

# *Research on the Influence of Emotional Labor on the Happiness of Employees in Tourist Attractions*

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**Abstract:** In order to explore the relationship between emotional labor, emotional exhaustion, sense of organizational support and employee happiness in tourist attractions. A questionnaire survey was conducted among 322 employees of tourist attractions. Then, using SPSS 26.0 (including its Process plug-in) and Amos 24.0 statistical software, stepwise regression analysis and Bootstrap test were used for empirical analysis. The following conclusions were obtained: Surface behavior has a significant negative effect on employee happiness; Deep behavior has significant positive effect on employee happiness; Emotional exhaustion significantly negatively affects employee happiness; Emotional exhaustion has a complete mediating effect between surface behavior and employee happiness. There are some mediating effects between deep behavior and employee happiness. Organizational support significantly moderates the relationship between emotional exhaustion and employee happiness. Based on the above results, this study puts forward some management suggestions for improving employee well-being in tourist attractions. First of all, we should correctly understand emotional labor and cultivate employees' deep behavioral ability. Secondly, it is necessary to alleviate the negative emotions of employees in many ways. Finally, we should strengthen organizational support to improve employee well-being.

## 1. Introduction

With the rise of the tourism industry, the number of people going out to travel increases in a blowout way. When serving tourists, scenic employees not only have to pay intellectual and physical strength, but also need to pay emotional labor. Most service organizations have also formulated corresponding emotional expression rules to require employees, which is easy to cause emotional exhaustion of employees and reduce their happiness. This study is devoted to exploring the influence mechanism of different emotional labor strategies on employee happiness, finding out the relationship between them, providing a theoretical basis for employee management in tourist attractions, and putting forward some targeted suggestions for reference in the management process of tourist attractions.

## 2. Literature Review

According to Hochschild (1983), emotional labor is "the activity of managing one's personal feelings in order to present visible facial expressions and body language to others in public places" [1]. Grandy believes that emotional labor is the division of a series of psychological activities such as goal recognition, planning and monitoring produced to regulate emotions, and divides emotional labor into surface behavior and deep behavior [2]. Surface behavior is a process in which employees only change the external emotional expression to achieve emotional camouflage, so as to achieve the work requirements of the organization and serve customers. The deep behavior is that employees adjust their inner emotions by themselves, through changing their psychological cognition and state, so that they can express their true feelings.

Liu Xiaoyu et al. (2021) found that when employees treat customers with deep behaviors, customers' praise of service quality will be enhanced and customer loyalty will be affected. Moreover, if customers can highly perceive employees' deep behaviors, this relationship will be strengthened [3]. This can not only make up for the emotional resources spent by employees in emotional labor, but also improve their sense of achievement and enthusiasm in work, and meet their competency needs, autonomy needs and relationship needs. According to the self-determination theory, when the three basic psychological needs of employees are satisfied, the happiness of employees will be improved. On the other hand, this emotion expression strategy is a kind of surface change, which will cause employees to have the pressure caused by the strong contrast between the inner heart and the surface, and increase the emotional expression pressure of employees in general. Seger et al. (2020) pointed out that only when employees of service enterprises use deep behaviors can they positively affect customers' purchasing behaviors. If customers perceive employees' hypocrisy, it will lead to poor customer experience, reduce customers' purchasing [4], and even lead to conflicts between employees and customers, resulting in more emotional resource consumption. In addition, long-term surface behavior can make employees doubt their competence and reduce happiness. Based on the above discussion, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis H1a: Surface behavior will significantly negatively affect employee happiness.

Hypothesis H1b: Deep behavior will significantly and positively affect employee happiness.

Emotional exhaustion is a kind of resource shortage, which reflects the negative emotional experience and state of individual employees, and is the exhaustion and energy exhaustion caused by the high consumption of emotional resources. Emotional labor will lead to resource loss. When resource loss continues and cannot be supplemented, it will affect employees' mental health, enhance employees' turnover intention and procrastination, reduce employees' job satisfaction, and reduce employees' work performance and organizational performance [5-8]. Surface behavior and deep behavior in emotional labor have different ways of generating emotional expression. Bechtoldt et al. (2011) also pointed out that emotional cognition can regulate the relationship between emotional labor and work engagement, indicating that emotional labor does not always negatively affect employees [9], so surface behavior and deep behavior may have different effects on emotional exhaustion. Grandey(2000), Guan Tao et al. (2020) and Wang Shang (2021) all proved through research that surface behavior can significantly improve employees' emotional exhaustion [2, 10-11]. Amornpipat(2019) pointed out that employees' positive psychological capital can effectively alleviate emotional exhaustion in work [12]. Guan Tao et al. (2020) found through empirical study that when employees engage in a high degree of deep acting, the loss of emotional resources will be reduced, and the possibility of emotional exhaustion will be smaller [10]. Based on the above discussion, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis H2a: Surface behavior has a significant positive effect on emotional exhaustion.

Hypothesis H2b: Deep behaviors have a significant negative impact on emotional exhaustion.

According to the resource conservation theory, if an employee has the feeling of "emotional resource exhaustion" due to emotional labor, and this exhaustion cannot be supplemented, the employee will show a series of negative work emotions and reduce job satisfaction. Secondly, emotional exhaustion is a manifestation of psychological overwork, which will lead to further loss of individual emotions and psychological resources. Thirdly, when employees are emotionally exhausted, they are more likely to express their dissatisfaction or even disgust with work and life, which reduces their satisfaction with work and life, affects the harmonious relationship between employees, customers, leaders and colleagues [5], and then negatively affects the happiness of employees. Based on the above discussion, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis H3: Emotional exhaustion will significantly negatively affect employee happiness.

Hypothesis H4a: Emotional exhaustion has an intermediary effect between surface behavior and employee happiness.

Hypothesis H4b: Emotional exhaustion has a mediating effect between deep behavior and employee happiness.

Resource conservation theory holds that individuals tend to acquire valuable resources and that access to resources plays an important role when resources are depleted. In the process of emotional labor, employees mobilize a large amount of emotional resources to make emotional expressions that meet the requirements, and the loss of emotional resources will bring negative effects, such as reducing employee happiness and making individuals indifferent [6]. Organizational support theory proposes that when organizations provide more support to employees, employees can satisfy their social emotional requirements when they feel that the organization cares and attaches importance to them. Zhao Huijun and Xi Yanping (2017) and Wang Zhe and Chen Jianhong (2021) both confirmed that individuals with a higher level of organizational support have higher sense of responsibility, emotional commitment and retention intention than those with a lower level of organizational support [4, 13]. At the same time, the higher the degree of support provided by the organization, the stronger the sense of support perceived by the employees, and the lower the possibility of employee happiness reduction caused by emotional exhaustion. Moreover, when employees are in a state of emotional exhaustion, high organizational support, as an enrichment resource, can prevent employees from forming a spiraling state of resource loss due to emotional exhaustion, improve self-affirmation and recognition, and meet employees' relational needs. Based on the above discussion, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis H5: Sense of organizational support regulates the relationship between emotional exhaustion and employee happiness, that is, the higher the level of organizational support, the weaker the negative impact of emotional exhaustion on employee happiness.

Research hypothesis model is shown in Figure 1.

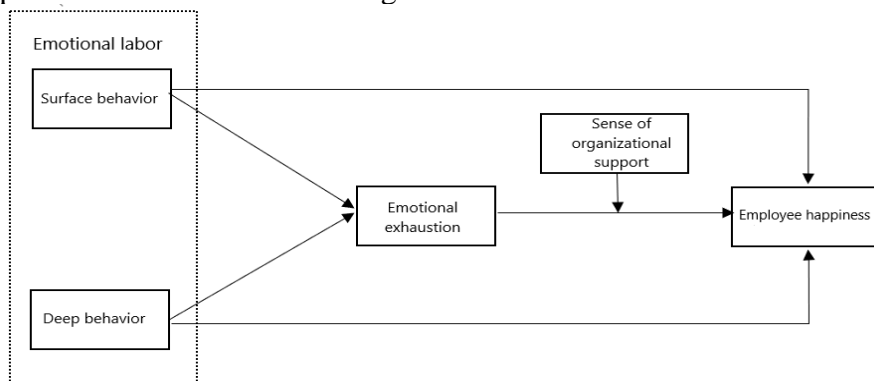


Figure 1: Research hypothesis model

### 3. Objects and Methods

#### 3.1 Sample

This study takes Ya Mountain Tourist Resort as a case study, which is highly praised and loved by all walks of life and has a good organizational atmosphere. The questionnaire was distributed online + offline. A total of 351 questionnaires were collected, 322 were valid, and the effective recovery rate was 91.7%.

#### 3.2 Measurement Tools

Employee happiness: Zheng's classification of employee happiness [14] is adopted, and work happiness and psychological happiness are used to measure employee happiness. In order to make the questionnaire more concise, the questionnaire eliminated 1 question with similar meaning in work happiness and psychological happiness, and finally obtained 10 measurement items. The Cronbach  $\alpha$  coefficient of this scale was 0.89.

Organizational support: A condensed version of the scale developed by Eisenberger [15] was selected to focus on the organization's support for employee happiness. Furthermore, based on the special situation of tourist scenic spot, the situation is modified into "scenic spot" in the scale. The Cronbach  $\alpha$  coefficient of this scale was 0.88.

Emotional labor: Based on Grandey's emotional labor strategy scale in Chinese, it is divided into surface behavior scale and deep behavior scale [2]. The scale is set according to the work objects and situations of employees in tourist attractions. CITC correlation analysis on the surface behavior scale found that Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient increased after the deletion of one of the questions, so the total reliability of the scale was 0.80 after the deletion and correction. Cronbach  $\alpha$  coefficient of deep behavior scale was 0.84.

Emotional exhaustion: The emotional exhaustion scale improved and simplified by Watkins et al. (2014) was selected [16]. The Cronbach  $\alpha$  coefficient of this scale was 0.83

Demographic variables: According to existing studies, employee gender, age, education level and income all have an impact on employee happiness. Therefore, the above demographic variables need to be controlled in the questionnaire survey.

### 4. Data Analysis

#### 4.1 Basic Demographic Information

The employee data are as follows: 208 women (64.60%), 114 men (35.4%); In terms of age, there are 129 employees aged 51 and above (40.06%), 95 employees aged 41-50 (29.50%), 51 employees aged 31-40 (15.84%), and 47 employees aged 30 and below (14.6%). In terms of education, 87.58% of high school (technical secondary school) and below, 8.08% of junior college, 3.73% of undergraduate. Income is concentrated in 3001-5000 yuan (50.62%), followed by 3000 yuan and below (43.48%), and more than 5001 yuan accounted for 5.9%.

#### 4.2 Common Method Deviation Test

In this study, SPSS26.0 statistical analysis software was used to perform unrotated factor analysis on all variables, and 5 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were obtained, which was consistent with the number of variables in the research model. The cumulative variance of the total explanatory change is 61.52%, in which the variance percentage of the first factor is 38.38%, which

is less than 40%. It can be seen that the common method deviation of the sample data in this study is not serious.

### 4.3 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

According to Table 1, there is a significant negative correlation between surface behavior and employee happiness. There is a significant positive correlation between deep behavior and employee happiness. There is a significant positive correlation between surface behavior and emotional exhaustion. Hypothesis H1a, H1b and H2a are preliminarily verified. There is a significant negative correlation between deep behavior and emotional exhaustion. There is a significant negative correlation between emotional exhaustion and employee happiness, assuming that H2b and H3 are valid.

Table 1: Describes statistics and correlation analysis

| Variable                          | M    | SD   | 1      | 2      | 3      | 4     | 5 |
|-----------------------------------|------|------|--------|--------|--------|-------|---|
| 1 Emotional exhaustion            | 2.28 | 0.83 | 1      |        |        |       |   |
| 2 Sense of organizational support | 3.98 | 0.53 | -.41** | 1      |        |       |   |
| 3 Surface behavior                | 2.33 | 0.78 | .33**  | -.31** | 1      |       |   |
| 4 Deep behavior                   | 4.10 | 0.46 | -.41** | .67**  | -.29** | 1     |   |
| 5 Employee happiness              | 4.11 | 0.45 | -.41** | .78**  | -.25** | .70** | 1 |

Note: \*P<0.05, \*\*P<0.01, \*\*\*P<0.001.

### 4.4 Mediation Effect Test

Process was used for stepwise regression analysis and bootstrap test to test the mediating effect of emotional exhaustion. As can be seen from model 5, when emotional exhaustion is taken as the mediating variable, the regression coefficient of surface behavior on employee happiness changes from -0.128 to -0.06, indicating that emotional exhaustion has a mediating effect on surface behavior and employee happiness. As can be seen from model 6, when emotional exhaustion is taken as the intermediary variable, the regression coefficient of deep behavior on employee happiness changes from 0.67 to 0.62, which indicates that emotional exhaustion has an intermediary effect on deep behavior and employee happiness, assuming that H4a and H4b are valid.

Bootstrap test method was used to verify the mediating effect of emotional exhaustion again, and the specific results were shown in Table 2 and Table 3. In the influence path of surface behavior on employee happiness, its total effect value is -0.13, and 95% confidence interval is [-0.20, -0.06], excluding 0, indicating that the total effect is significant. Its indirect effect value is -0.07, and 95% confidence interval is [-0.10, -0.04], excluding 0, indicating that emotional exhaustion has a significant intermediary effect between surface behavior and employee happiness. Moreover, its direct effect value is -0.06, and 95% confidence interval is [-0.13, 0.01], including 0. It indicates that the direct effect of surface behavior on employee happiness is not significant. It can be concluded that emotional exhaustion has a complete intermediary effect between surface behavior and employee happiness, and the relative effect value of the intermediary effect is 53.24%. In the influence path of deep behaviors on employee happiness, the total effect value is 0.67, and the 95% confidence interval is [0.57, 0.75], excluding 0, indicating that the total effect is significant. Its indirect effect size is 0.05 with 95% confidence interval [0.02, 0.10], excluding 0, indicating that emotional exhaustion has a significant mediating effect between deep behavior and employee happiness. However, its direct effect size is 0.62 with 95% confidence interval [0.50, 0.72], excluding 0. This indicates that emotional exhaustion only partially mediates between deep behaviors and employee happiness, and the relative effect value corresponding to the mediating

effect is 7.91%. Hypothesis H4a and H4b are both verified again.

Table 2: Test of the mediating effect of emotional exhaustion

| Variable             | Employee happiness |          | Emotional exhaustion |          | Employee happiness |           |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------|----------------------|----------|--------------------|-----------|
|                      | Model1             | Model2   | Model3               | Model4   | Model5             | Model6    |
| constant             | 4.07***            | 1.14***  | 1.38***              | 5.26***  | 4.34***            | 1.52***   |
| gender               | -0.04              | -0.02    | 0.06                 | 0.02     | -0.03              | -0.02     |
| age                  | 0.05**             | 0.03     | 0.07                 | 0.06     | 0.06***            | 0.03*     |
| Educational level    | 0.01               | 0.02     | 0.11                 | 0.11     | 0.04               | 0.03      |
| Income level         | 0.15***            | 0.11***  | -0.21***             | -0.19*** | 0.11***            | 0.09***   |
| Surface behavior     | -0.13***           |          | 0.36***              |          | -0.06*             |           |
| Deep behavior        |                    | 0.67***  |                      | -0.73*** |                    | 0.62***   |
| Emotional exhaustion |                    |          |                      |          | -0.19***           | -0.072*** |
| R <sup>2</sup>       | 0.12               | 0.51     | 0.14                 | 0.19     | 0.23               | 0.53      |
| F                    | 8.73***            | 66.14*** | 10.61***             | 15.24*** | 15.25***           | 58.09***  |

Note: \*P<0.05, \*\*P<0.01, \*\*\*P<0.001.

Table 3: Results of mediating effects of emotional exhaustion

| Effect type                                      | Path   | Effect size | 95% confidence interval CI |             | Relative effect size |
|--|--|-------------|----------------------------|-------------|----------------------|
|  |  |             | Floor                      | Upper limit |                      |
| Total effect                                     | Surface behavior → Employee happiness                        | -0.13       | -0.20                      | -0.06       |                      |
|  | Deep behavior → Employee happiness                           | 0.67        | 0.57                       | 0.75        |                      |
| Direct effect                                    | Surface behavior → Employee happiness                        | -0.06       | -0.13                      | 0.01        | 46.76%               |
|  | Deep behavior → Employee happiness                           | 0.62        | 0.50                       | 0.72        | 92.09%               |
| Pay attention to the indirect effects of control | Surface behavior → emotional exhaustion → employee happiness | -0.07       | -0.10                      | -0.04       | 53.24%               |
|  | Deep behavior → Emotional exhaustion → employee happiness    | 0.05        | 0.02                       | 0.10        | 7.91%                |

#### 4.5 Adjustment Effect Test

In this study, process3.3 was used to test the moderating effect of perceived organizational support, and the results were shown in Table 4. In model 3, the independent variable emotional exhaustion, the regulatory variable sense of organizational support and the interaction terms between emotional exhaustion and sense of organizational support were put into the model, and the regression coefficient of the interaction terms was significant ( $\beta=-0.07$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ). Moreover, the  $\Delta R^2$  of model 3 was 0.64, which was greater than the  $\Delta R^2$  of model 1 and model 2, and the explanatory power of the model was improved. It is concluded that organizational support moderates the effect of emotional exhaustion on employee well-being. This study further draws a

graph of the moderating effect of perceived organizational support, and the specific results are shown in Figure 2. It can be seen from the graph that the higher the perceived organizational support, the lower the negative impact of emotional exhaustion on employee happiness. Hypothesis H5 is verified.

Table 4: Testing the moderating effect of perceived organizational support

| Variable   | Dependent variable: employee happiness |          |          |
|--|--|----------|----------|
|  | Model 1                                | Model 2  | Model 3  |
| Constant   | 4.20***                                | 1.70***  | 0.96***  |
| Gender   | -0.21***                               | 0.63***  | -0.01    |
| age  | -0.03                                  | -0.05**  | 0.00     |
| Educational level                                      | 0.07***                                | -0.03    | 0.0      |
| Income level   | 0.03                                   | -0.01    | 0.06**   |
| Emotional exhaustion                                   | 0.11***                                | 0.01     | 0.24     |
| Sense of organizational support                        |  | 0.06**   | 0.79***  |
| Emotional exhaustion * Sense of organizational support |  |          | -0.07**  |
| R <sup>2</sup>   | 0.22                                   | 0.63     | 0.64     |
| ΔR <sup>2</sup>  | 0.22                                   | 0.63     | 0.64     |
| F  | 17.44***                               | 88.98*** | 78.17*** |

Note: \*P<0.05, \*\*P<0.01, \*\*\*P<0.001.

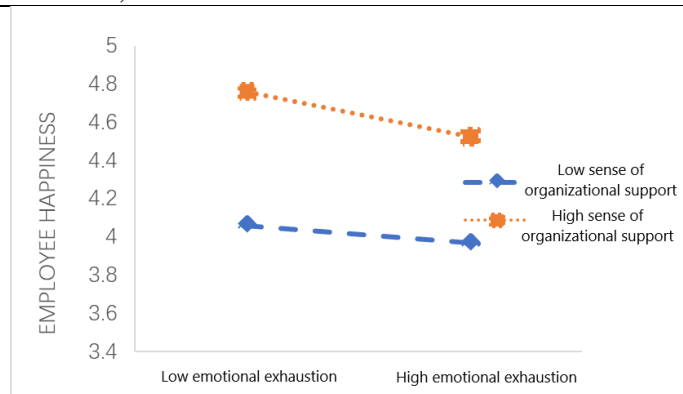


Figure 2: Moderating effect of perceived organizational support

## 5. Management Inspiration

Studies have shown that emotional labor does not always have a negative impact on employee happiness, and deep behaviors will negatively affect emotional exhaustion, thus improving employee happiness. The negative impact is mainly on surface behavior, which will deepen the emotional exhaustion of employees and reduce their happiness. At this time, if the organization provides more support, according to the theory of resource preservation, a high sense of organizational support can make up for the resource consumption of employees.

Based on this conclusion, this study puts forward the following practical implications for staff management in tourist attractions: First, actively cultivate employees' deep behavioral ability. Tourist attractions should improve employees' understanding of emotional labor and their ability to use it, and do a good job in emotional labor knowledge training to help employees understand



emotional labor. Second, to alleviate the negative emotions of employees in various ways. Create a good organizational emotional atmosphere and strengthen internal communication and exchange. Enhance communication between departments, between employees, and between superiors and subordinates through interesting activities. Appropriate mental health training courses should be carried out so that employees can master ways to channel their emotions. Third, strengthen organizational support to improve employee happiness. Strengthen trust between employees and their immediate supervisors. The survey found that the direct supervisor of the department would be regarded as the agent of the organization by the employees, so the direct supervisor should communicate with the employees openly and openly, and take the initiative to show respect and support for the employees. Create a highly supportive organizational culture and create a culture of praise and encouragement.

The research on the relationship between emotional labor and employee happiness mainly focuses on surface behavior and deep behavior, and adopts the cross-sectional research method. Therefore, multiple methods such as longitudinal research and experience sampling can be combined for interactive verification in the future. In addition, the research focus can be expanded. In the actual operation of tourist attractions, the impact of tourist attitude and support on employee happiness is worthy of further discussion.

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