The Role of Feeling-Display Rule Discrepancies in Emotional Labor Processes: An Event-Level Investigation in a Chinese Call Center

By

Dr James Diefendorff
University of Akron, USA

Date: Tuesday, 16 November 2010
Time: 2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Venue: M802

All interested are welcome
The Role of Feeling-Display Rule Discrepancies in Emotional Labor Processes: An Event-Level Investigation in a Chinese Call Center

Abstract

This investigation identified feeling-expectation discrepancies (i.e., the momentary mismatch between emotional expectations and felt emotions) as a key mechanism in the emotional labor process. This study demonstrated that the event-level customer difficulties and person-level perceptions of emotional display rules were antecedents of event-level feeling-expectation discrepancies. Additionally, the relationship between customer difficulty and feeling-expectation discrepancies was stronger when display rules to hide negative emotions were high and when display rules to express positive emotions were low. High levels of feeling-expectation discrepancies were associated with higher emotional exhaustion, higher felt inauthenticity, lower perceptions of customer satisfaction, and lower objectively measured job performance. Further, the effects of feeling-expectation discrepancies on felt inauthenticity and perceived customer satisfaction were stronger when employees surface acted at high levels compared to low levels. This study extends theory by providing the first empirical evidence that a discrepancy mechanism found in more general theories of self-regulation is operating in the emotional labor process.

Dr Diefendorff received his Ph.D. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from The University of Akron in 1999. His research interests include self-regulation, motivational traits, emotional display rules, and emotion management at work. His 30+ publications have appeared in leading journals such as Journal of Applied Psychology, Personnel Psychology, Journal of Management, and Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes. Dr Diefendorff is currently co-editing a book (with Dr Alicia Grandey and Dr Deborah Rupp) on emotional labor that is to be published in 2012 and is co-principle investigator (with Dr Becky Erickson) of a National Science Foundation funded research grant to examine emotional labor in nurses. Dr Diefendorff is currently on the editorial boards of Journal of Applied Psychology, Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, Personnel Psychology, and Journal of Vocational Behavior, and was previously on the editorial board of Journal of Organizational Behavior. He also is an associate editor of Journal of Business and Psychology. Dr Diefendorff is an associate professor of psychology at the University of Akron. Prior to joining the faculty at The University of Akron, Dr Diefendorff served on the faculty in the Psychology Department at Louisiana State University and in the Business School at The University of Colorado at Denver. He also was a visiting assistant professor of organizational behavior at Singapore Management University in the Summers of 2007 and 2009.