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Brendan Phillips
Curtin University of Technology

Thomas Tsu-Wee Tan
Curtin University of Technology

Craig C. Julian
University of Adelaide

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Brendan Phillips

Notre Dame University

Thomas Tan Tsu Wee, Ph.D.
Singapore Management University

Craig Julian, Ph.D.
University of Adelaide

Send All Correspondence to:

Tsu Wee Thomas TAN
Practice Associate Professor of Marketing,

Singapore Management University (SMU),

Lee Kong Chian School of Business,

469, Bukit Timah Road,

Singapore, 259756.

Abstract

In this paper, the broad context for the study of emotional dissonance and its importance to marketing is set out. The relevant literature on emotional dissonance, its antecedents and outcomes are introduced together with the knowledge gap in the literature, giving rise to the stimulus for a proposed future study. Finally, a conceptual framework for emotional dissonance is proposed together with the identification of key issues and the managerial implications from such a study.

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Keywords: emotional labor, dissonance, role expectation, performance management, customer orientation, job performance, job satisfaction.

Introduction

In this paper, the broad context for the study of emotional dissonance and its importance to marketing is set out. The relevant literature on emotional dissonance, its antecedents and outcomes are introduced together with the knowledge gap in the literature, giving rise to the stimulus for a proposed future study. Finally, a conceptual framework for emotional dissonance is proposed together with the identification of key issues and the managerial implications from such a study.

Many high contact services involving direct interactions with customers, require service providers to manage how they present their emotions during service encounters (Leidner 1999). These services may require service workers to comply with employer prescribed occupational expectations about emotional expression, otherwise known as "display rules" (Ashforth and Humphrey 1993), or "feeling rules" (Hochschild 1983) by hiding true feelings from clients and displaying feelings required to perform the job role effectively.

Consider this reflection from a lawyer and an interaction involving a health care worker and a psychiatric patient:

> "I spend a lot of my time trying to control my emotions at work. People don't expect me to be emotional, whether that means angry, upset, or excited. I have to be the same neutral person at all times (Mann 1999, p.1)."

According to Hochschild (1983), over 38% of all jobs require substantial amounts of emotion management in the workplace. If we limit the analysis to high contact service roles, involving face-to-face interactions between service employees and customers, the percentage would be considerably higher.

Service marketers generally agree that the manner in which interactions between employees and customers unfold constitute a principal component of a customer's expectations and experience of service quality. Hence, it is considered a key source of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Gronroos 2001; Lovelock 2001). Service marketers further recognize that it is the emotions displayed by service workers when interacting with customers as a key factor in determining customer evaluations of service quality (Pugh 2001).

Emotional Dissonance and its Significance to Marketing

Emotional dissonance occurs when expressed emotions satisfy feeling rule, or role expectations pertaining to emotional expression that come with the job rule, but clash with inner feelings. Hochschild (1983, p. 90) defined emotional dissonance as: "maintaining a difference between feeling and feigning". Hoffman and Bateson (2001, p. 252) conceptualized emotional dissonance as a result of person/role conflict in which "contact personnel are required to hide their true feelings and present a front or face to the customer".

The issue of emotional dissonance and its importance to customer contact personnel and marketing was highlighted in a study by Julian and Ramaseshan (1994) where the role of customer-contact personnel in the marketing process of a retail bank was recognized as being important by the customer-contact personnel and the organization. However, the customer-contact personnel felt they were not well rewarded

for their contribution to the retail bank's marketing effort, were not involved in an official training programme, and a significant percentage (37.1 per cent) felt they received greater blame, condemnation and threat of dismissal than did salespeople. The significance of the Julian and Ramaseshan (1994) findings highlights the low self-esteem evident in the customer-contact personnel that could permeate itself within the organization. A result of this low self-esteem could be poor customer service ultimately leading to poor organizational performance (Julian and Ramaseshan, 1994).

Lovelock (2001) pointed out that expressing emotions that one does not feel during service encounters can be stressful for service workers. The emotional dissonance that results can lead to feelings of falseness and in-authenticity (Ashforth and Humphrey 1993). The possible long-term psychological consequences of such stress and feelings of in-authenticity include emotional exhaustion, job burnout (Erickson and Ritter 2001; Hochschild 1983), job dissatisfaction (Morris and Feldman 1997) and depression (Erickson and Wharton 1997).

The significance of emotional dissonance to marketers was in the way employees experience their jobs, which was reflected in the perceptions customers have of the service quality they receive (Julian and Ramaseshan 1994; Schneider 1994). There is also a well-established link between employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction, sales and profits (Heskett, Sasser, and Schlesinger 2003). Despite the compelling link between the employee's experience of the job role, emotional dissonance and customer satisfaction, there has been a paucity of marketing research to explore how emotional dissonance can be managed to improve employee satisfaction and job performance in the context of high contact customer services (see Julian and Ramaseshan 1994; Kotler 1991).

For example, Kotler (1991) presented a model of three types of strategic marketing orientation; external marketing, internal marketing, and interactive marketing, and explained how they can be applied. External marketing describes how a company's marketing mix strategy consisting of product, price, promotion and place (distribution) is used to create a beneficial exchange relationship between producer and consumer. The emphasis is on improving marketing relationships between the company and its customers by adopting and utilising effective marketing mix strategies. However, this traditional marketing approach is no longer sufficient to retain customers in today's rapidly changing global marketplace (Kotler 1991; Waterschoot and Van Den Bulte 1992). Rather, two other marketing orientations - internal marketing and interactive marketing - are needed in order to meet the needs of today's companies effectively (Lu, Madu, Kuei, and Winokur 1994).

Internal marketing is a concept that emphasises team management. The company should encourage and motivate employees in non-marketing departments to work as a team and support employees in marketing related areas (e.g., sales, marketing and customer service) who have frequent contact with customers. The emphasis of internal marketing is on the management of relationships between marketing and non-marketing personnel. Systems marketing, which is a current practice within the broader context of internal marketing, involves the interaction between the company's management and employees, and its customers. Here, emphasis is placed on pre-selling, selling, and post-selling activities (Caruso 1992; Lu et al. 1994).

Interactive marketing measures the level of efficiency of the marketing department in contacting and addressing customers' needs. Database marketing can be used to illustrate this concept. Here, information on customers such as personal and/or organisational interests, goals and objectives is maintained in a database. The premise is:

"the more information a company has about its customers, the better it interacts with them and, therefore, the better their needs are satisfied"(Lu et al. 1994, p. 43). A typical example is a company that has a customer service department that maintains a database on customer complaints, needs and, perhaps, expectations. This information can be used to improve work processes.

These three types of strategic marketing orientation as proposed by Kotler (1991) can be adapted and further developed to support a company's vision and long-term goals and objectives in the global marketplace. However, they all hinge on satisfactory work place relationships between employer, employee and customer with emotional dissonance making a substantial contribution to that work place relationship. As such, this paper suggests an integrative approach to the study of emotional dissonance. The authors focus on research on workplace emotion management and its consequences, emotional dissonance, from a diverse range of literatures including sociology, management and marketing, in an effort to extend the application of emotional dissonance to the field of marketing.

The sociology and management literatures have contributed mostly to the conceptual and empirical study of workplace emotions and emotional dissonance. Hochschild (1983) first coined the term "emotional labor" to describe what employees perform when they are required to feel, or at least project the appearance of feeling particular emotions as they engage in job related interactions (Hochschild 1983). Although Hochschild's (1983) work focused on the negative psychological consequences of expressing emotions in order to comply with job expectations, positive consequences have also been conceptualized and found. These included the enhancement of professional judgement and commitment to a professional identity (Yanay and Shahar 1998), psychological detachment from deeply felt emotions (Rafaeli and Sutton 1987),

self-efficacy, objectivity and emotional equilibrium (Ashforth and Humphrey 1993). However, most of the literature on emotional dissonance deals conceptually with the negative consequences yet to be empirically tested. This paper addresses the paucity of empirical research in this area from a marketing perspective.

Based on the theory of dramaturgy, a field of sociology that applies the metaphor of a theatrical performance to social interactions, Hochschild (1983) considered the service employee to be an 'actor' who consciously attempts to deal with emotional dissonance and comply with feeling rules by engaging in two forms of acting. "Surface acting" requires employees to display emotions required for the job that they do not actually feel. This was achieved by carefully presenting verbal and non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, gestures and tone of voice. "Deep acting" requires much more effort from employees who actually psyche themselves into feeling the emotions they were required to express, thus eliminating the emotional dissonance initially experienced. According to Hochschild (1983), these different forms of acting affected the employee's psychological well being in very different ways. However, as previously explained, most of these propositions have not been empirically supported.

Instead, the majority of sociological studies on the expression of required emotions in the workplace have focussed on conceptualising the negative psychological consequences of displaying emotions not felt amongst employees in typical front-line service roles such as airline attendants (Hochschild 1983), bank employees, (Erickson and Wharton 1997; Julian and Ramaseshan 1994; Wharton 1993), health care workers (Erickson and Wharton 1997; Morris and Feldman 1997; Pugh 2001; Wharton 1993), debt collectors (Morris and Feldman 1997), and supermarket cashiers (Rafaeli 1989). These emotions include burnout, stress, estrangement from one's "self", poor self-esteem,

depression, cynicism and alienation from work (Julian and Ramaseshan 1994; Wharton 1999).

The field of sociology has contributed conceptually to an understanding of workplace emotions in general and their impact on psychological well-being. However, there has been little empirical support for the propositions pertaining to job performance outcomes such as job satisfaction and perceived job performance, which is of particular interest to the management and marketing disciplines. As identified earlier, Kotler (1991) alluded to this when he examined internal marketing orientation and its effect on performance outcomes. However, it is now timely to test the importance of workplace emotions on performance outcomes in an empirical model.

Antecedents of Emotional Dissonance: Customer Service and Role Orientation

Drawing from the sociology literature on social identity theory, Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) argued that the more one identified with a particular job role, the less emotional dissonance one experienced and less hypocritical one felt when performing according to the expectations of that role. Using role theory, Rafaeli and Sutton (1987) argued that the more one internalised feeling rules for a particular role, the less emotional dissonance one experiences when complying with feeling rules on the job. However these propositions have not been empirically tested.

Morris and Feldman (1997) subsequently conceptualised and tested a model of workplace emotion management that included the antecedent of emotional dissonance. They explored a number of exogenous job design variables, specifically, job autonomy and task routine-ness, as antecedents of emotional dissonance. Endogenous variables, such as personality traits specific to the individual employee that includes a degree of customer orientation as defined by Brown et al. (2002), or the degree of role

internalisation as defined by Rafaeli and Sutton (1987) have largely been ignored in the mainstream literature. Morris and Feldman (1997) did, however, find empirical support for previously argued negative impacts of emotional dissonance on key job outcomes namely, emotional exhaustion and job dissatisfaction. These outcomes have important marketing implications for customer satisfaction in high contact service roles.

Marketing has also drawn on role theory and social identity theory in conceptualising phenomena related to high contact service encounters. Of particular relevance is the theoretical framework for understanding role stress in front-line service jobs which explains three kinds of role stress namely role ambiguity, role over load and role conflict (Dewettinck and Buyens 2003). Amongst the different types of role conflict recognised in the marketing literature, it was person/role conflicts, which reflected a bad fit between an individual's self perception and the specific role the person must play in an organization (Hoffman and Bateson 2001) that was of most relevance in the study of emotional dissonance.

In faking emotions, one does not feel in order to fulfil job expectations is a recognised form of person/role conflict that arises when an employee does not identify with the job role (Hoffman and Bateson 2001; Rafaeli and Sutton 1987), which may result in emotional dissonance (Rafaeli and Sutton 1987), role stress, negative impacts on employee satisfaction, employee commitment and job performance amongst front-line employees (Dewettinck and Buyens 2003). Despite these important consequences of emotional dissonance in service organisations, there is surprisingly little conceptual and empirical literature that focuses on employee emotions and how person/role conflict can be managed by managing emotional dissonance. Instead, the focus of the literature for managing role stress has been on exogenous factors such as leadership style, employee empowerment and job design (Dewettinck and Buyens 2003).

An earlier application of role theory to marketing by Solomon et al. (1985) argued that the more employees internalized their expectations and values of a job role as their own, the more authentic they would feel performing their role and the more committed they will be to providing good service.

Despite the recognised importance of role expectations in service performance, consideration of role expectations that guide one's performance has not included expectations about emotional expression and how these expectations, or feelings, might influence a role incumbent's experience of emotional dissonance and as a consequence, job satisfaction and performance. The omission of expectations for emotional expression by organisational theorists who have adopted role theory has been recognised for quite some time (see Rafaeli and Sutton 1987) yet, to date, it has not been empirically examined in the marketing and management literature when analysing the topic of person/role conflict.

There is, however, emerging recognition and awareness of the importance of managing employee emotions in marketing. The concept of "internal service recovery" introduced by Bowen and Johnston (1999) referred to the efforts organisations carried out to make internal customers, i.e., front-line employees, feel a greater sense of "wholeness" after external service recovery episodes. Internal service recovery involved helping employees recover from possible negative feelings associated with dealing with complaining customers and making them more confident in their ability to satisfy customers in the future. The focus of internal service recovery has been on what the organization does to support customer contact employees who have to hide their feelings of low perceived control and helplessness in dealing with service failures and the impact on job performance (see Julian and Ramaseshan 1994).

Bowen and Johnston (1999) argued that their work was an important initial step in addressing the lack of attention paid to understanding how repeatedly dealing with angry customers in recovery situations affected the attitudes, emotions, and behaviours of the customer-contact employee.

In another application of social identity theory, Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) argued that individuals who regard their roles as a central, salient, and valued component of who they are, are apt to feel most authentic when they are conforming to role expectations including display rules. They conceptually linked employee experience of authenticity to lower levels of emotional dissonance and enhanced psychological well-being. Empirical support for this link existed between emotional dissonance and job satisfaction (Morris and Feldman 1997) and emotional dissonance and job burnout (Kruml and Geddes 2000). However, the marketing literature has yet to extend the application of social identity theory and the related concept of role internalisation to emotional dissonance and the outcomes of job performance and job satisfaction.

Based on the work of Goffman (1959), Grove and Fisk (1983) used role theory in their application of the dramaturgical metaphor to explain behaviour in high contact service exchanges. Grove and Fisk's (1983) conceptual work focussed on the service provider's behaviour and appearance in the context of a service setting and the resultant impression of reality given off to an observer. Consistent with Goffman's (1959) impression management perspective, this application of dramaturgy to marketing was not concerned with explaining the service provider's experience including emotional dissonance. Instead, the focus was on how the service employee's behaviours may sustain or undermine the desired impression of reality as perceived by the customer. Although Hochschild (1983) extended the application of the dramaturgical perspective in high

contact service interactions to incorporate the concepts of "surface acting" and "deep acting", the marketing implications of managing emotions through genuinely hiding the emotions felt have yet to be explored empirically.

A central argument of this paper is that there is conceptual and empirical support for extending the links between role internalisation, emotional dissonance and job outcomes. According to Ashforth and Mael (1989), role internalisation referred to the incorporation of values, attitudes and so forth within the self as guiding principles. The marketing literature has traditionally explored the antecedents of customer-oriented behaviours (Hartline, Maxham and McKee 2000; Hoffman and Ingram 1991). More recently, the marketing literature has conceptualised customer orientation as beliefs and surface personality traits rather than behaviours (Licata et al. 2003; Brown et al. 2002; Kennedy, Lassk and Goolsby 2002). Kennedy et al. (2002) conceptualise customer orientation as a "customer mind-set" defined as "an individual's belief that understanding and satisfying customers, whether internal or external to the organization, is central to the proper execution of his or her job". Brown et al. (2002) conceptualised customer orientation as "an employee's tendency or predisposition to meet customer needs in an on-the-job context". This paper suggests that this more recent definition of customer orientation represents a form of role internalisation. This definition of customer orientation will therefore be referred to as "Customer service role internalisation" (CSRI) to distinguish it from traditional definitions of customer orientation that reflect the performance of customer oriented behaviours.

Perceived Job Performance and Job Satisfaction

Licata et al. (2003); Brown et al. (2002); and Kennedy et al. (2002), found that customer oriented beliefs and surface traits positively influence key job outcomes namely, job

satisfaction (Kennedy et al. 2002) and job performance (Brown et al. 2002; Licata et al. 2003). Just as an individual who has internalised role expectations and values experiences less emotional dissonance resulting in positive job outcomes when performing a job role, so too will an individual with a high degree of CSRI experience less emotional dissonance resulting in positive job outcomes and an increase in job performance and job satisfaction.

Some researchers have conceptualised customer orientation as a set of behaviours rather than beliefs. These researchers have found that job satisfaction, amongst other variables such as role conflict, role ambiguity, psychological empowerment, organisational socialisation and commitment, were the antecedents of customer orientation (Hoffman and Ingram 1991; Kelly 1992). These apparently conflicting findings pertaining to the antecedents and consequences of customer orientation are due to the different ways in which the customer orientation concept has been conceptualised and operationalised. The distinction in this paper between CSRI and customer orientation as behaviours addresses this issue.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for emotional dissonance is set out in Figure 1 taking into consideration the literature review and the early development of the key concepts of customer service role internalization, operationalised as two antecedent variables, namely, enjoyment dimension and external customer mindset dimension with perceived job performance and job satisfaction as outcome variables (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Emotional Dissonance
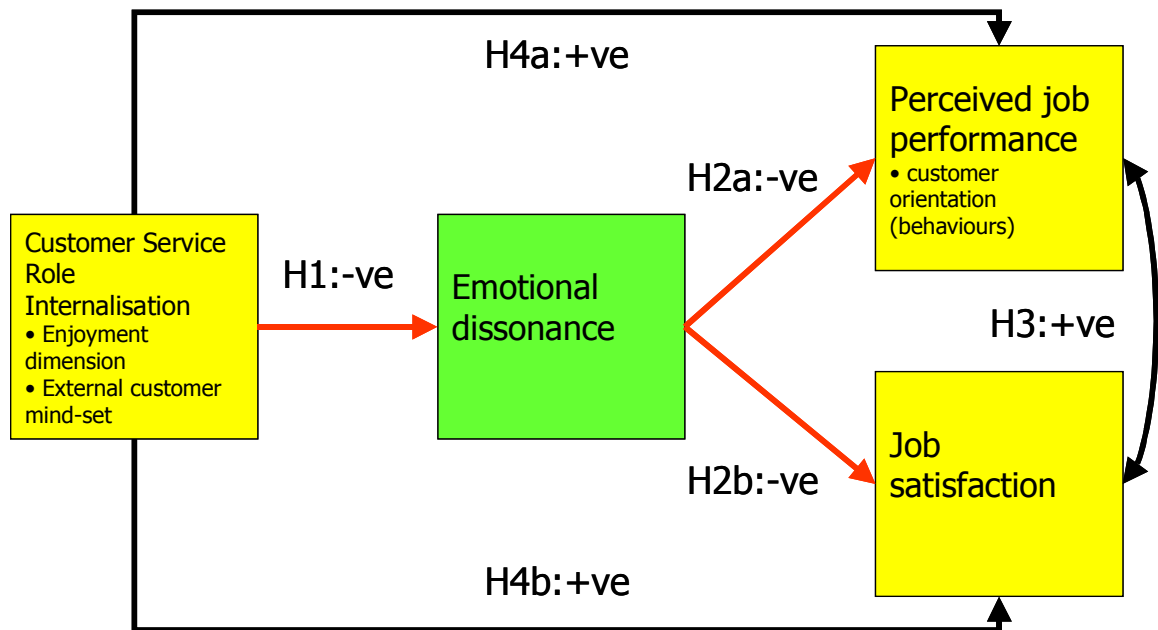
Based on the literature review and the conceptual framework identified in Figure 1 the key hypotheses for testing are identified as follows:

H1: Customer service role internalization has a significant negative influence on emotional dissonance.

H2a: Emotional dissonance has a significant negative influence on customer orientation.

H2b: Emotional dissonance has a significant negative influence on job satisfaction.

H3: Job satisfaction has a significant positive influence on customer orientation.

H4a: Customer service role internalisation has a significant positive influence on job performance.

H4b: Customer service role internalization has a significant positive influence on job satisfaction.

Analysis and Probable Outcomes

The theoretical underpinnings of this paper is that there is an empirical link between customer service role internalisation, emotional dissonance and job outcomes, measured in terms of job satisfaction and performance, that is yet to be ascertained in the extant literature. Customer service role internalisation will be determined by items designed to tap an individual's belief or mind set that understanding and satisfying customers, whether internal or external to the organisation, is central to the proper execution of the employee's role. Brown et al. (2002) conceptualised customer orientation as an employee's tendency to satisfy customer needs on the job. This paper adopts this principle of customer orientation as a form of customer service role internalisation.

Emotional dissonance will be measured via items designed to tap the personal or role conflict experienced by customer contact personnel in the workplace. Expressing emotions that one does not feel during service encounters can be extremely stressful for service workers (Lovelock, 2001). The emotional dissonance that results can lead to feelings of in-authenticity (Ashforth and Humphrey 1993). The possible long-term psychological consequences of such stress and feelings of in-authenticity include emotional exhaustion, job burnout (Erickson and Ritter 2001; Hochschild 1983), job dissatisfaction (Morris and Feldman 1997) and depression (Erickson and Wharton 1997). There is also a well-established link between employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction, sales and profits (Heskett, Sasser, and Schlesinger 2003).

Job outcomes will be measured via items designed to tap perceived job performance and job satisfaction. Perceived job performance and job satisfaction will be measured via items designed to tap various customer oriented beliefs and surface traits because customer oriented beliefs and surface traits positively influence key job outcomes (Licata et al., 2003; Brown et al., 2002; Kennedy et al., 2002). Just as an individual who has internalized role expectations and values experiences less emotional dissonance resulting in positive job outcomes when performing a job role, so too will an individual with a high degree of CSRI experience less emotional dissonance resulting in positive job outcomes and an increase in job performance and job satisfaction.

The paper's primary purpose is to identify the influence of customer service role internalization and emotional dissonance on job outcomes as measured by perceived job performance and job satisfaction. The paper also examines the relationship between customer service role internalization, emotional dissonance and job outcomes. The paper's framework suggests that emotional dissonance is determined by customer service role internalization when measured via items designed to determine the employee's belief

of the level of customer satisfaction inherent in their role. Job outcomes are in turn determined by emotional dissonance and customer service role internalization. The conceptualization posits a link between customer service role internalization and job outcomes through emotional dissonance highlighting the central role of emotional dissonance in determining job outcomes when measured by perceived job performance and job satisfaction. This is because of the various roles performed by the customer contact employee as defined by customer service role. The firm must give due consideration to the fit between the employee's feelings and the behavior he is required to display in his work.

Conclusions and Managerial Implications

This paper has sought to extend previous theoretical and empirical research on emotional dissonance in the workplace and customer service role internalization in high contact services involving face-to-face interactions between employees and customers. Specifically, this paper suggests examining the influence of customer service role internalization on emotional dissonance. It also suggests examining the impact of emotional dissonance on key job outcome variables namely, customer oriented behaviours and job satisfaction.

The main managerial implications of such an examination would be, firstly, that it will provide a unique contribution to understanding the impact of internalizing customer oriented beliefs role on the emotional experience of employees. Secondly, it will contribute to a better understanding of how to manage one type of person/role conflict by managing emotional dissonance through strategies that increase CSRI. Finally, it will contribute to a better understanding of the factors that contribute to job performance and

job satisfaction amongst high contact service workers by assessing the intervening influence of emotional dissonance.

The importance of providing training programs to reinforce the ability of the customer contact personnel during their contact with customers will be highlighted. Furthermore, the role of the customer contact personnel in determining the satisfaction or dissatisfaction a customer receives when purchasing a service should not be underestimated. The personal relationship between the service salesperson and the customer, rather than the purchase itself leads to satisfaction or dissatisfaction in service purchases. This identifies the importance of the customer contact personnel learning more about the customer and being more empathetic to the customers needs when representing the firm. If the customer contact personnel are in emotionally disequilibrium, it could result in a poor service experience for the customer and poor service performance by the firm, thereby highlighting the importance of emotional dissonance in the service encounter (Julian and Ramaseshan, 1994).

The managerial implications of such a study would extend to improving the recruitment of customer service employees, evaluating the effectiveness of customer orientation training programs and developing among customer contact personnel, change management, management of staff performance and satisfaction through the understanding and management of factors contributing to emotional dissonance. Because service selling requires considerable skill levels and extensive training of its personnel, the firm will need to place a high emphasis on teaching selling skills. This in turn should flow on positively to influence customer satisfaction and profits.

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