

The relationship between customer-perceived employee emotional competence (EEC) and rapport as drivers of customer satisfaction and customer loyalty: An analysis across different service types

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to investigate the differential effect of the dimensions of customer-perceived EEC (i.e., perception, understanding, and regulation of customer emotions), on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, as well as how and to what extent rapport mediates these effects. Next to that, these relationships were investigated across two service types: (1) high-contact, customized, personal services, and (2) moderate contact, standardized services. The data were collected by means of an anonymous web-based questionnaire. For analyzing the data, partial least squares (PLS) path modeling was applied. The results show that the EEC dimensions do have different effects on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Also, these effects are dependent on service type. In high-contact, customized, personal services, regulation of customer emotions (RCE) has a positive relationship with both customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, whereas in moderate contact, standardized services, understanding of customer emotions (UCE) has a positive relationship with customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, and perception of customer emotions (PCE) has a positive relationship with customer loyalty. Furthermore, the mediating role of rapport appears to be dependent on service type. In high-contact, customized, personal services, there is a positive relationship between rapport and customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Here, rapport mediates the relationship between RCE and customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. In moderate contact, standardized services however, rapport is not related to customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. These findings suggest that, depending on the service type, managers of service firms should select and train employees on the emotional competences that are relevant for creating customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

Keywords: employee emotional competence; rapport; customer satisfaction; customer loyalty; service type; emotionally charged service encounter

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1.0 Introduction

During service encounters, customers often experience intense emotions (Delcourt, Gremler, de Zanel & van Riel, 2017; Gabbott, Tsarenko & Mok, 2011; Strizhakova, Tsarenko & Ruth, 2012). This is especially true in the case of (1) negative services (i.e., unwanted or stressful service situations); (2) complex and high-involvement services; (3) services for which bad news is often delivered to customers; and (4) services subject to frequent failures (Bonifield & Cole, 2007; Dallimore, Sparks & Butcher, 2007; Delcourt et al., 2017; Spanjol, Cui, Nataka, Sharp, Crawford, Xiao & Watson-Manheim, 2015). Contact employees that are involved in such emotionally charged service encounters (i.e., service encounters with high affective content for the customer), have to deal with customers' emotions. However, employees vary in their ability to understand the emotional needs of customers (Bitner, Booms & Tetreault, 1990; Menon & Dubé, 2000). Service research almost exclusively focuses on employee emotional intelligence (EEI) (i.e., an employee's potential to behave in emotionally competent ways) to investigate the impact of employee emotion management on customer outcomes in service encounters (e.g., Giardini & Frese, 2008; Kernbach & Schutte, 2005; Weng, 2008). Focusing almost exclusively on EEI, previous research on employee emotion management in service encounters lacks a good understanding of the role of employee emotional competence (EEC) (i.e., actual display of emotionally competent behaviors by employees) in influencing customers' experiences (Delcourt, Gremler, van Riel & van Birgelen, 2016). Although prior research uses both terms for the same concept, Delcourt et al. (2016) find empirical evidence for conceptual discriminant validity.

The role of EEC in service encounters should be investigated in more depth, as it is the service employees' actual display of emotionally competent behaviors that counts. This can be done from an employee or supervisor perspective, using employee self-reports or supervisor reports, or from a customer perspective, using customer reports. Prior research has predominantly adopted an employee or supervisor perspective. However, employee self-reports or supervisor reports have several limitations when used in service encounters to predict customer outcomes (Delcourt, Gremler, van Riel & van Birgelen, 2013). They are subject to important biases, such as social desirability, faking, distortion, extreme leniency and strictness (Day & Carroll, 2008; Prendergast & Topel, 1993). Next to that, customers are in the best position to evaluate EEC during service encounters (Delcourt et al., 2013). Customer perceptions of employee performance during service encounters are the most important predictors of important customer outcomes such as customer satisfaction and

customer loyalty (Bitner, 1990; Delcourt et al., 2016). The role of EEC in service encounters should thus be further investigated from a customer perspective.

Contrary to prior research, Delcourt et al. (2013) focus on the actual display of emotionally competent behaviors rather than on the potential to display emotionally competent behaviors. Next to that, they measure EEC from a customer perspective. In their research, they investigate the relationships between customer-perceived EEC and customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, as well as the role of rapport (i.e., personal connection between two interactants) as a mediator in these relationships. Delcourt et al. (2013) find that customer-perceived EEC has a positive effect on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty and that these effects are partially mediated by rapport. These results suggest that rapport is an important construct in the relationship between EEC and customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. However, these findings should be treated with caution, because of the measure Delcourt et al. (2013) use for EEC. In order to measure customer-perceived EEC, they use an existing measure of EI and adapt it in order to use it for customer-reported evaluations of EEC during service encounters. However, existing measures of EI cannot be fully adapted to evaluate EEC as perceived by customers (Delcourt et al., 2016). These measures are not made to be applied to discrete service encounters. EEC varies across encounters and should thus be measured with regard to specific service encounters. Next to that, most of them, including the WLEIS scale being used by Delcourt et al. (2013), are developed to be completed by the person being evaluated.

Because of these limitations of existing EI measures for examining EEC in service encounters from a customer perspective, Delcourt et al. (2016) developed and validated a new measure for examining EEC in service encounters from a customer perspective. They find support for a three-factor EEC model with three underlying dimensions: perception, understanding, and regulation of customer emotions. Each of the dimensions refers to a unique aspect of customer-perceived EEC and may behave independently. An employee may for example score high on one of the dimensions, but low on the other two. Also, not all three dimensions are necessarily equally important for creating rapport, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. It may be possible that in order to create for example customer satisfaction, one of the dimensions is more important than the other two.

This research further investigates the role of EEC and rapport from a customer perspective in the context of emotionally charged service encounters, using the scale for customer-perceived EEC by Delcourt et al. (2016). This is done by studying the differential effect of the dimensions of customer-perceived EEC, as distinguished by Delcourt et al.

(2016), on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, as well as how and to what extent rapport mediates these effects. Rapport is thus included as a mediator, as suggested by Delcourt et al. (2013). The results will give insights into the importance of the different dimensions of customer-perceived EEC for creating customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Next to that, service type is added as a moderator. Bowen (1990) developed an empirically based taxonomy of consumer services. According to this taxonomy, services can be grouped into three different service types, with each different characteristics. The first type is called “high-contact, customized, personal services”, the second type “moderate contact, semi-customized, non-personal services” and the third type “moderate contact, standardized services” (Bowen, 1990). The classification of services into these three service types is based on seven common service characteristics: (1) level of customization; (2) employee customer contact; (3) importance of employees; (4) differentiation; (5) ability of the customer to switch firms; (6) services affecting people or things; and (7) continuous versus discrete transactions (Bowen, 1990). EEC may not play an equally important role in all three service types. The possibility to demonstrate emotionally competent behaviors, as well as the importance of employees’ emotionally competent behaviors for creating rapport, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty, is expected to be dependent on service type. This can be explained on basis of the common service characteristics that are used to classify services into the different service types. The three service types differ on these characteristics. Dependent on these characteristics, in some services the possibility to demonstrate emotionally competent behaviors, as well as the importance of EEC for creating rapport, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, is expected to be higher as compared to others. This will be explained in more depth in the next chapter.

Although suggested by Delcourt et al. (2013), so far no study has investigated the role of EEC across the different service types being distinguished in Bowen’s taxonomy of consumer services. The role of EEC across these service types needs to be investigated, as the insights could be used for designing proper services for consumers, which in turn would hamper consumers to switch service firms. Depending on the service type, managers of service firms could train and select employees on the specific EEC dimensions that contribute to creating customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. This research thus contributes to service literature in two ways. First, the role of EEC and rapport in emotionally charged service encounters is further investigated. This is done by studying the differential effect of the dimensions of customer-perceived EEC, as distinguished by Delcourt et al. (2016), on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, as well as how and to what extent rapport

mediates these effects. Next to that, service type is added as a moderator, investigating the role of EEC across different service types.

In the next chapter the concepts EEI and EEC will be discussed in more depth, including the preference for a customer perspective and the measure for customer-perceived EEC developed by Delcourt et al. (2016). Next to that, the service types according to the typology developed by Bowen (1990) will be discussed. Based upon this review of the literature, hypotheses are formulated and a conceptual model is presented. After that, the methodology of this research will be discussed, followed by the presentation of the results of the analyses. Finally, the theoretical and managerial implications, as well as the limitations of the research and suggestions for further research, will be discussed.

2.0 Literature review

In this chapter the concepts EEI and EEC will be discussed in more depth. Next to that, attention will be paid to the preference for a customer perspective and the measure for customer-perceived EEC developed by Delcourt et al. (2016). Also, the service types according to the typology developed by Bowen (1990) will be discussed. Based upon this review of the literature, hypotheses are formulated with regard to the effects of EEC on customer satisfaction, EEC on customer loyalty, and the mediating role of rapport, taking into account the different dimensions of customer-perceived EEC and the different service types. Finally, a conceptual model is presented.

2.1 EEI and EEC

The concepts of EEI and EEC are derived from the more general concepts emotional intelligence (EI) and emotional competence (EC). EI refers to the potential ability to display emotionally competent behaviors (Zeidner, Matthews & Roberts, 2004). Having high EI does not necessarily mean that this potential to behave in an emotionally competent way is also realized (Delcourt et al., 2016). The actual displaying of emotionally competent behaviors is captured by the notion of EC (Zeidner et al., 2004).

Previous research predominantly focuses on EEI to investigate the impact of employee emotion management on customer outcomes in service encounters (e.g., Giardini & Frese, 2008; Kernbach & Schutte, 2005; Weng, 2008). Those studies measure EEI as perceived by employees or their supervisors, adopting an employee or supervisor perspective (Delcourt et al., 2016). Next to that, they measure EEI in general and thus treat it as a stable ability within an employee (Delcourt et al., 2016). Furthermore, they focus on an employee's potential ability to manage one's own emotions (i.e., intrapersonal emotional ability) instead of an employee's potential ability to manage others' emotions (i.e., interpersonal emotional ability) (Delcourt et al., 2016). Focusing almost exclusively on EEI, service research lacks a good understanding of the role of EEC in influencing customer outcomes in service encounters. However, it is the actual displaying of emotionally competent behaviors that counts. Contrary to EEI in previous research, EEC is related to a specific service encounter, because the actual display of emotionally competent behaviors varies across encounters (Delcourt et al., 2013; Delcourt et al., 2016). An employee's behavior can vary, depending on his or her mood and motivation as well as the customer's personality and emotional state (Delcourt et al., 2016). The role of EEC in emotionally charged service encounters should thus be studied with regard to specific service encounters instead of service encounters in general.

2.2 A customer perspective

The role of EEC in influencing customer outcomes in service encounters can be investigated from an employee or supervisor perspective, using employee self-reports or supervisor reports, or from a customer perspective, using customer reports. Customers, supervisors, and employees do not have the same perceptions of one encounter (Delcourt et al., 2016). Mattila and Enz (2002) suggest that customers and service employees do not use the same criteria to evaluate employee performance. They even find that customer and employee perceptions of employee performance might be negatively correlated. Thus, it is likely that employee self-perceptions, supervisor perceptions and customer perceptions of EEC in service encounters differ (Delcourt et al., 2013).

Employee self-reports or supervisor reports have several limitations when used in service encounters to predict customer outcomes (Delcourt et al., 2013). Employee self-reports suffer from the fact that people lack the ability to accurately evaluate their own performance (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). Next to that, employee self-reports are subject to social desirability, faking, and distortion, which are important biases (Day & Carroll, 2008). Supervisor reports are subject to biases such as extreme leniency and strictness (Prendergast & Topel, 1993). Using customer reports could lead to common method variance, because information for both independent and dependent variables comes from the same person (Delcourt et al., 2016). However, service research generally does not suffer badly from common method variance (Malhotra, Kim & Patil, 2006). Altogether, customer-reported EEC seems more reliable than employee- and supervisor-reported EEC (Delcourt et al., 2013).

Not only is customer-reported EEC preferred to employee- and supervisor-reported EEC because of above-mentioned limitations, customers are also in the best position to evaluate EEC during service encounters (Delcourt et al., 2013). Services managers want employees to be perceived as emotionally competent by customers, not employees or supervisors. In considering the customer's experience, customer perceptions are the best source of information (Delcourt et al., 2016). Customer perceptions of employee performance during service encounters are the most important predictors of important customer outcomes such as customer satisfaction and loyalty (Bitner, 1990; Delcourt et al., 2016). Employees' competence in managing customer emotions is an example of such employee performance.

Using a customer perspective for investigating the role of EEC in service encounters, the focus should be on interpersonal emotional ability rather than intrapersonal emotional ability, as customers should perceive service employees to actually display interpersonal emotionally competent behaviors (Delcourt et al., 2016). Altogether, the role of EEC in

service encounters should be investigated from a customer perspective, with regard to specific service encounters, while focusing on interpersonal competencies (Delcourt et al., 2016).

2.3 A measure for customer-perceived EEC

Existing measures of EI cannot be fully adapted for use in the context of customer-reported evaluations of EEC during service encounters. These measures are not made to be applied to discrete service encounters. Next to that, most of them are developed to be completed by the person being evaluated (Delcourt et al., 2016). Because of these limitations, Delcourt et al. (2016) developed and validated a new measure for examining EEC in service encounters from a customer perspective. They find support for a three-factor EEC model, which means that customer-perceived EEC can be viewed as a multidimensional construct with three underlying dimensions: perception, understanding, and regulation of customer emotions. In line with this, they define EEC as “employee demonstrated ability to perceive, understand, and regulate customer emotions in a service encounter to create and maintain an appropriate climate for service” (Delcourt et al., 2016, p.77). Each of the dimensions refers to a unique aspect of customer-perceived EEC.

The first dimension of customer-perceived EEC, perception of customer emotions (PCE) can be defined as an “employee’s actual performance in accurately observing customers’ emotions” (Delcourt et al., 2016, p.75). This dimension refers to an employee’s competence in accurately identifying a customer’s emotions based on his or her language, appearance, and behavior. If a customer is for example visibly upset because of a service failure, and the contact employee recognizes this, he or she could make this clear to the customer by for example mentioning that he or she sees that the customer is upset by the situation. The second dimension, understanding of customer emotions (UCE), can be defined as an “employee’s actual performance in understanding customers’ emotions” (Delcourt et al., 2016, p.75). This dimension refers to an employee’s competence in understanding a customer’s emotions, including the recognition of these emotions and the interpretation of their causes. If the contact employee who is involved in the service encounter with the visibly upset customer described previously not only recognizes his or her emotional state, but understands the situation as well, he or she could for example say something that makes clear that he or she understands why the customer is upset by the situation. Finally, regulation of customer emotions (RCE) can be defined as an “employee’s actual performance in managing customers’ emotions” (Delcourt et al., 2016, p.75). This dimension refers to an employee’s competence in managing a customer’s emotions (i.e., eliminating negative emotions and

increasing positive emotions). In order to regulate the customer's emotions, the contact employee in the example of the visibly upset customer can for example encourage the customer to suppress negative emotions, or rectify the situation by telling the customer that he or she will get a compensation because of the service failure.

All three dimensions thus refer to a unique aspect of customer-perceived EEC. It is possible that a service employee scores high on one of the dimensions, but low on the other two. An employee may for example be well able to perceive a customer's emotions, but not know how to regulate these emotions.

2.4 Service types

Bowen (1990) developed an empirically based taxonomy of consumer services that goes beyond industry boundaries. According to this taxonomy, services can be classified into three different service types on basis of the common characteristics they share. The first type is called "high-contact, customized, personal services", the second type "moderate contact, semi-customized, non-personal services" and the third type "moderate contact, standardized services" (Bowen, 1990). The classification of services into these three service types is based on seven common service characteristics: (1) level of customization; (2) employee customer contact; (3) importance of employees; (4) differentiation; (5) ability of the customer to switch firms; (6) services affecting people or things; and (7) continuous versus discrete transactions (Bowen, 1990).

Customization can be defined as "tailoring service characteristics to meet each customer's specific needs and preferences" (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011, p. 597). The first characteristic, level of customization, thus refers to the extent to which services are designed towards the needs of individual customers. The second characteristic, employee customer contact, has to do with the amount of interaction between employees and customers throughout the delivery of a service (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011). The extent to which customers interact with employees varies across services (Chase, 1978). The third characteristic, importance of employees, basically refers to the importance of the employee for providing the service to the customer. The fourth characteristic is differentiation. Service firms can differentiate themselves from competitors in several ways. The fifth characteristic, ability of the customer to switch firms, speaks for itself. In some service situations it is harder for customers to switch to a competing organization as compared to others. Next, services can affect either people or things. This characteristic has to do with the recipient of the service (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011). Services affecting people are directed at people's bodies (e.g.,

health care, passenger transportation), or people's mind (e.g., education, advertising). Services affecting things, on the other hand, are directed at physical possessions (e.g., laundry and dry cleaning), or intangible assets (e.g., banking, accounting) (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011). Finally, services can be delivered on a continuous basis (i.e., continuous transactions) (e.g., insurance), or, on the other hand, on basis of discrete transactions (i.e., each transaction is recorded and charged separately) (e.g., restaurant) (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011). The three service types that are being distinguished in Bowen's taxonomy of consumer services (1990) score differently on these characteristics. This will be discussed hereafter on basis of the work by Bowen (1990).

2.4.1 High-contact, customized, personal services

Services that are classified into this service type share several common characteristics. First, they are characterized by a high level of customization, meaning that services are designed towards the needs of individual customers. Customers should have some kind of input into the creation of the service (e.g., choosing a hotel room, choosing menu options in restaurants). Next to that, employee customer contact is high among services that are classified into this service type. This means that a lot of interaction takes place between employees and customers throughout the delivery of a service. Another important characteristic that distinguishes services within this category from services within the other two categories, is that employees are important for providing the service to the customer. The customer's perception of service quality can even be influenced by the employee's knowledge of the job, appearance, and attitude. Also, services within this category are directed at people and they last a moderate amount of time. The ability to switch is high, although this is not a distinctive characteristic for services within this category. Finally, the amount of difference between firms is high. Services that share these characteristics and thus can be classified into this service type include restaurants, hotels, hospitals, beauticians, and dental services.

2.4.2 Moderate contact, semi-customized, non-personal services

Unlike services from the first type, services that are classified into this service type are characterized by moderate customization. The amount of customization is not as high as in the first type, though, customers should still be able to make some choices in the creation of the service (e.g., offering different picture sizes in photofinishing). Also, employees are only moderately important for the delivery of services from this type. Employees do not need as much skills as those in the first category, they can be more specialized. Furthermore,

employee customer contact is low among services that are classified into this service type, meaning that little interaction takes place between employees and customers throughout the delivery of a service. Another important characteristic that distinguishes services within this category from services within the other two categories, is that services within this category are directed at things instead of people. As well as services within the first category, services within this category last a moderate amount of time and the ability to switch is high. Finally, there is only little difference between firms that provide services from this type. Services that can be classified into this service type include photofinishing, appliance repair and shoe repair.

2.4.3 Moderate contact, standardized services

Like the name already suggests, services within this third service type are least customized out of the three service types. They are so-called standardized services, meaning that there is not much room for taking into account the needs of individual customers and giving them input into the creation of the service. Also, employees are only moderately important. When it comes to standardized services, customers are usually more concerned with the speed and consistency of the service delivery and price savings (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011). Employee skills may even be substituted by production systems and automatic equipment. Next to that, employee customer contact is fairly low for services within this category. Furthermore, services from this type are directed at people, just like services from the first type. An important difference with the other two service types, is that service from this type only last for a short time. This makes it harder to establish relationships with customers (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011). Finally, the ability to switch firms is high and there is only little difference between firms. Services that share these characteristics include cafeterias, fast food restaurants, movie theaters and theme amusement parks.

This research answers a call for further research on the role of EEC across service types by Delcourt et al. (2013). In their study, they investigate the relationships between customer-perceived EEC and customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, as well as the role of rapport as a mediator in these relationships. They chose hairstyling as the context of their study, which can be classified as a high-contact, customized, personal service (Bowen, 1990; Delcourt et al., 2013). They find that customer-perceived EEC has a positive effect on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty and that these effects are partially mediated by

rapport. Their findings may be applicable to high-contact, customized, personal services, but not necessarily to the other two service types (Delcourt et al., 2013).

In this research, service type is added as a moderator. Both a high-contact, customized, personal service and a moderate contact, standardized service will be included, in order to investigate whether EEC indeed does not play an equally important role across these service types. These two service types are chosen because although they are both directed at people, they differ considerably on a couple of the common service characteristics. On basis of these differences, it can be expected that the possibility to demonstrate emotionally competent behaviors, as well as the importance of EEC for creating rapport, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty, is higher in the former as compared to the latter. This will be explained in more depth in the next paragraph.

2.5 Hypotheses formulation

2.5.1 *Effects of EEC on customer satisfaction*

Customer satisfaction is an important customer outcome that is eventually related to company profitability (Anderson, Fornell & Lehmann, 1994). It can be viewed either transaction-specific or cumulative (Anderson et al., 1994). Customer satisfaction for a specific transaction is “a post-choice evaluative judgment of a specific purchase occasion” (Anderson et al., 1994, p. 54). It can be defined as “the result of a cognitive assessment of a customer’s emotional experience, in which customers consider whether product, service, and process needs are addressed during that specific transaction” (Delcourt et al., 2017, p.90). Cumulative customer satisfaction however, is “an overall evaluation based on the total purchase and consumption experience with a good or service over time” (Anderson et al., 1994, p. 54).

EEC is a key component of employee interpersonal behaviors (Delcourt al., 2013). Previous research has shown that customer satisfaction is affected by employee interpersonal behaviors such as customer-perceived care, commercial friendship, listening behavior and customer orientation (Dagger, Sweeney & Johnson, 2007; Dean, 2007; de Ruyter & Wetzels, 2000; Price & Arnould, 1999). Delcourt et al. (2013) were the first to investigate the relationship between customer-perceived EEC and customer satisfaction. They found support for a direct, positive relationship between customer-perceived EEC and customer satisfaction (Delcourt al., 2013). However, their findings should be treated with caution, because the measure they use for customer-perceived EEC suffers from several limitations (Delcourt et al., 2016). In this research, the relationship between customer-perceived EEC and customer

satisfaction is studied on basis of the conceptualization and measure for customer-perceived EEC that was developed by Delcourt et al. (2016). This means that customer-perceived EEC is viewed as a multidimensional construct with three underlying dimensions: perception, understanding, and regulation of customer emotions. Because we are interested in the differential effect of these dimensions, separate hypotheses are formulated for the effect of each of the dimensions of customer-perceived EEC on customer satisfaction.

The assessment and regulation of customer emotions can help an employee customize the service offering to better address customer needs (Mattila & Enz, 2002). During emotionally charged service encounters, customers expect the contact employee to address their emotional needs (Menon & Dubé, 2000, 2004; Singh & Duque, 2012). An employee's demonstrated ability to perceive, understand, and regulate customer emotions can help to address a customer's emotional needs. If an employee accurately identifies the customer's emotions during an emotionally charged service encounter, he or she can anticipate to this and customize the service offering in order to meet the customer's expectations. If a customer is for example visibly upset because of a service failure, the employee can mention that he or she sees that the customer is upset by the situation. Besides recognizing his or her emotional state, the upset customer may also expect the employee to understand the customer's emotions (Delcourt et al., 2016). If an employee accurately interprets the cause of the customer's emotional state, he or she again can customize the service offering by saying something that makes clear that he or she understands why the customer is upset by the situation. Finally, the customer may expect the contact employee to regulate his or her emotional state (Delcourt et al., 2016). By managing the customer's emotions, the employee can customize the service offering in order to meet the customer's expectations as well. The employee can for example encourage the customer to suppress negative emotions, or offer the customer a compensation.

Because perception of customer emotions, understanding of customer emotions, and regulation of customer emotions all contribute to meeting customers' emotional needs and expectations, it is expected that all three dimensions of customer-perceived EEC affect customer satisfaction directly and positively. This expectation is also supported by the theory of affect infusion (Forgas, 1995). This theory posits that a person's judgment is influenced by his or her affective state. By either recognizing the customer's emotions, interpreting the cause of these emotions, or managing them, the employee can induce a positive affective state (Delcourt et al., 2013). If again for example a customer is upset because of a service failure, and he or she believes that the employee perceives this, understands the cause of it, or tries to

regulate the customer's emotional state, it is likely that the customer achieves a more favorable emotional state (Delcourt et al., 2017). This ensures that the customer is less critical and, in turn, more satisfied (Delcourt et al., 2013). Accordingly, the following is hypothesized:

- H1a. Perception of customer emotions affects customer satisfaction directly and positively.
- H1b. Understanding of customer emotions affects customer satisfaction directly and positively.
- H1c. Regulation of customer emotions affects customer satisfaction directly and positively.

Besides the basic relationships between the three dimensions of customer-perceived EEC and customer satisfaction, the moderating effect of service type on these relationships is investigated. Especially, two service types that are distinguished in Bowen's taxonomy of consumer services are included: (1) high-contact, customized, personal services, and (2) moderate contact, standardized services. These service types differ considerably on the common service characteristics that are used to classify services into the different service types. Because of these differences, it is likely that customer-perceived EEC does not play an equally important role in both service types.

One important difference between the two service types is the amount of customization. An important reason to expect that the perception of customer emotions, understanding of customer emotions, and regulation of customer emotions affect customer satisfaction directly and positively, is because emotionally competent employees would customize the service offering to better address customer needs. However, not all services can be customized to the same extent. Whereas high-contact, customized, personal services are characterized by a high level of customization, moderate contact, standardized services are characterized by moderate customization (Bowen, 1990). This means that in high-contact, customized, personal service encounters, employees have more opportunity to customize the service offering in order to meet customers' emotional needs and expectations. In moderate contact, standardized service encounters there is less room for the contact employee to demonstrate his or her ability to perceive, understand, and regulate the customer's emotions.

Another important reason to expect that the perception of customer emotions, understanding of customer emotions, and regulation of customer emotions affect customer satisfaction directly and positively, is explained by the theory of affect infusion (Forgas, 1995). According to this theory, an emotionally competent employee can induce a positive

affective state, which ensures that the customer is less critical and thus more satisfied (Forgas, 1995). However, not every service offering lends itself for affective state inducement to the same extent. High-contact, customized, personal services and moderate contact, standardized services differ considerably on the amount of employee customer contact. In high-contact, customized, personal services, the amount of employee customer contact is high, whereas in moderate contact, standardized services employee customer contact is moderate, and even fairly low when compared with high-contact, customized, personal services (Bowen, 1990). Because of the fairly low amount of employee customer contact in moderate contact, standardized services as compared to high-contact, customized, personal services, it is likely that it is harder for contact employees to recognize the customer's emotions, interpret the cause of these emotions, and manage them, and, in turn, induce a positive affective state.

Finally, another important difference between the two service types is the importance of employees. In high-contact, customized, personal services, employees are important for providing the service to the customer, whereas in moderate contact, standardized services, employees are only moderately important (Bowen, 1990). In moderate contact, standardized services, the importance of employees can even be regarded as fairly low when compared with high-contact, customized, personal services (Bowen, 1990). The high importance of employees for high-contact, customized, personal services, makes that the customer's perception of service quality can even be influenced by aspects as the employee's knowledge of the job, appearance, and attitude (Bowen, 1990). In moderate contact, standardized services however, customers are usually more concerned with the speed and consistency of the service delivery and price savings (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011).

Altogether, the basic relationship between all three dimensions of customer-perceived EEC and customer satisfaction is expected to hold regardless of service type. However, the relationship is expected to be stronger in high-contact, customized, personal services as compared to moderate contact, standardized services. This leads to the following hypotheses:

- H2a. The direct positive relationship between perception of customer emotions and customer satisfaction is stronger for high-contact, customized, personal services as compared to moderate contact, standardized services.
- H2b. The direct positive relationship between understanding of customer emotions and customer satisfaction is stronger for high-contact, customized, personal services as compared to moderate contact, standardized services.

H2c. The direct positive relationship between regulation of customer emotions and customer satisfaction is stronger for high-contact, customized, personal services as compared to moderate contact, standardized services.

2.5.2 Effects of EEC on customer loyalty

Another important customer outcome that is eventually related to company profitability is customer loyalty (Anderson et al., 1994). In the context of services, customer loyalty can be defined as “the degree to which a customer exhibits repeat purchasing behavior from a service provider, possesses a positive attitudinal disposition toward the provider, and considers using only this provider when a need for this service exists” (Gremler & Brown, 1996, p. 173). EEC is a key component of employee interpersonal behaviors (Delcourt et al., 2013). Previous research has shown that customer loyalty is affected by customer perceptions of employee interpersonal behaviors, such as displaying respect and taking effort to address customers’ problems (Schoefer & Diamantopoulos, 2008). Customer loyalty is also affected by employee customer orientation (Dean, 2007). In this research, the relationship between customer-perceived EEC and customer loyalty is studied on basis of the conceptualization and measure for customer-perceived EEC that was developed by Delcourt et al. (2016). Again, separate hypotheses are formulated for the effect of each of the dimensions of customer-perceived EEC on customer loyalty.

Customer-perceived EEC is expected to directly and positively affect customer loyalty. This expectation can be explained on the basis of the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960). The norm of reciprocity basically posits that human exchanges are based on a subjective cost-benefit analysis and comparisons of alternatives (Delcourt et al., 2013). An employee’s demonstrated ability to perceive, understand, and regulate customer emotions can help to address a customer’s emotional needs. If during an emotionally charged service encounter the contact employee accurately identifies the customer’s emotions, interprets the cause of these emotions, or makes an effort to regulate the customer’s emotional state, it is likely that the customer feels indebted to the employee, because he or she experiences a benefit (Delcourt et al., 2013). In order to restore the balance and feel less indebted, the customer may adopt behaviors such as exhibiting more loyalty to the service provider (Delcourt et al., 2013). Furthermore, when interacting with an emotionally competent employee, customers develop favorable perceptions of the service encounter, which makes them more likely to exhibit loyalty in the future (Delcourt et al., 2016).

Because perception of customer emotions, understanding of customer emotions, and regulation of customer emotions may each create a feeling of indebtedness towards the contact employee, as well as a favorable service experience, it is expected that all three dimensions of customer-perceived EEC affect customer loyalty directly and positively. Based on this, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H3a. Perception of customer emotions affects customer loyalty directly and positively.

H3b. Understanding of customer emotions affects customer loyalty directly and positively.

H3c. Regulation of customer emotions affects customer loyalty directly and positively.

The moderating effect of service type on the relationships between the three dimensions of customer-perceived EEC and customer loyalty is studied as well. Again, a high-contact, customized, personal service and a moderate contact, standardized service are included, because it is expected that customer-perceived EEC does not play an equally important role across these service types. An important reason to expect that the three dimensions of customer-perceived EEC affect customer loyalty directly and positively, is because of Gouldner's (1960) norm of reciprocity. On basis of the norm of reciprocity, it is expected that customers will feel indebted to emotionally competent contact employees (Delcourt et al., 2013). In order to feel less indebted, they may adopt behaviors such as exhibiting more loyalty to the service provider (Delcourt et al., 2013). However, this cost-benefit analysis only takes place in the case of superordinate goals (Ozdemir & Hewett, 2010). Goals play an important role in decision making (Puccinelli, Goodstein, Grewal, Price, Raghubir & Stewart, 2009). Goal and action identification theories suggest that the underlying goals that operate in a specific context, partially determine customers' decisions and actions (Ozdemir & Hewett, 2010). Goals are organized hierarchically from superordinate goals to subordinate goals (Sirdeshmukh, Singh & Sabol, 2002). For decision making, customers focus primarily on the attainment of superordinate goals (Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002).

Because of their different characteristics, it is likely that superordinate goals in high-contact, customized, personal services differ from those in moderate contact, standardized services. On basis of differences in the importance of employees and the amount of employee customer contact, it is likely that interpersonal interaction is a superordinate goal in high-contact, customized, personal services, whereas it is no superordinate goal in moderate contact, standardized services. In high-contact, customized, personal services, employees are important for providing the service to the customer (Bowen, 1990). The customer's

perception of service quality can be influenced by the employee's knowledge of the job, appearance, and attitude (Bowen, 1990). The quality of the interaction may even outweigh the service (Delcourt et al., 2013). Also, the amount of employee customer contact is high (Bowen, 1990), which makes it more likely that interpersonal interaction is considered an important aspect of the service offering. In moderate contact, standardized services, employees are only moderately important (Bowen, 1990). Customers usually care less about aspects such as the employee's knowledge of the job, appearance, and attitude and are more concerned with the speed and consistency of the service delivery and price savings (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011). Also, the amount of employee customer contact is fairly low (Bowen, 1990).

Because interpersonal interaction is a superordinate goal in high-contact, customized, personal services, a cost-benefit analysis will take place (Ozdemir & Hewett, 2010). Because of the benefit they experience, customers will feel indebted to emotionally competent contact employees (Delcourt et al., 2013). In order to feel less indebted, they may exhibit more loyalty to the service provider (Delcourt et al., 2013). Because interpersonal interaction is no superordinate goal in moderate contact, standardized services, no cost-benefit analysis takes place. This means that customers' behavioral intentions are not dependent on the level of cost or effort perceived (Ozdemir & Hewett, 2010). Customers will not feel indebted to the emotionally competent contact employee, which means that there is no need to exhibit more loyalty to the service provider in order to restore the balance (Delcourt et al., 2013). However, customer-perceived EEC is also expected to lead to customer loyalty because an emotionally competent contact employee contributes to a favorable service experience, which makes customers more likely to exhibit loyalty in the future (Delcourt et al., 2016). Thus, even if interpersonal interaction is no superordinate goal, customers may still find the interaction with an emotionally competent employee enjoyable, which causes them to exhibit loyalty in the future (Delcourt et al., 2016).

Altogether, the basic relationship between all three dimensions of customer-perceived EEC and customer loyalty is expected to hold regardless of service type. However, the relationship is expected to be stronger in high-contact, customized, personal services as compared to moderate contact, standardized services. This leads to the following hypotheses:

H4a. The direct positive relationship between perception of customer emotions and customer loyalty is stronger for high-contact, customized, personal services as compared to moderate contact, standardized services.

- H4b. The direct positive relationship between understanding of customer emotions and customer loyalty is stronger for high-contact, customized, personal services as compared to moderate contact, standardized services.
- H4c. The direct positive relationship between regulation of customer emotions and customer loyalty is stronger for high-contact, customized, personal services as compared to moderate contact, standardized services.

2.5.3 *Mediating role of rapport*

The concept of rapport was introduced by Gremler and Gwinner (2000) to capture the quality of the interaction between employees and customers (Delcourt et al., 2013). It is defined as “a customer’s perception of having an enjoyable interaction with a service provider employee, characterized by a personal connection between the two interactants” (Gremler & Gwinner, 2000, p.92). Previous research has shown that rapport directly affects customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (e.g., Dewitt & Brady, 2003; Gremler & Gwinner, 2000; Macintosh, 2009; Verbeke, Belschak, Bakker & Dietz, 2008). Gremler and Gwinner (2000) conceptualize rapport as a higher-order construct with two underlying dimensions: (1) enjoyable interaction and (2) personal connection. Enjoyable interaction refers to the customer’s evaluation of enjoyableness related to the interaction between the customer and the contact employee during the service encounter (Gremler & Gwinner, 2000). The personal connection dimension captures the customer’s perception of a bond between the customer and the contact employee, or a feeling of affiliation with the contact employee based on some tie (e.g., close identification with the other, mutual caring) (Gremler & Gwinner, 2008; Macintosh, 2009).

Based on this conceptualization of rapport, the antecedents of rapport are those factors that contribute to a sense of connectedness (i.e., personal connection) and feelings of positive affect (i.e., enjoyable interaction), regarding the interaction between the customer and the contact employee, as perceived by the customer (Macintosh, 2009). Prior research has stated that EEC could affect rapport (Kidwell, Hardesty, Murtha & Sheng, 2011), but no study except Delcourt et al. (2013) has explicitly examined this relationship. Delcourt et al. (2013) find that customer-perceived EEC has a positive effect on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty and that these effects are partially mediated by rapport. These findings suggest that rapport functions as a mechanism through which EEC can exert an influence on customer satisfaction and loyalty (Delcourt et al., 2013). However, these findings should be treated with caution, because the measure they use suffers from several limitations (Delcourt et al., 2016).

Besides the direct relationship between customer-perceived EEC and customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, customer-perceived EEC is expected to indirectly affect customer satisfaction and customer loyalty through rapport. Prior research has shown that the relationship between customers' perceptions of employee behaviors and customers' attitudes (e.g., customer satisfaction) and behaviors (e.g., customer loyalty) is mediated by customers' evaluations of a service encounter (Bitner, 1990; Bitner et al., 1990; Hennig-Thurau, Groth, Paul & Gremler, 2006; Macintosh, 2009; Olsen, 2002). Because rapport is the result of a customer's evaluation of the interaction with the contact employee during a service encounter, and customer-perceived EEC is a form of customer-perceived employee behavior, rapport is expected to mediate the relationship between customer-perceived EEC and both customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. This expectation is also supported by the affect-as-information theory. According to this theory, people use their emotions as information that influences their judgments (Schwarz & Clore, 1983). When a customer displays emotions during an interaction with a contact employee, an emotionally competent contact employee creates a positive climate by perceiving, understanding, or managing these emotions, which in turn influences the customer's judgment of the interaction with the contact employee. The emotionally competent behavior thus contributes to feelings of positive affect (i.e., enjoyable interaction). Because of this, customer-perceived EEC is expected to be an antecedent of rapport. Furthermore, by recognizing the customer's emotions, interpreting the cause of these emotions, or managing them, emotionally competent employees can identify common ground and demonstrate uncommonly attentive behaviors (Delcourt et al., 2016; Gremler & Gwinner, 2008). Identifying common ground and demonstrating uncommonly attentive behaviors contribute to respectively a sense of connectedness (i.e., personal connection) and feelings of positive affect (i.e., enjoyable interaction), as perceived by the customer. Since identifying common ground and demonstrating uncommonly attentive behaviors are two key behaviors in establishing rapport, this may cause them to establish rapport (Delcourt et al., 2016; Gremler & Gwinner, 2008). It is thus likely that customer-perceived EEC is an antecedent of rapport. Based on the above, the following hypotheses are formulated:

- H5a. Rapport mediates the relationship between perception of customer emotions and customer satisfaction.
- H5b. Rapport mediates the relationship between understanding of customer emotions and customer satisfaction.

- H5c. Rapport mediates the relationship between regulation of customer emotions and customer satisfaction.
- H6a. Rapport mediates the relationship between perception of customer emotions and customer loyalty.
- H6b. Rapport mediates the relationship between understanding of customer emotions and customer loyalty.
- H6c. Rapport mediates the relationship between regulation of customer emotions and customer loyalty.

The mediating effect of rapport is expected to be dependent on service type. Regardless of service type, rapport is expected to mediate the relationship between EEC and customer satisfaction and EEC and customer loyalty. However, the mediating role of rapport is expected to be stronger in high-contact, customized, personal services as compared to moderate contact, standardized services. Gremler and Gwinner (2008) suggest that the development of rapport is influenced by the people that are involved in the interaction and the context in which they interact. It has often been suggested that rapport is particularly salient in services characterized by interpersonal interactions (Gremler & Gwinner, 2000, 2008; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006). As compared to high-contact, customized, personal services, moderate contact, standardized services are to a far lesser extent characterized by interpersonal interactions. For high-contact, customized personal services, a lot of interaction takes place between the customer and employee throughout the delivery of a service (Bowen, 1990). In moderate contact, standardized services however, the amount of employee customer contact is fairly low (Bowen, 1990). Another important difference is the importance of employees for providing the service to the customer. In high-contact, customized, personal services, employees are important for the delivery of the service, whereas in moderate contact, standardized services, employees are only moderately important (Bowen, 1990). Finally, services within the category of high-contact, customized, personal services last a moderate amount of time (Bowen, 1990). Moderate contact, standardized services only last for a short time (Bowen, 1990). This makes it harder to establish relationships with customers (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011) and develop rapport through creating a sense of connectedness or a bond between the customer and the contact employee. This leads to the following hypotheses:

- H7a. The mediating role of rapport on the relationship between perception of customer emotions and customer satisfaction is stronger for high-contact, customized, personal services as compared to moderate contact, standardized services.
- H7b. The mediating role of rapport on the relationship between understanding of customer emotions and customer satisfaction is stronger for high-contact, customized, personal services as compared to moderate contact, standardized services.
- H7c. The mediating role of rapport on the relationship between regulation of customer emotions and customer satisfaction is stronger for high-contact, customized, personal services as compared to moderate contact, standardized services.

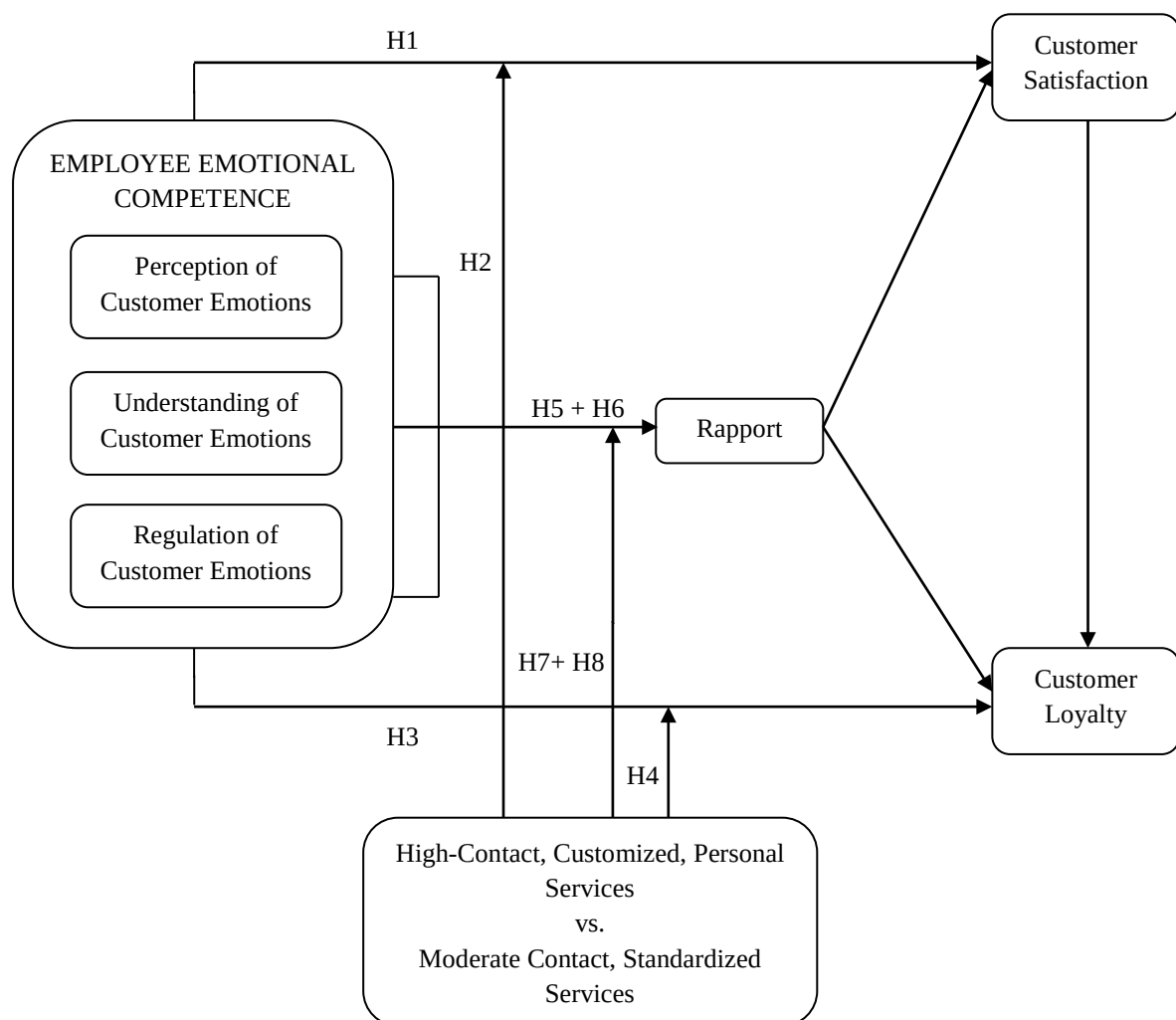
- H8a. The mediating role of rapport on the relationship between perception of customer emotions and customer loyalty is stronger for high-contact, customized, personal services as compared to moderate contact, standardized services.
- H8b. The mediating role of rapport on the relationship between understanding of customer emotions and customer loyalty is stronger for high-contact, customized, personal services as compared to moderate contact, standardized services.
- H8c. The mediating role of rapport on the relationship between regulation of customer emotions and customer loyalty is stronger for high-contact, customized, personal services as compared to moderate contact, standardized services.

Perceived service quality is included as a control variable in this research. Perceived service quality can be described as a form of attitude, related but not equivalent to satisfaction, that results from the comparison of service expectations with actual service performance (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985; Wetzels, de Ruyter & van Birgelen, 1998). Service quality can be divided into technical service quality and functional service quality. Whereas technical service quality relates to “the quality of the result or outcome of the service”, functional service quality relates to “the manner in or process by which a service is provided” (Wetzels et al., 1998, p.410). Basically, technical service quality is the “what” aspect, while functional service quality is the “how” aspect of the service delivery. Previous research has shown that service quality is an important antecedent of customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (e.g., Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Mosahab, Mahamad & Ramayah, 2010). The central construct in this research, EEC, is related to the “how” component of the service delivery. Since both the “what” and the “how” aspect of the service delivery can influence

customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, perceived service quality is included as a control variable.

The conceptual model in which all hypothesized relationships are depicted, is presented in Figure 1. Although not hypothesized, the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty is depicted in the conceptual model as well. Previous research has frequently shown that a direct, positive relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty exists (e.g., Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Gremler & Brown, 1996; Han, Kwortnik & Wang, 2008; Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner & Gremler, 2002).

FIGURE 1
Conceptual Model



3.0 Methodology

In the preceding chapter, the existing literature has been discussed. Based upon this review of the literature, the hypotheses that guide this research have been formulated. Finally, a conceptual model has been presented. In this chapter, the methodology of the research will be discussed, including the research setting and sampling, research approach and questionnaire design, and assessment of common method variance. Finally, attention will be paid to the ethical issues regarding this research.

3.1 Research setting

Both a high-contact, customized, personal service, and a moderate contact, standardized service are included. A representative service is chosen for both service types. Restaurant is chosen as representative for high-contact, customized, personal services. In a restaurant, the amount of customization is high. Customers can choose menu options and mostly even make adjustments to the dishes that are offered, if desired. Next to that, the amount of interaction between the customer and the waiter is relatively high. Also, the waiter's knowledge of the job, appearance, and attitude are important aspects for the customer's perception of service quality. Finally, restaurant visits last a moderate amount of time. These are all characteristics of high-contact, customized, personal services (Bowen, 1990). Grocery store is chosen as representative for moderate contact, standardized services. In a grocery store, there is not much room for taking into account the needs of individual customers. Next to that, the amount of contact between the customer and the sales employee is fairly low. Also, customers tend to be more concerned with the speed and consistency of the service delivery and price savings instead of aspects such as the sales employee's appearance and attitude. Finally, a visit to the grocery store in general lasts only for a short time. These are all characteristics of moderate contact, standardized services.

Together, these services provide a suitable setting for investigating the influence of EEC on rapport, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty in both service types. They are both common consumer services, which means that it is likely that the large majority of people has experience with them. Also, both services lend themselves for emotionally charged service encounters (i.e., service encounters with high affective content for the customer), since they are subject to frequent failures. In both a restaurant and a grocery store it is not rare that customers experience high levels of emotions during the delivery of the service. Long waiting times, cold food, mistakes in orders, and low quality of food are all examples of situations in a restaurant that can cause customers to experience high levels of emotions. The

waiter subsequently has to deal with these emotions. In a grocery store, such situations can occur as well. Some examples of situations that can cause customers to experience high levels of emotions are long waiting times, products that are out of stock, and the registration of wrong prices. The sales employee in turn has to deal with customers' emotions. How the contact employee deals with these emotions, depends on his or her emotional competence.

3.2 Research approach and sampling

Customers' perceptions of employees' emotional competence were measured in form of a survey. The data were collected by means of an anonymous web-based questionnaire. A web-based questionnaire was found to be the most suitable option for collecting data on behalf of this research. A scenario-based experiment was excluded because it was not feasible within the scope of this research. When using written scenario's, it is very hard for respondents to imagine themselves in a particular situation that they have not actually experienced. Taking that into account, video-based scenario's are a much better option. However, making video-based scenario's is very time-consuming and requires substantial investment in resources. Interviews were also excluded, since this research aims to obtain a large amount of data. By conducting a web-based questionnaire, a large amount of data can be gathered in a relatively short amount of time. Also, respondents are asked to report on a situation they have actually experienced in the past. Finally, since the web-based questionnaire is completely anonymous, the potential of social desirability biases (i.e., tendency to respond in a socially desirable or acceptable manner, regardless of true thoughts and feelings) is limited.

For selecting respondents, the common practice of convenience sampling was adopted (e.g., Delcourt et al., 2017; Menon & Dubé, 2004). Respondents were approached via social media (i.e., Facebook). Two versions of the questionnaire were distributed, each representing one service type. Respondents were randomly assigned to either the restaurant context or the grocery store context. They were evenly distributed among the two contexts. They were asked to fill out the questionnaire in reference to either their last emotionally charged restaurant visit, or their last emotionally charged grocery store visit. Emotionally charged service encounters are likely to be memorable for the customer (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer & Vohs, 2001; Price, Arnould, and Tierney 1995). Because of this, it is expected that customers are well able to report on the contact employee's emotional competence during such an emotionally charged service encounter.

In total, 282 questionnaires were collected; 53 respondents were excluded since they had never experienced an emotionally charged service encounter in the service type that was

assigned to them. Also, 72 respondents had to be excluded because of the large amount of missing values ($> 10\%$) (Hair, Anderson, Babin & Black, 2010). The final dataset includes 157 respondents (restaurant: $n = 78$; grocery store: $n = 79$), consisting of 55 male respondents (35%) and 102 female respondents (65%). The age of the respondents ranges between 19 and 62 years old ($M = 26.31$, $SD = 8.97$). The age category 21 until 25 years old is highly overrepresented, containing 71% of the respondents. The remaining of the respondents is quite evenly distributed in terms of age. Of the respondents, 84% indicated that the emotionally charged service encounter took place no later than six months ago, suggesting that they should be well able to recall the situation. 10% of the respondents indicated that the emotionally charged service encounter took place over a year ago. However, since emotionally charged service encounters are likely to be memorable for customers, this should not be too large of a problem for recalling the situation (Baumeister et al., 2001; Price et al., 1995). In terms of level of education, 56% of the respondents has completed a university degree, followed by higher vocational education and intermediate vocational education (both 15%), and finally secondary school (13%).

3.3 Questionnaire design

As mentioned before, two versions of the questionnaire were distributed, each representing one service type. Content wise the two versions are the same, except for the service type to which the items relate. The questionnaire starts with an introduction, in which anonymity of the respondents is guaranteed. Also, it is mentioned that no right or wrong answers exist. In this way, the chance of socially desirable answers is reduced (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003). After the introduction, respondents were asked to fill out the questionnaire in reference to either their last emotionally charged restaurant or grocery store visit, depending on the version of the questionnaire. Examples of emotion triggers during service encounters are given for both settings (e.g., long waiting times, cold food, products that are out of stock), in order to help respondents recalling the particular service encounter. Also, respondents had to indicate how long ago the particular service encounter took place. If respondents indicated that they had never experienced such an emotionally charged service encounter, they were redirected to the end of the questionnaire. All variables were measured on five-point Likert scales (1 - “strongly disagree”; 5 - “strongly agree”). The items were based on scales that have been developed and validated in previous studies. Some minor adjustments took place in order to fit the research setting.

First, respondents were asked to report on the perceived service quality, which functions as a control variable in this research. This was done in order to ensure that the perceived service quality is not influenced by the remaining of the questionnaire items. In this research, perceived service quality is defined as a form of attitude, related but not equivalent to satisfaction, that results from the comparison of service expectations with actual service performance (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Parasuraman et al., 1985; Wetzels et al., 1998). Service quality can be divided into technical service quality (i.e., the quality of the result or outcome of the service) and functional service quality (i.e., the manner in or process by which a service is provided). In line with this conceptualization, two items have been formulated for measuring perceived service quality, one for technical service quality and one for functional service quality.

Employee emotional competence. The definition of EEC that has been adopted in this research is “employee demonstrated ability to perceive, understand, and regulate customer emotions in a service encounter to create and maintain an appropriate climate for service” (Delcourt et al., 2016, p.77). In line with this definition, the scale for EEC that has been developed and validated by Delcourt et al. (2016) is used. This scale consists of thirteen items, divided over three dimensions: perception of customer emotions (five items), understanding of customer emotions (three items), and regulation of customer emotions (five items). Respondents were asked to report on the emotional competence of the contact employee (i.e., the employee who they had contact with during the providence of the emotionally charged service).

Rapport. For rapport, the scale by Gremler & Gwinner (2000) is adopted. In this research, rapport is defined as “a customer’s perception of having an enjoyable interaction with a service provider employee, characterized by a personal connection between the two interactants” (Gremler & Gwinner, 2000, p.92). The scale by Gremler & Gwinner (2000) measures both the enjoyable interaction dimension (six items) and the personal connection dimension (five items) of rapport. Personal connection and enjoyable interaction tend to be highly correlated (Gremler & Gwinner, 2000). Since the overall construct of rapport is of interest, the dimensions are combined into a single measure of rapport. Respondents were asked to report on the items in reference to the contact employee.

Customer satisfaction. For customer satisfaction, a scale by Gremler & Gwinner (2000) on the basis of Oliver (1980) is used. This scale consists of five items. In this research, customer satisfaction is defined in two ways. First, customer satisfaction can be viewed transaction-specific (Anderson et al., 1994). Transaction-specific customer satisfaction is

defined as “the result of a cognitive assessment of a customer’s emotional experience, in which customers consider whether product, service, and process needs are addressed during that specific transaction” (Delcourt et al., 2017, p.90). Customer satisfaction can also be viewed cumulative (Anderson et al., 1994). Cumulative customer satisfaction is defined as “an overall evaluation based on the total purchase and consumption experience with a good or service over time” (Anderson et al., 1994, p. 54). Three items from the customer satisfaction scale relate to transaction-specific customer satisfaction, the other two items relate to cumulative customer satisfaction.

Customer loyalty. In the context of this research, customer loyalty is defined as “the degree to which a customer exhibits repeat purchasing behavior from a service provider, possesses a positive attitudinal disposition toward the provider, and considers using only this provider when a need for this service exists” (Gremler & Brown, 1996, p. 173). The scale that is used for measuring customer loyalty is developed by Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman (1996). This scale contains five items.

Finally, respondents were asked for their age, gender, and highest level of education. The questionnaire was conducted in Dutch. Because the scales are originally in English, they had to be translated. To ensure good quality of translation when importing a scale for use in another language, considerable effort is required (Brislin, 1970; Wang, Lee & Fetzer, 2006). All items were “back-translated” into Dutch using Brislin’s classic back-translation method (1970), which is a widely used and generally recommended method for translation of scales (Cha, Kim & Erlen, 2007). This is done by two master’s students speaking fluently English as well as Dutch. One of them translated the items from the original language to the target language (i.e., English to Dutch), after which the second one independently translated them back from the target language to the original language (i.e., Dutch to English). Both English versions were then compared with each other for concept equivalence. Differences were found to be negligible. It was agreed that the two versions were identical in meaning, which suggests that the target version (i.e., Dutch version) is equivalent to the original version (i.e., English version) (Brislin, 1970; Cha et al., 2007). Finally, the questionnaire was pretested. Ten master’s students from different disciplines were asked to fill out the questionnaire and to comment on ambiguities and remarkable things. On the basis thereof, the questionnaire was refined. The comments mainly concerned the use of terminology and scientific language in the introduction. The final questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1.

3.4 Assessment of common method variance

Common method variance (CMV) is described as “variance that is attributable to the measurement method rather than to the constructs the measures represent” (Podsakoff et al., 2003, p. 879). CMV can arise from (1) having a common rater; (2) having a common measurement context; (3) having a common item context; or (4) the characteristics of the items themselves (Podsakoff et al., 2003). In this research, a customer perspective is adopted. Using customer surveys, information for both the independent and dependent variables comes from the same person (i.e., the customer). Because of this, the data are susceptible to common rater biases such as consistency motifs (i.e., tendency to maintain consistency in responses) and social desirability (i.e., tendency to respond in a socially desirable or acceptable manner, regardless of true thoughts and feelings) (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The measurement context (e.g., independent and dependent variables measured at the same point in time), item context (e.g., item embeddedness), and item characteristics (e.g., item complexity, item ambiguity) may cause CMV as well (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Although normally CMV is not a big problem in marketing research (Cote & Buckley, 1987; Malhotra et al., 2006), several measures have been applied in order to reduce the potential for CMV.

First, the questionnaire items are based on scales that have been validated in previous research. Next to that, the questionnaire was pretested and adjusted where needed. Also, several measures have been taken in order to reduce the potential of social desirability biases. The questionnaire was web-based and anonymous, which makes it easier for respondents to respond to the questionnaire items according to their own opinion. Also, in the questionnaire introduction, respondents were asked to fill out the questionnaire according to their own opinion and it was stated that no correct or incorrect answers exist. In order to control for consistency motifs and social desirability biases, respondents were not able to look back at their answers to previous questions.

Finally, the data were tested for CMV. This was done using Harman’s single-factor test, which basically means that you “include all items from all of the constructs in the study into a factor analysis to determine whether the majority of the variance can be accounted for by one general factor” (Podsakoff et al., 2003, p.890). In order to test whether a single factor accounts for all of the variance in the data, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted. The results showed that there are five factors that account for the variance in the data (eigenvalue > 1.0) and that 49% of the total variance is explained by the first factor. Since multiple factors emerged from the factor analysis and there is not one general factor that

accounts for the majority of the total variance, it can be concluded that there is no substantial amount of CMV present in the data (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

3.5 Research ethics

Several measures have been taken in order to meet the ethical requirements for conducting research with human participants. Since the data for this research were gathered by means of a web-based questionnaire, the role of the researcher during the collection of the data is theoretically non-existent. His role is mainly expressed before collecting the data (i.e., preparation of the questionnaire) and after collecting the data (i.e., analysis of the data). The researcher is not present when the questionnaire is being filled out by respondents. Respondents thus act independently of the researcher. Respondents were approached for participation in the research via social media. This means that the choice for participation in this research was to themselves. Each respondent participated voluntarily. Respondents were made aware of the fact that the data were to be used in a research that is being conducted for a master's thesis. Also, it was stated that the data would be used exclusively for research purposes. The purpose of the research, expected duration and procedures were mentioned in the introduction. Respondents were guaranteed that the questionnaire was completely anonymous. There was an option for respondents to leave their e-mail address at the end of the questionnaire in case they would like to receive the results of the research. They were guaranteed that in case they left their e-mail address, this e-mail address would only be used for sending the results. Respondents had the opportunity to contact the researcher by e-mail if they had any questions regarding the questionnaire or the research in general.

4.0 Results

In the preceding chapter, the methodology of the research was discussed, including the research setting and sampling, research approach and questionnaire design. In this chapter, the data that were gathered will be analyzed and the hypotheses testing will take place.

4.1 Data analysis method

For analyzing the data, the statistical method partial least squares (PLS) path modeling is applied. PLS path modeling is “a full-fledged structural equation modeling (SEM) method that can handle both factor models and composite models for construct measurement, estimate recursive and non-recursive structural models, and conduct tests of model fit” (Henseler, Hubona & Ray, 2016, p.3). This research aims to find effects and explain variance, which is characteristic of exploratory research. PLS path modeling is suitable for several research objectives, including exploration (Henseler, Ringle & Sinkovics, 2009). It is often argued that the strengths of PLS path modeling are in line with the research objective of exploration (Henseler et al., 2009). In the light of this research, PLS path modeling has several advantages. First, PLS path modeling can be used with relatively small sample sizes when compared to other methods (Henseler et al., 2009). Also, PLS path modeling can work with very complex models, consisting of many variables, even when the number of observations is relatively small (Henseler et al., 2009). Finally, PLS path modeling does not make distributional assumptions (Henseler et al., 2009). This means that PLS path modeling can even be used when data are non-normal, highly skewed or kurtotic.

PLS path models consist of a structural model (i.e., inner model) and a measurement model (i.e., outer model) (Henseler et al., 2016). Whereas the structural model “specifies the relationships between unobserved or latent variables”, the measurement model “specifies the relationships between a latent variable and its observed or manifest variables” (Henseler et al., 2009, p. 284). Measurement models can be either composite or reflective. In this research, all latent variables are measured in a reflective manner, using reflective indicators. This means that the direction of causality is from latent variable to observed variables or indicators (Henseler et al., 2009). In other words, “changes in the construct are expected to be manifested in changes in all of its indicators” (Henseler et al., 2009, p.289).

Before conducting PLS path modeling, sample size requirements as well as data requirements have to be ensured. The sample size should be considered both technically and in terms of inference statistics (Henseler et al., 2016). Technically, PLS path modeling can handle the model adequately when the number of observations is at least ten times the number

of maximum arrowheads pointing on a latent variable, independent of the model complexity (Henseler et al., 2009). In this research, the highest amount of arrowheads pointing on a latent variable is five, which means that 50 observations would be adequate for running the model. However, this rule of thumb ignores the importance of statistical power, which can be described as “the likelihood to find an effect in the sample if it indeed exists in the population” (Henseler et al., 2016, p.8). In the case of a strong effect the rule of thumb may lead to acceptable power, however, if the effect is small to medium, it will probably not turn out significant when the rule of thumb for the number of observations is followed (Henseler et al., 2009). According to Henseler et al. (2009), “researchers must ensure that the sample size is large enough to support the conclusions” (Henseler et al., 2009, p.292). The final data set consists of 157 observations, which should be sufficient for an acceptable level of power.

Regarding the data requirements, PLS path modeling is robust with different scale types (e.g., metric, quasi-metric, dichotomous). In this research, all latent variables are measured on Likert scales. Assuming that the points on Likert scales are equidistant, quasi-metric data stemming from Likert scales are acceptable for PLS path modeling (Henseler et al., 2016). In this research, special attention is paid to the role of service type in the relationships that are investigated. Service type is a categorical variable with three levels, of which only two are included in this research. This means that service type basically functions as a dichotomous moderating variable, with the two service types as levels of the moderating variable. Because of this, the role of service type can be determined by comparing model parameters across the two service types, by means of a group comparison. Furthermore, like aforementioned, PLS path modeling does not make distributional assumptions, meaning that the data may be non-normal, skewed, and kurtotic. The output from the ADANCO-PLS application, on which all of the following is based, can be found in Appendix 4.

4.2 Measurement model assessment

When assessing PLS path modeling results, the measurement model and the structural model are being assessed separately. The measurement model is assessed first, since validation of the measurement model is a requirement for assessing the structural model. This is because the structural model estimates become meaningless when the constructs are not measured in a reliable and valid way (Henseler et al., 2016).

First of all, the overall model fit is assessed. For assessing the overall model fit, both the correlation matrix implied by the saturated model (i.e., model in which all constructs correlate freely) and the correlation matrix implied by the estimated model (i.e., model as

specified) are compared to the empirical correlation matrix, to determine whether the model fits the data (Henseler et al., 2016). The global model fit can be assessed in two ways. First, tests of model fit can be applied (Henseler et al., 2016). This means that inference statistics (e.g., bootstrap) are used for assessing the model fit. The difference between the correlation matrix implied by the model and the empirical correlation matrix is quantified by doing a significance test, in order to see whether the model is significantly wrong or not. The unweighted least squares discrepancy (d_{ULS}) and the geodesic discrepancy (d_G) are used as measures for quantifying the difference between the model-implied correlation matrix and the empirical correlation matrix. The model is not significantly wrong if the d_{ULS} and the d_G values do not exceed the value at the 95%-percentile (“HI95”) or the 99%-percentile (“HI99”). In this research, the d_{ULS} and the d_G values for both the saturated model ($d_{ULS} = 2.08$, $d_G = 1.42$), and the estimated model ($d_{ULS} = 2.08$, $d_G = 1.42$) exceed the values at the 95%-percentile (saturated model: $d_{ULS} = 1.20$, $d_G = 1.20$, estimated model: $d_{ULS} = 1.20$, $d_G = 1.20$) and the 99%-percentile (saturated model: $d_{ULS} = 1.39$, $d_G = 1.33$, estimated model: $d_{ULS} = 1.39$, $d_G = 1.33$). Thus, according to inference statistics, the model is significantly wrong.

However, in most cases, models are significantly wrong. Even if the model is significantly wrong, it can still be very useful. The second option for assessing the global model fit, is assessing the approximate model fit by using fit indices (Henseler et al., 2016). The approximate model fit is assessed to determine how substantial the discrepancy between the model-implied correlation matrix and the empirical correlation matrix is (Henseler et al., 2016). Standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) is used as measure of approximate fit (Henseler et al., 2016). The recommended threshold for SRMR is 0.08 (Henseler et al., 2016). If the value for SRMR is below 0.08, the model-implied correlation matrix is sufficiently similar to the empirical correlation matrix. In this research, the SRMR values for both the saturated model (SRMR = 0.06) and the estimated model (SRMR = 0.06) are below the recommended threshold of 0.08. This means that although the model is significantly wrong, it is still a good description of reality.

After assessing the overall model fit, each construct should be assessed for reliability and validity of scores. In this research, all constructs are reflective. Reflective measurement models should be assessed with regard to construct reliability, indicator reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2016). Dijkstra-Henseler’s Rho (ρ_A) is used as a measure for construct reliability (Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015). Unlike other reliability measures, ρ_A measures the reliability of PLS construct scores instead of sum scores (Henseler et al., 2016). The recommended threshold for ρ_A is 0.7 (Henseler et al., 2016). As can be seen

in Table 1, the ρ_A values in this research range from 0.91 to 0.96, meaning that all constructs show satisfactory reliability.

The indicator reliability should be assessed as well. Indicator reliability denotes the proportion of indicator variance that is explained by the respective latent variable. At least 50% of each indicator's variance should be explained by its respective latent variable. (Henseler et al., 2009). Accordingly, the absolute standardized outer loadings should be higher than 0.7 (Henseler et al., 2009). In this research, the indicator reliability values range from 0.536 to 0.902 and absolute standardized outer loadings range from 0.732 to 0.950. Since the indicator reliability of each indicator exceeds the 0.5 threshold and all absolute standardized outer loadings are higher than 0.7, no indicators are considered for elimination.

In order to determine whether a set of indicators represents one and the same underlying construct, convergent validity is assessed (Henseler et al., 2009). The average variance extracted (AVE) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) is used as a criterion for unidimensionality. For sufficient convergent validity, the AVE should be at least 0.5 (Henseler et al., 2009). An AVE of at least 0.5 indicates that the first factor extracted from a set of indicators explains more than half of their variance, which means that there cannot be any other factor which explains as much variance (Henseler et al., 2009; Henseler et al., 2016). An AVE value higher than 0.5 is thus a sign for unidimensionality. As Table 1 shows, the AVE values in this research range from 0.68 to 0.86, which indicates satisfactory convergent validity.

In order to determine whether theoretically different constructs are also statistically different, discriminant validity is assessed. This can be done in several ways. The heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) is used as a measure for the relationship between constructs (Henseler et al., 2016). It is basically an estimate of the construct correlation. The HTMT should be significantly lower than one (Henseler et al., 2016). If that is the case, the constructs are statistically different. Inference statistics (e.g., bootstrap) should be used for determining the HTMT of all constructs. The HTMT values of all constructs in this research are indeed significantly lower than one. Another measure of discriminant validity is the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). According to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the AVE of each latent variable should be higher than its squared correlations with all other latent variables in the model (Henseler et al., 2009; Henseler et al., 2016). As can be seen in Table 1, the AVE of rapport is equal to its squared correlation with RCE. For all other constructs, the AVE is higher than its squared correlations with all other latent variables.

Finally, every indicator is expected to load higher on its respective construct than on any other construct (Henseler et al., 2009). This is the case for all indicators in this research.

Construct	Number of items	M	SD	ρ_A	PCE	UCE	RCE	Rapport	CS	CL
PCE	5	2.81	0.92	0.94	0.75					
UCE	3	2.87	1.02	0.91	0.44	0.83				
RCE	5	2.64	1.02	0.95	0.24	0.35	0.84			
Rapport	11	2.38	0.84	0.95	0.24	0.28	0.68	0.68		
CS	5	3.13	1.07	0.96	0.10	0.14	0.24	0.33	0.86	
CL	5	2.89	1.16	0.96	0.13	0.16	0.23	0.34	0.83	0.85

Table 1: Descriptive statistics, construct reliability, and discriminant validity. Notes: M = mean; SD = standard deviation; ρ_A = Dijkstra-Henseler's rho; for discriminant validity, squared correlations are presented with the AVE on the diagonal.

4.3 Structural model assessment

Since the measurement model appears to be reliable and valid, the structural model can be assessed. First of all, the explained variance of the endogenous variables (i.e., latent variables that are at least partially explained by other constructs in the model) is assessed. The key criterion here, is the coefficient of determination (R^2). The R^2 indicates the proportion of explained variance, or in other words, the proportion of the variance of a variable that is explained by the model (Henseler et al., 2016). The difference between R^2 and adjusted R^2 , is that the adjusted R^2 takes into account model complexity and sample size (Henseler et al., 2016). In this research, the adjusted R^2 values for rapport, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty are 0.680, 0.315, and 0.832, respectively. This means that 68.0%, 31.5%, and 83.2% of the variance of respectively rapport, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty is explained by the model.

The direction and strength of a relationship are indicated by the path coefficients. Path coefficients are basically standardized regression coefficients, and can be interpreted as “the change in the dependent variable if the independent variable is increased by one and all other independent variables remain constant” (Henseler et al., 2016, p.12). For determining the significance of the path coefficients, inference techniques (e.g., bootstrap confidence intervals, p-values) should be applied (Henseler et al., 2016). Since PLS path modeling does not rely on distributional assumptions, standard parametric approaches are not applicable. For the bootstrapping procedure, the recommended amount of 4,999 bootstrap samples is used

(Henseler et al., 2016). The PLS path model is estimated for each re-sample (i.e., 4,999 times). A path coefficient is regarded as significant, “if its confidence interval does not include the value of zero or if the p-value is below the pre-defined α -level” (Henseler et al., 2016, p.12). In this research, an α of 0.05 is used. The substantiality (i.e., effect size) of the significant effects can be determined by Cohen’s (1988) f^2 . Values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 for f^2 indicate respectively weak, moderate, and strong effects (Cohen, 1988). Significant effects with f^2 values below 0.02 are considered unsubstantial (Cohen, 1988). The results from the structural model assessment are graphically shown in Figure 2.

The relationships between both PCE and UCE and customer satisfaction are non-significant. There is neither a direct effect from PCE and UCE on customer satisfaction, nor an indirect effect from PCE and UCE on customer satisfaction through rapport. This means that H1a and H1b, as well as H5a and H5b are rejected. There is a significant, positive relationship between RCE and customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.406$; $p < 0.001$). However, there is also a significant indirect effect from RCE on customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.387$; $p < 0.001$). When controlling for the indirect effect from RCE on customer satisfaction, the effect from RCE on customer satisfaction becomes non-significant. This means that rapport fully mediates the relationship between RCE and customer satisfaction. In line with these results, H1c is rejected, whereas H5c is supported.

Similar results have been found for the relationships between the EEC dimensions and customer loyalty. The relationships between both PCE and UCE and customer loyalty are non-significant. There is neither a direct effect from PCE and UCE on customer loyalty, nor an indirect effect from PCE and UCE on customer loyalty through rapport. This means that H2a and H2b, as well as H6a and H6b are rejected. There is a significant, positive relationship between RCE and customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.357$; $p < 0.05$). However, there is also a significant indirect effect from RCE on customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.437$; $p < 0.001$). When controlling for the indirect effect from RCE on customer loyalty, the effect from RCE on customer loyalty becomes non-significant. There are two possible mediators in this relationship: (1) rapport and (2) customer satisfaction. The direct relationship between RCE and rapport is significant ($\beta = 0.765$; $p < 0.001$), whereas the direct relationship between RCE and customer satisfaction is non-significant. This means that rapport fully mediates the relationship between RCE and customer loyalty. In line with these results, H2c is rejected, whereas H6c is supported.

Furthermore, some significant relationships were found that were not hypothesized. First, there is a significant, positive relationship between RCE and rapport ($\beta = 0.765$; $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that rapport may function as a mediator in the relationships

between RCE and both customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. This was indeed found to be true. Next to that, there is a significant, positive relationship between rapport and customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.506$; $p < 0.001$). This finding is in line with previous research, which has frequently shown that a direct relationship between rapport and customer satisfaction exists (e.g., Dewitt & Brady, 2003; Gremler & Gwinner, 2000; Macintosh, 2009; Verbeke, Belschak, Bakker & Dietz, 2008). Furthermore, there is a significant, positive relationship between rapport and customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.550$; $p < 0.001$). However, there is also a significant indirect effect from rapport on customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.431$; $p < 0.001$). When controlling for the indirect effect from rapport on customer loyalty, the effect from rapport on customer loyalty becomes non-significant. This means that customer satisfaction fully mediates the relationship between rapport and customer loyalty. This finding is contrary to previous research, which has shown a direct relationship between rapport and customer loyalty (e.g., Dewitt & Brady, 2003; Gremler & Gwinner, 2000; Macintosh, 2009; Verbeke, Belschak, Bakker & Dietz, 2008). Finally, there is a significant, positive relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.853$; $p < 0.001$). This finding is in line with previous research, which has frequently shown that a direct, positive relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty exists (e.g., Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Gremler & Brown, 1996; Han, Kwornik & Wang, 2008; Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner & Gremler, 2002). An overview of the effects is presented in Table 2.

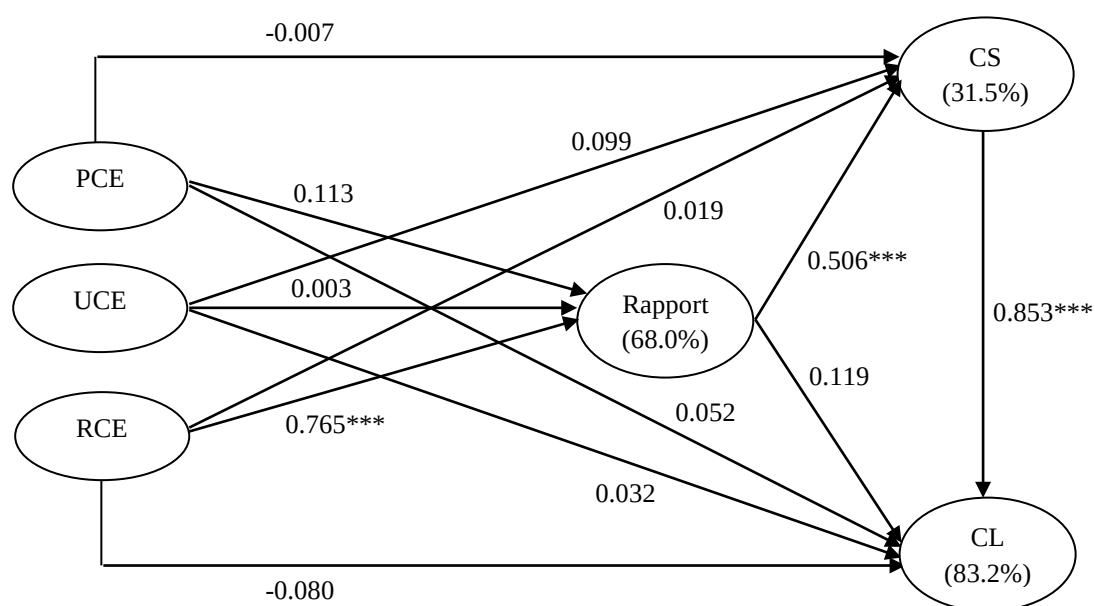


Figure 2: Results of structural equation modeling. Notes: Path coefficients and significance are reported; *** = significant at $p < 0.001$; percentages are adjusted coefficients of determination (adjusted R²).

Effect	Beta	Indirect effects	Total effect	Cohen's f^2	Hypothesis
PCE -> Rapport	0.113		0.113	0.022	Not hypothesized
PCE -> CS	-0.007	0.057	0.050	0.000	H1a rejected H5a rejected
PCE -> CL	0.052	0.056	0.108	0.009	H3a rejected H6a rejected
UCE -> Rapport	0.003		0.003	0.000	Not hypothesized
UCE -> CS	0.099	0.002	0.100	0.007	H1b rejected H5b rejected
UCE -> CL	0.032	0.086	0.118	0.003	H3b rejected H6b rejected
RCE -> Rapport	0.765***		0.765***	1.186	Not hypothesized
RCE -> CS	0.019	0.387***	0.406***	0.000	H1c rejected H5c supported
RCE -> CL	-0.080	0.437***	0.357**	0.012	H3c rejected H6c supported
Rapport -> CS	0.506***		0.506***	0.120	Not hypothesized
Rapport -> CL	0.119	0.431***	0.550***	0.024	Not hypothesized
CS -> CL	0.853***		0.853***	2.989	Not hypothesized

Table 2: Effect overview. Notes: ** = significant at $p < 0.01$; *** = significant at $p < 0.001$.

4.4 Group comparison

In order to investigate the role of EEC across service types, a group comparison is performed. Group effects are basically “a variable’s moderating effect, whereby the categorical moderator variable expresses each observation’s group membership” (Sarstedt, Henseler & Ringle, 2011, p.198). For the group comparison, the sample is split in two subsamples. The first subsample consists of respondents that filled out the restaurant version of the questionnaire ($n = 78$), which is representative for the high-contact, customized, personal service type. The second subsample consists of respondents that filled out the grocery store version of the questionnaire ($n = 79$), which is representative for the moderate contact, standardized service type. The PLS path model is run for both subsamples. Differences between path coefficients are interpreted as moderating effects. This procedure is adequate, since only two service types are included (i.e., dichotomous moderating variable). The output from the ADANCO-PLS application, on which all of the following is based, can be found in Appendix 5.

For the restaurant group, the relationships between both PCE and UCE and customer satisfaction are non-significant. There is neither a direct effect from PCE and UCE on

customer satisfaction, nor an indirect effect from PCE and UCE on customer satisfaction through rapport. There is a significant, positive relationship between RCE and customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.622$; $p < 0.001$). However, there is also a significant indirect effect from RCE on customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.517$; $p < 0.001$). When controlling for the indirect effect from RCE on customer satisfaction, the effect from RCE on customer satisfaction becomes non-significant. This means that rapport fully mediates the relationship between RCE and customer satisfaction. For the grocery store group, the relationship between PCE and customer satisfaction is non-significant as well. There is neither a direct effect from PCE on customer satisfaction, nor an indirect effect from PCE on customer satisfaction through rapport. Unlike for the restaurant group, there is a significant, positive relationship between UCE and customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.353$; $p < 0.01$). There is no significant indirect effect from UCE on customer satisfaction. This means that the relationship between UCE and customer satisfaction is not mediated by rapport. Furthermore, the relationship between RCE and customer satisfaction is non-significant. There is neither a direct effect from RCE on customer satisfaction, nor an indirect effect from RCE on customer satisfaction through rapport. Thus, the direct relationship between UCE and customer satisfaction in the grocery store setting is the only significant direct relationship between an EEC dimension and customer satisfaction that is found. In line with this, H2a, H2b, and H2c are rejected. Furthermore, the only relationship that is mediated by rapport is the relationship between RCE and customer satisfaction in the restaurant setting. This means that H7a and H7b are rejected, whereas H7c is supported.

The results for the relationships between the EEC dimensions and customer loyalty are to some extent comparable. For the restaurant group, the relationships between both PCE and UCE and customer loyalty are non-significant. There is neither a direct effect from PCE and UCE on customer loyalty, nor an indirect effect from PCE and UCE on customer loyalty through rapport. There is a significant, positive relationship between RCE and customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.647$; $p < 0.001$). However, there is also a significant indirect effect from RCE on customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.590$; $p < 0.001$). When controlling for the indirect effect from RCE on customer loyalty, the effect from RCE on customer loyalty becomes non-significant. There are two possible mediators in this relationship: (1) rapport and (2) customer satisfaction. The direct relationship between RCE and rapport is significant ($\beta = 0.774$; $p < 0.001$), whereas the direct relationship between RCE and customer satisfaction is non-significant. This means that rapport fully mediates the relationship between RCE and customer loyalty. For the grocery store group, there is a significant, positive relationship between PCE and customer loyalty (β

= 0.240; $p < 0.05$). There is no significant indirect effect from PCE on customer loyalty. This means that the relationship between PCE and customer loyalty is neither mediated by rapport, nor customer satisfaction. There is also a significant, positive relationship between UCE and customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.421$; $p < 0.01$). However, there is a significant indirect effect from UCE on customer loyalty as well ($\beta = 0.266$; $p < 0.05$). When controlling for the indirect effect from UCE on customer loyalty, the effect from UCE on customer loyalty becomes non-significant. There are two possible mediators in this relationship: (1) rapport and (2) customer satisfaction. The direct relationship between UCE and rapport is non-significant, whereas the direct relationship between UCE and customer satisfaction is significant ($\beta = 0.357$; $p < 0.01$). This means that customer satisfaction fully mediates the relationship between UCE and customer loyalty. Furthermore, the relationship between RCE and customer loyalty is non-significant. There is neither a direct effect from RCE on customer loyalty, nor an indirect effect from RCE on customer loyalty through rapport or customer satisfaction. Thus, the direct relationship between PCE and customer loyalty in the grocery store setting is the only significant direct relationship between an EEC dimension and customer loyalty that is found. In line with this, H4a, H4b, and H4c are rejected. Furthermore, the only relationship that is mediated by rapport is the relationship between RCE and customer loyalty in the restaurant setting. This means that H8a and H8b are rejected, whereas H8c is supported.

Finally, some group differences were found that were not hypothesized. For the restaurant group, there is a significant, positive relationship between RCE and rapport ($\beta = 0.774$; $p < 0.001$). For the grocery store group, there is a significant, positive relationship between RCE and rapport as well ($\beta = 0.783$; $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that rapport may function as a mediator in the relationships between RCE and both customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. This was found to be true only in the restaurant setting. For the restaurant group, there is a significant, positive relationship between rapport and customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.668$; $p < 0.001$). There is also a significant, positive relationship between rapport and customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.651$; $p < 0.001$). However, there is a significant indirect effect from rapport on customer loyalty as well ($\beta = 0.533$; $p < 0.001$). When controlling for the indirect effect from rapport on customer loyalty, the effect from rapport on customer loyalty becomes non-significant. This means that customer satisfaction fully mediates the relationship between rapport and customer loyalty. For the grocery store group, the relationship between rapport and customer satisfaction is non-significant. Furthermore, the direct effect from rapport on customer loyalty is non-significant, as well as the indirect effect through customer satisfaction. Finally, for the restaurant group, there is a significant, positive

relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.798$; $p < 0.001$). For the grocery store group the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty is significant as well ($\beta = 0.769$; $p < 0.001$). An overview of the effects is presented in Table 3.

Effect		Beta	Indirect effects	Total effect	Cohen's f^2	Hypothesis
PCE -> Rapport	R	0.104		0.104	0.017	Not hypothesized
	G	0.108		0.108	0.022	
PCE -> CS	R	-0.080	0.070	-0.010	0.006	H2a rejected; H7a
	G	0.085	0.021	0.106	0.006	rejected
PCE -> CL	R	-0.003	0.004	0.001	0.000	H4a rejected; H8a
	G	0.137*	0.104	0.240*	0.052	rejected
UCE -> Rapport	R	0.025		0.025	0.001	Not hypothesized
	G	-0.025		-0.025	0.001	
UCE -> CS	R	0.018	0.017	0.035	0.000	H2b rejected; H7b
	G	0.357**	-0.005	0.353**	0.078	rejected
UCE -> CL	R	-0.012	0.031	0.019	0.000	H4b rejected; H8b
	G	0.155	0.266*	0.421**	0.048	rejected
RCE -> Rapport	R	0.774***		0.774***	1.496	Not hypothesized
	G	0.783***		0.783***	0.996	
RCE -> CS	R	0.105	0.517***	0.622***	0.007	H2c rejected; H7c
	G	-0.044	0.150	0.106	0.001	supported
RCE -> CL	R	0.060	0.590***	0.647***	0.007	H4c rejected; H8c
	G	-0.294*	0.242	-0.052	0.105	supported
Rapport -> CS	R	0.668***		0.668***	0.284	Not hypothesized
	G	0.191		0.191	0.016	
Rapport -> CL	R	0.118	0.533***	0.651***	0.022	Not hypothesized
	G	0.205	0.147	0.352*	0.062	
CS -> CL	R	0.798***		0.798***	2.009	Not hypothesized
	G	0.769***		0.769***	2.066	

Table 3: Effect overview group comparisons. Notes: * = significant at $p < 0.05$; ** = significant at $p < 0.01$; *** = significant at $p < 0.001$; R = restaurant; G = grocery store.

4.5 Additional analysis

In this research, perceived service quality is included as a control variable. As mentioned before, service quality includes both a “what” and a “how” aspect. Whereas the “what” aspect relates to “the quality of the result or outcome of the service”, the “how” aspect relates to “the manner in or process by which a service is provided” (Wetzels et al., 1998, p.410). Previous research has shown that service quality is an important antecedent of customer satisfaction

and customer loyalty (e.g., Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Mosahab et al., 2010). EEC is related to the “how” component of the service delivery. However, both the “what” and the “how” aspect of the service delivery can influence customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Because of this, the hypothesized relationships are studied with the inclusion of perceived service quality into the path model. The output from the ADANCO-PLS application, on which all of the following is based, can be found in Appendix 6.

There is indeed a significant, positive relationship between perceived service quality and customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.268$; $p < 0.01$), as well as a significant indirect effect from perceived service quality on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.231$; $p < 0.01$). Except for one relationship, all of the relationships that were significant in the initial model still hold with the inclusion of perceived service quality into the model. Whereas in the initial model the total effect from RCE on customer loyalty is significant ($\beta = 0.357$; $p < 0.01$), this relationship becomes non-significant when perceived service quality is included in the model. However, the indirect effect from RCE on customer loyalty through rapport remains significant ($\beta = 0.306$; $p < 0.01$). The change in the path coefficient is 0.131. The direct effect from RCE on customer loyalty is non-significant, however, this relationship was non-significant in the initial model as well.

In the extended model, there is a significant positive relationship between RCE and customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.237$; $p < 0.05$). There is also a significant indirect from RCE on customer satisfaction through rapport ($\beta = 0.298$; $p < 0.01$). When controlling for the indirect effect, the effect from RCE on customer satisfaction becomes non-significant. These results are in line with the results from the initial model. The change in the path coefficients for the total effect and the indirect effect are respectively 0.169 and 0.089. Like in the initial model, the relationship between rapport and customer satisfaction is significant as well ($\beta = 0.398$; $p < 0.01$). The change in the path coefficient for this effect is 0.117. Furthermore, there is a significant positive relationship between rapport and customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.468$; $p < 0.001$). There is also a significant indirect from rapport on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.335$; $p < 0.01$). When controlling for the indirect effect, the effect from rapport on customer loyalty becomes non-significant. These results are in line with the initial model results. The change in the path coefficients for the total effect and the indirect effect are respectively 0.082 and 0.096. Finally, the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty remains significant as well ($\beta = 0.861$; $p < 0.001$), with a 0.008 change in the path coefficient. Altogether, perceived service quality does not have a major impact on the relationships that are investigated.

5.0 Conclusion

In the previous chapter, the hypotheses testing took place. In this final chapter, the findings will be discussed, followed by the theoretical and managerial implications based on these findings. Finally, the research limitations will be discussed and suggestions for further research will be given.

5.1 Discussion

The purpose of this research was to determine the differential effect of the dimensions of customer-perceived EEC, as distinguished by Delcourt et al. (2016), on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, as well as how and to what extent rapport mediates these effects. Furthermore, these effects were studied across two different service types that are being distinguished in Bowen's taxonomy of consumer services: (1) high-contact, customized, personal services and (2) moderate contact, standardized services.

First, the relationship between each of the EEC dimensions and both customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, as well as the role of rapport as a mediator in these relationships, was investigated in general. Against expectations, none of the EEC dimensions has a direct, positive relationship with either customer satisfaction or customer loyalty. Apparently, solely identifying the customer's emotional state, interpreting the cause of the customer's emotional state, or managing the customer's emotional state, is not enough for creating customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. However, RCE does have an indirect effect on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty through rapport. Rapport has a direct, positive relationship with customer satisfaction, as well as an indirect positive relationship with customer loyalty through customer satisfaction. RCE is the only EEC dimension that is related to rapport and by this eventually customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. A possible explanation may be that, as compared to perception and understanding of customer emotions, regulation of customer emotions requires more effort from the contact employee. The customer perceives this effort, which may increase the feeling of an enjoyable interaction and a personal connection between customer and contact employee.

The direct relationship between rapport and customer satisfaction that was found in this research, is in line with previous research, which has frequently shown that a direct relationship between rapport and customer satisfaction exists (e.g., Dewitt & Brady, 2003; Gremler & Gwinner, 2000; Macintosh, 2009; Verbeke, Belschak, Bakker & Dietz, 2008). However, the finding that customer satisfaction fully mediates the relationship between rapport and customer loyalty is contrary to previous research, which has shown a direct

relationship between rapport and customer loyalty (e.g., Dewitt & Brady, 2003; Gremler & Gwinner, 2000; Macintosh, 2009; Verbeke, Belschak, Bakker & Dietz, 2008). The positive relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty is in line with previous research, which has frequently shown a direct, positive relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (e.g., Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Gremler & Brown, 1996; Han, Kwortnik & Wang, 2008; Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner & Gremler, 2002).

Besides the investigation of the basic relationships, these relationships were investigated across the two different service types. The relationships between the EEC dimensions and both customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, as well as the mediating role of rapport, are indeed different for the different service types. However, the findings are not completely as hypothesized. Except for the direct relationship between UCE and customer satisfaction for moderate contact, standardized services, none of the EEC dimensions has a direct, positive relationship with either customer satisfaction or customer loyalty. Apparently, identifying the customer's emotional state, or managing the customer's emotional state, does not directly lead to customer satisfaction for both service types. For high-contact, customized, personal services, UCE does not directly affect customer satisfaction either. For moderate contact, standardized services however, UCE does have a direct, positive relationship with customer satisfaction. A possible explanation could be that in moderate contact, standardized services, understanding of the customer's emotional state addresses the emotional needs of customers. Hence, UCE is positively related to customer satisfaction. For high-contact, customized, personal services, UCE might be experienced as an indifference factor, which means that it does not cause customers to be more satisfied.

Furthermore, the direct relationship between PCE and customer loyalty for moderate contact, standardized services, is the only direct relationship between an EEC dimension and customer loyalty that is found across both service types. Apparently, interpreting the cause of the customer's emotional state, or managing the customer's emotional state, does not directly lead to customer loyalty for both service types. For high-contact, customized, personal services, PCE does not directly affect customer loyalty either. For moderate contact, standardized services however, PCE does have a direct, positive relationship with customer loyalty. A possible explanation could be that for moderate contact, standardized services, PCE contributes to a favorable service experience, which makes customers more likely to exhibit loyalty in the future (Delcourt et al., 2016). For high-contact, customized, personal services, PCE might be an indifference factor, just like UCE.

The mediating role of rapport is investigated across both service types as well. For high-contact, customized, personal services, RCE has an indirect effect on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty through rapport. Rapport has a direct, positive relationship with customer satisfaction, as well as an indirect positive relationship with customer loyalty through customer satisfaction. There is no indirect effect from both PCE and UCE on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty through rapport. For moderate contact, standardized services, RCE has a positive relationship with rapport as well. However, here, rapport does not lead to customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Furthermore, UCE has a positive indirect effect on customer loyalty. However, this relationship is mediated by customer satisfaction instead of rapport, since UCE does not have a positive relationship with rapport. There is no indirect effect from PCE on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty through rapport. Thus, rapport does not function as a mediator in the relationships between each of the EEC dimensions and customer satisfaction and customer loyalty for moderate contact, standardized services. Even if rapport is created, it will not lead to customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. This finding is contrary to previous research, which has frequently shown a direct relationship between rapport and customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (e.g., Dewitt & Brady, 2003; Gremler & Gwinner, 2000; Macintosh, 2009; Verbeke, Belschak, Bakker & Dietz, 2008). Apparently, this relationship between rapport and both customer satisfaction and customer loyalty does not hold across all service types. A possible explanation might be that moderate contact, standardized services are to a far lesser extent characterized by interpersonal interactions as compared to high-contact, customized, personal services. Because of this, it is likely that for moderate contact, standardized services, a personal connection with a service provider employee is not what causes customers to be more satisfied or exhibit loyalty towards a company. Finally, the positive relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty holds across both service types.

5.2 Theoretical implications

This research contributes to service literature in two ways. First, the role of EEC and rapport in emotionally charged service encounters is further investigated. This is done by studying the differential effect of the three dimensions of customer-perceived EEC, as distinguished by Delcourt et al. (2016), on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, as well as how and to what extent rapport mediates these effects. Next to that, this research answers a call for further research on the role of EEC across service types (Delcourt et al., 2013), by investigating the

hypothesized relationships for both high-contact, customized, personal services and moderate contact, standardized services.

Each of the dimensions of customer-perceived EEC (i.e., perception, understanding, and regulation of customer emotions) refers to a unique aspect of customer-perceived EEC and may behave independently (Delcourt et al., 2016). In previous research, no attention is paid to the differential effect of the dimensions on customer outcomes such as customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. However, this research shows that the dimensions do have different effects on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Whereas previous research has shown that customer-perceived EEC has a positive relationship with customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (e.g., Delcourt et al., 2013), this research shows that not all dimensions of customer-perceived EEC are related to customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Ignoring this finding, and treating EEC as an overall construct, may lead to inaccurate conclusions about the effect of customer-perceived EEC on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

Furthermore, this research shows that the role of EEC is indeed different across service types. In high-contact, customized, personal services, RCE is the only dimension of customer-perceived EEC that has a positive relationship with customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. In moderate contact, standardized services however, UCE has a positive relationship with customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, and PCE has a positive relationship with customer loyalty. Here, customer satisfaction is no necessity for customer loyalty. Even though the perception of customer emotions does not lead to customer satisfaction, it does lead to customer loyalty.

Finally, the positive relationship between rapport and customer satisfaction and customer loyalty that is frequently shown in previous research (e.g., Dewitt & Brady, 2003; Gremler & Gwinner, 2000; Macintosh, 2009; Verbeke, Belschak, Bakker & Dietz, 2008), does not hold across both service types. In high-contact, customized, personal services, a direct relationship between rapport and customer satisfaction, as well as an indirect relationship between rapport and customer loyalty through customer satisfaction, exists. In moderate contact, standardized services however, rapport is not related to customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Even if rapport is created, it will not lead to customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. This means that the mediating role of rapport is dependent on service type. Neglecting the role of service type in these relationships, may lead to either underestimation or overestimation of the mediating role of rapport.

5.3 Managerial implications

This research suggests that, depending on the service type, managers of service firms should select and train employees on the emotional competences that are relevant for creating customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. For high-contact, customized, personal services, this means that employees should be able to regulate customer emotions in order to create customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. For moderate contact, standardized services, employees should be able to understand customer emotions and perceive customer emotions for creating respectively customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

Managers could select employees on these abilities, by testing potential new employees on the relevant emotional competences. This could for example be done by letting them deal with several fictitious emotionally charged service situations, in order to determine their ability to demonstrate emotionally competent behavior in such situations. However, it is hard to determine the actual emotional competences as perceived by customers. This would mean that potential new employees would have to deal with real emotionally charged service situations, after which the potential new employees' emotional competences should be evaluated by the respective customers, using the scale for customer-perceived EEC by Delcourt et al. (2016).

A more feasible option for gaining emotional competent employees, is to train employees on the relevant abilities by using training programs. Research in psychology has shown that employees' ability to display emotionally competent behaviors can be taught and improved by scientifically validated training programs (Kotsou, Nelis, Grégoire & Mikolajczak, 2011; Nelis, Quoidbach, Mikolajczak & Hansenne, 2009). Furthermore, it is not enough for employees to possess the ability to display emotionally competent behaviors, they should be trained to realize this potential as well.

5.4 Limitations and suggestions for further research

In this research, customers' perceptions of employees' emotional competence were measured in form of a survey. Respondents were asked to fill out the questionnaire in reference to a situation they had actually experienced in the past. Even though emotionally charged service encounters are likely to be memorable for the customer, and 84% of the respondents indicated that the emotionally charged service encounter took place no later than six months ago, the extent to which they are able to remember the particular situation cannot be checked. Events might become distorted in the memory of customers over time. Further research could test this model, for example, in a scenario-based experiment instead of a survey. Although this

requires the ability to empathize with the particular situation in the scenarios, customers do not have to rely on their memory when filling out the questionnaire.

In this research, the role of rapport as a mediator in the relationships between customer-perceived EEC and both customer satisfaction and customer loyalty was investigated. It was found that not all dimensions of customer-perceived EEC have a positive relationship with rapport. Next to that, the mediating role of rapport appears to be dependent on service type. Besides rapport, there may be other mediators that link customer-perceived EEC to customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Previous research has shown that trust depends on employee interpersonal behaviors as well (Macintosh, 2009; Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002), and also affects key outcomes, such as customer satisfaction and loyalty (Crosby, Evans & Cowles, 1990; Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002). Further research could investigate this possible mediating role of trust on the relationship between customer-perceived EEC and customer outcomes such as customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Thereby, the differential effect of the customer-perceived EEC dimensions should be taken into account, as well as service type.

Furthermore, the differences across service types should be studied in more depth for the relationships what were investigated in this research. For the two service types that were included in this research, some interesting differences were found. However, the group differences were not tested on significance, since the ADANCO software that was used, does not have an option for significance testing on group differences. Further research should use a different software, that does support significance testing on group differences. For example, in Smart-PLS software, a PLS-based approach to multi-group analysis (PLS-MGA) can be conducted, in order to determine whether differences in model parameters across groups are significant (Henseler et al., 2009). Finally, further research could investigate the differential effect of the customer-perceived EEC dimensions on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty for moderate contact, semi-customized, non-personal services. This research has shown that the differential effect of the customer-perceived EEC dimensions on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty is dependent on service type. Since moderate contact, semi-customized, non-personal services were not included in this research, it would be interesting for further research to investigate the differential effect of the customer-perceived EEC dimensions on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty for this service type.

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Appendix 1: Operationalization of constructs

Variable	Dimensions	Items
Perceived service quality	Technical service quality	2. As compared to my expectations, the result of the service was excellent.
	Functional service quality	3. As compared to my expectations, the manner in which the service was provided was excellent.
Employee emotional competence (EEC) Reference: Delcourt et al. (2016)	Perception of customer emotions	4. The employee was altogether capable of recognizing that I was upset. 5. The employee was altogether capable of perceiving how I was feeling. 6. The employee was altogether capable of identifying the emotional state I was in. 7. The employee was fully aware of my emotional state. 8. The employee perfectly interpreted my emotions.
	Understanding of customer emotions	9. The employee perfectly understood the reasons why I was upset. 10. The employee perfectly understood the reasons for my feelings. 11. The employee perfectly understood why I was bothered.
	Regulation of customer emotions	12. The employee had a very positive influence on me. 13. The employee did everything to make me feel well. 14. The employee behaved tactfully to make me feel better. 15. The employee positively influenced the way I was feeling. 16. By his/ her behavior, the employee

		calmed me down.
Rapport Reference: Grenler & Gwinner (2000)	Enjoyable interaction	17. In thinking about my relationship with this employee, I enjoy interacting with him/ her. 18. This employee creates a feeling of “warmth” in our relationship. 19. This employee relates well to me. 20. In thinking about my relationship with this employee, I have a harmonious relationship with him/ her. 21. This employee has a good sense of humor. 22. I am comfortable interacting with this employee.
	Personal connection	23. I feel like there is a “bond” between this employee and myself. 24. I look forward to seeing this employee when I visit <i>service provider X</i>. 25. I strongly care about this employee. 26. This employee has taken a personal interest in me. 27. I have a close relationship with this employee.
Customer satisfaction Reference: Grenler & Gwinner (2000) on the basis of Oliver (1980)	Transaction-specific customer satisfaction	28. My choice to use <i>service provider X</i> was a wise one. 29. Overall, I am satisfied with the decision to choose <i>service provider X</i>. 30. I think I did the right thing when I decided to choose <i>service provider X</i>.
	Cumulative customer satisfaction	31. Based on all of my experience with <i>service provider X</i>, I am very satisfied with the services provided by <i>service provider X</i>.

		32. My overall evaluation of the services provided by <i>service provider X</i> is very good.
Customer loyalty Reference: Zeithaml et al. (1996)	-	33. I say positive things about <i>service provider X</i> to other people. 34. I recommend <i>service provider X</i> to someone who seeks my advice. 35. I encourage friend and relatives to do business with <i>service provider X</i> . 36. I consider <i>service provider X</i> my first choice to buy ____ services. 37. I wish to do more business with <i>service provider X</i> in the next few years.

Appendix 2: Questionnaire (English)

Read the following introduction carefully, this is important for completing the questionnaire.

The questionnaire that follows is part of an investigation that I conduct for my master's thesis. The data will not be used for other purposes. The aim of the research is to investigate the importance of employees' emotional competence for creating customer satisfaction and loyalty. The questionnaire consists of a number of questions and propositions that relate to a specific situation. When completing the questionnaire, it is important that you think back to the moment when that particular situation took place. The questionnaire is completely anonymous. Please answer the questions according to your own opinion, there are no correct or incorrect answers. Completion will take about five to ten minutes. In case of questions regarding the questionnaire or the research in general, you can contact me via iris.thiel@student.ru.nl.

Hereafter follows the questionnaire. Please fill out the questionnaire in reference to your last emotionally charged visit to *service provider X*. It is thus of importance that something has occurred that has evoked emotions in you. This could be anything. Think of... *examples depend on context. Restaurant: long waiting times, cold food, mistakes in orders, low quality of food, etc. Grocery store: long waiting times, products that are out of stock, registration of wrong prices, etc.*

1. When did this particular situation take place?

(inapplicable/ 0-6 months ago/ 6-12 months ago/ more than 1 year ago)

If inapplicable, the respondent is being redirected to the end of this questionnaire.

If, in the remainder of the questionnaire, reference is made to "the employee", assume the employee with whom you had (most) contact during the service encounter.

The following two propositions concern your opinion about the quality of the service. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the propositions (strongly disagree - disagree - neither agree nor disagree - agree - strongly agree).

2. As compared to my expectations, the result of the service was excellent.

3. As compared to my expectations, the manner in which the service was provided was excellent.

The following thirteen propositions concern your opinion about the employee's emotional competence. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the propositions (strongly disagree - disagree - neither agree nor disagree - agree - strongly agree).

4. The employee was altogether capable of recognizing that I was upset.
5. The employee was altogether capable of perceiving how I was feeling.
6. The employee was altogether capable of identifying the emotional state I was in.
7. The employee was fully aware of my emotional state.
8. The employee perfectly interpreted my emotions.
9. The employee perfectly understood the reasons why I was upset.
10. The employee perfectly understood the reasons for my feelings.
11. The employee perfectly understood why I was bothered.
12. The employee had a very positive influence on me.
13. The employee did everything to make me feel well.
14. The employee behaved tactfully to make me feel better.
15. The employee positively influenced the way I was feeling.
16. By his/ her behavior, the employee calmed me down.

The following eleven propositions concern your opinion about the relationship you have with the employee. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the propositions (strongly disagree - disagree - neither agree nor disagree - agree - strongly agree).

17. In thinking about my relationship with this employee, I enjoy interacting with him/ her.
18. This employee creates a feeling of "warmth" in our relationship.
19. This employee relates well to me.
20. In thinking about my relationship with this employee, I have a harmonious relationship with him/ her.
21. This employee has a good sense of humor.
22. I am comfortable interacting with this employee.
23. I feel like there is a "bond" between this employee and myself.
24. I look forward to seeing this employee when I visit *this restaurant/ grocery store*.

- 25. I strongly care about this employee.
- 26. This employee has taken a personal interest in me.
- 27. I have a close relationship with this employee.

The following five propositions concern your satisfaction with the service. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the propositions (strongly disagree - disagree - neither agree nor disagree - agree - strongly agree).

- 28. My choice to use *this restaurant/ grocery store* was a wise one.
- 29. Overall, I am satisfied with the decision to choose *this restaurant/ grocery store*.
- 30. I think I did the right thing when I decided to choose *this restaurant/ grocery store*.
- 31. Based on all of my experience with *this restaurant/ grocery store*, I am very satisfied with the services provided by *this restaurant/ grocery store*.
- 32. My overall evaluation of the services provided by *this restaurant/ grocery store* is very good.

The following five propositions concern your loyalty intentions towards *the restaurant/ grocery store* in question. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the propositions (strongly disagree - disagree - neither agree nor disagree - agree - strongly agree).

- 33. I say positive things about *this restaurant/ grocery store* to other people.
- 34. I recommend *this restaurant/ grocery store* to someone who seeks my advice.
- 35. I encourage friends and relatives to visit *this restaurant/ grocery store*.
- 36. I consider *this restaurant/ grocery store* my first choice.
- 37. I wish to visit *this restaurant/ grocery store* more often in the next few years.

38. What is your age?
(open question)

39. What is your gender?
(male/ female)

40. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
(primary school/ secondary school/ intermediate vocational education/ higher vocational education/ university/ other, specify...)

Thank you for your participation. In case you are interested in the results of this research, you can leave your e-mail address below. Your e-mail address will not be used for other purposes.

Appendix 3: Questionnaire (Dutch)

Lees de hierna volgende introductie aandachtig, dit is van belang voor het invullen van de vragenlijst.

De vragenlijst die hierna volgt, maakt deel uit van een onderzoek dat ik verricht voor mijn masterscriptie. De data zullen niet voor andere doeleinden worden gebruikt. Het doel van het onderzoek is om het belang van medewerkers' emotionele competentie voor het creëren van klanttevredenheid en loyaliteit te onderzoeken. De vragenlijst bestaat uit een aantal vragen en stellingen die betrekking hebben op een specifieke situatie. Het is belangrijk dat u bij het invullen van de vragenlijst terugdenkt aan het moment waarop de betreffende situatie heeft plaatsgevonden. De vragenlijst is volledig anoniem. Beantwoord de vragen naar uw eigen mening, er zijn geen juiste of onjuiste antwoorden. Het invullen duurt ongeveer vijf tot tien minuten. In het geval van vragen met betrekking tot de vragenlijst of het onderzoek in het algemeen, kunt u me bereiken via iris.thiel@student.ru.nl.

Hierna volgt de vragenlijst. Vul de vragenlijst in met betrekking tot uw laatste emotioneel beladen *restaurantbezoek/ supermarktbezoek*. Het is dus belangrijk dat er zich iets heeft voorgedaan dat emoties bij u heeft opgeroepen. Dit kan van alles zijn. Denk aan... *voorbeelden zijn afhankelijk van de context. Restaurant: lange wachttijden, koud eten, fouten in bestellingen, slechte kwaliteit voedsel, etc. Supermarkt: lange wachtrijen, producten die niet op voorraad zijn, registratie van verkeerde prijzen, etc.*

1. Wanneer heeft de betreffende situatie zich voorgedaan?

(niet van toepassing/ 0-6 maanden geleden/ 6-12 maanden geleden/ meer dan 1 jaar geleden)

Indien niet van toepassing, wordt de respondent doorverwezen naar het einde van deze vragenlijst.

Indien er in het vervolg van de vragenlijst wordt gesproken over “de medewerker”, ga dan uit van de medewerker waarmee u (het meeste) contact heeft gehad tijdens de dienstverlening.

De volgende twee stellingen hebben betrekking op uw mening over de kwaliteit van de dienstverlening. Geef aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de stellingen (zeer mee oneens - mee oneens - noch mee eens, noch mee oneens - mee eens - zeer mee eens).

2. In vergelijking met mijn verwachtingen, was het resultaat van de dienstverlening uitstekend.
3. In vergelijking met mijn verwachtingen, was de manier waarop de dienst werd verleend uitstekend.

De volgende dertien stellingen hebben betrekking op uw mening over de emotionele competentie van de medewerker. Geef aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de stellingen (zeer mee oneens - mee oneens - noch mee eens, noch mee oneens - mee eens - zeer mee eens).

4. De medewerker was al met al in staat te herkennen dat ik van streek was.
5. De medewerker was al met al in staat om waar te nemen hoe ik me voelde.
6. De medewerker was al met al in staat om de emotionele toestand waarin ik verkeerde te identificeren.
7. De medewerker was zich volledig bewust van mijn emotionele toestand.
8. De medewerker interpreteerde mijn emoties perfect.
9. De medewerker begreep de reden dat ik van streek was perfect.
10. De medewerker begreep de reden dat ik me zo voelde perfect.
11. De medewerker begreep perfect waarom ik geërgerd was.
12. De medewerker had een zeer positieve invloed op me.
13. De medewerker deed er alles aan om me goed te laten voelen.
14. De medewerker gedroeg zich tactvol om me beter te laten voelen.
15. De medewerker had een positieve invloed op hoe ik me voelde.
16. Door middel van zijn/ haar gedrag, kalmeerde de medewerker me.

De volgende elf stellingen hebben betrekking op uw mening over de relatie die u heeft met de medewerker. Geef aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de stellingen (zeer mee oneens - mee oneens - noch mee eens, noch mee oneens - mee eens - zeer mee eens).

17. Nadenkend over mijn relatie met deze medewerker, heb ik plezier in de interactie met hem/ haar.

18. Deze medewerker creëert een gevoel van “warmte” in onze relatie.
19. Ik heb een goede verhouding met deze medewerker.
20. Nadenkend over mijn relatie met deze medewerker, heb ik een harmonieuze relatie met hem/ haar.
21. Deze medewerker heeft een goed gevoel voor humor.
22. Ik voel me comfortabel in de interactie met deze medewerker.
23. Ik heb het gevoel dat er een “band” bestaat tussen deze medewerker en mijzelf.
24. Ik kijk ernaar uit om deze medewerker te zien wanneer ik *dit restaurant/ deze supermarkt* bezoek.
25. Ik geef veel om deze medewerker.
26. Deze medewerker heeft een persoonlijk belang in mij genomen.
27. Ik heb een hechte band met deze medewerker.

De volgende vijf stellingen hebben betrekking op uw tevredenheid met de dienstverlening. Geef aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de stellingen (zeer mee oneens - mee oneens - noch mee eens, noch mee oneens - mee eens - zeer mee eens).

28. Mijn keuze voor *dit restaurant/ deze supermarkt* was wijs.
29. Alles bij elkaar ben ik tevreden met de beslissing om voor *dit restaurant/ deze supermarkt* te kiezen.
30. Ik denk dat ik het juiste heb gedaan toen ik besloot om voor *dit restaurant/ deze supermarkt* te kiezen.
31. Gebaseerd op al mijn ervaringen met *dit restaurant/ deze supermarkt*, ben ik zeer tevreden met de diensten verleend door *dit restaurant/ deze supermarkt*.
32. Mijn algehele evaluatie van de diensten verleend door *dit restaurant/ deze supermarkt* is zeer goed.

De volgende vijf stellingen hebben betrekking op uw loyaliteitsintenties richting *het betreffende restaurant/ de betreffende supermarkt*. Geef aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de stellingen (zeer mee oneens - mee oneens - noch mee eens, noch mee oneens - mee eens - zeer mee eens).

33. Ik zeg positieve dingen over *dit restaurant/ deze supermarkt* tegen andere mensen.
34. Ik raad *dit restaurant/ deze supermarkt* aan, aan iemand die mijn advies vraagt.

35. Ik moedig vrienden en familieleden aan om *dit restaurant te bezoeken/ naar deze supermarkt te gaan*.
36. Ik beschouw *dit restaurant/ deze supermarkt* als mijn eerste keuze.
37. Ik zou *dit restaurant vaker willen bezoeken/ vaker naar deze supermarkt willen gaan* in de komende jaren.
38. Wat is uw leeftijd?
(open vraag)
39. Wat is uw geslacht?
(man/ vrouw)
40. Wat is uw hoogst afgeronde opleiding?
(basisschool/ middelbare school/ VMBO/ HBO/ WO/ anders, namelijk...)

Bedankt voor uw deelname. Indien u geïnteresseerd bent in de resultaten van het onderzoek, kunt u uw e-mailadres hieronder achterlaten. Uw e-mailadres wordt niet gebruikt voor andere doeleinden.

Appendix 4: Initial model run output

Overall model

Goodness of model fit (saturated model)

	Value	HI95	HI99
SRMR	0.059	0.045	0.048
d_{ULS}	2.083	1.201	1.393
d_G	1.422	1.203	1.327

Goodness of model fit (estimated model)

	Value	HI95	HI99
SRMR	0.059	0.045	0.048
d_{ULS}	2.083	1.201	1.393
d_G	1.422	1.203	1.327

Measurement model

Construct reliability

Construct	Dijkstra-Henseler's rho (ρ_A)
PCE	0.939
UCE	0.913
RCE	0.950
Rapport	0.953
CS	0.960
CL	0.958

Convergent validity

Construct	Average variance extracted (AVE)
PCE	0.747
UCE	0.831
RCE	0.835
Rapport	0.675
CS	0.857
CL	0.854

Discriminant validity: HTMT inference

Construct	PCE	UCE	RCE	Rapport	CS	CL
PCE						

UCE	0.823				
RCE	0.634	0.738			
Rapport	0.616	0.669	0.898		
CS	0.453	0.529	0.618	0.679	
CL	0.500	0.558	0.614	0.694	0.966

Discriminant Validity: Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Construct	PCE	UCE	RCE	Rapport	CS	CL
PCE	0.747					
UCE	0.443	0.831				
RCE	0.238	0.349	0.835			
Rapport	0.239	0.282	0.676	0.676		
CS	0.099	0.139	0.240	0.325	0.857	
CL	0.130	0.160	0.230	0.338	0.827	0.854

Squared correlations; AVE in the diagonal.

Loadings and cross loadings

Indicator	PCE	UCE	RCE	Rapport	CS	CL
PCE_A	0.837	0.521	0.399	0.374	0.181	0.242
PCE_B	0.858	0.581	0.365	0.386	0.247	0.300
PCE_C	0.891	0.548	0.367	0.364	0.211	0.248
PCE_D	0.867	0.539	0.404	0.431	0.270	0.286
PCE_E	0.867	0.650	0.525	0.510	0.387	0.423
UCE_A	0.630	0.897	0.504	0.435	0.288	0.302
UCE_B	0.623	0.934	0.592	0.536	0.390	0.409
UCE_C	0.571	0.902	0.510	0.470	0.332	0.372
RCE_A	0.528	0.553	0.895	0.755	0.459	0.462
RCE_B	0.398	0.493	0.917	0.746	0.439	0.411
RCE_C	0.441	0.585	0.912	0.747	0.448	0.427
RCE_D	0.433	0.529	0.950	0.771	0.465	0.460
RCE_E	0.427	0.537	0.893	0.736	0.424	0.427
Rapport_A	0.367	0.432	0.788	0.856	0.487	0.475
Rapport_B	0.380	0.422	0.739	0.8429	0.432	0.466
Rapport_C	0.394	0.469	0.718	0.845	0.544	0.558
Rapport_D	0.412	0.473	0.737	0.869	0.536	0.516
Rapport_E	0.345	0.395	0.657	0.732	0.350	0.389
Rapport_F	0.385	0.546	0.672	0.765	0.482	0.494
Rapport_G	0.440	0.454	0.661	0.862	0.506	0.519
Rapport_H	0.372	0.344	0.681	0.847	0.493	0.487

Rapport_I	0.414	0.397	0.582	0.792	0.476	0.488
Rapport_J	0.447	0.429	0.607	0.813	0.411	0.424
Rapport_K	0.471	0.416	0.563	0.801	0.402	0.410
CS_A	0.278	0.363	0.413	0.486	0.907	0.821
CS_B	0.255	0.321	0.439	0.497	0.945	0.831
CS_C	0.269	0.308	0.434	0.541	0.930	0.815
CS_D	0.284	0.335	0.461	0.531	0.924	0.866
CS_E	0.363	0.396	0.511	0.577	0.924	0.871
CL_A	0.277	0.370	0.517	0.606	0.868	0.927
CL_B	0.326	0.400	0.434	0.543	0.858	0.948
CL_C	0.359	0.371	0.464	0.582	0.821	0.942
CL_D	0.376	0.345	0.397	0.475	0.803	0.890
CL_E	0.334	0.362	0.393	0.470	0.850	0.912

Indicator reliability

Indicator	PCE	UCE	RCE	Rapport	CS	CL
PCE_A	0.700					
PCE_B	0.736					
PCE_C	0.794					
PCE_D	0.752					
PCE_E	0.752					
UCE_A		0.805				
UCE_B		0.873				
UCE_C		0.814				
RCE_A			0.801			
RCE_B			0.842			
RCE_C			0.831			
RCE_D			0.902			
RCE_E			0.797			
Rapport_A				0.733		
Rapport_B				0.710		
Rapport_C				0.715		
Rapport_D				0.755		
Rapport_E				0.536		
Rapport_F				0.585		
Rapport_G				0.742		
Rapport_H				0.717		
Rapport_I				0.628		
Rapport_J				0.660		

Rapport_K	0.642
CS_A	0.823
CS_B	0.892
CS_C	0.864
CS_D	0.853
CS_E	0.853
CL_A	0.859
CL_B	0.899
CL_C	0.888
CL_D	0.792
CL_E	0.832

Structural model

R-squared

Construct	Coefficient of determination (R²)	Adjusted R²
Rapport	0.687	0.680
CS	0.332	0.315
CL	0.838	0.832

Path coefficients

Independent variable	Dependent variable		
	Rapport	CS	CL
PCE	0.113	-0.007	0.052
UCE	0.003	0.099	0.032
RCE	0.765	0.019	-0.080
Rapport		0.506	0.119
CS			0.853

Total effects

Independent variable	Dependent variable		
	Rapport	CS	CL
PCE	0.113	0.050	0.108
UCE	0.003	0.100	0.118
RCE	0.765	0.406	0.357
Rapport		0.506	0.550
CS			0.853

Indirect effects

Independent variable	Dependent variable		
	Rapport	CS	CL
PCE		0.057	0.056
UCE		0.002	0.086
RCE		0.387	0.437
Rapport			0.431
CS			

Effect overview

Effect	Beta	Indirect effects	Total effect	Cohen's f^2
PCE -> Rapport	0.113		0.113	0.022
PCE -> CS	-0.007	0.057	0.050	0.000
PCE -> CL	0.052	0.056	0.108	0.009
UCE -> Rapport	0.003		0.003	0.000
UCE -> CS	0.099	0.002	0.100	0.007
UCE -> CL	0.032	0.086	0.118	0.003
RCE -> Rapport	0.765		0.765	1.186
RCE -> CS	0.019	0.387	0.406	0.000
RCE -> CL	-0.080	0.437	0.357	0.012
Rapport -> CS	0.506		0.506	0.120
Rapport -> CL	0.119	0.431	0.550	0.024
CS -> CL	0.853		0.853	2.989

Inter-construct correlations

Construct	PCE	UCE	RCE	Rapport	CS	CL
PCE	1.000					
UCE	0.666	1.000				
RCE	0.488	0.591	1.000			
Rapport	0.489	0.531	0.823	1.000		
CS	0.315	0.373	0.490	0.570	1.000	
CL	0.361	0.400	0.479	0.581	0.909	1.000

Bootstrap

Direct effects inference

Effect	Original	Standard bootstrap results				Percentile bootstrap quantiles				
	coefficient	Mean value	Standard error	t-value	p-value (2-sided)	p-value (1-sided)	0.5%	2.5%	97.5%	99.5%

PCE -> Rapport	0.113	0.119	0.057	2.002	0.045	0.023	-0.019	0.013	0.237	0.274
PCE -> CS	-0.007	-0.007	0.091	-0.080	0.937	0.468	-0.243	-0.186	0.170	0.228
PCE -> CL	0.052	0.053	0.040	1.297	0.195	0.097	-0.053	-0.026	0.132	0.156
UCE -> Rapport	0.003	0.002	0.061	0.056	0.955	0.478	-0.165	-0.121	0.123	0.155
UCE -> CS	0.099	0.100	0.103	0.962	0.336	0.168	-0.172	-0.102	0.297	0.361
UCE -> CL	0.032	0.030	0.050	0.629	0.529	0.265	-0.106	-0.069	0.128	0.159
RCE -> Rapport	0.765	0.764	0.037	20.698	0.000	0.000	0.670	0.692	0.838	0.864
RCE -> CS	0.019	0.020	0.132	0.145	0.885	0.443	-0.305	-0.228	0.283	0.388
RCE -> CL	-0.080	-0.078	0.065	-1.233	0.218	0.109	-0.245	-0.207	0.053	0.092
Rapport -> CS	0.506	0.505	0.106	4.755	0.000	0.000	0.236	0.297	0.710	0.781
Rapport -> CL	0.119	0.118	0.065	1.827	0.068	0.034	-0.058	-0.009	0.248	0.288
CS -> CL	0.853	0.851	0.028	30.064	0.000	0.000	0.769	0.793	0.902	0.918

Indirect effects inference

Effect	Original coefficient	Standard bootstrap results				Percentile bootstrap quantiles				
		Mean value	Standard error	t-value	p-value (2-sided)	p-value (1-sided)	0.5%	2.5%	97.5%	99.5%
PCE -> CS	0.057	0.061	0.034	1.692	0.091	0.045	-0.009	0.006	0.139	0.170
PCE -> CL	0.056	0.059	0.083	0.673	0.501	0.251	-0.154	-0.108	0.219	0.275
UCE -> CS	0.002	0.001	0.032	0.055	0.956	0.478	-0.096	-0.065	0.063	0.081
UCE -> CL	0.086	0.086	0.098	0.880	0.379	0.190	-0.176	-0.109	0.276	0.336
RCE -> CS	0.387	0.386	0.083	4.645	0.000	0.000	0.185	0.229	0.550	0.615

RCE -> CL	0.437	0.435	0.103	4.248	0.000	0.000	0.178	0.236	0.641	0.703
Rapport -> CL	0.431	0.430	0.093	4.653	0.000	0.000	0.201	0.252	0.610	0.678

Total effects inference

Effect	Original coefficient	Standard bootstrap results					Percentile bootstrap quantiles			
		Mean value	Standard error	t-value	p-value (2-sided)	p-value (1-sided)	0.5%	2.5%	97.5%	99.5%
PCE -> Rapport	0.113	0.119	0.057	2.002	0.045	0.023	-0.019	0.013	0.237	0.274
PCE -> CS	0.050	0.054	0.095	0.525	0.600	0.300	-0.186	-0.139	0.236	0.302
PCE -> CL	0.108	0.113	0.093	1.169	0.243	0.121	-0.128	-0.076	0.288	0.352
UCE -> Rapport	0.003	0.002	0.061	0.056	0.955	0.478	-0.165	-0.121	0.123	0.155
UCE -> CS	0.100	0.101	0.111	0.903	0.367	0.183	-0.193	-0.119	0.318	0.386
UCE -> CL	0.118	0.116	0.114	1.033	0.302	0.151	-0.188	-0.109	0.338	0.402
RCE -> Rapport	0.765	0.764	0.037	20.698	0.000	0.000	0.670	0.692	0.838	0.864
RCE -> CS	0.406	0.405	0.102	3.964	0.000	0.000	0.143	0.209	0.607	0.680
RCE -> CL	0.357	0.357	0.105	3.410	0.001	0.000	0.087	0.158	0.562	0.648
Rapport -> CS	0.506	0.505	0.106	4.755	0.000	0.000	0.236	0.297	0.710	0.781
Rapport -> CL	0.550	0.548	0.104	5.318	0.000	0.000	0.280	0.348	0.753	0.814
CS -> CL	0.853	0.851	0.028	30.064	0.000	0.000	0.769	0.793	0.902	0.918

Appendix 5: Group comparisons output

Restaurant subsample

Effect overview

Effect	Beta	Indirect effects	Total effect	Cohen's f^2
PCE -> Rapport	0.104		0.104	0.017
PCE -> CS	-0.080	0.070	-0.010	0.006
PCE -> CL	-0.003	0.004	0.001	0.000
UCE -> Rapport	0.025		0.025	0.001
UCE -> CS	0.018	0.017	0.035	0.000
UCE -> CL	-0.012	0.031	0.019	0.000
RCE -> Rapport	0.774		0.774	1.496
RCE -> CS	0.105	0.517	0.622	0.007
RCE -> CL	0.060	0.588	0.647	0.007
Rapport -> CS	0.668		0.668	0.284
Rapport -> CL	0.118	0.533	0.651	0.022
CS -> CL	0.798		0.798	2.009

Direct effects inference

Effect	Original coefficient	Standard bootstrap results					Percentile bootstrap quantiles			
		Mean value	Standard error	t-value	p-value (2-sided)	p-value (1-sided)	0.5%	2.5%	97.5%	99.5%
PCE -> Rapport	0.104	0.121	0.081	1.281	0.200	0.100	-0.077	-0.026	0.300	0.378
PCE -> CS	-0.080	-0.085	0.115	-0.692	0.489	0.245	-0.394	-0.310	0.146	0.244
PCE -> CL	-0.003	-0.007	0.058	-0.058	0.954	0.477	-0.185	-0.128	0.101	0.139
UCE -> Rapport	0.025	0.016	0.085	0.291	0.771	0.386	-0.233	-0.167	0.172	0.222
UCE -> CS	0.018	0.024	0.125	0.147	0.883	0.442	-0.298	-0.218	0.280	0.354
UCE -> CL	-0.012	-0.014	0.066	-0.187	0.852	0.426	-0.193	-0.143	0.118	0.159
RCE -> Rapport	0.774	0.769	0.050	15.473	0.000	0.000	0.630	0.667	0.861	0.888
RCE -> CS	0.105	0.101	0.154	0.680	0.496	0.248	-0.275	-0.198	0.407	0.518
RCE -> CL	0.060	0.062	0.084	0.713	0.476	0.238	-0.141	-0.096	0.234	0.291

CL										
Rapport										
-> CS	0.668	0.671	0.128	5.216	0.000	0.000	0.330	0.423	0.924	1.002
Rapport										
-> CL	0.118	0.120	0.095	1.247	0.212	0.106	-0.121	-0.065	0.311	0.367
CS ->										
CL	0.798	0.796	0.057	14.012	0.000	0.000	0.622	0.677	0.900	0.932

Indirect effects inference

Effect	Original coefficient	Standard bootstrap results				Percentile bootstrap quantiles				
		Mean value	Standard error	t-value	p-value (2-sided)	p-value (1-sided)	0.5%	2.5%	97.5%	99.5%
PCE ->										
CS	0.070	0.083	0.060	1.168	0.243	0.121	-0.051	-0.016	0.224	0.285
PCE ->										
CL	0.004	0.014	0.100	0.043	0.966	0.483	-0.236	-0.176	0.227	0.325
UCE ->										
CS	0.017	0.010	0.058	0.288	0.774	0.387	-0.168	-0.117	0.115	0.152
UCE ->										
CL	0.031	0.030	0.118	0.260	0.795	0.397	-0.288	-0.202	0.266	0.339
RCE ->										
CS	0.517	0.516	0.108	4.787	0.000	0.000	0.247	0.316	0.732	0.814
RCE ->										
CL	0.588	0.581	0.102	5.741	0.000	0.000	0.308	0.374	0.779	0.838
Rapport										
-> CL	0.533	0.535	0.113	4.721	0.000	0.000	0.253	0.323	0.764	0.841

Total effects inference

Effect	Original coefficient	Standard bootstrap results				Percentile bootstrap quantiles				
		Mean value	Standard error	t-value	p-value (2-sided)	p-value (1-sided)	0.5%	2.5%	97.5%	99.5%
PCE ->										
Rapport	0.104	0.121	0.081	1.281	0.200	0.100	-0.077	-0.026	0.300	0.378
PCE ->										
CS	-0.010	-0.002	0.120	-0.084	0.933	0.466	-0.297	-0.228	0.246	0.363
PCE ->										
CL	0.001	0.007	0.104	0.009	0.993	0.497	-0.273	-0.194	0.220	0.309
UCE ->										
Rapport	0.025	0.016	0.085	0.291	0.771	0.386	-0.233	-0.167	0.172	0.222

UCE ->										
CS	0.035	0.034	0.141	0.248	0.804	0.402	-0.345	-0.248	0.311	0.393
UCE ->										
CL	0.019	0.017	0.122	0.151	0.880	0.440	-0.307	-0.218	0.254	0.342
RCE ->										
Rapport	0.774	0.769	0.050	15.473	0.000	0.000	0.630	0.667	0.861	0.888
RCE ->										
CS	0.622	0.617	0.108	5.784	0.000	0.000	0.328	0.396	0.820	0.879
RCE ->										
CL	0.647	0.644	0.105	6.166	0.000	0.000	0.361	0.431	0.839	0.895
Rapport										
-> CS	0.668	0.671	0.128	5.216	0.000	0.000	0.330	0.423	0.924	1.002
Rapport										
-> CL	0.651	0.655	0.134	4.847	0.000	0.000	0.298	0.391	0.919	0.996
CS ->										
CL	0.798	0.796	0.057	14.012	0.000	0.000	0.622	0.677	0.900	0.932

Grocery store subsample

Effect overview

Effect	Beta	Indirect effects	Total effect	Cohen's f^2
PCE -> Rapport	0.108		0.108	0.022
PCE -> CS	0.085	0.021	0.106	0.006
PCE -> CL	0.137	0.104	0.240	0.052
UCE -> Rapport	-0.025		-0.025	0.001
UCE -> CS	0.357	-0.005	0.353	0.078
UCE -> CL	0.155	0.266	0.421	0.048
RCE -> Rapport	0.783		0.783	0.996
RCE -> CS	-0.044	0.150	0.106	0.001
RCE -> CL	-0.294	0.242	-0.052	0.105
Rapport -> CS	0.191		0.191	0.016
Rapport -> CL	0.205	0.147	0.352	0.062
CS -> CL	0.769		0.769	2.066

Direct effects inference

Effect	Original coefficient	Standard bootstrap results				Percentile bootstrap quantiles				
		Mean value	Standard error	t-value	p-value (2-sided)	p-value (1-sided)	0.5%	2.5%	97.5%	99.5%
PCE ->										
Rapport	0.108	0.115	0.075	1.438	0.151	0.075	-0.067	-0.029	0.267	0.318

PCE ->										
CS	0.085	0.085	0.128	0.663	0.507	0.254	-0.277	-0.181	0.320	0.389
PCE ->										
CL	0.137	0.142	0.065	2.100	0.036	0.018	-0.023	0.013	0.271	0.316
UCE ->										
Rapport	-0.025	-0.029	0.089	-0.282	0.778	0.389	-0.270	-0.212	0.141	0.189
UCE ->										
CS	0.357	0.357	0.125	2.866	0.004	0.002	0.011	0.104	0.602	0.669
UCE ->										
CL	0.155	0.152	0.086	1.804	0.071	0.036	-0.076	-0.013	0.323	0.379
RCE ->										
Rapport	0.783	0.787	0.061	12.923	0.000	0.000	0.640	0.678	0.919	0.979
RCE ->										
CS	-0.044	-0.039	0.190	-0.230	0.819	0.409	-0.515	-0.399	0.354	0.505
RCE ->										
CL	-0.294	-0.294	0.116	-2.540	0.011	0.006	-0.586	-0.518	-0.068	0.018
Rapport										
-> CS	0.191	0.192	0.172	1.111	0.267	0.133	-0.258	-0.138	0.525	0.632
Rapport										
-> CL	0.205	0.204	0.114	1.808	0.071	0.035	-0.119	-0.025	0.416	0.471
CS ->										
CL	0.769	0.768	0.057	13.455	0.000	0.000	0.596	0.645	0.871	0.891

Indirect effects inference

Effect	Original coefficient	Standard bootstrap results				Percentile bootstrap quantiles				
		Mean value	Standard error	t-value	p-value (2-sided)	p-value (1-sided)	0.5%	2.5%	97.5%	99.5%
PCE ->										
CS	0.021	0.025	0.031	0.679	0.497	0.249	-0.033	-0.015	0.102	0.144
PCE ->										
CL	0.104	0.105	0.100	1.034	0.301	0.151	-0.191	-0.104	0.284	0.344
UCE ->										
CS	-0.005	-0.007	0.023	-0.205	0.838	0.419	-0.103	-0.064	0.035	0.057
UCE ->										
CL	0.266	0.262	0.104	2.549	0.011	0.005	-0.025	0.055	0.465	0.529
RCE ->										
CS	0.150	0.150	0.135	1.107	0.269	0.134	-0.206	-0.112	0.415	0.513
RCE ->										
CL	0.242	0.247	0.143	1.697	0.090	0.045	-0.089	-0.021	0.544	0.646

Rapport										
-> CL	0.147	0.145	0.132	1.114	0.265	0.133	-0.200	-0.114	0.406	0.489

Total effects inference

Effect	Original coefficient	Standard bootstrap results					Percentile bootstrap quantiles			
		Mean value	Standard error	t-value	p-value (2-sided)	p-value (1-sided)	0.5%	2.5%	97.5%	99.5%
PCE ->										
Rapport	0.108	0.115	0.075	1.438	0.151	0.075	-0.067	-0.029	0.267	0.318
PCE ->										
CS	0.106	0.110	0.125	0.845	0.398	0.199	-0.252	-0.151	0.333	0.394
PCE ->										
CL	0.240	0.247	0.115	2.084	0.037	0.019	-0.066	0.007	0.461	0.523
UCE ->										
Rapport	-0.025	-0.029	0.089	-0.282	0.778	0.389	-0.270	-0.212	0.141	0.189
UCE ->										
CS	0.353	0.351	0.125	2.813	0.005	0.003	0.009	0.099	0.598	0.664
UCE ->										
CL	0.421	0.414	0.128	3.290	0.001	0.001	0.058	0.152	0.659	0.734
RCE ->										
Rapport	0.783	0.787	0.061	12.923	0.000	0.000	0.640	0.678	0.919	0.979
RCE ->										
CS	0.106	0.111	0.124	0.852	0.394	0.197	-0.195	-0.124	0.372	0.496
RCE ->										
CL	-0.052	-0.047	0.119	-0.436	0.663	0.332	-0.336	-0.275	0.201	0.305
Rapport										
-> CS	0.191	0.192	0.172	1.111	0.267	0.133	-0.258	-0.138	0.525	0.632
Rapport										
-> CL	0.352	0.349	0.141	2.494	0.013	0.006	-0.042	0.062	0.622	0.699
CS ->										
CL	0.769	0.768	0.057	13.455	0.000	0.000	0.596	0.645	0.871	0.891

Appendix 6: Perceived service quality as control variable output

Effect overview

Effect	Beta	Indirect effects	Total effect	Cohen's f ²
PCE -> Rapport	0.113		0.113	0.022
PCE -> CS	-0.035	0.044	0.009	0.001
PCE -> CL	0.056	0.023	0.079	0.010
UCE -> Rapport	0.003		0.003	0.000
UCE -> CS	0.120	0.001	0.121	0.010
UCE -> CL	0.027	0.105	0.132	0.002
RCE -> Rapport	0.765		0.765	1.186
RCE -> CS	-0.061	0.298	0.237	0.002
RCE -> CL	-0.068	0.306	0.238	0.008
Rapport -> CS	0.389		0.389	0.067
Rapport -> CL	0.133	0.335	0.468	0.029
CS -> CL	0.861		0.861	2.898
Servqual -> CS	0.268		0.268	0.056
Servqual -> CL	-0.041	0.231	0.189	0.005

Direct effects inference

Effect	Original coefficient	Standard bootstrap results					Percentile bootstrap quantiles			
		Mean value	Standard error	t-value	p-value (2-sided)	p-value (1-sided)	0.5%	2.5%	97.5%	99.5%
PCE -> Rapport	0.113	0.119	0.057	2.002	0.045	0.023	-0.019	0.013	0.237	0.274
PCE -> CS	-0.035	-0.035	0.088	-0.397	0.692	0.346	-0.257	-0.208	0.133	0.183
PCE -> CL	0.056	0.057	0.041	1.380	0.168	0.084	-0.054	-0.023	0.139	0.161
UCE -> Rapport	0.003	0.002	0.061	0.056	0.955	0.478	-0.165	-0.121	0.123	0.155
UCE -> CS	0.120	0.121	0.097	1.239	0.216	0.108	-0.139	-0.067	0.308	0.366
UCE -> CL	0.027	0.027	0.051	0.537	0.591	0.296	-0.109	-0.074	0.127	0.163
RCE -> Rapport	0.765	0.764	0.037	20.698	0.000	0.000	0.670	0.692	0.838	0.864
RCE -> CS	-0.061	-0.061	0.135	-0.448	0.655	0.327	-0.399	-0.320	0.208	0.295

RCE ->										
CL	-0.068	-0.067	0.070	-0.977	0.328	0.164	-0.248	-0.206	0.073	0.113
Rapport										
-> CS	0.389	0.389	0.113	3.457	0.001	0.000	0.094	0.170	0.617	0.687
Rapport										
-> CL	0.133	0.133	0.068	1.968	0.049	0.025	-0.050	-0.000	0.269	0.307
CS ->										
CL	0.861	0.859	0.030	28.445	0.000	0.000	0.774	0.797	0.915	0.930
Serv-qual ->										
CS	0.268	0.268	0.091	2.940	0.003	0.002	0.043	0.089	0.449	0.508
Serv-qual ->										
CL	-0.041	-0.042	0.054	-0.772	0.440	0.220	-0.169	-0.146	0.067	0.108

Indirect effects inference

Effect	Original coefficient	Standard bootstrap results				Percentile bootstrap quantiles				
		Mean value	Standard error	t-value	p-value (2-sided)	p-value (1-sided)	0.5%	2.5%	97.5%	99.5%
PCE ->										
CS	0.044	0.047	0.028	1.562	0.118	0.059	-0.007	0.004	0.112	0.145
PCE ->										
CL	0.023	0.026	0.081	0.282	0.778	0.389	-0.183	-0.135	0.180	0.239
UCE ->										
CS	0.001	0.001	0.025	0.054	0.957	0.479	-0.075	-0.050	0.052	0.070
UCE ->										
CL	0.105	0.105	0.092	1.137	0.256	0.128	-0.136	-0.078	0.284	0.336
RCE ->										
CS	0.298	0.297	0.086	3.446	0.001	0.000	0.074	0.131	0.469	0.527
RCE ->										
CL	0.306	0.304	0.115	2.664	0.008	0.004	0.012	0.079	0.532	0.602
Rapport										
-> CL	0.335	0.335	0.098	3.420	0.001	0.000	0.081	0.145	0.531	0.596
Serv-qual ->										
CL	0.231	0.231	0.080	2.890	0.004	0.002	0.037	0.077	0.388	0.443

Total effects inference

Effect	Original coefficient	Standard bootstrap results				Percentile bootstrap quantiles				
		Mean value	Standard error	t-value	p-value (2-sided)	p-value (1-sided)	0.5%	2.5%	97.5%	99.5%
PCE ->										
Rapport	0.113	0.119	0.057	2.002	0.045	0.023	-0.019	0.013	0.237	0.274
PCE ->										
CS	0.009	0.012	0.091	0.100	0.920	0.460	-0.217	-0.168	0.187	0.246
PCE ->										
CL	0.079	0.083	0.091	0.873	0.383	0.191	-0.162	-0.098	0.257	0.310
UCE ->										
Rapport	0.003	0.002	0.061	0.056	0.955	0.478	-0.165	-0.121	0.123	0.155
UCE ->										
CS	0.121	0.121	0.103	1.172	0.241	0.121	-0.155	-0.083	0.321	0.381
UCE ->										
CL	0.132	0.131	0.110	1.199	0.231	0.115	-0.160	-0.087	0.343	0.412
RCE ->										
Rapport	0.765	0.764	0.037	20.698	0.000	0.000	0.670	0.692	0.838	0.864
RCE ->										
CS	0.237	0.237	0.114	2.088	0.037	0.018	-0.054	0.010	0.457	0.526
RCE ->										
CL	0.238	0.237	0.125	1.902	0.057	0.029	-0.082	-0.006	0.484	0.565
Rapport -> CS										
CS	0.389	0.389	0.113	3.457	0.001	0.000	0.094	0.170	0.617	0.687
Rapport -> CL										
CL	0.468	0.467	0.112	4.201	0.000	0.000	0.188	0.242	0.688	0.748
CS ->										
CL	0.861	0.859	0.030	28.445	0.000	0.000	0.774	0.797	0.915	0.930
Serv-qual ->										
CS	0.268	0.268	0.091	2.940	0.003	0.002	0.043	0.089	0.449	0.508
Serv-qual ->										
CL	0.189	0.189	0.101	1.878	0.060	0.030	-0.063	-0.004	0.394	0.450