

Book review

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The future society will be (digitally) connected and (physically) disconnected. Artificial intelligence and robotic knowledge are on the rise and mobile technologies dictate consumers' daily lives, yet, consumers increasingly seek interpersonal relationships and meaningful connections. Travelling facilitates and reinforces these desired personal interactions. Service encounters go beyond delivering standardized services; they enable connectedness and evoke emotional reactions. Thus, emotional intelligence has become an invaluable asset and competitive advantage for businesses in the service industry. While tourism and hospitality curricula still focus on the acquisition of hard skills and standard operation procedures, employees are looking for "work-ready plus" graduates that have obtained much needed soft skills, such as emotional intelligence. Education and training need to be transformed to acknowledge the future relevance of emotional intelligence in successful service delivery and ensure that future tourism and hospitality employees obtain the desired skills. The recently published book *Emotional Intelligence in Tourism and Hospitality* by Erdogan Koc discusses this needed paradigm shift in tourism and hospitality education and training and therewith addresses tourism scholars, teachers, students and practitioners alike.

In 10 chapters written by 11 international authors, the book discourses the need and rationale for emotional labour, comprehensively describes emotional intelligence and elaborates on its advantages as a competitive strength. Questions and activities are provided throughout the book that can be integrated in education and

training and invite the reader to actively engage in self-tests and reflective thinking. After introducing the topic and demarcating emotional intelligence from other forms of intelligence in Chapter 1, the concept of emotions and ways to develop and improve emotional intelligence are presented in Chapter 2. Performance-based tests and self-reported tests as tools to measure emotional intelligence are described in Chapter 3. The relationship between emotional intelligence and satisfactory service encounters is established in Chapter 4 with special attention to empathy and emotional intelligent behavioural competences in decision-making. With references to the dynamically changing tourism and hospitality environment, and particularly workforce, Chapter 5 highlights the role of cognitive knowledge, personality and learning styles in the development of personal expertise. The importance of social skills, especially emotional skills, for employees to become inspirational and successful leaders is further discussed in Chapter 6. Here the author refers to the influence of personality, gender, age and culture on developing emotional intelligence. The centrality of intercultural sensitivity is highlighted in Chapter 7 and seven key stages in advancing intercultural sensitivity from denial to integration are introduced. The ideas presented in this chapter are particularly important in the design of future tourism and hospitality curricula. Not only are tourists and the tourism and hospitality workforce increasingly multicultural leading to a growing importance of cultural intelligence, the recent rise of ethnocentrism stresses the need for intercultural sensitivity. Chapter 8 discusses the role of emotional intelligence in delivering service quality and assesses how the key elements of SERVQUAL can be applied to emotional labour. Hereafter, the lens is turned towards the dyadic relationship and interplay between customer and employee emotional intelligence in service failure and recovery. Considering that tourists are increasingly experienced, have higher expectation towards service quality and are becoming

Emotional Intelligence in Tourism and Hospitality

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more emotionally intelligent, the authors of Chapter 9 argue that higher levels of employee emotional intelligence will be needed in the future to facilitate deep acting and affective service delivery. The last chapter goes beyond emotional intelligence and introduces spiritual intelligence as the most valuable skill for employees to become indispensable in the future. The author argues that “a lack of spiritual touch [...] cannot create genuine satisfaction either for employees nor for their customers” (p. 145) and therewith provokes the reader to delve into the acquisition of spiritual intelligence as a deeper, more intuitive and less staged form of connectedness.

Only if the future tourism and hospitality employee manages to obtain higher degrees of self-awareness, self-management/-regulation, empathy and social skills will a replacement through robots remain an unrealised imagination. While robots might be able to acquire hard skills, they lack human’s emotional intelligence and fail to establish personal connections. This much-needed book provides a helpful starting point for anyone in the industry to understand the rationale and the characteristics of emotional intelligence. It raises awareness what future graduates and employees will need to consider when developing their skill sets and wanting to enter the tourism and hospitality industry to become successful leaders. Considering that students are a main target

group for this edited book, I would have liked to see more consistency in introducing the key concepts of emotional intelligence. By nature, edited works are associated with the potential of using different definitions and perspectives, yet in some parts the reader is left alone with unsatisfactorily integrated tables, non-compliant descriptions using different original sources and insufficient explanations. A refreshing strength of the book is the incorporation of activities that invite the reader to self-test and reflect and thus actively engage with the topic. At the same time, it seems that the complex process of acquiring emotional intelligence is in parts trivialised. I hope to see more critical approaches and evaluations on the highly subjective and multifaceted process of becoming emotionally intelligent and, how businesses can succeed in not only facilitating the training of emotional labour but also retaining them in the long-term. Futurologists might argue that the book misses to acknowledge the influential role of technological developments and particularly artificial intelligence on the growing need for emotional intelligence – a potential for a second edition of this highly relevant and mostly enjoyable read.

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