

Employees' Emotional Expressions in Healthcare Service Interactions: A Neuroscientific Approach

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Cite as:

STOKBURGER-SAUER NICOLA, SCHEFBÄNKER KATRIN, TEICHMANN KARIN (2026),
Employees' Emotional Expressions in Healthcare Service Interactions: A Neuroscientific Approach.
Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy, 55th, (134020)

Paper from the 55th Annual EMAC Conference, Bath, United Kingdom, June 2-5, 2026



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Abstract

Employees' emotional expressions are specifically important for customer satisfaction in healthcare, however, the effects of positive emotional expressions across modalities (facial vs. vocal) remain underexplored. This study examines the nonlinear relationship of the intensity of healthcare employees' emotional expressions and patient satisfaction, with a focus on the distinct effect across emotion modalities. Using a neuroscientific approach, a lab experiment was conducted to analyze the influence of the facial and vocal emotional expression intensity of joy on patient satisfaction. The findings reveal that employees' moderate compared to low or high holistic emotional intensity significantly enhances patient satisfaction. Both facial and vocal positive emotional expressions influence satisfaction, with vocal joy emerging as the most impactful for healthcare outcomes. Healthcare employees should balance emotional intensity, and emphasize vocal joy, to optimize patient satisfaction.

Track: Service Marketing & Service Innovation