

Working with emotions: cultural employee perspectives to service management expectations

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Abstract

Purpose

Drawing on the emotional labour theory, the purpose of this paper is to explore the effects of cultural orientation on emotion regulation and display processes for service employees.

Design/methodology/approach

Based on a Nigerian study where literature is scarce, data were gathered from semi-structured interviews conducted with 40 call centre service agents

Findings

The findings identified three key values around reinforcing social cohesion, anticipated self-curtailment, hierarchy and expressions of servility based on broader societal needs to promote relational harmony when managing customer relations during inbound calls into the call centre.

Research limitations/implications

The extent to which the findings can be generalised is constrained by the limited and selected sample size. However, the study makes contributions to the service work theory by identifying the extent to which communication of emotions is informed in large parts by local culture and seeks to incite scholarly awareness on the differences of emotional display rules from a developing country other than western contexts.

Originality/value

This paper is among the first to focus on the interface between culture and emotional labour from a Sub-Saharan African context.

Keywords

Service employees ; Emotion and culture ;;Nigeria and call centres

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