

When Listening Hurts: Emotional Exhaustion in Beauty Services and the Moderating Role of Emotional Intelligence and Self-Regulation

Mohammad Karami¹, Serife Zihni Eyüpoglu²

¹*Department of Marketing, Near East University, Nicosia, Cyprus*

²*Department of Business Administration, Near East University, Nicosia, Cyprus*

Abstract

The service industry has always been relationship-oriented, where the interaction between service providers and their clients is a core component of the service sustainability. The highly frequent interaction between service providers and clients has increased concerns about the quality of life for service providers in the service context. Managing the emotional experiences of service providers is therefore essential to maintaining their health, effectiveness, and the quality of the service they deliver. This study aims to extend the knowledge of service provider-client interactions in beauty salon services, which are characterized as high-contact services. Specifically, it investigates the impact of active empathetic listening on emotional exhaustion. It additionally examines the moderating roles of emotional intelligence (trained skill) and self-emotion regulation (biological mechanism) in this relationship. Data were collected from 204 beauticians in Cyprus and analyzed using PLS-SEM. Results revealed a positive relationship between active empathetic listening and emotional exhaustion. Emotional intelligence and self-emotion regulation both moderate the relationship, with self-emotion regulation showing a stronger influence. Despite limitations, the findings contribute to the literature on emotional labor, service climate, and occupational well-being and provide practical implications for enhancing emotional skills and resilience in service roles.

Keywords: beauticians' well-being; empathetic listening; service interaction; emotional labor; service climate.