

# Customer Emotional Labor

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## **Abstract**

In the present research, we introduce the idea of customer emotional labor. While employee emotional labor has been largely documented, we propose that customers also perform emotional labor during service encounters, such as when they pretend to be happy with the outcome of a service encounter (e.g., a haircut) when they truly are not. We draw on the organizational behavior literature (in which employee emotional labor has been studied) to conceptualize customer emotional labor and we consult the value cocreation literature to explain why customers perform emotional labor. We then advance several propositions on customer emotional labor. Our research contributes to the literature on customer emotion in services. The underlying assumption in most service marketing studies is that customers express how they truly feel. Our research challenges this assumption. Customers may not always express their genuine emotions during service encounters; instead, they perform emotional labor.

**Keywords:** *emotion; customers; services*

**Track:** Services Marketing