



Emotional intelligence, emotional labor, perceived organizational support, and job satisfaction: A moderated mediation model

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Emotional intelligence
Emotional labor
Job satisfaction
Perceived organizational support
Moderated mediation

ABSTRACT

This study examined the effects of emotional intelligence and emotional labor on job satisfaction in a moderated mediation model, which posits surface and deep acting strategies as mediators between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction and perceived organizational support as a moderator to the mediation effects. Based on a sample of 279 Chinese hotel employees, results showed that: 1) while deep acting partially mediated the effect of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction, surface acting did not mediate; 2) Perceived organizational support effectively moderated the mediation of deep acting between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction; but the moderated mediation was not found with surface acting as a mediator. This study contributes to a better understanding of the roles of emotional intelligence and emotional labor strategies in affecting hotel employees' job satisfaction and how organizational support can function as an organization resource in changing the psychological mechanisms underlying emotional labor and job satisfaction.

1. Introduction

Emotional intelligence, as an individual's ability to identify her/his own emotions and emotions of others, and thus to form favorable relationship with others (Salovey and Mayer, 1990), plays a crucial role in the process of emotional labor (Goleman, 1998). Emotional intelligence can help change employees' attitudes and behaviors in jobs involving emotional labor, thereby reducing job stress and increasing job satisfaction (Lee and Ok, 2012). It is very important to employees in the hotel industry (Kim et al., 2012; Li et al., 2011). Hospitality employees need to take an enthusiastic and friendly attitude when serving customers even if they are in a bad mood or facing some difficult customers (Pizam, 2004). Emotional labor strategies offer manifestations for employees to apply emotional intelligence as a trait-like capability (Mastracci et al., 2010; Mikolajczak et al., 2007). Employees with high emotional intelligence would adopt the deep acting strategy rather than the surface acting strategy to display those emotions favored by the organization in their service interactions with customers (Mikolajczak et al., 2007), and this in turn may increase their job satisfaction (Chen et al., 2012).

Based on the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001), emotional intelligence can be regarded as an internal (emotional) resource, which could effectively explain the asymmetric

relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional labor strategies as well as that between emotional labor and its outcome variables (Liao and Yan, 2014). Perceived organizational support can be regarded as a kind of organization resource. As a supplementary resource to an individual, perceived organizational support can produce a series of positive affective perceptions and experiences in the workplace (Riggle et al., 2009). These positive emotional experiences will supplement the resources consumed by emotional labor and may bring higher job satisfaction to employees. The relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction has been examined by different researchers (Petrides and Furnham, 2006; Li, 2011; Anari, 2012; Joshi et al., 2015; Ouyang et al., 2015; Ali et al., 2012). Although these studies generally confirmed a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction, they provide little evidence on why and how emotional intelligence can impact job satisfaction. And the moderating role of perceived organizational support on the relationship between emotional labor and job satisfaction has been well documented in the hospitality literature (e.g., Chen et al., 2012; Duke et al., 2009; Hur et al., 2015; Nixon et al., 2011). However, these studies often overlooked emotional intelligence as an important and meaningful antecedent of emotional labor. As such, the interactions between organizational support as an external resource in dealing with emotional labor and employees' internal resource in the emotional labor context

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are not clearly depicted.

The COR Theory provides a useful theoretical base in examining the psychological mechanism underlying emotional intelligence's impact on emotional labor and job satisfaction within an organization. This study postulates organizational support as a moderator variable over the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction mediated by emotional labor strategies. It extends the moderation effect of perceived organizational support onto the relationship between emotional labor and its antecedents. It thus broadens the research perspective for a better understanding of the role of emotional intelligence in emotional labor performance and job satisfaction in the hospitality context and develops a moderated mediation model which posits emotional labor strategy as a mediator between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction and perceived organizational support as a moderator to the mediation.

2. Theoretical foundation and research hypotheses

2.1. The conservation of resources theory

The Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory argues that people always defend or conserve their various resources and try to avoid threats that may result in exhaustion of resources (Hobfoll, 1989). Hobfoll (1989) defines resource as those objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by an individual or the means to obtain these objects, personal characteristics, conditions or energies. Hobfoll (2001) refers to internal resource as inner energy including physical, emotional and cognitive energy, and external resource as outside energy that individuals hope to gain. Individuals experience stress, job burnout and emotional exhaustion when they lose resources or fail to gain supplementary resources. Gaining resources can help people reduce emotional exhaustion due to stress and enhance their self-efficacy. The tenet of the COR theory includes primacy of conservation of resources, subordination of gaining resources and input of resources to avoid resource exhaustion. Primacy of conservation of resources means that individuals are more conscious of conserving current resources than gaining extra resources. When individuals face resource exhaustion, they tend to promptly take action to conserve resources from further exhaustion. Subordination of gaining resource means that although gaining extra resources is not as important as conserving fundamental and normal resources, possessing more resources can reduce the risk of losing other resources. Besides, possessing one type of resource can create opportunities to gain other resources (Cao and Qu, 2014). Inputting resources is a strategy to avoid exhaustion of valuable resources. By inputting more resources, an individual can change the status quo and create a more favorable situation.

The COR theory offers good explanations on the exhaustion process of stress and resources (Wright and Hobfoll, 2004). From this perspective, emotional intelligence can be regarded as an essential resource in relation to an individual's emotional labor of providing services (Mastracci et al., 2010). According to the COR theory, it can be logically reasoned that the impact of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction depends on whether the resource exhaustion in delivering the emotional labor and resource inputting from different channels can be balanced. When an individual lacks inner resources like emotional intelligence, she or he is more likely to adopt surface acting strategy to reduce resource exhaustion, thus becoming more dissatisfied with the job. However, if they can gain external resources like organizational support, the individual's inner resource exhaustion will be reduced or supplemented through the addition of external resources, thus reducing stress and dissatisfaction. In this regard, perceived organizational support can also be treated as a resource. The level of organizational support perceived by an employee changes the effects of emotional labor strategies on job satisfaction (Hur et al., 2015).

2.2. Emotional intelligence

Since the concept of emotional intelligence was proposed, there are mainly two kinds of understanding, one is emotional ability represented by Salovey and Mayer, and the other is mixed ability represented by Goleman, that emotional intelligence is a mixture of personality and ability (Zhan, 2012). American psychologist Salovey and Mayer (1990) first proposed the concept of emotional intelligence; they think that emotional intelligence is a part of social intelligence, which is defined as the ability of individuals to monitor their own emotions and others, and the ability of emotion recognition and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior, and that emotional intelligence includes three kinds of abilities: the ability of emotion evaluation and expression, emotion regulation ability and the ability to use emotion to solve problems. The theory was revised, and finally formed the four-dimensional emotional intelligence model, including emotion recognition, emotion integration, emotion understanding and emotion management (Mayer et al., 2004). Goleman (1995) defines emotional intelligence as the ability to recognize the emotions of oneself and others, motivating oneself, manage emotions, and handling relationships.

In this study, we have used the Mayer and Salovey (1997) definition of emotional intelligence as a set of interrelated skills concerning "the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth" (p.10). Based on this definition, emotional intelligence can be operationalized in four aspects: self emotional appraisal, others' emotional appraisal, regulation of emotion, and use of emotion (Wong and Law, 2002). This study adopted Wong and Law's (2002) scale to measure emotional intelligence. The scale includes sixteen items covering all four aspects mentioned above.

2.3. Emotional labor strategies

Hochschild (1983) defined emotional labor as "the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display" for a wage (p.7). Most emotional labor conceptualizations can be operationalized in three strategies: surface acting, deep acting and genuine acting (Diefendorff et al., 2005). Surface acting (SA) refers to the visual part that the individual adjusts emotions according to the rules of the organization's emotions when the emotion actually perceived by the individual does not conform to the performance rules required by the organization (Hochschild, 1983). Deep acting (DA) refers to the individual's inner feelings which do not meet the performance of organizational requirements, the individual through a deep psychological processing (imagination, thinking and memory) to stimulate positive emotions or suppress negative emotions, so to experience the emotions in line with the emotional performance of the organization requirements (Grandey, 2000). However, no published research has examined genuine acting as an emotional labor strategy (Diefendorff et al., 2005). Chu and Murrmann (2006) developed an emotional labor scale in the hospitality context. The scale has high reliability and validity and used to explore the impact of emotional labor on the employee outcome variable (Chu et al., 2012). But the scale mainly measured the emotive dissonance and emotive effort of the staff, which did not conform to the subject of this study. Therefore, the study focuses on SA strategy and DA strategy based on Diefendorff et al., (2005) emotional labor scale.

2.4. Mediating effects of emotional labor strategies between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction

As an available resource for service employees, emotional intelligence will promote the utility and accumulation of other related individual resources. Utility of emotional intelligence will stimulate and enhance employees' faith, sense of self-worth, and abilities. Employees

with high emotional intelligence will more likely adopt deep acting strategies to replace surface acting strategies in their work (Lee and Ok, 2014). Yin et al. (2013) found that emotional intelligence was significantly and positively associated with the deep acting strategy and the expression of naturally felt emotions; however, its association with surface acting was not significant. Emotional intelligence was also found to be positively related to teachers' job satisfaction (Anari, 2012). In the hospitality service context, Kim et al. (2012) found that emotional intelligence was negatively related to frontline hotel employees' surface acting strategy, but positively associated with deep acting. Employees with high emotional intelligence are capable of conducting emotional labor by using these emotional abilities as fundamental resources. They can notice the positive aspects of required emotions at the workplace and better control their emotions. They also tend to adopt deep acting more than surface acting.

Deep acting means that employees actively experience the emotions they should display, not resulting in the loss of employees' resources to weaken job satisfaction. Surface acting, however, means that employees passively display their emotions, so as to lead to emotions exhaust due to job strain (Totterdell and Holman, 2003). Furthermore, the associated job strain will naturally reduce job satisfaction. Several studies in the field of hospitality management showed that the surface acting strategy adopted by hotel employees resulted in low job satisfaction while the deep acting strategy led to high job satisfaction (Chen et al., 2012; Wing and Chen, 2012). Deep acting also requires individuals to make efforts to manage emotions. Such adjustment is based on employees' active change of their emotional perception, cognition, and perspectives. As time passes, employees believe that it is natural to display positive emotions in their jobs and can effectively eliminate negative emotions through internalizing positive perspectives and cognition; this in turn will contribute to a heightened job satisfaction. In a meta-analysis of 116 studies on emotional labor, (Kammeyer-Mueller et al. 2013) confirmed that surface acting is negatively associated with job satisfaction while deep acting is positively associated with job satisfaction.

Research has shown that emotional labor strategy can mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and relevant outcome variables. For instance, Kim et al. (2012) demonstrated that emotional intelligence exerted its effect on service recovery performance through the mediating effects of emotional labor strategies. In the telecommunication industry, Tang et al. (2010) found that customer service employees' emotional labor strategies played a partial mediating role in the relationship between emotional intelligence and employees' job performance, and that between emotional intelligence and job strain. In the Greek health service sector, Psilopanagiotti et al. (2012) found that surface acting mediated the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction among physicians. However, studying hotel employees, Lee and Ok (2012) found that the mediating effects of emotional effort and emotion dissonance as forms of emotional labor on the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction was not significant. Based on the above discussions, we put forward the following research hypotheses:

H1a. Hotel employees' emotional intelligence is negatively related to surface acting as an emotional labor strategy

H1b. Hotel employees' surface acting is negatively related to job satisfaction

H1c. Surface acting has a mediating effect on the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction

H1d. Hotel employees' emotional intelligence is positively related to deep acting as an emotional labor strategy

H1e. Hotel employees' deep acting is positively related to job satisfaction

H1f. Deep acting has a mediating effect on the relationship between

emotional intelligence and job satisfaction

2.5. Moderating effects of perceived organizational support

Perceived organizational support, as a resource in an organization, can make employees generate a series of positive emotions based on support and understanding from colleagues and supervisors, as well as affirmation of their abilities (Chen and Liao, 2006). Such positive emotions can help recover employees' emotional exhaustion in emotional labor. To employees, organizational support is an important external energy resource that helps emotional recovery when they conduct emotional labor (Li and Zhou, 2012). Organizational support can help hospitality employees gain various resources needed in their emotional labor-based service delivery, thus enhancing employees' confidence and abilities to serve customers. Studies showed that perceived organizational support can significantly expand employees' tolerance scale, effectively curtail the accumulation and spread of employees' negative emotions, and minimize the gap between employees' real inner emotions and the required positive emotions in serving customers so as to reduce employees' faking emotions (Yu and Zhang, 2010). Brotheridge and Lee (2003) found that employees need to consume emotional resources when they adopt deep acting strategy and surface acting strategy. Employees' satisfaction and happiness will increase when employee's resources are compensated or even get extra reward. Otherwise, Resulting in employees have imbalanced resources, and then have emotional exhaustion, job burnout and other negative results. According to the COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001), with high perceived organizational support, employees can gain more internal resources by integrating, regulating and effectively deploying emotions. Their emotional intelligence-induced resources will also be enhanced, thus making them more prone to adopt deep acting in their work roles. On the other hand, when employees' perceived organizational support is low, little support perceived in the organization can lead to exhaustion of their emotional resources. When the lost resources are not compensated, employees will reduce the corresponding behavior to reduce the further loss of resources (Hobfoll, 2001). Consequently, surface acting may be employed to avoid the loss of internal resources; as such, employees will exhaust resources under the pressure of job requirements. If perceived organizational support can be engaged in meeting employees' social emotional needs to recover the exhausted emotional resources, the strain will be reduced and employees are willing to make efforts to realize organizational goals. Thus, the following hypotheses are developed:

H2a. Perceived organizational support moderates the positive relationship between hotel employees' emotional intelligence and deep acting, in that the higher the employees' perceived organizational support, the stronger the positive relationship between emotional intelligence and employees' deep acting.

H2b. Perceived organizational support moderates the negative relationship between hotel employees' emotional intelligence and surface acting, in that the higher the employees' perceived organizational support, the weaker the negative relationship between emotional intelligence and employees' surface acting.

Employees can gain social resources from supervisors' support and customers' positive feedbacks. These resources can partially offset resource exhaustion, thus moderating the relationship between emotional labor and outcome variables (Liao and Yan, 2014). Hur et al. (2015), by studying salespersons in stores, found that perceived organizational support significantly weakened the negative relationship between surface acting and job satisfaction but strengthened the positive relationship between deep acting and job satisfaction. Duke et al. (2009) found that perceived organizational support played a moderating role in the relationship between emotional labor and its outcomes such as job satisfaction and performance. Studying Chinese hotel employees, both

Chen et al., (2012) and Nixon et al.'s (2011) confirmed that supervisor support moderated the relationship between surface/deep acting and job satisfaction. Li and Long (2011) found that perceived organizational support moderated the relationship between hotel employees' imbalanced positive emotions and job satisfaction. When employees work in positions required with emotional labor, they may gradually exhaust their emotional, psychological, and physical energy. Under such circumstances, employees tend to feel job burnout if there is no alternative way to recover their inner resources. However, if there exist external resources like organizational support, employees' inner resource exhaustion may be substituted and job strain resulted from emotional labor may be reduced, which in turn alleviates the negative effect of emotional labor on relevant job outcomes such as performance and satisfaction (Hobfoll, 2001). Therefore, perceived organizational support can function as a valuable external resource to employees and effectively counteract on the depletion of employees' internal resources, thereby playing a moderating role between emotional labor strategies and job satisfaction.

Based on the above discussion, we develop the following hypotheses:

H3a. Perceived organizational support moderates the positive relationship between hotel employees' deep acting and job satisfaction, in that the higher the employees' perceived organizational support, the stronger the positive relationship between employees' deep acting and job satisfaction.

H3b. Perceived organizational support moderates the negative relationship between hotel employees' surface acting and job satisfaction in that the higher the employees' perceived organizational support, the weaker the negative relationship between employees' surface acting and job satisfaction.

2.6. The effects of dual-stage moderated mediation

The hypotheses of 2a, 2b, 3a and 3b further reveal the effects of a dual-stage moderated mediation in our proposed model. Cohen and Wills (1985) argued that social support has a moderating effect on stress and its consequences, that is, under high support conditions, the negative effects of stress are small. Cropanzano et al. (1997) found a negative correlation between organizational support and stress variables such as body tension, fatigue, and job burnout. More specifically, perceived organizational support moderates the indirect effects of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction through deep acting/surface acting, by changing the relationship between emotional intelligence and deep acting/surface acting. Besides, as perceived organizational support also moderates the relationship between deep acting/surface acting and job satisfaction, it also moderates the indirect effects of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction through deep acting/surface acting. The study uses the COR Theory by Hobfoll (1989) to explain the influence mechanism of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction. It explains how individuals use their own resources and various external resources to minimize the resources loss in the emotional labor process. EI as psychological resource is a critical factor for hospitality employees' coping styles (Kim and Agrusa, 2011). Hobfoll (2001) have recognized emotional resources as a fundamental component of individual adaptability, and emotional resource is a subtype of personal resources (Liu et al., 2008). Kim et al. (2012) recognized Emotional resource as a type of personal resources that may aid employees engaging in emotional labor and protect them from emotional exhaustion. So EI can be as a proxy for maximum emotional resources (Kim et al., 2012).

The COR theory analyzes the formation process of pressure and resource loss from the perspective of resource flow, which not only can explain the behavior motivation of individual work, but also has strong predictive and explanatory power for employees' behavior decision

under the condition of limited resources, and can effectively reveal the mechanism of employee behavior and job outcomes (Cao and Qu, 2014). According to the COR theory, people tend to protect their own resources and minimize the loss of their own resources (Hobfoll, 1989). When the lost resources are not compensated, employees will reduce the corresponding behavior to reduce the further loss of resources (Hobfoll, 2001). The COR theory explains the process of stress and resource depletion from the perspective of resource loss and gain (Wright and Hobfoll, 2004). The influence of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction depends on whether the resources consumed by employees in emotional labor process and whether employees can maintain resources balance through different channels. When an individual's internal resources (such as emotional intelligence) are lacking, in the process of emotional labor, the strategy of surface play is adopted to reduce the loss of resources, resulting in more dissatisfaction with work. At this time, external resources (such as organizational support) can reduce or compensate the individual internal resource loss and reduce the pressure and resource loss caused by emotional labor (Hobfoll, 2001), so that employees have higher levels of job satisfaction. If they can't supplement the lost resources, employees will have emotional exhaustion, which will result in turnover intention or reduced effort to prevent the continuous loss of resources (Brotheridge and Lee, 2002).

A number of studies have found that perceived organizational support moderates the relationship between stressors and personal-and work-related outcomes. (Duke et al., 2009). Abraham (1998) found that social support was a strong moderator of the relationship between emotional dissonance and job satisfaction. Social support is comprised of support from individuals, perceived organizational support focuses on support provided by the organization to help employees perform effectively and handle stressful situations adequately (Stinglhamber and Vandenberghe, 2003), and such organizational support is meeting their socioemotional needs (Duke et al., 2009). Brotheridge and Lee (2002) proposed that workers attempt to cope with role demands by performing surface or deep acting and that the effect of this expenditure of resources on worker burnout depends on the more immediate rewards of the service encounter and the application of internal and external resources specific to the needs at hand. In summary, according to the COR theory, perceived organizational support is as an external resources, which can reduce or compensate the individual internal resource, and as a moderator to the mediation effects. So individuals with high emotional intelligence often take active measures to adjust themselves when faced with personal or work-related challenges, and pay more attention to obtaining external resources (such as organizational support) so as to have more resources and more deep acting strategy, and have higher satisfaction with work.

Therefore, we put forward the following hypotheses:

H4a. The indirect effect of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction through deep acting is moderated by perceived organizational support. This means that the higher the perceived organizational support, the stronger the indirect effect of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction through deep acting.

H4b. The indirect effect of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction through surface acting is moderated by perceived organizational support. This means that the higher the perceived organizational support, the stronger the indirect effect of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction through surface acting.

3. Method

This study collected first-hand data through a questionnaire survey. The survey solicited hotel employees' responses on the enclosed questions by employing a 5-point Likert scale from 1 for "strongly disagree" / "never" to 5 for "strongly agree" or "always". The questionnaire was originally designed in English. The researchers conducted translation

and back-translation on the selected English scales before operating them in the Chinese questionnaire. On this basis, the researchers further analyzed the translated items which were significantly different from the original scales and made necessary modifications. Then, 4 experts in the hotel research field and 10 hotel employees were invited to assess and pilot test the questionnaire items. Before the formal survey, a pretest was conducted with 40 hotel employees to further improve the accuracy of scale items.

3.1. Measurement scales

3.1.1. Emotional intelligence (EI)

Emotional intelligence is the independent variable in our model. Emotional intelligence can be operationalized in four aspects: self emotional appraisal, others' emotional appraisal, regulation of emotion, and use of emotion. In the current study, we adopted Wong and Law's (2002) scale to measure emotional intelligence. The scale includes sixteen items covering all four aspects mentioned above. A five-point Likert scale where 1 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strongly agree" was used for measurement. Previous studies supported the EI scale's reliability, factor structure, internal consistency, convergent, and discriminant validity in the context of hotel (Lee and Ok, 2012; Kim et al., 2012; Kim and Agrusa, 2011). Wong et al. (2007) took personnel from Mainland China and Hong Kong as research samples to explore the reliability and validity of the WLEIS scale in the context of Chinese culture. The results show that the scale has high reliability and validity in the context of China, and have high predictive validity for workplace employees' emotional labor, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance.

3.1.2. Emotional labor (EL) strategy

Emotional labor strategy is a mediator variable in our model. This study used emotional labor strategy scale developed by Diefendorff et al., (2005) which is composed of 14 items representing three dimensions, i.e., surface acting strategy, deep acting strategy and the expression of naturally felt emotions. In the hotel industry, research has commonly found that employees just adopt surface acting strategy and deep acting strategy (Hochschild, 1983). For the purpose of this study and considering the prevalence of emotional labor strategies in the hotel context, we only adopted the deep acting and surface acting measurement with 11 items from Diefendorff et al., (2005) scale. Respondents' responses were recorded using a 5-point Likert type scale from 1 = "never" to 5 = "always". Chen et al., (2012) took Chinese hotel employees as research samples to explore the reliability and validity of the Emotional labor strategy scale of Diefendorff et al., (2005). The results show that the scale has high reliability and validity in the context of China. The alpha coefficients for surface acting and deep acting were 0.88 and 0.82, respectively.

3.1.3. Job satisfaction and perceived organizational support

Job satisfaction is the dependent variable in our model. We adopted the overall job satisfaction scale with 3 items developed by Cammann et al. (1983). Previous studies supported the Cammann et al.'s (1983) job satisfaction scale's reliability and validity in the context of hotel and the alpha coefficient was 0.90 (Lee and Ok, 2012). Perceived organizational support is a moderator variable in the study model. We adopted Eisenberger et al.'s (1986) scale comprising of 8 items in measuring perceived organizational support. For both scales, a 5-point Likert scale where 1 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strongly agree" was used for measurement. Li et al.(2015) took Chinese telephone operators as research samples to explore the reliability and validity of the perceived organizational support of Eisenberger et al.'s (1986) scale. The results show that the scale has high reliability and validity in the context of China. The alpha coefficient was 0.842.

3.2. Data collection and study sample

The study sample includes hotel employees in seven hotels in Guangzhou and Shenzhen. According to China's hotel star rating standards, two of the seven hotels are five-star hotels and five are four-star hotels. These seven hotels are high-star hotels and mainly for the reception of business guests. A total of 340 questionnaires were distributed and 314 were returned. After removing incomplete and low quality questionnaires (e.g., answers following a Z-shape on the questionnaire), a total of 279 questionnaires were deemed usable.

The researchers directly contacted the hotel manager to get support for the research. Before the investigation, the researchers discussed with the hotel's manager to ensure that the samples were front-line service employees. Through the discussion, the study selected the front-line staff who worked in the front Office, food and beverage department, concierge department and recreation department as the sample survey. The two researchers personally conducted the questionnaire survey in the hotel. Before the investigation, the researchers explained the purpose and content of the questionnaire to the surveyed employees, and showed that all the researchers were guaranteed the anonymity and confidentiality of the data they were filling. This step was to win the cooperation of the employees. All respondents were volunteers and did not receive any incentives.

As shown in Table 1, 67% of the respondents were female while male respondents accounted for 33%. A majority (68.1%) of the respondents aged from 18 to 29 years old. Frontline employees accounted for 73.5% of the study sample. 82.1% of the respondents had an education level of tertiary diploma or below. 64.9% of the respondents had worked in the current hotel for less than one year; and 41.6% of them had worked in the hotel industry for less than one year.

4. Results

4.1. Common method bias

Data from a single source such as a questionnaire survey are subject to common method bias. To ensure that the scale was easy for the respondents to understand, we conducted back-translation between Chinese and English, modification by experts and a pretest on the questionnaire. To effectively control common method bias, we applied methods that ensured the anonymity of questionnaires, and explained that answers were not classified as just "yes" or "no" so that respondents have the choice to express their real ideas (Zhou and Long, 2004; Podsakoff and Mackenzie, 2003). The questionnaire survey was administered to employees in different departments in seven hotels in Guangzhou and Shenzhen. Furthermore, we referred to the single factor test method proposed by (Harman 1976) to test the common variance

Table 1
Profile of the sample (n = 279).

| Demographics | Percentage | Demographics | Percentage |
|---------------------|------------|---------------------------------|------------|
| <i>Gender</i> | | <i>Education</i> | |
| Male | 33 | Senior high school | 41.6 |
| Female | 67 | 2-3 year college diploma | 40.5 |
| | | University degree | 11.5 |
| | | Postgraduate | 6.5 |
| <i>Age</i> | | <i>Tenure in current hotel</i> | |
| < 18 yrs | 7.9 | Less than 1 year | 64.9 |
| 18-23 yrs | 42.7 | 1-3 years | 28.7 |
| 24-29 yrs | 25.4 | 3-5 years | 6.5 |
| 30-35 yrs | 10 | | |
| > 36yrs | 14 | <i>Tenure in hotel industry</i> | |
| <i>Job position</i> | | Less than 1 year | 41.6 |
| Frontline employee | 73.5 | 1-3 years | 38.7 |
| Foreman | 16.5 | 3-5 years | 10.8 |
| supervisor | 10 | More than 5 years | 9 |

Table 2
Reliability and Validity Analysis Result.

| Construct/Model | Cronbach α | CR | AVE | χ^2 | df | χ^2/df | RMSEA | CFI | NFI | IFI | TLI |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|------|------|----------|-----|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Emotional Intelligence | .850 | 0.81 | 0.61 | 185.9 | 98 | 1.897 | 0.06 | 0.954 | 0.910 | 0.958 | 0.901 |
| Surface Acting | .855 | 0.85 | 0.66 | 47.388 | 15 | 3.156 | 0.07 | 0.953 | 0.936 | 0.954 | 0.930 |
| Deep Acting | .817 | 0.82 | 0.63 | 89.87 | 43 | 2.09 | 0.075 | 0.992 | 0.987 | 0.922 | 0.975 |
| Job Satisfaction | .782 | 0.70 | 0.56 | 50.426 | 19 | 2.654 | 0.065 | 0.997 | 1.00 | 0.989 | 0.969 |
| Perceived Organizational Support | .732 | 0.72 | 0.58 | 77.758 | 20 | 3.887 | 0.072 | 0.934 | 0.906 | 0.936 | 0.967 |
| Five-factor Model | | | | 1384.007 | 665 | 2.081 | 0.076 | 0.970 | 0.911 | 0.972 | 0.947 |
| Single-factor Model | | | | 2987.538 | 665 | 4.493 | 0.112 | 0.330 | 0.283 | 0.337 | 0.291 |

of the sample data. Exploratory factor analysis of all items in the questionnaire was conducted. Results showed that the principal factor just explained 16.8 percent of the total variance. Through the above steps, the researcher can maximize control of the potential impact of the common method bias on the result.

4.2. Reliability and validity

Table 2 displays the internal consistency of each scale. All Cronbach α values were greater than 0.73 and those for emotional intelligence, surface acting and deep acting were greater than 0.8, indicating high level of internal consistency of these measurements. Results of confirmatory factor analysis showed that the values of χ^2/df for emotional intelligence, surface acting, deep acting, job satisfaction and perceived organizational support were between 1–4; the RMSEA was below 0.08 and the values of CFI, NFI, IFI and TLI were greater than 0.9, all demonstrating acceptable level of model fit. We also compared the five-factor model which takes emotional intelligence, surface acting, deep acting, job satisfaction and perceived organizational support as five latent factors in an overall measurement model with the single-factor model which had all measurement items loaded on one same factor. The results showed that the five-factor model performed much better than the single-factor model (Table 2), evidencing the validity of the measurements.

4.3. Correlation analysis

Table 3 shows the values of the mean and standard deviation of the variables and the pair-wise correlations between the variables. The results indicated that emotional intelligence was significantly and positively associated with job satisfaction ($r = 0.302, p < 0.01$), deep acting ($r = 0.151, p < 0.05$), and employees' perceived organizational support ($r = 0.279, p < 0.01$). However, emotional intelligence was found to be negatively associated with surface acting ($r = -0.178, p < 0.05$) and surface acting was negatively associated with job satisfaction ($r = -0.168, p < 0.05$). Furthermore, surface acting was negatively related to perceived organizational support ($r = -0.126, p < 0.01$), and positively related to deep acting ($r = 0.537, p < 0.01$). Deep acting was positively related to both job satisfaction ($r = 0.117, p < 0.01$) and perceived organizational support ($r = 0.219, p < 0.01$). Finally, Job satisfaction was positively

associated with perceived organizational support ($r = 0.335, p < 0.01$).

4.4. Hypothesis test

4.4.1. Mediating effects of emotional labor strategies

We adopted the Bootstrap method to test the significance of mediating path, that is, whether the indirect effect ($a*b$) of emotional intelligence through surface acting and deep acting on job satisfaction was significantly different from zero. For this purpose path analysis was conducted using Mplus 7.0. Results were reported in Table 4.

As shown in Table 4, the indirect effect of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction through surface acting was not significant ($-0.019; p = 0.179$), the 95% C.I. is $[-0.046, 0.009]$. However, the indirect effect of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction through deep acting was statistically significant ($0.033; p < .05$), the 95% C.I. is $[0.002, 0.068]$. Based on the results reported in Table 4, we can see that $H_{1a}, H_{1b}, H_{1d}, H_{1e}, H_{1f}$ were supported. However, H_{1c} was not supported. Furthermore, as emotional intelligence had a direct effect on job satisfaction ($.278; p < .001$), the 95% C.I. is $[0.049, 0.113]$, it was concluded that deep acting only partially mediated the effects of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction. The mediating path model with path coefficients is displayed in Fig. 1.

4.4.2. Moderating effects of perceived organizational support

To test the moderating effects of perceived organizational support, we adopted Hierarchical Regression Analysis in our analysis. In the regression analysis, to reduce the effects of multicollinearity, we followed Aiken and West (1991) to have the independent variables and moderating variables standardized and then multiplied to get the interaction term; the interaction term was then entered into the regression model. Employees' age, gender, educational level, department, tenure in the current hotel, and tenure in the hotel industry were treated as control variables. All variance inflation factors (VIFs) of the predictor variables were no more than 1.68, so there existed no multicollinearity among variables.

As presented in Table 5, the regression coefficient of the interaction effect between emotional intelligence and perceived organizational support on deep acting ($M3: \beta = 0.164, p < 0.01$) was significant. This confirms the moderating effect of perceived organizational support on the relationship between emotional intelligence and deep acting; thus

Table 3
Mean Value, Standard Deviation and Correlation of All Variables($n = 279$).

| Variable | M | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|------------------------------------|-------|------|--------|---------|--------|--------|---|
| 1.Emotional Intelligence | 3.745 | .437 | 1 | | | | |
| 2.Surface Acting | 2.621 | .876 | -.178* | 1 | | | |
| 3.Deep Acting | 2.758 | .938 | .151* | .537** | 1 | | |
| 4.Job Satisfaction | 3.627 | .680 | .302** | -.168* | .177** | 1 | |
| 5.Perceived Organizational Support | 3.269 | .482 | .279** | -.126** | .219** | .335** | 1 |

Notes.
** $p < 0.01$.
* $p < 0.05$.

Table 4
Path analysis results.

| Effect | Estimate | S.E. | Est./S.E. | p | 95% C.I. |
|--|----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------------|
| Emotional Intelligence →Job Satisfaction | 0.278*** | 0.016 | 5.098 | 0.000 | [0.049, 0.113] |
| Surface Acting →Job Satisfaction | -0.158* | 0.024 | -2.210 | 0.027 | [-0.099,-0.007] |
| Deep Acting →Job Satisfaction | 0.218** | 0.039 | 3.017 | 0.003 | [0.034, 0.196] |
| Emotional Intelligence →Surface Acting | -0.178* | 0.034 | 1.902 | 0.047 | [0.016, 0.200] |
| Emotional Intelligence →Deep Acting | 0.151* | 0.033 | 2.446 | 0.014 | [0.004, 0.141] |
| Emotional Intelligence →Surface Acting→ Job Satisfaction | -0.019 | 0.014 | -1.338 | 0.179 | [-0.046,0.009] |
| Emotional Intelligence →Deep Acting→ Job Satisfaction | 0.033* | 0.018 | 1.857 | 0.037 | [0.002,0.068] |

Notes.
* p < 0.05.
** p < 0.01.
*** p < 0.001.

H_{2a} was supported. However, the regression coefficient of the interaction effect between emotional intelligence and perceived organizational support on surface acting (M6: β = 0.004, p > 0.05) was not significant. Therefore, H_{2b} was not supported.

Following the same procedure, we tested the moderating effects of perceived organizational support on the relationship between deep acting/surface acting and job satisfaction. As shown in Table 6, the regression coefficient of the interaction effect between deep acting and perceived organizational support on job satisfaction (M3: β = 0.185, p < 0.01) was significant; thus, H_{3a} was supported. Furthermore, the regression coefficient of the interaction effect between surface acting and perceived organizational support on job satisfaction was significant (M6: β = -0.145, p < 0.01). Therefore, H_{3b} was also supported.

4.4.3. Moderated mediation

A moderated mediation model posits that the moderating variable would strengthen or weaken the relationship between the independent variable and the mediator variable, and at the same time strengthen or weaken the relationship between the mediator variable and the outcome (dependent) variable; as such, mediating effects would change due to the change of the moderating variable (Chen et al., 2012). Such type of moderated mediation model focusses on whether the mediating process can be changed due to the change of the moderating variable (Wen and Ye, 2014). In this study, we specifically analyzed how surface acting and deep acting (mediated variables) mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence (independent variable) and job satisfaction (dependent variable) as well as how the perceived organizational support (moderating variable) can change these mediating mechanisms.

We followed the steps proposed by Muller et al. (2005) and Preacher et al., (2007) to test the moderated mediation. We examined the following four conditions in testing the moderated mediation: 1) significant effect of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction; 2) significant interactions between emotional intelligence and perceived organizational support in predicting surface acting/deep acting; and significant interactions between surface acting/deep acting and perceived organizational support in predicting job satisfaction; 3) significant effect of surface acting/deep acting on job satisfaction; and 4) different conditional indirect effects of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction, via surface acting/deep acting, across low and high levels of perceived organizational support (Preacher et al., 2007). The last

condition is key to establishing moderated mediation (Preacher et al., 2007). In the current study, moderated mediation will be demonstrated when the conditional indirect effects of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction via surface acting/deep acting, differ across the two levels of perceived organizational support.

4.4.3.1. Moderated mediation test taking surface acting as the mediator. Table 4 shows that the emotional intelligence had a direct significant effect on job satisfaction (.278; p < .001), providing support to Condition 1 for moderated mediation. To test Condition 2, we first examined whether the interaction between emotional intelligence and perceived organizational support significantly predicted surface acting. Table 5 shows that the interaction term between emotional intelligence and perceived organizational support (M6: β = 0.004, p > 0.05) was not significant in predicting surface acting. Therefore, Condition 2 was not met. Hence, results based on Condition 2 indicate that perceived organizational support did not moderate the mediation of surface acting between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. Therefore, H_{4b} was not supported.

4.4.3.2. Moderated mediation test taking deep acting as the mediator. Table 4 shows Condition 1 was met. To test Condition 2, we first examined whether the interaction between emotional intelligence and perceived organizational support significantly predicted deep acting. Table 5 shows that the interaction term between emotional intelligence and perceived organizational support (M3: β = 0.164, p < 0.01) was significantly predicted deep acting. Table 6 shows that the interaction term between deep acting and perceived organizational support (M3: β = 0.185, p < 0.01) was also significant in predicting job satisfaction. Condition 2 was supported. Table 4 shows that deep acting had a direct significant effect on job satisfaction (.218; p < .01), thus supporting Condition 3. Hence, results indicate that the first three conditions were met.

To further verify the moderated mediation relationships, we examined Condition 4, which requires the magnitude of the conditional indirect effect of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction via deep acting to be different across high and low levels of perceived organizational support. With reference to Fig. 2, this conditional indirect effect is quantified as (a₁ + a₃U)(b₁ + b₂U) (Muller et al., 2005; Preacher et al., 2007). According to Tables 4–6, a₁ = 0.151, a₃ = 0.164, b₁ = 0.218, b₂ = 0.185. Hence, (a₁ + a₃U)(b₁ + b₂U) =

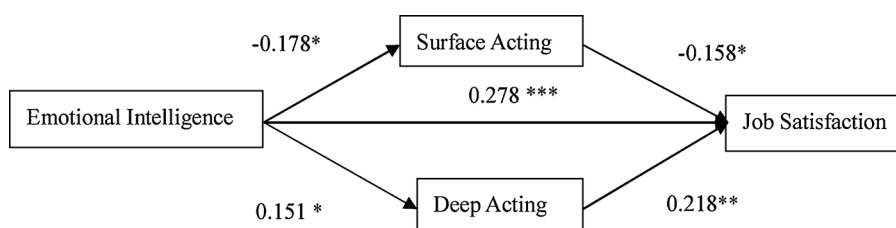


Fig. 1. the Mediating Path Model.

Table 5
Moderating Effects of Perceived Organizational Support on the Relationship between EI and DA/SA.

| Variable and Step | | Deep Acting(n = 279) | | | Surface Acting(n = 279) | | |
|-------------------|--|----------------------|----------|---------|-------------------------|----------|----------|
| | | M1 | M2 | M3 | M4 | M5 | M6 |
| Step 1 | Gender | -0.111 | -0.102 | -0.102 | -0.190** | -0.184** | -0.184** |
| | Age | -0.025 | -0.065 | -0.064 | -0.129* | -0.162* | -0.163* |
| | Position | -0.011 | -0.032 | -0.033 | 0.048 | 0.036 | 0.037 |
| | Department | -0.025 | -0.035 | -0.035 | -0.018 | -0.027 | -0.026 |
| | Educational Level | 0.126* | 0.130* | 0.130* | 0.082 | 0.076 | 0.076 |
| | Tenure in Hotel Industry | 0.079 | 0.090 | 0.090 | -0.009 | -0.005 | -0.005 |
| | Tenure in Current Hotel | 0.099 | 0.078 | 0.079 | 0.203** | 0.190* | 0.190* |
| | Emotional Intelligence | | 0.075* | 0.074* | | 0.090 | -0.184* |
| Step 2 | Perceived Organizational Support | | 0.204** | 0.204** | | 0.102 | 0.102 |
| | Emotional Intelligence* Perceived Organizational Support | | | 0.164** | | | 0.004 |
| | R ² | 0.034 | 0.082 | 0.078 | 0.122 | 0.145 | 0.142 |
| | ΔR ² | 0.059* | 0.111*** | 0.158* | 0.122*** | 0.144*** | 0.000 |

Notes.
*** p < 0.001.
** p < 0.01.
* p < 0.05.

(0.151 + 0.164U)(0.218 + 0.185U). We operationalized high and low levels of perceived organizational support as one standard deviation above and below the mean score. When the values of U (perceived organizational support) are 2.787, 3.269 and 3.751, the mediating effects of deep acting were 0.4461, 0.5653 and 0.6987, respectively. This shows that if employees perceive high organizational support, the effect of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction via deep acting can be greatly enhanced. Therefore, H_{4a} was supported.

5. Conclusion and discussions

Based on the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, this study developed and tested a moderated mediation model which posits emotional labor strategy as a mediator between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction and perceived organizational support as a moderator to such a mediation. Using data collected from 7 hotels in South China, the study demonstrated that emotional intelligence directly affected hotel employees' job satisfaction. While deep acting effectively mediated the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction, such a mediation effect was not found with surface acting. Perceived organizational support was found to be a moderator to the mediation effect played by deep acting between emotional intelligence

and job satisfaction. The findings of the study have both theoretical and practical implications.

5.1. Theoretical implications

Treating emotional intelligence as employees' internal resource and perceived organizational support as employees' external resource in an organization, this study demonstrated that emotional intelligence influences employees' emotional labor strategy, which in turn affect employees' job satisfaction. However, deep acting is differentiated from surface acting as an emotional labor strategy in its mediating role in passing the effect of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction. While deep acting partially mediated the effect of intelligence on job satisfaction, surface acting did not demonstrate such a mediating role. In the literature, while sufficient evidence shows that emotional intelligence is negatively related to surface acting and positively related to deep acting (cf. Kim et al., 2012; Lee and Ok, 2012) and emotional labor strategies influence job satisfaction (Chen et al., 2012; Hur et al., 2015), little research has demonstrated how emotional labor strategies can possibly mediate the effect of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction. Our study identified the partial mediation of deep acting between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. These findings

Table 6
Mediating Effects of Perceived Organizational Support on the Relationship between DA/SA and Job Satisfaction.

| Variable and Step | | Job Satisfaction(n = 279) | | | Job Satisfaction(n = 279) | | |
|-------------------|--|---------------------------|----------|----------|---------------------------|----------|----------|
| | | M1 | M2 | M3 | M4 | M5 | M6 |
| Step 1 | Gender | -0.017 | 0.006 | 0.005 | -0.017 | -0.013 | -0.009 |
| | Age | 0.162* | 0.135* | 0.136* | 0.162* | 0.124* | 0.123 |
| | Position | 0.180* | 0.154* | 0.157* | 0.180* | 0.151* | 0.152* |
| | Department | -0.057 | -0.059 | -0.060 | -0.057 | -0.064 | -0.067 |
| | Educational Level | -0.049 | -0.042 | -0.047 | -0.049 | -0.021 | -0.024 |
| | Tenure in Hotel Industry | 0.027 | 0.033 | 0.024 | 0.027 | 0.044 | 0.043 |
| | Tenure in Current Hotel | -0.119 | -0.155* | -0.148* | -0.119 | -0.139 | -0.132 |
| | Deep Acting | | 0.124* | 0.128* | | | |
| Step 2 | Surface Acting | | | | | -0.131* | -0.130* |
| | Perceived Organizational Support | | 0.289*** | 0.284*** | | 0.321*** | 0.323*** |
| | Deep Acting* Perceived Organizational Support | | | 0.185** | | | |
| | Surface Acting* Perceived Organizational Support | | | | | | -0.145** |
| | R ² | 0.039 | 0.146 | 0.150 | 0.039 | 0.133 | 0.132 |
| | ΔR ² | 0.063* | 0.174*** | 0.167** | 0.063* | 0.161*** | 0.142** |

Notes.
*** p < 0.001.
** p < 0.01.
* p < 0.05.

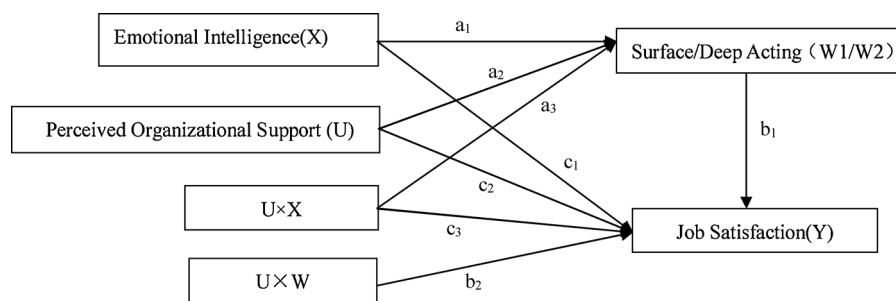


Fig. 2. Moderated mediation test.

disclose two important theoretical clues: 1) emotional intelligence as a personal capability, may not only directly influence job satisfaction, but also have its indirect effect on job satisfaction through its positive effect on deep acting. This actually reiterates the importance of emotional intelligence in the workplace life. 2) Deep acting seems to be overwhelming surface acting in its effect on job satisfaction. Hur et al. (2015) found that the absolute magnitude of deep acting's effect on job satisfaction (.39**) is much bigger than the negative effect of surface acting on job satisfaction (-0.23**). Our study also confirms that the positive effect of deep acting on job satisfaction (.218**) is larger in magnitude than the negative effect of surface acting on job satisfaction (-0.158*). Furthermore, as deep acting was confirmed to mediate the effect of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction, its overall contribution to job satisfaction should be appreciated more compared to the destructive effect of surface acting on job satisfaction.

In this study, we also tested the moderating role of perceived organizational support on the mediation effect of deep acting/surface acting on the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. The findings are interesting enough to shed some theoretical light. Our study only found perceived organizational support's moderating role in the mediation process played by deep acting, as the mediation of surface acting between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction was not confirmed. While perceived organizational support has been generally confirmed as a moderator in the relationship between emotional labor strategies and job satisfaction (Chen et al., 2012; Hur et al., 2015). The empirical findings of previous studies did not reach any consensus point. While Chen et al., (2012) study confirmed higher perceived organizational support would strengthen the positive effect of deep acting on job satisfaction, as hypothesized, Hur et al. (2015) found lower perceived organizational support instead would strengthen such an effect, contrary to what is hypothesized. Our study findings are generally consistent with Chen et al.'s (2012). Furthermore, our study reveals that although perceived organizational support moderated the relationship between surface acting and job satisfaction as expected, it did not moderate the mediation effect of surface acting in the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction, as such a mediation was not found in the study. On the contrary, we found perceived organizational support moderated the mediation effect of deep acting on the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. As such, our study provides some further evidence on perceived organizational support's moderating role in relation to emotional intelligence, emotional labor and job satisfaction. Explaining the transmission mechanism of the effects of emotional intelligence and the boundary conditions under which this mechanism works.

In addition to the above contributions, the study also has the following inspiration. First, most previous articles explain the effects of emotional intelligence on related outcome variables based on theories of emotional control theory, emotional cognitive theory and emotional contagion theory. The study is based on the COR theory and explains the role mechanism of emotional intelligence to job satisfaction from the perspective of employee social psychological resources flow. This perspective enriches the research of the mechanism of emotional

intelligence, and also enriches and promotes the research of emotional labor strategies. Second, most researches on emotional intelligence focus on advanced North American customers with advanced customer service orientation and traditional North American economy, lacking theoretical analysis and empirical tests from developing countries (Bozionelos and Kiamou, 2008). The study found that emotional intelligence of Chinese hotel front-line employees still positively affects individual job satisfaction, supplements evidence from developing countries and increases the generalization of the relationship between employees' emotional intelligence and employee job satisfaction, highlighting the important influence of emotional intelligence on employee job satisfaction. Third, most of the existing studies focus on the simple role of the effect of emotional intelligence on job outcome variables, and more on the correlation between variables, and lack of systematic research on the relevant regulatory and mediating variables (Zhang, 2011). Fourth, behind the high customer interaction service organization represented by hotels, the job satisfaction of employees is not only related to individual emotional factors and individual personality traits, but also to the cultivation of employees' emotional management ability and the shaping of social psychological environment related.

5.2. Management implications

This study offers insights on how to enhance employees' job satisfaction by understanding the role played by emotional intelligence in the context of emotional labor, and how organizational support can be utilized as a human resource management strategy to leverage employees' job satisfaction. Emotional intelligence appears to be the core resource for hotel employees engaging in emotional labor. Therefore, hotel managers should pay attention to employees' emotional intelligence as an internal personnel resource. In staff recruitment, emotional intelligence test may help select those employees with high emotional intelligence. It is also important for hotel training to focus on improving employees' skills and capabilities of applying deep acting strategy in the workplace, as deep acting seems more critical to increase job satisfaction. According to the COR theory, frontline employees need to consume their emotional and psychological resources continuously in emotional labor. Enterprises should pay attention to the compensation of employees' resources, and adopt a reasonable remuneration and welfare system to help employees compensate for the loss of emotional resources. Maximize the benefits of emotional capital. Research shows that individuals' emotional intelligence can be improved through training (Slaski and Cartwright, 2003). The staff's emotional intelligence training into individual career development planning and organizational training programs; through targeted training to help front-line staff to improve the emotional ability to monitor and manage emotions, and motivate front-line staff to internalize the emotional rules in the work to reduce the impact of bad emotions.

The service organization represented by the hotels takes the emotional labor management of the front-line staff into account when making human resources planning, and formulating the rules of

emotional labor based on the actual situation of the enterprise. Enterprises should further examine the ability of employees to deal with emotional problems, and arrange employees with high emotional management ability to work in high emotional labor positions so as to achieve a good match between employees and their positions and organizations. In terms of training, enterprises should strengthen the training of employees' emotional management ability and improve employees' emotional display skills during interacting with customers. Through targeted training to help front-line staff to improve their ability to monitor and manage emotions and reduce the impact of bad emotions. Encourage employees to take a deep acting strategy and to show positive real emotions and reduce the surface acting strategy. Through the above measures to improve the employees' job satisfaction, so that they can provide high quality service for customers and create more service performance and profit.

Perceived organizational support should be viewed as important compensation resources to counteract on hotel employees' emotional exhaustion. Hotel management should consider constantly improving the organizational support environment to their frontline employees. Appropriate policies and reward procedures should be formulated to recognize employees' contributions and care for their welfare. Fair atmosphere should be created and more job autonomy should be offered to employees. In particular, frontline supervisors should be granted more authority to trust and support frontline employees. Organize more activities in the work, to enhance team cohesion and create a good working environment, and enhance frontline staff's organizational honor and belonging. These measures can ease the emotions caused by employee emotional exhaustion and make up for the loss of emotional resources and mental resources caused by long-term emotional work. The introduction of organizational support provides a way for hotel companies to relieve the emotional pressure of employees and improve their service level and job satisfaction.

5.3. Limitations and future research

This study employs a cross-sectional questionnaire survey in its data collection. The causal relationship test in the model may be compromised by the cross-sectional research design. Future research can take alternative methodologies such as quasi-experiment design to verify the moderated mediation relationships revealed in this study. Further studies can also look into the effects of hotel employees' emotional intelligence on pertinent employee attitudes and behaviors, such as workplace wellbeing perception, turnover behavior, service performance and organizational citizenship behavior, to better understand the role of emotional intelligence in hospitality management. This article only explores the role of perceived organizational support as a single variable. Future research can specifically explore the role of different dimensions of perceived organizational support between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. In order to avoid the common method bias issues, future studies can adopt an alternative research design to completely avoid the threat of common method variance and the necessity for post-hoc justification. This article used the averaging item technique to combine the items in the same factor, and eventually synthesize a total score so as to explore the relationship between EI and other variables. Due to averaging items method may remove some information and variance, future studies should pay extra attention to the limitation if it is necessary to dig deeply into which one of components of EI can specifically affect employees' behavior. And different cultural backgrounds and scenarios in different countries, the conclusions of this paper have to be further verified for the applicability in other countries.

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