Strategic Service Marketing: Competing on Exemplary Service Quality and Innovation for Customer Satisfaction

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The purpose of the paper was to carryout a thorough and critical review and analysis of the empirical literature on strategic service marketing. Also analyzed is the unique characteristics of the service industry and the fast-changing competitive marketplace. Moreover, the role of innovation in service delivery and the need for customer participation in exemplary service delivery are analyzed.

The article starts with a brief introduction and overview of the concept of service marketing and the presentation of the paper's objectives. The research methodology then follows. Next, the article outlines the associate theories that support service marketing strategies and models. A comprehensive and rigorous analysis and synthesis of the empirical literature on service marketing concepts is presented. An analysis of current trends and emerging issue is also presented. Finally, the paper discusses implications for marketing decision-makers and recommends action.

Keyword: strategic, service, marketing, customer, satisfaction, quality, innovation, exemplary

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Imagine there is one issue managers and academic researchers would concur on. In that case, the operations of a service organization is anything but identical to managing a tangible goods enterprise. From health delivery to utilities and the financial sector to tourism, the expanding services industry globally is a dynamic stage where human and technology, and various communications and activities are coordinated to provide service performance. Viewing this performance and its target is the consumers, whose satisfaction the service providers seek to meet. Running a service enterprise, which is more difficult than a physical products organization, involves comprehending consumer behavior dynamics and its impact on service performance (Mittal & Baker, 1998).

The service marketing literature has thoroughly analyzed the direct impact of service quality variables on customer satisfaction and their associated effect on customer satisfaction through overall service excellence. Perception of service quality invoke favorable or unfavorable customer reaction directly or through elevated customer satisfaction (Andersen & Weisstein, 2019). A service marketing model comprises of seven Ps. Four of these are the traditional four Ps of the marketing mix: product, price, place, and promotion. Product represents services as service design and place as location and distribution. Price and promotion have similar meanings for goods and services. Three more Ps are added to these four Ps unique to services: people (service workers who produce and provide services), process (the service production mechanisms and methods), and physical facilities (the environment in which the service

production is stored). These three Ps comprise the service production, provision and delivery model (Mittal & Baker, 1998).

The service encounter is the interaction between the customer and the service provision model. It is important to consider the customer and the service encounter as integral part of the strategic service marketing model because the service interface is where the service is delivered. Moreover, the customer is not only a passive beneficiary of the service being rendered but contributes to produce and deliver the service. With the customer participation, the service could take place regardless of how brief (Mittal & Baker, 1998).

Extant literature provides two contradicting theories for the connection between service quality and customer satisfaction. On one hand, some research argue that service quality is an prerequisite to customer satisfaction. On the other hand, a perspective claims that customer satisfaction precedes perceived service excellence. However, the research finds that service quality drives customer satisfaction for several reasons. This is because perceived service quality is knowledge acquired over time by direct encounter with the service workers and come from other influential sources such as word of mouth, publicity, and the firm's marketing programs (He & Li, 2010).

Objectives of the Article

The objectives of this article are to conduct a comprehensive review of the empirical literature on strategic service marketing with a thorough analysis of the associated theoretical framework, service framework, dimensions of service quality, service quality, and customer satisfaction, service quality and customer perception, service design, trends, and emerging issues is strategic service marketing, draw implications for marketing decision-making, and outline recommendations for managerial actions.

Research Methodology

The research methodology used in this paper is the systematic literature review methodology since it allows the researcher to adopt a transparent process, enabling him to collect the broadest perspectives and theories on research into service marketing. Systematic review uses a critical deliberation on a specific research issue by analyzing current literature, synthesizing past discoveries, uncovering knowledge gaps, and offering recommendations in areas for future research. (Adarkwah & Malonaes, 2022).

Empirical Literature Review

The empirical literature depicts service quality as the variance between actual service delivered and expected service performance. A customer perceives a service's relative inferiority or superiority by benchmarking service provider's actual performance against his expectations. The variance between perception and expectations is perceived service quality. Customers are very sensitive about the value the get for their money and have increased expectations of service delivery nowadays. Customers who perceive service quality as subpar will not hesitate to vote with their wallets elsewhere. Moreover, recent technology enhances market transparency, allowing rivals to offer identical or better product models (Dinh & Pickler, 2012).

Associated Theoretical Framework of Service Marketing

Since its initial introduction, the service-dominant logic of marketing has been the topic of countless scholarly research papers and special issues in academic outlets, conferences, and webinar sessions globally. It provides a more humanistic perspective of marketing theory, placing the customer on the equal level with the company. It does this by claiming that service is traded for service in all economic interactions and by underscoring value co-creation. Moreover, from a theoretical standpoint, households are seen as resource-gathering, value-creating entities, just as much as ordinary enterprises (William & Aitken, 2011).

Social exchange theory states that customers evaluate the intangible and tangible opportunities and risks of forging relationships. Customers must at least weigh these opportunities and risks over time to sustain consumer engagement. For example, customers may display interest and eagerness to interact with a firm to obtain benefits through the need for social acceptance. Contemporary strategic service marketing

considers both relationship marketing and service-dominant logic, which, when integrated, argues that consumers are now partners with providers, contributing to exchanges through a co-creation mechanism. Consumers trade intellectual, emotional, financial, economic, and physical resources with firms. For customer engagement to be sustainable, the consumer and service provider must perceive it as equal and fair (Rather, 2019).

The expectancy-disconfirmation theory argues that customer satisfaction is derived from subjective opinion in which consumers typically compare their prepurchase expectations of quality with perceived service performance after usage through the exchange confirmation mechanism. The attitude toward the service is later adjusted based on post-purchase assessment (Andersen & Weisstein, 2019).

Finally, motivated information processing theory posits that employees consciously seek, attend to, retrieve, and interpret information and intelligence connected to their needs. According to motivated information processing theory, when service providers take customers' worldview, their drive to satisfy customers' needs leads them to concentrate on the customers' thoughts and emotions. That is, customer-centric perspective-taking sensitizes service providers to customer desires and implement strategy to discover ways to assist customers. Consequently, these service providers tend to seek information to expect customers' thoughts and emotions during service provisions. This allows them to comprehend customers' desires and expectations more transparently (Huo et al., 2019).

Service Framework and Quality

Academic scholars have provided a theoretical framework, SERVQUAL, consisting of five service quality attributes (i.e. tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy). The SERVQUAL framework has been applied to measure many sectors, such as healthcare, tourism, and recreation. However, the SERVQUAL framework has met with severe scrutiny regarding how it depicts service quality as it pertains to websites and the Internet. This is because such types of electronic service quality have unique processes and characteristics when it comes to service provision (Suh & Pedersen, 2010).

Research shows the importance of service quality in organizational competitiveness. This implies that service enterprises must be certain that they implement strategies that promote and enhance service quality (Baloch et al., 2018). From a customer-oriented view, a service failure is when something does not turn out well as anticipated by the customer. It is also defined as the service delivery that falls short of meeting the desires of customers (Oflac et al., 2012). The initial concepts of satisfaction research have traditionally depicted satisfaction as a post-choice assessment opinion about a particular buying decision (Kalia et al., 2016).

Quality is the level of excellence to which a given service satisfies the desires of a particular consumer; quality is the degree to which a specific service is consistent with design or specifications. Service quality is the gap between customers' expectations and perceptions of the service they experience. Customers define service quality standards, which must be converted into clear execution terms for workers companywide (Baloch et al., 2018).

Dimensions of Service Quality

Three crucial service quality attributes are: (1) Functional quality elements: These typically consist of four SERVQUAL elements, namely, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, with little modifications. Several items associated with customer convenience are also incorporated; (2) Technical quality dimensions: These are the quality of service provided to customers. These factors entail the supply frequency, duration, and equipment's physical condition; and (3) Pricing dimensions: Price of services, consumption-based pricing model, incentives for early payments, and disincentives for delayed payments appeared as crucial drivers influencing customer's impressions (Sharma, 2010).

According to Research in organizational behavior and service marketing, employees' customer-centric view relates favorably to customer satisfaction. Service workers who adopt customers' viewpoints likely comprehend and empathize with customers' experiences, show more authentic concern for their problems, and experience higher fulfillment when responding their desires. When service providers take the customer view, their willingness to assist customers increase. Consistent with past scientific studies on the

perspective-taking-performance connection and the self-driven customer-centric mindset rooted in perspective-taking, research indicates that customer-centric perspective-taking relates favorably to service workers' proactive customer service and effective compliant-resolving performance. Proactive customer service emphasizes a service provision strategy that is self-initiated, future-focused, and strategic thinking. Proactive compliance-handling performance implies resolving customer concerns thoroughly and expeditiously (Huo et al., 2019). Researchers have identified ten attributes of service quality. The first three are reliability, responsiveness, and competence. The next are access, courtesy, and communication. The final four are credibility, security, customer understanding, and tangibles (Suh & Pedersen, 2010).

Service Quality: Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is defined as the consumer assessment and subjective opinion about the ability of a service to deliver a pleasurable degree of consumption-related fulfillment. Customers typically assess and judge service quality on several dimensions, such as tangibles (features), reliability, security, empathy, responsiveness, and comfort (Andersen & Weisstein, 2019).

The intangibility of the service output makes the service sector more mission-critical for the success of a service organization. In the manufacturing domain, services are a key driver of the customer's attitude toward the firm and the buyer's final buying decision—promising and delivering high quality service benefits organizations in enhancing customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and other customer behavior. According to research, service has contributed meaningfully to the manufacturing industry fortune (Zhang et al., 2016).

Once the goal of service is established, designing and delivering excellent service becomes an important concern of an organization. Researchers have utilized different research strategies and discovered critical elements contributing to service excellence. Some factors are associated with leadership policies, such as managing each moment of encounter when the customer engages with the service employees and the service context. Others prioritize customers, such as paying attention to individual customers' basic courtesy and adopting new technologies to deliver services. Although these investigations were primarily carried out in the manufacturing sector, and some are relatively service companies, the elements contributing to service control enhance customer satisfaction. Furthermore, customer control is especially useful to services requiring customer participation (Ouschan et al., 2000).

Service quality and customer satisfaction have been described as matching the service expectation with the customer's experience. Therefore, when customers' experience is in line with or surpasses their expectations, the service is categorized as high quality, and the receivers are technically satisfied customers. Conversely, when the service consumers encounter is below their expectations, the perception of service quality is decreased, and customers are typically unsatisfied. Because of the following unique attributes of services, quality assessments are determined on both the process and the output of service delivery (Patterson & Marks, 1992).

Although tangibility and knowledge may be difficult for a customer to assess, tangibles are visible and understandable. They may assist the customer in developing an initial impression or making a decision about quality without other physical manifestations of quality. Tangibles can consist of the physical context (e.g., décor of waiting area, cleanliness, parking facilities) and the appearance of direct contact with employees. Emphasis on neatness and personal touches in individual offices can assist customers in better evaluating service providers (Patterson & Marks, 1992).

Service Quality: Consumer Perceptions

Service quality and satisfaction are closely associated drivers of consumer perceptions. There is a connection between these variables, but they are not identical. According to research, service quality is a customer subjective judgment. Quality perceptions are determined by a customer's unique evaluation of the service. Satisfaction, on the other hand, is a function of the exchange. It is a response to a service-related consumption encounter. Therefore , as the perception of quality service increases, recipients are more certainly to be delighted with their overall service delivery and experience (Shapiro, 2010).

In service quality modeling, scholars divide the consumer's perception of any given service into two components, namely technical and functional quality. Service quality can be seen as a manifestation of a customer's overall impression of functional and technical services provided by a firm. Improvements in service quality can also enhance competitiveness. Several elements of competitiveness have been investigated across industries. Researchers have analyzed the basics of competitiveness and its assessment. They show the connection between service quality and competitiveness (Sharma, 2010).

Service Design

Service design entails a systematic, iterative, and user-centric process that helps to develop a strong comprehension of the target markets and leads to an eventual service delivery that provides a desirable customer encounter. A crucial dimension of service design practice is making a service easy and admirable. Service design shares similar attributes with design thinking, human-centered design, customer experience, and other design models. However, it also contains some unique characteristics—generally speaking, service design can be considered at the juncture of design thinking and customer experience. Additionally, service design is smaller in its scope as it emphasizes the unique challenges of designing experiences in the services context (Miaskiewicz, 2023).

According to research, there are two key elements to the design of a service. The first is the definition of the core service characteristics, and the other is the definition of the service delivery system, which entails a skilled workforce and the establishment of tangibles to provide the services. The close connection between all these functions is of important relevance to the success of a service enterprise (Guilhoto, 2017).

Trends and Emerging Issues in Strategic Service Marketing From the Empirical Literature Analysis

The issues and trends below emerged from analyzing the empirical literature above. The first is the association between service design and strategic service marketing. One of the hurdles involved in incorporating service design into the broader analysis of strategic service marketing is providing a seamless transition between analyzing more essential service marketing concepts (e.g., the broader service marketing mix, servicescape design, and service framework) and a thorough analysis of service design. The foundational services marketing concepts are also used to understand service design. For example, the role and scope of processes are discussed and then used as part of the assessment of the prototyping and ideation stage of the service design model (Miaskiewicz, 2023).

Service design, similar to service marketing, has an outsized influence on consumers' service experience. Past research on consumers' service encounters primarily emphasizes conceptualizing and quantifying perceived service quality. Perceived service quality is an evaluation of how well the service level provided consistently meets the consumer's expectations and reflects a long-run overall assessment of a service (Chan et al., 2021).

The second is the connection between service innovation and customer empowerment and engagement. While the research into service marketing needs to address client empowerment, it has separately examined each element of patient empowerment (i.e., customer control, customer participation, customer education). Customer participation has gotten the most focus in discussing the three empowerment elements of service marketing. This is no accident, considering that customer involvement in service delivery contributes to competitive quality, service quality, and customer satisfaction (Ouschan, 2000).

Research on person-environment interface and service encounters emphasizes goal achievement and satisfaction as important end states. Goal attainment indicates the aim toward which service provision has been directed; satisfaction means the cognitive and affective judgment of the service encounter. Past empirical studies identify engagement's effects on goal achievement and satisfaction. Customers who participate in service delivery tasks likely acquire improved goal attainment and satisfaction. However, engagement must be translated into customer behaviors that can fulfill service delivery tasks before it can enhance goal achievement and satisfaction. If they become engaged, customers invest in executing their roles effectively and cooperate with service providers to attain goals. Moreover, customer participation enables organizations to better understand customer preferences and tailor their service delivery. In the

strategic service marketing literature, customer involvement in service delivery is integral to customer goal attainment. This is accomplished by way of exchanging and negotiating ideas and joint development and application of knowledge (Torkzadeh et al., 2021).

The third is the integration of service innovation and internal marketing. The internal marketing concept first became known in the strategic service marketing literature several years ago as a strategy to provide consistently high service quality. Internal marketing aimed to get all employees and managers involved in service delivery to excel in customer encounters. Internal marketing successfully employs, develops, and motivates workers to serve customers well. It has been centered on the employees of the enterprise. It concentrates on improving employee satisfaction. Satisfied workers will be more motivated and customer-centric, enhancing service quality and superior corporate performance. Moreover, internal marketing aims to align employees with current conditions and work processes. Research indicates that only if the internal customer relationships succeed will the quality of the outcome be excellent; therefore, this brings about satisfied external customers. Furthermore, establishing employee incentive initiatives is key to enhancing job satisfaction (Nikbin et al., 2010).

The fourth is the relationship between service innovation and employee empowerment. Service employees' customer-centric perspective-taking could build their role breadth self-efficacy (RBSE). First, interpersonal communication skills are a crucial component of employee empowerment. According to research, interpersonal dynamics are key to employee empowerment, and employees in modern enterprises often have the interpersonal capabilities to execute tasks and make decisions while appreciating more interdependence with internal and external customers. Perspective-taking with customers assists employees in understanding the parameters of their role-expanding and role-breaking behaviors. Thus, making them more capable of effectively adjusting their behavior, extending their role, and proactively serving customers. Similarly, taking the customer-centric perspective can smooth the employee-customer encounter and enhance the probability of customers' participation and appreciation of employees' role-expanding behavior. Second, the motivated-information-processing perspective argue that by concentrating on customers' perspectives, service providers begin thinking more strategically to integrate, solidify, and polish these perspectives. Proactively engaging in several tasks beyond official job responsibilities is unproductive and challenging. Still, a more authentic and precise view of customers' desires, and thoughts can assist service workers make relevant decisions in implementing new strategies to serve the customers well and delight them with their discretionary activities and efforts (Huo et al., 2019).

The rationale to empower service workers is typically attributed to the heterogeneity and intangibility of services. Subsequently, service staff empowerment has been operationalized as allowing the employees some leeway to satisfy customers' desire. Discretion is also at the root of customer empowerment. For instance, research suggests that choice not only gives the customers greater degrees of dignity but also encourages them to engage, contribute and succeed. A positive association between employee empowerment and employee involvement in service innovations and strategic service marketing has already received scientific support. Similarly, it is reasonable to believe that only empowered customers will likely be actively engage in service delivery (Ouschan et al., 2000).

The fifth and last is the relationship between service innovation and organizational commitment. Organizational commitment can be categorized into three factors: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. The affective dimension of organizational commitment reflects employees' emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the firm. Continuance commitment focuses on employee commitment based on the costs associated with departing the firm. The normative component of organization commitment emphasizes the employee's duty to stay work for the firm. Strategic marketers who clearly articulate the enterprise development vision can attain employee commitment and satisfaction more effectively. This communication can be in a meeting or a few words to motivate employees. When employees know managers' opinions, their enthusiasm and ability to serve external customers improve. Empirical studies also reinforce the impact of internal marketing on organizational commitment. For example, Research indicates that one outcome of internal marketing is to enhance employees' organizational commitment (Nikbin et al., 2010).

Market-creating service innovation offers far higher upside potential than incrementally enhance service offerings. Service innovation differs from product innovation in significant ways. First, for labor-intensive, interactive services, the main providers—the service delivery employees—are integral to the customer experience and, thus, the innovation. Second, services mandating the physical presence of the consumer promote local decentralized service capacity. Third, service innovators typically do not have a tangible product with a brand name (Berry et al., 2006).

Implications for Marketing Decision-Making

Successful service marketing organizations understand the significance of mindfully monitoring and managing customer satisfaction. Success in service marketing enterprises is a function of marketing managers being proactive to the dynamics in customer values and discerning the significance of employee commitment to service provision and delivery (Zhang et al., 2019).

Given the long list of tasks assigned to services recipients, such as resource providers and co-producers, and contributions of functional and communal characteristics, customer training has not gotten enough focus in the strategic services marketing literature. Nevertheless, it has been agreed upon that customers need education, too. Moreover, educating customers and employees on scripts has been discovered as a strategy to ensure role clarity, reduce role conflict, and encourage mutual understanding. Research suggests that marketing managers put in place a mechanism of companywide socialization of customers to handle customer expectations and eventually lower the variance between expected and perceived service (Ouschan et al., 2000).

Human resource personnel and marketing managers should analyze and scrutinize the applicants' customer-centric perspective-taking tendencies and proactive characteristics in the hiring process to guarantee employees' proactive service performance. Employees with a customer-centric approach and initial-taking personalities are likelier to provide service and resolve customer concerns on time. After the employees have joined the enterprise, marketing managers should increase the employees' enthusiasm to take customers' viewpoints by connecting incentives to exceptional executions of transcending role limitations to assist customers. The hiring process should also collect intelligence about service workers' RBSE. Psychometric analysis and assessment can also indicate the applicants' preparedness. The interview questions should focus on the applicant's past experience in going above and beyond their normal duties to resolve customer problems. Finally, marketing managers should use intervening initiatives in the strategic service marketing process to enable employees increase their confidence in proactively expanding their responsibilities. To encourage engagement, marketing managers should give employees more leeway over their service delivery, incentivize employees to attend a as many training activities as possible, and provide them opportunities to engage in continuous improvement initiatives. Marketing managers should also assign employees duties that must go beyond their role skills to attain success (Huo et al., 2019).

When it comes to upgrading e-service quality, consumers' perceptions of value, and customers' service satisfaction, marketing managers should devote more resources to creating and enhancing the design of their websites, elevating their service quality by delivering excellent service, and improving the security of online waiting and response times. These initiatives and improvements would raise consumer trust in and loyalty to a given service and improve the benefits for service recipients (Luo & Lee, 2011).

Educating service providers about transforming the relationship between service workers and customers into cooperation between service providers and customers will be crucial. This education will help contain the subjects and notions of customer psychology, excellent communication, body language, and empathy. It should be recalled that the matter in the advice that stands out is sometimes excellent communication, and the service provider who conduct himself professionally and ethically almost typically recommended. Acknowledging that customer satisfaction is highly linked to employee satisfaction, it will be beneficial for marketing managers to focus on in-house public relations initiatives to increase morale and motivate the workers in the organization (Buyukdogan et al., 2017).

Service providers typically find it challenging to deliver service without defects. If it is difficult to eliminate service failure, marketing managers must comprehend how consumers perceive and judge service recovery mechanism. Complaints and feedback are indications of opportunities for marketing managers to

engage in recovery process to favorably alter future behavior by restoring satisfaction, enhancing purchase intention and positive word-of-mouth, and establishing trust in the organization (Bortoli & Pizzutti, 2017).

Research indicates that a service marketing organization with a positive corporate social responsibility (CSR) association and quality service perception by its consumers can win customer fidelity because both CSR association and service quality can improve brand identification and customer satisfaction. Such insights have significant implications for marketing managers. First, it motivates marketing managers to know that CSR enhances brand identity and customer satisfaction, suggesting they should invest more in social and sustainable initiatives. Second, consumers tend to reward those more socially conscious organizations by being more loyal to them (He & Li, 2010). Finally, the research emphasizes the importance for marketing managers to increase efforts to analyze, evaluate, and comprehend their industries and markets and the appropriate engagement with their respective organizations and their product offerings (Hume, 2011).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MANAGERIAL ACTION

Success Drivers of Market-Creating Service Innovations for Exemplary Service Delivery

Service marketing managers attempting to create a new market through service innovation must focus on the factors determining success or failure. There are nine success drivers behind market-creating service innovations for exemplary service delivery. Some are unique for service innovation; others apply to all innovations. The most innovative and exemplary service organizations harness all these drivers.

A scalable business model—Service organizations can use various strategies to enhance their business models. One model is to become more capital-intensive. Another model is to incentivize customers to perform more of the service themselves. Still, another alternative is to develop a detachable service variant to extend the market while lowering labor intensity.

Comprehensive customer-experience management—Customer experience management is useful to a certain level for all market-creating innovations. Still, it is key to the success of inseparable services because customers visit the service provider's facilities and experience firsthand what happens there.

Investment in employee performance—Exemplary service innovators invest in their workforce's potential and ability to perform their tasks at consistently advanced levels. These investments typically entail strategic hiring, consistent training and development programs, information exchange, performance-focused incentives and rewards, and internal branding. That is, training & developing, promoting, and reemphasizing the desired brand identity and image to service employees.

Continuous operational innovation—Exemplary service organizations are operations-driven regardless of whether their offerings are separable or inseparable or provide a core or delivery benefit. It is difficult for imitators to perform better than service innovators who are continuously updating their operations.

Brand differentiation-- This success factor is key to market-creating exemplary service innovators but even more so for service innovators. Because services are performances, there is no time to kick in after purchasing. A reputable brand lowers perceived risk. Effectively articulating a convincing message, performing core services efficiently, and devising strategies to connect emotionally with customers help develop a successful brand. A strong brand is key for service innovations.

An innovation ambassador—Market-creating innovations of all types required an ambassador —a mobilizer of resources, an effective persuader, executor, and a person who can envision the possibilities inherent in an initiative and champion the development process of the idea into a market success.

A superior customer benefit—Innovations can bring to existence new products only if they offer an effective solution to a problem of adequate importance to push customers to use the service—and then to repeat the service encounter and give the service a favorable word of mouth. Lowering customers time and effort is a key advantage and a benefit of market-creating innovations.

Affordability—Developing a market requires customers willing to alter their behavior for a superior benefit and have the money to make the purchase. Cost-structure innovation is an effective strategy for offering customer affordability.

Finally, continuous strategic innovation is a hallmark of exemplars—Neither service firms nor manufacturing companies can ignore it or take it for granted. For instance, Google sustains its competitive edge by allowing service employees to allot one day in a week to brainstorm on new initiatives called Googlettes, and by promoting an online Ideal list, open office meeting time with senior managers, and routine brainstorming sessions for service staff to pitch their ideas on new innovations (Berry et al., 2006).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Empirical investigations have corroborated the strategic service marketing literature that emphasizes the role of service quality in shaping consumer behavior (Andersen & Weisstein, 2019). As labor costs continue to grow, improving service quality provides obvious cost benefits to service firms. The literature shows a robust association between customer satisfaction and financial success. Marketing managers need to harness drivers associated with customer satisfaction to increase commercial success. More specifically, marketing managers should forecast customer satisfaction based on tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, which account for 38.9% of customer satisfaction (Dinh & Pickler, 2012).

Research underscores the importance of virtual servicescape quality (VSQ) in endangering participation behavior. Marketing managers in charge of user experience should devise relevant strategies. Marketing managers recognize and respond to the widespread expansion of the Internet in the lives of modern consumers, but the quality of virtual operations is still significantly different among service enterprises. Research findings also highlighted the importance of creating and sustaining high-quality virtual environments by elucidating the framework by which the quality of the virtual servicescape determines service outputs. The VSQ elements (system availability, efficiency, social factors, and tangible) are all actionable factors that marketing managers can harness to enhance engagement (Tarkzadeh, 2021).

Customer engagement is an innovative concept in strategic service marketing that comes from the social sciences: organizational behavior, psychology, sociology, and political science. Customer engagement is a psychological state through interactive, co-creative customer encounters with a focal agent in focal service relationships. Customer engagement involves a mindset or an attitude that creates certain behaviors and results like referral and recommendation of particular services or brands. Research provides five elements of customer engagement: (1) the degree of passion for the brand (enthusiasm); (2) the degree of a consumer's sense of belonging to the brand (identification); (3) a pleasurable condition for being elated, and heavily absorbed when experiencing service delivery with the service provider (absorption); (4) the various degrees of engagement that a customer has with the service provider (interaction); and (5) the amount of attention which focuses and connects with the service provider (attention) (Rather, 2019).

In addition to promoting a corporate ethos that creates human capital, marketing managers seeking to establish new markets with services must foster an environment of innovation—a model of corporate behavior that encourages being aggressive about novel ideas, risk, and failure. Service staff must be confident to take risks and openly exchange thoughts and perspectives with others in the organization. They must care and trust enough to attempt to develop something authentic and original. Organizations that successfully create an environment that appreciates human talent and innovation will acquire consistent flows of incremental improvements that increase their profitability. However, when marketing decision-makers value the innovations that create new markets and put the key drivers of success in place, they can also create innovative services that prepare their organizations for sustained growth and profitability. By thinking about a service in regards to its core benefits and the separability of its use from its production, marketing decision-makers can determine how to out-innovate their rivals (Berry et al., 2006).

Branding is imperative for service marketing organizations because most service consumption is continuous or periodic, and reputable brands build consumers' trust in intangible purchases and consumption. Thus, it is crucial for service marketing enterprises to build brand loyalty. Moreover, the intangibility and variability of services expose significant risks to service recipients, yet strong service brands can lower such risks and increase recipients' confidence in service purchases consumption (He & Li, 2010). To meet customer satisfaction, marketing managers must know consumers' evolving needs and wants, which shift continuously. Consumers will respond after perceiving the service value; post-purchase

satisfaction is a function of the service performance about customer expectations. Satisfaction is a sentiment of delight (Foster, 2019).

Lastly, the clarity of strategies and the identification of success drivers means that marketing decision-makers have more intelligence. More intelligence fused with innovation and creativity will likely result in exemplary service marketing and delivery for potential customers. Thus, this expands the service firms' potential market share and delivers an exemplary service to customers (Hall, 2009).

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