Customer Satisfaction Based On The Missing Aspects: Instinct Factors And Emotion

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Abstract: This research addressed the antecedents and the structure of customer satisfaction from human intrinsic motivation's view, as origins of value perceived through interacting Oliver expectancy disconfirmation theory and emotional aspect of satisfaction. In the present research study, the effort was made to clarify the dimensions and the structure of satisfaction in a developed form. The elucidation of these dimensions can be of paramount value for managers in all the service sectors, as it identifies the bundles of service attributes which consumers find important. The clarification of the structure is also important as it confirms the customers' satisfaction, and the compatibility of services with the human basic demands which can lead to primary satisfaction and affect perceived value in relation to environment influence (positive and negative expectancy disconfirmation in the present study) as a mediator variable. Emotion of costumers is another determinant that has remained least noticed in the traditional models which focused only on value perception as the last phase which leads to satisfaction. Our proposed model concentrates on the role of customer's basic instinct and emotions in the satisfaction process.

Key words: Service quality- Customer satisfaction – perceived value – instinct factors- emotion

INTRODUCTION

Kondo (2001) stated that customer satisfaction is the ultimate target of total quality management. To achieve high customer satisfaction, companies have to eliminate all complaints and provide something more to customers i.e., attractive quality, which is usually more important when it comes to satisfying customers.

Traditionally, the focus of marketing activities have been on attaining success in the product marketplace via examining the physical aspects of products and services such as quantity, quality, functionality, availability, accessibility, delivery, price and customer support. More recently, marketing managers have shifted their emphasis to creating value for their customers (e.g. Clutterbuck and Goldsmith, 1998; McAlexander *et al.*, 2002). The past models tried to support customer satisfaction in any environment, but they couldn't be comprehensive applicable to all customer satisfaction aspects. For example, SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, *et al* 1988), that is a common measurement instrument for obtaining customers' perceptions of quality (Ryan, 1997; Wuest, 2001). Although the importance of service quality has been recognized, there has been limited research that has addressed the structure and antecedents of the concept.

The purpose of this article is to present a research model for improving the quality of services.

Our study proposes a significantly different conceptual framework for a customer satisfaction model. Actually, our model exhibits satisfaction as a construct that has originated from basic human needs (basic human needs in the areas of food, health, education, shelter, and clothing) and considers how the customers' needs can be met in ways customer perceived value perceived value and satisfied from service/product with environmental interaction.

We aimed at recognizing the fundamental elements of satisfaction that are likely to be common to other/more sectors' customers or can be redefined based on a sector special conditions. After characterizing basic aspects, they can be used for improving service recoveries and increase of customer satisfaction and may be base view for customer satisfaction in business sectors.

Literature review:

The concept of "customer satisfaction" first came into use in early 1980s in the USA. Customer satisfaction is the result of a product or service exceeding what the customers expected (Oliver, 1980). Hernon and Whitman (2001) defined satisfaction as a sense of contentment that arose from an actual experience.

In some of the best known models which connect concepts of loyalty, customer satisfaction and customer value, customer satisfaction is modeled as a function of customer expectations and perceived quality (Fornell, 1992). Fornell endorses a view of customer satisfaction, loyalty and switching behavior which can also be applied to business services. According to this model, satisfaction while increasing customer loyalty, decreases switching behavior. In a later work, Johnson *et al.* (1995) argue that customer satisfaction is a cumulative construct that is affected by market expectations and performance perceptions in any given period, and is also affected by past satisfaction from period to period. SERVQUAL, another popular model; suggested service

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quality can be defined as an antecedent of overall customer satisfaction (Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996), while its constructs may not be applicable to all sectors. Their adopted approach is effective in incremental changes to improve quality, which can be judged within the narrow outcomes pertaining to universal attributes (Fache, 2000). Also, Anderson and Sullivan (1993) specify satisfaction as a function of perceived quality and "disconfirmation" - the extent to which perceived quality fails to match prepurchase expectations. Expectations in their model do not directly affect satisfaction.

Furthermore, their model is unable to explain the extent to which disconfirmation results in dissatisfaction, since there are other factors which affect and change the degree of perceived value and satisfaction. As a matter of fact, Customer satisfaction with services depends not only on the service outcome (what the customer receives during the exchange), but also on the process of service delivery, or the quality of the interaction itself (how the customer perceives value). Moreover, traditional research conceptually and empirically analyzes specific service quality and satisfaction dimensions, which relate closely to service providers' behavior (Specht *et al*, 2007).

Most of the research studies that we presented suggest a developmental process in the relationships existing between businesses and business services over time. However, Bejou (1994) by integrating the social penetration theory and interpersonal relationships theories with marketing theories suggests the constructs of encounter quality and relationship quality.

Customer satisfaction with business service can be defined as a customer's positive or negative feeling about the value of using a business service in a specific situation. This feeling can be a reaction to an immediate use situation or an overall reaction to a series of use situation experiences (Woodruff and Gardial, 1996).

Proposed model:

Customer satisfaction is conceptualized with transaction-specific meaning it is based on the customer's experience in a particular service encounter, (Cronin & Taylor, 1992), and also some believe that customer satisfaction is a cumulative construct which is based on the overall evaluation from a service experience (Jones & Suh, 2000). However, Sureshchander *et al*., (2002, p.364) believe customers' level of satisfaction is determined by their cumulative experiences in their points of contact with a supplier organization.

The customer's satisfaction is rooted in two common variables, instinct and environment elements which have influence on value perception. A comparison of customer value orientation with customer satisfaction measurements may further reveal that value orientation considers all the levels of the customer's interaction with a service, including attributes, consequences, and final states. The customer value orientation is a long term and more stable orientation. Thus providing a new model based on the origins of values and emotions can be generalized to many market and service sectors.

We intend to produce a new model based on environment factors and basic instinct by categorizing them through explanatory factor analysis results. In this model, we suggest that, any satisfaction depends on internal and external features pertinent to customer. Internal features relate to basic human instinct and his satisfaction and confirmation with service provided. External features are environment factors that can affect two aspects: positive expectancy confirmation and positive expectancy disconfirmation.
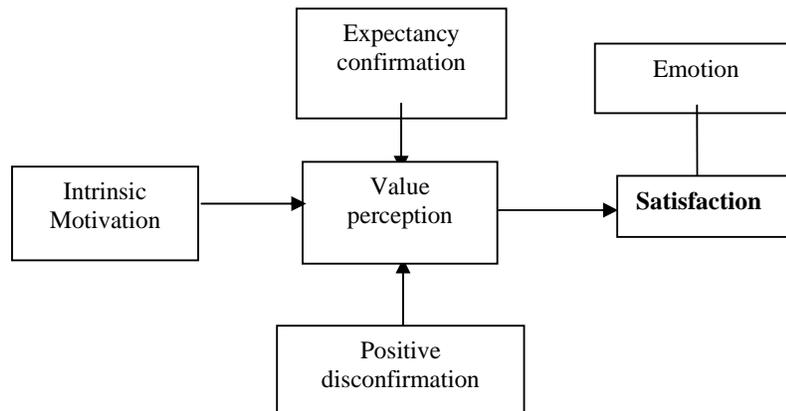
The most dominant theory of customer satisfaction is the expectancy-disconfirmation model (Oliver, 1980). According to this theory, satisfaction outcomes are a function of perceived performance and perceived

disconfirmation. Perceived disconfirmation depends on perceived performance and comparison standards. Standards of comparison may include expectations, ideals, competitors, other service categories, marketer promises and industry norms. If perceived performance is significantly lower than the comparison standard (more than the customer is indifferent to), a customer will experience negative disconfirmation (i.e., service dose not meet the comparison standard). It does not matter how the service provider believed the service was performed. It is especially important for managers of business services to recognize negative disconfirmation, as it presents the largest threat to customer loyalty, word-of-mouth recommendation, repeated purchases, and other desirable customer responses. Therefore in some cases the model is not capable to describe customer satisfaction.

Intrinsic motivation:

A fundamental matter of motivation theory is energy that is based on needs and needs are innate to the organism (Deci and Ryan, 1985). Intrinsic needs provide energy for the organism to act on the environment, and to manage aspects of their drives and emotions.

Deci (1975) proposed that intrinsically motivated behaviors are based on people's needs to feel competent and self-determined.

But in the case that the customers' expectations are not met, it will result in disconfirmation. However, what is important is the degree of disconfirmation. In fact it can entail expressions such as "not bad" on the part of the customers, while it is not to the extent that that leads to dissatisfactions. In this case the, the customers, that have experienced the services previously, don't feel dissatisfied but their perceived value becomes less when it recurs. The new customers, as well, won't refuse from second returning, but more likely they will evaluate the quality of services in their future returns and they will form their expectancy confirmation process once more and when their negative confirmation became fixed, they would look for an alternative and would exit from the customers' bundle.

But there is a state in which the quality of services varies to a great extent from our expectations. And it is the state of disconfirmation (represented in the second graph).
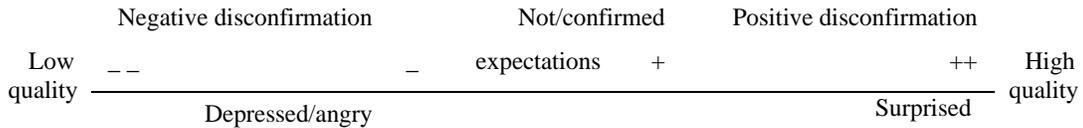
	Negative disconfirmation	Not/confirmed	Positive disconfirmation	
Low quality	_ _ _	expectations +	++	High quality
	Depressed/angry		Surprised	

Fig. 2: Differentiation between positive/negative disconfirmation and expectancy confirmation (not confirmation)

Positive disconfirmation:

Another assumption underlying the model suggests that performance (in terms of the recovery attributes) only indirectly affects satisfaction through disconfirmation and perceived justice (Smith *et al*, 1999). They concluded that disconfirmation also had a positive and complementary influence on satisfaction.

They used seven-point scale, anchored at middle and endpoints ("Much Worse than Expected"/"As Expected"/"Much Better than Expected") based on Oliver and Swans work (1989) but in our study, we used separate concept for measuring confirmation and disconfirmation. We suppose confirmation and disconfirmation on separate scales, not one scale. Both of them are different measures. Confirmation in our proposed model is like Oliver and Swans' models, but the disconfirmation continuum has two limits. The positive end shows the surprised or happy customers, that means their perceived quality was higher than their expectations, while the other end reflects those who are angry with services, which implies bad service quality or lower than expectations that has negative affect on satisfaction process. Disconfirmation is hypothesized to affect satisfaction, with positive disconfirmation leading to satisfaction and negative disconfirmation leading to dissatisfaction.

The impact of disconfirmation is to the degree that can bring about either surprise or depress/anger, that is two extreme ends of the dis/confirmation continuum.

However, positive disconfirmation was not the focus of this study, so it was treated as an independent variable in the model.

Discussion:

In the present research study, taking the strong points and weak points of other models into account, customer satisfaction was investigated. What matters about customer satisfaction models is their capability to be generalized in all types of enterprise environments. In the present article we presented two main factors which had been ruled out of consideration in the customer satisfaction models including: intrinsic motives or

conformity of services to instinct and internal needs, and customers' emotions and feelings at the time of receiving services.

Considering these two factors, we presented a model in which the satisfaction was exhibited as a variable that arises from intrinsic motivations and instinct satisfaction, in the initial stages; subsequently, it develops through effect of emotions and excitements. The emotions and excitements don't have effect on customers' perceived value from received services and directly influence satisfaction. Besides, contrary to Oliver's (1980) model, we segregated disconfirmation and confirmation of the customers' expectations, and didn't place them on the same continuum. Though the confirmation of expectations affects perceived value, disconfirmation itself embraces two positive and negative dimensions. The positive disconfirmation is the state in which an individual receives a service beyond his expectation, and feels excited and surprised. On the other hand, in the negative disconfirmation, he faces with terrible situation.

In the case of confirmation of the negative and positive expectations, the differences detected between expectations and received services in both ends of a continuum were very slight, and didn't have positive effect on perceived value. But only when they were positive, they maintained and confirmed their past experience.

In the present study, we made our effort to propose a comprehensive model that could cover different states. Although the segregation of different types of emotions disconfirmation arising from their expectations, and also the role of time intervals in customers' satisfactions has not been investigated yet, it can reveal some ways for making the customers become loyal and return to the service providers.

This approach is closely aligned with constructivist ontology and enables managers and researchers to gather in-depth customers' perceptions of the service environment for improving service quality design.

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