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Jurnal Ekonomi dan Keuangan Islam
Journal of Islamic Economics and Finance

ISSN:
2089-6239 (Print)
2549-0648 (Online)

When Customers Complain: The Value of Self Efficacy in Service Recovery Performance

ABSTRACT - With the growing importance of Islamic hospitality in Indonesia's tourism sector, understanding the psychological pressures faced by frontline employees becomes crucial for maintaining service quality and organizational competitiveness. This study aims to investigate the relationship between customer-related social stressors (ambiguous customer expectations, disliked customers, disproportionate customer expectations, and customer verbal aggression) and their effects on emotional exhaustion and service recovery performance, while examining the moderating role of self-efficacy among frontline employees in Islamic hotels. Using a quantitative approach, primary data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 559 frontline employees of Islamic hotels across Indonesia and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS 24 software. The findings reveal that ambiguous customer expectations, disproportionate customer expectations, and customer verbal aggression significantly increase emotional exhaustion among employees, while interactions with disliked customers showed no significant effect. Emotional exhaustion was found to negatively impact service recovery performance, with higher exhaustion levels leading to diminished recovery efforts. Importantly, self-efficacy emerged as a significant moderator, mitigating the adverse effects of emotional exhaustion on service recovery performance, enabling employees with high self-efficacy to maintain optimal performance despite experiencing emotional stress. These results have important implications for Islamic hotel management, emphasizing the need to implement comprehensive programs that enhance employee self-efficacy through interpersonal skills training, stress management, and spiritual enrichment initiatives that align with Islamic values, ultimately improving employee well-being and service quality in the halal tourism industry.

ABSTRAK - Saat Pelanggan Komplain: Peran Efikasi Diri dalam Optimalisasi Kinerja Pemulihan Layanan. *Dengan meningkatnya peran perhotelan syariah dalam sektor pariwisata Indonesia, pemahaman terhadap tekanan psikologis karyawan frontline menjadi krusial karena berkaitan erat dengan kualitas layanan dan daya saing organisasi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji hubungan antara stressor-stressor sosial yang berkaitan dengan pelanggan seperti ekspektasi pelanggan yang ambigu, pelanggan yang tidak disukai, ekspektasi pelanggan yang tidak proporsional, dan agresi verbal pelanggan serta pengaruhnya terhadap kelelahan emosional dan kinerja pemulihan layanan, sambil menguji peran moderasi efikasi diri di antara karyawan frontline hotel syariah. Data penelitian dikumpulkan melalui angket yang didistribusikan kepada 559 karyawan frontline hotel syariah di seluruh Indonesia yang kemudian dianalisis menggunakan Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) dengan software AMOS 24. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ekspektasi pelanggan yang ambigu, tidak proporsional, dan agresi verbal secara signifikan meningkatkan kelelahan emosional di antara para karyawan, sementara interaksi dengan pelanggan yang tidak disukai tidak menunjukkan pengaruh signifikan. Kelelahan emosional terbukti berdampak negatif pada kinerja pemulihan layanan, dengan tingkat kelelahan yang lebih tinggi menyebabkan berkurangnya upaya pemulihan. Selain itu, penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa efikasi diri berperan sebagai moderator yang signifikan dalam meredam dampak negatif kelelahan emosional terhadap kinerja pemulihan layanan. Karyawan dengan efikasi diri tinggi memiliki keyakinan dan kemampuan untuk mengatasi tantangan, sehingga dapat tetap berkinerja optimal meskipun mengalami stres emosional. Penelitian ini memiliki implikasi penting bagi manajemen hotel syariah yang menekankan perlunya program komprehensif dalam meningkatkan efikasi diri para karyawan, seperti pelatihan keterampilan interpersonal, manajemen stres, dan pengayaan spiritual, yang pada akhirnya meningkatkan well-being karyawan dan kualitas layanan dalam industri pariwisata halal.*

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Article History
Received: 14 March 2025
Last Revised: 24 April 2025
Accepted: 01 May 2025
Published: 05 September 2025

Keywords
Customer-Related Social Stressors, Emotional Exhaustion, Service Recovery Performance, Self-Efficacy, Islamic Hotels

JEL Classification
L83, M12, J81, Z12

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, halal tourism has witnessed remarkable growth as nations intensify their efforts to attract Muslim travelers. Indonesia has notably ascended to lead the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) in 2023, marking a significant improvement from its second-place standing in the previous year. Its trajectory on the GMTI has varied—in 2019, Indonesia ranked second, later dropped to fourth in 2021, regained second position in 2022, and ultimately secured the top spot in 2023. Despite this upward shift, a closer analysis reveals emerging concerns over declining service scores, as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1. GMTI Indicator 2017-2023

Year	Access (10%)	Communication (20%)	Environment (30%)	Services (40%)	Rank
2019	190	248	263	389	2
2020	None. Due to covid 19				
2021	99	179	256	356	4
2022	185	181	261	392	2
2023	197	194	284	390	1

Service quality has emerged as a critical concern, especially since it substantially shapes customer loyalty. Excellent service is identified as a principal determinant influencing customers' intentions to return, underlining the necessity for improvements in this area (Traiyarach et al., 2025). In GMTI metrics, service carries the greatest weight at 40%, surpassing other dimensions such as accessibility (10%), communication (20%), and environment (30%), each of which collectively influence the tourist experience and Indonesia's international ranking.

Corroborating the importance of these findings, the Directorate General of Consumer Protection and Trade Compliance reported a total of 4,114 complaints from consumer services. This number has decreased from the previous year, namely 7,707 services (Kemendag, 2025). The frequency of complaints underscores the pressing need to enhance services within the hospitality industry, particularly for Islamic hotels, which face the dual challenge of upholding high service standards while adhering to Islamic principles (Yahaya et al., 2020).

Islamic hotels are characterized by their comprehensive accommodation of Muslim guests' needs as prescribed by Islamic law. They are also referred to as halal, sharia-compliant, or Muslim-friendly hotels, all requiring adherence to particular standards such as prohibition of alcohol, serving only halal-certified food, the absence of nightclubs, the provision of prayer rooms and Islamic texts in guest rooms, gender-segregated facilities, qibla direction indicators, and even Islamic financial practices (Sriprasert et al., 2014). Employees in these hotels are entrusted not only with delivering superior service but also with consistently implementing Islamic values throughout their professional conduct. These dual expectations can heighten workplace stress and potentially affect employees' emotional well-being.

The pressures placed upon Islamic hotel employees are exacerbated when they interact with customers holding high expectations or those unfamiliar with sharia-compliant accommodations. Such conditions can frequently lead to emotional exhaustion, which in turn threatens to diminish service performance and compromise the effectiveness of service recovery efforts. Prolonged

psychological stress is cited as a catalyst for emotional exhaustion, which negatively impacts work performance among hospitality staff (Alcover et al., 2018).

Implementing effective service recovery performance (SRP) has been identified as a promising strategy to address these problems. SRP pertains to the actions of frontline employees as they resolve service failures, retain customers, and aim to restore satisfaction after service mishaps (Al-Bazaiyah, 2022). Notably, customer satisfaction is highest when service recovery is swift and efficient; for example, satisfaction rates significantly decrease when resolution requires involvement from multiple employees, highlighting the detrimental effect of cumbersome recovery processes (Devrye, 1994).

Research further specifies that service recovery performance outcomes are tightly linked to the emotional states of employees. Emotional exhaustion undermines employees' capabilities to respond effectively in recovery situations, subsequently affecting customer loyalty (Ashill et al., 2009; Nawaz et al., 2018). Additionally, frontline staff often face a structural power imbalance with customers and may be compelled to suppress negative emotions to preserve the organization's image—an ongoing strain that can precipitate burnout and limit service effectiveness (Harris & Reynolds, 2004; Karatepe et al., 2009).

A prominent factor triggering emotional exhaustion among Islamic hotel employees lies in customer-related social stressors. These are defined as stress-inducing conditions arising from customer interactions, such as unrealistic expectations, verbal aggression, personal dislike, or ambiguous requests (Dormann & Zapf, 2004). Several studies confirm that these social stressors are significantly associated with heightened employee emotional exhaustion within the hospitality sector (Song & Liu, 2010; Yoo et al., 2015).

The intricate relationship between customer-induced stress, emotional exhaustion, and diminished service recovery performance has been the subject of considerable scholarly attention (Kim et al., 2012; Choi et al., 2014; Yoo et al., 2015; Sommovigo et al., 2019). Most existing research draws upon the stressor-strain-outcome (SSO) model, which posits that external stressors provoke psychological strains, ultimately impinging upon workplace outcomes like performance (Koeske & Koeske, 1993). Within the Islamic hospitality context, customer-driven pressure can escalate emotional exhaustion and erode the quality of service recovery.

Despite extensive investigation into the interrelations of these factors, there remains limited exploration of potential moderating variables capable of mitigating the adverse effects of emotional exhaustion on service recovery, especially within Islamic hotels. This study therefore introduces self-efficacy as a novel moderating variable. Self-efficacy, defined as an individual's belief in their capability to surmount challenges and accomplish objectives, has been shown to bolster stress management and sustain work performance under pressure (Bandura, 1982; Shea & Howell, 2000; Sue-Chan & Ong, 2015).

Accordingly, the present study builds on the foundational work of Kim et al. (2012), Choi et al. (2014), Yoo et al. (2015), and Sommovigo et al. (2019), proposing self-efficacy as a buffer that may attenuate the negative repercussions of emotional exhaustion on service recovery performance. The theoretical and practical implications of the findings are anticipated to enrich

the discourse on service recovery and offer actionable recommendations for optimizing service quality in the Islamic hospitality sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundations: COR Theory, Emotional Exhaustion, and Self-Efficacy

The Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, introduced by Hobfoll (1989), serves as a foundational framework to understand how individuals strive to acquire, retain, and protect valuable resources. These resources include material, emotional, and psychological assets that contribute to individual well-being. According to COR, stress arises when individuals lose resources, anticipate their loss, or invest resources without adequate return. Within organizational contexts, this theory helps explain how emotionally demanding interactions—particularly in customer-facing roles—can lead to emotional exhaustion, a state of depleted emotional energy (Halbesleben et al., 2013).

Emotional exhaustion, one of the core components of burnout, refers to chronic feelings of fatigue and emotional depletion due to persistent workplace demands (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). COR theory posits that as emotional exhaustion increases, the ability to meet job expectations declines, leading to reduced job performance (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998).

To cope with such demands, self-efficacy—as defined by Bandura (1977)—plays a crucial role. Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their ability to execute specific tasks or manage challenging situations. Employees with high self-efficacy are generally more resilient, motivated, and persistent when facing adversity. Research shows that such individuals are better equipped to navigate emotionally challenging environments and maintain performance (Cohen & Abedallah, 2015).

Customer-Related Social Stressors and Service Recovery Performance

Customer-related social stressors (CRSS), as described by Dormann and Zapf (2004), encompass a range of interpersonal stressors experienced by employees due to interactions with customers. These stressors can erode psychological resources and contribute to burnout, particularly emotional exhaustion. CRSS includes four primary dimensions:

1. Disproportionate customer expectations involve unrealistic or excessive demands that employees struggle to meet. These demands have been shown to increase burnout levels (Song & Liu, 2010; Karatepe & Nkendong, 2014).

2. Customer verbal aggression includes hostile communication such as shouting or insults, which can cause psychological harm and emotional fatigue (Dormann & Zapf, 2004; Yoo et al., 2015).

3. Disliked customers refer to interactions with unpleasant or impolite customers. Such encounters disrupt employee well-being and increase job stress (Ma et al., 2019).

4. Ambiguous customer expectations describe unclear service demands that create confusion, increase workload, and contribute to emotional strain (Dormann & Zapf, 2004).

These stressors have direct implications for Service Recovery Performance (SRP), which refers to employees' effectiveness in addressing service failures and restoring customer satisfaction (Boshoff & Allen, 2000). Babakus et al. (2003) highlight that SRP involves discretionary effort and problem-solving skills that often exceed routine job descriptions. However, employees experiencing emotional exhaustion are less likely to engage in effective recovery behaviors, as shown in the study by Daskin and Yilmaz (2015). Therefore, managing emotional stressors is essential for maintaining high-quality service in hospitality environments.

Islamic Hospitality: Values, Employee Expectations, and Service Ethics

Islamic hotels, also known as halal, Sharia-compliant, or Muslim-friendly hotels, cater specifically to the needs of Muslim travelers in accordance with Islamic principles. These hotels prohibit alcohol and pork, provide halal food, and ensure the availability of prayer rooms, Qur'ans, prayer mats, gender-segregated facilities, and Islamic financing mechanisms (Sriprasert et al., 2014).

The uniqueness of Islamic hotels extends beyond facilities to include their human resource management. As Alam et al. (2023) note, recruitment processes in these establishments emphasize not only technical skills and experience but also moral and religious qualifications—such as the ability to read the Qur'an and demonstrate values like honesty, discipline, and good character. Employees are thus expected to uphold Islamic values in both their service delivery and interpersonal conduct, adding an extra layer of responsibility and emotional labor.

The Islamic perspective on service recovery is rooted in three core values: *tawakkul, ihsan, and amanah.* Tawakkul (trust in Allah) encourages emotional resilience by helping individuals accept outcomes with patience after exerting their best effort. As Alhafiza et al. (2022) explain, practicing tawakkul reduces emotional burden by shifting focus from results to sincere effort, as supported by the Qur'anic verse:

> *"Then, when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely upon Him."* (Qur'an, Ali-Imran: 159)

Ihsan emphasizes excellence and sincerity in actions. In the context of service recovery, employees practicing ihsan aim not only to meet expectations but to exceed them with genuine care and moral integrity. As Maidugu et al. (2024) state, ihsan inspires moral excellence and compassion, as echoed in the verse:

> *"And do good (ihsan); indeed, Allah loves those who do good."* (Qur'an, Al-Baqarah: 195)

Amanah (trustworthiness) represents the responsibility to carry out duties honestly and with integrity. It is essential in resolving complaints transparently and maintaining customer trust. As Setiawan and Cholili (2023) emphasize, amanah is foundational to accountability in Islamic organizations. The principle is rooted in the Qur'anic command:

> *"Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due."* (Qur'an, An-Nisa: 58)

These principles foster a service culture grounded not only in technical excellence but also in spiritual accountability, promoting both employee well-being and customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis Development

Ambiguous Customer Expectations and Emotional Exhaustion

Research has consistently explored the relationship between ambiguous customer expectations and employee well-being. Kim et al. (2012) examined frontline employees in the tourism sector and found that unclear or inconsistent customer demands significantly increased emotional exhaustion. However, contrasting evidence was presented by Nawaz et al. (2018), who investigated bus attendants and reported that ambiguous customer expectations did not significantly contribute to emotional exhaustion. These mixed findings suggest that contextual factors may influence the strength of this relationship. Based on prior literature, the following hypothesis is proposed:

> H1: Ambiguous customer expectations have a positive effect on the emotional exhaustion of frontline employees.

Disliked Customers and Emotional Exhaustion

Interactions with unpleasant or unfriendly customers can place additional strain on frontline employees. Choi et al. (2014) confirmed that disliked customers had a positive and significant effect on emotional exhaustion in the tourism sector. In contrast, Karatepe et al. (2010), studying bank employees in Northern Cyprus, reported no significant relationship between disliked customers and emotional exhaustion. These divergent outcomes indicate that industry context may moderate the effect of disliked customers on employees. Thus, the study proposes:

> H2: Disliked customers have a positive effect on emotional exhaustion among frontline employees.

Disproportionate Customer Expectations and Emotional Exhaustion

Excessive or unrealistic customer demands have been identified as a critical stressor in service industries. Ma et al. (2019) found that disproportionate expectations significantly contributed to emotional exhaustion among hospitality employees. However, in the context of banking, Karatepe et al. (2010) found no significant association between disproportionate customer expectations and emotional exhaustion. Given this inconsistency, the hypothesis is formulated as:

> H3: Disproportionate customer expectations have a positive effect on emotional exhaustion among frontline employees.

Customer Verbal Aggression and Emotional Exhaustion

Customer verbal aggression, characterized by hostile communication and abusive language, has been shown to increase emotional strain among employees. Aytac and Aytac (2017) demonstrated that customer verbal aggression significantly contributed to emotional exhaustion among shopping center employees. In contrast, Karatepe et al. (2010) observed that while

customer verbal aggression had some impact, it was not statistically significant in the banking sector. To test this relationship in the context of frontline service roles, the following hypothesis is proposed:

> H4: Customer verbal aggression has a positive effect on emotional exhaustion among frontline employees.

Emotional Exhaustion and Service Recovery Performance

The detrimental effects of emotional exhaustion extend beyond employee well-being to service outcomes. Kim et al. (2012), studying tourism employees in Korea, and Zahoor and Siddiqi (2023), focusing on banking employees in India, both confirmed that emotional exhaustion negatively affects service recovery performance (SRP). Employees who are emotionally depleted are less capable of engaging in effective recovery behaviors following service failures. Thus, the hypothesis is:

> H5: Emotional exhaustion has a negative effect on service recovery performance among frontline employees.

The Moderating Role of Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy, defined as an individual's belief in their ability to manage challenges effectively (Bandura, 1977), has been identified as a potential moderator in workplace stress-performance relationships. Daskin and Yilmaz (2015) and Zhu et al. (2023) found that higher levels of self-efficacy enhanced service recovery performance among hotel employees. However, mixed findings exist: Robinson Jr. et al. (2011) reported that self-efficacy had a positive but insignificant effect on SRP in various service sectors, while Petitta and Vecchione (2011) observed a negative association between self-efficacy and burnout in research institutions. To extend this line of inquiry, the present study posits:

> H6: Self-efficacy moderates the influence of emotional exhaustion on service recovery performance among frontline employees.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the theoretical underpinnings and empirical findings, the research framework of this study is illustrated in Figure 1, representing the hypothesized relationships between customer-related social stressors, emotional exhaustion, service recovery performance, and self-efficacy as a moderator.

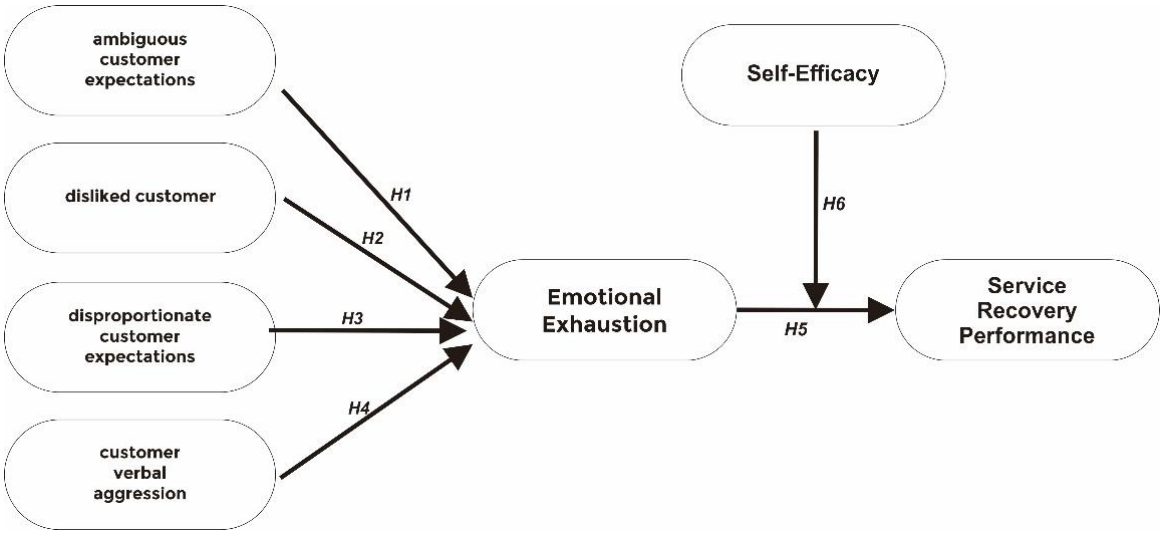


Figure 1. Research Framework

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Sample

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the relationships among customer-related social stressors, emotional exhaustion, service recovery performance, and self-efficacy. The analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), an approach appropriate for testing complex models with multiple latent constructs.

The study population comprised frontline employees in Islamic hotels in Indonesia, as these employees interact directly with customers and are therefore highly exposed to customer-related social stressors (Kim et al., 2012). A non-probability convenience sampling technique was applied, allowing the inclusion of respondents based on accessibility and their willingness to participate, provided they met the study criteria (Sekaran, 2009). Through this method, data were collected from 559 respondents across various Islamic hotels in Indonesia.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected through a structured online questionnaire, designed based on validated scales from prior research. The instrument measured seven core constructs: ambiguous customer expectations, disliked customers, disproportionate customer expectations, customer verbal aggression, emotional exhaustion, service recovery performance, and self-efficacy.

Prior to full-scale data collection, a pilot study was conducted with 30 respondents to assess reliability, clarity, and construct validity of the survey items. Minor revisions were made to improve comprehension, ensuring that the questionnaire was suitable for the target population (Sekaran, 2009).

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using AMOS 24.0 for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The analysis included several stages:

1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was employed to evaluate construct validity and to ensure that the observed items accurately represented the underlying latent variables.
2. Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) to assess internal consistency (Hair et al., 2009).
3. Structural model testing was conducted using path analysis within Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the hypothesized relationships among the constructs.

Operational Definitions and Measurement of Variables

To ensure clarity and replicability, the operational definitions and measurement instruments for each variable are outlined as follows. *First*, ambiguous customer expectations refer to unclear or confusing service demands placed by customers. This variable was measured using a scale adapted from Dormann and Zapf (2004), which has been widely applied in subsequent studies (Choi et al., 2014; Karatepe & Nkendong, 2014; Kim et al., 2012; Sommovigo et al., 2019). *Second,* disliked customers are defined as individuals perceived by employees as unpleasant, unfriendly, or disruptive. This construct was assessed using Dormann and Zapf's (2004) scale, validated in later research (Choi et al., 2014; Karatepe & Nkendong, 2014; Kim et al., 2012; Sommovigo et al., 2019). *Third*, disproportionate customer expectations refer to excessive or unfair demands from customers and were measured using the same instrument developed by Dormann and Zapf (2004), consistently utilized in hospitality research.

Fourth, customer verbal aggression is defined as customer behavior characterized by verbal abuse or rudeness toward employees. This variable was measured using the Dormann and Zapf (2004) scale, which has also been employed in hospitality and tourism studies (Choi et al., 2014; Karatepe & Nkendong, 2014; Kim et al., 2012; Sommovigo et al., 2019). *Fifth*, emotional exhaustion is conceptualized as a state of feeling emotionally overextended and depleted of emotional resources, as defined by Maslach and Jackson (1981). It was measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory, which has been adapted in various service-related studies (Alola et al., 2019; Song & Liu, 2010; Yoo et al., 2015).

Sixth, service recovery performance (SRP) refers to the perceived ability of employees to effectively resolve service failures and restore customer satisfaction. This construct was measured using an instrument adapted from Boshoff and Allen (2000), and its validity has been confirmed in subsequent studies (Yoo et al., 2015; Zahoor & Siddiqi, 2023). *Lastly*, self-efficacy is defined as an individual's belief in their ability to mobilize motivation, cognitive resources, and actions to meet situational demands (Bandura, 1977). Measurement was based on Jones' (1986) scale, which has been adapted in workplace studies (Renn & Fedor, 2001; Robinson Jr. et al., 2011).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Validity Test

Construct validity was assessed using correlation analysis in SPSS 20, with 30 pilot respondents as the sample. An item is considered valid if the correlation coefficient exceeds the r-table value of 0.296 ($p < .05$). As shown in Table 2, all item loadings for the study variables exceeded this

threshold, indicating that the measurement items adequately represent their respective constructs.

Table 2. Results of the Validity Test

Variable	Indicator	Correlation
Ambiguous Customer Expectations	ACE1	.893**
	ACE2	.854**
	ACE3	.876**
	ACE4	.894**
Disliked Customers	DC1	.811**
	DC2	.723**
	DC3	.787**
	DC4	.756**
Disproportionate Customer Expectations	DCE1	.709**
	DCE2	.879**
	DCE3	.767**
	DCE4	.875**
	DCE5	.859**
	DCE6	.775**
	DCE7	.747**
	DCE8	.846**
Customer Verbal Aggression	CVA1	.857**
	CVA2	.835**
	CVA3	.741**
	CVA4	.879**
	CVA5	.867**
Emotional Exhaustion	EE1	.714**
	EE2	.704**
	EE3	.767**
	EE4	.780**
	EE5	.850**
	EE6	.797**
	EE7	.813**
	EE8	.674**
	EE9	.707**
Self-Efficacy	SE1	.752**
	SE2	.885**
	SE3	.808**
	SE4	.812**
	SE5	.854**
	SE6	.837**
	SE7	.780**
	SE8	.827**
Service Recovery Performance	SRP1	.789**
	SRP2	.843**
	SRP3	.773**
	SRP4	.714**
	SRP5	.716**

*Note: *$p < .01$.

All indicators exceeded the minimum correlation requirement, confirming the validity of the measurement instrument.

Reliability Test

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). A construct is considered reliable if Cronbach's alpha ≥ 0.60, CR ≥ 0.70, and AVE ≥ 0.50 (Hair et al., 2009).

As presented in Table 3, Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.770 to 0.929, while CR values ranged from 0.838 to 0.922. Similarly, all AVE values exceeded 0.50, confirming adequate convergent reliability. Thus, all constructs demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency.

Table 3. Results of the Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE	Number of Items
Ambiguous Customer Expectations	0.902	0.898	0.687	4
Disliked Customers	0.770	0.838	0.561	4
Disproportionate Customer Expectations	0.923	0.922	0.597	8
Customer Verbal Aggression	0.893	0.860	0.552	5
Emotional Exhaustion	0.907	0.899	0.531	9
Self-Efficacy	0.929	0.901	0.534	8
Service Recovery Performance	0.905	0.887	0.612	5

All values meet the recommended thresholds, indicating that the measurement instruments were both reliable and valid.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was performed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS 24.0. Model fit indices, including Chi-Square, CFI, TLI, AGFI, RMSEA, and GFI, all met the recommended criteria, confirming an acceptable overall model fit.

The results of the path analysis are presented in Table 4. Four customer-related social stressors were tested as antecedents of emotional exhaustion. The findings indicate that ambiguous customer expectations (H1, $\beta = 0.316$, $p < .001$), disproportionate customer expectations (H3, $\beta = 0.295$, $p < .001$), and customer verbal aggression (H4, $\beta = 0.352$, $p < .001$) had significant positive effects on emotional exhaustion. However, disliked customers (H2, $\beta = -0.003$, $p = .942$) did not significantly influence emotional exhaustion. Furthermore, emotional exhaustion negatively influenced service recovery performance (H5, $\beta = -0.212$, $p < .001$). The moderating role of self-efficacy (H6) was also confirmed. For employees with low self-efficacy, emotional exhaustion had a stronger negative effect on service recovery performance ($\beta = -0.325$, $p < .001$) compared to those with high self-efficacy ($\beta = -0.154$, $p = .030$).

Table 4. Results of the Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis	Path	Estimate	p	Result
H1	EE <--- ACE	0.316	.000	Supported
H2	EE <--- DC	-0.003	.942	Rejected
H3	EE <--- DCE	0.295	.000	Supported
H4	EE <--- CVA	0.352	.000	Supported
H5	SRP <--- EE	-0.212	.000	Supported
H6 (Low SE)	SRP <--- EE	-0.325	.000	Supported
H6 (High SE)	SRP <--- EE	-0.154	.030	Supported

Customer-Related Stressors and Emotional Exhaustion

The findings provide important insights into the unique challenges faced by employees in the Islamic hospitality sector and the mechanisms that influence their well-being and performance. The results revealed that customer-related stressors have differential impacts on employee emotional exhaustion. Specifically, three of the four examined stressors—ambiguous customer expectations, disproportionate customer expectations, and customer verbal aggression—significantly contributed to emotional exhaustion, while disliked customers did not demonstrate a significant effect.

Ambiguous Customer Expectations

The study found that Ambiguous Customer Expectations (ACE) exert a positive and significant effect on Emotional Exhaustion (EE) ($\beta = 0.316$, $p = 0.000$), supporting the first hypothesis. ACE occurs when customers cannot explicitly express their needs, creating additional interpretive burdens for employees. In the context of Islamic hotels, this challenge is particularly pronounced as customer expectations often intertwine with Islamic values, such as gender-segregated areas, thereby increasing the complexity of employees' tasks.

These findings align with the Stressor-Strain-Outcome theory (Koeske & Koeske, 1993), which explains how work pressures such as ACE can cause emotional strain that impacts psychological well-being. ACE functions as a stressor that triggers emotional strain, particularly for employees who must interpret ambiguous expectations without clear guidance. The results also support the Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), which posits that stress occurs when individuals perceive their resources as depleted. In this context, employees must allocate additional resources to meet customer expectations, thereby increasing the risk of emotional exhaustion.

The findings are consistent with previous research demonstrating that ACE positively affects EE in frontline employees (Choi et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2012). In Islamic hotels, the diversity of customer expectations, including varying interpretations of Sharia values, creates heightened work pressure. The study emphasizes the importance of clear communication between customers and employees to reduce emotional stress and improve service quality. Management can mitigate the impact of ACE by providing communication training, establishing service standard guidelines, and offering psychological support for employees.

Disproportionate Customer Expectations

Disproportionate Customer Expectations (DCE) demonstrated a positive and significant effect on Emotional Exhaustion (EE) ($\beta = 0.295$, $p = 0.000$), confirming the third hypothesis. DCE is characterized by employees perceiving customer demands as unfair, which can arise when customers attempt to exploit employees' time or energy, demand services disproportionate to the transaction value, or request employees to perform tasks that customers should handle themselves.

These results corroborate previous research by Dormann and Zapf (2004), who identified disproportionate customer expectations as a primary source of work pressure in the service industry. Customers with unrealistic demands compel employees to allocate additional resources

to meet those expectations, ultimately increasing the risk of emotional exhaustion. Kim et al. (2012) also found that disproportionate customer expectations are directly related to emotional exhaustion, particularly when employees perceive that customer demands exceed their capacity.

In Islamic hotels, disproportionate customer expectations present additional complexity because customers often harbor expectations based on Islamic values, such as personalized service that maintains Sharia ethics or the provision of exemplary halal facilities. When customers expect service standards that far exceed operational capacity or predetermined guidelines, employees face intensified pressure that not only depletes emotional resources but also creates feelings of unfairness.

Customer Verbal Aggression

Customer Verbal Aggressions (CVA) exhibited a positive and significant effect on Emotional Exhaustion (EE) ($\beta = 0.352$, $p = 0.000$), representing the strongest predictor among the examined stressors. CVA encompasses behaviors such as abusive language, condescending tones, and offensive comments, with employees often becoming direct targets of dissatisfied customers' frustrations, creating substantial emotional pressure.

This finding supports Hochschild's (2012) theory that service employees are expected to display positive emotions even when confronted with aggressive customers. The discrepancy between felt and displayed emotions creates emotional dissonance, which can accelerate emotional exhaustion. In Islamic hotels, this challenge may be exacerbated by expectations to uphold Islamic values such as patience (*sabr*) and self-control, even in emotionally stressful situations.

The results align with research by Dormann and Zapf (2004), who identified customer verbal aggression as a primary predictor of burnout in the service industry, particularly when employees perceive a lack of control or support. Karatepe et al. (2010) noted that employees without adequate organizational support or training are more vulnerable to the negative effects of customer verbal aggression. In the Islamic hotel context, training emphasizing communication skills based on Islamic values could provide a solution to reduce emotional stress.

Disliked Customers

Contrary to expectations, Disliked Customers (DC) did not significantly affect Emotional Exhaustion (EE) ($\beta = -0.003$, $p = 0.942$), leading to the rejection of the second hypothesis. This finding suggests that interactions with disliked customers do not contribute to emotional exhaustion among frontline employees in Islamic hotels.

These results align with Karatepe et al. (2010), who identified factors such as self-efficacy, organizational support, and professional training as mitigating influences against stress from interactions with disliked customers. A potential explanation for this finding is that employees in Islamic hotels may be equipped with training that emphasizes emotional management based on Islamic principles, such as Tawakkul, Ihsan, and Amanah. These values provide psychological strength for employees to navigate social stressors without experiencing emotional burdens.

The findings resonate with emotional labor theory, which posits that employees' emotional regulation during customer interactions can mitigate the adverse effects of stressful experiences (Hochschild, 2012). This aligns with Attribution Theory (Weiner, 1985), which explains that employees may interpret negative customer behavior as resulting from external factors rather than personal affronts. This perspective enables employees to maintain emotional distance and preserve professionalism.

High self-efficacy may also explain these findings. Employees with elevated self-efficacy are better positioned to manage stress and maintain performance during difficult customer interactions (Karatepe et al., 2010). Training grounded in Islamic values may enhance self-efficacy by strengthening employees' confidence in their ability to handle challenges consistent with Islamic principles.

The findings can also be understood through Hobfoll's (1989) Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, which emphasizes that individuals with psychological resources such as social support and self-confidence demonstrate greater resilience to work stress. Islamic hotel employees, benefiting from supportive colleagues and management, along with Islamic values-based training, may possess protective mechanisms that enable them to manage interactions with unpleasant customers without significant emotional depletion.

Indonesian cultural factors also contribute to these findings. The cultural emphasis on patience and tolerance in the workplace, particularly in the service sector, equips Islamic hotel employees to navigate unpleasant customer interactions with greater composure. These cultural values may serve as additional coping mechanisms, reinforcing employees' capacity to withstand social stressors.

Emotional Exhaustion and Service Recovery Performance

The study found that Emotional Exhaustion (EE) negatively and significantly affects Service Recovery Performance (SRP) ($\beta = -0.212$, $p = 0.000$), confirming the fifth hypothesis. This indicates that higher levels of emotional exhaustion correlate with diminished service recovery capabilities among frontline employees in Islamic hotels.

Emotional exhaustion, defined as a state of emotional fatigue resulting from continuous psychological pressure, is particularly prevalent in roles involving intense interpersonal interactions. Based on Hobfoll's (1989) Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, emotional exhaustion occurs when individuals perceive their psychological resources as depleted due to high job demands. In Islamic hotels, frontline employees face pressures from unclear customer expectations, difficult customers, verbal aggression, and the additional demand to maintain behavior consistent with Sharia values, which can exacerbate emotional exhaustion and negatively impact service recovery abilities.

These findings align with previous research by Choi et al. (2014) and Sommovigo et al. (2019), which demonstrated that emotional exhaustion hinders employees' effectiveness in handling customer complaints. High emotional exhaustion significantly reduces service recovery performance as employees lose the ability to think clearly, make appropriate decisions, and

handle difficult situations. In Islamic hotels, this condition becomes more complex as employees must also maintain behavioral integrity in accordance with Sharia values.

The Moderating Role of Self-Efficacy

The study revealed that self-efficacy significantly moderates the relationship between emotional exhaustion and service recovery performance. The negative effect of Emotional Exhaustion (EE) on Service Recovery Performance (SRP) is stronger among employees with Low Self-Efficacy (LSE) ($\beta = -0.325$, $p = 0.000$), while this negative effect is weaker among employees with High Self-Efficacy (HSE) ($\beta = -0.154$, $p = 0.030$).

These findings are supported by previous research. Robinson et al. (2011) demonstrated that high self-efficacy enhances employees' capacity to navigate complex work challenges, including customer complaint resolution. Guchait (2023) confirmed that self-efficacy can mitigate the adverse effects of work stress on service performance.

The results align with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1977), which posits that self-efficacy represents an individual's belief in their capacity to execute actions necessary for achieving desired outcomes. Self-efficacy serves as a vital psychological resource that helps individuals cope with challenges, mitigate stress, and maintain focus on objectives. In Islamic hotels, frontline employees with high self-efficacy demonstrate confidence and clarity in performing service recovery, enabling them to remain effective despite high emotional pressure from intense customer interactions.

In the Islamic context, values such as Tawakkul, Ihsan, and Amanah contribute significantly to enhancing service recovery performance and strengthening employees' self-efficacy mechanisms. Tawakkul (surrender after trying) helps employees reduce anxiety related to work outcomes through the belief that ultimate results rest with Allah (Q.S. Ali-Imran: 159), aligning with self-efficacy's function in reducing emotional pressure (Alhafiza et al., 2022). Ihsan (doing good optimally) encourages employees to exceed customer expectations, consistent with findings by Tsang et al. (2012) that self-efficacy increases individual effort and persistence. Amanah (integrity in responsibility) strengthens employees' commitment to transparent complaint resolution (Q.S. An-Nisa: 58), correlating with Cohen and Abedallah's (2015) findings on the relationship between high self-efficacy and work initiative.

Training focused on self-efficacy and Islamic values can help employees develop the ability to remain calm, professional, and responsive to customer complaints. For instance, a Front Office employee in an Islamic hotel with high self-efficacy will more easily manage emotions, devise appropriate solutions, and provide responses that restore customer relationships. Conversely, employees with low self-efficacy may feel overwhelmed by emotional pressure and unable to provide optimal service recovery.

Indonesian cultural factors also play an important role in this context. Indonesian culture's emphasis on patience and tolerance strongly supports the application of Islamic values in the workplace, particularly in the Islamic hospitality industry. This cultural backdrop enables employees to view situations objectively, attributing negative customer behavior to external factors rather than personal affronts, thereby reducing emotional impact.

Implications and Recommendations

The findings provide several important managerial implications for Islamic hotels. First, management should establish clear boundaries regarding services offered to customers to reduce ambiguity and unrealistic expectations. Second, Islamic values-based training can help employees manage situations involving disproportionate customer expectations more effectively through empathetic approaches while maintaining professional boundaries. Third, implementing workplace wellness programs that provide psychological and social support can help employees cope with the negative effects of customer-related stressors, thereby reducing the risk of emotional exhaustion.

The study emphasizes the importance of effective customer expectation management in creating healthier work environments for employees. By implementing strategies to manage customer-related stressors, Islamic hotels can enhance employee emotional well-being while ensuring consistent service quality. Organizational interventions such as training to enhance employees' self-efficacy, workload management, and psychological support programs aligned with Islamic values are necessary to mitigate the impact of emotional exhaustion on service recovery performance.

High self-efficacy, combined with Islamic values such as Tawakkul, Ihsan, and Amanah, plays a crucial role in moderating the relationship between emotional exhaustion and service recovery performance in Islamic hotels. Employees with high self-efficacy are better equipped to manage emotional stress and provide quality service even during challenging customer interactions. Implementing training that emphasizes Islamic values and self-efficacy can enhance service recovery performance and foster a harmonious, productive work environment. Appropriate organizational support, including Islamic-based training, recognition of individual achievements, and clear operational guidelines, will strengthen employees' ability to deliver effective recovery services and improve overall service quality.

CONCLUSIONS

This study identified critical factors influencing emotional exhaustion and service recovery performance among employees in Islamic hotels. Ambiguous customer expectations, disproportionate customer expectations, and customer verbal aggression were found to significantly contribute to emotional exhaustion, highlighting the psychological pressures employees face in delivering value-based services aligned with Islamic standards. These stressors not only compromise employees' mental well-being but also hinder their ability to perform effective service recovery, which is essential for customer satisfaction and organizational reputation. However, interactions with disliked customers were not found to significantly affect emotional exhaustion, suggesting that employees can manage such interactions more effectively when supported by psychological resources like self-efficacy and organizational support. Furthermore, emotional exhaustion was shown to have a negative impact on service recovery performance, emphasizing the importance of addressing this issue to maintain competitiveness in the halal tourism sector.

The findings have important theoretical and practical implications. Self-efficacy emerged as a key moderating factor, reducing the adverse effects of emotional exhaustion on service recovery

performance. Employees with high self-efficacy demonstrated greater resilience in managing work pressures and delivering effective solutions even in challenging situations. This underscores the need for organizations to invest in programs aimed at enhancing employees' psychological capacity, such as training initiatives that integrate Islamic values like Tawakkul, Ihsan, and Amanah. These values foster a supportive workplace culture, enabling employees to manage stress more effectively while maintaining high standards of service. Additionally, incorporating spiritual practices such as dhikr and scheduled prayers into organizational strategies can help employees maintain emotional balance, improve service quality, and strengthen Indonesia's position in the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI).

Despite its valuable contributions, this study has several limitations that warrant further exploration. Future research should investigate additional factors that may influence service recovery performance, such as cultural differences, organizational policies, and customer demographics. Expanding the sample size and observation period would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics involved. Moreover, exploring the interplay between customer-related stressors, emotional exhaustion, service recovery performance, and self-efficacy across different sectors of halal tourism could offer valuable insights for global applications. Addressing these gaps will enhance the development of effective strategies to manage employee well-being and optimize service delivery in the growing halal tourism industry.

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