

## ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: **INFLUENCES OF CUSTOMER MISTREATMENT ON EMPLOYEES' EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING: THE MODERATING ROLES OF ON-LINE AND OFF-LINE EMOTION REGULATION STRATEGIES**

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Customer mistreatment is a growing issue for service organizations. The present study specified two forms of customer mistreatment behaviors: aggressive and demanding mistreatment and tested their proximal and lagged effects in predicting within-person fluctuation of service employees' emotional well-being. An archival data set was used to test the hypotheses. One thousand one hundred and eighty-five daily surveys were collected from 149 customer service representatives from a call center for 8 weekdays. Multilevel analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses. First, drawing on the cognitive appraisal model of emotion, theory for mood development, and resource perspective, the present study examined both proximal and lagged effects of customer mistreatment on employees' emotional well-being (i.e., daily emotional exhaustion and negative mood in the next morning) and the role of daily emotional exhaustion in mediating the lagged association between

daily customer mistreatment and employees' negative mood in the next morning. The mediation model was largely supported by the current sample. Second, positive treatment by customer was demonstrated to be a significant moderator in buffering the detrimental effect of demanding but not aggressive customer mistreatment in predicting daily emotional exhaustion. Third, employees' on-line emotion regulation strategies (i.e., surface acting, deep acting, and natural expression) and off-line emotion regulation strategies (i.e., rumination and social sharing) were tested as moderators on the negative relationship between customer mistreatment and employees' lagged negative mood. The current findings supported some of these moderation effects but were not consistent across aggressive mistreatment and demanding mistreatment. Theoretical and practical implications were discussed.

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by

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the  
University of Maryland, College Park in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
2011

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## Acknowledgements

I would like to cherish each contribution to the development of my dissertation. First, I would like to express my deep gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Mo Wang, for his excellent guidance, encouragement, and patience throughout my years in graduate school. Mo is a great role model who is always passionate and energetic towards research and life.

Second, I would like to thank my committee – Drs. Cheri Ostroff, Paul Hanges, Michele Gelfand, and Hui Liao, for their support, constructive feedbacks, thoughtful criticism, and inspiring suggestions for my dissertation.

Third, I gratefully acknowledge my collaborator, Dr. Junqi Shi, for his generous assistance in collecting data for my research. I would also like to express my special thanks to Laura Wolkoff, who spent much time proofreading an earlier version of my dissertation.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my families and friends who unconditionally love me and support me, and have always been standing by me through the good and bad times.

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## Chapter I: Introduction

Along with the shift in national economy from the manufacturing sector to the service sector (Grizzle, Zablah, Brown, Mowen, & Lee, 2009), workers in service occupations have drawn considerable research interest in recent years. As the liaison between a company and its customers, service employees must constantly monitor and regulate their emotions in response to display rules that promote organizational goals (Grandey, 2000; Beal, Trougakos, Weiss, & Green, 2006). Two main research streams can be identified in the area of service interaction. The first stream is grounded in the argument that “the customer is not always right”. For example, marketing literature has identified a number of customer misbehaviors in a wide variety of deviant forms of behaviors in service interaction (Reynolds & Harris, 2006). One important category that has attracted the most attention from organizational researchers is customer mistreatment which is customer misbehaviors directed against organizations’ employees or service providers (Fullerton & Punj, 2004; Harris & Reynolds, 2003), representing the low-quality interpersonal treatment that employees receive from customers (Bies, 2001). Past research has also shown that customer mistreatment is a growing problem for service organizations. For example, Grandey, Dickter, and Sin (2004) reported that call center employees experience customer mistreatment an average of 10 times a day. Specifically, customers may treat employees in disrespectful, demeaning, unreasonable, or aggressive ways, and these types of customer mistreatment may influence employees’ emotional and behavioral reactions (e.g., Dormann & Zapf, 2004; Grandey et al., 2004; Skarlicki, Van Jaarsveld, & Walker, 2008; Yagil, 2008).

The second research stream is inspired by the slogan of “service with a smile” which is commonly seen in service occupations. Based on the general framework of emotion regulation process (Gross, 1998, 2008), extensive research in the area of emotional labor has identified different types of emotion regulation strategies adopted by service employees and have demonstrated their differential impacts on employees’ well-being and service performance (e.g., Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Diefendorff, Croyle, & Gosserand, 2005; Grandey, 2000, 2003).

Multiple theoretical perspectives have been proposed and applied to address different research questions along these two streams. For example, Rupp, Spencer, and their colleagues (e.g., Rupp, McCance, Spencer, Sonntag, 2008; Rupp & Spencer, 2006; Spencer & Rupp, 2009) applied organizational justice perspective to understanding employees’ emotional reaction to customer service interactions. Further, Brotheridge and Lee (2002) applied conservation of resource theory to examining the antecedents and consequences of emotion regulation in service context. In addition, Diefendorff and Gosserand (2003) applied control theory to conceptualizing service employees’ emotion regulation process during service encounters. Nevertheless, there has been a lack of research integrating these theoretical perspectives to provide a comprehensive understanding of the unfolding process of customer-employee interactions and employees’ emotional and behavioral reactions. Therefore, the current study aims to integrate existing theoretical models and bridge the two research streams by examining service employees’ proximal and lagged emotional reactions to customer treatment as well as by studying how emotion regulation strategies could moderate the effects of customer treatment.

Service employees' experiences during customer-employee interactions have been studied from a wide range of aspects. Depending on the specific research scenarios, researchers tend to examine different types of negative customer-related experiences. Some studies focused on a narrow range of specifically defined customer behaviors such as sexual harassment (Yagil, 2008) and verbal abuse (e.g., Grandey et al., 2004; Grandey, Kern, & Frone, 2007); some studies applied broader operationalizations of customer-related events such as customer injustice (e.g., Rupp et al., 2008; Rupp & Spencer, 2006; Skarlicki et al., 2008), customer mistreatment (e.g., Wang et al., *in press*), and dysfunctional customer behaviors (e.g., Harris & Reynolds, 2003). Along with the emotional labor tradition, most of these studies have emphasized the affect-involved customer misbehaviors (e.g., speaking aggressively to employees) but failed to identify other forms. To my knowledge, only one study (Dormann & Zapf, 2004) made effort to categorize customer-related stressors into different forms (i.e., disproportionate expectations, verbal aggression, disliked customers, and ambiguous expectations) and related them to job burnout. Thus, the specification of negative customer-related events warrants more research attention. To address this gap, the current study reviewed various concepts describing customer-related negative experiences and tested distinctions between aggressive and demanding customer mistreatment behaviors.

Another gap in customer-employee interaction literatures is that prior research has largely focused on the “dark side”, in other words, how customer misbehaviors impact employees' reactions and service outcomes. This focus echoes the current trend that “the customer is not always right”. For example, Grandey et al. (2004)

examined the frequency of customer verbal aggression as an antecedent of employees' emotional exhaustion and absence, mediated by employees' stress appraisal. Spencer and Rupp (2009) showed the effect of customer interactional injustice in predicting the difficulty level of emotion regulation of service employees. Further, Skarlicki et al. (2008) examined customer mistreatment as a predictor of customer-oriented sabotage. This focus on the "dark side" may be attributed to the stress-coping research tradition, which suggests that negative events typically evoke strong and rapid physiological, cognitive, and behavioral responses (Taylor, 1991) and thus require greater regulation demands from service providers (Totterdell & Holman, 2003). However, the service interaction can also be pleasant and rewarding for employees when interacting with a customer who is respectful and grateful. Therefore, only focusing on customer mistreatment can be too narrow; it is necessary for researchers to explore the potential beneficial effects of positive events in customer interactions. Therefore, the current study measures the frequency of both negative and positive customer-service events in customer-employee interactions, and explores the beneficial effect of positive events in buffering the negative effect of customer mistreatment.

In terms of the impact of customer treatment on service employees, past research has shown that employees' emotional well-being (e.g., emotion exhaustion and negative mood) is one of the most important outcomes of customer mistreatment. Most previous studies have assessed customer mistreatment and employees' emotional well-being with one-time global assessment at the between-person level. In general, these studies have focused on the negative effects of chronic exposure to

customer mistreatment. For example, empirical studies using cross-sectional designs (e.g., Dorman & Zapf, 2004; Kern & Grandey, 2009; Grandey et al., 2004; Grandey et al., 2007; Rupp, McCance, Spencer, & Sonntag, 2008) have consistently reported a robust positive relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' emotional outcomes (e.g., emotional exhaustion and anger). Further, a meta-analytic review by Bedi and Schat (2007) reported a moderate yet significant relationship between customer aggression and employees' emotional health ( $r = 0.24$ ). Recently, empirical studies began to explore the immediate emotional reactions to customer treatment by using lab simulations. For example, by simulating a call center customer interaction scenario, Rupp and Spencer demonstrated that college students who acted as service providers experienced higher levels of anger immediately following interactions with confederates who served as injustice customers (Rupp & Spencer, 2006; Spencer & Rupp, 2009). Nevertheless, little is known about whether the negative effect of customer mistreatment can prolong and influence employees' mood at a later time (Tschan, Rochat, & Zapf, 2005; Wang, Liu, Liao, & Shi, 2010). Based on the resource perspective (Wang et al. , in press), it is conceivable that unpleasant interactions with customers may result in depletion of employees' emotional resource (i.e., emotional exhaustion) and may further prolong the negative mood state after the customer service activities. To address this research gap, the current study examines the effects of daily customer mistreatment on employees' emotional exhaustion experience on that day as well as the lagged effect of customer mistreatment on employees' negative mood in the next morning. Furthermore, emotional exhaustion is examined as a mediator contributing to the persistence of negative mood.

Despite the existence of the negative effect of customer mistreatment, the manifestation of this effect may vary. Specifically, the impact of customer mistreatment can be exacerbated or attenuated depending on the specific strategies one employs to cope with work events and to regulate emotions. Existing studies on emotional labor have consistently demonstrated that using different emotion regulation strategies in service interaction may lead to various outcomes for employees (e.g., Grandey, 2003). However, little attention has been paid to the potential moderating role of emotion regulation strategies. Understanding the moderating effects of emotion regulation is of practical as well as theoretical interest. Given the prevalence of customer mistreatment, employees must be able to frequently regulate their emotions to reach their performance goals during customer interaction and to reconcile negative experiences after work. In this situation, adopting a maladaptive emotion regulation strategy may not aid in releasing emotional distress, but may rather exacerbate distress (Brown, Westbrook, & Challagalla, 2005). The current study aims to address this gap by examining the moderating role of employees' emotion regulation both at work and after work on a daily basis. Specifically, two types of emotion regulation strategies were examined. One is on-line emotion regulation strategies, which are used by employees during customer service interactions (e.g., surface acting and deep acting). The other is off-line emotion regulations strategies, which are used by employees to gain relief from the negative experience after work (e.g., ruminating and sharing with others).

Methodologically, previous studies examining consequences of customer mistreatment have generally relied on between-person designs, in which customer

mistreatment and employee well-being were assessed by a one-time global assessment. Specifically, participants were usually asked to recall the frequency of customer mistreatment during a previous time period (e.g., Grandey et al., 2004; Grandey et al., 2007; Winstanley & Whittington, 2002), which might introduce potential retrospective biases. Also, the use of a between-person design does not account for the substantial intra-individual variation existing in customer service interaction and its emotional effects (Wang et al., in press). Given that service employees interact with customers on a day-to-day basis, in the current study, a daily diary research design is used to capture the dynamic process in natural temporal context of customer service. In addition, such within-person design also captures the intra-individual variation in one's use of emotion regulation strategies (Judge, Woolf, & Hurst, 2009).

In sum, by using a daily diary design, this study aimed to contribute to the customer service research in three aspects. First, I examined both proximal and lagged effects of employee mood and customer mistreatment in predicting employees' emotional well-being. Based on the theory for mood development and resource perspective, I proposed that daily emotional exhaustion partially mediated the lagged association between daily customer mistreatment and employees' mood in the next morning. Second, this study specified the effects of two different forms of customer mistreatment and customer positive treatment toward employees. A careful classification of the forms of customer treatment provides more fine-grained understanding about customer-employee interactions. Third, employees' emotion regulation strategies were examined as moderators of the negative effects of customer

mistreatment. Specifically, on-line emotion regulation strategies were examined as moderators of the effect of daily customer mistreatment on daily emotional exhaustion. Off-line emotion regulation strategies were examined as moderators of the lagged effect of customer mistreatment on negative mood in the next morning. Overall, based on a comprehensive review of multiple theoretical perspectives, the current study examined the dynamic process in which service employees responded to their customers at work and regulated their emotions throughout the work days.

Figure 1 depicts the theoretical framework.

#### Conceptualization of Customer Mistreatment

Customer misbehavior is enhanced by the basic and widespread philosophy of service as pleasing and indulging customers, reflected in the notion that “customer is always right.” This embedded notion communicates the unequal power in the customer-employee transaction, giving a raise to the vulnerability of employees as the target of mistreatment (Bishop, Korczynski, & Cohen, 2005; Grandey et al., 2004; Yagil, 2008). In the current study, customer mistreatment refers to the low-quality interpersonal treatment that employees receive from customers (Bies, 2001). To clearly define this construct, the following paragraphs described several related constructs in marketing and organizational behavior literatures.

#### *Consuming Behavior Perspective: Dysfunctional Customer Behaviors*

Marketing researchers have long been paying attention to customer misbehaviors. A number of labels have been used in marketing literatures referring to customer misbehaviors in the exchange setting (Fullerton & Punj, 1993; Harris &

Reynolds, 2003), such as deviant customer behavior (Reynolds & Harris, 2006), aberrant customer behavior (Fullerton & Punj, 1993), dysfunctional customer behavior (Harris & Reynolds, 2003), unethical customer behaviors (van Kenhove, de Wulf, & Steenhaut, 2003), and jaycustomers (Lovelock, 1994). These highly overlapped terms broadly refer to deliberate or unintentional customer behaviors which violate the generally accepted norms of conduct in such situations and disrupt otherwise functional service encounters.

Fullerton and Punj (2004) organized customer misbehaviors into five broad categories depending on the targets of misbehaviors, including customer misbehaviors directed against an organization's employees, merchandise, other customers, financial assets, and the destruction of physical and electronic property. The first category is most relevant to the concept of customer mistreatment examined in the current study. Specifically, misbehaving customers can be thieves, rule breakers, deadbeats, or vandals, but customer mistreatment particularly focuses on the quality of interpersonal treatment that service employees receive from customers. Therefore, customer mistreatment is expected to be the most predictive customer misbehaviors of the well-being of frontline service providers (McGrath & Goulding, 1996; Reynolds & Harris, 2006).

#### *Workplace Aggression Perspective: Customer Aggression*

In organizational behavior literatures, customer mistreatment is mainly examined from the perspective of the targets, i.e., service employees. As a major type of customer mistreatment, customer aggression is an extension of workplace aggression with intra-organizational members receiving outsider-initiated aggression

(Aquino, 2000; Glomb, 2002). It is defined as a type of behavior initiated by a customer in a service context that is intended to cause discomfort or harm to the service provider (Bedi & Schat, 2007). Specifically, it encompasses a wide range of behaviors that could cause an employee either psychological or physical harm, including acts of psychological aggression or violence. It also does not specify the type of service context, and therefore covers both face-to-face and indirect encounters such as phone or email interactions.

Customer aggression is the most commonly examined operationalization of customer mistreatment in service research literatures. It includes a wide range of behaviors from customer incivility with low intensity to high-intensity customer physical violence. For example, Grandey et al. (2004) has focused on customer verbal aggression in particular. They have defined customer verbal aggression as verbal communications of anger that violate social norms, which can be viewed as a more mundane daily hassle than violence. Examples of customer verbal aggression include service providers being yelled at, threatened, or treated rudely by customers. As indicated by another study conducted by Grandey and her colleagues, verbal aggression behaviors accounted for a large proportion of customer-initiated anger-inducing interpersonal events over two-week period (Grandey, Tam, & Brauburger, 2002), and it predicted employees' work stress and emotional exhaustion above and beyond verbal abuse from insiders (e.g., coworkers and supervisors; Grandey et al., 2004; Grandey et al., 2007).

Recently, customer incivility has been examined as a social stressor to service employees (Sliter, Jex, Wolford, & McInerney, 2010; van Jaarsveld, Walker, &

Skarlicki, 2010). It is defined as low-intensity deviant behavior perpetrated by someone in a customer or client role, with ambiguous intent to harm an employee, and in violation of social norms of mutual respect and courtesy (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Kern & Grandey, 2009; Sliter et al., 2010). Different from customer verbal aggression, customer incivility is more covert, less intense, and less deliberate. Some examples may include “paying little attention to a service provider’s statement” or “being condescending to a service provider.” Another specific example of customer aggression that has attracted more researchers’ attention is customer/client sexual harassment (Gettman & Gelfand, 2007). As suggested by Hughes and Tadic (1998), customer sexual harassment is becoming a significant problem given the high proportion of female employees in service industry. Specific behaviors may range from inappropriate sexual advances like leering and flirting to propositions for sex and coercive sexual activity (Yagil, 2008). The detrimental effect of customer sexual harassment on employees’ well-being and performance could be stronger than sexual harassment from coworkers because of the unequal power in customer-employee transactions.

#### *Organizational (In)justice Perspective: Customer Interpersonal Injustice*

The issue of customer interpersonal injustice is raised from the perspective of organizational justice. Interpersonal justice is one important dimension of organizational justice, referring to the perception about how fairly employees are treated by others at work (Colquitt, 2001). Applying this construct to the setting of customer-employee interaction, customers could be a potential source of (in)justice toward service providers and customer-initiated (in)justice could predict service

related outcomes when customers treat employees in a disrespectful or demeaning way (Rupp & Spencer, 2006). Theoretically, customer interpersonal injustice is employees' perception of violations of justice by customers. It involves moral and social judgment (Skarlicki et al., 2008) which could be more subjective than above mentioned verbal aggression or physical violence. Nonetheless, the items researchers have used to measure customer interpersonal injustice are similar to the items measuring customer incivility or verbal aggression.

#### *Two Forms of Customer Mistreatment: Aggressive and Demanding Mistreatment*

Customer mistreatment examined in this study is featured with following characteristics. First, the source and the target of mistreatment are clearly defined to be customers and service providers respectively. It does not include misbehaviors such as stealing goods from a store or jumping the queue. Rather, customers as outsiders initiate low-quality interaction with service employees by exhibiting anti-norm behaviors or violation of conventional social rules. Second, customer mistreatment is viewed as daily interpersonal hassles that are usually in verbal or attitudinal form and less intense than physical violence. Although lack of high intensity, a daily hassle is an irritating, frustrating, or distressing occurrence experienced on a day-to-day basis that is harmful and threatening to a person's well-being (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Sliter et al., 2010). Prior research has supported that daily hassles are more predictive of negative health outcomes, job performance, and absenteeism than less frequent but more serious life stressors (Sliter et al., 2010). Customer mistreatment fit well under this term because dealing with disrespectful people or demanding people can be a daily occurrence at work especially in the

service industry. By conceptualizing customer mistreatment as daily hassles, it is emphasized that customer mistreatment is commonly observed in customer-employee transactions. Taking verbal abuse as an example, Ringstad (2005) reported that around 40% of the social workers participating in the study had been the target of verbal abuse from clients in the past year. Further, Grandey et al. (2007) reported that customer verbal abuse was more frequent than coworker or supervisor verbal abuse. Third, customer mistreatment can be either intentional or unintentional in term of harming the interests of employees. It is possible that customer mistreatment is due to their dissatisfaction of the service they receive or service environment, and it is also possible that customers may mistreat employees because of their personal attributes such as high self-concern, high trait anger, high neuroticism, or perfectionism (Bedi & Schat, 2007).

In previous studies on customer mistreatment (Skarlicki et al., 2008; Wang et al., in press), customer mistreatment has been defined and measured as an overall unidimensional construct encompassing a set of different behaviors. However, a careful examination of these items may reveal that these behaviors may differ in nature. Dormann and Zapf (2004) is one of few empirical studies that examined various forms of stressful customer-employee interactions from work stress and burnout perspective. Specifically, they integrated research approaches on social conflicts, unfair treatment, and antisocial behaviors at work, and classified customer-related social stressors for service employees into four forms: disproportionate customer expectations, customer verbal aggression, disliked customers, and ambiguous customer expectations. Although all four forms could be social stressors

for service employees, the latter two do not fit into the concept of customer mistreatment. The dimension of disliked customers reflects aversions employees have about certain customers. It is measured by items such as “one has to work together with customers who have no sense of humor.” The dimension of ambiguous customer expectations measures customer expectations that are unclear, with sample items such as “it is not clear what customers request from us.” These two forms of customer-related stressors are not viewed as customer mistreatment for two reasons. First, they do not necessarily involve customers’ anti-norm behaviors in social interactions. Second, different from disproportionate customer expectations and customer verbal aggression which focus on the behaviors of customers or employees’ perceived customer behaviors, the latter two forms of customer-related social stressors, to a larger extent, reflect employees’ subjective evaluation of customers. They are not necessarily triggered by concrete customer behaviors. Therefore, the current study only includes demanding and aggression behaviors as customer-initiated mistreatment.

As such, in the current study, customer mistreatment is classified into two categories depending on the nature of customer mistreatment. Echoing the research on customer verbal aggression and interpersonal injustice, the first category is aggressive mistreatment (Grandey et al., 2007; Skarlicki et al., 2008). This type of mistreatment is observed when a customer yell at a service provider, use condescending language, or get angry at a service provider over minor matters. The second category is demanding mistreatment or mistreatment. For instance, Skarlicki et al.’s (2008) scale for customer injustice includes items such as “made demands that you [service employee] could not deliver.”

These two forms of customer mistreatment can further be distinguished conceptually in two ways. First, aggressive mistreatment and demanding mistreatment focus on different aspects of customer-employee interactions. To be specific, aggressive mistreatment emphasizes the inappropriate manner of interaction or treatment that delivered by a customer, while demanding mistreatment emphasizes the inappropriate content of transaction that requested by a customer which is expected to be more task- or service-related than aggressive mistreatment. Second, these two forms of mistreatment could influence service employees in different mechanisms. Aggressive mistreatment, which involves more negative affective expression, is likely to influence service employees' emotions and impact their affective reactions to a larger degree than demanding mistreatment. Demanding mistreatment on the other hand, involves less emotion communication, but it may be more influential on employees' resource, because demanding customers are likely to raise the level of challenge in customer-employee transactions. It is important to note that there is no clear cut between aggressive and demanding customer mistreatment in terms of the affective versus resource-based mechanisms. Both forms of mistreatment may directly or indirectly affect service employees' affective reactions and resource availability, but to different extent.

### Employees' Reactions to Customer Treatment

#### *Affect-based Mechanisms of Customer Treatment*

Contemporary emotion theories view emotions as arising from the context of a person-situation transaction that compels attention and has a particular meaning to an individual (Gross, 2008). Specifically, applying the cognitive appraisal model to

understanding emotion (Lazarus, 1991), the emotion elicitation process begins with an event which is initially evaluated for relevance to well-being and goal attainment in simple positive or negative terms, namely primary appraisal. Goal relevance is essential to the emotional reactions to events such that when an event is perceived as highly related to one's focal goal, this initial evaluation will lead to a high intensity of emotional reaction with a clear direction of emotional valence. Further, a secondary appraisal is activated in which the meaning of the event is interpreted. The secondary level of appraisal focuses on certainty, consequences, attributions, and coping potential. It results in the experience of discrete emotions such as fear, anger, or joy (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996).

In addition to the cognitive mechanism, emotions can also be immediately changed in an even more spontaneous way, usually through the mechanism of emotional contagion. According to Dallimore, Sparks, and Butcher's (2007) model of emotional contagion process, aggressive customers may send emotional information like anger and complain to service providers and change service providers' emotional states to be convergent with the customer's anger. This contagion process is proposed to unfold through two stages: first, employees mimic customers through congruent facial displays; second, employees' affective state changes corresponding to their afferent feedback. Although this emotional contagion process can occur in both directions between customers and employees theoretically, given the unequal power status in the customer-employee transaction, customers are more likely to be the initiator of the process. This emotional contagion mechanism of the affective

influences of customer aggression has been supported in prior studies (Dallimore et al., 2007).

As another important member in the affect family, moods can be distinguished from emotions in two aspects (Brief & Weiss, 2002; Parkinson, Totterdell, Briner, & Reynolds, 1996). One distinguishing feature is duration, such that mood is the pervasive and sustained “emotional climate” and emotions are fluctuating changes in “emotional weather” (American Psychiatric Association, 1994, p. 763). A second distinguishing feature is that emotions typically have specific objects and give rise to behavioral response tendencies relevant to these objects, while moods are more diffuse and give rise to broad action tendencies.

As pointed out by Weiss and Cropanzano (1996), theoretical discussions of the antecedents of mood have been far less frequent than similar discussions about the antecedents of emotions. Nonetheless, Morris (1989) has developed a theory for mood development and proposed three mechanisms through which moods can result from emotions. First, the offset of emotional reactions leads to moods as the affective intensity becomes lower. According to the cognitive appraisal model, concrete emotions are elicited immediately by goal-relevant events. Along with time, one’s emotional arousal becomes weaker and the reason of the emotional reaction is blurred. With the loss of specificity of emotional feeling, mood in positive or negative terms follows. Second, moods can result from the recollection of emotional events. This mechanism involves cognitive processes of recall and consequent reappraisal of events. For example, repeatedly thinking about threatening events in a negative frame will induce negative mood. Third, inhibition of emotional expressions can lead to a

residual mood later on. In other words, mood is a type of delayed emotional expression. This mechanism is particularly relevant to emotional labor because emotional display rules may increase the expectation to control emotional displays by suppressing negative emotions. As such, the emotional suppression may delay the expression of the negative emotion, resulting in the development of negative mood.

Applying the theories of emotion elicitation and mood development to the research on customer-employee interaction may help us understand the link between customer treatment and employees' emotional well-being. According to Lazarus's (1991) cognitive appraisal model of emotion, how one is treated by customers is a salient situational cue for customer service employees, which is highly relevant to both performance goal and one's psychological well-being. Therefore, customer interaction likely triggers intense emotional responses. For example, Rupp and Spencer (2006) have shown that unfair customer treatment induces higher levels of anger experienced by service employees and in turn leads to higher levels of emotional labor demands. Further, Zapata-Phelan, Colquitt, Scott, and Livingston (2009) showed that perceptions of unfair treatment lead to low task performance via the activation of negative emotions. In addition, Dallimore et al. (2007) found that service providers reported stronger negative affective states after exposure to an angry complaint from a customer than prior to exposure. Furthermore, the negative emotional responses to customer mistreatment may transfer to negative mood over time. Specifically, the first mechanism of Morris's (1989) theory suggests that mood is likely to be directly developed from the offset of emotional reactions. Also, for service employees, because of the emotional display rules set by their organizations,

they may have to control and suppress immediate negative emotional reaction toward customers during service interaction. The third mechanism proposed by Morris, therefore, is particularly relevant to understand the link among customer-service events and moods. In addition, according to Morris's second mechanism, the way in which employees cope with customer mistreatment and regulate their emotions may influence the cognitive recollection and accessibility of affective events, thus affecting the development of employees' negative mood.

#### *Resource-based Mechanism of Customer Treatment*

Recently, the resource-based mechanism has been applied to conceptualizing customer service interaction as a process during which employees may lose or gain valued resources (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). According to Hobfoll (2002), resource can be broadly defined as the total capability that an individual has to fulfill his or her centrally valued needs. Hobfoll's (1989) conservation of resources theory suggests that people strive to obtain, retain, protect, and foster valued resources and minimize any threats of resource loss. Brotheridge and Lee (2002) used this theory to explain the dynamic link between emotional labor and burnout process. They found that service workers often attempted to cope with emotional display demands in a manner that would conserve their resources by performing either surface acting or deep acting. Additionally, a study conducted by Trougakos, Beal, Green, and Weiss (2008) has shown that a relaxing break between tasks results in better emotional display in the following work session because of the refreshment of the emotional resources.

The resource perspective emphasizes the importance of employees' available emotional resources as well as the potential of emotional depletion that employees

face in customer service interaction. According to the conservation of resource theory, two levels of resource loss can be activated when people face threatening or demanding situation (Wang et al., in press). First, the situation itself may lead to loss of object, energy, personal, or social resources (i.e., primary resource loss). A resource protection mechanism may lead people to invest resources they have to counter or compensate for the primary resource loss. To the extent that this protection mechanism depletes individual's resources (i.e., secondary resource loss), individuals tend to adopt less efficient or maladaptive loss-control strategies, resulting in the emergence of a loss spiral that manifests increasingly more rapid depletion of the resources needed to regulate one's emotions and behaviors (Bacharach & Bamberger, 2007; Hobfoll, 2002). Excessive loss of resource without regaining new resources will further result in an extreme imbalance thus lead to fatigue and emotional exhaustion.

In the customer service interaction, service employees are presented with the job demands imposed by the organization regarding treating customers professionally, friendly, and patiently, which may lead to primary resource loss (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). In addition, customer mistreatment imposes more demands on employees' resources to regulate their behaviors and emotions to follow organizational rules (Wang et al., in press). As such, employees' effort in regulating their emotional display may lead to secondary resource loss. On the other hand, by collaborating with customers, solving their problems, and fulfilling their service needs, service employees may have the potential to gain and accumulate several important resources through positive customer-service events. For example, cooperation and co-

production with customers may foster feelings of social companionship and relatedness (Dormman & Zapf, 2004). Solving customer's problems may lead to a sense of competence and accomplishment. Further, grateful customers may lead to feelings of self-esteem.

### Emotion Regulation of Service Employees

Emotion is not free-floating but is regulated to keep one's emotional experiences and expressions in check and to meet one's own and societies' demands. The concept of emotion regulation is developed to describe a heterogeneous set of processes through which people attempt to influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how these emotions are experienced or expressed (Gross, 1998).

#### *Functions of Emotion Regulation*

Theoretical foundation of emotion regulation can be drawn from stress and coping literature (Lazarus, 1966). According to Lazarus's cognitive appraisal model, individuals go through two appraisals to interpret a potentially stressful situation: a relevance appraisal and a coping potential appraisal. The coping response can be problem-focused (i.e., aimed at fixing the problem) or emotion-focused (i.e., aimed at lessening negative emotion experiences). Emotion-focused coping, or the way in which individuals attempt to manage their emotions in stressful situations, is one important goal of emotion regulation. By modifying or maintaining their affective states, individuals expect to be at least temporally distracted from unpleasant feelings and maximize their immediate pleasure.

In addition to the hedonic reason of emotion regulation, emotion regulation can be driven by functional reason (e.g., pursue task performance) which is uniquely essential for service employees to satisfy display goals (Augustine & Hemenover, 2009; Tamir, 2009). Tamir (2005) has shown that when driven by performance goals, people can be motivated to experience different concrete emotions even negative emotions, which are consistent with task demands. In emotional labor literature, Diefendorff and Gosserand (2003) applied control theory to explain emotional regulation of service employees. In general, individuals compare their current emotional state to the emotional display rules of their organizations; if a sufficient discrepancy is detected, a regulatory effort is engaged. The successful regulation of emotions will impact their service performance, which in turn will elicit positive outcomes from customers such as high customer satisfaction and perceived service quality.

For service employees, they may engage in emotion regulation for both reasons discussed above. Specifically, during their interaction with customers at work, service performance may be their primary goal. Employees have to modify their expressions or feelings to maintain a positive emotion toward their customers. This is critical for them to accomplish their service tasks without violating organization's display rule and to achieve their performance goals. When outside of the customer service activities (e.g., after work), they are motivated to regulate their emotions to release negative emotions experienced at work in order to achieve affective pleasure and psychological well-being.

### *Theoretical Perspectives for Emotion Regulation*

*Resource allocation in emotion regulation.* Emotion regulation has been conceptualized as a type of self-regulation processes which compete for resources with other cognitive or behavioral processes (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). According to the resource perspective, self-regulation process involves effortful attempts to control and alter naturally occurring behaviors or mental states; regulatory resources may be depleted through the regulatory activities and need recovery in order to successfully accomplish subsequent tasks (Beal, Weiss, Barros, & MacDermid, 2005). As described in the earlier section of resource-based mechanism of customer treatment, emotion regulation for service employees can be viewed as contributing to the secondary resource loss beyond the primary resource loss due to high levels of customer demands.

Kanfer and Ackerman (1989) have proposed a motivational process model to explain the association between resources and performance. Their model distinguishes among three types of possible activities: on-task activities, off-task activities, and self-regulatory activities. During the process of resource allocation, self-regulation may work in two ways. First, self-regulation is an essential mechanism for the allocation policy toward a task, impacting the proportion of resource capacity that is engaged in the focal task. For example, interacting with a difficult customer will encourage service employees allocating more resources from their resource pool. Second, self-regulation itself need resources and may reduce the amount of resources assigned to focal tasks. This has been supported by Muraven and Baumeister's (2000) summary of a wide range of studies and their conclusion that self-control might

consume a pool of limited resource thus decrease the subsequent task performance. In addition, Trougakos et al.'s (2008) study supported the resource perspective of emotion regulation, such that cheerleaders who engaged in respite activities (i.e., joyful activities that are preferred by participants and help to recover from resource drain) during breaks were more likely to display positive affects in following performance episodes compared to cheerleaders who engaged in chore activities (i.e., task-related activities that continue to consume resources) during breaks.

*Control theory in emotion regulation.* Diefendorff and Gosserand (2003) applied control theory in explaining emotional regulation of customer service employees. According to this theory, service employees tend to compare their perceived emotional experience to organization's display rule as a standard and regulate their emotions by either modifying their facial displays or modifying their inner appraisals once a discrepancy is detected. Nevertheless, it is possible that employees choose to not to regulate their emotions to fulfill their performance goals set by their organizations; instead, they pursue an alternative goal which is usually defined by themselves, such as the personal authenticity goal. Specifically, to meet the personal authenticity goal, one is expected to maintain a desired self-concept by being genuine to others or being honest to own feelings and displaying naturally felt emotions. When adopting different goals, service employees may respond differently to the discrepancy between their feelings and organizational display rules. According to control theory, emotional regulation of service employees may be stressful because organization's performance goal could be different from employees' personal goal on

emotional expression, especially when a service employee is involved in an unpleasant service situation.

*Social interaction model.* Côté (2005) has proposed a social interaction model to explain emotional regulation in interpersonal interaction. Côté's model suggests that emotions can be communicated between interaction partners (i.e., emotion senders and receivers). According to this model, emotion senders regulate their public displays of emotions to their interaction partners. Partners as emotion receivers then interpret the emotions and react favorably or unfavorably depending on their appraisal of the senders' motivation and intention. Emotion senders may feel stressful if the reactions from receivers are unfavorable. Applying this model to customer interaction scenario, service employees' emotion regulation may be stressful because their inauthentic expressions toward customers induce unfavorable reactions. Specifically, when an employee fakes positive emotion or acts to be sincere toward his/her customers, customers are able to detect the "bad faith" delivered along with their interaction which will trigger a less friendly response.

#### *Strategies of Emotion Regulation*

Multiple models or taxonomies have been proposed for categorizing emotion regulation strategies (e.g., Gross, 1998; Larson, 2000; Parkinson & Totterdell, 1999). Parkinson and Totterdell (1999) used in-depth interview and developed taxonomy to organize different emotional regulation strategies along with two dimensions: behavioral versus cognitive strategies and engagement versus diversion. Their study has located commonly used strategies into this taxonomy. Specifically, behavioral engagement strategies involve active confrontation, including acting happy, venting,

expressive writing, and sharing feelings. Behavioral diversion strategies involve relaxation-oriented or mastery-oriented activities such as taking breaks and exercises. Cognitive engagement strategies involve thinking and processing affective experiences such as rumination and reappraisal. Cognitive diversion strategies involve cognitive distraction such as fantasy and sleep.

In the customer service literature, emotional labor is defined as the process of regulating emotional expression and/or feelings of service employees for organizational goals (Grandey, 2000). Two main strategies have been discussed in previous research: surface acting and deep acting (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003; Hochschild, 1983). Surface acting refers to employees' emotion regulation strategy focusing on changing external expressions, such as suppressing their felt emotions but faking a desired mood. In other words, using this strategy, service employees put on a "mask" in order to deal with customers in a desired way, regardless of their true feelings (Grandey, 2003). In contrast, deep acting refers to the emotion regulation strategy focusing on the modification of internal feelings, through which service employees genuinely feel the emotions that they are required to display. Using deep acting strategy, employees could modify their underlying emotion through self-talk, attention refocus, or by changing their cognitive appraisal of the situation (Grandey, 2000). Prior findings have consistently shown a positive relationship between surface acting and employee burnout (e.g., Goldberg & Grandey, 2007), but researchers usually fail to observe significant associations between deep acting and employee outcomes.

Although surface acting and deep acting are most commonly examined constructs in customer interaction scenario, Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) argued that only focusing on these two types of acting ignores the possibility that employees can spontaneously experience and display appropriate emotions. Service employees may express their naturally felt positive emotions, instead of “acting”. Dieffendorff, Croyle, and Gosserand (2005) tested and supported the structure of emotional labor with three dimensions (i.e., deep acting, surface acting, and genuine emotion) using confirmatory factor analysis. They suggested that the expression of genuine emotions is a distinct strategy for displaying emotions at work and should be included in research on emotional labor.

Furthermore, emotion regulation strategies have been conceptualized in a more specific manner. In a recent work, Diefendorff and Greguras (2009) has applied Ekman and Friesen's (1975) taxonomy of expression management strategies (i.e., express, qualify, amplify, deamplify, neutralize, and mask) to emotional labor research. More specifically, expressing is the effortless strategy involving showing ones' naturally felt emotions without modification. Qualifying represents the expression management in that people express felt emotions but add a smile to them as an explanation about one's intentions or thoughts regarding what one is feeling. Amplifying and deamplifying represent moderate forms of expression management in that individuals modify the intensity of their expression. Finally, neutralizing and masking are the strongest forms of expression management. Neutralizing is the extreme form of deamplifying without any emotion shown at all. Masking, on the other hand, involves hiding felt emotion while expressing an unfelt emotion at the

same time. This operationalization of specific emotion regulation strategies can better capture the nature of difference in the amount of effort involved in emotion regulation. Therefore, they are more appropriate than traditionally defined surface and deep acting in measuring emotion regulation in a short period.

### *A Two-stage Model of Emotion Regulation of Service Employees*

Emotion regulation of service employees may occur in different forms at different time points through a day. In the current study, I propose a two-stage model of emotion regulation and categorize service employees' emotion regulation into on-line and off-line regulations. On-line emotion regulation details the strategies used during customer interaction, and off-line emotion regulation strategies are the procedures that are utilized by employees after customer service activities. First, the two types of emotion regulations are categorized depending on different stages when the service-related emotional regulation occurs. Reynolds and Harris (2006) proposed similar stage-based taxonomy for how frontline employees manage interactions with poorly behaved customers by conducting in depth interviews. Based on their results, employees' tactics could be grouped into pre-incident tactics such as mental preparation for work and consuming drugs, tactics during the incident such as ignoring difficult customers and using emotional labor, and post-incident tactics such as individual isolation and physical release of emotion.

Second, this categorization corresponds well to the two functions of emotion regulation. To be concrete, on-line emotion regulation strategies are used to reach the performance goal. Specific emotion regulation strategies (i.e., mask, amplify, deamplify, neutralize, qualify, reappraise, and express) have been tested in the current

study given that they respectively represent on-line emotion regulation strategies that require the most and the least amount of regulatory effort. During customer interaction when performance goal is activated, employees usually make effort to regulate their emotional displays once they detect a discrepancy between their feelings and organizations' display rules by either modifying their external expressions or modifying their internal feelings through specific regulation strategies. Off-line emotion regulation strategies are used for the personal pleasure goal with the expectation of reducing negative feelings. They likely influence the recollection and cognitive accessibility of negative experiences. Specifically, rumination and social sharing have been tested as off-line emotion regulation strategies in the current study. Based on Parkinson and Totterdell's (1999) taxonomy, rumination is a cognitive engagement strategy that targets at self, whereas social sharing is a behavioral engagement strategy that involves an external verbal expression.

#### Summary: Theoretical Perspectives

In prior sections, three research topics have been reviewed: different forms of customer mistreatment, mechanisms for employees' reactions to customer treatment, and employees' emotion regulation. Although a variety of theoretical models have been applied to different research topics respectively, these theoretical models could be categorized into two general perspectives: affect-based perspective and resource-based perspective. Although these two perspectives may work simultaneously in many situations, they involve different underlying mechanisms, associate with different physiological functions, and could be impacted by different intervening factors or higher level factors. Specifically, affect-based mechanism may play a more

important role when one's emotional arousal is high or for people who are easy to be emotionally aroused (e.g., people with high levels of trait anger or neuroticism).

Resource-based mechanism may play a more important role when one has less energy (e.g., under high task load or after engaging in exhausting activities) or for people who have a smaller resource pool in general (e.g., people with little task-related experiences). Applying the two-perspective categorization to the current research topics, Table 1 lays out multiple theoretical models based on the underlying mechanism each of them emphasizes.

First, for customer mistreatment, aggressive mistreatment involves higher affective arousal and may elicit more intense affective reactions from service employees (e.g., Grandey et al., 2004; Rupp & Spencer, 2006), whereas demanding mistreatment requires higher resource investment from service employees but less emotional activation given its focus on service quality. Given the difference, aggressive customer mistreatment might be a more salient social stressor for employees' with higher levels of emotional arousal, and employees lack of resources may view demanding customers to be more stressful. Second, regarding service employees' reactions to customer treatment, affect-based perspective is reflected in the cognitive appraisal model for emotion elicitation (Lazarus, 1991), emotional contagion model (Dallimore et al., 2007), and theory for mood development (Morris, 1989), whereas resource-based perspective is reflected in the conservation of resource model (Hobfoll, 1998, 2002) and the theoretical framework for primary and secondary resource loss (Wang et al., in press). Third, service employees' emotion regulation process has been explained by resource allocation model in self-regulation

(Beal et al., 2005; Kanfer & Ackerman, 1989), control theory (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003), and social interaction model (Côté, 2005). Among them, social interaction model mainly focuses on individuals' emotional displays during social interaction which may convey individuals' intention and sincerity toward interaction partners. Thus, social interaction model is more affect-based given its emphasis on the role of emotional expressions. Resource allocation model from the self-regulation literature directly draws from the conservation of resource model (Hobfoll, 1998; Muvaren & Baumeister, 1998) and emphasizes the resource-consuming nature of regulation process, thus is resource-based. Dieffendorff and Gosserand's (2003) application of control theory (Vancouver, 2000) potentially involves both affect-based and resource-bases processes. On the one hand, their theoretical model aims to answer when and how individuals modify their facial expressions and/or inner feelings. On the other hand, the fulfillment of performance goal and/or personal authenticity goal is related to the potential gain/loss of resources.

The differentiation between affective-based and resource-based perspectives may help organize and integrate various theoretical models in this research area. These two theoretical perspectives are expected to work in a complementary way in understanding the whole process of employees' reactions to customer interaction and their emotion regulation. They are both applied to developing the hypotheses of the current study.

## Hypotheses Development

### *Emotional Exhaustion as a Proximal Outcome*

The current study examined a within-subject model predicting service employees' daily emotional exhaustion as a proximal outcome. In many studies, emotional exhaustion has been conceptualized as a chronic and stable construct usually measured in cross-sectional research design (e.g., Gaines & Jermier, 1983; Lewig & Dollard, 2003). Barling and MacIntyre's study (1993) is among the first that investigated the effects of daily work role stressors on mood and emotional exhaustion. Since then, researchers have paid more attention on the dynamic within-person aspect of emotional exhaustion (e.g., Judge et al., 2009; Teuchmann, Totterdell, & Parker, 1999; Totterdell & Holman, 2003).

During a work day, employees' daily emotional exhaustion may be influenced by inputs from two sources: their own psychological states and the treatment they receive from customers. As an undesired state, negative mood is detrimental to one's psychological well-being because negative mood itself requires effort from people to cope and regulate (Forgas & George, 2001). Following the resource perspective, employees' negative mood has been viewed as imposing emotional demands on employees' resources and preventing employees from regaining resources via efficient interactions with the customer (e.g., Grandey, 2000; Totterdell & Holman, 2003). For example, Judge et al. (2009) found that employees' daily negative mood was positively associated with the daily emotional exhaustion they experienced; Teuchmann et al. (1999) also reported the effect of negative mood in mediating job stressor-emotional exhaustion association. Therefore, it is possible that when

employees experience higher levels of negative mood on a particular day, they are more likely to perceive the risk of emotional depletion.

*Hypothesis 1:* Employees' negative mood in day  $t$ 's morning is positively related to their emotional exhaustion at the end of work on day  $t$ .

In addition to employees' own psychological states, customers as the primary interaction partners also impact employees' emotional exhaustion depending on the way how customers treat employees. The two forms of customer mistreatment, aggressive mistreatment and demanding mistreatment, can be viewed as an interpersonal stressor to service employees (Dormann & Zapf, 2004) and are expected to lead to emotional exhaustion on a daily basis. First, from the perspective of cognitive appraisal of emotions (i.e., the affective perspective), customer mistreatment can induce stressful feelings. Aggressive mistreatment may immediately induce employees' frustration which could be cumulated throughout a day. The link between aggressive customer mistreatment and emotional exhaustion has been demonstrated in many studies at the between-person level. For instance, prior research has found that the frequency of customer aggression positively relates to emotional exhaustion via stress appraisal of customer aggression (Grandey et al., 2004; Grandey et al., 2007). On the other hand, interacting with demanding customers who request exorbitant service may raise employees' stress level that is driven by increased challenge in service delivery.

Further, from the resource-based perspective, customer mistreatment may break the balance between resource loss and resource gain in service encounter. For both forms of customer mistreatment, because of the customer's violation of service

interaction norm, more demands are imposed on employees' resources to regulate their behaviors to follow organizational customer service rules. Employees must respond with increased emotional regulation effort, draining their emotional resources (Dormann & Zapf, 2004). Further, due to the unpleasant interaction, employees are less likely to gain a sense of accomplishment or competency which makes it difficult to regain emotional resources (Wang et al., in press). Taking as a whole, I expect a positive relationship between customer mistreatment and emotional exhaustion at the within-person level, such that on days employees experience more aggressive or demanding customer mistreatment, they are more likely to feel emotional exhaustion on that day.

*Hypothesis 2:* (a) Daily aggressive mistreatment and (b) demanding mistreatment received from customers are positively related to employees' emotional exhaustion at the end of the workday.

#### *Negative Mood in the Following Morning as a Lagged Outcome*

The impact of customer mistreatment may prolong to influence employees' mood in the next day. Customer mistreatment can induce negative emotions such as anger, frustration, and anxiety (e.g., Dallimore et al., 2007; Rupp & Spencer, 2006; Zapata-Phelan et al., 2009). Specifically, according to the cognitive appraisal model of emotion (Lazarus, 1991), being mistreated is a situational cue for service employees which is highly relevant and threatening to their performance goal. Following such appraisal, an arousal is likely to be triggered accompanied by negative emotions. Following Morris's theory for mood development (1989), mood can be viewed as the residual of emotion after being dissolved and reorganized. On

days that employees are frequently mistreated by their customers, the negative emotions such as anger and frustration may be followed by a negative mood with lower intensity than the immediate emotional reactions and with a vague reason of the feeling (i.e., the first mechanism of Morris's theory for mood development). Also, because of the possible inhibition of negative emotions toward customers, negative mood may be induced as a delayed emotional expression (i.e., the third mechanism of Morris's theory for mood development). Therefore, on days when employees experience more customer mistreatment, they are likely to report a higher level of negative mood in the next morning. This lagged effect is expected to be above and beyond the simple continuity of day-to-day negative mood.

*Hypothesis 3:* (a) Daily aggressive mistreatment and (b) demanding mistreatment received from customers (day  $t$ ) are positively related to employees' negative mood in the next morning (day  $t+1$ ) above and beyond day  $t$ 's morning negative mood.

Emotional exhaustion may contribute to the continuance of negative affective reactions and manifest a potential mechanism that mediates the association between customer mistreatment and negative mood in the next morning. Being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work, an employee may experience both physical fatigue and a sense of feeling psychologically and emotionally drained (Maslach, 1982). Accordingly, on days that employees are emotionally exhausted, they are more likely to feel frustrated by their job and hold a depressed view on the future of their job, which in turn prevents employees from recovery of lost energy. Few empirical studies have explicitly tested emotional exhaustion as a predictor of

subsequent negative mood, but emotional exhaustion has been consistently found to be associated with negative self-attitude (Kahill, 1998; Thompson, Kirk, & Brown, 2005) and depression and irritability (Kahill, 1998). Also, being emotionally exhausted prevents employees from engaging in further mastery activities which helps to restore energy and positive feelings (Sonnenstag, Binnewies, & Mojza, 2008). For example, Trougakos et al.'s (2008) study implied that cheerleaders who experienced resource depletion due to their inhibition of preferred behaviors tended to feel more negative emotions.

*Hypothesis 4:* Employees' emotional exhaustion at the end of work is positively related to their negative mood in the next morning.

Furthermore, as a proximal outcome of service employees' negative affective status and the quality of treatment received from customers, emotional exhaustion is likely to help to link day  $t$ 's negative mood and customer mistreatment to day  $t+1$ 's negative mood. First, emotional exhaustion is hypothesized to partially mediate the recursive link among day-to-day negative mood of service employees. In other words, negative mood could be passed on to the following work day via felt exhaustion, and it could also simply continue from one day to another. Specifically, negative mood may lead to ones' feeling of resource depletion due to its emotional demands, and the feeling of emotional exhaustion may in turn contribute to the maintenance of ones' negative mood to longer time. In addition to the mood association from day to day, the effect of customer mistreatment is also likely to be mediated by employees' emotional exhaustion. Daily unpleasant experiences of being mistreated by customers may deplete one's resource and result in emotional exhaustion at the end of work,

which prevents individuals from gaining resources and may lead to negative feelings on the next day. Thus, the lagged effects of service employees' negative mood and customer mistreatment experiences are expected to be mediated by the proximal outcome – daily emotional exhaustion.

*Hypothesis 5:* Employees' daily emotional exhaustion (day  $t$ ) mediates the relationship between day  $t$ 's negative mood and day  $t+1$ 's negative mood.

*Hypothesis 6:* Employees' daily emotional exhaustion (day  $t$ ) mediates the relationship between day  $t$ 's (a) aggressive mistreatment and (b) demanding mistreatment and employees' negative mood in the day  $t+1$ 's morning.

#### *Effect of Positive Treatment Received from Customers*

Opposite to customer mistreatment, positive treatments received from respectful and grateful customers are pleasant and rewarding. Positive customer treatments are expected to buffer the negative effect of customer mistreatment on emotional exhaustion. From affect perspective, positive events have been demonstrated as a stress buffer because of the feelings of happiness and satisfaction accompanied with positive events (Cohen & Hoberman, 1983). Positive emotions triggered by positive events are important facilitators of adaptive coping and adjustment to acute and chronic stress by sustaining coping efforts, providing a "breather," and restoring depleted resources (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000). Furthermore, from resource perspective, positive events may protect service employees by increasing their feelings of self-esteem and fostering social companionship and relatedness (Dormman & Zapf, 2004). These motivational resources are expected to make employees less vulnerable to customer mistreatment.

For both aggressive and demanding customer mistreatment, the adaptive coping triggered by positive emotions and the motivational resources generated by rewarding customer interactions may protect service employees from their stressful experiences.

*Hypotheses 7:* Daily positive customer treatment moderates the effect of customer mistreatment on employees' emotional exhaustion, such that on days employees experience frequent positive treatments, (a) daily aggressive and (b) daily demanding mistreatment are less related to emotional exhaustion on that day.

#### *The Moderating Role of On-line Emotion Regulation Strategies*

The nature of customer service jobs requires service employees to comply with the emotional display rule in interacting with customers. Even if their customers violate the moral norms by treating them in disrespectful or unreasonable ways, they usually cannot freely express their discomfort toward customers. Therefore, service employees need to use certain emotion regulation strategies during their interaction with customers to fulfill their job responsibility. Following Diefendorff et al.'s (2005) suggestion to include the expression of naturally felt emotions in the emotion regulation framework, I examined three types of regulation strategies, surface acting, deep acting, and natural expression or no regulation in the current study, in order to cover a full range of regulations that might be adopted by service employees.

*Surface acting.* Surface acting refers to the emotion regulation strategies focusing on the modification of external expressions. Among the specific regulation strategies categorized by Ekman and Friesen (1975), this type of expression regulation includes mask, amplify, deamplify, and neutralize. All four forms of strategies involve the change of emotional expressions without any change of inner

feelings. Although adopting surface acting can help employees stick to display rules, it may signal the customers with the avoidance intention of service employees (Côté, 2005). Also, because of the discrepancy between felt and expressed emotions, employees may experience emotional dissonance which facilitates secondary resource loss during customer interaction (Dieffendorff & Gosserand, 2003; Grandey, 2003), thus strengthening the link between customer mistreatment and emotional exhaustion. To the extreme case of expression regulation, masking involves hiding the felt emotion while faking an unfelt emotion at the same time, requesting most effort from employees. Furthermore, as demonstrated by Beal et al. (2006), employees engaging in surface acting perceived greater difficulty in affective delivery. They also found that surface acting increased the relationship between negative emotions and self-rated difficulty of maintaining display rules during a performance episode. Therefore, when an employee uses surface acting to regulate their emotional expression, they are more likely to be exhausted by the customer mistreatment because of the increased emotional demands and resource loss.

*Hypothesis 8:* Surface acting as an emotion regulation strategy moderates the relationships between (a) daily aggressive mistreatment and (b) daily demanding mistreatment and daily emotional exhaustion. Specifically, on days employees more frequently use surface acting, the association between daily customer mistreatment and emotional exhaustion is stronger than the association on days when employees use surface acting less frequently.

*Deep acting.* Deep acting refers to the emotion regulation strategies focusing on the modification of inner affective experiences. Specifically, according to Ekman

and Friesen (1975), this type of regulation includes qualifying and reappraisal which involve employees sincerely thinking “a customer is always right” and “viewing a customer as a king.” These two forms of inner emotion regulation strategies modify deeper experiences or appraisals with cognitive effort. Specifically, qualifying involves expressing felt emotions and adding a smile to it as an explanation about one’s intentions or thoughts regarding what one is feeling. For instance, when an employee is treated unfairly by a customer, he/she does not act on the expression of negative emotions but adds a smile indicating that “my anger is reasonable but I will not go too far.” Similarly, by “viewing a customer as a king,” service employees make effort to reappraise the situation and reframe unpleasant situations to be more reasonable.

When employees use deep acting strategies, customer mistreatment is less likely to result in employees’ emotional exhaustion for two reasons. First, customer mistreatment will not lead to experienced discrepancy between felt and expressed emotions given that employees do not engage in faking or suppression. Different from surface acting which results in emotional dissonance, deep acting is more likely to lead to “emotional harmony” which is indicated by the congruence between one’s experiences and expressions without deviating from display rules. This may potentially reduce the secondary resource loss due to emotion regulation. Second, the justification for one’s negative expression or unpleasant interaction shows one’s intention to react positively. According to the social interaction model (Côté, 2005), a good intention delivered in interpersonal interaction can be perceived by the other party and decrease the social stress level. Therefore, deep acting could impact

employees' appraisal of customer mistreatment such that customer mistreatment is perceived to be less stressful.

*Hypothesis 9:* Deep acting as an emotion regulation strategy moderates the relationships between (a) daily aggressive mistreatment and (b) daily demanding mistreatment and daily emotional exhaustion. Specifically, on days employees more frequently use deep acting, the association between daily customer mistreatment and emotional exhaustion is weaker than the association on days when employees use deep acting less frequently.

*Natural expression.* Diefendorff et al. (2005) have suggested that expression of naturally felt emotions should be paid more attention in emotion regulation research given that natural expression at work may be fairly common and individuals who display their felt emotions likely would appear sincerity and authenticity. From the perspective of resource loss during customer interactions (Wang et al., in press), when mistreated by customers, primary resource loss is directly initiated. If customer service employees simply express their naturally felt emotions without effortful acting, they can avoid secondary resource loss due to emotion regulation process. Furthermore, according to Diefendorff and Gosserand's (2003) control theory of emotional labor, natural expression helps service employees maintain a desired self-concept by being true to one's feelings and being genuine to others. Therefore, displaying felt emotions help service employees to fulfill personal goal of emotional expression rather than work goal. It is expected to protect employees from resource imbalance thus weaken the association between customer mistreatment and emotional exhaustion.

*Hypothesis 10:* Natural expression moderates the relationships between (a) daily aggressive mistreatment and (b) daily demanding mistreatment and daily emotional exhaustion. Specifically, on days employees more frequently express naturally felt emotions, the association between daily customer mistreatment and emotional exhaustion is weaker than the association on days when employees express naturally felt emotions less frequently.

#### *The Moderating Role of Off-line Emotion Regulation Strategies*

Emotion regulation as a coping strategy also occurs outside of the workplace. Given the commonly observed customer mistreatment and the importance of mood in service encounter, it is necessary to examine when service employees are more likely to bring their negative emotions to the following day. Off-line emotion regulation refers to employees' emotion regulation after work in the absence of customer interactions. Emotion regulation occurring after work has the functions of reorganizing and reappraising ones' emotional reactions to work events. According to Morris (1989), the ways how people regulate and organize their emotions influence the long-lasting consequences of emotions (Rimé, Philippot, Boca, & Mesquita, 1992). Therefore, the current study examines two different types of emotion regulation strategies people typically use in their leisure time, rumination and social sharing. They are expected to moderate the lagged emotional effect of customer mistreatment.

*Rumination.* Rumination refers to conscious thinking directed toward failure in goal pursuit for an extended period of time (Smith & Alloy, 2009; Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco, & Lyubomirsky, 2008). According to Augustine and Hemenover

(2009), rumination is a type of emotion regulation involving cognitive engagement. The implicit goal of rumination is to reduce depressive feelings; however, the actual effect is usually the opposite. Due to the repetitive self-focused attention to sad or angry thoughts and feelings, rumination could produce more negative experiences (Gross, 1999). For example, by using both psychological and physiological measures, Ray, Wilhelm, and Gross (2008) demonstrated that rumination led to greater self-reported anger, more cognitive perseveration, and greater sympathetic nervous systems activation. Furthermore, they reported both acute and lingering effects of rumination on anger experiences.

In the current study, I expect a moderating role of rumination in strengthening the association between customer mistreatment and negative mood in the next morning. When employees ruminate on their unpleasant experiences, the negative material is called to mind and processed in a negative way. By using rumination, employees cannot release themselves from negative feelings; rather, rumination is likely to prolong and amplify the effect of customer mistreatment on subsequent negative mood. As shown by Rusting and Nolen-Hoeksema (1998), rumination maintains and augments anger as well as the cognitive accessibility of negative and aggressive constructs. Therefore, through the cognitive engagement strategy, ruminators cognitively recollect their experiences of being mistreated by customers, which is expected to facilitate the development of negative mood (Morris, 1989).

*Hypothesis 11:* Employees' rumination at night moderates the relationships between (a) daily aggressive mistreatment and (b) daily demanding mistreatment and employees' negative mood in the next morning. Specifically, on days when

employees engage in more rumination after work, the association between customer mistreatment and negative mood in the following morning is stronger.

*Social sharing.* Social sharing involves confronting negative emotions and verbally expressing them explicitly in a safe context. Social sharing as an emotion regulation strategy is originally proposed by client-centered therapy in clinical psychology, in which clients are encouraged to talk about their experiences and feelings in an understanding, warm, respectful, and accepting atmosphere (Lambert & Erikson, 2008). Over the last twenty years, this type of emotion expression has been operationalized and examined mainly in two forms: expressive writing (Pennebaker, 1994; Pennebaker & Beall, 1986; Spera, Buhrfeind, Pennebaker, 1994) and social sharing (Pennebaker, Zech, & Rimé, 2001; Rimé, Mesquita, Philippot, & Boca, 1991; Zech, Rimé, & Nils, 2004). Both strategies have been recently tested in the work setting and demonstrated positive influences on subjective well-being (e.g., Barclay & Skarlicki, 2009; McCance, Nye, Wang, Jones, & Chiu, in press). To explain the beneficial effects of social sharing, it exposes individuals to the negative experiences and allows them to address their negative feelings (Sloan & Marx, 2004). By confronting their experience, the negative effects of inhibition or suppression may be reduced, thus decreasing the probability of stress-related physical and psychological problems. In addition, social sharing is also helpful in gaining social support and perceived psychological safety because during social sharing process, listeners are expected to express their empathy toward sharers (Christophe & Rimé, 1997).

Nonetheless, in a daily context, social sharing of negative experiences may exacerbate the negative effect of customer mistreatment on one's mood in the similar

way as rumination. Specifically, social sharing can be viewed as external-oriented rather than self-oriented rumination in which individuals talk their negative experiences with others. Similar with rumination, overt expression increases the cognitive accessibility to negative feelings, causing individuals to perceive and interpret their situations more negatively than it would if they distract themselves. For example, verbal overshadowing effect (Chiu, Krauss, & Lau, 1998; McCanne et al., in press) suggests that verbally describing an emotional experience in a negative manner creates a negatively framed memory of the event, which in turn colors how the experience will be remembered later. Therefore, sharing negative experiences makes individuals more susceptible to negative experiences and thus may strengthen the negative emotional residual. Moreover, social sharing of negative experiences often involves the element of venting which refers to the overt expression of negative emotions to others. Some researchers argue that venting is helpful in making emotions less potent thus individuals are able to cognitively process their experience and create understanding of their situation (Sloan & Marx, 2004). Nevertheless, extensive literature has revealed that emotional venting actually increases negative feelings rather than reduce them (Bushman, 2002). Therefore, negative social sharing is hypothesized to prolong and strengthen the lagged effect of customer mistreatment on negative mood in the next morning.

*Hypothesis 12:* Employees' social sharing of negative experiences at night moderates the relationships between (a) daily aggressive mistreatment and (b) daily demanding mistreatment and employees' negative mood in the next morning. Specifically, on days when employees engage in more social sharing, the association

between customer mistreatment and negative mood in the following morning is stronger.

## Chapter II: Method

### *Participants and Procedure*

An archival data set was used to test the hypotheses in the current study. Participants in this data set were customer service representatives recruited from a call center located in Southern China. This call center provides customer service support to telephone and cell phone products. The customer service representatives working in this call center typically respond to between 60 and 90 calls per day. They are required to be positive and polite in their interactions with customers. A sample of call center customer service representatives is appropriate for the current research aim. First, call center employees have frequent contact with customers, giving them ample opportunity to experience customer interaction with various levels of quality. Second, as organizations are increasingly moving service support onto the telephone (Skarlicki et al, 2008), the call center research setting has become highly relevant to many organizations. The study announcement, along with a letter assuring confidentiality and voluntary participation, was distributed to all customer service representatives by the human resource department. Specifically, employees were assured that their managers and organization would not know their individual responses in the survey.

Among a total of 250 customer service representatives, 159 (63.6%) agreed to participate in the current study. Ten of them were removed from the data because they only completed the initial survey. Therefore, the final sample size for this study was 149, including 103 female employees (69.1%) and 45 male employees (30.2%). This gender distribution was consistent with prior studies using participants with

service jobs (e.g., Gosserand & Diefendorff, 2005; Johnson & Spector, 2007). The average age of the participants was 24.47, ranging from 20 to 32 ( $SD = 2.31$ ). The average organizational tenure was 1.41 years, ranging from 0 to 6 years ( $SD = 1.23$ ).

All hypotheses except Hypotheses 8-10 were tested based on the whole sample with 1185 daily observations from 149 employees. For Hypotheses 8-10 on the moderating roles of on-line emotion regulation strategies, because on-line regulation strategies were only reported on days when employees were mistreated, a subsample was constructed by removing daily observations when no customer mistreatment occurred, resulting in a reduced sample size of 879 daily observations from 138 employees. In other words, there were 11 out of 149 employees who did not report any customer mistreatment experience across the 8 days. This reduced sample included 108 female (78.3%) and 30 male employees (21.7%). The average age was 24.46 ( $SD = 2.34$ ). The average job tenure was 3.23 years ( $SD = 2.51$ ). The demographic information of these 11 employees was largely consistent with the reduced sample. No significant difference was observed in terms of age and job tenure ( $p > .05$ ). This reduced sample was used to test the moderating effects of on-line regulation strategies; in addition, all the other hypotheses were retested in this reduced sample.

The data collection included two phases. In the first phase, participants completed a questionnaire for demographic variables. About two weeks after the first phase, daily surveys were conducted for two weeks consecutively (i.e., ten work days). During this phase, with the company's permission, each morning around 8:00am (the start of the work day), research assistants distributed a paper-pencil

survey to each participant, asking their rumination and social sharing experience in the previous night and negative mood they experienced in that morning. Each workday afternoon around 4:50pm (10 minutes before the end of the work day – 5pm), the participants were asked to complete another survey rating the customer mistreatment and customer-service positive events that happened on that day as well as current feeling of emotional exhaustion. Because the model in current study hypothesized the relationships between daily customer interaction and on-line emotion regulation strategies (measured in day  $t$ 's afternoon survey), rumination and social sharing at night (measured in day  $t+1$ 's morning survey), and negative mood in the next morning (measured in day  $t+1$ 's morning survey), the maximum number of useful daily observations provided by each participant was eight (for each work week, days 1-4's afternoon surveys were matched up with days 2-5's morning surveys). In total, participants completed 1185 out of total possible 1192 daily surveys (149 participants for 8 days), resulting in a near perfect compliance rate (99.4%). This unusually high compliance rate is likely due to the combination of company sponsorship, use of company time to fill out the daily surveys, and the financial incentive offered for completing the data collection.

All surveys were conducted in Chinese. A translation-back translation procedure (Brislin, 1980) was followed to translate the English-based measures into Chinese. The translation process involved four translators. Three of them (translators A, B, C) are bilingual researchers in the field of Organizational Psychology and the fourth one (translator D) is a certified professional Chinese-English translator. First, translators A and B translated the English version of the survey into Chinese. They

were allowed to discuss in the translation process to generate the Chinese survey. Then, translator C double checked the Chinese translation and reconciled concerns with the two original translators. The resulted Chinese survey was passed to translator D for back translation. The original English version and the English back translation version were then compared and discussed by the translators to reach the final consensus on the Chinese survey translation.

#### *Daily Afternoon Survey*

*Daily customer treatment.* Twenty five items were used to assess the daily treatment employees received from their customers. Customer mistreatment was measured by Wang et al.'s (in press) 18-item scale which was adapted from Dormann and Zapf's (2004) customer-related social stressor scale and Skarlicki et al.'s (2008) scale of customer interpersonal injustice behaviors. Among these 18 items, 9 items measured aggressive customer mistreatment. Sample items were "spoke aggressive to you" and "used condescending language to you." Another 9 items measured demanding customer mistreatment. Sample items were "demanded special treatment" and "made exorbitant demands." By including items from previous scales on customers' injustice treatment and service employees' social stressors, the current measures aimed to cover the most documented customer mistreatment behaviors in the literature. Items that were not appropriate for the call center service situations or did not clearly reflect the quality interpersonal treatment received from the customers were eliminated. Daily positive treatment from customers was measured by 7 items. The items were adapted from Rupp et al.'s (2008) measure of customer interpersonal

justice behaviors (Colquitt, 2001). Sample items included “appreciated your service” and “expressed understanding of the difficulty in your job.”

For all three customer treatment scales (i.e., aggressive treatment, demanding treatment, and positive treatment), participants were requested to rate the daily frequency of each customer-related event on a 5-point frequency scale ranging from 0 = “never” to 4 = “all the time” (please see Appendix A for the item contents and scale anchors). Coefficient alpha is not appropriate to provide a reliability estimate for this scale because it includes distinct types of customer mistreatment behaviors experienced by the employees on daily basis (Frone, 1998; Liu, Wang, Zhan, & Shi, 2009). The three-factor structure of this 25-item customer treatment scale was largely supported by a principal component analysis. Appendix B reported the results of this analysis.

*On-line emotion regulation strategies.* Surface acting, deep acting, and natural expression were measured by a checklist corresponding to the 18 customer mistreatment behaviors. Participants were asked to report their emotion regulation strategies only when the corresponding mistreatment event occurred during that day. Specifically, if a mistreatment event occurred, they reported whether or not they used one or more strategies from mask, amplify, deamplify, neutralize, qualify, reappraise, and express to regulate their emotion in serving customers who mistreated them. They were scored by using the frequency-weighted averages. Specifically, participants’ endorsement of each regulation strategy was first weighted by corresponding frequency of the customer mistreatment behaviors. The weighted

endorsement was summed across all 18 mistreatment behaviors and then divided by the summed frequency of customer mistreatment behaviors.

According to the nature of these regulation strategies, scores of “mask”, “amplify”, “deamplify”, and “neutralize” were aggregated to represent surface acting given that they were about modification of facial expressions; scores of “qualify” and “reappraise” were aggregated to represent deep acting given that both of them involved cognitive effort to modify their internal explanations of the mistreatment experiences and justify their facial expressions; finally, score of “express” itself measured natural expression.

*Daily emotional exhaustion.* Daily emotional exhaustion is measured using the 6-item Job-Related Emotional Exhaustion scale (Wharton, 1993). The items were slightly adapted by adding “today” to emphasize the daily feelings. The participants were asked to respond the extent to which they agree to each item, rating on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = “strongly disagree” to 7 = “strongly agree”). A sample item is “I feel emotionally drained from my today’s work”. The mean Cronbach’s alpha of this scale across eight days was .96 ( $SD = .01$ ).

#### *Daily Morning Survey*

*Negative mood in the morning.* Employees’ negative mood was measured by an 8-item measure from Mohr et al. (2005). Two sample items are “sad” and “dejected.” Responses range from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”. The mean Cronbach’s alpha of this scale across eight days was .92 ( $SD = .01$ ).

*Rumination.* Rumination on the negative experiences with customers was measured in the morning survey using an 8-item scale developed by McCullough,

Bono, and Root (2007). A sample item is “Last night, I could not stop thinking about the bad experience my client gave me yesterday.” Responses range from 0 = “not at all true of me” to 5 = “extremely true of me.” The mean Cronbach’s alpha for this scale across eight days was .97 ( $SD = .01$ ).

*Social sharing.* Social sharing of one’s daily customer-related experiences to others was measured in the morning survey using a 4-item scale adapted from Gable, Reis, Impett, and Asher (2004). All items were negatively framed. A sample item is “Last night, I talked about the bad experience my client gave to me with my spouse/girlfriend/boyfriend.” Responses range from 0 = “not spending time on this at all” to 5 = “spending a lot of time on this.” The mean Cronbach’s alpha for this scale across eight days was .82 ( $SD = .04$ ).

### *Analytic Strategies*

Given that the daily assessments were nested within each participant, the data contained a hierarchical structure. To test the mediation hypothesis in the multilevel data (i.e., Hypotheses 5-6), the covariances among the Level-1 random effects had to be estimated in order to estimate the indirect effect and corresponding standard error (Bauer, Preacher, & Gil, 2006). Therefore, I used multilevel modeling to simultaneously estimate effects on multiple endogenous variables in Mplus 5.2 software package (Muthén & Muthén, 2008). To test the mediation hypothesis, day  $t$ ’s emotional exhaustion was modeled as a function of the same day’s morning mood, aggressive mistreatment, and demanding mistreatment, and day  $t+1$ ’s morning negative mood was further modeled as a function of day  $t$ ’s emotional exhaustion and the predictors of emotional exhaustion (i.e., day  $t$ ’s negative mood and day  $t$ ’s

aggressive and demanding mistreatment). The direct effects of day  $t$ 's mood and customer mistreatment in predicting day  $t+1$ 's negative mood were also included to probe the significance of partial mediation effect. I followed the approach developed by Bauer et al. (2006) to achieve robust estimation for the mean and standard error of the indirect effect in multilevel models by taking covariances between Level-1 random effects into account. Specifically, the significance of the indirect effect is examined by an online program based on R developed by Preacher and Selig (July, 2010).

In testing the within-person level interactions (Hypotheses 7-12), to reduce the potential multicollinearity, I first centered the predictors at their grand-means and then created the interaction terms by taking the products of two centered variables. The interaction terms were added to the mediation model to examine their significance.

All hypotheses but Hypotheses 8-10 were tested based on the whole sample with 1185 daily observations from 149 employees. Hypotheses 8-10 on the moderating roles of on-line emotion regulation strategies were tested based on the reduced sample with 879 daily observations from 138 employees, given that on-line emotion regulation strategies were only reported by employees who were mistreated on that day. In addition, all the other hypotheses were retested in this reduced sample. This provided more conservative findings given the restricted range of customer mistreatment frequency.

### Chapter III: Results

Means, standard deviations, and within-subject bivariate correlations among daily measures were presented in Table 2. Based on the descriptive analysis, morning negative mood ( $r = .31, p < .01$ ), two types of customer mistreatment ( $r = .38$  for aggressive mistreatment and  $r = .41$  for demanding mistreatment,  $p < .01$ ), and positive customer treatment ( $r = -.16, p < .01$ ) were all significantly correlated with daily emotional exhaustion. Daily emotional exhaustion was positively correlated with negative mood in the following morning ( $r = .33, p < .01$ ). In addition, the direct links were also significant between day  $t$ 's morning mood and customer treatment ( $r = .31$  for aggressive mistreatment and  $r = .30$  for demanding mistreatment,  $p < .01$ ) on the one hand and day  $t+1$ 's morning mood on the other hand ( $r = .70, p < .01$ ). These findings provided preliminary support for Hypotheses 1-4. Further analyses were conducted to test the mediation and moderation hypotheses.

#### *Testing daily emotional exhaustion as a mediator*

Hypotheses 1-6 were tested via estimating a multilevel model with mediation at Level 1. Specifically, daily emotional exhaustion was predicted by morning mood and two types of customer mistreatment (i.e., aggressive customer mistreatment and demanding customer mistreatment); in turn, daily emotional exhaustion predicted negative mood in the next morning. Both direct and indirect effects were examined in this model. Table 3 presented the parameter estimates and standard errors and Figure 2 presented the mediation model with coefficient estimates.

Supporting Hypothesis 1, the mean value of the random slope for day  $t$ 's morning negative mood in predicting daily emotional exhaustion was significant ( $\gamma = .17, p < .01$ ), suggesting that on days that service employees felt more negative mood in the morning, they were more likely to be emotionally exhausted at the end of work. Hypotheses 2a and 2b were supported in that the mean values of the random slopes for day  $t$ 's customer mistreatment, aggressive ( $\gamma = .38, p < .05$ ) and demanding customer mistreatment ( $\gamma = .42, p < .01$ ), were significant in predicting daily emotional exhaustion. Specifically, on days that service employees received more mistreatment from their customers, either aggressive behaviors or inappropriate customer demands, they were more likely to be emotionally exhausted at the end of work. Hypotheses 1-2 together indicated that service employees' inner affective state and the way of being treated by customers both impacted their emotional exhaustion.

Further, in predicting day  $t+1$ 's negative morning mood, Hypothesis 3a was supported such that there was a significant direct effect of day  $t$ 's aggressive mistreatment above and beyond day  $t$ 's baseline mood ( $\gamma = .13, p < .05$ ), while Hypothesis 3b regarding the direct effect of demanding mistreatment was not supported. Hypothesis 4 was supported in that the mean value of the random slope for day  $t$ 's emotional exhaustion in predicting day  $t+1$ 's morning negative mood was significant ( $\gamma = .05, p < .01$ ). It indicated that on days when service employees were more exhausted after work, they were likely to experience stronger negative mood in the following morning.

The mediation hypotheses (i.e., Hypotheses 5-6) were tested using Bauer et al.'s (2006) method of testing 1-1-1 mediation model. The average indirect effect

from day  $t$ 's negative mood to day  $t+1$ 's negative mood through day  $t$ 's emotional exhaustion was significant (indirect effect = 0.02,  $p < .05$ , 95% confidence interval = [.01, .05]). In addition to the significant indirect effect, the direct effect was also significant ( $\gamma = .41$ ,  $p < .01$ ), suggesting that emotional exhaustion was a partial mediator in the association between day  $t$ 's negative mood and day  $t+1$ 's negative mood. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 was supported.

The average indirect effect of day  $t$ 's demanding customer mistreatment on day  $t+1$ 's negative mood through day  $t$ 's emotional exhaustion was marginally significant (indirect effect = 0.02,  $p < .10$ , 90% confidence interval = [.00, .05]). Following Preacher, Zyphur, and Zhang (2010), 90% indirect effect confidence intervals corresponding to one-tailed tests are justified in multilevel mediation research, given such tests are preferred to raise the statistical power for detecting indirect effects. Therefore, Hypothesis 6b was supported, suggesting that emotional exhaustion mediated the relationship between day  $t$ 's demanding customer mistreatment and day  $t+1$ 's negative mood. However, the indirect effect of day  $t$ 's aggressive customer mistreatment on day  $t+1$ 's negative mood in the morning through day  $t$ 's emotional exhaustion was not significant, although there was a significant direct effect of aggressive customer mistreatment in predicting negative mood ( $\gamma = .13$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Hypothesis 6a was not supported.

#### *Testing moderating effect of positive customer treatment*

In order to test the moderating effect of positive treatment on the mistreatment – emotional exhaustion link, two interaction terms were constructed by taking the products between centered positive treatment and centered aggressive mistreatment as

well as between centered positive treatment and centered demanding mistreatment. Positive treatment was also entered into previous mediation model as a predictor, and its random slopes were estimated in predicting emotional exhaustion and negative mood in following morning. Two interaction terms were entered into the model as fixed predictors; in other words, these interactive effects were not expected to vary across different employees. This expectation was supported by non-significant variances of the random slopes when the interaction terms were treated as random effects.

Table 4 presented the results for this model. Specifically, day  $t$ 's positive treatment was negatively related to day  $t$ 's emotional exhaustion ( $\gamma = -.16, p < .01$ ). Also, it significantly moderated the association between demanding mistreatment and daily emotional exhaustion ( $\beta = -.20, p < .05$ ). According to Figure 3, on days when an employee received more positive treatments from customers, the demanding mistreatment received on that day was less likely to result in emotional exhaustion at the end of work. That is, receiving positive treatment from customers could buffer the influence of demanding mistreatment on emotional exhaustion. However, the moderating effect of positive treatment was not significant for aggressive mistreatment. Therefore, Hypothesis 6a was supported, while Hypothesis 6b was not. In addition, there was no significant direct effect of positive treatment in predicting morning mood on the following day.

#### *Testing moderating effects of off-line regulation strategies*

To test Hypotheses 11-12, within-subject level interaction terms were constructed by taking the products between day  $t$ 's customer aggressive and

demanding mistreatments and off-line regulations strategies (i.e., rumination and social sharing at day  $t$ 's evening). Rumination and social sharing were included in the mediation model to test their random effects on day  $t+1$ 's morning mood, and the interaction terms were included to test their fixed effects in predicting day  $t+1$ 's morning mood.

Results were presented in Table 5. Accordingly, day  $t$ 's rumination was positively related to day  $t+1$ 's negative mood ( $\gamma = .16, p < .01$ ), such that on days employees ruminated more on the mistreatment they received from customers, they were likely to feel more negative in the next morning. The effects of rumination were significant in moderating both the effect of aggressive mistreatment ( $\beta = .11, p < .05$ ) and the effect of demanding mistreatment ( $\beta = -.14, p < .01$ ). However, the patterns of interactions were not consistent across the two types of mistreatment (Figure 4a and 4b). Simple slope test was conducted to test the significance of aggressive mistreatment – negative mood association at high and low levels of rumination (i.e., one standard deviation above and below average). The results showed that at lower levels of rumination, being mistreated by aggressive customers was not significantly linked to mood in the next morning ( $\gamma = -.01, p > .05$ ), while at higher levels of rumination, aggressive mistreatment received from customers significantly predicted negative mood in the following morning ( $\gamma = .19, p < .05$ ). To be concrete, consistent with Hypothesis 11a, compared to the days involving less rumination, the within-subject effect of aggressive mistreatment on following negative mood was shown to be stronger on days when service employees engaged in more rumination (Figure 4a).

That is, rumination as an off-line regulation strategy strengthened the association between aggressive mistreatment and negative mood in the following morning.

As for rumination as a moderator on the effect of demanding mistreatment in predicting negative mood, an overriding effect, rather than a strengthening effect, was observed (Figure 4b). Simple slope test was conducted to test the significance of demanding mistreatment – negative mood association at high and low levels of rumination (i.e., one standard deviation above and below average). Results of simple slope test showed that being mistreated by demanding customers significantly predicted negative mood in the following morning only when there was lower levels of rumination ( $\gamma = .17, p < .01$ ). On days when service employees engaged in higher levels of rumination, they would report stronger negative mood regardless of the frequency level of demanding mistreatment during the last day ( $\gamma = -.06, p > .05$ ). Therefore, high levels of rumination overrode the predictive effect of demanding mistreatment.

Social sharing was another off-line regulation strategy examined in this study. According to Table 5, social sharing was not significantly related to day  $t+1$ 's morning mood. Further, the effect of social sharing was not significant in moderating the association between aggressive customer mistreatment and day  $t+1$ 's negative mood. Therefore, Hypothesis 12a was not supported in this sample. As for the association between demanding mistreatment and day  $t+1$ 's negative mood, the moderating effect of social sharing was significant ( $\beta = .11, p < .05$ ). The interaction was plotted in Figure 5. Simple slope test showed that demanding mistreatment only predicted mood on days when more social sharing was involved ( $\gamma = .16, p < .05$ ),

while the association was not significant for lower levels of social sharing ( $\gamma = -.04$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Consistent with Hypothesis 12b, sharing negative customer-related experiences after work could strengthen the lagged effect of demanding mistreatment in predicting negative mood in the following morning.

#### *Replication Results based on a Reduced Sample*

Among the 1185 within-subject observations, 306 observations contained no customer mistreatment (i.e., the frequency was reported as “never” for all mistreatment items). Because on-line regulation strategies were only reported on days when employees were mistreated, in order to test the moderating effects of on-line regulation strategies, a subsample was constructed by selecting out these 306 observations, resulting in a reduced sample size of 879. The following analyses were based on this reduced subsample.

Table 6 presented the means, standard deviations, and within-subject correlations among daily measured based on 879 observations. This subsample provided consistent preliminary results as those from the entire sample. Further, the mediation model was re-tested for this subsample. As presented in Table 7, the results based on the subsample well replicated the results based on the whole sample. To be specific, on days when service employees felt stronger negative mood in the morning ( $\gamma = .19$ ,  $p < .01$ ) or received customer mistreatment more frequently ( $\gamma_s = .35$  for both aggressive mistreatment and demanding mistreatment,  $ps < .01$ ), they were more likely to be emotionally exhausted at the end of work. Further, being emotionally exhausted would lead to stronger negative mood in the following morning ( $\gamma = .05$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Regarding the 1-1-1 mediation model, the average indirect effect from day  $t$ 's

negative mood to day  $t+1$ 's negative mood through day  $t$ 's emotional exhaustion was significant (indirect effect = 0.03,  $p < .05$ , 95% confidence interval = [.01, .06]). Emotional exhaustion was a partial mediator given that the direct effect of mood was also significant in predicting the following day's negative mood. The average indirect effect from day  $t$ 's demanding customer mistreatment to day  $t+1$ 's negative mood through day  $t$ 's emotional exhaustion was also significant (indirect effect = 0.02,  $p < .10$ , 90% confidence interval = [.00, .06]), and emotional exhaustion was demonstrated to be a full mediator given the non-significant direct effect. For aggressive mistreatment, only a significant direct effect was observed ( $\gamma = .14$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

The moderating effect of positive customer treatment was also retested in the reduced sample. Although the main effect of positive treatment was still significant in predicting the following morning's negative mood, the moderating effect was not significant any more. The non-significance might be due to the restricted range of customer mistreatment in this subset.

Results for the moderation test of off-line mood regulation strategies (i.e., rumination and social sharing) were presented in Table 8. Similar with the results based on the whole sample, rumination significantly predicted negative mood in the next morning ( $\gamma = .16$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and significantly moderated the effect of aggressive ( $\beta = .13$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and demanding customer mistreatment ( $\beta = -.15$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The interactions showed the same pattern with the interactions from the whole sample, such that higher levels of rumination strengthened the effect of aggressive mistreatment and overrode the effect of demanding mistreatment in predicting the

following morning's negative mood. In addition, social sharing significantly moderated the relationship between demanding customer mistreatment and negative mood in the next morning ( $\beta = .15, p < .01$ ). Specifically, social sharing strengthened the effect of demanding customer mistreatment in predicting negative mood.

In general, the prior findings based on the whole sample were largely replicated in the reduced sample. In the following section, I report the results for the moderating effects of on-line mood regulation strategies.

#### *Testing moderating effects of on-line regulation strategies*

To test hypotheses 8-10, within-subject level interaction terms were constructed by taking the products between day  $t$ 's customer mistreatments and on-line regulations strategies (i.e., surface acting, deep acting, and natural expression). The three types of regulation strategies were included in the mediation model to test their random effects on emotional exhaustion, and the interaction terms were included to test their fixed effects in predicting emotional exhaustion at the end of work.

According to the results, surface acting only moderated the relationship between aggressive mistreatment received from customers and employees' emotional exhaustion ( $\beta = .39, p < .05$ ). Consistent with Hypothesis 8a, higher levels of surface acting engagement strengthened the predictive effect of aggressive mistreatment. Specifically, on days when employees frequently used surface acting, or simply manipulated their facial displays of emotions, in handling aggressive customers, they were more likely to feel emotionally exhausted at the end of work (Figure 6a). Hypothesis 8b which hypothesized the moderating effect of surface acting on demanding mistreatment – emotional exhaustion association was not supported.

Deep acting only moderated the relationship between demanding mistreatment received from customers and employees' emotional exhaustion ( $\beta = -.25, p < .05$ ). Consistent with Hypothesis 9b, higher levels of deep acting engagement weakened the predictive effect of demanding mistreatment. Specifically, Figure 6b indicated that on days when employees frequently used deep acting, or made effort to express their good intentions, in handling demanding customers, they were less likely to feel emotionally exhausted at the end of work. However, Hypothesis 9a was not supported regarding the moderating role of deep acting on aggressive mistreatment – emotional exhaustion association. In addition, the moderating effects of natural expression were not significant, such that Hypothesis 10 was not supported for either types of customer mistreatment.

## Chapter IV: Discussion

The current study reviewed major theoretical models in the research areas of service employees' reactions to customer interaction and employees' emotion regulation. By emphasizing the affect-based perspective and resource-based perspective, this study provided a comprehensive theoretical framework in contributing to our understanding of these phenomena. Drawing on this theoretical integration, the current study was able to address the following research questions. First, do aggressive and demanding customer mistreatment behaviors influence service employees' emotional outcomes at the end of work day and in the next morning above and beyond one's baseline mood? And if they do, what is the underlying mechanism of the lagged effect? Second, does positive treatment received from customers buffer the negative effect of customer mistreatment? Third, do on-line and off-line emotion regulation strategies during and after customer interaction moderate the emotional effect of aggressive and demanding customer mistreatment? To answer these questions, a daily diary study was conducted using data collected from customer representatives working in a call center.

Results from current study largely supported the proximal and lagged effects of service employees' baseline affective states and customer mistreatment on employees' well-being. The findings also demonstrated the mediating role of daily emotional exhaustion as a proximal outcome linking daily predictors to employees' negative mood in the following morning as a lagged outcome. Further, service employees use various emotion regulation strategies during and after their interactions with customers. Regarding on-line emotion regulation strategies used

during interactions, surface acting strategies strengthened the detrimental effect of customer mistreatment, while deep acting strategies weakened the detrimental effect of customer mistreatment on the proximal well-being outcome (i.e., emotional exhaustion). However, these significant moderating effects were not consistently observed across the two types of customer mistreatment behaviors. Regarding off-line emotion regulation strategies used after work, both rumination and social sharing of negative customer-related experiences exacerbated the lagged effect of customer mistreatment. In the following section, I first discuss some major findings with an emphasis on their implications to our understanding of specific processes and constructs. I also discuss the possible reasons why certain hypotheses were not consistently supported. Then, I discussed the theoretical and practical implications of the current study. Finally, I address several limitations and point out some potential future directions.

### *The Mood Development Process*

In the current study, a mediation model was supported for the mood development of service employees. This mediation model can be interpreted from three aspects. First, both direct and indirect effects of customer mistreatment were observed in predicting employees' mood in the following morning, supporting the emotion- and resource-based mechanisms. Specifically, according to the theory for mood development (Morris, 1989), the direct link between customer mistreatment and the employees' negative mood in the following morning reflected that mood could be simple continuity of emotions triggered by affective events. The indirect link was mediated by emotional exhaustion which reflected the degree of emotional

resource depletion from work. Therefore, the mood development process can be driven by both affective and resource-based mechanisms.

Second, mood can be influenced by both one's own affective states and treatment one receives from the environment. As an internal affective factor, employees' negative mood functioned as a baseline for the following day's negative mood. The results demonstrated a strong correlation between negative moods measured on successive days. This strong association is likely to be attributed to individuals' trait affectivity which is viewed as stable baseline affectivity with temporary fluctuations. In order to specifically test the effects of employees' internal states and distinguish it from the effect of treatment received from customers, supplementary analysis was conducted to analyze the mood effect based on the removed observations in which no customer mistreatment occurred. 306 observations were included in this analysis, and the results consistently supported the strong direct effect of day  $t$ 's morning mood in predicting day  $t+1$ 's morning mood ( $\gamma = .66, p < .01$ ) and the effect of day  $t$ 's morning mood in predicting day  $t$ 's emotional exhaustion ( $\gamma = .33, p < .05$ ). However, the indirect effect of day  $t$ 's morning mood via daily emotional exhaustion was not significant ( $p > .05$ ). Above and beyond the internal affective states, employees' mood was shown to be impacted by how well they were treated by their customers. As the major interaction partners during work for customer service representatives, customer treatment is highly relevant to employees' performance goal and social goal at work. Thus, customer treatment can be viewed as critical events for service employees and the quality of customer relationship is especially important in affecting service employees' well-being.

Different levels of interaction quality may introduce fluctuations of employees' affective reactions, thus predict proximal and lagged emotional outcomes above and beyond their internal affective states.

Third, service employees' mood was tested as both a predictor and an outcome in the current study. Not surprisingly, there was a strong direct association between negative moods measured on successive days, indicating that employees' negative mood could be conveyed from one day to another. In addition to the direct link, the significant indirect effect suggests that service employees' negative mood also persisted to the following day and shaped the following day's mood through emotional exhaustion. In other words, negative feeling works as a contributing factor to resource depletion and resource exhaustion in turn further drives one's affective state toward negative direction.

Although not hypothesized in the current study, supplementary analysis was conducted to test the potential relationship between employees' negative mood and customer mistreatment they received. Results of this analysis showed significant link between service employees' negative mood in the morning and their reported frequency of customer mistreatment and positive treatment, such that on days when an employee felt higher levels of negative mood, he/she was more likely to be treated in an inappropriate manner and less likely to be treated in a good manner by customers during that day. This might be due to biased ratings of customer treatment by unhappy employees, and it is also possible that employees' negative feelings were sensed by customers and triggered more mistreatment and less positive treatment from customers during their interactions (Côté, 2005; Côté & Morgan, 2002). Further,

supplementary analysis also showed that employees' negative mood could be delivered to the following day through customer mistreatment as well. In sum, the day-to-day links among employees' negative mood and the interplay between negative mood, emotional exhaustion and customer treatment quality suggests that further research attention should be paid to the potential cyclic system of service employees' affective well-being.

Another question raised by the current finding is how long the lagged effects of customer mistreatment may prolong. In order to address this question, another set of supplementary analysis was conducted by examining the effects of customer mistreatment in predicting day  $t+1$ 's emotional exhaustion as well as in predicting day  $t+2$ 's negative mood in the morning above and beyond the effect across successive days. According to the results, neither of these effects was significant. This indicated that although being mistreated by customers on day  $t$  was able to influence one's negative mood in the following morning directly or through emotional exhaustion, such detrimental effect might not prolong for longer time (e.g., day  $t+2$ 's morning). Rather, employees' work experiences on day  $t+1$  appeared to be more influential than the distal negative affective state. However, given that only 6 within-person observations were included for each employee, the findings from the supplementary analysis need to be validated by future research.

### *Aggressive and Demanding Mistreatment*

The current study categorized customer mistreatment behaviors into two groups: aggressive mistreatment and demanding mistreatment. As described in the introduction, this categorization was based on the different nature of mistreatment

behaviors such that aggressive mistreatment focused more on the manners how customers treated employees while demanding mistreatment focused more on the inappropriate content of service that requested by customers. Given such difference, aggressive mistreatment involved higher levels of affective arousal while demanding mistreatment involved higher levels of cognitive demands. Nonetheless, because there is no clear cut between these two forms of customer mistreatment, I did not develop differentiating hypotheses for the relationships between these two forms of mistreatment and other constructs. However, the analyses revealed inconsistent findings across aggressive versus demanding mistreatment.

First, current findings supported a mediating effect of emotional exhaustion in the relationship between demanding mistreatment and the following day's negative mood, but the indirect effect was not significant in mediating aggressive mistreatment – lagged negative mood association. Also, in testing the whole mediation model, the direct effect of demanding mistreatment on lagged negative mood was not significant any more when the mediator, emotional exhaustion, was included in the model, while a strong direct effect of aggressive mistreatment on lagged negative mood was observed although no indirect effect was found. Second, although both in the hypothesized direction, surface acting strengthened the detrimental effect of aggressive mistreatment on emotional exhaustion, while deep acting weakened the detrimental effect of demanding mistreatment on emotional exhaustion. Third, positive customer treatment only buffered the predictive effect of demanding mistreatment but not aggressive mistreatment.

These inconsistent findings are likely due to the affect-based and resource-based nature of aggressive and demanding mistreatment respectively. Given that demanding customer mistreatment mainly heightens employees' load of resource, demanding mistreatment is more likely to influence employees' lagged negative mood through the indirect resource mechanism. In other words, demanding customer mistreatment may not necessarily trigger intense emotional responses from service employees. Differently, given the critical affective component of aggressive mistreatment, interacting with aggressive customers is more likely to work as a salient emotional cue to customer service employees and elicit immediate emotional reactions with high arousal, which directly contributes to the emotional mechanism of mood development.

Further, affect- versus resource-based focuses may also explain the inconsistent moderating effects of surface and deep acting. As discussed in introduction, surface acting delivers "bad faith" by expressing insincere emotional displays. According to Côté's (2005) social interaction model of emotion regulation, customers are able to detect the inauthentic displays. Due to high affective arousal, emotionally aggressive customers are expected to be more sensitive to such inauthenticity and more likely to respond to inauthentic service providers by more intense aggressive behaviors. This has been supported by the research findings that aggressive individuals are more likely to form hostile expectations and perceptions when observing dyadic interactions (Dill, Anderson, & Deuser, 1997). However, for demanding customers, because their focus is more on the service content delivered by service employees, it is less likely for the spiral of unfavorable emotional expressions

to occur. Therefore, surface acting only strengthened the detrimental effect of aggressive mistreatment on employees' daily emotional exhaustion. Comparing to surface acting, deep acting involves more cognitive processes such as attention refocus and cognitive reappraisal. According to the principle of compatibility (Ajzen, 1989), strong associations are expected when the correlated constructs are at the same abstraction level and in the same content domain. Thus, the inconsistent findings of surface and deep acting in moderating the effects of aggressive and demanding mistreatment may be due to the different compatibilities between the specific types of mistreatment and corresponding on-line regulatory strategies..

Finally, positive treatment from customers only moderated the effect of demanding mistreatment in predicting daily emotional exhaustion. Emotion literatures has found that positive emotions are usually less intense and less alerting comparing to negative emotions, and positive events are less likely to activate individuals' immediate physiological reactions (Taylor, 1991). As such, the lower levels of arousal of positive affective reactions resulting from positive customer treatment may not be able to eliminate the negative influence of aggressive mistreatment. However, positive treatment from customers, such as being appreciated and being respected by customers, may effectively bring in resources and protect employees from further resource loss by promoting self-esteem and sense of accomplishment (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000). Therefore, customer-related positive experiences are more likely to enhance ones' resource-based process by contributing to gaining resources rather than affect-based process by eliciting high aroused positive emotions. This potentially explains why positive treatment only moderated

demanding mistreatment – emotional exhaustion association but not aggressive mistreatment – emotional exhaustion association.

Related to the different nature of these two forms of customer mistreatment, it is possible that customer employees perceive different motives thus form different attributions for aggressive versus demanding mistreatment. To be specific, aggressive mistreatment is more likely to be perceived as targeting at the service employees in person, whereas demanding mistreatment is more likely to be perceived as targeting at the service delivered. When mistreated by an aggressive customer, a service employee may feel being personally offended and view the customer to be in “bad faith.” From the stress-coping perspective, aggressive mistreatment is more likely to be perceived as a threatening work experience by employees. When mistreated by a demanding customer, a service employee may attribute such treatment as high standard for their service quality which may potentially facilitate their work performance. Therefore, demanding mistreatment is likely to be perceived as work challenge. To my knowledge, there is no existing studies examining the attribution of customer mistreatment, but this could be a potential factor that moderates employees’ reactions to customer mistreatment.

### *Regulation Strategies*

The current study examined the moderating effects of employees’ emotion regulation strategies during customer interaction and after work. This two-stage model reflected the different goals of employees’ emotion regulation. Regarding on-line regulation strategies, I followed the tradition in emotional labor literature to categorize regulation into external expression regulation and internal feeling

regulation, but adopted Ekman and Friesen's (1975) specific regulation strategies to measure surface and deep acting. This may better catch a full range of emotion regulation strategies and avoid some problems of traditionally used surface and deep acting scales. For example, typical surface acting scale merely includes highly effortful regulation strategies such as suppression and faking (e.g., "putting on a mask") but ignores less effortful forms of external expression regulation such as amplifying or deamplifying the intensity of felt emotions.

Furthermore, natural expression was not a significant moderator in the current sample. According to Table 6, the mean of weighted frequency of natural expression was quite low (within-person mean = 0.08) relative to surface and deep acting, indicating that employees rarely expressed their naturally felt emotions. Given that only employees who received customer mistreatment reported their on-line regulation strategies, this low frequency of natural expression is not surprising and is consistent with previous findings. For example, Diefendorff and Greguras (2009) reported that the frequency for individuals with positive feelings to use "express" in interacting with customers was almost 10 times more than the frequency for individuals with negative feelings to use "express" in interacting with customers. Constrained by organization's display rules, service employees tend to engage in more regulation in general, including both surface and deep acting (Diefendorff, Erickson, Grandey, & Dahling, 2010). Further, expressing one's natural emotions on the one hand may protect individuals from emotional exhaustion and promote genuine expression goal, but on the other hand, it is highly risky to use direct expression in customer

mistreatment scenario because it may further intensify the conflict between the employee and the customer.

In terms of off-line emotion regulation strategies, although not hypothesized, rumination had a significant main effect in predicting the following day's negative mood in addition to its moderating effect. It suggests that rumination in general is a maladaptive emotion regulation strategy (Lyubomirsky, Tucker, Caldwell, & Berg, 1999). As a negative-focused cognitive engagement strategy, the cognitive information processing involved in rumination increases the level of negative affect by itself, as well as exacerbates the detrimental effect of customer mistreatment on lagged affective outcome. As to the moderating role of rumination, it demonstrated different patterns in moderating aggressive and demanding customer mistreatment. The pattern was consistent with the hypothesis in aggressive mistreatment – lagged negative mood association such that higher rumination strengthened this association. However, an overriding effect was observed in moderating the association between demanding mistreatment and lagged negative mood. This overriding effect might be partly due to the strong detrimental main effect of rumination, that is, as long as an employee engaged in high levels of rumination, one might feel more negative in the following morning. However, it is still not clear why the overriding effect did not occur to aggressive mistreatment. More studies are needed to validate these findings.

In examining the moderating roles of off-line regulation strategies, additional analysis was conducted to test the model including the moderating effects of off-line regulation strategies on the link between emotional exhaustion and the following

day's negative mood. However, the moderating effects were not significant for either rumination or social sharing.

### *Implications*

The current study has several important theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, this study applied affect-based and resource-based perspectives and examined the lagged emotional effect of customer mistreatment at within-person level and tested the mechanism underlying this lagged effect. Specifically, the detrimental influence of customer mistreatment may be prolonged to impact employees' mood on the next day directly and through emotional exhaustion. The findings provide direct support to the cognitive appraisal model of emotion elicitation and Morris's (1989) theory for mood development, suggesting that customer mistreatment can be viewed as a salient environmental cue to employees which is typically appraised to be negative and threatening. Negative and stressful feelings triggered by such appraisal can prolong and induce negative mood as an emotional residual and/or delayed emotional expression. In addition, customer mistreatment may lead to employees' resource depletion because of the increased service demands and interpersonal stress. It may also prevent employees from regaining resources from subsequent customer interactions. Being emotionally overextended and exhausted, in turn, may lead to the decreased affective well-being. This mediation path reflects the resource-based mechanism underlying employees' reactions to customer mistreatment. By examining the direct effect and the mediating effect via emotional exhaustion, the current study has extended past research to explain both the proximal and lagged emotional outcomes of customer mistreatment.

Regarding the role of emotion regulation in customer service context, the current study has examined two sets of emotion regulation strategies as potential moderators of negative effects of customer mistreatment. By recognizing that on-line and off-line emotion regulation strategies correspond to different stages where the service-related emotional regulation occurs and serve for different functions, this study provided a more comprehensive understanding about the emotion regulation process for customer service employees. Based on the findings of the current study and those from prior studies, emotion regulation strategies, especially on-line regulation strategies, have been demonstrated to play various functional roles in service context. First, emotion regulation can be either an outcome of affective states or a predictor of affective states. Although not tested in the current study, emotional labor literature has consistently demonstrated that negative affectivity initiates emotional labor (e.g., Grandey, 2003). A recent study also found significant effect of emotional labor in influencing state negative and positive affect (Scott & Barnes, 2011). The complex role of on-line emotion regulation provides promising direction for future research in this area.

Second, emotion regulation can work as either moderators or mediators in explaining the association between customer mistreatment and employee outcomes. For example, testing the mediating role of emotion regulations, Sliter et al. (2010) analyzed data from bank tellers and reported a model where emotional labor mediated the relationships between customer incivility and employee work outcomes (i.e., emotional exhaustion and service quality). Accordingly, service employees' on-line emotion regulation may function in a variety of ways. The mediating role suggests

that regulation strategies can be a response to customer treatment and which strategies to use is a direct contributing factor toward employee outcomes. The moderating role suggests that regulation strategies are not necessarily a reaction to customer treatment, and different quality levels of customer mistreatment do not necessarily correspond to certain regulation strategies. Rather, service employees tend to adopt different types of regulation strategies given the fluctuation of their feelings and the concrete service contexts (Pugh, 2001; Tan, Foo, & Kwek, 2004). Therefore, customer mistreatment directly influences employee outcomes, but the strength of this relationship can be modified by the emotion regulation strategies.

It should be noted that the multiple functional roles of emotion regulation are theoretically consistent with the roles of coping in the cognitive appraisal theory of emotions. To be specific, coping in earlier literature has been commonly tested as a mediator such that coping strategies were viewed as responses to stress triggered by threatening environmental cues and in turn influence individuals' physical and psychological outcomes (e.g., Folkman & Lazarus, 1988; Lazarus, 1993). Later research has then demonstrated that coping can also work as a moderator (e.g., De Rijk, Le Blanc, Schaufeli, & de Jonge, 1998; Rantanen, Mauno, Kinnunen, & Rantanen, 2011). Specifically, coping behaviors can be generally engaged by individuals in the absence of specific environmental cues, but when threatening events occur, different coping strategies may function to either protect individuals from the detrimental impacts of threatening events or exacerbate such impacts.

Practically, the long-lasting effect of customer mistreatment suggests that service organizations need to pay particular attention to employees who are

mistreated by their customers. When any unpleasant interaction happens between a customer and an employee, the organization tends to make every effort to appease the customer while sometimes ignoring the feelings of the employee. Given the robust emotional influence and the importance of employees' mood in service quality, it is critical for organizations or supervisors to take care of their employees in order to help them reach better psychological well-being.

For service employees who are required to display positive emotion toward the customers, they should be encouraged to make effective use of opportunities to compensate their resource pool and heal their emotions. For example, employees should be encouraged to take credits for themselves from pleasant customer interactions. Also, they should be trained in terms of how to deal with aggressive and demanding customer mistreatment and regulate their emotions adaptively. For example, masking or faking should be avoided when interacting with a rude customer while a reasonable justification or reappraisal is beneficial for employees to get over the negative experiences of being mistreated by demanding customers. In addition, outside of workplace, it could be harmful to allow the negative memories further lingering because it makes the negative perception more accessible and could diminish one's self-efficacy.

### *Limitations and Future Research*

This study has several limitations and drives future research in several aspects. First of all, the cognitive appraisal model of emotion elicitation has been used to interpret the direct link between customer mistreatment and the lagged negative mood. However, the current study did not measure the immediate emotional reactions to

customer mistreatment. Given the argument that mood could be the residual of emotions with reorganization and reprocessing, an underlying assumption is that customer mistreatment events trigger intense negative emotions of employees. Simply measuring the frequency of customer mistreatment could not directly assure that there is an immediate emotional arousal. Accordingly, the lagged effect of customer mistreatment could be better explained by examining the valence and intensity of emotions right after customer interaction. Nevertheless, previous studies have shown consistent evidence from both lab and field data that customer mistreatment triggers intense negative emotions, such as anger and frustration (e.g., Dallimore et al., 2007; Rupp & Spencer, 2006; Zapata-Phelan et al., 2009), which alleviates this missing variable concern.

Second, based on the current findings and the additional analysis on the association between morning mood and customer mistreatment frequency, it is possible that there is a cyclic process linking service employee's mood, treatment quality they receive and perceive, and emotional exhaustion on a daily basis. However, given the current design, it is difficult to explain the positive association between morning negative mood and reported customer mistreatment. Future research may explore the mechanisms underlying this potential relationship.

Third, as one of the first studies that attempt to specify different forms of customer mistreatment, the current study has proposed the distinctions between aggressive and demanding customer mistreatment behaviors. However, no systematic hypotheses were developed and tested to differentiate them. Given the current

differentiating findings across these two forms of mistreatment, future studies should take a further step to examine the affective versus cognitive resource natures.

Fourth, the current study only examines a small number of off-line emotion regulation strategies with a focus on the maladaptive ones which were hypothesized to prolong the negative effect of customer mistreatment. Rumination and social sharing have been tested as commonly used cognitive engagement strategies and behavioral engagement strategies respectively. According to Augustine and Hemenover's (2009) meta-analysis, cognitive and behavioral distraction is only one of the most effective strategies for emotion regulation in terms of emotion recovery. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to test more emotion regulation strategies, especially the adaptive strategies, in the emotional labor context.

Fifth, the current study has focused on the within-person process during customer-employee interactions, but the effects found at the within-person level may vary depending on individual differences of employees. For example, the affect-based perspective may work better for service employees with higher levels of trait anger or negative affectivity, such that aggressive mistreatment or surface acting might be more influential for them given the affective nature. The resource-based perspective may work better for service employees with less resource due to shorter tenure or lower levels of emotional intelligence which both indicate the resource availability. Therefore, future studies are recommended to examine the cross-level effects of stable individual level factors. This will also help clarify affect-based and resource-based perspectives.

In terms of methodological limitations, first, all the variables examined in this

study were measured by self-report. Thus, a potential concern with the results is that they may be contaminated by common method variances. However, the measures of predictors (i.e., customer mistreatment and positive customer-service events) and mediator (i.e., emotional exhaustion) are separated in time from the measures of outcome (i.e., negative mood in the next morning). In addition, given that the measures of customer mistreatment and positive customer-service events are behavior-based, they are less likely to be biased by self-report.

In a related vein, the daily diary design may trigger demand effect and introduce reactive and common-source bias. Specifically, because of the repetitive day-to-day surveys, employees might intentionally seek for the potential linkage between their mood, emotional exhaustion, and the treatment they received from customers, which could enlarge the observed associations between these constructs. Although employees might become more aware of their emotional status and the quality of customer treatment, the demand effect was not able to explain significant moderations found in the current study. Nevertheless, future studies may use objective measures (e.g., customer service monitoring records) or other-reported measures (e.g., customer-reported employee sabotage) to replicate the current findings.

Second, the generalizability of the current findings may be limited by the use of Chinese sample. Although the operation and managerial practice may be similar across call centers in China and other countries (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993), Chinese culture has the tradition to view one's politeness in social interactions as a virtue. Therefore, this cultural environment may make customer mistreatment a more

severe type of social transgression for service employees. As such, the current relationship between daily customer mistreatment and its emotional outcomes may be stronger than those would be observed in Western cultures. In terms of the emotion regulation, given the strong social display rule in Chinese culture, Chinese people may tend to suppress their emotional expression to a larger extent than people from Western culture in regular social interactions. In this situation, emotion regulation could be less effortful for Chinese people, and surface regulation may be less likely to trigger an unfavorable response in interaction partners. Therefore, the findings regarding emotion regulation in the current study are conservative and should be stronger if examined in Western culture. Future research should cross-validate the current findings using employee samples from different cultures. In addition, the daily customer mistreatment measure we used was relatively narrow due to the call center research scenario, which may potentially limit the generalizability of the construct. Future research needs to develop more general measures for customer mistreatment to fit other service settings.

### *Conclusion*

The current study has supported a mediation model in which service employees' mood and customer mistreatment they receive predict daily emotional exhaustion, which in turn impact their negative mood in the following morning. The proximal and lagged effects of service employees' affective states and customer mistreatment on employees' well-being can be interpreted by applying affect-based and resource-based theoretical perspectives. Further, service employees use various emotion regulation strategies during and after their interactions with customers.

Regarding on-line emotion regulation strategies used during interactions, surface acting has been shown to strengthen the detrimental effect of aggressive mistreatment, while deep acting strategies weakened the detrimental effect of demanding mistreatment on the proximal well-being outcome (i.e., emotional exhaustion). The inconsistency across two types of customer mistreatment may be due to the affect-versus resource-focused natures of the regulatory strategies. Regarding off-line emotion regulation strategies used after work, both rumination and social sharing of negative customer-related experiences exacerbated the lagged effect of customer mistreatment. This study has made important theoretical contributions toward the relevant literature by reviewing and organizing multiple theoretical models. Future studies are recommended to validate the current findings in other samples and further explore the differential effects between different types of customer mistreatment as well as the multiple roles of employees' emotion regulation.

## Appendix A Scales for Daily Measures

### Afternoon Assessment

#### **Daily Customer Mistreatment: Aggressive and Demanding Mistreatment**

Instruction: The following statements describe many situations that may occur in your interaction with customers. Please think over your work today and indicate the frequency that your customers treated you in the following ways during today's work: 0 = never, 1 = a few times, 2 = half of the times, 3 = a majority of the times, and 4 = all the time.

##### *Aggressive Mistreatment Items:*

1. Vented their bad mood out on you.
2. Yelled at you.
3. Spoke aggressively to you.
4. Got angry at you even over minor matters.
5. Argued with you the whole time throughout the call.
6. Refused to listen to you.
7. Cut you off mid sentence.
8. Doubted your ability.
9. Used condescending language to you.

##### *Demanding Mistreatment Items:*

1. Demanded special treatment.
2. Thought they were more important than others.
3. Asked you to do things they could do by themselves.
4. Did not understand that you had to comply with certain rules.

5. Complained without reason.
6. Made exorbitant demands.
7. Insisted on demands that are irrelevant to your service.
8. Were impatient.
9. Made demands that you could not deliver.

### **Daily Positive Treatment by Customers**

Instruction: The following statements describe many situations that may occur in your interaction with customers. Please think over your work today and indicate the frequency that your customers treated you in the following ways during today's work:  
0 = never, 1 = a few times, 2 = half of the times, 3 = a majority of the times, and 4 = all the time.

1. Expressed his/her satisfaction with my service.
2. Expressed understanding of the difficulty in my job.
3. Complimented my service.
4. Had a pleasant conversation with me.
5. Thanked me for solving his/her problem.
6. Treated me politely.
7. Appreciated my service.

### **On-line Emotion Regulation Strategies**

Instruction: Facing the following situations, how did you regulate your emotional expression toward your customers? Please check the strategies that you used in dealing with each situation. You can check more than one if applicable:

1. Mask (i.e., hiding felt emotion while expressing an unfelt emotion at the same time, e.g., you hide your anger but pretended to be friendly to your customer)
2. Amplify (i.e., increasing the intensity of the expression and showing more emotion than is felt)
3. Deamplify (i.e., decreasing the intensity of expression and showing less emotion than is felt)
4. Neutralize (i.e., hiding felt emotion and showing none)
5. Qualifying (i.e., expressing felt emotion but adding a smile to it as an explanation about your intentions or thoughts regarding what you are feeling, e.g., you expressed anger but added a smile indicating that “my anger is reasonable but I will not go too far.”)
6. Reappraise (i.e., always thinking “a customer is always right” first and making effort to sincerely feel the positive emotion that is required by organization)
7. Expression (i.e., expressing naturally felt emotions without any modification)

### **Emotional Exhaustion**

Instruction: Please indicate the extent to which each of following items described your feelings while you are at work today:

0 = extremely disagree, 1 = moderately disagree, 2 = slightly disagree, 3 = uncertain,

4 = slightly agree, 5 = moderately agree, 6 = extremely agree

1. I feel emotionally drained from my work today.
2. I feel used up at the end of today’s work.
3. Today, I dread once I thought I had to continue this job.
4. I feel burned out from my work today.

5. I feel frustrated by today's job.
6. I feel I'm working too hard on my job today.

### **Morning Assessment**

#### **Morning Negative Mood**

Instruction: Please indicate the extent to which each of 16 words described your mood now by circling on the appropriate response:

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = moderately disagree, 3 = uncertain, 4 = moderately agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

1. Jittery
2. Ashamed
3. Nervous
4. Hostile
5. Guilty
6. Angry
7. Dejected
8. Sad

#### **Rumination**

Instruction: Please rate how much you had the following experiences in the last night:

0 = not at all true for me and 5 = extremely true for me.

1. I couldn't stop thinking about the bad experience my client gave to me yesterday.
2. Thoughts and feelings about how badly my client treated me yesterday kept running
3. Strong feelings about what my client did to me yesterday kept bubbling up.

4. Memories of yesterday's bad experience with my client kept coming back to me.
5. I brooded about how badly my client treated me yesterday.
6. I found it difficult not to think about the negative feelings my clients caused me yesterday.
7. Even when I was engaged in other tasks, I thought about how badly my client treated me yesterday.
8. I found myself playing the bad experience with clients yesterday over and over in my mind.

### **Social Sharing**

Instruction: Please rate how much you had the following experiences in the last night:

0 = not at all true for me and 5 = extremely true for me.

1. I talked about the bad experience my client gave to me with my spouse/girlfriend/boyfriend.
2. I talked about how badly my client treated me yesterday with other family members.
3. I talked about yesterday's bad experience at work with my friends.
4. I talked about my bad experience in serving my client yesterday with my colleagues.

## Appendix B Principal Component Analysis of Customer Treatment

Given the formative nature of the customer treatment scale, a principal component analysis was conducted to examine its structure. Principal component analysis suggested a 3-component solution, cumulatively explaining 73.01% of the total variance. The 3-component solution supported the expected structure of customer treatment scale. Given the potential associations among these components, I used direct oblimin as the rotation method. The loadings were presented in Table Appendix-B1. Almost all variables/items were highly loaded onto their corresponding components except Items 16 and 18. Nevertheless, Items 16 and 18 were still counted as items measuring demanding mistreatment based on their unambiguous contents. The correlations between components were presented in Table Appendix-B2. Accordingly, there was a large correlation between two customer mistreatment components (i.e., aggressive mistreatment and demanding mistreatment,  $r = .51$ ), while the correlations between two mistreatment component and the positive treatment component were small.

**Table 1 Affect-based perspective and resource-based perspective**

	Affect-based Perspective	Resource-based Perspective
<b>Customer Mistreatment</b>	Aggressive mistreatment	Demanding mistreatment
	Cognitive appraisal model for emotional elicitation	Conservation of resource theory
<b>Employees' Reactions to Customer Treatment</b>		Primary and secondary resource loss framework
<b>Employees' Emotion Regulation</b>	Emotional contagion model	
	Theory for mood development	Social interaction model
		Resource allocation in self-regulation
	Control theory of emotion regulation and goal hierarchy	

**Table 2 Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations of within-subject variables for whole sample**

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Negative mood (day <i>t</i> morning)	1.76	.77							
2. Aggressive treatment (day <i>t</i> )	.40	.58	.30 **						
3. Demanding treatment (day <i>t</i> )	.62	.70	.28 **	.86 **					
4. Positive treatment (day <i>t</i> )	1.75	1.15	-.20 **	.10 **	.13 **				
5. Emotional exhaustion (day <i>t</i> )	1.73	1.63	.31 **	.38 **	.41 **	-.16 **			
6. Rumination (day <i>t</i> after work)	.43	.88	.30 **	.40 **	.40 **	-.01	.36 **		
7. Social sharing (day <i>t</i> after work)	1.62	.81	.07 *	.12 **	.13 **	.03	.04	.29 **	
8. Negative mood (day <i>t</i> +1 morning)	1.74	.78	.70 **	.31 **	.30 **	-.19 **	.33 **	.37 **	.09 **

Note. N = 1181-1185. \* p &lt; .05. \*\* p &lt; .01.

**Table 3 Multilevel model for testing daily emotional exhaustion as a mediator**

		Predicting day $t$ 's Emotional Exhaustion		Predicting day $t+1$ 's Morning Negative Mood			
		Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE		
Level 1	Variance	0.83	**	0.09	0.20	**	0.03
Level 2							
Random intercept	Intercept	0.02		0.10	1.75	**	0.03
	Residual variance	0.10	**	0.13	0.05	*	0.02
Random slope for day $t$ 's morning negative mood	Intercept	0.17	*	0.08	0.41	**	0.07
	Variance	0.24		0.18	0.09	**	0.02
Random slope for day $t$ 's aggressive mistreatment	Intercept	0.38	*	0.17	0.13	*	0.07
	Variance	0.40		0.29	0.04		0.09
Random slope for day $t$ 's demanding mistreatment	Intercept	0.42	**	0.13	0.08		0.07
	Variance	0.22		0.14	0.12	*	0.05
Random slope for day $t$ 's emotional exhaustion	Intercept			0.05	**	0.02	
	Variance			0.01		0.01	

\* p < .05. \*\* p < .01.

**Table 4 Multilevel model for testing daily positive treatment as a within-level moderator**

			Predicting day $t$ 's Emotional Exhaustion		Predicting day $t+1$ 's Morning Negative Mood	
			Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE
Level 1	Variance		0.81	**	0.09	0.20
Level 2					**	0.03
Random intercept	Intercept	0.03		0.09	1.75	** 0.03
	Residual variance	1.02	**	0.13	0.05	** 0.02
Random slope for day $t$ 's morning negative mood	Intercept	0.14	*	0.08	0.41	** 0.07
	Variance	0.20		0.18	0.08	** 0.02
Random slope for day $t$ 's aggressive mistreatment	Intercept	0.39	**	0.18	0.13	* 0.08
	Variance	0.42		0.26	0.03	0.10
Random slope for day $t$ 's demanding mistreatment	Intercept	0.46	**	0.13	0.08	0.08
	Variance	0.19		0.14	0.12	* 0.05
Random slope for day $t$ 's positive treatment	Intercept	-0.16	**	0.05	-0.03	0.02
	Variance	0.03		0.03	0.01	0.01
Random slope for day $t$ 's emotional exhaustion	Intercept				0.05	** 0.02
	Variance				0.01	0.01
Fixed slope for aggressive mistreatment x positive treatment	0.17		0.13		0.00	0.08
Fixed slope for demanding mistreatment x positive treatment	-0.20	*	0.11		-0.01	0.05

\* p &lt; .05. \*\* p &lt; .01.

**Table 5 Multilevel model for testing daily off-line regulation strategies as within-level moderators**

		Predicting day $t$ 's Emotional Exhaustion		Predicting day $t+1$ 's Morning Negative Mood	
		Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE
Level 1	Variance	0.81	**	0.09	0.17
Level 2					
Random intercept	Intercept	0.03		0.09	1.75
	Residual variance	1.04	**	0.13	0.06
Random slope for day $t$ 's morning negative mood	Intercept	0.15	*	0.08	0.34
	Variance	0.18		0.19	0.08
Random slope for day $t$ 's aggressive mistreatment	Intercept	0.36	*	0.18	0.08
	Variance	0.39		0.24	0.03
Random slope for day $t$ 's demanding mistreatment	Intercept	0.46	**	0.14	0.06
	Variance	0.19		0.14	0.07
Random slope for day $t$ 's positive treatment	Intercept	-0.16	**	0.05	-0.03
	Variance	0.03		0.03	0.01
Random slope for day $t$ 's emotional exhaustion	Intercept			0.04	**
	Variance			0.01	
Random slope for day $t$ 's rumination	Intercept			0.16	**
	Variance			0.04	

Random slope for day  $t$ 's social sharing

	Intercept		-0.01	0.03
	Variance		0.03	0.02
Fixed slope for aggressive mistreatment x positive treatment	0.16		-0.03	0.08
Fixed slope for demanding mistreatment x positive treatment	-0.19	*	0.01	0.06
Fixed slope for aggressive mistreatment x rumination			0.11	*
Fixed slope for demanding mistreatment x rumination			-0.14	**
Fixed slope for aggressive mistreatment x social sharing			-0.03	0.07
Fixed slope for demanding mistreatment x social sharing			0.11	*
<hr/>				

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

**Table 6 Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations of within-subject variables for reduced sample**

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Negative mood (day <i>t</i> morning)	1.83	.78					
2. Aggressive mistreatment (day <i>t</i> )	.54	.62	.29 **				
3. Demanding mistreatment (day <i>t</i> )	.83	.39	.26 **	.83 **			
4. Positive treatment (day <i>t</i> )	1.89	1.02	-.26 **	.03	.04		
5. Emotional exhaustion (day <i>t</i> )	1.99	1.64	.30 **	.34 **	.36 **	-.27 **	
6. Rumination (day <i>t</i> after work)	.54	.97	.30 **	.36 **	.37 **	-.07 *	.36 **
7. Social sharing (day <i>t</i> after work)	1.68	.80	.08 *	.09 *	.08 *	.06	.04
8. Negative mood (day <i>t</i> +1 morning)	1.82	.78	.69 **	.31 **	.29 **	-.26 **	.32 **
9. Expressing (day <i>t</i> )	.07	.18	.07 *	-.04	-.02	-.04	-.06
10. Deep acting (day <i>t</i> )	.58	.45	-.18 **	-.08 *	-.07	.17 **	-.13 **
11. Surface acting (day <i>t</i> )	.57	.51	-.03	.06	.02	-.10 **	.05

**Table 6 (Continued)**

	6	7	8	9	10
1. Negative mood (day $t$ morning)					
2. Aggressive mistreatment (day $t$ )					
3. Demanding mistreatment (day $t$ )					
4. Positive treatment (day $t$ )					
5. Emotional exhaustion (day $t$ )					
6. Rumination (day $t$ after work)					
7. Social sharing (day $t$ after work)	.29 **				
8. Negative mood (day $t+1$ morning)	.37 **	.10 **			
9. Expressing (day $t$ )	-.03	.06	.08 *		
10. Deep acting (day $t$ )	-.08 *	-.06	-.19 **	-.11 **	
11. Surface acting (day $t$ )	-.04	.03	-.05	-.12 **	-.49 **

Note. N = 1181-1185. \* p < .05. \*\* p < .01.

**Table 7 Multilevel model for testing daily emotional exhaustion as a mediator (reduced sample)**

		Predicting day $t$ 's Emotional Exhaustion		Predicting day $t+1$ 's Morning Negative Mood		
		Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE	
Level 1	Variance	0.82	**	0.10	0.19	** 0.03
Level 2						
Random intercept	Intercept	-0.02		0.11	1.83	** 0.04
	Residual variance	1.14	**	0.16	0.08	* 0.03
Random slope for day $t$ 's morning negative mood	Intercept	0.19	**	0.10	0.36	** 0.08
	Variance	0.37		0.20	0.10	** 0.02
Random slope for day $t$ 's aggressive mistreatment	Intercept	0.35	**	0.17	0.14	* 0.08
	Variance	0.43		0.28	0.04	0.10
Random slope for day $t$ 's demanding mistreatment	Intercept	0.35	**	0.13	0.07	0.08
	Variance	0.16		0.14	0.11	0.07
Random slope for day $t$ 's emotional exhaustion	Intercept				0.05	** 0.02
	Variance				0.01	0.01

\* p < .05. \*\* p < .01.

**Table 8 Multilevel model for testing daily off-line regulation strategies as within-level moderators (reduced sample)**

		Predicting day $t$ 's Emotional Exhaustion		Predicting day $t+1$ 's Morning Negative Mood	
		Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE
Level 1	Variance	0.82	**	0.11	0.14
Level 2				**	0.03
Random intercept	Intercept	-0.02		0.10	1.83
	Residual variance	1.04	**	0.15	0.08
Random slope for day $t$ 's morning negative mood	Intercept	0.16	*	0.10	0.28
	Variance	0.28		0.20	0.11
Random slope for day $t$ 's aggressive mistreatment	Intercept	0.34	**	0.17	0.10
	Variance	0.34		0.23	0.06
Random slope for day $t$ 's demanding mistreatment	Intercept	0.37	**	0.14	0.04
	Variance	0.13		0.14	0.05
Random slope for day $t$ 's positive treatment	Intercept	-0.21	**	0.07	-0.06
	Variance	0.05		0.06	0.01
Random slope for day $t$ 's emotional exhaustion	Intercept			0.03	*
	Variance			0.01	0.02
Random slope for day $t$ 's rumination	Intercept			0.16	**
	Variance			0.06	0.05

Random slope for day  $t$ 's social sharing

Intercept		0.01	0.04
Variance		0.03	0.02
Fixed slope for aggressive mistreatment x positive treatment	0.17	0.13	-0.02
Fixed slope for demanding mistreatment x positive treatment	-0.15	0.13	0.04
Fixed slope for aggressive mistreatment x rumination		0.13	** 0.06
Fixed slope for demanding mistreatment x rumination		-0.15	** 0.05
Fixed slope for aggressive mistreatment x social sharing		-0.05	0.07
Fixed slope for demanding mistreatment x social sharing		0.15	** 0.06

\* p < .05. \*\* p < .01.

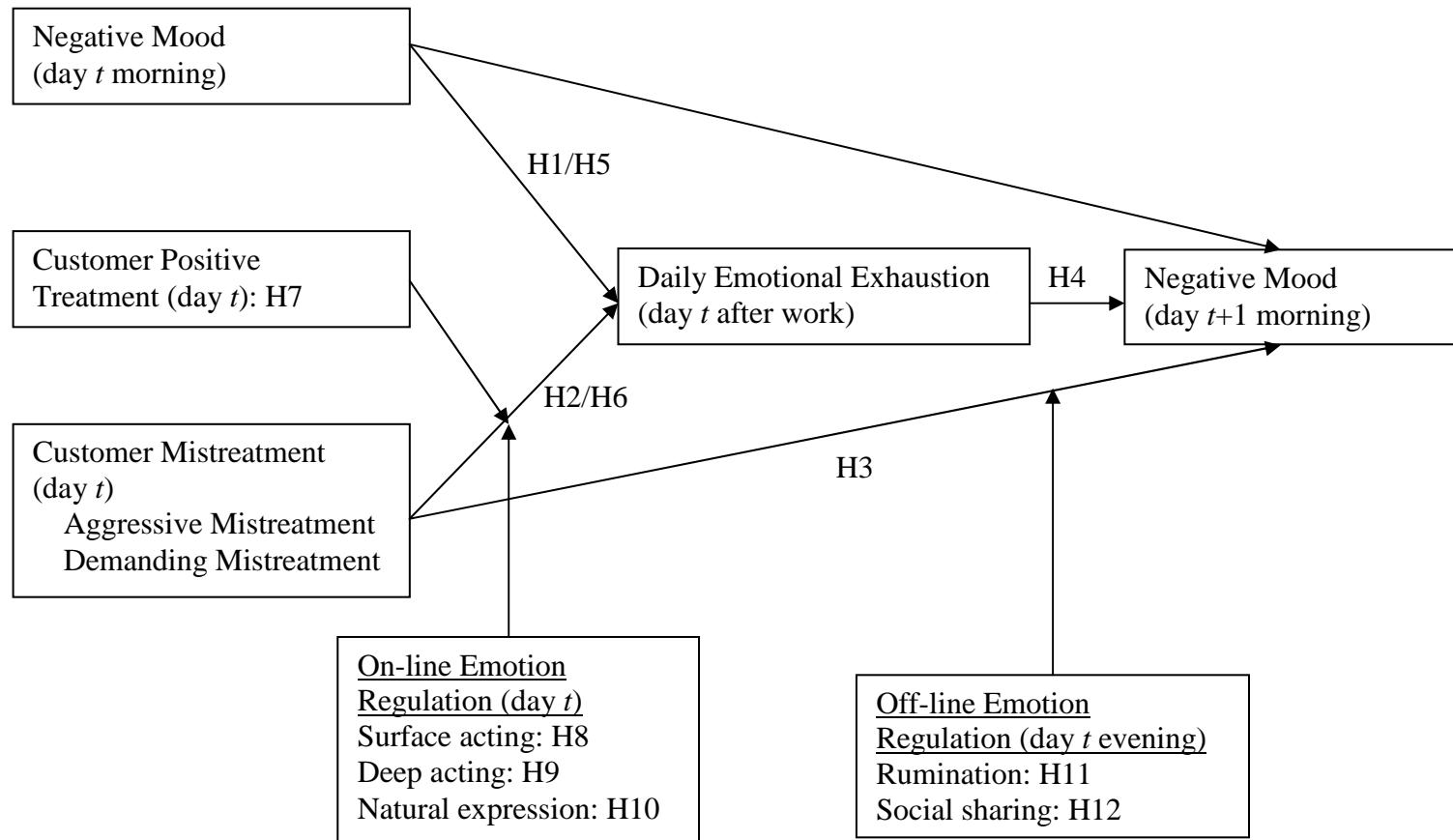
**Table Appendix-B1 Factor loadings resulting from principal component analysis with direct oblimin rotation**

	Items	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
1	Vented their bad mood out on you.	0.48		
2	Yelled at you.	0.78		
3	Spoke aggressively to you.	0.89		
4	Got angry at you even over minor matters.	0.87		
5	Argued with you the whole time throughout the call.	0.90		
6	Refused to listen to you.	0.70		
7	Cut you off mid sentence.	0.47		
8	Doubted your ability.	0.87		
9	Used condescending language to you.	0.81		
10	Demanded special treatment.		0.80	
11	Thought they were more important than others.		0.83	
12	Asked you to do things they could do by themselves.		0.74	
13	Did not understand that you had to comply with certain rules.		0.68	
14	Complained without reason.		0.43	
15	Made exorbitant demands.		0.51	
16	Insisted on demands that are irrelevant to your service.		0.16	
17	Were impatient.		0.39	
18	Made demands that you could not deliver.		0.03	
19	Expressed his/her satisfaction with my service.			0.91
20	Expressed understanding of the difficulty in my job.			0.75
21	Complimented my service.			0.86
22	Had a pleasant conversation with me.			0.92
23	Thanked me for solving his/her problem.			0.86
24	Treated me politely.			0.83
25	Appreciated my service.			0.92

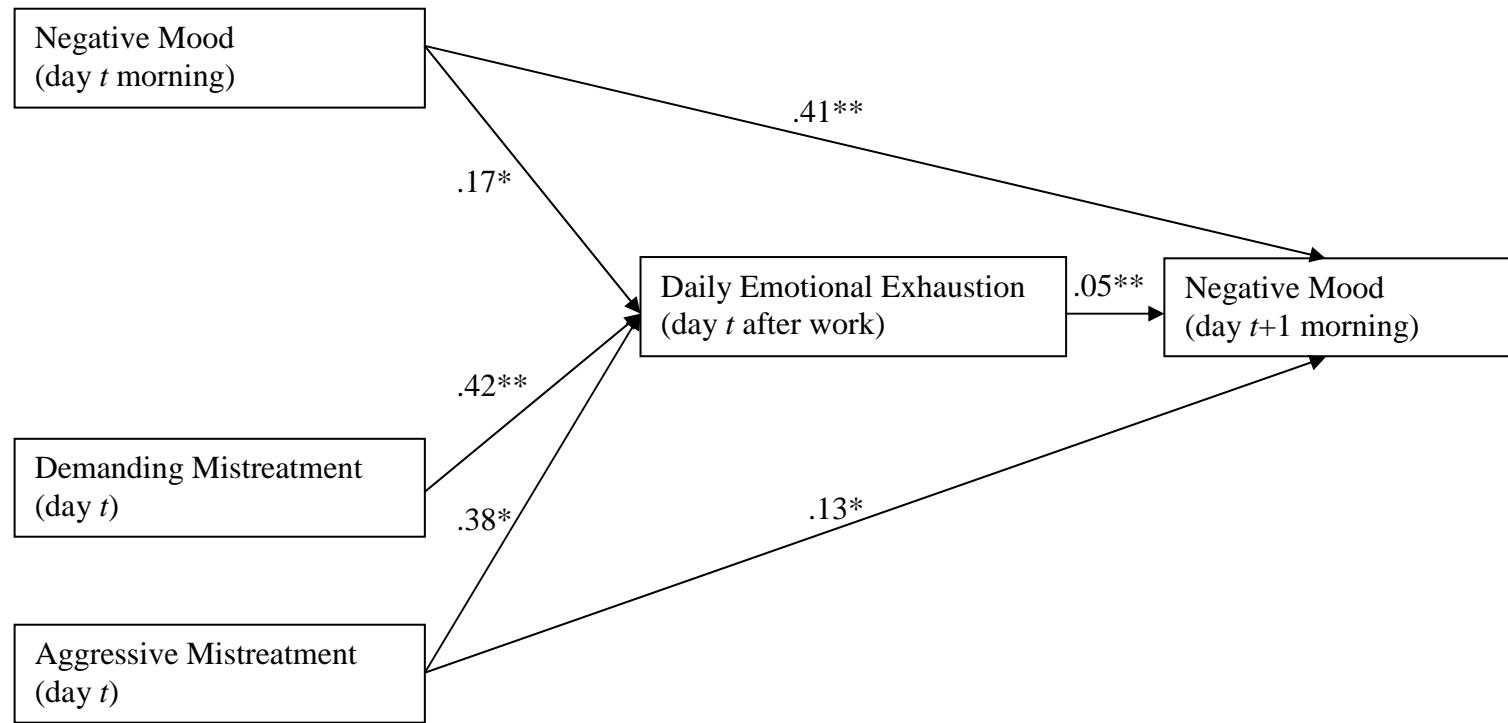
**Table Appendix-B2 Component Correlation Matrix**

Component	Aggressive mistreatment	Demanding mistreatment	Positive treatment
Aggressive mistreatment			
Demanding mistreatment	0.51		
Positive treatment	0.06	0.08	

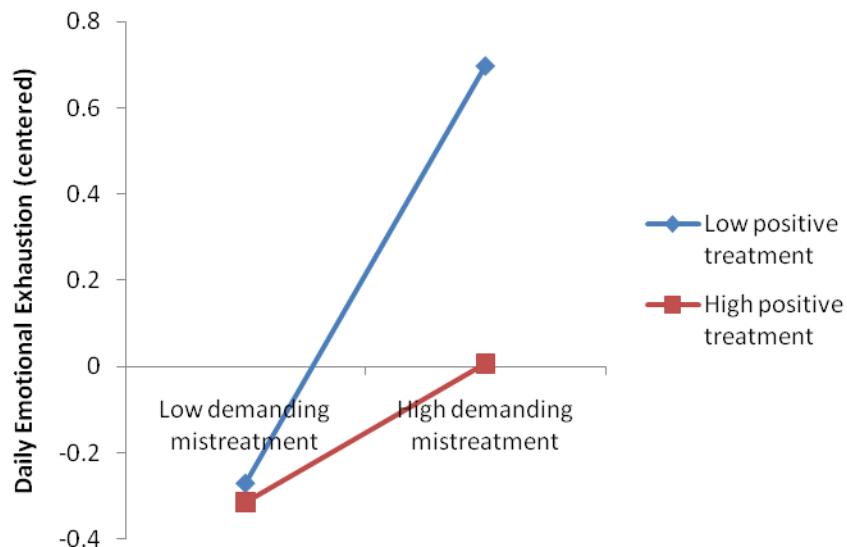
**Figure 1 Hypothesized model**



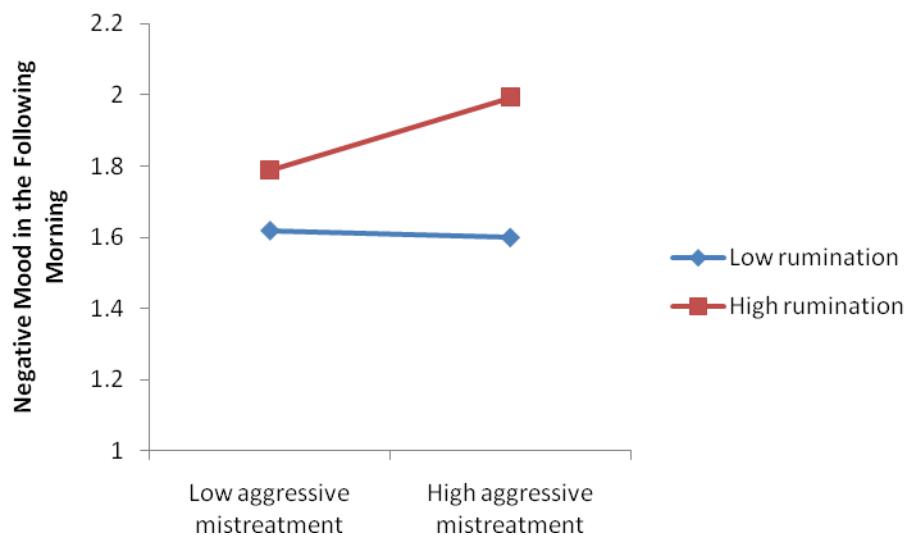
**Figure 2 Resulting mediation model with coefficient estimates**



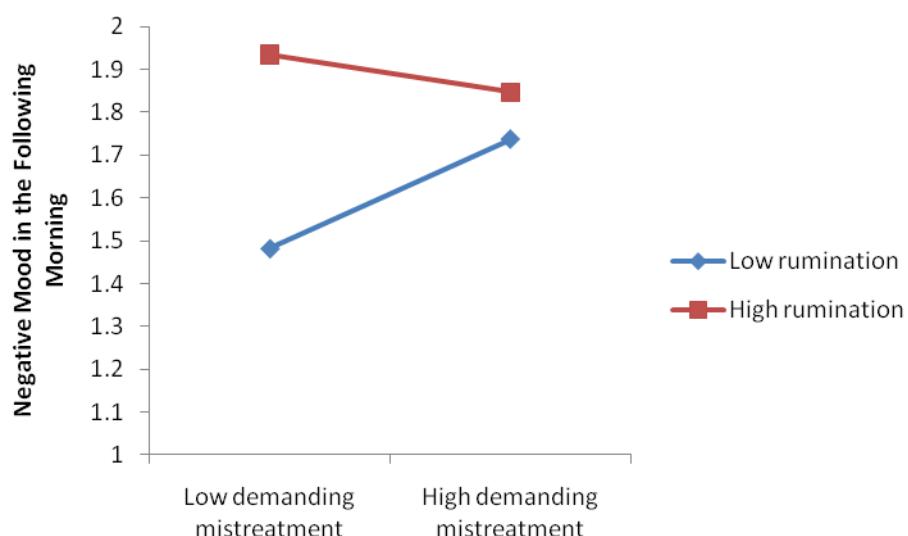
**Figure 3 Moderating effect of positive treatment on demanding mistreatment in predicting daily emotional exhaustion**



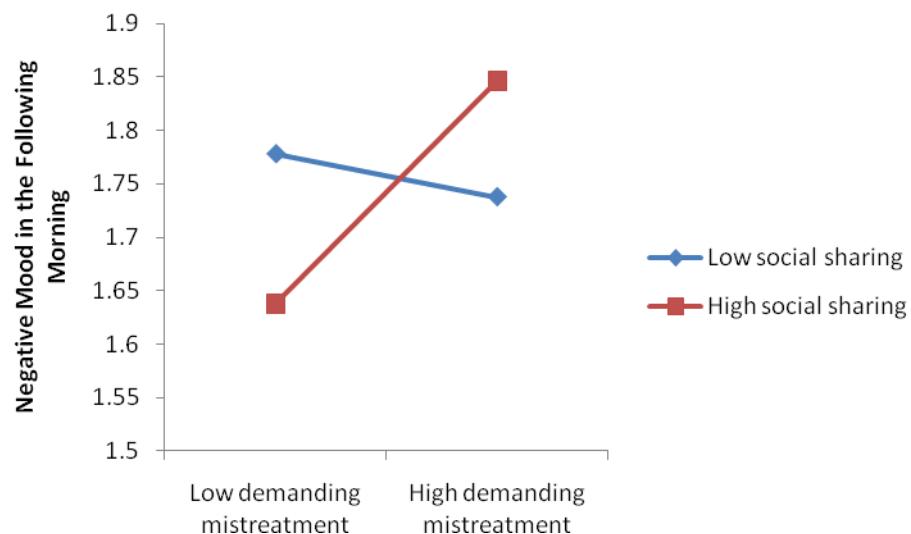
**Figure 4a Moderating effects of rumination on customer aggressive mistreatment in predicting lagged negative mood**



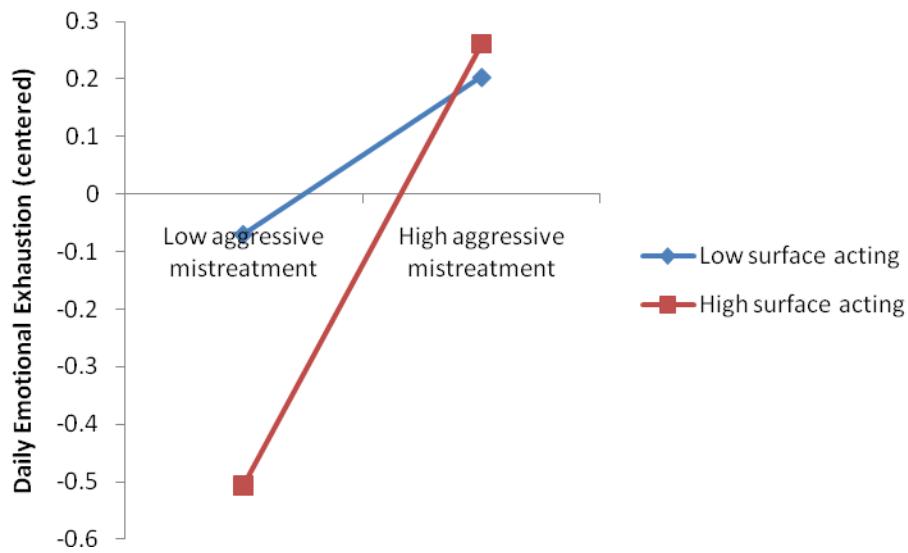
**Figure 4b Moderating effects of rumination on customer demanding mistreatment in predicting lagged negative mood**



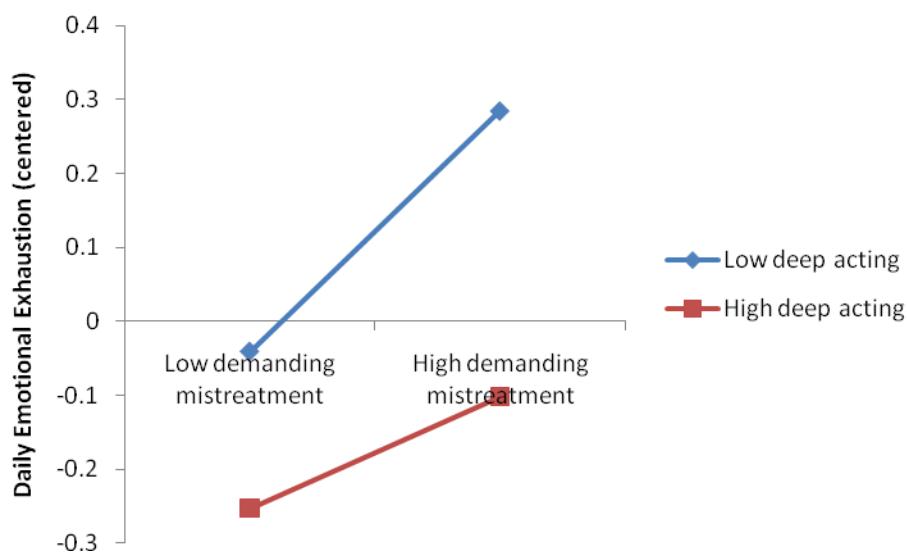
**Figure 5 Moderating effects of social sharing on customer mistreatment in predicting lagged negative mood**



**Figure 6a Moderating effects surface acting on customer aggressive mistreatment in predicting daily emotional exhaustion**



**Figure 6b Moderating effects deep acting on customer demanding mistreatment in predicting daily emotional exhaustion**



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