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Loved but Never Satisfied: Cognitive and Affective Influences on Consumers’ Economic Valuation of Their Pets

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Pet ownership is a phenomenon of contemporary life in the United States, with over 30% of American households owning at least one dog or cat. Despite the substantial role animals play in American consumers’ lives, the implications of pet ownership for marketer’s remains relatively unstudied.

It is well-documented that pet owners spend more on surgery and expensive medical procedures for dogs than for cats. For example, dogs are provided veterinary care and microchips more frequently than cats (Perrin 2009). Nonetheless, the reasons for this discrepancy have been less well-articulated. Drawing from psychological ownership (Pierce, Kostova, and Dirks 2003) and attachment (Zilcha-Mano, Mikulincer, and Shaver 2011) theories, we propose that consumers perceive more control over dogs than cats, and that these perceptions of control drive psychological ownership and ultimately valuation of the pet. Further, we propose that psychological ownership of a living creature fosters emotional attachment, and these attachment feelings mediate the effect of psychological ownership on valuation of the pet.

Study 1
Referring to a feeling that “it is mine!” (Pierce et al. 2003), psychological ownership positively impacts consumer outcomes such as willingness-to-pay (WTP) and word-of-mouth (Fuchs, Prandelli, and Schreier 2010). It has also been theorized to enhance feelings of stewardship, or a desire to subjugate one’s self-interests in order to nurture and protect (Hernandez 2012). Control is an important driver of psychological ownership (Pierce et al. 2003). Given that cats are notoriously less controllable than dogs, we propose that dog-owners feel greater psychological ownership of their pet than cat owners, and that psychological ownership mediates the effect of pet ownership (dog vs. cat) on WTP for medical expenses for the pet.

Results. ANOVA results revealed that participants would pay significantly more for surgery for their dog than for their cat ($M_{Dog} = $10,689 vs. $M_{Cat} = $5,174; $F(1,97) = 15.29; p < .001). Further, participants perceived greater control over their dog than their cat ($M_{Dogs} = 3.86, M_{Cats} = 3.07; F(1, 97) = 13.64; p < .001). Mediation analysis (Hayes 2013; model 6) revealed that the effect of pet ownership on WTP for surgery is sequentially mediated by perceived control and psychological ownership (95% CI: .001 to .157).
Study 2
Whereas psychological ownership has a cognitive component (Pierce et al. 2003), attachment refers to an emotion-laden bond between a person and an object (Bowlby 2012; Thomson, MacInnis, and Whan Park 2005). Both psychological ownership and emotional attachment enhance consumers’ economic valuation of products (Shu and Peck 2011). Emotional attachment develops based on the interaction between an individual and a person or object (Baldwin et al. 1996), often a living creature including pets (Zilcha-Mano et al. 2011). According to attachment theory (Bowlby 1982), reciprocal control of behavior is key to development of secure attachment partnerships (Moss et al. 1998). We propose that by cognitively facilitating the interaction between owner and pet, psychological ownership mediates the relationship between perceived control and attachment, ultimately enhancing the valuation of the pet.

Study 2 is designed to test this proposition. Further, in order to provide a more robust test of the notion that valuation results from consumers’ perceived behavioral control of dogs and cats, in study 2 we manipulate not only pet ownership (imagining owning a dog vs. a cat) but also the animal’s behavior (dog-like vs. cat-like). In this study, we also include additional outcome measures related to medical expenses, pet-related merchandise, and word of mouth.

**Design, Participants, Procedures and Measures.** This study employed a 2 (pet: dog vs. cat) x 2 (behavior: dog vs. cat) design with 121 MTurk participants. Participants were asked to imagine owning either a typical dog or cat, or a dog (cat) that behaves like a cat (dog). They were asked to write at least six sentences describing the pet’s behavior. Following this manipulation, we measured perceived control, psychological ownership, and WTP for life-saving surgery as in study 1, along with emotional attachment (Thomson et al. 2005) and other valuation indicators including WTP for health insurance, intent to purchase a 3-D printed model of the pet, and intent to post a selfie with the pet.

**RESULTS**
Results of two-way ANOVA reveal a main effect of pet-behavior congruence on perceived control ($M_{Congruent} = 3.31$ vs. $M_{Incongruent} = 2.88$; $F(1,117) = 5.40$; $p = .02$). However, consistent
with our theorizing, this effect was qualified by a significant interaction confirming that dog behavior in a pet was perceived to elicit higher feelings of control than cat behavior ($F(117) = 83.55; p < .001$; see Figure 1).

Consistent with our predictions, mediation analysis (Hayes 2013; model 6) reveals that the effects of pet behavior on WTP for surgery, WTP for insurance, intention to purchase a 3-D printed pet, and intention to post a selfie with the pet are sequentially mediated by perceived control, psychological ownership, and emotional attachment.

DISCUSSION
This research offers a first look at the effect of psychological ownership on economic valuation and stewardship of a living creature, contributing not only to the literatures on pet ownership and emotional attachment, but also to the emerging literature on consumer psychological ownership (Kirk, Peck, and Swain 2018). In addition to its implications for marketers and pet owners, this research further suggests implications for the nascent study of consumers’ relationships with potentially human-like entities such as digital and robotic assistants and artificial intelligence (Belk forthcoming).

REFERENCES


Post-Purchase Dissonance Coping Strategies of Product Returners and Keepers

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ABSTRACT
This study investigates whether consumers who return their recent purchase (returners) and those who keep it (keepers) deal with anxiety, uncertainty, or unsettling feelings that they experience after purchase differently.

Product returns by consumers have not garnered due interest from consumer behavior researchers. This trend is troubling, since consumer product returns are widely documented to have serious adverse effects financially and are rapidly increasing (D’Innocenzio 2011; Lawton, 2008; Lee 2015; Safdar 2018). In the scant consumer product returns literature, the bulk of research has focused on identifying the causes of product returns by consumers (Chu, Gerstner, and Hess 1998; Hess, Chu, and Gerstner 1996; Kotler and Keller 2012). Dissatisfaction, in particular, has attracted the attention of consumer behavior researchers because it reveals behavioral motivations of consumer product returns stemming from dissatisfaction with product performance (Hausknecht, Sweeney, Soutar, and Johnson 1998; Lee 2008; Oliver 1997). Recent research further suggests that product returners and keepers might use divergent PPD coping strategies (Lee 2015). The very fact that some return their purchase after experiencing PPD whereas others keep it renders intuitive support for the proposition, although no empirical evidence has been reported. The present study empirically investigated whether product returners and keepers exhibit discernably different patterns of
handling PPD with regard to their thinking, feelings, and actions, which may reveal distinctive PPD coping strategies of the two types of consumers.

A field survey was conducted with ordinary consumers who had experienced anxiety, uncertainty, or uncomfortable feelings with their recent major purchase. The thoughts, feelings, and actions in which participants were engaged when they experienced PPD were measured with a scale used in previous research (Lee 2015). Participants were also asked whether or not they returned the product to the seller.

Results revealed that the product returners and keepers indeed used different strategies to cope with PPD by engaging in divergent thoughts and activities. Product returners, unlike keepers, did not adjust their cognitions regarding the purchased product by raising its perceived performance when they experienced PPD, nor did they justify its performance either by lowering their perceptions of the bypassed products’ performance or raising that of the purchased product. Moreover, product returners did not seek positive information about the chosen brand such as ads or product reviews in an effort to support their purchase decision, unlike their counterparts. In contrast, product keepers changed their cognitions regarding the purchased product by selectively paying attention to the positive aspects of the product and focusing on favorable aspects of their product experience. They also tried to assure themselves that their choice was right by speaking favorably about their purchase in public and suggesting to others to buy the product.

The present study provides empirical evidence that the consumers who return the product and those who end up keeping it use divergent coping strategies after both groups experience PPD. The results of the present study also help reconcile a conflicting body of knowledge about how consumers deal with PPD. It has long been an accepted view since the 1970s that consumers use various normatively prescribed PPD coping strategies as previously indicated. Recent research, however, found that consumers in general do not use most of such normative PPD coping strategies in the current market environment (Lee 2015). The discrepancy between the long-held view and recent findings can be reconciled by a boundary condition that is uncovered by the present study – product returners and keepers. That is, product keepers use PPD reduction strategies normatively prescribed in the literature (although their use is less extensive than was suggested), whereas product returners do not resort to such PPD handling strategies. Instead, they use product return as a viable strategy to eliminate PPD in the intensely competitive consumer-centered market environment.

In conclusion, the findings of the present study broaden and deepen our understanding of consumers’ PPD coping strategies and increasingly complex consumer product return behavior.

**REFERENCES**


Nonprofit organizations work hard to engage potential donors, often hiring sophisticated development personnel who employ the latest social media tools to grow their giving base. These efforts are in line with substantial research documenting the positive impact of social media engagement on desired outcomes for marketers (Colicev et al. 2018). However, only a small fraction of website visitors actually engage with social media when presented with an opportunity on a website. Research suggests that the behavior of these far more numerous social media “lurkers” may be more nuanced and is less well-understood (Kirk and Swain 2016; Schlosser 2005).

Social media offer a public vehicle for acknowledging donors’ gifts. However, charitable giving research reveals that public recognition of donors’ contributions can be a double-edged sword (Simpson, White, and Laran 2017). On one hand, public recognition provides donors an opportunity to present a positive self-view to others and therefore motivates charitable giving (Fisher and Ackerman 1998). However, for people who have an independent (distinct and separate from others) view of the self, public recognition actually decreases charitable giving because it reduces these donors’ sense of agency, or perceived freedom of choice (Simpson et al. 2017).
In this research, I propose that by offering an opportunity to interact or engage with digital content, a social media link, even if not acted upon, can serve as a public social presence cue. Therefore, website users who encounter a social media or other two-way communication link may be more likely to behave as if they are in public, even when they are simply lurking and not actively engaged with social media. This proposal is consistent with research which finds that simply providing a mere opportunity for two-way communication on a website can affect consumers’ behavioral intentions (Kirk and Swain 2016).

Pride is a self-conscious emotion often leveraged by nonprofit organizations in their promotional appeals (Kemp, Kennett-Hensel, and Kees 2013). In particular, hubristic (versus authentic) pride stems from achievements attributed to the self (“I am smart”) rather than to effort (“I worked hard;” Kirk, Swain, and Gaskin 2015; Tracy and Robins 2007). Hubristic pride may therefore be particularly relevant in the context of donations, which comprise an investment of financial resources but not necessarily of effort. Given the self-focused nature of hubristic pride, in which consumers feel they are innately superior to, and therefore distinct, from others, I propose that in online donation contexts in which a social media link is present (but not absent), consumers with high hubristic pride will reduce their charitable giving.

METHODOLOGY
To test this hypothesis, I conducted a research study with college alumni participants. The research study employed a 2 (two-way communication: present vs. absent) x 2 (hubristic pride vs. control) factor between-subjects experimental design. Gamification is increasingly being used as a strategy to engage consumers in digital media (Andonova 2013). Therefore, a website was created in which users had an opportunity to play a word find game using words related to the college.

College alumni were emailed an invitation by the institution’s development office to take a “games and websites” survey. Participants were told the researchers wanted to examine “how people respond to memories.” Following procedures used in prior research (Tracy and Robins 2007), participants in the hubristic pride condition were told: “Please take a few minutes to recall and describe a time when you were doing really well in something and finding that you didn’t even have to work hard -- you just felt naturally talented, and pretty good about yourself as a result -- even superior to many of your peers. Everyone has at some time in their lives felt this way -- innately superior to or better than others. Please focus on yourself and think about a time when you felt your natural abilities were better than other people's. Write a short paragraph recalling this time and what it felt like.” Participants in the control condition were told: “Please take a few minutes to recall what you did today. Then, write a short paragraph recalling what you did today.”

To confirm that this manipulation successfully elicits hubristic pride, a pretest was conducted with 70 Mturk participants. Hubristic pride was measured with the statement “Thinking about the situation you just described, please indicate how much the words below captured your feelings in that situation,” followed by 8 Likert-type items including such words as “smug,” “egotistical,” and “stuck up,” with endpoints “not at all…a lot.” ANOVA results confirmed that participants who attributed their accomplishments to a superior self felt more hubristic pride than those who wrote about what they did that day (M_Hubris = 2.61 vs. M_Ctrl = 1.36; F(68) = 31.678; p < .001).
Participants were then told “Imagine that you are getting ready to meet with a prospective student and need some information in order to prepare. You look at the college website to get the information you need. You decide to play a game you see on the website.” They were asked to play the game for a few minutes and then complete the survey. Participants were then randomly assigned to a version of the game either with or without social media links. To avoid potential confounds resulting from external access to social media sites, if the participant clicked on a social media link, a popup indicated that the feature was still “under construction.”

Maximum donation amount was measured with a single open-ended response question, “What would be the most you would donate to the college this year?” Donation intention was measured with the question “How likely would you be to donate to the college” with three 5-point bipolar responses (e.g. unlikely/likely). Perceived two-way communication with the website was measured as a manipulation check using two 5-point Likert-type items taken from prior research (Liu and Shrum 2009), including “I could communicate with other users through this website.” Finally, as a control measure, participants were asked approximately how many hours per week they spent on social media, and whether or not they had tried to click on one of the social media links.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS
A total of 287 alumni completed the study. The website game was not designed to function with a touch screen. Therefore, data for 98 participants who used a touchscreen for the study and could not play the game were removed, leaving 189 usable responses. Participants perceived higher levels of two-way communication when social media links were present, than when they were not ($M_{Present} = 2.53, M_{Absent} = 1.76; F(185) = 18.31; p < .001), indicating the two-way communication manipulation was successful.

Results of two-way ANCOVA with maximum donation amount as the dependent variable, two-way communication and hubristic pride as the independent variables, and social media usage as a covariate reveal a significant interaction between two-way communication and hubristic pride ($F(184) = 4.51; p = .035$). In the control condition, participants playing the game that included a social media link indicated they would donate significantly more than those without a link ($M_{Present} = $207.47, $M_{Absent} = $61.51; $F(100) = 5.10; p = .026$). On the other hand, for participants who felt hubristic pride, the maximum donation amount remained unchanged in the presence of a social media link ($M_{Present} = $81.16, $M_{Absent} = $110.03; $F(83) = .330; p = .57; see Figure 1).

Repeating the analysis with donation intention as the dependent variable, ANOVA results revealed a similar interaction ($F(184) = 4.40; p = .037$). In the control condition, participants with a social media link indicated significantly higher intentions to donate than those without a link ($M_{Present} = 3.36, M_{Absent} = 2.64; F(100) = 4.93; p = .029$). On the other hand, for participants who felt hubristic pride, donation intentions were unaffected by the presence of a social media link ($M_{Present} = 2.94, M_{Absent} = 3.17; F(184) = .553; p = .459; see Figure 2).

Finally, seven participants indicated they had clicked on the social media links. Therefore, to ensure that the findings result simply from the mere presence of a social media link, and not from
actual engagement, the analysis was repeated after removing the data from the seven participants. Results remained unchanged (p’s < .051).

**DISCUSSION**

In this research, I show that the mere presence of a social media link is sufficient to boost charitable giving on a website, even if the user does not even engage with the social media link. However, when hubristic pride, which refers to a sense of accomplishment attributed to a superior self, is activated, the effect of a social media link disappears. This outcome is consistent with research showing that consumers with an independent self-construal donate less in the context of public than private recognition due to reduced feelings of agency (Simpson et al. 2017).

With significant implications for nonprofit organizations, this research suggests that whereas even the mere opportunity for social media engagement can boost charitable giving, activating a sense of hubristic pride risks undermines the benefits of including social media cues on a website.

**REFERENCES**


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**A Manager's Guide to Complaint Management**

Moshe Davidow PhD

**ABSTRACT**

Complaint handling has been shown to be a profit center in its own right, however, very little research has focused on the value added of complaint management, and its strong impact on how complaints are handled today. Previous research has focused on a bottom up approach to handling complaints. This research will focus on a top down approach.

First, and foremost, organizations should be aiming for problem prevention and the resultant value creation, rather than complaint recovery. This focus on problem prevention, in turn, dictates how organizations should handle complaints. The overall macro strategy should dictate how the individual complaints should be handled.

Value is a subjective and a relative construct, similar to satisfaction and quality. It is in the eyes of the beholder, and it is relative to other options. A complaint is not just an objective problem with the design or production of a service. Research has shown that objective problems account for only around one third of all complaints. If the customer determines the situation to be a problem, then at the very least it is a problem. This is the narrative that the customer believes, and it is the story that he is telling his friends.

We have developed a framework which will allow managers to determine where customers believe the value destruction is, and enable managers to eliminate the point of contention, thus creating future value for the organization. The framework integrates elements from several literature streams, including service quality, customer relationship management, service dominant logic, co-creation, voice of customer and customer experience management.

It is our belief that most organizations do not realize the many ways in which customer value can be destroyed (inadvertently) as a result of organizational decisions.

Utilizing the framework will allow organizations to better understand where, how and why value is being destroyed, and what needs to be changed in order to create more value for the
organization and its customers. This is necessary since the Customer Rage (2017) survey shows that most organizations are not handling complaints well.

The framework seeks to maximize problem prevention, necessitating a change in complaint handling. Instead of the current paradigm of investigating each individual complaint, thus alienating the customer (you don't believe me), the framework allows to build trust by accepting the complaint as a given, giving the organization the opportunity to co-create with the customer as to why the problem exists. This in turn allows the organization the flexibility of making changes to policies and procedures in order to ensure value creation.

While it may seem that accepting each complaint at face value will lead to higher costs, these costs are offset by deducting the verification costs for each complaint, and adding the benefits of building trust and increasing the probability of future repurchase. In addition, the organization can calculate the benefit of problem prevention, as well as increasing the number of people willing to give feedback to the organization.

As a result, it is recommended that the department be called the customer feedback department instead of the complaint department.

**College Sports Fans: Examination Of Attachment, Feelings, And Bragging Rights**

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**ABSTRACT**
The purposes of this study were to examine college sports fans attachment, feelings and perceived bragging rights related to their favorite team. Three research questions were identified.

*RQ1: “How do you show your level of attachment to your favorite college sports team?”* *RQ2: “How important is being a fan of your favorite college sport team to you?”* *RQ3: “Do college sports fans feel they have bragging rights when their favorite team beat the rival team?”* A total of 1,061 consumers nationwide completed the quantitative online survey.

Sports viewing, team identification, college athletics and the weekend sports warrior been researched over the past decade as serious physical, environmental, psychological and economic impact indicators (Koch and Wann 2016, 279-281). Research (e.g. Yoshida, Heere and Gordon 2015, 318-319) has shown that fans and spectator experiences are particularly important to the viability of teams. That is, fans are an incredibly important component of college sports teams’ ability to fill arenas, sell merchandise, and generate network television interest (Yoshida, Heere and Gordon 2015, 318-319).

It is not uncommon for sports fans to purposefully seek out fellow fans. They accomplish this
affinity to others by going to sports bars, attending games and wearing sports related merchandise (Spinda, Wann and Hardin 2016, 348-349). These findings are the foundation for

**RQ1: “How do you show your level of attachment to your favorite college sports team?”**

It would be naïve to think that the sports fans are a “nice” byproduct of any team. In actuality, the affinity and loyalty of fans are the heart and soul of sports. It represents a significant source of funding from the public, networks and donors. The funds raised are particularly important throughout higher education as public funding continues to be reduced (Fretwell, Lewis, Hannay and Colley, 2017). Fans’ attachment to a team drives attendance; stimulates merchandise sales and media sponsorship (Yoshida, Heere and Gordon 2015). As such, athletic directors, coaches and even university presidents place a high importance of filling the stadiums and keeping the fans loyal regardless of the team’s ability to win (Fretwell, Lewis, Hannay and Colley 2017, 91-93).

College sports directors purposely, carefully and methodically promote sports fan attachments to the team. These actions are the foundation for **RQ2: “Do college sports fans feel they have bragging rights when their favorite team beat the rival team?”**

Simply by the nature of a common interest, college sports teams indirectly acts as a conduit for building social relationships (Chang, Ko, Connaughton and Kang 2016, 2-4). Whether the sports fan is at the stadium, in a work environment, attending a party, or in a social setting (e.g., restaurant, bar) having the affinity toward a specific team and/or sport opens up conversions and ultimately builds friendships and/or friendly rivalries. These friendships and/or friendly rivalries are the foundations for **RQ3: “Do college sports fans feel they have bragging rights when their favorite team beat the rival team?”**

Of the 1,063 consumers, the majority was female (56.8%). The sample was well distributed in age from 18 to 65 and older. The age distribution was as follows: 18-23 (49; 4.6%), 24-41 (385; 36.5%), 42-53 (270; 25.6%), 54-73 (304; 28.8%), and 74 or older (47; 4.5%). The majority of the sample (572; 54.2%) earned between $25,000-$74,999 and an additional 31.7% (335) earned $75,000 or more. The remainder of the sample (149; 14.1%) earned under $25,000 annually. Respondents who were married or living with a domestic partner comprised 59.3% of the sample. An additional 29.8% were single, never married. The remainder of the sample was either widowed or divorced (11%). The majority of the sample (57.4%) did not have children living in the household.

Stepwise regression analysis was used to examine **RQ1 “How do you show your level of attachment to your favorite college sports team?”** Results revealed that the college sports fans’ demonstrated their level of attachment to their favorite sports teams by (a) being a fan (R²=.40; df=1,1046; F=701.49; p≤.000) (b) attending games (R²=.43; df=1,1045; F=398.08; p≤.000). (c) wearing sport team colors on game day (R²=.44; df=1,1044; F=280.56; p≤.000) and (d) buying sports memorabilia prior to a game (R²=.44; df=1,1043; F=212.40; p≤.000). Support was provided for **RQ1**.

Stepwise regression analysis was used to examine **RQ2 “How important is being a fan of your favorite college sport team to you?”** Results revealed that college sports fans’ who are attached to
a team (a) think of it as being something “we” would do, rather than something “they” would do” ($R^2=.28; df=1,1043; F=414.29; p<.000$), (b) it to be difficult to change his/her beliefs about their favorite college team ($R^2=.34; df=1,1042; F=270.88; p<.000$), (c) support their college team regardless of the lack of any prominent teams on their schedule ($R^2=.35; df=1,1041; F=193.99; p<.000$), and (d) the friendships I have with other college team fans mean a lot to me ($R^2=.37; df=1,1040; F=154.17; p<.000$). Support was provided for the RQ2.

Stepwise regression analysis was used to examine RQ3 “Do college sports fans feel they have bragging rights when their favorite team beat their rival team?” Results revealed that the college sports fans’ felt they had bragging rights when their favorite team beat their rival team significantly increased their sense of accomplishment ($R^2=.59; df=1, 1061; F=1548.80; p<.000$). Support was provided for the RQ3.

The findings supported prior research regarding college sports fans attachment toward their team, strong feelings as it related to merchandise and the importance of bragging rights (Chang, Ko, Connaughton and Kang 2016; Yoshida, Heere and Gordon 2015; Hannay and Colley 2017; Fretwell, Lewis, Hannay and Colley, 2017). As higher education continues to experience cuts from legislators, it becomes imperative to find alternative sources of revenue. College sports build a positive fan base both locally and nationally through merchandise sales, team affiliation and sponsorship. While college sports and its fans may be categorized as (a) fun, (b) entertaining and/or (c) a weekend diversion, the revenues generated often means the difference between financial solvency and bankruptcy for some higher education institutional programs. The strong affinity held by college sports fans can be used to benefit universities, manufacturers of sporting goods, retailers and food and beverage vendors. Long live the college sports fan!

REFERENCES
The Elevation Of Psychological Capital, Advocacy, And Feedback Constructs Using Narrative Analysis Of Intentional Communities Newsletters

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Since its introduction, the service-dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004) has spawned considerable theoretical interest in marketing and management (Payne, Storbacka, & Frow, 2008; Vargo & Lusch, 2008; Lusch, Vargo, & O’Brien, 2007). At its foundation, the perspective offers service-premised reasoning for exchange whereby relational partners co-create value through interactions. Despite the theoretical prominence of the service-dominant paradigm, questions exist regarding the specifics of what service-driving capabilities organizations should develop to facilitate value co-creation with stakeholders. Or, said in the language of the service-dominant logic, how do firms “service” an experience to enhance collaboration with stakeholders for mutual benefit (Flint, 2006; Vargo & Lusch, 2008).

The proposed research aims to elevate individual-level constructs to organizational-level analysis with the aim of developing insights into the aforementioned service-dominant logic dynamics. Specifically, we will explore relationships between aspects of organizational-level psychological capital, advocacy and feedback. To this end, we will employ lexical analysis (including computer-aided and hand coded text analysis) addressing calls for better organizational-level construct assessment (McKenny, Short, & Payne, 2012). Specifically, analyses will focus on organizational newsletters from a sample of intentional communities. Justification for the use of newsletters as a communication medium, intentional communities as an organizational context, and the constructs follows.

Organizational communication has been conceived as the binding force that facilitates the integration of stakeholders (Myers & Myers, 1982). Indeed, organizational communication has been significantly linked to important organizational outcomes (i.e., employee performance, satisfaction, and commitment) (Byrne & Lemay, 2006). As a form of organizational communication, newsletters are internally and externally directed for the purpose of connecting an organization’s existing and potential members. Empirical support points to the salience of top management written communication in impacting aspects of employee satisfaction and trust in management (Byrne & Lemay, 2006).

Intentional communities are a deliberate attempt to realize an alternative way of life (Poldervaart, 2001) and as such hold potentially important implications for lifestyle and identity co-creation. To some degree, intentional communities have existed throughout history and represent dissatisfaction with mainstream society (Meijering, Huigen, & Van Hoven, 2007). These communities are characterized by voluntary membership, some degree of psychological and geographic separation from mainstream society, a common ideology, sharing of at least some
possessions and property, and group interests taking precedence over individual interests (Pitzer, 1997). Examples of intentional communities include religious (spiritual or religious-beliefs-based), ecological (sustainable lifestyles-based), communal (interpersonal/relationally-based), and practical (resource sharing-based). Thus, intentional communities represent unique and powerful social innovation contexts through which to explore service-dominant logic dynamics. Psychological capital is defined as an individual’s positive state of development composed of optimism, hope, resilience, and confidence (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007). Within organizations, the construct has been linked to employee attitudes and behavior including satisfaction and performance (Avey, Luthans, & Youssef, 2010). Questions exist regarding how to best measure psychological capital at the organizational level. Customer engagement is conceived as all non-transactional behaviors that can affect a firm (Verhoef, Reinartz, & Krafft, 2010). Related literature on engagement often includes customer-to-customer behavior (advocacy) as well as customer-to-business communication (feedback) (c.f., Verhoef et al., 2010; Celuch, Robinson, & Walz, 2015). Of relevance to the present research, recent work on operationalizing value co-creation has emphasized customer citizenship behavior such as advocacy and feedback as key relational outcomes (Yi & Gong, 2013).

METHOD
Sample and Procedure
A leading archive consisting of materials from over 600 intentional communities was contacted and agreed to allow access to community newsletters for this research. The researchers prescreened all communities based on their having printed newsletters available for a multi-year time period. This sample of communities was then subset further to ensure different types of communities were included in the analyses (historical, religious, environmental, and social cause-related). The sample of newsletters consisted of several newsletters across multi-year time periods for each community sampled.

In order to elevate individual-level constructs to an organizational-level, we will use lexical analysis of organizational narratives. We illustrate this process of elevating psychological capital, advocacy, and feedback to the organizational level by developing computer-aided and hand coded text analytic measures. The procedure allows for the direct measurement of constructs at the organizational level by selecting and analyzing the appropriate text for analysis.

IMPLICATIONS
Results of this study will contribute to the value co-creation literature by helping to broaden theory with the inclusion of the psychological capital construct and how its facets might be related to desired community member co-creation behavior. We view an exploration of these organizational-level constructs as holding the potential for providing insights into how organizations can facilitate value co-creation through relational, empowered, and developmental communication.

REFERENCES


**Please Like Me: How Self-Presentation Theory Influences Tenant Ratings and Reviews in the Sharing Economy**

Laura Rifkin, Pace University

**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

The peer to peer sector of the sharing economy is built on the capacity for strangers to trust other strangers. This foundation of trust is built on the rating and review process. Extant research, however has identified that online reviews do not accurately reflect opinions. This study contributes to current literature by uncovering factors among tenants in the home stay
sector that contribute to this misalignment. Humans have an intrinsic need to be likeable, to be perceived as competent, to reciprocate to retaliate and to avoid conflict. We demonstrate that giving and receiving reviews involves a complex social system in which decisions to write a good or bad review can be deeply personal, eliciting feelings of pleasure, guilt, and fairness. These factors result in ratings that are sometimes inflated and other times deflated and reflect more about the characteristics of reviewer than the object of the review.

INTRODUCTION

The sharing economy has seen tremendous growth in the past decade. The existence of peer to peer exchanges is predicated on both the technology that brings buyers and sellers together and rating and review process which builds a foundation of trust among strangers. There has been much debate, however as to the validity of online ratings and questions as to whether they are a true representation of the reviewer’s opinion (de Langhe, Bart, Fernbach, Philip M. and Lichtenstein, Donald R.; 2016; Singh, 2016;) A unique aspect of the peer to peer economy is that both buyers and sellers’ participation in the rating process. A second differentiating factor is neither the buyer nor the seller is aware of the rating they will receive until all feedback is submitted. We believe that this brings unique challenges and introduces uncertainty which can negatively impact the integrity of the process.

This study contributes to the current literature by examining how buyers (tenants) are influenced by factors that are unrelated to their actual opinion of the peer to peer rental. We focus on the home sharing networks such as Airbnb, Home Away and VRBO to demonstrate our hypotheses. A home sharing network is a platform that brings property owners who want to rent their properties together with tenants who want to lease them. We also focus on the reviews from the tenant’s perspective.

Drawing on theories of self-discrepancy and self-presentation, and the norms of reciprocity, gratitude, justice and betrayal, we seek to demonstrate that ratings and reviews are colored by emotional as well as cognitive components. Specifically, in needing to make a positive impression on others, the tenant (buyer) will want to be perceived as likeable and competent. We suggest that meeting those needs entails writing a review that is both favorable in order to be liked by the property owner and accurate in order to “do a good job”. If the property does not meet expectations, those two goals will be in conflict.

We also suggest that tenants feel compelled to express gratitude for acts of kindness by matching the valence of the review that they will be receiving. On the other hand, acts of betrayal such as a potentially negative review will evoke a compulsion to retaliate. This study demonstrates that these factors that are unrelated to the property, strongly influence the valence and content of tenant reviews. We also propose that these reviews induce feelings of pleasure, guilt and fairness which spillover to attitudes about the platform.

OVERVIEW

The consumer information environment has undergone a radical transformation in the past few years, spurred on by user generated ratings and reviews (de Langhe, Bart, et al.; 2016). Most U.S. adults (82%) at least somewhat, refer to ratings and reviews when making purchase
decisions and about half of millennials always do (54%) (Smith A, and Anderson, M, 2016). One study found that placing customer ratings and reviews on a website increased sales by 37% and store traffic by 57% (Folse, J. A. G., Porter III, M., Godbole, M. B. and Reynolds, K. E., 2016). Another study found that including ratings and reviews on retail websites has become standard business practice (de Langhe, Bart, et al.; 2016).

Despite the influence of online reviews in consumer purchase behavior, studies are inconclusive as to whether online reviews are actually representative of consumer opinions or other objective measures (Singh, 2016). Consumers are subject to an “illusion of validity” in which they overestimate the accuracy and reliability of the reviews (de Langhe, Bart, et al.; 2016). Negative reviews are more prevalent than positive ones and a disproportionate number are polarized, either being intensely positive or negative. Negative reviews are also found to be more persuasive than positive ones (Folse, J. A. G., et al., 2016; de Langhe, Bart, et al., 2016) and consumers are more likely to follow reviews that are more recent, tangible, emotional, and clearly written (de Langhe, Bart, et al.; 2016). A study of 344,157 Amazon.com ratings across 120 product categories compared user generated ratings to comparable ratings by Consumer Reports and found that average ratings were poorly correlated. A major conclusion of the study was “Consumers do not make appropriate quality inferences from ratings, instead jumping to strong unjustifiable conclusions about quality while underutilizing other cues like price (de Langhe, Bart, et al.; 2016). Reviews have become part of a complex social network (Singh, 2016) and rather than making consumers more rational, it has become a platform for social connections, commentary, entertainment, self-awareness, self-aggrandizement, and revenge (Kozinets, 2016). Biases are sometimes malicious, fake or manipulative (Singh, 2016) and other times inadvertent such as being unconsciously influenced by herding and brand image (de Langhe, Bart, et al.; 2016). Even consumers question the trustworthiness of ratings. Half of Americans question the validity and truthfulness of reviews and find it difficult to determine if the reviews are truthful and unbiased (Smith, A et al., 2016).

**Theories of the Self**

"Who am I?", “Who was I” and Who will I become?” are questions integral to Self-Identity (Jussila et al., 2015). The self includes our bodies, values, characters, competence, successes, social roles, and personality (Mittal, 2006) and can be extended to family, community, groups and possessions (Belk, 1988). Self-enhancement motives stem from a basic need to think positively about oneself (Chan and Sengupta, 2010).

Self-discrepancy theory recognizes the gaps between “who I am”, who I want to be and how I want others to perceive me (Hillenbrand & Money, 2015). These gaps may create feelings of disappointment, dissatisfaction and sadness (Yu, Y., Jing, F., Su, C. T., Zhou, N., and Nguyen, B. 2016) People are motivated to narrow the gap between the actual and ideal self which is fundamental to psychological growth (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

Self-presentation theory purports that the desire to make a favorable impression on others is ingrained in human nature and central to social interaction. Innumerable studies have shown that self-presentation influences both personal and professional satisfaction and leads to higher self-esteem, fulfillment and positive affect. How individuals are perceived by others impacts the
The positive effects and persuasive power of flattery are well documented in the literature. Flattery is effective because it facilitates the need to feel good about ourselves. In turn, the recipient of flattery views the flatterer in a more positive light (Chan et al, 2010). We contend that receiving a positive review is a form of flattery and provides validation of likeability and competence.

Reciprocity, Gratitude, Justice and Betrayal

Reciprocity is considered one of the most critical elements defining relationships in marketing (Palmatier, Robert W, Dant, Rajiv P., Dhruv Grewal, Dhruv and Evans, Kenneth R., 2006). Social exchange theory emphasizes the importance of reciprocity in target attractiveness (Montoya & Insko, 2008). In other words, we will develop an attraction to others who are attracted to us. Sincerity genuine concern and willingness to sacrifice will facilitate attraction, while ulterior motives and manipulation will suppress attraction. The norm of reciprocity suggests that an exchange should be mutually beneficial and positive gestures and benefits should be returned in kind (Montoya & Insko, 2008). The literature suggests that the urge to reciprocate is so strong that returning a favor will lead to pleasure, while failing to do so will induce guilt. Gratitude provides the emotional underpinnings for the pressure to reciprocate and is believed to be so ingrained in human nature that the absence of gratitude is considered sociopathic. Gratitude has an affective component which compels individuals to reciprocate as soon as they have received a perceived benefit and a behavioral component (Palmatier, Robert W. Burke Jarvis, Cheryl, Bechkoff, Jennifer R. and Kardes, Frank R., 2009).

Customer retaliation has become more prevalent, as consumers have increased outlets to express their discontent. Retaliation is defined as customer reactions designed to punish and cause inconvenience to a party in order to right a perceived wrong. (Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998). The desire to get even emanates from justice based theory when there is a violation of a fairness norm. One such violation is an act of betrayal which is an intentional violation of trust or breach of expectations. Ultimately betrayal may lead to anger, dissatisfaction, and a desire to retaliate (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008), Revenge enables an act of betrayal to be restored to fairness (Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998).

Reviews in the peer to peer economy differ from other types of product and service reviews, in that both the buyer and seller participate in the review process. In contrast to reviews of a company or product, we contend that reviews of an individual can be perceived as a highly personal assessment of likeability and competence and positive reviews will be perceived as flattering. Drawing on self-presentation theory, tenants will strive to make a good impression and failure to get a good review may widen the gap between the actual and ideal self. In the role of the reviewer, tenants may have a predilection to leave intensely positive reviews in order to appear more likeable. If a positive review is not reflective of their true opinions, however, tenants might be forced to make a trade-off between being likeable and writing a more truthful review that demonstrates competence and self-respect. In the case of inner conflict, we predict that tenants are less likely to leave any review. Based on these factors we seek to understand the following
What influences the:
- frequency, valence, and intensity of customer reviews?
- decision to post or not post a review?

Based on these questions, a tenant may choose one of four behaviors: Inflation, Reflection, Deflation or Avoidance.
- Inflation: a review is more positive than perceived experience
- Reflection: a review is equivalent to the perceived experience
- Deflation: a review is more negative than perceived experience
- Avoidance: a review is not submitted

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Satisfied Employees and Company Brand Image: A Social Media Approach

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ABSTRACT

Leaders cannot build organizations, which are capable of fitting the needs of 21century without building organizations that fit the people first. In recent years, several CEOs indicated, “employees come first” as their corporate strategy. They focused on satisfying their employees as their “internal customers.” On the other hand, unsatisfied employees will not only be low performers or demotivated, but just like dissatisfied customers, they tend to express and communicate their dissatisfaction with their community.

In the internet era and with the use of social media, expressing dissatisfaction with a company can lead to disasters for a company’s brand. The company brand name could be ruined following some review blogs on the internet, while the ethical and legal responsibilities of the employees and employers are still a grey area in many situations.
This paper reviews and examines strategies and tactics that the employers might use to deal with unsatisfied employees in the internet age. It also suggests new methods to handle them. The appropriate handling of dissatisfied employees can help in building a company’s brand image and provide a competitive edge for organizations when recruiting.

**Complaining Complimenting And Word-Of-Mouth In The Digital Age: Typology And Terms**

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**ABSTRACT**
The rise of digital platforms has changed how, when and where consumers communicate with each other (consumer-to-consumer, C2C) and with firms (consumer-to-business, C2B). Word-of-mouth (WOM) behavior has evolved in the digital age. Complaints and compliments are no longer just words. C2B and C2C Marketing communication is increasingly played out in other media and in view of others. An updated typology of complaint channels is proposed.
The current definitions of digital WOM are not comprehensive. Updating and clarifying the types of WOM is critical for understanding how consumers communicate in the digital age. While eWOM, (positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet; Hennig-Thurau, et al 2004) and UGC (any form of content such as video, blogs, discussion form posts, digital images, audio files, and other forms of media) have been defined, prompted WOM has not been consistently defined.

Working from extended definitions which recognize that WOM/UGC might be prompted, iWOM is defined as written consumer communication to the firm (C2B), or other consumers (C2C); Naylor 2016. Similarly, iUGC is defined as communication that is encouraged by the marketer. Inducements can be extrinsic (money, product, discount) or intrinsic (symbolic benefit or altruistic); Naylor 2016.

The rise of incentivized and solicited C2B and C2C communication creates new challenges to both consumers and marketers. We seek to provide unambiguous definitions that encompass the various types of communication methods, motives and channels. Expanding on our inquiry, we examine the role of impression management, emotion regulation, information acquisition, social bonding, and persuasion, self-esteem, susceptibility to interpersonal influence, need for cognition, social comparison orientation, altruism and sociocultural differences on the generation, and trust of; iWOM and iUGC.

**REFERENCES**


**The Impact of Consumer Purchasing Power Fluctuations on Decision Making as it Relates to Low Involvement Consumer Satisfaction**

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**ABSTRACT**

There is a direct correlation between customer satisfaction and their decision to repeatedly repurchase the same product. The level of customer satisfaction is determined by various factors including the quality of the relationship with a salesperson, product or service, brand loyalty, use of product, and price. Low involvement products are products that consumers regularly purchase and spend little or no decision-making time when repurchasing. In the case of low involvement products where customer satisfaction with the salesperson and product are high, customers tend to continue to buy the product repeatedly without engaging in a complicated decision-making process because they trust the salesperson and product. When consumer satisfaction is high less decision-making time is needed because the consumer feels comfortable in repeatedly buying the trusted product. Previous studies which focused on the level of customer satisfaction as it related to the purchase of low involvement products have overlooked the impact of changes in a consumer’s purchasing power to the strength of consumer loyalty to low involvement products. The literature has overlooked the impact of the change in consumer purchasing power increases as the demographic variable income changes on consumer loyalty to low involvement products. As income and purchasing power increases or decreases will that upward or downward change impact on the strength of the consumer loyalty to the low involvement product. In this presentation, a study is proposed in which we conduct a survey to measure the strength of customer satisfaction and loyalty on low involvement products during changes in a consumer’s purchasing power. We will also measure the impact on consumer repurchase. The study will benefit businesses by providing them with insight into customer loyalty for low involvement products, which can provide guidance in marketing, advertising, and organizational strategies for sustainability.

**The Antecedents of Satisfaction with and Perceptions of Value of Full-time MBA Programs and Their Effects on Program Allegiance**

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ABSTRACT

Traditional full-time MBA programs often get a disproportionate share of time and attention in U.S. business schools, and the literature makes the reasons clear. Although academics may value faculty research productivity, and while revenue may be driven by other business school programs, a business school’s reputation within the business community and the broader public, for better and worse (Gioia & Corley, 2002) is driven by the reputation of its full-time MBA program (Datar et al., 2010; Trank & Rynes, 2003). The satisfaction of full-time MBA students is consequently of great importance to business schools.

Using a grounded-theory approach, we develop and test a model that is broadly encompassing of the various facets of student satisfaction, that differentiates between student satisfaction and perceptions of the value of the program, and relates these to the felt commitment of the students to the program. The first phase of this process was a focus group (n=15) where we allowed the student participants to tell their stories unencumbered by what we expected to find or what we read in the literature (Creswell, 2007). From the focus group data we identified 12 antecedents of student satisfaction that included the core and elective curriculum, use of traditional learning methods, experiential learning opportunities, faculty as subject matter experts as well as mentors, business community connections, career services, employment outcomes, program size, program reputation, and diversity of faculty, staff, and students. For each of these areas, as well as for overall satisfaction, program value, and commitment to the program, we developed multiple measures and validated them with an independent group of full-time MBA students, rewording as necessary and eliminating those that were not considered clear and precise. This resulted in a final instrument containing 59 questions.

This instrument was administered to another independent sample of full-time MBA students (n=164) and a path model was estimated using partial least squares (PLS). In the initial model, all 12 antecedents served as predictors of program satisfaction and program value, which in turn predicted commitment to the program. Via a bootstrapping procedure we estimated the statistical significance of each path in the model and eliminated those antecedents that were not significantly related to either program satisfaction or program value. Six of the antecedents were thus eliminated. In a purely exploratory mode we propose modeling the deleted antecedents as precursors to the significant predictors. Findings are discussed in light of the literatures on MBA programs and business education and on employee and customer satisfaction. Future research is suggested.

REFERENCES


The Effect Of Nonverbal Communication Through Smell And Sound On Consumer Behavior and Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

In today's fast growing world, success is the result of complex skills, both on verbal and nonverbal level. Possibilities of speech - spoken, written, brought to formulas and incorporated in the electronic memory of the computer are unlimited and essential for evolution, but not enough. Considering that the man is not entirely rational, “but woven from emotions, being" (Carnegie, 1996), and that the nonverbal communication is the message of our emotional state and attitude towards others, from one side, and from another, it is a way to directly influence our senses, so it is reasonable to affirm that knowledge and appropriate use of nonverbal elements are crucial for prosperity. Namely the establishment of the this relation has predetermined the direction of the current study.

The current scientific article aims to explore the impact of nonverbal communication on consumer behavior. We will take a closer look to the essential role that nonverbal communication plays in the decision-making process in terms of purchasing. Research objectives are related to justify the argumentative value of nonverbal elements, with emphasis on non-verbal communication through sound and smell.

In both, professional and everyday life, what cannot be achieved by words and images, it is possible through nonverbal communication.

Examination of Course Attributes that Contribute to Student Satisfaction with Online Learning

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this study were to examine students’ perceptions of online learning and identify attributes that contributes to a sense of a community. Three research questions were identified. RQ1: “Are students satisfied with a feeling of community within their group”? RQ2: “Do students perceive the learning in the course to be of the highest quality?” and RQ3: “What course attributes contribute to students’ satisfaction in an online learning course?” Using an online quantitative survey, a total of 228 students participated in the study.
The isolated learning format of asynchronous online learning places a higher importance on social presence for this type of educational delivery. In the case of online learning, establishing a strong social presence is critical to the online student’s success and satisfaction with a course (Richardson and Swan 2003). Group assignments, announcements, videos and technological advances provide online asynchronous learning with the potential for social presence (Garrison 2011).

Of the 228 participating students, the majority consisted of females (n=198; 88.8%) residing in the same city as the university (n=216; 94.7%). Stepwise regression analysis was used to examine RQ1 “Are students satisfied with a feeling of community within their group”? Results revealed that (a) introductions, (b) distinct impressions of students, and (c) being comfortable with the technology were significant predictors of students’ satisfaction level of feeling of being in a community. Support is provided for RQ1.

Stepwise regression analysis was used to examine RQ2 “Are students satisfied with a feeling of community within their group”? Results revealed that the (a) ability to reach/communicate with the instructor, (b) ability to upload assignments (c) quality of information provided by the instructor, and (d) ability to interact with other students were significant predictors of students’ perceptions of high quality learning in the course. Support is provided for RQ2.

Stepwise regression analysis was conducted to test RQ3 “What course attributes contribute to students’ satisfaction in an online learning course?” Results revealed that students were satisfied with (a) their point of view being presented in a written assignment, (b) a feeling of community within a group, and (c) the ability to form distinct individual impressions of students in the course as a result of announcements. Support is provided for RQ3.

The findings revealed students’ perceptions of a high-quality course were dependent upon continual communication with the instructor, a predetermined method of connecting students with one another and students’ ability to express their opinions. Asynchronous online education has the potential for high quality learning however, interaction between the student and instructor and interaction among students are essential.

REFERENCES


Resolving Campus Conflict Through Mediation: The Road Map To Student Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT
University campuses are a breeding ground for student conflict, challenging university administrators hoping to avoid litigation and preserve their reputation (and brand) as well as their relationship with students as alumni may be donors and brand promoters or could be a university’s worst nightmare. If a conflict with a student remains unresolved leaving the student dissatisfied, a best-case scenario might see the former student indifferent about their relationship with the university and in a worst-case scenario being angry and seeking retribution. Universities are in fact businesses and students are their customers. The difference between managing and mismanaging the student (customer) complaint can either reap positive benefits or can have dire consequences. Although many universities employ conventional complaint procedures (which rely on inflexible adversarial conflict resolution models that fail to facilitate collaborative win/win outcomes), a growing number of universities have introduced voluntary mediation to address student conflict. This paper explores the benefits of implementing a mandatory mediation process to resolve all campus conflict as a tool to improve customer (student) satisfaction with respect to campus life and their post-graduation relationships with the university. The initiative should also protect and perhaps improve the brand-reputation. We conclude with a proposed study to address the impact that mediating campus conflict would have on improving student (customer) satisfaction and its effect on positive branding.

Keywords: Campus Conflict; Mediation; Litigation; Student Satisfaction; Brand and Reputation; Alumni; Relationship;

Impact on and of the Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction, and Complaining Behavior: A 30-Year Retrospective

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ABSTRACT
On the 30th anniversary of its first publication, this we focus on the people and practices that have shaped the Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction, and Complaining Behavior. It also focuses on the influence that the journal has had on our understanding of consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction. We suggest that the journal has not only developed knowledge about how consumer satisfaction is created, dissatisfaction avoided; it has also applied that understanding to enhance the value of the journal itself. Moving forward, we examine strategies to enhance the exposure and reputation of the journal and conference.