

## **DOES THE CUSTOMER COMPLAIN OR COMPLIMENT? NUDGING THEM TO FEEL GRATEFUL**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Organizations strive to ensure that their products and services align with customer expectations. Customer feedback captures their expectations and provides avenues for making improvements. While most companies inquire about areas that warrant improvement, they remain silent on the aspects that they do well. This study intends to find how the organization approaches the customers for feedback and whether customers can be nudged to give positive feedback. Using secondary data from 30 websites, we captured the elements of customer feedback. Next, we conducted three surveys asking customers about what they liked and what needed improvement. Findings suggest that positively toned questions triggered positive anecdotal experiences. Implications for practice are discussed.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Customer feedback is customer communication about purchased goods and services (Erickson & Eckrich, 2001). To increase customer service, product quality, and innovation, companies collect customer feedback through various methods such as customer suggestions, complaints, and feedback (Joung, Jung, Ko, & Kim, 2019) through a dedicated customer service team. Because customer satisfaction is the telos of marketing theory and practice (Larsen, & Wright, 2020), customer complaints may highlight areas where companies need to work to improve their services to increase customer satisfaction, build customer loyalty, and maintain customer relations (Mei, Bagaas, & Relling, 2019). The company's response to the complaining customer influences their feelings of perceived justice and satisfaction from the handling of the complaint, which in turn impacts the customer's post complaint behavior, i.e., word-of-mouth or repurchase intentions (Davidow & Leigh, 1998; Davidow, 2014). Hence, managing customer complaints is vital. Companies should manage this process professionally (Yilmaz & Ari, 2017). The company needs to know its service through customer feedback, which is the central focus of customer relationship management. The frontline employees are trained to be friendly and exhibit professionalism to the customers (Jerger & Wirtz, 2017), as they play a vital role in the service-profit chain (Chauradia, Milewicz, Echambadi, & Ganesh, 2021). Customer feedback (communication) can be neutral (no complaints), negative (complaints), or positive, i.e., compliments (Celuch & Robinson, 2016).

Customer complaint behavior is a universal phenomenon (Badghish, Stanton, & Hu, 2018). As is widely understood, dissatisfied customers leave negative reviews more often than a satisfied customer leaves positive reviews. While some may not reach out to the companies to express their dissatisfaction (Meiners, Reucher, Khan, & Spille, 2021), many may write on social media to express their dissatisfaction (Stevens, Spaid, Breazeale, & Jones, 2018) or by word-of-mouth. Word-of-mouth plays a significant role in the complaint process and significantly influences

customer satisfaction and their intention to repurchase (Davidow, 2003). With the increasing relevance of the Internet and social media, negative word-of-mouth has expanded beyond interpersonal channels to virtually anyone, and it has severe consequences for the firm (Arora, Gupta, & Naylor, 2021). Online consumer reviews also influence consumer behavior significantly, both positively and negatively (Hong, Kim, & Lennon, 2018; Srivastava & Kalro, 2018).

A study of an online review of an insurance company shows that customers mostly complained about the service quality (Moon, Wei, & Miao, 2019), but hardly anyone offered appreciation for any positive aspect of the service. Though companies adopt innovative methods such as discount codes for filling in the feedback form to encourage customers to give feedback, not all companies have provisions for collecting positive feedback or appreciation. For example, KFC has a feedback form on its website. The form has Yes/Maybe/No responses only. It fails to capture the essence of "customer delight" or "customer satisfaction," as the nature of customer relationship management is to "encourage, receive, and handle customer complaints" (Yang, Xu, Yang, & Chen, 2018).

In collecting feedback about services and products, we contend that companies overemphasize the negative feedback (encouraging the customers to complain) and aggravate consumer grudges. Instead, customers can be nudged to appreciate, feel grateful, give positive feedback and make suggestions. Nudging is defined as "any aspect of the choice architecture that alters people's behavior predictably without forbidding any options or significantly changing their economic incentives" (Hummel & Maedche, 2019). By asking the customers to share their positive *and* negative experiences, companies can change the focus of the customers' feedback from neutral or negative to positive. Building positive affect is the crucial step to diminishing consumer grudges (Nordstrom & Egan, 2021).

While previous studies have focused on the causes and nature of customer complaints (e.g., Gunarathne, Rui, & Seidmann, 2017; Moon, Wei, & Miao, 2019) and their typology (Naylor, 2016), there are fewer studies on customer appreciation or positive feedback. Studies have also acknowledged the need to focus on customer complaints, customer complimenting behavior, or soliciting positive feedback (Nasr, Burton, & Gruber, 2018). One of the ways to get positive feedback is to nudge the customer to report positive aspects of the rendered services, or to show gratitude. Gratitude is "the attitude of appreciating life as a gift and recognizing the importance of expressing that appreciation" (Watkins, Grimm, & Kolts, 2004). Appreciation and gratitude are different. Appreciation is the first step toward getting positive feedback from customers. To give positive feedback, customers must have something to appreciate.

Expressed gratitude is abundant in marketing campaigns. For example, many companies thank their viewers, readers, and partners. These are some of the investments companies make in developing and sustaining customer relationships. Relationship marketing investments generate feelings of gratitude (Mishra, 2016). Relationship marketing includes both affective (feelings of gratitude) and behavioral (gratitude-based reciprocal behaviors) components of customer gratitude (Ahmad, Ahmed, & ul Haq, 2020). Companies can exploit the grateful perception of their customers. Grateful customers may spread positive word-of-mouth about the company and be loyal. Customers who experience positive customer service interactions are satisfied with the service and develop a commitment to the service provider (Smith, 2021). Feelings of gratitude help to develop positive perceptions about the company or the product.

This study has two main objectives. First, we examine how organizations solicit customers for feedback. Second, we explore whether or not customers can be nudged to recall positive experiences when they respond to feedback. Drawing from the Broaden and Build theory of

positive emotion (Fredrickson, 2001) and Affective network theory (Bower, 1981), we argue that companies can minimize potential dissatisfaction by prompting customers to recall positive experiences. The study applies positive psychology, particularly positive emotions like gratitude, to customer relationship management by suggesting that positive experiences elicit positive feedback. From a practical standpoint, organizations need to be aware of the products and services that the customers appreciate, including their employees' behaviors.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### *Gratitude and Appreciation*

It is essential to differentiate gratitude and appreciation before proceeding to literature, as appreciation and gratitude are not identical. Appreciation is a certain kind of response to something good. It can be aesthetic, cognitive, or ethical (Manela, 2016). Thus, appreciation can be given for good work. When we come across quality dress material or neatly arranged products in a retail showroom, we appreciate those products and the variety or the way they are arranged.

In contrast, the feeling of gratitude is experienced by the beneficiary (customer) towards the helper (salesperson or company representative) for any extra role and value. Gratitude is generated when a benefit is recognized and is accompanied by a sense of thankfulness (Adler & Fagley, 2005; Manela, 2016). Gratitude is felt for the addressed 'need' (of the beneficiary).

### *Gratitude in Marketing*

Gratitude has been studied in the interpersonal relationship marketing model. Since gratitude is "the emotional appreciation for benefits received" (Bonnie & de Waal, 2004), it is a fundamental component of buyer-seller relationships. When a seller goes beyond his expected role in benefitting the buyer, the buyer becomes emotional, feels grateful, and appreciates the effort involved in rendering the help. Developing and maintaining a high-quality customer relationship is an essential part of the marketing function in which gratitude plays an important role (Jin, Line, & Yoon, 2018), particularly between service providers and buyers. There are many ways by which companies, and their practices, may elicit gratitude. Gratitude in commercial exchanges means making extra efforts to benefit a buyer or thanking the customer for a visit to the shop or the transaction. "Felt gratitude" can be expressed verbally or behaviorally in the business context, for example, by giving gifts.

Cause marketing (CM) campaigns provide an opportunity to do good and induce feelings of gratitude in consumers. Consumers perceive more significant effort by small firms that engage in CM campaigns, leading them to assess the underlying motives as sincere, then experience stronger feelings of gratitude for the opportunity to donate (De Vries, & Duque, 2018) and increase the likelihood of purchasing a product with a donation-based promotion (Septianto, & Garg, 2021). In an experimental study, when participants perceived that an organization provided costly and high-value services to help, they developed gratitude and positive behavioral intentions towards those organizations (Bridger & Wood, 2017). Salesperson prosocial behaviors account for the positive association between salesperson gratitude and customer gratitude (Mangus, Bock, Jones, & Folse, 2017).

The consequences of customer gratitude are a positive perception of the brand, positive word-of-mouth, and customer loyalty. Customer gratitude can influence the existing relationship and motivate future relationships (Bolton, Lemon, & Verhoef, 2004). This is because the most important criterion that distinguishes relational exchange from transactional exchange is recognizing an intended benefit and having more interactions because of expressions of gratitude

(Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006). Customers' perceived relationship marketing investment impacts overall satisfaction through its mediating effect of gratitude (Hasan, Mortimer, Lings, & Neale, 2017; Lee, Kim, & Pan, 2014). This will, in turn, stimulate the customer to show further 'pro-sociality in terms of positive perception of the brand and loyalty to the brand. Service quality positively influences customer referrals through customer gratitude (Ullah & Shabbir, 2018). Gratitude mediates customer responses to relationship marketing investments and helps build, maintain, and transform commercial relationships (Ahmad, Ahmed, & Ul Haq, 2020; Mangus, Bock, Jones, & Folse, 2017; Raggio, Walz, Godbole, & Folse, 2014). Gratitude helps marketers understand how relationship marketing investments increase purchase intentions, sales growth (Palmatier, Jarvis, Bechkoff, & Kardes, 2009), satisfaction, trust, and commitment (Fazal-e-Hasan, Mortimer, Lings, & Kaur, 2020).

The expression of gratitude may strengthen the relationship between customers and the company as the consumer positively evaluates the brand, influences other customers to pay for the products and services of the company, and spreads positive word-of-mouth about the company (Raggio, Walz, Godbole, & Folse, 2014). As the grateful perception influences positive reframing, customers' gratitude increases positive word-of-mouth (WoM), repeat purchase intentions, and price tolerance (Soscia, 2007). Gratitude appeal increases WoM intentions (Septianto, Seo, & Errmann, 2020). Affective commitment mediates the relationship between gratitude and customer WoM intentions and involvement (Fazal-e-Hasan, Lings, Mortimer, & Neale, 2017). Organizations' web-based marketing communication strategies drive customer gratitude and other desired behavioral responses (Huggins, White, Holloway, & Hansen, 2020). Though gratitude's role in marketing is well researched, its role in customer care remains unaddressed.

*You Get What You Ask For: Nudge Them to be Positive!*

In this context, approaching customers for suggestions/feedback, companies will likely get negative feedback. This will demotivate the employees for not being appreciated and only receiving suggestions for continuous improvement (which is a never-ending process). In addition to receiving feedback, companies can ask the customer what they liked about the products or services. For example, compare the following scenarios:

**Situation 1:** *Tell us where we can improve.*

**Situation 2:** *Tell us where we excelled in servicing you. Alternatively, tell us if any of the services made you feel grateful.*

In Situation 1, we induce the customer to think negatively. The customers tend to find the fault and report it. While leaving the website or physical store, customers leave with the negative aspect of the brand/service after giving feedback.

Compared to the first situation, the second situation has more benefits for the organization. In Situation 2, the customers are asked to think positively. They may report the positive. While leaving the website/store after giving feedback, the customers leave with a positive impression of the store or brand. Customers tend to think of the brand's exceptional service and may report the same.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### *Objective*

This study explores how the organization approaches customers for feedback, whether customer complaints and compliments can co-exist when soliciting feedback and whether the customers can be nudged to recall positive experiences and report positively when they respond to feedback.

Customers can contact the organization online (e.g., their website, through social media) and offline (e.g., visit the physical store or call the store). Online interaction is more prevalent nowadays and most organizations have provisions for collecting online feedback on their website. Hence, in our first study, we examined company websites to learn about the organization's mode of collecting feedback. In this study, we are mainly interested in whether the websites encourage neutral, harmful, or positive feedback. Since we have no access to the data of customers' feedback, we can only make inferences about the type of data they receive from the questions they ask.

Moreover, not all the customers who buy from physical stores contact the websites for feedback (unless they have some issues). Some may give feedback but many will not. To address this issue, we conducted a second study, where we approached the customers who came out of the store and asked for their feedback. In this second study, we manipulated the way we asked for feedback (neutral, negative, and positive).

### *Study 1*

Study 1 is based on secondary data from company websites. In this study, we analyzed some of the websites of leading brands to learn how they approach customers for feedback. We examined the websites from major sectors (e.g., retailers, banks, app-based companies, and online shopping sites), particularly where there are opportunities for customer interaction with the websites. We hypothesize that, in general, companies will have provisions for collecting complaints but not for collecting customer appreciation/gratitude.

### *Analysis and Discussion for Study 1*

We examined the websites of 30 companies. The details and information about handling complaints are given in table 1.

**Table 1:**  
Mode of receiving customer complaints

Sl. No	Mode of receiving customer complaints	Count
1	Open for reviews	2
2	Five-point scale rating	4
3	E-mail address / Contact phone numbers	All
4	Have an issue / complaint / grievance	10
5	Query / Feedback / Suggestions	7
6	Compliment	1
7	Support centers with subtopics for resolving issues	10

The first study focused on learning how these 30 companies enabled customer feedback. As shown in Table 1, we found that all the companies gave email address and phone numbers for customers to contact. Seven companies provided feedback forms for customers to complain or make suggestions. Ten companies encourage the customers to complain if they had an issue, complaint, or grievance. Many companies had options for more than one feedback method (e.g., open reviews; e-mail address and phone numbers, etc.). App-based companies such as Ola and Uber implemented rating systems. Ola and Uber are particular in asking the feedback. They also ask about the reason for the given rating, whether it is low or high. This is one way of uniquely collecting the reasons for both good and bad feedback. Only one organization requested compliments in addition to the complaint/write to us option.

As hypothesized, most companies ask for neutral (Open for reviews, Feedback, Five-point scale rating) or negative feedback (Have an issue / Complaint / Grievance / Suggestions). We term them as 'negative feedback' because terms such as 'Complaint / Grievance / Suggestions' mostly prompt the customers to give negative reviews. However, we did not have access to the data from these websites and can only guess about the responses. Hence, we set up a second study to collect data about such responses.

### *Study 2*

For our second study, we surveyed customers of selected retail stores (grocery and clothes mercantile) that have their pan India presence in Madurai, the capital city of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu and the administrative headquarters of the Madurai District. The number and type of showrooms taken for the survey were the same. After getting permission from the store managers, we surveyed their customers when they came out of the showroom. The data collection mode was both online (sharing their WhatsApp no) and offline (requesting to fill the paper-based questionnaire).

We administered the following three types of open-ended surveys:

Survey 1: Share your feedback.

Survey 2: Tell us how / where we must improve.

Survey 3: Tell us where we excelled in providing service for you. Tell us something about our service that made you feel grateful to us.

All three surveys were administered in the same showroom on the same days. Each survey was administered to 30 customers, and we ensured that no customers completed more than one survey. Survey 1 was to learn whether the customers were negative (complaint), satisfied (no complaint/suggestion to improve), or positive (appreciate the service) in giving feedback. This was done to find the answer to the first research question. Survey 2 was used to support our claim that soliciting suggestions will invite mostly negative views (e.g., "the company can work on this or that"). Survey 3 was used to see if customers can be nudged to give positive feedback.

### *Analysis of Study 2*

The responses were coded as follows in each condition. Positive feedback was coded with '1', negative feedback was coded with '2', and any other responses that were neither positive nor negative were coded as '0'.

*Survey 1*

Survey 1 was intended to learn about the types of feedback (positive or negative) customers will give us when we neutrally ask for their feedback. For this survey, we neutrally asked: Share your feedback. Table 2 summarizes the results of this survey.

**Table 2**  
First Survey Summary

	Positive Feedback	Negative Feedback	Other responses
Sample	25	4	1

Twenty-five responses were positive, four were negative, and one was neutral.

*Survey 2*

This survey was designed to show the types of feedback (positive or negative) customers will give if we ask for suggestions to improve. We asked for the following open-ended statement: Tell us how and where we must improve. Table 3 summarizes the results of this survey.

**Table 3**  
Second Survey Summary

	Positive Feedback	Negative Feedback	Neutral Feedback
No	7	19	4

Seven responses were positive, 19 were negative, and four were neutral.

*Survey 3*

This survey was designed to see if we could “nudge” consumers to provide positive feedback. We asked for the following open-ended statement: ‘Tell us where we excelled in servicing you? / Tell us something about our service that made you feel grateful to us’. Table 4 summarizes the results of this survey.

**Table 4**  
Third Survey Summary

	Positive Feedback	Negative Feedback	Other responses
Samples	30	0	0

For this third survey, we got 30 positive feedback and no negative feedback. The descriptive statistics are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5**  
Descriptive statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Survey 1	30	1.10	.403	.074	.95	1.25	0	2
Survey 2	30	0.93	.583	.106	.72	1.15	0	2
Survey 3	30	2.00	.000	.000	2.00	2.00	2	2
Total	90	1.34	.621	.065	1.21	1.47	0	2

A simple statistical analysis (ANOVA) shows significant differences among the three groups.

**Table 6**  
ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	19.756	2	9.878	58.995	.000
Within Groups	14.567	87	.167		
Total	34.322	89			

**Figure 1**  
Feedback means in all three surveys

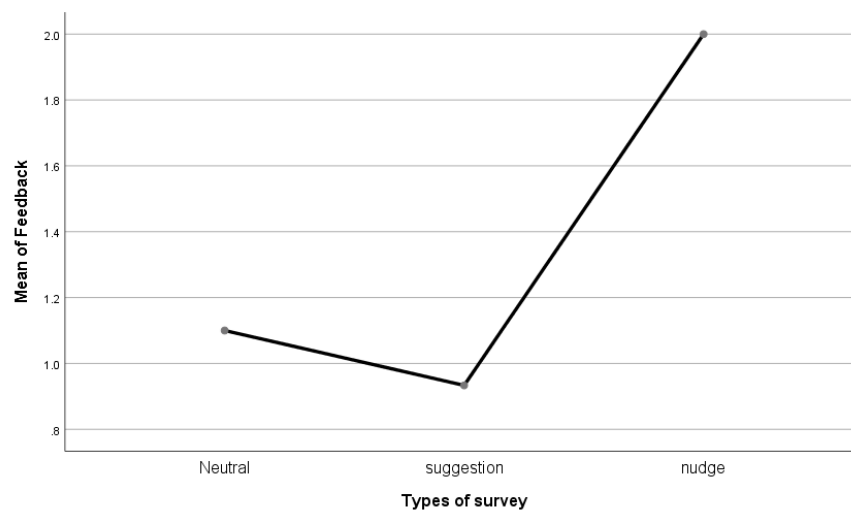


Figure 1 presents the mean of all three feedbacks pictorially.



Study 2 was intended to find customer complaints or compliments when we approached them for feedback. We also intended to nudge the customers for positive feedback and feel grateful for the service.

As we expected, for the first research question, we found that customers were more likely to complain when asked for feedback. A neutral, open survey, "Share your feedback," elicits positive, negative, and neutral responses. However, it contained more negative than positive or neutral responses. Negative responses increased when we asked loaded questions like "where we can improve?" When we ask for suggestions on *how* to improve, the customers are more likely to think and suggest improvements to the service or products. As we expected, for the second research question, we found that customers were more likely to appreciate the positive aspects. Further content analysis of the survey found that different roles of service personnel sometimes elicited customer gratitude. In line with many other studies, it shows that more than the physical aspects of the store, the behavioral aspect is essential for satisfying or delighting customers.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Overall, the studies in this paper wanted to understand how the organization approaches the customers for feedback, what types of feedback they are getting, and whether it can elicit positive feedback and help the customers feel grateful. Study 1 examined the selected sites' websites to understand how companies collect feedback. Since all customers may not try to give feedback, and we do not know what type of feedback the company received, we went to Study 2, where we customized our approach to get customer feedback. The results of Study 1 show that most companies ask for feedback, suggestions, and grievances. We speculate that this will most likely elicit neutral responses or complaints from the customers. There are no provisions (except a 5-point scale) for customers to appreciate the service or products. Study 2 had three types of surveys: a neutral survey that asked for feedback; a survey that nudged customers to respond negatively by asking for suggestions to improve; and a survey that nudged customers to respond positively, by asking about excellent aspects of the service encounter. As expected, we got more negative feedback for the neutral and nudging to be negative. In the positive nudging survey, 100% of respondents responded positively. There were no neutral or negative responses.

These results are in line with previous gratitude studies. Counting blessings makes people recollect the positive aspects of life. As envisaged by the Broaden and Build the theory of positive emotion (Fredrickson, 2001) and affective network theory (Bower, 1981), grateful people are more likely to recollect positive memories. According to the Broaden and Build theory of positive emotion, gratitude broadens cognitive frameworks and interprets negative or ambiguous situations positively. According to the affective network theory, emotional memories are organized by emotion nodes, and when a node is activated, this activates the relevant emotional memories. When customers feel grateful, they tend to recall a broad array of positive aspects of the service rendered. Neutral surveys most likely induce negative cognitive biases and nudge customers to find the flaws in the system. Gratitude influences an upbeat cognitive style through positive attention bias, interpretation bias, and memory bias (Alkozei, Smith, & Killgore, 2018). Gratitude helps to reduce this negative bias. A grateful outlook facilitates more attention to positive stimuli (positive attention bias) in the environment than negative stimuli. Thus, changes in cognition (from neutral and negative to positive) help elicit positive feedback, appreciation, and gratitude from the customers. People with high gratitude infer that life is more meaningful and comprehensible than those with low gratitude due to positive reframing (Lambert et al., 2012). They reframe neutral or negative events positively. Due to positive

memory bias, grateful individuals easily retrieve positive memories (e.g., pleasing shopping experiences; Watkins, 2014). Customers can also be nudged to reframe their shopping experience positively.

Furthermore, the results of these studies suggest that there are "framing effects" in eliciting feedback. The manner in which feedback is "sought" affects the actual feedback. This raises the question of whether or not realistic feedback exists. Realistic feedback must be more closely aligned with the customer experience, which cannot be captured without framing effects. The simple advice here is that organizations should solicit both positive and negative feedback. However, all feedback will be impacted by framing effects, and businesses must be aware of the extent of framing and its effects on customers and employees.

**Table 7**  
Positive and Negative Consequences of Framing Effects

		Framing	
		Positive	Negative
Consequences of Framing	Positive	Positive Consequences of Positive Framing (Gratitude, Appreciation, Feeling valued, Higher motivation, tolerance)	Positive Consequences of Negative Framing (Improvement, justice, satisfaction)
	Negative	Negative Consequences of Positive Framing (customer apathy, deceit, loss of zeal for improvement; survey begging)	Negative Consequences of Positive Framing (stress, cynicism, survey begging)

Framing effects (both positive and negative) have both positive and negative consequences. The negative repercussions are that feedback can be manipulated to serve the interests of various stakeholders of organization. The stakeholders can use "framed" feedback to their advantage and others' detriment. When companies seek feedback only for the purpose of improvement (negative framing), it may have a negative impact on both customers and employees. Employees and managers may experience anxiety and fear when receiving feedback. In addition, it can make customers more demanding and cynical. Customers with high expectations tend to raise their expectations each time they provide feedback. This spiral of rising employee stress and rising customer demands can create problems for society and organizations. Is the competition for customer satisfaction causing harm and creating more stress and cynicism? However, negative framing (improvement) can also have positive consequences. It compels employees to exert greater effort to enhance customer service. Customers may feel a sense of justice and satisfaction as a result of the fact that they have a voice, and their opinions are heard. They may believe that the organization is not exploiting them.

Positive framing results in obviously positive feelings, such as gratitude, between customers and employees. Such positive emotions make employees feel "appreciated," and as a result, they can lead more fulfilling lives. When employees are inspired, they may want to return to work and contribute more to the organization. Positive framing encourages customers to be

more empathetic and tolerant of employees, as well as to recognize the effort made by employees to serve them. Similarly, a negative consequence of positive framing could be that employees engage in “survey begging,” where service providers beg for positive ratings and evaluation, which may lead to customers feeling pressured and irritated and viewing the begging as “just plain wrong” (Jones and Taylor, 2018). Table 7 lists the positive and negative consequences of framing effects.

We make the following contributions. First, by prompting customers to think about their positive experiences, we can expand their horizons to include elements they appreciate. In doing so, customers can weigh the positives and the negatives while giving feedback differently. It provides an opportunity to give positive feedback. Nudging customers can help reconcile the shortcomings by replacing them with positive comments. Thus, it will help the company with its ‘internal marketing’ (Bell, Mengüç, & Stefani, 2004). The contact employee *is* the service in the customer's view (Berry, Conant, and Parasuraman 1991), and the attitudes and behaviors of contact staff embody those of the organization in the customer's eyes (Bell, Mengüç, & Stefani, 2004). Hence, the study has implications for managers who manage frontline employees. Appreciation from customers can act as a morale booster for the employees and the organizations as it enhances repeat business. In turn, qualitative customer feedback can be used to appraise the performance of the employees.

### **LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The study is not without limitations. Collecting data from one city is one of the limitations. More surveys from other cities will further strengthen the findings. The second limitation is the lack of demographic data (age and gender). Collecting and analyzing data along this line will further enhance our understanding of customer feedback.

As stated above, demographic details can shed light on customers' feedback behavior, age, and gender differences. We may know what types of customers (young males or old females) tend to complain or compliment because studies have already shown the gender difference in gratitude (Yue et al., 2017). Secondly, future studies can explore the mood toward the brand after these surveys. As we claim that nudging them to feel positive will elicit positive responses, we can examine whether the third survey elicited a positive mood or not. If the customers leave the store in a positive mood, they may feel good about their shopping experience and the brand. Therefore, they may spread positive word-of-mouth about the brand. Third, we can compare the customers of all three surveys to know who comes back for the next purchase. Had the third survey elicited an upbeat mood about the brand, we can expect more customers under this condition to come back than the with the other two surveys. While the third survey captured the reasons for customers' gratitude, this study did not analyze that content. Future studies can examine these reasons listed by the customers and find whether the customers feel grateful for the material aspect of the brand (e.g., facilities, servicescapes) or employees' behavior (e.g., friendly interaction with the customers).

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