

RESEARCH ON EMOTION IN ORGANIZATIONS

VOLUME 16



EMOTIONS AND SERVICE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

CHARMINE E. J. HÄRTEL
WILFRED J. ZERBE
NEAL M. ASHKANASY

Editors

EMOTIONS AND SERVICE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

This volume is dedicated to

Love, time, inclusion are the greatest things we can give or receive. I take this moment to thank those I have received these from, and as always to express my gratitude for being graced with my beautiful family and my forever love. Life is truly beautiful because of you.

CEJH

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Professor Anat Rafaeli is the Yigal Alon Chair for Study of People at Work in Technion, Israel's Institute of Technology. Her research examines multiple aspects of customer service delivery. Her early work developed the theory of "Emotional Labor" inherent to service work and the effects of symbols and artifacts in service delivery. Her recent research examines effects of anger and aggression of customers on service agents, in face-to-face, telephone, and online service interactions. Most recently she has integrated research using big data archives and tools for automated research of organic data extracted from digital traces to study emotion dynamics and other aspects of service delivery. Prof. Rafaeli has published extensively in leading journals, including *Frontiers in Psychological Science*, *Journal of Service Research*, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Academy of Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Review*, *Organization Science*, and *Personnel Psychology*. She is a Fellow of the Academy of Management, the Society of Organizational Behavior, the American Psychological Association, and the Association of Psychological Science.

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Dr Sunita Ramam Rupavatharam (MD Psychiatry; PhD Organizational Psychology) is an Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Bharti Vidyapeeth Medical College Pune, India. Her focus areas are preventive Psychiatry and neurobiological aspects of personality. She also teaches Organizational Behavior and psychological aspects of Human Resource Management at premier business schools in Pune as a visiting faculty. She has over a decade experience as a leadership coach, behavioral consultant, and corporate trainer for reputed corporates in India. Her areas of research interest are emotional intelligence and gender behavior with

specific focus on the interactions, implications, and applications of these aspects on organizational productivity, performance, and leadership behavior across sectors.

Professor Rebekah Russell-Bennett has an international reputation for research and industry relevance in the field of Social Marketing (using commercial marketing to address social problems such as alcohol consumption, chronic disease, water usage, electricity use, public transport, and diet). She is the Deputy Director of the Centre for Behavioural Economics, Society, and Technology and immediate past National President of the Australian Association of Social Marketing (the peak industry body for social marketing in Australia). Rebekah is the most cited marketing academic in Australia and is also a leading educator in the field of marketing and is responsible for the development of the award-winning QUTopia role-play simulation at QUT. Rebekah holds a PhD in brand loyalty for the services sector, is the co-editor for the *Journal of Services Marketing*, and has published over 300 peer-reviewed articles with more than 75 articles in international journals.

Marvin Schuth, MSc is a PhD candidate at the Chair of Strategy and Organization of the Technical University of Munich, Germany. Before starting his PhD, he studied Management with Technology (MSc) at the Technical University of Munich and Business Administration and Economics: Economics (BSc) at the University of Hohenheim, Germany. His research interests circle around human resource management and organizational behavior topics. Thereby, he focuses on areas such as performance evaluation, social identity theory in organizations, recruitment signals, and applicant attraction, as well as image perceptions of organizations. To test his hypotheses, he applies a combination of different quantitative research methods including word analyses, experimental conjoint analysis, and (massive) archival data from organizations and professional sports. In the area of recruitment and applicant perceptions, he particularly looks into how organizations can attract students and professionals in the field of information technology to address the challenges of the digital transformation.

Lucas Whittaker is a Research Student at the Centre for Behavioural Economics, Society, and Technology (BEST) at the Queensland University of Technology. His research focuses on understanding how emerging technologies and novel application of these technologies can influence human behavior and the way in which we communicate. Specifically, his work examines how the sophisticated application of artificial intelligence to create “deepfakes” can influence perceptions of messaging. He has presented his work to scholarly and practitioner audiences at conferences both nationally and internationally.

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most recent research has explored such diverse topics as sex differences in nonbinary gender identification, male and female decision-making in assisted reproductive and donor insemination medical environments, and preferences versus choice in cyber dating markets.

Galit Bracha Yom Tov is an Assistant Professor at IE&M faculty of the Technion. Her research focuses on operations of service systems, in particular, healthcare and contact centers. Dr Yom Tov is the co-director of the SEE-Lab (Service Engineering Enterprise)—a worldwide hub for research and teaching in Service Engineering. Her research aims to build models for understanding the impact of customer and agent behavior on service systems and to incorporate these behaviors into operational models of such systems. Her multidisciplinary research approach applies a combination of Data Science and Stochastic Modeling to archives of digital traces from service systems. Her recent work used such data to study the dynamics of customer emotions in contact centers, the reaction of customers to waiting announcements in emergency departments, and other aspects of service delivery. Dr Yom Tov has published her work in leading operations research journals, including *Management Science*, *M&SOM*, *OR*, and *Stochastic Systems*.

INTRODUCTION: EMOTIONS AND SERVICE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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INTRODUCTION: EMOTIONS AND SERVICE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

This volume is split into three parts. Part I describes the phenomenon of the Digital Age and how it is set to influence emotions and service. The latest research on the expected impact of digitalization on work and workers, emotions research, and practice is discussed. Part II explores the impacts of the Digital Age and ways in which we can adapt to the evolving digital environment in service and the workplace. The chapters in this section highlight the importance of human-centered design considerations to ensure digital tools add value to society and the research we conduct. Part III explores how emotions affect care given and received in service and organizations in the setting of the Digital Age. It also highlights how organizations can display care in the Digital Era. Below is an overview of the 12 chapters included in this volume.

PART I: THE DIGITAL AGE

The first section of this volume is dedicated to introducing readers to the latest developments and predictions relating to the interface between digital technology and the human experience of work and services.

Chapter 1 introduces the basic concepts of the digital age, gives examples of how digitalization is influencing customer service and services, and explores the role of digitalization, including digital communications, in the expression and management of workers' emotions and well-being. Authors Jasmin Härtel and Charmine Härtel conducted a literature review covering recent publications on the digital age and its consequences for services, workers, customer–organization communication,

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and emotions research and management. Their review spans seven key areas: (1) What is the digital age/economy/world? (2) how customer services have changed as a result of digitalization, (3) how emotions are captured and used in digital communications, e.g., emoticons, (4) how people are using digital means (e.g., “self-tracking” and “wearables”) to manage their own emotions/feelings/well-being, and (5) some of the implications of the digital era for emotions scholars and practitioners, (6) how the digital age is hypothesized to change the future of work, and (7) the associated ethical and well-being imperatives that must be met.

Chapter 2 discusses the potential of technologically altered realities, including augmented reality, mixed reality, and virtual reality, as a novel tool for emotions research and practice. Authors Jameson Härtel and Charmine Härtel explore the possibilities of using this novel technology for studying emotion, such as the use of VR to create controlled scenarios in which to investigate individuals’ emotional and behavioral responses to a stimulus of interest, therefore opening avenues of research that in the real world may otherwise be unfeasible. The authors also provide examples of how this novel technology is currently being applied to a wide range of fields, from medicine to space travel, and illustrate how such technology can be used to increase accessibility for those with emotional regulation challenges, such as adults diagnosed with autism.

In Chapter 3, authors Kate Letheren, Rebekah Russell-Bennett, Lucas Whittaker, Stephen Whyte, and Uwe Dulleck critically review the research on service robots in organizations and the emotional and cognitive interplay between these robots, employees working alongside them, and the customers being served by them. They reveal 6 main themes arising from the literature and provide 14 specific research questions from which to expand upon these themes. This chapter acts as an overview of the current state of research and a guide for future research on this emerging, and increasingly important, field.

PART II: ADAPTING TO THE DIGITAL AGE

The second section of this volume concerns the adaptation implications of digital tools including changes to coaching and well-being management, leader communication considerations, and the use of digital traces data in research and decision-making.

In Chapter 4, author Jennifer Nash explores how coaching is being influenced by digital advancements brought about by the Digital Age and how coaches must adapt to provide an effective and valuable service. As coaching services are progressively moving toward digital platforms, Nash highlights the importance of the human element in the coach–client relationship. This chapter presents the first study to investigate relational climate as a key to coaching relationship quality. Nash identifies the key contributing factors to an effective executive coaching relationship and the existing research gaps relating to coach–client relationships, before discussing ways in which coaches can improve upon the coaching relational climate in the Digital Age. To explore these aims, Nash presents a model consisting of three dimensions (shared vision, compassion, and relational energy)

derived from Boyatzis and Rochford's relational climate scale that links to Gregory and Levy's perceived quality of the employee coaching relationship scale. To understand the role of coaching relationships throughout a leader's development, Nash conducted interviews with 293 executives to gather information on their perceived coach/mentor experiences. The results show that relational climate has a significant positive influence on coaching relationship quality, emphasizing the importance of the human element in an increasingly digital world.

In Chapter 5, authors John Jasinski, Jennifer Jasinski, Charmine Härtel, and Günter Härtel develop and assess the usefulness of a novel online coaching intervention to support medical students' mental and physical well-being. The chapter provides an overview of the current state of medical students' mental health when compared to age-matched students and the general population, thus illustrating the prevalence of mental health issues in medical students worldwide. This is followed by a review on coaching and how this intervention could be a useful approach for managing medical students' well-being. To evaluate the effectiveness of the coaching intervention, the authors conduct a two-group randomized control trial design with 176 medical students over 10 weeks. Coaching the medical students to reflect on their emotions and to make solution-focused decisions to manage stress was shown to decrease their stress, anxiety, and depression; thus, online well-being coaching could be a promising tool for medical schools to help support students and ultimately increase patient care in the future.

In Chapter 6, authors Prisca Brosi and Marvin Schuth investigate the influence of leaders' emotion expressions on the social distance between leaders and followers and how the prevalence of digital communication may lessen their influence. Leaders' emotion expressions can have a strong impact on leader-follower relationships, affecting work outcomes, trust, power differences, and followers' social worth. This impact can be positive or negative depending on whether the emotions expressed are engaging or disengaging. Digital communication, however, often removes or lessens the impact of emotion expression associated with face-to-face communication. The authors build a theoretical model to help leaders effectively communicate and build relationships with their followers in an increasingly digitalized world. The model provides specific recommendations for how leaders can express emotions, using digital communication to their benefit, to create and maintain high-quality leader-follower relationships.

In Chapter 7, authors Anat Rafaeli, Galit Yom Tov, Shelly Ashtar, and Daniel Altman outline recent developments in digital service delivery. Employing archived resources available at <http://LivePerson.com>, the authors extracted data based on genuine service conversations between agents and customers, which they refer to as "digital traces." Although they did not test significance or causality in the usual way, they used computational science models to provide a rich and unique lens into the dynamics of emotions in service work, results that are not obtainable using traditional research methods. Although the method is essentially descriptive, the results unravel new dynamics that future scholars can use as a starting point in conducting research using traditional and experimental

methods. In particular, the digital traces research allows inferences of causality when used in experimental research. Moreover, the digital data and newly developed tools for sentiment analyses allow exploration of emotions in large samples of genuine customer service interactions. The research provides objective, unobtrusive views of customer emotions that draw directly from customer expressions, with no self-report intervention and biases. In sum, this is the first objective and detailed depiction of the actual emotional encounters that customers express and the first to analyze in detail the nature and content of customer service work.

PART III: EMOTIONS AND CARE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

The final section of this volume presents a selection of research addressing the features of care that organizations must not lose sight of in the digital era. Digitalization is creating a more complex web of actors and information that workers and consumers engage with. Rather than making positive relationships and work environments or meaningful work less important, the digital era is raising the bar on these.

In Chapter 8, author Sunita Ramam Rupavataram addresses the role of psychological androgyny as a factor in medical practitioners' interpersonal competency, which is critical for patient care in modern times, where patients have access to the Internet and are prone to self-diagnose their ailments. The author hypothesized that more psychologically androgynous medical practitioners should demonstrate more interpersonal competency than their non-androgynous counterparts. To test this idea, she administered self-report measures of androgyny (using the Bem sex-role inventory) and interpersonal competence (measured using a self-report emotional intelligence scale) to 30 doctors undergoing postgraduate training and 30 medical consultants. Results confirmed that androgynous doctors score higher than non-androgynous doctors on interpersonal competence. She also found that the consultants scored higher than the postgraduates on this measure (although this is most likely reflective of the latter group's age and experience). The author concludes with a discussion of the implications of her findings for medical training in India, which only recently has begun to realize that medical care depends not only on technical skills but also on developing skills of care and compassion.

The following chapter (Chapter 9) focuses on the challenge of successful integration faced by organizations following an acquisition, a process which can have a significant impact on employees and the organization as a whole. In recent times, an emphasis has been placed on how employees' emotions influence this process. In line with this, author Riikka Harikkala-Laihinien's chapter investigates "*how organizations can influence the emotional climate surrounding change*". Using a case study, this chapter takes us through the changing emotional climate experienced by employees throughout the post-acquisition integration process. The importance of clear and honest communication during this time is

emphasized, as well as a focus on the benefits of the acquisition for the future of the organization and thus employees.

Chapter 10 explores the importance of work relationships in influencing employees' happiness at work and therefore their commitment and intentions to stay at the organization. Using a latent difference score approach, authors Daphna Brueller, Nir Brueller, and Ety Doveh investigated whether emotional expression in work relationships contributed to employees' organizational commitment. This hypothesis was supported, thus adding to the evidence of the benefits of positive work relationships and a work environment where open emotional expression is encouraged.

In Chapter 11, Magda du Preez, Hendrik Kriek, and Jeremy Albright address the issue of boredom in today's retail organizations—that routinely employ advanced digital technology to provide decision-making and solutions. The authors address in particular how a personality trait, openness, buffers the relationship between feeling bored (both as an emotion and a mood) affects middle managers' confidence and risk appraisal acumen. They hypothesized in particular that emotion boredom would decrease confidence and that mood boredom would affect the manager's risk perceptions; and that these effects would be ameliorated for managers with higher trait openness. They tested these hypotheses among a sample of 68 South African middle managers who responded to seven video clips depicting situations where middle managers in retail needed to manage in an uncertainty environment. Results not only supported the main-effect hypotheses (boredom links to lower confidence and decreased perceptions of risk) but also provided evidence that components of a manager's level of trait openness condition these effects. In particular, they found that the learning component of openness neutralizes the negative effects of feeling bored on managers' decision-making confidence and that both the learning and inquisitive components temper the positive association between excitement (the opposite of feeling bored) and risk perceptions.

In Chapter 12, authors Olof Brunninge, Markus Plate, and Marcela Ramirez-Pasillas use a metasystem approach to investigate the corporate social responsibility (CSR) of family-owned businesses. The authors explore the significance of family business social responsibilities (FBSR) through case studies, with a particular focus on the Deichmann family, a third-generation German shoe retail business. Three themes are identified and discussed: From corporate social responsibility to FBSR; the idiosyncratic nature of FBSR; and FBSR transcending generations. The authors also identify and discuss the gaps present in the extant literature on CSR, suggesting avenues for further research to strengthen our understanding and knowledge of FBSR.

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PART 1

THE DIGITAL AGE

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