

What if high is too high: the role of regulation of emotion in sales interactions

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Abstract

Using the observer's perspective (i.e. the customer's), this study examines how differing levels of salesperson's regulation of emotion (ROE) affect customer satisfaction with the interaction. Furthermore, the study investigates how the two key strategic options for increasing the interaction quality, i.e. salesperson's displayed positive emotion (DPE) and helpfulness, shape the "ROE-customer satisfaction" link. Support is found for the hypothesized inverted U-shaped effect of ROE on customer satisfaction implying that the customers are most satisfied with interaction when salespeople exhibit optimal levels of ROE. In addition, both DPE and helpfulness moderate this relationship, albeit in different directions. Whereas helpfulness makes the "ROE-customer satisfaction" link more pronounced, for DPE the effect is reversed, where results indicate a flip in the curve on the higher lever for extreme values of ROE when DPE is high. The theoretical and practical implications of these findings are discussed.