

CUSTOMER CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOURS: TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TYPOLOGY

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Abstract

Eight types of customer citizenship behaviours were extracted from the existing marketing literature, and the more developed organisational citizenship behaviour literature. These included: positive word of mouth behaviour; suggestions for service improvements; participation in organisation events/activities; benevolent acts of service facilitation; policing of other customers; flexibility; voice and displays of relationship affiliation. Although citizenship behaviours such as positive word-of-mouth and voice have established empirical measures, the other types of customer citizenship behaviours do not. The objective of this study, therefore, was to source, adapt and derive measures for each of the eight identified citizenship behaviours. Using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, these measures were validated across three service contexts.

Introduction

In an environment where competition is fierce, and resources are increasingly scarce, organisations are continually looking for avenues to increase their efficiency and effectiveness. Customer citizenship behaviour (Gruen 1995), also referred to as “extra role behaviour” (Keh and Teo 2001), or “customer voluntary performance” (Bailey, Gremler and McCollough 2001), or even “pro-social behavior” (used in the context of service employees) (Bettencourt and Brown 1997), offers a means by which service organisations can gain a competitive edge with no cost. Customer citizenship behaviours may be described as helping behaviours directed towards the service organisation or other individuals, such as service employees or fellow customers.

It is important to differentiate between role-prescribed and extra-role citizenship behaviours. Extra-role behaviours will be the focus of this paper, and will be herein referred to as citizenship behaviours. This is compatible with Gruen’s (1995) definition of helpful, constructive gestures exhibited by customers that are valued or appreciated by the organisation, but not directly enforceable, or an explicit requirement of the customers’ role. This may be contrasted to role-prescribed, pro-social behaviours that are equivalent to desired or expected customer participation required for optimum service delivery (Bettencourt 1997).

Types of Citizenship Behaviours

Eight main types of customer citizenship behaviours were isolated from the literature. These included: positive word of mouth behaviour (Gremler and Gwinner 2000; Harrison-Walker 2001); displays of relationship affiliation (Gruen 1995); making suggestions for service improvements (Bettencourt 1997); policing of other customers (Podsakoff et al. 1990); voice (Singh 1988; Spake et al. 2003); flexibility (Gruen 1995); participation in organisation events/activities (Podsakoff et al. 1990; Gruen 1995) and benevolent acts of service facilitation (Bettencourt 1997). Definitions for each of the eight types of citizenship behaviours are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Types of Customer Citizenship Behaviours, Their Definitions and Sources

Positive Word of Mouth:	Favourable, informal, person-to-person communication between a perceived non-commercial communicator and a receiver regarding a brand, a product, an organisation, or a service	Harrison-Walker (2001)
Service Improvement Suggestions:	Customer provision, to the service organisation, of ideas and suggestions, that do not derive from specific instances of consumption dissatisfaction, which may aid in the organisation's improvement	Bettencourt (1997)
Participation:	Customer willingness to participate in organisational events, including research, and other sponsored activities	Gruen (1995)
Benevolent Acts:	Kind, charitable acts on the part of the customer, within the immediate service exchange	Researchers
Policing:	The observation of other customers to ensure their appropriate behaviour(s)	Bettencourt (1997)
Flexibility:	Customer willingness to adapt to situations beyond their control	Bettencourt (1997)
Voice:	Customer directing his/her complaint to the service provider in the instance of a service failure, so as to give them the opportunity to rectify the problem, retain their reputation and maintain the relationship	Singh (1988)
Displays of Affiliation:	Communication by the customer to others, of their relationship with an organisation, through tangible displays on their person or their personal items.	Gruen (1995)

Although the citizenship behaviours of positive word-of-mouth and voice have established empirical measures, the others do not. The objective of this study, therefore, was to source, adapt and derive measures for each of the eight identified customer citizenship behaviours. In many cases, items for these constructs were derived from meanings reflected in the literature. Discussions with academics and

regular consumers of services, prior to the administration of the questionnaire, confirmed the relevance and clarity of the individual items. All scales were measured on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

A consumer service context provided the sample homogeneity preferred when seeking theoretical explanation (Sternthal, Tybout and Calder 1994). Three versions of the questionnaire, representing three types of customer and service worker relationships, namely customer-pharmacist, client-hair stylist, and patient-doctor service types, were printed. These contexts vary on the degree of search, experience and credence properties (Zeithaml 1981); the pharmacy service is dominated by search properties, the hairdressing service is characterised by experience properties, and the medical service is high in credence properties. It was felt that this did not compromise the consumer service context desired, whilst also allowing for future exploration of the generalisability of the measures.

Methodology

Ninety-four undergraduate students from a third year Marketing Research class at an Australian university served as data collectors. Each student was provided with six questionnaires from one type of service, and was instructed to personally administer them to any people that they knew who were regular users of the service type given. However, to obtain full credit for this piece of assessment, students had to survey subjects in each of six age ranges (i.e., 18-24, 25-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59 and 60 or older). Furthermore, students had to record a contact number and name for each respondent to allow the researchers to validate the questionnaires. This would ensure a balanced demographic profile and would serve to discourage the self-completion of the questionnaires. In an attempt to reduce interviewer bias, each student conducted a mock interview with his/her tutor prior to the distribution of the questionnaires.

All questionnaires were completed within two weeks of distribution, and the researchers validated those for the 60 years or older respondents for each student. Where some discrepancy was found, that student's remaining surveys were also validated. Following the exclusion of "suspect" questionnaires, a total sample of 548 remained from the initial sample of 564. Pharmacist, hairdresser and doctor samples were fairly even, with 172 respondents for the pharmacist service provider, 197 for the hairdresser, and 179 for the doctor. Gender was also fairly evenly split, with 57.8 per cent female and 42.2 per cent male respondents. Respondent ages, as expected, were evenly spread, with 19.2 per cent between 18 and 24 years, 17.5 per cent between 25 and 29 years, 16.4 per cent between 30 and 39 years, 16.2 per cent between 40 and 49 years, 15.9 per cent between 50 and 59 years and 14.8 per cent aged 60 or older. The majority of the sample indicated Australian as their cultural background (46.2 per cent), with European (29.2 per cent), and Asian (12.8 per cent) being other prominent responses. Further to this, 74.3 per cent of respondents had lived in Australia for 15 years or more.

Analysis and Results

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed using principal components with an orthogonal (varimax) rotation to increase the interpretability of the factor solution.

Factors with latent roots (eigenvalues) greater than 1 were considered significant, and given the large sample size, factor loadings greater than 0.30 were considered significant (Hair et al., 1998). A nine factor solution was initially obtained, but following the removal of three items due to high cross-loadings and one negatively worded item (reversed scored) due to low communality, the expected eight factor solution was obtained which explained nearly 70 per cent of the common variance. Each of the items remaining from the EFA was included in a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) where the cross-loadings were constrained to be zero and the measures were allowed to load only on their hypothesised constructs. Following the removal of poor performing items with low standardised regression weights and squared multiple correlation coefficients (<0.5) (Bollen 1989; Diamantopoulos 1994), a CFA of the remaining items indicated a good fit to the data, as presented in Table 2.

Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha was performed on each type of customer citizenship behavior containing the selected items from the CFA. Values ranged between 0.78 and 0.94, well above the acceptable cut-off value of 0.7 (Nunnally 1978). Composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) were calculated as a further assessment of convergent reliability (Fornell and Larcker 1981). Composite reliability values for all constructs were desirable as they greatly exceeded 0.6 (Bagozzi and Yi 1988). Furthermore, the amount of variance captured by the latent constructs exceeded that due to measurement error, and was greater than the squared correlation between the two latent constructs, the latter providing a robust test of discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker 1981).

Table 2: Types of Citizenship Behaviours Measurement Model Results

	Overall Model Fit					
	χ^2	df	GFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
	813.08	350	0.90	0.96	0.95	0.049
Variable	Standardised Loading	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted		
Positive word-of-mouth		0.93	0.97	0.69		
Encourage friends and relatives to go to my...	0.825					
I have actually recommend my... to others	0.818					
I recommend my... to those who ask or seek my advice	0.869					
When the topic arises... I go out of my way to recommend...	0.847					
I say positive things about...to other people	0.837					
I am proud to tell others that I use...	0.772					
Suggestions for service improvements		0.94	0.97	0.80		
I would make suggestions...as to how the service could be improved at the...	0.903					
I would let my...know of ways that...could better serve my needs	0.902					
I would share my opinions with my...if I felt they might be of benefit to the...	0.879					
I would contribute ideas to my...that could improve service at the...	0.885					
Policing of other customers		0.78	0.89	0.58		
I would take steps to prevent problems caused by other customers/ patients...	0.878					
I would inform my...if I became aware of inappropriate behaviour by other customers/patients	0.811					
I would give advice to other customers/ patients of the ...	0.548					
Active voice		0.89	0.93	0.69		
If I had a complaint, I would discuss it with my...	0.920					
If I had a problem I would complain to my...	0.775					
If I had a complaint I would contact my... and ask him/her to take care of it	0.820					
I would not be afraid to discuss a complaint with my...	0.791					
Benevolent acts of service facilitation		0.78	0.76	0.55		
I go out of my way to treat my...with kindness	0.785					
I try to do things to make my...job easier even though I do not have to	0.743					
If I was happy with my ...service I would let him/her know it	0.686					
Displays of relationship affiliation		0.82	0.90	0.65		
I would wear, in public, a hat that advertised my...	0.840					
I would wear, in public, a t-shirt that advertised my...	0.901					
I would display a sticker that advertised my...	0.652					
Flexibility		0.85	0.92	0.66		
If the hours of operation were to change so as to affect me, I would be willing to adapt	0.785					
If my...needed me to come back at another time I would be willing to do so	0.881					
I would be willing to wait to see my...	0.771					
Participation in organisation events/activities		0.84	0.94	0.67		
I would try out a new service being trailed by my...	0.563					
I would attend events being sponsored by my...	0.932					
I would attend functions held by my...	0.913					

Composites scores were then constructed by averaging the remaining item scores for each type of citizenship behaviour. The descriptive statistics presented in Table 3 suggest that the least likely citizenship behaviour engaged in by Australian consumers is that of overt displays of affiliation with the service organisation, followed by participation in organisation events/activities. Further, correlations between the variables are all significant and positive which suggests that consumers who are likely to engage in one type of citizenship behaviour, are likely to participate in another type

of citizenship behaviour. Also, given the very weak to moderate strength of association, multicollinearity between the citizenship behaviour types is unlikely.

Table 3: Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations Among Citizenship Behaviours

	Variable	No. of items	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Word-of-mouth	6	4.53	1.55	1.000							
2	Suggestions for service improvements	4	3.7	1.63	.502**	1.000						
3	Policing of customers	3	3.35	1.45	.334**	.470**	1.000					
4	Voice	4	4.84	1.47	.327**	.427**	.351**	1.000				
5	Benevolent acts	3	5.14	1.25	.567**	.397**	.386**	.377**	1.000			
6	Affiliation	3	2.46	1.54	.310**	.285**	.273**	.191**	.291**	1.000		
7	Flexibility	3	4.98	1.50	.481**	.218**	.209**	.283**	.534**	.172**	1.000	
8	Participation in organisation activities	3	3.51	1.53	.476**	.481**	.443**	.327**	.436**	.448**	.332**	1.000

** = $p \leq 0.01$ (two-tailed)

Conclusion and Future Research

This study takes a further step in defining and measuring the different types of customer citizenship behaviours in a service context. The eight types of customer citizenship behaviours identified, however, are not exhaustive, and it is likely that qualitative research in the form of focus groups or in-depth interviews with loyal customers of a service, and/or observational studies, would flush out further types of customer citizenship behaviours.

Customer citizenship behaviors are extremely valued by firms, particularly in the current environment where there is a push to encourage greater customer participation in service delivery to reduce organisational labor costs and increase productivity. Furthermore, customer citizenship behaviours directed to service employees are likely to have a positive effect on their job satisfaction. Given the potential value of citizenship behaviours, future research needs to identify organisational and customer factors that serve as antecedents of these behaviours. For example, is it a customer personality trait, customer loyalty, and/or a desire for reciprocity that drives customers' propensity to engage in citizenship behaviours? The OCB literature has found antecedents of "pro-social" employee behaviours to include: workplace fairness perceptions, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Bettencourt and Brown 1997) and procedural justice (Moorman, Niehoff and Organ 1993). Perhaps these same antecedents can be applied to customer citizenship behaviours.

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