

顧客満足とサービス提供者の コミュニケーション・スタイルとの関係に おける接近・回避志向の調整効果

Approach-Avoidance Orientation as a Moderator of the Relationship between Service Provider's Communication Styles and Customer Satisfaction

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要約

サービスの価値創造にはサービス提供者と消費者の相互作用が必然であるが、顧客満足の研究では、サービス提供者の特性と顧客特性の両方が同時に考慮されることは少ない。また、ほとんどのサービスにおいてコミュニケーションの役割は大きい。そのスタイルの違いによる顧客満足への影響について検討されたものも少ない。本研究は、サービス提供者のコミュニケーション・スタイルと顧客満足の関係が、顧客の接近・回避志向によって調整されることを検討する。三つの調査の結果、接近志向が高い消費者は、低コンテキスト・コミュニケーションのサービスよりも、高コンテキスト・コミュニケーションのサービスに対する満足の方が高い傾向にあった。反対に、回避志向が高い消費者は、高コンテキスト・コミュニケーションのサービスよりも、低コンテキスト・コミュニケーションのサービスに対する満足の方が高い傾向にあった。これらの結果は、サービス業の顧客満足を理解する上では、サービス提供者と顧客の両方の特性を把握しておくことが重要であることを示唆している。

キーワード

顧客満足、コミュニケーション・スタイル、接近・回避志向、サービス提供者特性、顧客特性

Service encounters are essentially social exchanges. The interaction between service provider and customer is a crucial component of customer satisfaction (Solomon et al., 1985). However, most research in customer satisfaction fails to include both service characteristics and customer characteristics in a same model (see Anderson, Pearo, and Widener, 2008 for a similar view). Thus, the primary purpose of this research is to examine the interaction effect of service characteristics and customer characteristics toward customer satisfaction.

As for service characteristics, we examine a property that is particularly distinctive of services

- communication styles. Given the degree of communication involved in most services, it stands to reason that communication styles used by service providers might affect customer satisfaction (Mattila and Patterson, 2004; Sparks, Bradley, and Callan, 1997). This research focuses on low- and high-context communication (Hall, 1976) to better understand the differences in service providers' communication styles.

As for customer characteristics, we feature promotion-prevention focus (approach-avoidance orientation) highlighted in regulatory focus theory (Carver and White, 1994; Higgins, 1997). According to

regulatory focus theory, individuals with a promotion focus (approach orientation) will regulate their behaviors toward positive outcomes, and those with a prevention focus (avoidance orientation) will regulate their behaviors away from negative outcomes. The effect of regulatory focus has been confirmed in various consumer behaviors; however, its effect on service encounter and its subsequent influence on satisfaction evaluations have received little attention in extant literature.

This research shows that individuals with high approach orientation have a higher customer satisfaction with high-context (HC) communication services than low-context (LC) communication services; whereas individuals with high avoidance orientation have a higher customer satisfaction with LC communication services than HC communication services. HC communication services provide benefits for individuals having high motivation to approach positive outcomes. Individuals having high approach orientation are highly engaged in the pursuit of whatever incentives arise (e.g., unexpected opportunity). However, HC communication services, because of their ambiguity, provide risks for individuals having high motivation to avoid negative outcomes such as being ill-mannered.

In three studies, we test the hypothesis that customer satisfaction toward HC vs. LC communication services is moderated by customers' approach vs. avoidance orientations. In Study 1, we examine customer satisfactions toward HC and LC communication services based on customers' approach-avoidance orientations in two service categories, restaurant and entertainment. We show that customers with high approach-orientation have a

higher customer satisfaction with HC communication services than LC communication services. On the other hand, customers with high avoidance-orientation have a higher customer satisfaction with LC communication services than HC communication services. Next, Study 2 replicates these findings using an experimental method, where the service category remains same and only the communication style is manipulated. Finally, in Study 3, we find further support for the hypothesis by testing in different culture (the U.S.) and service category (retail store). The pattern of findings, which is robust across multiple cultures and service categories, thereby highlight the importance of considering both the service characteristics and customer characteristics in understanding customer satisfaction.

The findings of this paper contribute to the existing literature in several ways. First, we extend the literature on customer satisfaction by showing that communication styles and regulatory focus have an interactive effect on customer satisfaction. The finding adds to the growing body of research suggesting that a parsimonious model of customer satisfaction demands consideration of both service characteristics and customer characteristics (Anderson et al., 2008). Second, we extend the literature on motivational orientation by demonstrating the effect of regulatory focus on customer satisfaction processes. Finally, we contribute methodologically by employing multiple methods to elaborate theory – survey studies to explore hypothesis in the real-world settings and experimental studies to examine causal relationships.