



Book Review

Emotional Intelligence in Tourism and Hospitality, E. Koc. CABI, London (2019). 153 pp., (Hbk.), £75.00 ISBN: 13 9781786398314

The book *Emotional Intelligence in Tourism and Hospitality* offers examples throughout the text, sets out clear learning objectives in each chapter, and presents some interactive activities to test acquired knowledge. The presence of Power Point slides for each chapter makes it suitable to all the students, scholars and practitioners who wish to understand the role of emotions in service encountering experiences in an informative way.

The Introduction (Chapter 1) clarifies the etymology of the word “intelligence” and then proceeds with presenting the concept of emotional intelligence. A great deal of thought is devoted to the understanding of others’ emotions. At the end, the introductory chapter includes a clear outline of the structure of the book.

Chapters Two and Three discuss the different facets of emotions and how to measure them. There are specific examples of internal (e.g. hunger) vs. external (e.g. disappointment after service failure) emotions in hospitality. A thorough discussion of positive (e.g. joy) vs. negative (e.g. fear) is paired with a discussion of recent advances on how to capture emotional expressions through facial recognition devices. After presenting emotional labour, that is, the art of managing feelings and expressions at work, *Emotional Intelligence in Tourism and Hospitality* provides actionable levers to measure emotional intelligence. Informed by previous theories and scales. Added to this is a detailed explanation of the differences between self-reported measures and performance-based tests. Critically, contrary to self-reported measures that suffer from social desirability bias and extremeness, performance-based tests allow examining emotions at face value. There is a good level of detail on innovative performance-based tests, such as eye-trackers, functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) and facial recognition. The third chapter ends suggesting the need for data triangulation to increase the validity and accuracy of the findings.

The other chapters are stand-alone chapters. Chapter Four focuses on service encounters and specifically on the different possible emotions in the customer-employee interaction. Stemming from some theories coming from general marketing, three main areas are explored: i) service failure, ii) customer needs and iii) unprompted employee action. A particular section of the chapter is entirely devoted to empathy - the ability to comprehend others’ feelings and to vicariously feel those feelings oneself. This requires cognitive imagination of oneself in another person’s place, which is not straightforward. The chapter ends by stressing the idea that - when managing emotions - employees should be aware of the consequences of their decisions.

Chapter Five focuses on key factors that influence the development of professional expertise on tourism and hospitality: i) cognitive knowledge, ii) personality and iii) learning style. Personal expertise is proposed as a critical success factor in tourism hospitality professions. Taking a micro perspective, the authors focus on aspects related to the development of personal skills and competencies in tourism and

hospitality. Building on a seminal paper by Wilson-Wünsch (2016), this chapter examines the role played by personality traits and learning styles in predicting professional success in tourism and hospitality. The authors also emphasise the significance of Meta cognition, particularly self-awareness and reflection. Overall, this chapter highlights that educators should not downplay the importance of practice and should encourage knowledge transfer partnerships between education institutions and industry.

Chapter Six discusses the role of emotional intelligence as a key soft skill that generates success in tourism and hospitality. The authors discuss the concept of emotional intelligence, highlighting its multi-dimensional nature (Matute, Palau-Saumell, & Viglia, 2018). The chapter reviews four key components of emotional intelligence: i) self-awareness, ii) self-management, iii) social awareness, and iv) relationship management. These components of emotional intelligence are important to manage emotions and express them in a positive way. This chapter also highlights the key antecedents of emotional intelligence that influence the level of employee emotional intelligence, namely personality, gender, age, and culture. Concerning personality, the chapter reviews three tools that can be used to assess personality (Meyers-Briggs test, DISC assessment and True colours test). The information presented on these tools provides readers with an understanding of personality types that may influence emotional intelligence. The authors also emphasise that certain areas of emotional intelligence differ across genders. Finally, the chapter also highlights the need to understand the way individuals with different age groups (i.e. traditionalists, baby boomers and generation x, y, & z) respond to different situations.

Chapter Seven examines the role of inter-cultural sensitivity in service encounters in tourism and hospitality contexts. The authors highlight the need to provide education and training on cultural differences and inter-cultural sensitivity to increase guest’s satisfaction and maintain competitiveness. Building on the Bennett’s (1986) Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), the authors conclude the chapter with an outline of the key stages and activities that should be included in a hospitality management program.

Chapter Eight provides a discussion on the association between emotional intelligence and emotional labour, stemming from the key dimensions of SERVQUAL model of Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988): i) reliability, ii) assurance and iii) tangibles, iv) empathy, and v) responsiveness. There are clear practical examples where emotional intelligence plays a significant role in developing positive social relationships, with different internal and external customers and employees. Notably, high emotional intelligence facilitates a higher level of service quality across service quality dimensions.

Chapter Nine is entirely devoted to service failure and recovery. The underlying question is how emotional intelligence can help to cope with service failure and recovery. The chapter stresses four types of abilities: i) perceiving emotions, ii) understanding emotions, iii) facilitating emotions and iv) managing emotions. Resolving conflicts with customers in a calm and organised manner involves both the employee and the customer. For this reason, although the whole book focuses on

employee emotional intelligence, a section of the chapter is devoted to customer emotional intelligence.

Chapter Ten introduces the concept of spiritual intelligence in the hospitality context. More specifically, this chapter discusses the association between spiritual intelligence and team failures, and provides some rich insights into the underlying mechanisms behind cognitive, emotional and spiritual intelligence. The conclusion is that it is extremely important for managers to recognise and satisfy the spiritual needs of the employees, as employees with spiritual intelligence have the ability to delight consumers.

Overall, the book offers some clarity on emotional intelligence, which as a topic, suffers from too many conceptualisations. The context of the analysis – tourism and hospitality – requires a high level of contact between customer and employee, making emotional intelligence an essential element of service interactions. Perhaps a chapter on successful vs. unsuccessful cases on the use emotional intelligence in marketing would enhance the practical contribution of the

book.

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