

# Emotional Labor, "Too Much of a Good Thing" —A Case Study Based on Crawler Technology

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**Abstract**—Based on the theory of "Too much of a good thing" and web crawler technology, this paper uses Haidilao as a case study to analyze the problem that actually exists in the industry but has not attracted theoretical attention—excessive emotional labor of service personnel. This study uses Python 3.6.2 software to crawl the text data of user comments on Sina Weibo, a large social platform in China, based on the key word "Haidilao Service" identified in this article. A total of 10862 comments were crawled from August 12, 2020 to October 1, 2020. After finishing cleaning, code it. The coding rules are as follows: when a user comment praises Haidilao's service, it is coded as 1; when the user comment expresses that Haidilao's service is too enthusiastic, it is coded as -1; the rest of the comments that are not related to Haidilao's service are coded as 0. Among the comments on Haidilao services, 734 (10862 in total, 8326 of them are 0, 1802 of them are 1) commented that Haidilao's services were too enthusiastic, accounting for 6.76%. Studies have shown that some Haidilao service personnel have the problem of "over enthusiasm", and excessive emotional labor will cause bad experience for customers. It is proposed that the emotional labor of service personnel should have a "degree" concept, and the service personnel are required to provide moderate and accurate emotional labor.

**Keywords**- Emotional labor; Too much of a good thing; Haidilao; "Degree"; Case study

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The preliminary calculation of GDP for the first quarter of 2021 announced by the National Bureau of Statistics is shown that the added value of the service industry accounts for 58.3% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which closes to 60%. At the same time, in recent years, employment in the tertiary industry in China has accounted for nearly half of the total employment, which shows that China has entered the era of the service economy. In the era of the service economy, consumer behavior is service-oriented <sup>[1]</sup>, service quality and feelings has

become key factors affecting consumer satisfaction. In this context, the proportion of emotional need in people's consumption behavior has increased, and the focus of consumption has gradually shifted from the product and service itself to the process of consumer experience <sup>[2]</sup>. Therefore, in order to meet the emotional needs of customers, what service companies sell is no longer just the goods and services themselves, but more of the emotional experience that is integrated behind the goods and services.

In order to meet the emotional need of consumers, companies will put forward certain requirements for employees' emotional feelings and expressions at work. At work, employees are committed to emotional management, so as to show facial expressions and body movements that can be observed by the public. This is emotional labor <sup>[3-4]</sup>. The concept of emotional labor is mainly used in the service industry, because workers in the service industry often need to show a positive emotional state in order to establish and maintain a good service and corporate image in the process of providing services to customers. It can be said that service is the external performance of employees after emotional labor.

A typical representative of the service industry, Haidilao (full name Sichuan Haidilao Catering Co., Ltd.), established in 1994, is a large-scale cross-provincial, direct-operated catering private enterprise focusing on Sichuan hot pot and integrating local hot pot characteristics. Under the premise of fully understanding and understanding consumers, Haidilao has implemented a series of activities in its marketing process in order to meet the needs of consumers, including service marketing, network marketing and word-of-mouth marketing, among which the most successful one is in it. Service marketing. Because of its impressive service, Haidilao has become one of the most well-known and popular hot pot brands in Mainland China. However, in recent years, some Haidilao employees have performed excessive emotional labor, and their over-enthusiastic service has also caused more and more controversies, and even made it difficult for consumers to accept. This also shows from the side that those behaviors that are regarded as beneficial to the organization may also have a negative effect after being excessively implemented, that is, there is a "too-much-of-a-good-thing" effect.

The Haidilao service, which was supposed to be popular among people, has caused dissatisfaction and even dissatisfaction among some consumers, and has become the object of many netizens to complain about. Why is this? Is it because Haidilao's service is not good? No, it's because Haidilao's service is so good that it makes people "uncomfortable" or even "unacceptable".

Therefore, this article is based on the theory of "passing is not enough", taking Haidilao as the research object, using Python crawler technology to crawl the user's evaluation of Haidilao services on Weibo, supplemented by second-hand information, to explore the reasons for the disputes caused by Haidilao services, and to make suggestions to improve the user experience.

## 2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Emotional labor

The concept of emotional labor was first proposed by Hochschild in 1983, and is defined as: an individual is committed to psychological adjustment and control in order to show visible facial expressions or physical actions in front of the public <sup>[3]</sup>.

Ashforth and Humphrey define emotional labor as showing behavior that meets the emotional requirements of the organization <sup>[5]</sup>. Morris and Feldman define emotional labor as in the process of interpersonal communication, individuals use effort, planning and control to show themselves the emotional behavior required by the organization <sup>[6]</sup>. Jones defined emotional labor as trying to adjust their inner feelings to meet organizational requirements when interacting with internal and external stakeholders. The emotions are consistent with each other <sup>[7]</sup>. Based on the perspective of emotional regulation, Grandey defines emotional labor as the psychological process of employees adjusting emotional feelings and emotional performance in order to achieve the goals desired by the organization <sup>[4]</sup>. Diefendorff, Croyle, and Gosserand defined emotional labor as the process of accomplishing work goals and adjusting emotional expression to conform to the rules of expression <sup>[8]</sup>.

This article agrees with Diefendorff's viewpoint on the behavioral expression of emotional labor, that is, emotional labor is the unity of psychological processing and behavioral expression, so this article adopts its definition.

### 2.2 The Theory of "Too much of a good thing"

In both Chinese and Western philosophical systems, there are discussions on the "principle of moderation". Confucianism emphasizes "the doctrine of the golden mean" and advocates "allowing one's hold upon it", that is, "immediacy, unbiased, and just right in emotion, speech and behavior" <sup>[9]</sup>. Ancient Greek Aristotle also advocated the "middle way", pointing out that the middle way requires a corresponding rational spirit, and that over and under is not in line with rationality <sup>[10]</sup>. The "zhong" of the mean and the "zhong" both represent moderation. Both of these ideas are advocating a state of maintaining moderation and harmony, and both emphasize the principle of moderation more than the principle of "eclecticism" without principles. It can be seen that both Confucius and Aristotle emphasized grasping the degree of thing in order to achieve a reasonable state, which embodies the idea of "excessiveness is not enough".

Grant and Schwartz pointed out that for variables that are generally regarded as "positive", their positive effects will have a critical point. After reaching the critical point, the relationship between the positive antecedent variable and the outcome variable will change, that is, it may appear The inverted U-shaped non-linear relationship, they call it the "excessiveness is not enough" effect <sup>[11]</sup>. Pierce and Aguinis applied the effect of "being too late" to the field of management research for the first time, and made it clear that the "being too late" effect is in the organizational context. Those behaviors that are considered beneficial to the organization may also have a negative effect after being implemented too much <sup>[12]</sup>.

### 3 RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA ACQUISITION

#### 3.1 Research method

This research adopts a case study method. Case studies are qualitative research in empirical research, which is to find some undiscovered new variables or relationships through observation, sorting, and analysis of cases <sup>[13]</sup>. The case study method is suitable for problem research in a specific situation <sup>[14]</sup>, and the research problem in this article has exactly this research feature.

#### 3.2 Case company selection

This study first determines the criteria for selecting case study objects as follows: ①Since the research field of emotional labor is mainly concentrated in the service industry, the selection of research objects is limited to the service industry; ②Follow the typical requirements of case study selection; ③Data acquisition Convenience. Since Haidilao is a typical representative of the service industry, and Haidilao is more open to customers and the media, and the public information is relatively rich, which is conducive to obtaining research-related information. Therefore, Haidilao was finally selected as the case study object of this study.

#### 3.3 Data acquisition

##### 3.3.1 Web crawler method

This study uses Python 3.6.2 software to crawl the text data of user comments on Sina Weibo, a large social platform in China, based on the key word "Haidilao Service" identified in this article. A total of 10862 comments were crawled from August 12, 2020 to October 1, 2020. After finishing cleaning, code it. The coding work of this research is mainly completed by two graduate students and supervisors. First, two graduate students act as data coders to code the collected data separately. After the coding is completed, the two will compare the coding results for consistency, and discuss the comparison results with the instructor, and then adjust and improve the coding to ensure the objectivity and scientificity of the coding.

The coding rules are as follows: when a user comment praises Haidilao's service, it is coded as 1; When the user comment expresses that Haidilao's service is too enthusiastic, it is coded as -1; The rest of the comments that are not related to Haidilao's service are coded as 0. The coding results are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** Web crawler coding results

Coding	-1	0	1	Total
Number of comments	734	8326	1802	10862

### 3.3.2 Second-hand data analysis method

Another method of data acquisition in this paper is the analysis of second-hand data. Weibo 21st Century Business Herald, with 21.19 million fans, released a poll on Haidilao services on January 2, 2020. The subject of the poll was: "What do you think of Haidilao's services?" See the result of the Table 2. Because this poll fits well with the research content of this research, and the target groups are wider, and the voting results are more representative and authoritative. Therefore, this research uses the polls made by the 21st Century Business Herald as a source of research data.

**Table 2** "What do you think of Haidilao's service?" Voting results

Voting content	Number of voters
1. Especially caring	715
2. Excessive enthusiasm	792
3. Just so	194
4. Chat in the comment section	69
<b>Total</b>	<b>1770</b>

source: <https://m.weibo.cn/1651428902/4456272202031676>

It can be seen from Table 2 that among the 1770 people who participated in the voting, 792 people thought that Haidilao's service was too enthusiastic, accounting for 44.75% of the total number of votes.

## 4 CASE DESCRIPTION

Haidilao was established in 1994 by Zhang Yong, the founder. It is a large-scale direct-operated catering private enterprise focusing on Sichuan-style hot pot and integrating local hot pot characteristics. The company always adheres to the concept of "service first, customer first", insists on innovation, changes the traditional standardized and single service, advocates personalized service, and is committed to providing customers with pleasant catering services. As of June 30, 2020, Haidilao has opened 935 directly-operated restaurants worldwide, of which 868 are located in 164 cities in mainland China, and 67 are located in Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and overseas, including Singapore, South Korea, and Japan, The United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia and Australia. As a large-scale chain catering company with a global business, Haidilao adheres to the concept of honest management, and takes the improvement of the stability and safety of food quality as the prerequisite to provide consumers with more intimate services, healthier, safer and more nutritious and more assured food.

Once inside the store, people will deeply feel the enthusiasm of Haidilao-style service. People don't understand that Haidilao's boss is not around. Why does the service staff still feel like "beaten blood" and make the guests feel a bit "fluffy"? For example, within 10 minutes of the

arrival of the guests, the identity of the guest can be accurately distinguished, and the name of the guest can be called; if the customer needs to travel, the service staff will check the car timetable, ticket price and pre-sale status on behalf of the customer; the service staff will help Customer birthday, etc. These extreme services of Haidilao are often the result of a large number of high-intensity emotional labor of its service staff. Moreover, Haidilao's service always makes customers feel very sincere, that is, the service staff is doing a deep role or true expression of emotional labor. This is because Zhang Yong's method of "moving employees" has made Haidilao employees loyal to the store as their home.

Haidilao's employees are loyal to the company, even if they leave. In addition to slightly higher wages and more comprehensive benefits than other companies in the industry, the more important reasons are: ① Haidilao encourages employees to pursue equality, advocates "equality in life", and calls on employees to change their destiny. Efforts to stimulate the subjective initiative of employees; ② Help employees design a way to succeed. According to the different situations of employees, Haidilao has designed multiple development paths for employees, so that employees have a clear understanding of their own promotion path; ③ The internal promotion mechanism makes employees full of expectations. Haidilao adopts the method of internally selecting management talents to open up a path for employees to develop upward; ④ To move employees. Zhang Yong put the position of employees high and helped them climb up. His ideas were recognized by Haidilao people and spontaneously followed Zhang Yong, and made Haidilao better.

It is this kind of loyalty to the company that makes Haidilao employees have deep feelings for the company, and they are often grateful. They hope to show themselves through hard work, so that customers at every table have a pleasant dining experience. Feeling the dining atmosphere of Haidilao.

In the service process, the service staff strive to pay attention to the customer's every move, try to experience the customer's emotions and integrate into the customer, but also strive to make the customer feel the atmosphere of Haidilao, and strive to make every table customer satisfied or even beyond expectations. They will be happy because of the laughter of customers, but also feel disappointed because of their inadequate service, and sincerely express their apologies and present gifts to customers. This is Haidilao-style service. Even if something uncomfortable during the service, or complaints from customers, or negative emotions accumulated due to heavy work intensity, the service staff will silently adjust their emotions in the lounge. Once back to working, the service staff will adjust their negative emotions, serve the customers with a smile, and become one of the customers.

This kind of surprise service that exceeds customer expectations is a manifestation of the emotional labor of Haidilao employees, but it does not mean that it is suitable for all customers. Haidilao's customer groups are mainly young white-collar workers. These young white-collar workers not only have high requirements for service, but also emphasize personalization. Some customers are pursuing comprehensive service and full of praise for the enthusiastic service. Some customers pursue a comfortable and independent dining environment, and their demand for enthusiastic service will be reduced. At this time, Haidilao-style services will have to service redundancy, that is, redundant services that do not help improve customer satisfaction because managers and employees overestimate customer expectations and needs<sup>[15-16]</sup>. When

the service demand is less than the supply, customers will passively and reluctantly accept the service, and naturally there will be an "embarrassing" dining scene.

Although Haidilao's ultimate service is recognized by many people, it is precisely because of these ultimate services that some customers are dissatisfied or even disgusted. From the results of the web crawler, it can be seen that some customers think that Haidilao's service is too enthusiastic, causing them to feel embarrassed. According to the results of the subject voting published by the 21st Century Business Herald, this group of customers may not be a minority. As the saying goes: "Success and failure are also failures." Haidilao is most well-known and satisfied with its services, but now, it is its ultimate service that may have a certain negative impact on Haidilao. The service is not as extreme as possible. Even if it is beneficial to the organization, if it is implemented too much, it may have a negative effect.

## **5 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION**

It is this kind of loyalty to the company that makes Haidilao employees have deep feelings for the company, and they are often grateful. They hope to show themselves through hard work, so that customers at every table have a pleasant dining experience. Feeling the dining atmosphere of Haidilao.

### **5.1 Research conclusions and recommendations**

On the basis of theoretical research, through the coding and in-depth analysis of case data, this article mainly draws the following research conclusions: Among the comments on Haidilao services, 734 (10862 in total) commented that Haidilao's services were too enthusiastic, accounting for 6.76%. According to the 21st Century Business Herald released on January 2, 2020, "what do you think of Haidilao's service?" In the poll, 44.75% of total votes felt that Haidilao's service was too enthusiastic. These evidences show that although Haidilao's service has always been pleasing to the people, it is also that its over-enthusiastic service has caused dissatisfaction and discomfort among some customers. This also confirms the "excessiveness is not enough" effect, and those behaviors that is regarded as beneficial to the organization may also have a negative effect after being implemented too much. This research result can better explain why previous research conclusions of Grandey and Zhan Xiaojun are inconsistent. The reason is that the relationship between emotional labor and customer satisfaction has an "inverted U" structure, and the emotional labor of service personnel exceeds a certain "degree". "It will cause dissatisfaction or discomfort from customers.

After sorting out the scraped Weibo comments, it can be concluded that the main manifestations of customers feeling that Haidilao's service is too enthusiastic are: ①The service personnel are rushing to do everything, and the customer does not even have the opportunity to refuse, and it will give the customer a kind of "self Hands-on is the feeling of grabbing the work of the service staff; ②The service staff follows the customer during the meal, so that the customer has no sense of freedom, chatting with friends will produce a sense of privacy; ③The words and deeds of the service staff are not appropriate, such as customers When going to the toilet, the service staff will bow and even say "you have worked hard", which makes customers feel uncomfortable.

Therefore, there is nothing wrong with the original intention of employees to adjust their emotional feelings and expressions in accordance with the requirements of the organization during the work process, but there should be a "degree", that is, the more emotional labor is not the better. When service personnel do too much emotional labor, customers will feel too enthusiastic, which will form a kind of "pressure" for customers, which will have a negative impact on customer service experience.

In order to avoid discomfort to customers, service personnel should not only understand and meet the potential needs of customers, but also provide accurate services to avoid redundant services.

## **5.2 Theoretical contribution**

The theoretical value of this study is mainly reflected in: First, the theory of "excessiveness is not enough" is introduced into the field of emotional labor research, and the theory is used to explain the excessiveness of emotional labor, which further expands the analytical perspective of emotional labor. Previous studies mainly focused on the positive effects of deep-level performances and real expressions on customer experience, while ignoring that deep-level performances and real expressions may also have an adverse effect on customer experience. The introduction of the theory of "excessiveness is not enough" fills the gap in the theoretical circle, that is, deep performance and true expression of these positive expressions of emotional labor will also bring negative effects after being implemented too much.

Second, it enriches the related research on the core of emotional labor. The previous literature mainly focused on the research on the causes and results of emotional labor, and seldom discussed the internal measurement scale of emotional labor. Based on this, this article discusses the "degree" problem of emotional labor for the first time from a qualitative perspective.

## **5.3 Practical inspiration**

The practical significance of this research lies in the fact that managers in the service industry require service personnel to adjust their emotional feelings and expressions in accordance with the requirements of the organization of work. They should pay attention to the appropriateness and accuracy of emotional labor intensity, not the higher the better. First, the excessive emotional labor of service personnel will make some customers feel too enthusiastic, creating feelings of uncomfortableness, infringement of privacy, and "embarrassment", which will affect the customer experience.

Second, emotions affect the mental health of employees. First of all, due to the inconsistency between emotional experience and expression, deep acting will consume the psychological resources of service personnel. Secondly, in the process of emotion regulation, service personnel who use deep acting need to re-evaluate negative emotions such as anger and frustration, and try to arouse inner positive emotions, pay attention to things that can inspire happy emotions, in order to obtain more psychological resource compensation <sup>[17]</sup>. Adjusting loss and frustration to happiness and enthusiasm. This huge emotional leap will cause emotional fatigue of employees, thereby offsetting the positive psychological experience



brought to employees by deep acting, and ultimately harming employees' physical and mental health.

## **5.4 Research limitations and future development**

### **5.4.1 Research limitations**

The research of this article has the following two limitations: First, Haidilao is a model of private catering service companies in recent years, and its "excessive" service is one of the few in the service industry. Therefore, the results of the research are very good. The scope of application has certain limitations. Second, the research in this article only discusses the issue of "degree" qualitatively, and does not quantitatively study how service personnel grasp the "degree" of service.

### **5.4.2 Future development**

In the future, research can be carried out by the following aspects: ① This article uses a single case study to conclude that emotional labor should have a "degree" concept. In the future, this conclusion can be further tested through multiple case studies; ② It can be verified through large sample surveys and other empirical studies. Research methods to verify that employees' emotional labor should grasp a "degree" and quantitatively prove the "excessiveness" of emotional labor; ③ The moderate emotional labor studied in this paper will promote moderate service and show moderate service behavior. For Haidilao, the active service and sincere smile experienced by most customers are not actually the work content specified by the company, but the essential attributes of active service. Misjudgment or overestimation of customer needs will lead to negative results in active service. Therefore, some scholars advocate weak proactive customer service performance of service personnel<sup>[18]</sup>. Weak proactive customer service performance refers to the service behavior of employees with the characteristics of spontaneity, accuracy and empathy that exceed customer requirements and management systems or processes<sup>[18]</sup>. Based on this, future research can start with the relationship between moderate emotional labor and weak active service behavior, and launch a deeper discussion.

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