Literature Review of Service Encounter Management, using Emotions Management

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Abstract

Background/ Objectives: The aim of this service management literature review is to identify the role of emotions during service encounter, to analyze effect of emotions on service customers and employees, and to identify ways to manage emotions for effective service encounter. **Method:** The review based on systematic review based on literature tracked chronologically; based on SCOPUS database. The literature is then scanned for relevance and citation counts. The themes arising in service encounter management are identified and grouped for conceptual ease. **Conclusion/ Improvements:** The study highlights importance of effective emotion management during service encounter. It identifies customer emotional reactions like anger, frustration, fear, hate, grief, love and joy; and indicates relationship of demographic factors with emotions. The study also uncovers effect of emotions on service employees during service encounter in terms of; emotional labor, employee burnout, emotional dissonance. Finally, the study lists ways to manage emotions using;—emotional intelligence and motivation; supervisory support; employee and customer citizenship behavior; clue management, theatrical approach and emotion script; and service recovery management. For effective customer experience, it is imperative to manage every service encounter effectively. Since services in general involve human being, emotions generated during service delivery process is a key to customer experience. Managers are advised to create customer experiences considering for emotion management. The study is a unique effort to highlight literature related to service encounter in relations using emotions. It analysis emotions related service consumers as well as service employees.

Keywords: Clue Management, Customer Experience, Customer Value, Emotions, Service Encounter

1. Introduction

Most of the service industries like entertainment, hospitals, crematorium, and restaurants and many others evokes strong consumer and employee emotions, at times these emotions are hidden, and at times emotions are visibly displayed. Till very recently managers un-successfully tried to create emotion-free organizations, with the belief that emotions were disruptive to business processes. While few emotions like frustration, fear, anger, hate, grief can be disruptive, others like love and joy can be constructively used by the organizations. Every day, every individual; either an employee or the customer carry their emotions at service encounter and interact with each other. Emotions being attitudes; are based on;

—cognitive evaluation, —affective or emotional feelings, and —behavioral actions. Forming right attitudes between consumer and employee during service encounters is vital for favorable behavioral response from the consumer.

2. Emotions During Service Encounter

Emotions during service encounter are the set of feelings evoked in customers and employees during a typical service interaction. Emotions are attitudes generated towards a stimuli exchanged during service encounter and is formed through interconnected process of cognitive evaluation of the encounter, emotion generated during the encounter, and behavioral response of the participants

in the encounter[1]. The effects of stimuli to the behavioral response could be emotional and rational [2].

Body of research has differentiated; affect, emotions, and moods as closely intertwined concepts. While affect is a general in meaning, it has wide variety of feelings experienced, like emotions and moods;—emotions are strong feelings aimed at somebody or something; and—moods are relatively less strong feelings which usually generated irrespective of any stimulant event[1]. Emotions are suggested to be bidirectional i.e. positive or negative, and consumer emotions are considered as an important predictor of customer loyalty based on service quality[3]. Consumers may get positive emotional experience when the service encounters are as per their desires; and based on perceived ability consumer may still experience positive emotions even with the undesirable event[4]. Emotion, sometimes referred as affect by researchers[5], are hypothesized to works as; — filter in quality evaluation, — and an intervening factor in delivered- perceived attribute in quality experiencing.

Managing emotions during service delivery is important because, —some emotions may heighten the cognitive & rational process of experience and evaluation,—while some emotions may shut down the process. The research shows that both; the cognitive as well as affective (emotional) components of service quality attitude positively influences behavioral intentions[6]. Customer satisfaction, word-of-mouth, and service quality are considered as interwoven concepts affected by; emotions and time duration[7]. Consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction is an emotional feeling in response to confirmation/ disconfirmation. Satisfaction is conceptualized as a process which rises at a conscious level and evokes a positive or negative emotional response[8].

To understand emotions one needs to cognize concepts of psychology. Evolutionary psychology is proposed to be used in various consumption-related phenomena like communication, consumption choices, consumer-experienced emotions in service encounters[9]. According to general psychology theory; successful change in people occurs as a result of; four factors of client (personal attribute), relationship (practical and emotional benefits), expectancy (belief of future), and modeling (intervention)[10].

2.1 Objectives

The aim of this review is to identify effects of emotions generated during service encounter on service customer

and the employees; and to identify ways to effectively manage service encounter emotions for effective customer engagement.

2.2 Rationale of the Study

Emotions generated during service encounter tends to affects customer value as well as customer experience. Customer value and customer experience during service encounter are considered to be the concepts involving exchange of emotions between service customer and the organization.

2.2.1 Emotions and Customer Value

Value creation in a service dominant logic is a process of co-creation. Service value is an effective predictor of satisfaction and consumer behavior, as the cognitive evaluations precede emotional responses[11]. Customer satisfaction measured to capture both the cognitive and the emotional nature of this construct suggest that, integrating perceived value with customer satisfaction and perceived service quality can better explain and predict post-purchase behavior[12]. Literature argue, emotions to be the reason of developing strong bond between the customer and the company— through customer-company identification, by incorporating company-identity within self-identity. The emotional bonds thus created can lead to customer willing to pay more, contributing to better financial performance, the process described as service-profit chain[13]. Huder and Henneberg(2007) has conceptualized customer value as four-factor multidimensional construct of; emotional, practical, logical and risk components. A direct relationship is observed between customer value, and customer satisfaction.

2.2.2 Emotions and Customer Experience

Importance of research in emotions during service encounter was felt in automated retail store requiring 'fun factor' in service encounter[15]. Recent research in customer experience suggests; emotions are building customer experiences. Customer experience management; is firms directed efforts towards effective management of customer interactions, and is the effect of product experience, outcome focus, moments-of-truth, and peace-of-mind. Peace-of mind is an emotional aspect of service encounter and describes the customer's assessment of the interactions; pre-in-post purchase of

the service[16]. Experience marketing requires partnering with customers and design service value through sensory, emotional, functional or utilitarian, relational, social, informational, novelty and utopian methods; and interacting and designing the product; by co-creation and study of post purchase behavior[17]. Experience quality is consumer emotional conclusion about the service experience in an intricately designed service scene. The experience quality construct is tested to be effected by;— physical surroundings,— service employees, —presence of other consumers, —other attendees with consumer, and— their own self[18].

2.3 Research Methodology

This study involves systematic literature review of emotions generated during a typical service encounter. Important themes related to emotions generated during service encounter and their effects on service employees and customers are identified and literature related to effective management of emotions is organized for better understanding.

3. Discussion

3.1 Type of Emotions

The literature identifies list of emotions generated during service encounters. Even though, emotions cannot be confined to specific fundamental set; the basic emotions are grouped as; anger, fear, sadness, happiness, disgust, and surprise[1]. Early research work in types of emotions identifies eight types of emotions called emotional episodes; grouped under four groups as; —positive emotions: happiness & delight; —situation based undesirable emotions: anxiety and fear; —other undesirable emotions: anger and frustration; and— self-attributed negative emotions: guilt and shame[19]. In case of service failure, anger is the better predictor of behavior than satisfaction[20]. Further to this list; consumption emotion is said to be generating based on consumption of service. Consumption emotions are the emotional responses generated in a consumer based on consumption and product usage. Consumption emotion are conceptualized as a four dimension structure of excitement, comfort, annoyance, and romance[21]. Enjoyments related to consumption like shopping at retail store can generate consumption emotional state affecting satisfaction or dissatisfaction[22]. Literature also identifies

regret emotion, as a negative cognitive based emotion; experienced by customer when the alternative approach is thought better than the one selected by him[23]. The emotions can be grouped as shown in

3.2 Effect of Emotions on Customers

Literature discusses various effects of emotions on service customers. Themes like customer forgiveness, revenge and blackmail and effect of demographical factors are widely discussed by the literature.

3.2.1 Customer Forgiveness, Revenge, and Blackmail

Literature conceptualizes concept of forgiveness as customer coping strategy under service failure. Situational factors and contingent factors facilitates forgiveness process[24]. Negative reactions to service delays affects service evaluations. The perception of service provider's control on delays, and customer's time utilization affects consumer evaluation of service delays. The relationship is mediated by consumer reactions of uncertainty and anger[25]. When faced with service failures, customer develops a tendency to revenge against the firm. Customer perception of the firm's greed (opportunistic intent); may generate feeling of customer revenge. Customer revenge can be direct (face to face) act of aggression and vindictive complaining, or indirect (behind the back) acts[26]. In an interesting article Chen has conceptualized emotional blackmail on five distinctive emotional blackmailing styles as; Guanxi (relation)- customer one who uses, one who demands, one who expects fair-treatment, one who is under time- pressure, and one who threatens[27]. Customer outrage and delight emotions are stronger that satisfaction and dissatisfaction; and affect customer emotions, behavior and loyalty[28]. Emotional stresses during service encounters may generate hostile behavior among the customer and employee[29].

3.2.2 Demographic Factors and Emotions

People from different culture may react differently to negative service encounters. In general, a negative service encounter is viewed with anger. Compared to others, people from African origin reported sadness and feeling of 'being let down' and humiliated at the hands of service employees during negative service encounters[30]. As suggested by the appraisal theory, consumers from

different cultures appraise satisfaction differently. The differences in emotions may result in variation in interpretation and understanding of service environment. In mostly collectivist Asian cultures, importance of harmonious and smooth relationships dampens show of negative emotions[31].

Socio-emotional selectivity theory, suggests that intensity of negative emotions has a reciprocal relationship with demographic factor of age. People tend to regulate their negative emotions better as they grow old. Young customers are more likely to express stronger negative emotions than the older lot. Satisfaction through service recovery strategies (compensation, apology, and speed of service recovery) can also affect by negative emotions. Thus effective recovery strategies are important for recovery satisfaction[32].

3.3 Effect of Emotions on Employees

Literature suggests employees also get effected by emotions during service encounter. While employee empowerment, emotional dissonance, service quality, and customer satisfaction are interconnected concepts[33]; employees role is also evident from the study claiming employee citizenship behavior as encouragement to customer citizenship behavior, which build customer satisfaction[34].

3.3.1 Emotional Labor

Employee empowerment influences emotional dissonance; and positive bond is suggested between empowerment, quality, and satisfaction[33]. The concept of emotional labor though mainly discussed in relation to employee; is equally applicable to the customer as well. Emotional labor, is conceptualized as the effort, planning, and control required to express expected emotions during

interactions. Authenticity of employee labor display is found to affect customer emotions and perceptions[35]. Effect of emotional labor in case of frontline employees and customers is extensive. They are required to alter their behavior to perform to the designed emotion display by internalizing elements of the value positioning[36]. Similarly customers are also required to display self-control during service encounters, especially during service failure situation. Emotional labor can create stress in employees and customers. Frontline employees are required to alter their behavior to express designed emotion display for value positioning[36]. Effective employees training can help cope with emotional labor[37]. Emotional intelligence is also said to help control connect of emotional labor and job stress[38].

3.3.2 Employee Burnout and Employee's Hostile behavior

Continued episodes of multiple work-related stressors during customer interaction can cause employee burnout making him emotionally drained with lack of energy. Literature proposes burnout, structured on; — emotional exhaustion, — de-personalization, and— perceived reduced personal accomplishment. Personality traits are said to impact burnout dimensions[39]. Continued emotional stresses during service encounters may lead to hostile behavior between the customer and the service employee. Hostile behavior is detrimental to service quality; especially during poor technical performance of high utility interaction service[29].

3.3.3 Emotional Dissonance

Employees showing off untrue emotions during service encounters is stressful. When, displayed and expected emotions are same; but felt emotions are different; a state of
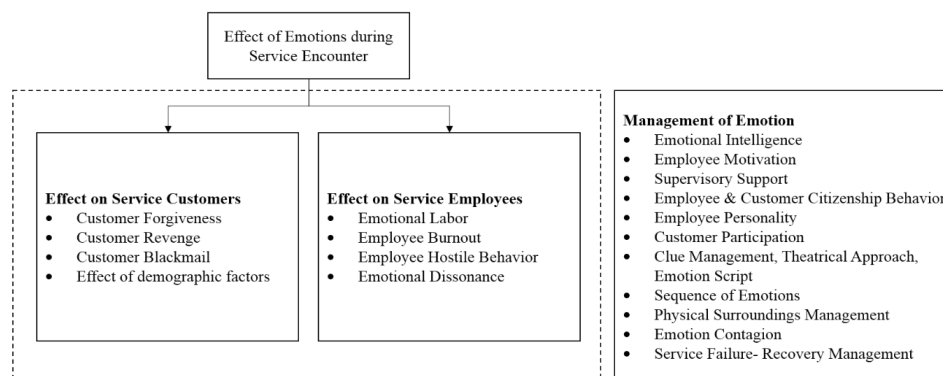

Figure 1. Effects of emotions during service encounter.

emotional dissonance occurs. Emotional dissonance can impact employee job outcomes[40]. Employee dissonance occur because of conflict between displayed, expected emotion with felt emotions. It can impact employee job outcomes[40]. Employee empowerment is said to positively influence emotional dissonance[33].

3.4 Management of Emotions
Literature suggests ways to manage emotions during service encounter. Emotional intelligence and motivation; supervisory support; employee and customer citizenship behavior; clue management, theatrical approach, and emotion script; and service failure and service recovery management are broad themes emerging from the literature.

3.4.1 Emotional Intelligence and Motivation

Emotional intelligence is human ability to perceive, understand, and then regulate,—self and other's emotions[1]. Emotional intelligence is difficult to measure, and is considered conceptually similar to personality. Emotional intelligence is an intuitive appeal, and a predictor of behavior, and considered to be biologically based[1]. It is found that Emotional intelligence mediates relationship of emotional labor and job stress; and improves employee job performance. Internal marketing connects service employees with their jobs, and improves job performance and betters customer offerings[38]. Emotional intelligence is ability to perceive emotions, understand the meaning, and regulation of ones emotions. Difficult to measure, conceptually similar to personality, emotional intelligence is biologically based intuitive appeal, and is a good predictor of behavior[1]. It is said to improve employee job performance[38]. Emotional motivation is the positive attachment of the service employee to organization which influences their approach to customer service[41]. Buyer-seller relationships develop over consumer proneness and motivations[42].

3.4.2 Supervisory Support

Research suggests, management's role in management of emotions during service encounters, as in tasks requiring self-handling, high-stress employees get tired affecting their performance compared to low-stress employees. Organizational supervisory backing can improve employee work focus by perspective change, creating a buffer effects through enhanced intrinsic job

motivation[43]. Leadership style, workplace spirituality (includes emotional attachment), and service climate are found to affect service quality[44]. Employee's service approach is affected by emotional motivation created through positive attachment of service employee towards his/her organization[41].

3.4.3 Employee and Customer Citizenship Behavior

Citizenship behavior is a favorable behavior, and dysfunctional behavior is an unfavorable behavior of participants in service encounter. For effective customer satisfaction, management should encourage employee citizenship behavior, and discourage employee dysfunctional behavior. Show of employee citizenship behavior is suggested to encourage customer citizenship behavior, thus building customer satisfaction[34]. Organizational support and emotional attachment of employee is found to have positive effect their citizenship behaviors[45].

Service employee is the link between the organization and the customer. Employee's self and other's emotional appraisal ability is important for his understanding of his in-role cooperative behavior and his extra-role service behavior[46]. Emotional display by service employees is suggested as it has a contagious effect on customer behavior. Service personnel displaying their emotion hierarchically influences;—consumer emotion,—satisfaction through service personnel,—brand attitude, and—support intention[47]. Employees affective Commitment is his emotional attachment, identification, and involvement in the organization; which affects service quality[48]. Every individual in every job has some emotional involvement which should be managed. To better manage service encounters, Disney is training its employees to cope with emotional labor[37]. One of the technique suggested is to train employees on emotional recall of their own experiences like waiting in long queue can build up credibility and empathy in employee behavior[49]. Display of positive emotions like smile by service employee positively affect customer. Employee characteristics and situational factors are said to affect their displayed emotion, and customer response. Emotions displayed by employees are important while designing service encounter as these directly affects customers evaluation of service quality[50]. Service failures tends to generate consumer anger; and one of the important aspect of service employee's work profile is effective handling of angry consumer. The anger can be controlled using service recovery attempt

specifically through pre-service recovery and service recovery phases[51].

3.4.3.1 Employee Personality

Research considers personality as influencer of human behavior; while personality is mix of specific psychological qualities affecting the behavior at varying situations and times. A significant relationship exists between— employee personality, — resemblance between personalities of customer and employee, and— customer perceptions. Salesperson neuroticism, a personality trait characterized by—fear, anxiety, moodiness, envy, worry, frustration, jealousy, and loneliness;—is found to affect customer perceptions of assurance, empathy and service quality. It is suggested that less neurotic salesmen are less to show negative emotions and handle critical customers better. Less neurotic salespersons will be able to uphold long-term associations with critical buyers[52]. Emotional stability is one of the big five personality traits along with extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. Interaction quality between provider and customer is an overall effect of big five personality traits[53]. Cognitive trust serves as mediator explaining impact of customer-service provider personalities on service quality. Recruiting service-oriented employees is likely to facilitate cognitive and build service quality. Training service employees in identifying personality match may develop trusting relationships[54].

3.4.3.2 Consumer Participation and Emotion

Careful customer management, around emotional conditions, may result in increased customer involvement and improved assessment of customer experience[55]. In high involvement services, generated positive emotions tends to moderate linkage between satisfaction and loyalty; while in low-involvement services, interaction type is not a significant contributor to service customer loyalty.[56] Service management literature emphasizes importance of consumer participation is service delivery. Consumer participation in service co-creation process could be corporeal, oral, or symbolic. Some services require consumer's emotional control through active emotional participation and may also need emotion management by service provider. Consumer's emotion displays could be in the form of angry outbursts, inappropriate laughter, loud talk, or even stoic behavior depending upon the context[57].

3.4.4 Clue Management, Theatrical Approach, and Emotion Script

Service encounters consists of acts also called as moments of truth like pre-sales, in-sales, and post-sales interactions which may include; phone calls, plant visits, service calls, service failures, service recovery[58]. Service employees job performance largely depends on situation of the service encounter, the time span, emotional context, and proxemics intimacy[59]. Customers look around for numerous clues, which are embedded in service; from selection of services to evaluation of service experiences. Literature widely discusses clue management; especially humanic clues. Clues can be grouped as— functionality based functional clues, and— emotion based (smell, sounds, sights, tastes, and textures) mechanical clues (emitted by things) and humanic clues (emitted by people); humanic clue is the behavior and look of service employee. Even small clues influences overall perception of a service experience. Clues build customer experience, and influences rational and emotional perceptions of service quality[60,61]. Service management literature has proposed using drama or theatrical approach in managing services. Mis-en-scene approach used by customer critic uses drama elements to create service performance[62]; and the approach is suggested to be used in service design[62]. One of the approach to managing emotions during service encounter is training employees understanding actions and emotions of customers and tactically using emotion script instead of standardized script[63]. Consumer perceive service quality based on happiness generated during servie encounter; while consumer personality determines their service quality expectations[64]. Employees should be trained on actions and knowing emotions of customers and their use of emotion script[63]. While employee characteristics affect their displayed emotion, display of positive emotion through smile can positively affect customer. Emotions displayed by employees could be used in encounter design[50].

3.4.4.1 Sequence of Emotions

Study of sequence of the emotion suggests that the positive emotions at the end of the service encounter are better predictor of satisfaction. The good ending of the encounter is evaluated better by the customers, while bad ending of the service encounter can be costly and can effect immediate and final consumption of the customer. The good ending does not mean ending with no problems

but much more than that. However ending an already positive encounter with a positive note may evoke delight[65]. While quality of the past service performance develops predictive attributes, emotions generated after the service failure facilitate the connect of causal attributes (stability and control) and overall customer satisfaction[66].

3.4.4.2 Physical Surroundings Management

Effect of physical surrounding affecting customer emotions and performance is important for service businesses[67]. Research suggest; the cleanliness of the servicescape influences customers' judgement of pleasantness, trust, prestige, and behaviors. In addition, the pleasantness may mediator relationship of servicescapes cleanliness with customer's approach behaviors[68]. Emotions such as pleasure, arousal, and dominance; influences customers perception of servicescape cues, which affects servicescape attitude, servicecaape involvement, and purchase intentions[69]. Role of physical surroundings on customer and employee behavior has been discussed extensively in literature. Post-purchase evaluation is the effect of emotional response of pleasure and arousal – factors of emotional responses[70]. Based on environment factors like servicescape customers and employees may respond cognitively, emotionally, and physiologically to the environment[71]. Emotional and behavioral response to physical environment; and service employees is mediated by consumer perceived control. Perceived control mediates the relationship of,—consumer density and consumer choice with service experience and consumer's approach[72]. Study of Environmental psychology based on Stimulus-Organism-Response model (SOR model) is useful in understanding effect of physical evidence in creating service environment[73]. Experience quality is an emotional judgement in the service setting, the experience quality construct includes, physical surroundings[18]. Perceived control mediates, consumer's emotional and behavioral responses to physical environment and contact personnel[72]. Pleasure and arousal at preprocess service environment interacts to determine post purchase evaluations[70]. Workplace spirituality— an emotional attachment and service climate influences service quality[44].

3.4.4.3 Emotion Contagion

Service delivery is likely to be affected by employee emotions, mood of the work group, and servicescape; further affecting consumer emotions and encounter outcome, suggesting effect of emotional contagion[74]. Employee display of multiple sequential emotional display tend to affect consumer emotions. Multiple contagion is the successive occurrences of negative and positive emotional incidences during service failure and recovery efforts. Incidences of employee display of negative emotions during service encounter leads to contagious transfer of emotions to service consumer. During service recovery, positive emotional display by employees may reduce negative emotions in consumers[75]. Importance of service encounter satisfaction can be understood by the research involving customer and employee smile. Smile is used as a predictive of customer satisfaction. Service employee's smile may favorable affect customer satisfaction from the encounter. Employee smile may even predict consumer smile; and consumer smile can also predict employee smile[76]. Human has a tendency to catch emotions similar to the person he is associated with. Since the service employee and the customer are associated with each other during the service encounter, similar effect of emotions between the service employee and the customer tend to have effect on perception of quality of service. At times such interactions are not positive, and employee may have to fake the emotions[77].

3.4.5 Service Failure and Service Recovery Management

Literature related to service failure and subsequent service recovery is vast. Customer does not blame service provider for uncontrollable service failure; but expect a proactive approach to controllable service failures. In case of controllable failure consumers tends to generate strong switching intentions as negative emotions become stronger when service failures are controllable, manageable and preventable by service provider[s]. Service failures evoke strong negative emotions, based on customer reasoning of service failure, further affecting customer behavior directly[79].

Thus emotions play important role during service encounter. The article reviews research in area of types of emotions, their effect on customer, service employee, and management of emotions. Customer emotion reactions could be in terms of forgiveness, revenge, and blackmail; and these may be dependent on demographic factors. Employees too get affected by emotions developing emotional labor, employee burnout, and hostile behavior,

and emotional dissonance. Literature discusses various emotion management techniques like use of emotional intelligence and motivation; improved supervision; encouraging employee and customer citizenship behavior; clue management, theatrical approach, and emotion script; and effective service recovery management process.

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