge, et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2009) but this has not been investigated. Consistent with the claims of Mauss, Bunge, and Gross (2007), I found that nonconscious reappraisal exhibits a more adaptive profile by facilitating social, cognitive resource, and affective outcomes. I also found evidence that nonconscious suppression exhibits maladaptive profiles by impairing social, cognitive resource, and affective outcomes, which lends support to claims that nonconscious suppression does not minimize underlying emotional conflict (Mauss, Cook, et al., 2007). This finding suggests that the underlying

conflict remains during nonconscious suppression, and may consequently induce feelings of inauthenticity or require further regulatory effort in order to maintain appropriate displays (Erickson & Wharton, 1997; Mauss, Bunge, et al., 2007). This heightening of negative emotional experiences during nonconscious suppression may also be attributed to ironic effects that subsequently increase the experience of the emotion being suppressed (Wegner, Ansfield, & Pilloff, 1998). Heightened experiences of negative emotions following nonconscious suppression may make it increasingly difficult for employees to maintain affective displays, leading to poorer ratings of customer performance.

Together, the findings from Chapter 4 contribute and extend the emotional labor literature by discussing and investigating the potential for emotional labor to become routinized in the service context and in the emotional management of service personnel. Specifically, the study highlights the potential utility and threats that automatic emotional labor poses to employee and customer outcomes, and draws attention to the potential mechanisms that give rise to such effects.

Finally, Chapter 5 contributed to theory by bridging dual-process theory and social-functional accounts of emotion to understand the role of customer inferences in employee emotional displays. This chapter contributed to the emotional labor literature by actively incorporating and focusing on the perception of customers. The perception of customers is a critical variable in social-functional accounts of emotions (Van Kleef, 2009). Customers often misread emotional information, and such errors play a critical role in determining whether employee emotional labor, and particularly surface acting, is associated beneficial or detrimental outcomes. Despite the importance of customer perceptions, studies have rarely investigated the processes that determine whether customers are accurate or inaccurate in their perceptions of employee emotional labor.

In Chapter 5, I used dual-process theory to better understand how accurate inferences regarding others' emotional displays are formed, and why errors occur in the customer inference process. While social-functional perspectives on emotion highlight the critical role of perceiver inferences and attribution processes in determining the outcomes of employee emotional labor (Côté et al., 2013; Van Kleef, 2009), very little theory exists on how such inferences are formed in the first place, and whether these inferences are ideal given the emotional display. In Chapter 5, I contributed to the emotional labor literature by borrowing from dual-process theory, a ubiquitous theory on human judgment and decision-making processes, to better understand the judgment and inferential processes underlying perceptions of the emotional displays of others. Further, I considered the role of emotions in dual-process mechanisms, which is thought to be guided by heuristic processes, but has seldom been empirically investigated (Evans, 2008).

Drawing on the emotions and dual-process literature, I hypothesized and found evidence that cognitive load distractions, which facilitate heuristic processing by impeding systematic processing, lead to more accurate perceptions of employee surface acting (i.e., lower ratings of affective delivery performance), but only when emotional intelligence is high. Further, I found that negative moods, which facilitate systematic processing, lead to less accurate perceptions of employee surface acting (i.e., higher ratings of affective delivery performance) but only when emotional intelligence is low. Together, these findings provide empirical support for the role of dual processing in the recognition of emotions, and for the idea that the processing of emotional information is facilitated by heuristic rather than systematic processes (Evans, 2008; Haidt, 2001).

Critically, the findings reported in Chapter 5 highlight how customer emotional intelligence is crucially important to theorizing both employees' engagement in

emotional labor and customers' perception of emotional labor (Daus & Ashkanasy, 2005; Grandey, 2000; Joseph & Newman, 2010). Yet there is surprisingly little empirical research investigating the effects of emotional intelligence on the emotional labor process. Further, empirical studies in the emotional labor field tend to focus on the intrapersonal effects of emotional intelligence on employee well-being outcomes (Johnson & Spector, 2007; Moira Mikolajczak et al., 2007; Totterdell & Holman, 2003) rather than the role of emotional intelligence in guiding employee interpersonal interactions with customers. In this study, I explicitly considered the role of emotional intelligence in customer judgment processes. The finding that heuristic processes interact with high customer emotional intelligence to predict more accurate inferences lends support to the idea that the beneficial effects of heuristic processes on judgment tasks depends on the individual's relevant past experience and knowledge structures (Klein, 1998). This finding parallels research on professional golf players who perform better when working memory is distracted by peripheral tasks (Beilock et al., 2002). Together, these findings highlight the utility of incorporating judgment theories in forming an understanding of how accurate inferences are made from the social emotional displays of others.

6.3 Practical Implications

In addition to the theoretical contributions, this thesis also contributes to knowledge in the form of the practical implications of its results. While I have detailed some of the more specific practical implications of each study within each corresponding chapter, here I focus on more general implications of these findings.

One clear finding across the three studies presented in this thesis is that some forms of surface acting are clearly detrimental to customer service outcomes. In Chapter

3 (Study 1), I highlighted how surface acting (in the form of suppressed negative emotions) predicted poorer service outcomes in some service settings. Likewise, in Chapter 4 (Study 2) I show how priming concepts associated with suppression is especially detrimental to customer perceptions of service quality. Similarly, the findings reported in Chapter 5 (Study 3) highlight the conditions under which surface acting predicted poorer customer perceptions. As discussed in Chapter 2, a large body of research suggests that surface acting strategies also contribute to poorer employee well-being outcomes. The performance of surface acting strategies can therefore not only harm customers and organizations, but the employees themselves. It is especially important, then, for organizations to try to prevent or discourage the use of surface acting strategies, particularly the suppression of negative emotions, in employees' attempts to manage their emotions on the job.

How might organizations promote the use of deep acting strategies and discourage employees from using surface acting strategies in the workplace? Firstly, organizations can create a *climate for service* through the use of practices, procedures, and behaviors that signal the expectation for employees to provide high quality customer service (Schneider, Wheeler, & Cox, 1992; Schneider, White, & Paul, 1998). By rewarding and supporting employees in their provision of high quality service, organizations are able to create and maintain a service climate that communicates the organization's implicit rules, values, and expectations about the provision of service quality. For instance, organizations may be effective in cultivating service climates that stress the importance of regulating emotional displays through deep acting, and the harm caused by surface acting may be communicated through training programs. Such training programs may be able to curtail the use of surface acting strategies and promote the use of deep acting strategies. Further, service climates that emphasize deep acting

may also encourage employees to automatically engage in such strategies across a variety of emotion-eliciting situations. In other words, service climates may serve as an effective social prime for employees to engage in nonconscious deep acting, which can further enhance organizational performance and employee well-being outcomes compared to active efforts to engage in deep acting.

While deep acting may be generally associated with more favorable service outcomes (Hülshager, & Schewe, 2011), the findings presented in Chapters 3 and 5 stress that surface acting is not necessarily detrimental to customer outcomes. Specifically, standardized services may buffer any potential negative influence of more deleterious surface acting strategies such as suppressing negative emotions. As such, managers may not necessarily have to be concerned with ensuring the authentic display of positive employees emotions in such service setting, and may be advised to attend to more valued aspects of this service such as employee competence and productivity. Further, while personalized services seem to be particular sensitive to suppressed negative emotions, the findings of Chapter 3 also stress that strong relationships between the employees and customer can buffer its negative influence. Personalized services are especially conducive to the formation of strong bonds between employees and customers (Gutek, 1999), and managers may be advised to provide additional training on how to foster and grow relationships between employees and customers. Finally, the findings in Chapter 5 stress that even the most concerted efforts by managers to control the authenticity and display of positive emotions in service settings may not be appreciated by customers. Customers often make errors in determining the quality of employee's smiles, and the extent to which customers perceive authenticity may be a function of their moods, their resource depletion levels, and their emotional intelligence. While managers may not be able to select which customer frequent their

stores, they can redesign the servicescape to ensure that such influences do not have adverse effects on customer judgments of service quality.

6.4 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This thesis makes a number of theoretical and methodological contributions to the literature, but there are nevertheless limitations associated with each study. Having highlighted the more specific limitations of each study in their respective chapters, in this section I outline some of the more general concerns about the research presented in this thesis. Further, I discuss how these limitations can be explored in future research, as well as general directions for research that will contribute to the field of emotional labor.

Chapter 3 suggested that high levels of employee self-reported suppressed negative emotions predict negative service outcomes in some contexts. However it is still not readily apparent what low levels of suppressed negative emotions, faked positive emotions, or surface acting capture. A finding of low levels of emotional labor suggests that employees are not managing their emotional displays for customers; however, it does not capture whether employees are not managing emotions because (a) they do not need to regulate their emotions because their feelings are naturally aligned with display rules, or (b) they are displaying felt emotions that are at odds with display rules. In other words, employees reporting low levels of suppressed negative emotions or faked positive emotions may either exhibiting genuine behavior that is in compliance with display rules, or genuine behavior that is not in compliance with display rules.

In terms of the interpersonal approach to emotions, these two possibilities lead to markedly different effects. Low levels of emotional labor in the context of displaying naturally experienced positive emotions may predict superior customer perceptions,

since authentic smiles are associated with favorable interpersonal inferences (Frank et al., 1993; Krumhuber et al., 2007; Surakka & Hietanen, 1998). On the other hand, low levels of emotional labor in the context of not attempting to comply with display rules at all predicts more negative customer outcomes (Bitner et al., 1990). This concern, however, is not specific to the studies presented in this thesis. Issues concerning low levels of surface or deep acting are problematic for the emotional labor and emotion regulation literatures in general. Difficulties in the interpretation of low levels of emotional labor is likely to limit the power of statistical tests of significance due to noise driven by the inconsistent interpretation of the lower end of the scale.

One potential method of clarifying what is denoted by low levels of emotional labor is to conduct a cluster analysis (Kaufman & Rousseeuw, 1990). Cluster analysis can be used to profile employees based on their joint patterns of responses to items measuring employee emotion management strategies and naturally felt emotions. As such, cluster analysis may be able to capture what low emotional labor means for that individual. Alternatively, future studies may wish to take into account the resulting appropriateness of employees' emotional displays to better gauge the meaning of low levels of emotional labor.

In this thesis, I drew on social-functional models of emotions as theoretical grounding to argue the effects of employee emotional labor on customer outcomes. Specifically, I argued that the *strategies* used by employees to manage their internal feelings and external emotional displays affect their resulting emotional displays, and these resulting emotional displays consequently affect customer outcomes. The underlying logic of this argument therefore concerns the pivotal role of employee *displays*—it is the displays that trigger processes in the observer, such as customer inferences and service satisfaction. Implicit in this argument is the idea that even if the

employee is not experiencing the emotions they ought to display, this will only affect subsequent customer perceptions and decision making *if* they are somehow observed by the customer (i.e., if the experience manifests in the display).

The idea that emotional labor affects the resulting authenticity of the smile is commonly used in the emotional labor literature to link employee emotional labor to customer outcomes (e.g. Grandey, Fisk, Mattila, Jansenc, & Sideman, 2005; Groth, Hennig-Thurau, & Walsh, 2009; Hennig-Thurau, Groth, Paul, & Gremler, 2006). In doing so, researchers often draw on social psychology evidence to detail the mechanisms underlying how emotion management strategies can subsequently impact the resulting displays. For example, Ekman argues that underlying feelings often manifest as microexpressions that taint the quality of the resulting display (Ekman, Friesen, & O'Sullivan, 1988; Ekman & O'Sullivan, 1991). Therefore, incongruences between feelings and displays (i.e., surface acting, including faking and suppression) ought to be associated with lower quality emotional displays. However, the studies presented in this thesis, and the general emotional labor–customer outcomes literature, have not investigated whether employee emotion regulation strategies do indeed affect the quality of their resulting displays. Future researchers may therefore wish to investigate this question. For example, researchers may wish to employ the facial action coding system (FACS; Ekman & Friesen, 1978) to examine the quality of displays and to determine the extent to which microexpressions taint the quality of resulting displays (Ekman et al., 1988).

Another concern of this study is that of the use of single methods to investigate the constructs of interest. For example, Chapter 3 utilized a self-report survey, whereas the studies presented in Chapters 4 and 5 used experimental procedures. Both surveys and experiments are effective in indicating relationships between variables, but each

method is associated with unique sets of advantages and disadvantages. For instance, dyadic self-report surveys between employees and customers following a single service encounter may be more effective in capturing the realistic aspects of service delivery between “real” employees and customers in “real” service encounters, thereby enhancing the external validity of the study. However, self-report survey-based measures conducted in more realistic environments may threaten the internal validity of the study, since it would be difficult to ascertain temporal precedence, control for the influence of confounding variables, and eliminate biases in selection. By contrast, experimental procedures typically enhance the internal validity of studies by controlling environmental features and randomly allocating participants between groups, minimizing confounding influences. However, imposing strict environmental constraints threatens the external validity of the studies by decreasing the realism of the task, which compromises the generalizability of the study across situations.

One possible way of enhancing the empirical rigor of the studies presented in this thesis would be to employ a mixed-methods approach. As mentioned, each method is associated with a unique set of advantages and disadvantages; employing both surveys and experimental methods could provide a more comprehensive picture of the phenomena by enhancing the validity of findings through triangulation and minimizing methodological artifacts. For instance, the findings of Chapter 3 could be strengthened by asking participants to assess the performance of confederates instructed to either produce fake positive displays or suppress negative feelings. Given that habitual use of emotion regulation strategies is associated with increased automation (Bargh & Williams, 2011), the findings reported in Chapter 4 could be complemented by linking employee general emotion regulation strategies with performance outcomes. Finally, the

findings reported in Chapter 5 could be enhanced by studying the effects of individual differences in working memory capacity, which is implicated in systematic processes.

This thesis has attempted to contribute to the emotional labor literature by investigating the links between employee emotional labor strategies and customer outcomes in dyadic service interactions. In doing so, the study presented in Chapter 4 emphasized the outcomes of employee nonconscious emotion regulation. However, given that habitual use of emotion regulation strategies can render those strategies highly automated and practiced nonconsciously (Bargh & Williams, 2011), this study also speaks to the antecedents of emotional labor. Although there exists a handful of studies investigating the antecedents of emotional labor strategies (Diefendorff et al., 2005; Morris & Feldman, 1996; Schaubroeck & Jones, 2000), this body of work is considerably smaller than that focused on investigating the outcomes. Research investigating the antecedents of emotional labor strategies is sorely needed in order to provide a comprehensive nomological network documenting the causes and effects of emotional labor strategies. In particular, understanding the antecedents of emotional labor strategies can help minimize the use of surface acting and suppression strategies that diminish organizational performance.

In this thesis, I examined the impact of employee emotional labor strategies on customer-rated outcomes. There are, however, other ways to capture objective performance in an organization, such as supervisor ratings of performance. Studies examining the impact of employee emotional labor on objective supervisor-rated performance and withdrawal data are scarce. This is perhaps driven by the indirect nature of employee emotional labor on objective organizational outcomes. In other words, employees perform emotional labor directly to customers, which then benefits organizations. Studies often employ proxy measures of objective performance such as

employee self-rating of performance (Totterdell & Holman, 2003), coworker-rated performance (Grandey, 2003), and employee reported of supervisor performance (Hülsheger, Lang, & Maier, 2010).

However, the links between employee self-reported emotional labor and supervisor-rated performance are considerably weaker. Studies investigating these links have often been inconsistent in their findings. For instance, Goodwin, Groth, and Frenkel (2011) found negative relationships between employee surface acting and supervisor-rated job performance, while Beal, Trougakos, Weiss, and Green (2006) reported positive relationships. Beal et al. (2006) also documented positive relationships between employee deep acting and supervisor-rated job performance, whereas Goodwin et al. (2011) failed to find a significant relationship. Finally, Gosserand and Diefendorff (2005) failed to find any significant relationships between employee surface and deep acting and supervisor-rated positive affective delivery. While some differences in findings between studies may be driven by the context in which the study was conducted, or the method used for data collection, future studies may wish to clarify relationships between employee emotional labor and supervisor-rated outcomes.

6.5 Conclusion

In closing, this thesis has presented three studies that highlight the complexities underlying the links between employee emotional labor and customer outcomes in service settings. Specifically, the first study documented the unique influence of distinct surface acting strategies and the moderating role of service context in influencing customer outcomes. The second study considered the role and the outcomes of nonconscious processes in guiding employees' use of emotional labor, and the final study investigated the individual differences and cognitive mechanisms that drive the

accuracy of customers' perceptions of employee emotional labor. Despite their associated limitations, the studies presented in this thesis provide a nuanced perspective on the relationship between employee emotional labor and customer outcomes, while simultaneously generating valuable practical insights and future research opportunities.

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