

# A study on the relationship of contact service employee's attitude and emotional intelligence to coping strategy and service performance

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**Abstract.** This study examined the relationships among service employee's attitude, subjective norm, emotional intelligence, coping strategy, and service performance for 201 service encounters from three different service areas. We developed the research model for SEM (Structural Equation Modeling). We predicted and found that individual attitude was positively associated with emotional intelligence and subjective norm was positively associated with emotional intelligence. In addition, encounter's emotional intelligence had a more impact on coping strategy and service performance. Applied implications of the results are discussed.

**Keywords:** employee's attitude, subjective norm, emotional intelligence, coping strategy, and service performance, SEM (Structural Equation Modeling).

## 1 Introduction

In today's global economy, achieving with the business performance with excellence service and unpredictability of ongoing changes requires frequent emotional and cognitive adjustment. To respond effectively to service performance, individuals must display both emotional intelligence [1] and career adaptability [13].

Our research tests a model of service performance effects on employee's attitude and emotional intelligence in area of industrial services and hospital services. Employee attitude and emotional intelligence are important factors for service operations and are the most viable means of influencing service performance [12][15].

The relationships between these constructs and emotional intelligence, coping strategy, and service performance are explored. The methods used to collect data and test the model are described next, followed by discussion of results. Finally, the managerial implications of our findings are directions for future research are examined.

## **2 Theoretical background**

### **2.1 Individual attitude and subjective norm**

In service sector, competition is very stiff. Service firms are trying to provide high levels of service through encounters. Successful service firms perform well on both customer needs and efficient manner [14].

In personal behavior, Individual attitude and subjective norm will be effect on emotional intelligence [16]. Derived from the social psychology setting, the theory of reasoned action (TRA) was proposed by Ajzen and Fishbein [4] [1]. The components of TRA are three general constructs: behavioral intention (BI), attitude (A), and subjective norm (SN). TRA suggests that a person's behavioral intention depends on the person's attitude about the behavior and subjective norms ( $BI = A + SN$ ). If a person intends to do a behavior then it is likely that the person will do it.

### **2.2 Emotional Intelligence**

Employees with good human skill will have degree of self-awareness. It's a foundation for something called emotional intelligence, defined by scholar and consultant Daniel Goleman [9] as the "ability to manage ourselves and our relationship effectively." Employee's strength and weakness in emotional intelligence is reflected in how well you recognize, understand, and manage feelings while integrating and dealing with others [8]. In summary, emotional intelligence is the ability to manage ourselves and our relationship effectively. It is a key factor for self awareness, self regulation, motivation, empathy.

### **2.3 Coping Strategy**

As coping is a highly contextualized, dynamic process there are no universally 'adaptive' coping strategies that can be statically applied across all individuals and stress situation [4]. In psychology, coping is expending conscious effort to solve personal and interpersonal problems, and seeking to master, minimize or tolerate stress or conflict. The effectiveness of the coping efforts depends on the type of stress and/or conflict, the particular individual, and the circumstances.

### **2.4 Service Performance**

Employees with high emotional intelligence should be more adept at regulating their own emotions and managing others' emotions to foster more positive interaction, which could lead to more organizational citizenship behaviors that contribute to performance [16]. Innis and La Londe [10] confirmed a relationship between physical distribution and demand by linking customer service, attitudes, satisfaction, and

market share. With their work, 'emotional intelligence' construct will be 'proxy for service performance'. It is suggested that past experimental studies which depict proactive personality as a positive predictor of service performance [3].

### 3 Research model and research hypothesis

The model examined in this study is presented in Fig.1. The theoretical foundations for the relationships depicted in this figure are summarized in theoretical foundation parts[1][12][15][16][17]. In Fig. 1, Individual attitude (IA) and subjective norm (SN) are antecedents of emotional intelligence (EI), coping strategy (CS), and service performance (SP).



Fig. 1. Research model

A synthesis of findings leads to our next two model hypothesis.

H1: Individual attitude (IA) positively affects emotional intelligence.

H2: Subjective norm (SN) positively affects emotional intelligence.

The literature reveals a strong link among emotional intelligence, coping strategy, service performance. Emotional intelligence can play a significant role in the work environment [9][7][12][15]. Based on the foregoing discussion, we propose:

H3: Emotional Intelligence (EI) positively affects coping strategy.

H4: Emotional Intelligence (EI) positively affects service performance.

## 4 Method

### 4.1 Survey instrument and Sample

Development of the measurement scales for each construct in the model proceeded through a series of steps. Based on the measures derived from the literature, questionnaire was developed. Measures were drawn from scales used and validated in strong theoretical foundation. The sample was chosen from among the total population of service industry in Korea. The target respondent in service industry was the service worker. The survey was administered by google drive and off-line questionnaire survey

The demographic statistics illustrate that the data is representative of the service sector in general. The number of working year (six year over) was 55.3%, since they are well know the company status and customer response. Results of these analyses

failed to reveal significant difference in responses due to demographic variance. Generalization of results to the population of service sector is therefore justified.

#### **4.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

The hypothesized measurement and structural models were tested by performing latent variable structural equation modeling using the LISREL. Structural equation modeling (SEM) is a statistical approach that has the hypotheses among observed and latent variables [11]. The CFA provides a more rigorous method for assessing unidimensionality than coefficient alpha. The results of the CFA are the following (Chi-square=535.76, d.f.(degree of freedom)=199, GFI(Goodness of Fit Index)=0.80, AGFI(Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index)=0.74, NFI(Normed Fit Index)=0.93, NNFI(Non-Normed Fit Index)=0.94, CFI(Comparative Fit Index)=0.95). In our case, the chi-square statistic of 535.76 (199 d.f) results in a p-value below 0.05- indicating rejection of the null hypothesis and poor model fit. Chi-square, however, is not the sole measure of fit. Other fit statistics have been developed to provide further indication of goodness-of-fit. NFI, NNFI, CFI all have values greater than the 0.9 cutoff suggest by literature to indicate reasonable fit [6]. All factors in our research are correlated positively with each other. Diagonal matrix measures are greater than correlation coefficients of other constructs, thus indicating discriminant validity [6].

## **5 Result and discussion**

### **5.1 Structural equation model analysis**

For research hypothesis testing, Analysis of the structural model allows us test the hypothesized relationships among constructs. The results of the CFA are the following (Chi-square=663.50, d.f.(degree of freedom)=204, GFI(Goodness of Fit Index)=0.76, AGFI(Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index)=0.70, NFI(Normed Fit Index)=0.91, NNFI(Non-Normed Fit Index)=0.93, CFI(Comparative Fit Index)=0.93). The four hypotheses were tested using t-value. Four research model were accepted.

### **5.2 Discussion**

The findings infers that whilst strong individual attitude and subjective norm to emotional intelligence beneficial effects coping strategy and service performance. Building strong relationships with customer through emotional intelligence enables service providers to tailor excellent service quality. A strong emotional intelligence appears to have clear management implications with regards to enabling proactive employees to achieve positive service-related outcomes.

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