



Developing a deeper understanding of positive customer feedback

DOI:
[10.1108/JSM-07-2016-0263](https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-07-2016-0263)

Document Version
Accepted author manuscript

[Link to publication record in Manchester Research Explorer](#)

Citation for published version (APA):
Nasr, L., Burton, J., & Gruber, T. (2018). Developing a deeper understanding of positive customer feedback. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 32(2), 142-160. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-07-2016-0263>

Published in:
Journal of Services Marketing

Citing this paper
Please note that where the full-text provided on Manchester Research Explorer is the Author Accepted Manuscript or Proof version this may differ from the final Published version. If citing, it is advised that you check and use the publisher's definitive version.

General rights
Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the Research Explorer are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Takedown policy
If you believe that this document breaches copyright please refer to the University of Manchester's Takedown Procedures [<http://man.ac.uk/04Y6Bo>] or contact openresearch@manchester.ac.uk providing relevant details, so we can investigate your claim.





Developing a deeper understanding of positive customer feedback

Journal:	<i>Journal of Services Marketing</i>
Manuscript ID	JSM-07-2016-0263.R2
Manuscript Type:	Article
Keywords:	Service encounter, Positive Customer Feedback, Front-line Employees, Laddering, ZMET

SCHOLARONE™
Manuscripts

Developing a Deeper Understanding of Positive Customer Feedback

Structured Abstract:

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to highlight the importance and extend the understanding of the under researched concept of personal Positive Customer Feedback (PCF). By comparing and contrasting Front-Line Employees' (FLEs) and customers' perspectives, this study aims to develop a deeper understanding of the main elements, characteristics of PCF, its various impacts, and the perceived importance of this phenomenon for both parties.

Design/methodology/approach: An exploratory research study was conducted using a novel integrated methodological approach combining two well-established qualitative techniques: structured Laddering interviews and various elements of the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET). In total, personal interviews with 40 participants consisting of 20 customers and 20 FLEs were conducted.

Findings: This study conceptualizes personal PCF in the service literature by identifying the various PCF elements and characteristics. We extend PCF understanding beyond what the current literature shows (i.e. gratitude, compliments) by identifying nine characteristics of PCF. This study also proposes a number of impacts on both customers and FLEs. While both customers and FLEs have a similar understanding of the various elements and characteristics of PCF, the significance of the various elements and the subsequent impacts vary between the two groups. Finally, three key themes in PCF handling that help position PCF within the extant customer management literature are identified and discussed.

Research limitations/implications: This study contributes to a well-rounded understanding of customer feedback by counter-balancing the prevailing focus on customer complaining behaviour and proposing a complimentary look at the positive valence of personal feedback. It also provides managerial implications concerning the management of positive service encounters, an emerging topic within service research.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Originality/value: This multidisciplinary study is the first to extend the understanding of personal PCF by comparing and contrasting customers' and FLEs' perspectives. The findings of this study highlight the need to explore the positive side of service interactions in order to create positive service experiences.

Key Words: Service Encounter, Positive Customer Feedback, Front-line Employees, Laddering, ZMET.

Paper Type: Research Paper

Developing a Deeper Understanding of Positive Customer Feedback

Introduction

Considerable research has recognized the various advantages of receiving, analysing, and managing customer feedback (Ordenes *et al.*, 2014). However, current service research seems to be mostly “listening” to the negative voices. For decades, driven by the goal to fix problems, such that costs (like negative word-of-mouth, customer switching behaviour, and lost turnover) can be managed and minimized, service researchers were primarily concerned with negative customer feedback. Thus, the main focus was on customer complaints, dysfunctional customer behaviour, and customer rage (e.g., Daunt and Harris, 2014; Patterson *et al.*, 2016).

Although these studies advanced the area of customer feedback management, service researchers have paid less attention to human appreciation (Nasr *et al.*, 2014). Nevertheless, this notion represents a fundamental component of social relationships (Howells and Cumming, 2012) and, accordingly, has been an essential ingredient to theories concerning social relationships and reciprocal behaviours across a variety of disciplines (Bartlett and DeSteno, 2006). For example, it has been found that appreciation and gratitude help with coping with stressful situations, strengthening social relationships, and increasing positive emotions (Grant and Gino, 2010). The limited research around appreciation within service research is surprising, given that service encounters are, in their essence, social interactions involving service customers and providers. Additionally, service companies are continually striving to decrease stress levels within service encounters (Bailey *et al.*, 2001), strengthen their relationships with customers (Verhoef, 2003), and increase customers’ positive emotions as a way to build positive customer experiences (Gentile *et al.*, 2007).

We suggest that customer feedback is an essential medium for the delivery of customer appreciation and the sharing of positive emotions, which can have crucial positive implications on customers, Front-Line Employees (FLEs), and companies. Given that most of the customer feedback is delivered in person to FLEs during service encounters (Wirtz *et al.*, 2010), a deeper understanding of personal Positive Customer Feedback (PCF) from the perspective of both

1
2
3 customers and FLEs is needed. Given the importance of customer participation in creating their
4 own experiences (Palmer, 2010) and considering the established benefits of positive feedback for
5 the giver and recipient, makes the need to consider PCF in greater depth especially notable.
6
7

8
9
10 In this respect, a number of research gaps are identified: first, previous research is biased towards
11 negative customer feedback (Erickson and Ecktich, 2001). Even though there is a substantial
12 amount of research that looked into the various elements and dynamics within service encounters
13 in general (e.g., Bitner *et al.*, 1990; Lariviere *et al.*, 2017); and customer-employee personal
14 interactions in particular (e.g. Pugh, 2001; Delcourt *et al.*, 2017), only a limited number of
15 studies specifically looked at the positive valence of customer feedback (e.g., Kraft and Martin,
16 2001; Robinson and Berl, 1979) while proposing more questions than answers and failing to
17 explain the various *elements and characteristics* of PCF. Second, although in a recent study the
18 impact of PCF on well-being was established (Nasr *et al.*, 2014), the operationalisation of this
19 *impact and its importance* remained unclear. Third, some previous studies offer a fragmented
20 overview of PCF by collecting data from employees and managers while failing to include the
21 customer's perspective (e.g., Erickson and Ecktich, 2001). Finally, previous research discusses
22 contrasting and sometimes contradicting impacts of PCF (e.g., Nasr *et al.*, 2015). Thus, research
23 on PCF fails to give a coherent and in-depth understanding of this important phenomenon.
24
25

26
27
28 This study aims to fill these gaps by investigating, through comparing and contrasting,
29 customers' and employees' perceptions of personal PCF, the main elements and characteristics
30 of PCF, its various impacts, and the significance of this phenomenon for both parties. By looking
31 at both customers' and employees' perspectives, this study helps identify whether customers'
32 understanding of what constitutes personal PCF differs from what contact employees perceive.
33 Moreover, it helps recognize the impacts associated with personal PCF for both parties involved
34 in the service encounter. Accordingly, this study is impactful in a number of ways. First, we
35 contribute to the advancement of research by addressing topics that many researchers have
36 identified as crucial for the future of service research. In particular, we respond to the needs for
37 more studies around the role of positive experiences and positive relationships (Gable and Haidt,
38 2005) by exploring the overlooked concept of PCF. Additionally, we provide an in-depth
39 understanding of a major phenomenon taking place during a service encounter (Kunz and
40 Hogreve, 2011) by looking at both FLEs' and customers' perspectives of personal PCF. We
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 subsequently dissect personal PCF to understand its main elements and characteristics, its
4 various impacts, and its importance for both parties. It is hoped that this study will unfold an area
5 of research and methodology which will generate considerable benefits for researchers interested
6 in stretching the boundaries of service encounter and customer feedback management research.
7 Finally, by comparing customers' and employees' perspectives, it is contended that this study
8 has vital managerial implications as it increases employees' and managers' awareness and
9 understanding of positive customer communications and their potential outcomes, which are
10 crucial for successful employee management, customer relationship building, and service
11 experience enhancement.
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19

20 This paper begins with an overview of the role and importance of customer feedback and the
21 need to focus on PCF within service. We, then, present the research questions and the novel
22 integrated methodological approach consisting of combined structured laddering interviews and
23 two key elements of the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET); the visual projective
24 technique and unstructured in-depth questions (Zaltman, 1997). Subsequently, we describe the
25 chosen data analysis techniques followed by a discussion of the results. Finally, we propose
26 managerial implications and outline limitations and directions for further research.
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36

37 **Literature Review**

38 *Customer feedback*

39 Identified as a form of customer engagement (Van Doorn *et al.*, 2010), customer feedback is
40 defined as customer communication concerning goods and (customer) service (Erickson and
41 Ecklich, 2001). Though customer engagement is a somehow new concept (Brodie *et al.*, 2011),
42 customer feedback research has been conducted much longer and in greater depth.
43
44
45
46
47
48
49

50 According to Witell *et al.* (2011), customer feedback can be either structured or unstructured.
51 Structured feedback takes the form of quantitative surveys, while unstructured feedback comes
52 through telephone calls, e-mails, and social media, thus, giving the customers more flexibility to
53 describe their experiences in more details. Ordenes *et al.* (2014) present another categorization of
54 customer feedback and propose that "customer feedback can be classified as 'explicit or implicit'
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 depending on whether the customers consciously or unconsciously provide a third party with
4 information about their experiences” (p. 280). Traditional channels for explicit customer
5 feedback collection include platforms such as surveys, e-mail, online reviews, while
6 organizations collect implicit feedback, when tracking customer-determined actions, through
7 measuring activities such as; eye tracking, reading time, number of pages scrolled, and number
8 of clicks obtained in a web document (Poblete and Baeza-Yates, 2008). Finally, Sampson
9 considers the “initiator” of customer feedback as the basis of his categorization and proposes that
10 customer feedback could be either active or passive, also referred to as solicited and unsolicited
11 feedback (e.g., Wirtz and Tomlin, 2000). Companies use active feedback collection tools (or
12 solicited feedback) to invite customers to express feedback, for example, through surveys, focus
13 groups, and interviews, thus the initiator of this feedback is the company. In contrast, passive
14 feedback collection (or unsolicited customer feedback) relies on the customers’ own desire and
15 will to express their experiences (Mattila and Wirtz, 2004). Witell *et al.* (2011) argue that
16 unstructured and unsolicited feedback assigns more active roles to customers as they engage in
17 providing organizations with richer information about their experiences. Two types of
18 unsolicited customer feedback are identified: interpersonal communication to other people (e.g.,
19 WOM, EWOM) and communication to firms (Day and Landon, 1977).
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33

34 Although organizations traditionally focused on solicited feedback, a substantial amount of
35 research was conducted on the importance and effects of WOM (e.g., Litvin *et al.*, 2008).
36 Moreover, with technological advances presenting customers with new channels and platforms
37 through which they can provide feedback (Witell *et al.*, 2011) and the growing importance of big
38 data and social media content, unsolicited feedback became the central focus of many
39 researchers and organizations (Ordenes *et al.*, 2014). Nevertheless, research suggests that the
40 majority of the unsolicited customer feedback communicated to service firms is addressed in
41 person to FLEs rather than through other channels (Wirtz *et al.*, 2010), which makes the
42 customer and the FLE key sources of information for organizations through the centrality and
43 frequency of their interactions (Voss *et al.*, 2004). Finally, unsolicited customer feedback, could
44 be directly given to the FLE through verbal interaction or indirectly through tipping and other
45 symbolic actions (Voss *et al.*, 2004).
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 As evidenced by the various identified categorizations, customer feedback has been widely
4 studied in the service literature. This is mainly due to the strategic position of customer feedback
5 within companies' operations. For example, customer feedback management outcomes include
6 assistance in performance measurement and facilitation of organizational learning (Caemmerer
7 and Wilson, 2010) by gaining insights for new product and service development (Fundin and
8 Bergman, 2003). Moreover, feedback management leads to improvement in decision making and
9 service quality (Wirtz *et al.*, 2010), generating competitive advantage (Lusch *et al.*, 2007), and
10 building stronger customer relationships (Frow and Payne, 2009). Finally, the analysis of
11 customer feedback leads to an improved customer experience by designing a more accurate,
12 customer-focused service blueprint (Ordenes *et al.*, 2014).
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20

21 *Positive customer feedback*

22
23
24
25 Despite the substantial work done in the area of customer feedback management, most of the
26 research conducted so far focuses on customer complaints and dissatisfaction. The customer
27 complaining field was pioneered by Best and Andreasen (1977) and thereafter has been the
28 emphasis of many scholars (e.g., Gruber *et al.*, 2008; Henneberg *et al.*, 2015), leaving the
29 various manifestation of PCF quasi-marginalized (Nasr *et al.*, 2014). We do not deny the merits
30 of these robust studies in advancing the area of customer feedback management; where both
31 valences of customer feedback have been acknowledged and considered (e.g., Ordenes *et al.*,
32 2014), but we do propose a complimentary in-depth look at personal PCF.
33
34
35
36
37
38
39

40 Our literature review identified a small number of studies conducted on PCF. Robinson and Berl
41 (1979) were among the pioneers to investigate personal PCF. Their particular focus was on a
42 particular *element and characteristic* of personal PCF; "customer compliments". The authors
43 made the first effort to study customer compliments, recognizing that customer compliments
44 seem to be more frequent than customer complaints. However, many companies do not have
45 established systems to capture them. In addition to customer compliments, two other elements
46 and characteristics of personal PCF are discussed in the literature: customer empathy and
47 customer gratitude. Customer empathy is defined as customer's apprehension of and reaction to
48 an employee's thoughts, feelings, and intentions during a service interaction (Wieseke *et al.*,
49 2012). Gratitude, on the other hand, has been recently rediscovered as a research priority within
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 Positive Psychology (Young and Hutchinson, 2012) and accordingly has been studied by various
4 social scientists (Howells and Cumming, 2012). Within service research, customer gratitude has
5 been briefly studied through the lens of relationship marketing (Palmatier *et al.*, 2009).
6
7

8
9
10 Kraft and Martin (2001) criticized the current practices of focusing solely on studying customer
11 complaining behaviour and called for research considering the other side “of the same coin” (p.
12 11). They proposed that encouraging, recognizing, understanding, and acting on positive
13 feedback is a strategic step for every service organization because of its potential strategic
14 *impact*. In this regards, Baron and Warnaby (2011) found that soliciting positive feedback
15 produces valuable information for improving services. Furthermore, personal PCF contributes to
16 the creation of more productive and happier FLEs (Nasr *et al.*, 2014). Similarly, customer
17 empathy was found to act as a qualifier of social interaction by nurturing alignment of feelings
18 and thoughts and creating smooth and harmonious interactions (Gremler and Gwinner, 2008).
19 Moreover, research shows that empathy could foster successful interactions and mitigate the
20 effects of negative experiences in service interaction (Wieseke *et al.*, 2012). Equally, customer
21 gratitude was found to create long-lasting performance benefits based on gratitude-related
22 reciprocal behaviors. In particular, research shows that customer gratitude is a fundamental
23 component of buyer-seller relationships and that it plays a vital role in realizing how relationship
24 marketing investments increase purchase intentions, sales growth, and share of wallet (Palmatier
25 *et al.*, 2009).
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38

39 In addition, Erickson and Ecktich (2001) studied the *importance of PCF for customers* and found
40 that complimenting customers are already predisposed to relationship building since they are
41 engaged enough to invest time and energy in communicating the positive feedback to the
42 employee. Similarly, Heskett *et al.* (1994) found that complimenting customers are the most
43 motivated, vocal, and satisfied ones; therefore, they should be the obvious choice for long-term
44 relationship building and customer engagement. On the other hand, Eisenberger *et al.* (1990)
45 studied the *importance of PCF for FLEs* and found that it satisfies the employee’s social need for
46 approval, affiliation, and esteem. Nevertheless, these studies are limited and raise a number of
47 unanswered but crucial questions, in particular, regarding the various personal PCF elements and
48 characteristics, impacts and perceived importance.
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Research Objective

In light of the limited knowledge in the area of PCF, it is vital to deepen our understanding of PCF in a service setting. Previous research studies fail to answer the following questions: How do customers and FLEs perceive personal PCF? What are the main characteristics and elements of personal PCF as identified by customers and FLEs? What does personal PCF mean to customers and FLEs? Are there inconsistencies in personal PCF perceptions between customers and FLEs? What are the impacts of personal PCF on customers and FLEs? Why is personal PCF important to both customers and FLEs? Therefore, the objective of this study is to expand the understanding of unsolicited personal PCF, having the FLE as subject and recipient, by using the perspectives of both parties involved in a service encounter. For this purpose, we aim to compare and contrast customers' and employees' perceptions of personal PCF elements and characteristics, its various impacts, and the significance of this phenomenon for both parties. Thus, this study will provide a much needed conceptualization and deeper understanding of PCF.

Integrated Methodological Approach

An exploratory approach was selected in order to gain a deeper understanding (Malhotra and Birks, 2006) of the understudied PCF phenomena. For this purpose, qualitative techniques were adopted since they are capable of capturing the complexities of and extracting detail information about sensitive subject areas and phenomenon (Keegan, 2009). Similarly, a qualitative approach is suitable when limited theory exists to explain the relationships between the concepts under study (Altinay *et al.*, 2014). We adopted an integrated hybrid methodology consisting of well-known qualitative methods such as laddering (Reynolds and Gutman, 1988), combined with elements of the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) (Zaltman, 1997).

Laddering

Laddering refers to a one-on-one, in-depth interviewing technique used to gain a deeper understanding of the individual deep reasoning regarding a specific topic (Zaltman, 1997). Laddering was selected because it is a well-established technique for exploratory research. In particular, laddering helps discover what a certain phenomenon (in this study PCF) means to

1
2
3 individuals by using probing questions to gain a better acumen of the individual's deep reasoning
4 vis-à-vis a particular topic (Zaltman, 1997). This technique is grounded in the means-end
5 approach that draws on insights from motivation and cognitive psychology, which state that the
6 values or desirable end-states are the key motivators of consumers' choice models (Gutman,
7 1982). As such, the *attributes* of things are "means" to reach higher level *consequences*
8 (psychological or functional), which, in turn, are *means* to achieve an ultimate value ("ends")
9 (Olson and Reynolds, 2001). Therefore, laddering usually involves personal semi-standardized
10 in-depth interviews where probing questions are used to uncover Attribute-Consequence-Value
11 chains.
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19

20 In this study, through the laddering interviews, we aim to uncover the Attributes (A),
21 Consequences (C) and perceived Values (V) associated with personal PCF occurrence.
22
23
24

- 25 • Attributes (A) are usually tangible and intangible characteristics of a good, a service, or
26 an individual. In this study, Attributes (A) are customers' and employees' perceptions of
27 the main *elements and characteristics* of personal PCF.
28
- 29 • Consequences (C) usually describe why a certain attribute is important to the individual.
30 In this study, Consequences (C) are the *impacts* of personal PCF on FLEs and customers.
31
32
- 33 • Values (V) are universal life goals, and as described by Rokeach (1973), they are the
34 most personal consequences people are aiming for in their lives. In this study, Values (V)
35 reflect the perceived importance that customers and FLEs associate with personal PCF.
36
37
38
39

40 Therefore, Attributes (A) – Consequences (C) – Values (V) are laddering specific terms, while
41 *elements and characteristics*, *impacts* and perceived *importance* are study specific terms. Taken
42 together, the generated linkages between the Attributes (*elements and characteristics*),
43 Consequences (*impacts*) and Values (*importance*) of PCF were then translated into visual
44 linkages (means-end chains), displaying detailed relationships between A-C-V and referred to as
45 Hierarchical Value Maps (HVM) (Reynolds and Gutman, 1988).
46
47
48
49
50

51 *Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique*

52
53
54

55 Previous research shows that customers and employees might feel embarrassed or reluctant to
56 express their sincere feelings regarding positive feedback, as giving (Martinuzzi, 2009) or
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 receiving praise (Nasr *et al.*, 2015) could be intimidating. Therefore, in order to address this
4 possible issue, known as “blocking” (Reynolds and Gutman, 1988), we adopted the approach
5 used by Barnett *et al.* (2014) and integrated the visual projection elements of the ZMET into
6 laddering. In addition, in order to acutely understand the different perceptions of the two parties,
7 the in-depth unstructured questions component of the ZMET technique was also employed
8 (Zaltman and Higie, 1993).
9

10
11 ZMET is a hybrid methodology that incorporates the visual projection technique, in-depth
12 personal interviews, and a range of qualitative data-processing tools (Lee *et al.*, 2003). It has
13 been used as an academic research tool to enhance the understanding of customer thinking and
14 behaviour (Coulter and Zaltman, 1994). Our study utilized a combination of two key ZMET
15 elements: visual projective technique and in-depth personal interviews.
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24

25 The visual projective technique of ZMET is built on the premise that research tools need to
26 further emphasize non-verbal communication (Zaltman, 1997). ZMET advocates that most
27 people find it easier to express themselves through images rather than words. Therefore, at the
28 heart of the ZMET approach is the idea of “knowledge representation” or “metaphors” (Coulter
29 and Zaltman, 1994). These representations are prompted through the usage of projective
30 techniques by asking the participants to present and describe images that reflect their perceptions
31 of a particular issue. The aim is to help the participants express what they find difficult to
32 articulate.
33
34
35
36
37
38
39

40 In addition, within ZMET, there is a need to ask the respondents some unstructured and in-depth
41 questions. In this respect, the researcher used reflexive interviewing techniques such as restating
42 informants comments and summarizing to ensure a full understanding (Roger and Farson, 1984).
43
44
45

46 *Integrating both methods*

47
48

49 In this study, ZMET elements were incorporated into the laddering technique, by first
50 implementing the visual projective technique, which forms the basis of the structured laddering
51 interview, and second by asking in-depth, unstructured questions regarding aspects of PCF that
52 the structured laddering questions failed to explain. This integration of methods helps to
53 overcome the identified phenomenon of “blocking” (Barnett *et al.*, 2014), by making the
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 participants reflect about their thoughts and feeling in advance of the interview and accordingly
4 projecting them into images of their choice. It also triggers thoughts and feelings in the
5 participants and generates meanings that otherwise might not be extracted in a face-to-face or
6 focus group interview. Finally, combining laddering and ZMET elements allows the researcher
7 to look at the data in a deeper and varied way (Christensen and Olson, 2002).
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15

16 **Data Collection**

17 *Sample size and characteristics*

18
19 According to Reynolds *et al.* (2001), the minimum sample size required for conducting laddering
20 research is 20 participants per subgroup as it can give a full range of attributes, consequences,
21 and values. Subsequently, personal interviews were conducted with 40 participants (20 service
22 customers and 20 FLEs) working in different service industries.
23
24
25
26
27
28
29

30 Snowball sampling was used as a non-probability sampling technique. It consists of asking the
31 recruited participants to recommend further participants who share the required characteristics to
32 be eligible to take part in the study (Malhotra and Birks, 2006). Snowball sampling is a suitable
33 technique for exploratory research, and it has been used in similar service research (e.g., Groth *et*
34 *al.*, 2009). We started with the customer subgroup by approaching and inviting two random
35 customers of a local coffee shop to participate. Afterwards we asked for referrals (acquaintances,
36 friends and family members who qualify to serve as customer participants in this study) and the
37 chain referral, via the snowballing technique, of the customer subgroup began. Customer
38 participants were customers of various service industries including retail, hospitality, and
39 tourism. Similarly, the management of a local service company, who offered help with the
40 research, selected two FLE respondents. After interviewing these two FLEs, we asked them for
41 referrals (acquaintances, friends and family members who qualify to serve as FLE participants in
42 this study). Afterwards the chain referral, via the snowballing technique, of the FLE subgroup
43 began. The inclusion criteria for employee participants was to have working experience as FLEs
44 in a service industry. In order to match the expertise of the customers, FLEs working in the
45 hospitality, retail, and tourism industries were prioritized (e.g., sales coordinator, barista, sales
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 representative, and receptionist). We did not have an open call for participation but rather
4 emailed those potential participants who verbally expressed a desire to participate (either when
5 the researcher(s) approached them in person or through the referring person). Most of the
6 approached participants agreed to participate and arrangements were made to set the interview
7 time and place around their schedule and preferences. The characteristics of customer and FLE
8 samples are summarized in Table 1.
9
10
11
12
13

14 -----
15
16
17
18 Insert Table 1 about here
19
20
21 -----
22

23 *Data collection process*

24
25
26 In order to answer the research questions of this study, data were collected in two stages:
27
28

29 Stage 1: Image collection

30
31
32 Adopting the ZMET premise, our 40 participants (20 service customers and 20 FLEs working in
33 different service industries) were asked, via email, to find up to five images that represented their
34 thoughts and feelings about communicating PCF during a service encounter. We did not instruct
35 the participants about particular meanings or manifestations of unsolicited PCF, this was left to
36 them to decide. The participants were given up to seven days to collect the images and were
37 instructed to email the images to the interviewer prior to the interview as per Zaltman's (1997)
38 recommendation. We instructed the participants to find images through regular web search or by
39 taking the images themselves with a camera. We did not give any further instructions, in order
40 not to bias the participants. The average number of submitted images per participant was 4.8
41 (N=97) for the customer subgroup and 4.4 (N=88) for the FLE subgroup. Accordingly, a total of
42 185 images were collected from the 40 participants.
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51

52 Stage 2: Personal interviews

53
54
55 The 40 participants (20 service customers and 20 FLEs) were instructed to rank/sort the collected
56 images starting with what they felt was the most meaningful picture. They were subsequently
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 asked to briefly describe the picture and its meaning. This sorting task is one of the core steps in
4 implementing ZMET (Zaltman, 1997). Accordingly, the participants were asked to explain why
5 they chose a particular picture. This approach helped overcome the possible issue of “blocking”
6 (Barnett *et al.*, 2014). Instead of starting the interview by asking “what are the attributes of
7 PCF?” which might put the respondents in an uncomfortable or reluctant position (Martinuzzi,
8 2009; Nasr *et al.*, 2015), the participants described the images and narrated stories associated
9 with the selected pictures. As the topic is positive, most of the images were bright, colourful, and
10 positive in nature and accordingly put the respondents in an optimistic mood, which resulted in
11 them feeling more comfortable and at ease. As an example, the following figure shows two
12 images that respondents selected.
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21

22 -----
23
24 Insert Figure 1 about here
25
26
27
28 -----
29

30 Based on the given answers, the researcher either “ladder(ed) down” by asking questions that
31 help uncover the PCF attributes or “ladder(ed) up” to uncover the consequences and values
32 associated with PCF giving/receiving. Table 2 represents a simplified process of laddering up
33 and laddering down by using probing questions to both customers and FLE participants.
34
35
36
37
38

39 -----
40
41 Insert Table 2 about here
42
43
44
45 -----
46

47 The purpose of questioning is to reveal structural relationships between the attributes of PCF, the
48 consequences of these attributes, and the personal values and/or goals that these consequences
49 reinforce. Accordingly, the interviewer continuously asked: “Why is attribute/ consequence/
50 value ‘xyz’ important to you?” serving as the starting point for further questioning based on the
51 received answer about the particular described encounter. In order to reach the higher level of
52 consequences and values, the interviewer asked the question, “How does that make you feel?” as
53 per Reynolds *et al.*'s (2001) recommendations. The structured questioning continued until
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 participants were not able or willing to give an answer or until they were giving repetitive or
4 circular answers or had reached the value level (i.e. the ultimate importance of this
5 phenomenon). Once all the images were discussed, participants were also asked to describe any
6 missing images which they were unable to obtain and explain their relevance (Zaltman, 1997).
7
8
9

10
11 Finally, some unstructured, in-depth questions were asked to clarify any ambiguity resulting
12 from the laddering procedures and to gain deeper understanding of the identified attributes,
13 consequences, and values. After each interview, participants were asked to review the ladders
14 that the researcher noted for confirmation/validation and to clarify any possible
15 misunderstanding. Each interview was recorded for verbatim transcription employed in the data
16 analysis and lasted between 40 and 70 minutes.
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

26 **Data Analysis**

27
28 Following the recommendation of Reynolds and Gutman (1988), the data were analysed in three
29 stages. At first, content analysis was used in order to code the data from the interviews. Content
30 analysis is a systematic technique that aims to analyse the informational content of textual data
31 (Forman and Damschroder, 2008). Phrases from the interviews were categorized as either an
32 attribute, consequence, or value (the “ladder”). During this first phase, categories were developed
33 to group together comparable phrases and data points across participants. An iterative process of
34 coding was used, where data were split, combined, and (re)-grouped into meaningful categories
35 in line with content analysis techniques (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Data with identical meanings
36 were grouped into aggregated categories derived from the participants’ answers or from the
37 literature review (Krippendorff, 2004).
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46

47 A systematic coding approach was adopted. First, the researcher who conducted the interviews
48 carried out the preliminary coding of the data, taking into account the contextual information
49 related to each respondent (such as the collected images, the responses to the unstructured
50 questions, personal experiences and stories, demographics, etc.) when assigning meanings to the
51 answers as suggested by Grunert and Grunert (1995). Subsequently, two experienced coders
52 conducted separate evaluations of the coding process (conducted by the first coder) by
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 independently going manually through all the codes and ladders. For the manual coding, each
4 coder annotated his or her own version of the Excel file of codes. These two independent coders
5 then discussed and agreed on the codes between each other. They subsequently delivered a joint
6 coding report. Finally, a third independent coder acted as a third-party judge by looking at the
7 disagreements between the original coder and the joint recommendations made by the two
8 experienced coders. The results were compared and measured by using Perreault and Leigh's
9 'index of reliability' (1989) in order to check the reliability of the coding. This index, which is
10 particularly suitable in cases where two or more coders are used, has been recommended by
11 previous researchers (Iacobucci, 2001). The 'index of reliability' in this study was 0,85;
12 suggesting that the coding was reliable (Perreault and Leigh, 1989). The third independent coder
13 made the final decision regarding any identified inconsistencies, as per the recommendations of
14 Reynolds and Phillips (2008). Employing a number of independent coders ensured consistency
15 in coding and allowed for inter-coder reliability testing, which is particularly crucial to ensure
16 the reliability and validity of the analysis (Hennink *et al.*, 2011).
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29

30 Four tables were generated listing the PCF attributes (Table 3), the consequences for customers
31 (Table 4) and employees (Table 5), and the values imperative for both parties (Table 6)
32 concerning PCF. Each table succinctly describes each identified construct and states the number
33 of times each concept was mentioned. The codes are listed alphabetically.
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45

Insert Tables 3, 4, and 5 about here

46 Schwartz's (1994) Universal Values list was used to code the end value categories as it provides
47 an overview of generally held values and has been effectively used in previous laddering studies
48 (e.g., Barnett *et al.*, 2014; Henneberg *et al.*, 2015). Schwartz (1994) defines values as “desirable
49 trans-situational goals, varying in importance that serve as guiding principles in the life of a
50 person or other social entity” (p. 21).
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Insert Table 6 about here

The second stage of the analysis consisted of coding the sequences of A-C-Vs (ladders) aggregated across subjects using the decision-support software program LADDERMAP (Gengler and Reynolds, 1993) to generate implication matrices, for each subgroup, that express the number of associations between the identified attributes, consequences, and values. According to Deeter-Schmelz *et al.* (2002), the implication matrix acts as a bridge between the qualitative and quantitative element of the laddering technique by generating the number of times one code leads to another. These implication matrices depict the amount of direct and indirect links that a particular concept has with another (Deeter-Schmelz *et al.*, 2002). Direct relationship represents a connection where a concept (attribute/consequence) is directly connected to another concept (attribute/consequence) in the same ladder, while indirect relationship represents a connection where a concept (attribute/consequence) is connected to another (attribute/consequence) but with another concept (attribute/consequence) in between (Reynolds and Gutman, 1988). A total of 629 ladders were entered into LADDERMAP, divided as follows: 324 ladders from customer subgroup and 305 ladders from FLE subgroup.

The third stage consisted of generating the Hierarchical Value Maps (HVM), for each subgroup, with the data from the corresponding implication matrices. A HVM is defined as “a graphical representation of a set of means-end chains which can be thought of as an aggregate cognitive structure map” (Gengler *et al.*, 1995, p. 245). The map’s main role is to summarize the findings of the laddering interviews analysis (Claeys *et al.*, 1995). Therefore, the output is in the form of visual linkages indicating methodical relationships between A-C-Vs. Each map consists of several nodes, which represent the most mentioned A-C-Vs connected with lines expressing the linkages between them. Each map depicts three levels representing the attributes (first level or bottom of the map), consequences (second level or middle of the map) and values (third level or top of the map). Gengler *et al.* (1995) state that the first (bottom) level of the map is “somewhat cluttered and crowded” (p. 252) due to the normally larger number of identified attributes during the laddering interview.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
The size of each node (circle) represents the frequency of mentioning the concept by the participants (identified in stage 2 through the implication matrix). Therefore, the most often mentioned concept is set to receive the area of the circle to a defined maximum level. Accordingly, the circles of the other concepts are “computed proportionally to that value, based on the relative frequency of mentioning that concept” (Gengler *et al.*, 1995, p. 253). The thickness of the lines connecting the various nodes (circles) represents the relative frequency of association between the concepts (identified in stage 2 through the implication matrix) and therefore depicts the strength of the relationship between these concepts. Therefore, a maximum line width is set first; representing the relationship between the two most strongly associated concepts. Accordingly, all the other line widths are scaled to this maximum value. By following this procedure, the reader of the map can easily depict the (1) number of times participants mentioned each concept, (2) the relationship between the concepts and (3) the strength of the relationship; i.e. strongly related concepts (connected through thick lines) versus weakly related concepts (connected through thin lines).

29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
It is important to mention that the HVM does not have to show all the implications and connections generated through the implication matrix. In order to generate these maps, the researchers agreed on a “cut-off” level, which is used to make the maps interpretable while keeping a balance between detail and interpretability (Christensen and Olson, 2002), and data retention and reduction (Gengler *et al.*, 1995). For example, a “cut-off” level of 1 will generate a map that includes every connection between concepts mentioned by the participants. The downside to this cut-off level is that the generated map is “unintelligible” (Christensen and Olson, 2002, p. 484). On the other hand, if the chosen “cut-off” level is too high, many linkages will disappear and the map will become not interesting. By using LADDERMAP, we were able to test the different cut-off levels in order to generate maps that are meaningful and interpretable. Accordingly, we identified consensus maps (Figure 2 and 3) at a cut-off level of 4, meaning that the participants had to mention the linkages between concepts at least 4 times for them to be included in the map. A cut-off level of 4 represents on average 60% of the data.

53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
ZMET elements additional analysis

ZMET elements help gain a deeper understanding of the constructs elicited through traditional laddering probes. In this respect, the collected images and content analysis of the interview transcripts helped identify a number of relevant themes. We adopted a similar approach to Lee *et al.* (2003), where the step of deep metaphor investigation was replaced by conceptualization of the thematic categories from the data. The typical ZMET approach to developing deep metaphors does not take into account previous theories and research advancement (Lee *et al.*, 2003). Accordingly, creating abstractions of the thematic categories without reference to findings of the laddering interviews would limit the understanding of PCF. This would accordingly contradict one of the purposes of incorporating ZMET into this study. Therefore, the collected images were reviewed and all transcripts were closely read and the key concepts related to the laddering analysis were highlighted. Subsequently, similarities, differences and/or relationships between the concepts that help understand PCF phenomenon in greater depth and beyond the HVMs, were thoroughly searched (Giorgi, 1989). In particular, we used a similar approach to Altinay *et al.* (2014) where we first worked on identifying the major themes, using the participant's own language, through open coding (Corbin and Strauss, 2008) to generate the first-order concepts. Then, we used axial coding to introduce our own interpretations that helped us understand PCF phenomenon in greater depth based on the knowledge gained from the HVMs, this process helped us generate second-order themes. Finally, we grouped the second-order themes into aggregate dimensions that gave an overall overview of PCF that goes beyond the findings of the HVM. Based on this additional analysis, empirically grounded key themes were identified.

Results and Discussion

Customer perceptions of PCF

Figure 2 shows the HVM that graphically presents customer perceptions of PCF attributes (characteristics and elements), consequences (impacts), and values (importance).

Insert Figure 2 about here

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

The HVM shows a complex structure. The most important PCF attribute is “Acknowledgement” (mentioned 16 times). In a service encounter, customers tend to admit the good service received without going further or investing extra efforts in communicating their satisfaction. This appears to be the most direct and common way for customers to express personal PCF to FLEs. This finding extends Jones *et al.*'s study (2015), who argue that not all customers are keen on relationship building with employees, by showing that engaging in a positive conversation or small talks is not a guarantee of long term relationship building intentions. Acknowledging a good service makes the customer feel comfortable and at ease in a service encounter (“Feeling comfortable” mentioned 17 times). Interestingly, the consequence of “Feeling comfortable”, is linked to all the attributes (except “Encouragement”). Thus, the strong desire to feel comfortable could be triggering customers to express various PCFs.

By aiming to feel comfortable and at ease in a service encounter, customers indirectly experience positive emotions (“Feeling enthusiastic” mentioned 19 times and “Feeling altruistic” mentioned 20 times). Wieseke *et al.* (2012) found that “Feeling altruistic” or experiencing customer empathy, defined as customer’s apprehension of and reaction to an employee’s thoughts, feelings, and intentions during a service interaction, can act as a qualifier of social interactions, nurturing alignment of feelings and thoughts and creating smooth, harmonious interactions. In service research, empirical studies on empathy in employee-customer interactions are scarce (Weißhaar and Huber, 2016) with the majority of prior research studying the impact of employee empathy on customers (e.g. Zeithaml *et al.*, 1996). In this study, we extend this notion, but focusing on the empathy experienced by customers and linking it to well-being outcomes. These positive emotions are indicators of enhanced well-being for customers as a result of PCF giving (Forgeard *et al.*, 2011). Feeling altruistic is also important, as it was found that experiencing empathic feelings also fosters successful interactions and mitigates the effects of negative experiences in service interaction (Wieseke *et al.*, 2012). Consequently, “Feeling altruistic” is linked to the most important values of “Security” (mentioned 20 times) and “Universalism” (mentioned 18 times). Thus, customers need to feel secure and strive for stability, risk reduction and harmony during a service encounter, and aim to maintain the stability of relationships they have (“Security”) by being empathetic, while showing care about the well-being of others

1
2
3 (“Universalism”). In this respect, they also care about the well-being of those who they build a
4 relationship with (“Relationship” mentioned 17 times). Thus, a common way for customers to
5 achieve security is by building quality relationships with FLEs. This comes in accordance with
6 Berry (1995) who found that risk reduction is a key outcome of service provider relationships.
7 Nevertheless, he mainly focused on the role of companies in reducing customer risk and
8 fostering the security feeling. We extend this notion by proposing that customers are active
9 actors in the process and their positive feedback could be a major contributor to reducing their
10 perceived risk.
11
12

13
14
15
16
17
18
19 Another reason customers express PCF is to feel in control (mentioned 15 times) of the
20 encounter as a way to express their own power (also mentioned 15 times) and enhance their
21 security. Our study supports that the perception of having control reinforces customers’ security
22 values (Kania and Gruber, 2013). Bitran and Hoech (1990) advocate that customers’ perceived
23 control is an important dimension of a successful service experience. Thus, we extend previous
24 findings by proposing that the highly valued feeling of security is multidimensional and is
25 strongly triggered by the experienced empathetic feeling, the relationship customers build with
26 FLEs, and the control feeling they experience during a service encounter.
27
28
29

30
31
32
33
34 The second most important PCF attribute is “Connection” (mentioned 15 times). Customers tend
35 to want to create a personal bond by exchanging feelings of care and friendliness, which might
36 help building personal connections with FLEs. Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2006) found that
37 connection and rapport building are the main drivers for customer satisfaction. We extend this
38 finding by showing that connection and rapport building could be triggered by customers
39 themselves when they give PCF to employees. Therefore, it is not the sole role of the employee
40 to foster rapport building. This attribute is also linked to consequences of “Feeling in control”
41 and “Feeling comfortable” (each mentioned 17 times).
42
43
44
45
46
47
48

49 Interestingly, “Connection”, “Loyalty” (both mentioned 14 times) and “Sensory expressiveness”
50 (mentioned 12 times) have strong connections with the consequence of “Feeling comfortable”.
51 This could be explained by the notion that these characteristics of PCF are more behavioural and
52 personal in nature while “Acknowledgement” and “Gratitude” (mentioned 7 times) are verbal
53 and more formal. Thus, it might be that customers feel more comfortable when the employee
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 understands their positive behaviour, enabling them to avoid having to express positive feedback
4 verbally.
5
6

7
8 *FLE perceptions of PCF*
9

10 Figure 3 shows the hierarchical value map that graphically presents FLE perceptions of PCF
11 attributes (characteristics and elements), consequences (impacts), and values (importance).
12
13

14 -----
15
16
17
18 Insert Figure 3 about here
19
20
21 -----
22

23
24 According to FLEs, the most important PCF attributes are “Acknowledgement” and
25 “Encouragement” (both mentioned 16 times). Both attributes have a strong relationship with the
26 most important consequence of “Feeling enthusiastic” (mentioned 20 times). Therefore, the main
27 consequence for FLEs is the experience of positive emotions and feelings which is indirectly
28 linked to a number of consequences including: Feeling responsible (mentioned 11 times),
29 Relationship (mentioned 13 times), Motivation (mentioned 12 times), Job satisfaction
30 (mentioned 14 times), and Spillover (mentioned 13 times). These findings supplement Nasr *et*
31 *al.*'s (2014) research, which argues that PCF has a positive impact on FLE well-being, by
32 uncovering a number of personal and work related consequences. Moreover, FLEs confirmed
33 that the impact of PCF and the positive emotions experienced have a much wider impact that
34 goes beyond the particular service encounter (through the strong connection between “Feeling
35 enthusiastic” and “Spillover”). This finding supports further transdisciplinary research conducted
36 in the field of psychology by Rodríguez-Muñoz *et al.* (2014) who found that an individual's
37 work engagement and resulting happiness would spill over to their home domain, by increasing
38 the happiness level of their family members, which alternatively increases the employee overall
39 happiness. This major finding explains why the consequence “Spillover” is linked to one of the
40 most important values of FLEs: “Benevolence” (mentioned 16 times) since FLEs care about the
41 preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom they are in frequent personal
42 contact (i.e. family and friends).
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 The next most important consequences for FLEs resulting from personal PCF are “Self-efficacy”
4 and “Enhanced self-image” (both mentioned 16 times and both have a strong relationship with
5 the major attributes “Acknowledgement” and “Encouragement”). The confirmation that FLEs
6 receive through encouragement and acknowledgement contribute to the enhancement of their
7 feelings of self-efficacy by becoming more confident about their performance and self-image and
8 boosting their self-evaluation. Both measures were identified as important facets of well-being
9 by Forgeard *et al.* (2011). “Self-efficacy” is indirectly linked to “Managerial Reward”
10 (mentioned 11 times) which, along with “Job satisfaction” (mentioned 14 times), has a strong
11 link with one of the most important values of FLEs: “Achievement” (mentioned 16 times).
12 Therefore, the value of “Achievement” is enhanced by the intrinsic job satisfaction feeling as
13 well as by the extrinsic managerial reward.
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23

24 Finally, one of the main drivers of FLEs to maintain a “Relationship” with the customers is the
25 value of “Security” (mentioned 13 times) where they aim to maintain harmony and stability by
26 staying in good terms with customers. This finding extends the concept of “dyad attachment
27 style” — which refers to the extent to which both the customer and FLE are “able to trust and
28 depend on other people” (Ben-Ari and Lavee, 2005, p. 622), by showing that PCF can foster
29 their security feelings and relationship closeness.
30
31
32
33
34

35 *Comparison of customer and employee perspectives*

36
37
38 The two complex HVMS (Figures 2 and 3) showcase that a number of attributes, consequences,
39 and values are shared between the two sets of data. However, there are several concepts that only
40 appear in one of the HVMS but not in the other, while some repetitive concepts identified by
41 customers and FLEs lead to different consequences and values and at varying levels of
42 importance.
43
44
45
46
47

48 In terms of similarities, the most common attribute of PCF is “Acknowledgement”. Both
49 customers and FLEs agreed that this is the most evident and common PCF communicated during
50 a service encounter. Moreover, “Feeling enthusiastic” is a common impact on both subgroups,
51 displaying the strong positive emotions and feelings generated as a result of PCF
52 communication. This extends Nasr *et al.*'s (2014) study advocating that PCF has a positive
53 impact on the well-being of FLEs by operationalizing this well-being and providing concrete
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 implications. More importantly, this study shows that expressing PCF can have a positive impact
4 on the well-being of customers as well and proposes a number of well-being dimensions and
5 implications.
6
7

8
9
10 Although some literature states that customers might not always aim to build relationships
11 (Grainer *et al.*, 2014; Jones *et al.*, 2015), our study supports this finding but also shows that both
12 customers and FLEs believe that relationship building enhances the feeling of security in a
13 service encounter, and PCF is a way to achieve it. Forgeard *et al.* (2011) identified security as an
14 important facet of well-being, while Gottlieb and Bergen (2010) found that social support and
15 positive relationship building are important aspects in the overall assessments of well-being.
16 Thus, PCF could contribute to the well-being of customers and FLEs by making them feel secure
17 through relationship building. This finding is also important as it helps in further explaining the
18 concept of “shared frontline experience” defined as “the tendency of a customer and FLE to
19 undergo a similar emotional response to events that occur within their exchange relationship”
20 (Zablah *et al.*, 2016, p. 80). Therefore, PCF can contribute to a shared frontline experience of
21 security fostering, relationship building and well-being enhancement.
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31

32 Overall, similar to the study of Mattila and Enz (2002) which found a gap between customer and
33 employee perceptions regarding service quality expectations, our study shows inconsistency in
34 the perceptions of PCF between FLEs and customers.
35
36
37

38 While both customers and FLEs have generally a similar understanding of the various elements
39 and characteristics of PCF, customers place a greater weight on “Connection” as a mean to
40 express PCF to FLEs while FLEs favour “Encouragement”. Moreover, while customers perceive
41 “Loyalty” as an important element of PCF, FLEs do not tend to see “Loyalty” as such. This
42 could be due to the difficulty faced by FLEs in differentiating between “Loyalty” towards the
43 service/brand versus “Loyalty” towards themselves. Accordingly, FLEs might desire more
44 explicit and personal forms of PCF expression while customers prefer more subtle ways to
45 communicate PCF. Similarly, “Sensory expressiveness” seems to be more important to
46 customers than to FLEs. This might be also due to the “Authenticity” issue that is linked to
47 sensory expressiveness. Social psychology literature on authentic smiles and emotion recognition
48 (Ekman and Friesen, 2003) advocates that authentic smiles stimulate more positive emotional
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 reactions by respondents than do “faked” smiles. Therefore, if FLEs perceive the sensory
4 expressiveness as unauthentic, they might not perceive it as PCF in the first place.
5
6

7
8 Surprisingly, FLEs see “Cooperation” as one of the characteristics of PCF; however, it is not the
9 case for customers. This might be because FLEs tend to appreciate a customer who is “playing
10 along” while the customer might not be aware that by being cooperative and engaged with the
11 service, they are making the job of the FLE enjoyable, and, thus, the FLE perceives it as PCF.
12 This might come as contradictory to the premise made earlier regarding FLEs needing more
13 explicit PCF; however, in the case of “Loyalty” and “Sensory expressiveness”, the FLE is a mere
14 recipient while with “Cooperation” the FLE is equally engaged and involved in the PCF
15 communication.
16
17
18
19
20
21
22

23 In terms of impact, this study found a number of differences between customers and FLEs. The
24 identified list of consequences differs between customers and FLEs (Tables 4 and 5) as opposed
25 to the identified lists of attributes and values that are shared between customers and FLEs
26 (Tables 3 and 6). Through the HVM, it is evident that some of the consequences are shared (such
27 as “Feeling enthusiastic”, “Relationship”, and “Enhanced self-image”); however, the rest of the
28 consequences are different, and, thus, there is no room for further comparison except than by
29 identifying what those impacts are and their weight for each subgroup (discussed in the
30 description of Figures 2 and 3). These findings are unique to this study and extend the current
31 customer feedback literature by uncovering various consequences of personal PCF as identified
32 by customers and FLEs.
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41

42 Finally, the most important value for customers is “Security”. This finding is similar to the study
43 of Kania and Gruber (2013), who found that customers need to feel safe and experience certainty
44 during a service encounter. While FLEs strive the most for “Achievement” and “Benevolence”,
45 Achievement is attained by demonstrating competence according to social standards, and PCF
46 contributes to this confirmation. Finally, the “Benevolence” value could be explained by the
47 desire to enhance the well-being of those who staff are in direct contact with, whether family and
48 friends (through the Spillover effect) or customers (through the feeling of responsibility FLEs
49 have towards them). This finding is particularly important as it stresses the role and importance
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 of family and friends for service employees' well-being, a topic studied in management and HR
4 research but overlooked in service research.
5
6

7 8 *ZMET-Towards a deeper understanding* 9

10 As previously mentioned, ZMET was used to help gain a deeper understanding of the constructs
11 elicited through traditional laddering probes. Therefore, after reviewing all the collected images
12 and transcripts; similarities, differences and/or relationships between the concepts that can help
13 understand PCF phenomenon in greater depth and beyond the HVMs, were thoroughly searched
14 (Giorgi, 1989). Accordingly, empirically grounded key themes were identified: mutual mistrust,
15 counterintuitive impact of PCF, and the role of management. These themes complement our
16 understanding of the knowledge gained through laddering.
17
18
19
20
21
22

23 24 *Mutual mistrust* 25

26
27 Through our interviews, we identified a mutual mistrust between service customers on one side
28 and service employees/organizations on the other. We found evidence that customers believe that
29 organizations strive to abuse them, while employees' believe that customers are, in their
30 majority, opportunistic and selfish. Nevertheless, employees are being trained to understand and
31 deal with customers for the benefit of the service. However, the generic feeling that customers
32 have towards FLEs and service organizations, in most of the cases, is associated with negative
33 and abusive connotations. This finding provides empirical evidence to the conceptual work of
34 Fisk (2009) stating that current service practices are "designed to control customers than to serve
35 customers" (p. 17). For example, our findings show that customers perceive FLEs as being
36 driven by power and achievement. Similarly, FLEs believe that customers are opportunistic and
37 seek personal benefits when expressing PCF.
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46

47 48 *Counterintuitive impacts of PCF* 49

50 Although the study focuses on a positive topic (PCF), respondents interestingly also mentioned
51 negative consequences of PCF. Respondents were not specifically probed for these but they still
52 mentioned them. These were issues such as "complacent behaviour", "embarrassment", "feeling
53 discomfort", "increased workload", "internal confrontation," and "pressure from raised
54 expectations". These findings support Nasr *et al.*'s (2015) study stating that PCF can have
55
56
57
58
59
60

negatives consequences too. Moreover, our study shows that customers believe that PCF might not always have an impact on FLEs, and this, according to our findings, seems to be a reason for some customers to be reluctant in giving PCF since they mentioned that employees “might not care” about the PCF received, or “have limited time to respond” or simply “see it as part of their job”. In contrast, FLEs discussed being frustrated when customers do not give them PCF, especially when they feel that they went the “extra mile” for the customer. Finally, this study adds to Nasr *et al.*'s (2015) work, which explored the negative consequences of PCF on the well-being of FLEs, by revealing that PCF can sometimes have a negative impact on the customer as well, for example, in the form of pressure and experienced discomfort. This is especially evident when the customer feels “tricked” or forced into giving PCF, for example, when the FLE explicitly pushes the customer to give positive feedback or when there is a valuable incentive linked to feedback, or when feedback is expected in the presence of others. This comes in accordance with the emotional labour literature. Emotional labour is defined as “the expression of organizationally desired emotions during interpersonal transactions” (Morris and Feldman, 1996, p. 987). The service literature is rich with empirical studies on emotional labour in service-related occupations with a predominant focus on the negative impact of emotional labour on FLEs. However, Bailey *et al.* (2001) propose that customers also engage in forms of emotional labour. This is particularly evident when the customer invests an emotional effort during a service interaction. Finally, our results show that the various characteristics, elements, and impacts of PCF are not mutually exclusive and could be expressed and experienced during the same service encounter.

The role of management

Our findings support Koa *et al.*'s (2015) premise, claiming that although FLEs have the potential and power to nurture customer and organizational well-being, their ability depends on the presence of transformational management in the company. Many FLEs mentioned the role of management and the current internal feedback systems as prerequisites for proper feedback understanding and handling by FLEs. Respondents discussed at length the importance of positive feedback management with regard to how positive feedback is captured, recorded, recognized, and acted upon within the organization. Employees confirmed that the internal feedback management system and the way customer feedback is handled internally is what affects the

1
2
3 impact of PCF on the employee. This comes in accordance with Nasr *et al.*'s (2015) study, where
4 "management of positive feedback" was identified as a key contingency of PCF impact. In
5 addition, employees mentioned experiencing frustration when the positive feedback received is
6 not appreciated internally. This finding can be explained by the expectancy theory (Vroom,
7 1964), where individuals' levels of morale are negatively affected when they feel that their
8 efforts are not being appreciated.
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17

18 **Managerial Implications**

19
20 Our findings suggest a number of important managerial implications. First, *regarding the*
21 *solicitation of customer feedback*, companies should encourage customers to express PCF. In a
22 recent study, Bone *et al.* (2017) found that starting a customer survey with open-ended questions
23 soliciting positive feedback (e.g. by asking what went well) increased customer purchase
24 behaviour as the focus on their positive experiences indirectly affects their future behaviour.
25 Similarly, our findings show additional benefits of communicating and receiving personal PCF,
26 therefore, we encourage FLEs to ask customers directly to express what went well in a service
27 encounter. Moreover, by inviting customers to speak about their positive experiences, managers
28 can learn new and unexpected details. Similarly, they can ask specific follow-up questions which
29 can help identify the important element of the service as well as what makes the service stand out
30 from competitors. Unfortunately, many companies miss out on this relatively easy but equally
31 important lever in customer acquisition strategy. Companies can compile the received PCF and
32 communicate it back to the public in the form of quotes and narratives from satisfied customers
33 used on the company website and social media sites. This authentic type of communication could
34 attract more customers than other more expensive and time consuming customer acquisition
35 campaigns.
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49

50 Our results also show that communicating PCF has an uplifting impact on the person giving the
51 feedback. Therefore, in addition to encouraging customers to share the PCF in person, we
52 encourage companies to solicit positive feedback on social media and review sites such as
53 Facebook and TripAdvisor. This will not only be beneficial to the company and its future
54 customers but also to the person expressing this feedback. This is particularly important since
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 research shows that customers experiencing good moods tend to see the positive side of things
4 and are more willing to return to the store (Tsai and Huang, 2002).
5
6

7
8 In addition, given that service experiences require customer participation (Verhoef *et al.*, 2009),
9 soliciting positive customer feedback would allow customers to positively enhance their
10 experiences. This could be achieved by creating innovative incentives making the process of
11 feedback-giving fun and entertaining by for example using gamification, which is an “informal
12 umbrella term for the use of game elements in non-gaming systems to improve user experience
13 and user engagement” (Deterding *et al.*, 2011, p. 9). Companies could also work on designing
14 processes capable of generating high levels of gratitude, allowing customers to reciprocate and
15 prevent them from guilt rationalization (Palmatier *et al.*, 2009).
16
17
18
19
20
21
22

23 Second, *regarding the management of FLEs*, managers should be aware of the vital impact PCF
24 has on FLEs. Our results show that FLEs’ enthusiasm is linked to a number of positive outcomes
25 such as higher job motivation, job satisfaction, and a strong spillover effect. In addition, PCF
26 contributes to a positive self-evaluation which can counterbalance the feelings of depression that
27 many FLEs face at work (Worth, 2010). This is particularly important as upward spirals of
28 positive emotions counter downward spirals of negativity (Garland *et al.*, 2010). Moreover, PCF
29 for FLEs is associated with their level of achievement; thus, it could be used as a tool by
30 management to evaluate FLEs’ performances. Nevertheless, caution should be exercised
31 concerning the weight or impact PCF has on FLEs, as Nasr *et al.* (2015) found that PCF can have
32 “negative” or “no impact” on FLEs. Furthermore, just as FLEs are being trained to identify and
33 respond to the different types of customer complaints (Davidow, 2003), they could also be
34 trained to identify, understand, and respond to all types of PCF. This supports Delcourt *et al.*'s
35 (2016) findings, inviting managers to strengthen the Employee Emotional Competence (EEC) on
36 *all* levels. Emotional competence implies the manifestation of emotionally competent behaviours
37 (Seal and Andrews-Brown, 2010) that exhibit emotional intelligence (EI). Research shows that
38 EEC can be learned and improved with training and is known to affect FLEs’ well-being (Kotsou
39 *et al.*, 2011). With regards to FLEs’ training techniques, a perspective-taking technique could be
40 adopted, which puts employees in the customers’ shoes (e.g., role playing, videotaping, mystery
41 shopping) and thereby increases their ability to adopt a customer’s viewpoint (Parker and Axtell,
42 2001). Moreover, it would be useful to develop a portfolio of diagnostic cues of various PCF
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 elements and characteristics to help employees identify the various cues and respond
4 accordingly. In this regards, FLEs should be capable to ascertain the customer's perspective of
5 the service encounter and to sense and share the customer emotions generated during the
6 interaction.
7
8
9

10
11 Third, there should be a careful *examination of positive service encounters* as they are crucial for
12 the development and sustainment of customer-employee relationships. Service encounters
13 designed to improve customer service experience should focus on delivering customer comfort,
14 reinforcing their feeling of control and safety, and building a relationship with the FLE.
15 Interestingly, our findings suggest that FLEs value human connection and relationships with
16 customers as it gives them a feeling of security and enhances their benevolence value. However,
17 the challenge lies in making the customer perceive the employee as genuinely engaged and
18 concerned. Accordingly, managers should make the process of building and maintaining genuine
19 relationships between customers and FLEs comfortable and transparent. Accordingly,
20 "interaction routing" (van Dolen *et al.*, 2002) could be adopted, where employees and customers
21 are matched based on personalities and preferred manners of interactions. This could be achieved
22 by profiling customers and employees in advance of service encounters. With the advancement
23 in technology and text analysis allowing organizations to analyse language patterns, customer
24 and employee profiling could be fostered.
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39

40 **Limitations and Directions for Further Research**

41
42 This study has a number of limitations that suggests potential avenues for further research. Due
43 to the explorative nature of the study and the size of the sample, the findings are tentative.
44 Further empirical studies should use probability samples that represent a broader population of
45 customers and FLEs and conduct studies to test and measure the strength of the identified
46 relationships.
47
48
49
50

51
52 Secondly, as we conducted personal interviews, there is always the possibility of interviewer
53 bias; however, the interviewer, who is trained and experienced in this method, made all attempts
54 to remain neutral and avoid asking leading questions or illicit hoped-for answers.
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Thirdly, although we position PCF as a dyadic construct, our participants did not describe the *same* incident of PCF (similarly to the approach adopted by Gremler and Gwinner, 2008). Future studies could investigate both parties in the dyad of a single incident to obtain a singular picture of PCF perceptions. Another option would be to use a triadic approach, by including the management perspective, as we found that managers play an important role in influencing the impact of PCF on FLEs. This approach could be implemented through the usage of case studies. This would help researchers to better understand the nature of PCF communication and the managerial viewpoint regarding PCF management. Future research could also look at the impact of positive feedback given by a FLE to a customer. It would be of interest to explore the impacts of this feedback on both the customer and the FLE.

Another avenue for future research could be to investigate the cross-cultural stability of our findings. Future research should consider the extent to which cultural differences affect the display, consequences, and importance associated with PCF. Moreover, we did not consider the personal characteristics of FLEs and customers, such as demographic information and personality traits, future research could consider the effect of these variables. Finally, we acknowledge that service encounters vary between and within different contexts and industries and therefore we invite future research to focus on various service contexts such as healthcare, education, transport, and social media. Similarly, as retail, hospitality, and tourism sectors were mainly examined through the data collection, we encourage focusing on further industries such as banking, and utilities. Accordingly, by focusing on particular service industries, a more complete understanding of PCF within each industry will be achieved. Thus, there is a need to expand this study geographically, culturally and industry wise. Thus, future research could study the extent to which these differences affect the display, motivation, contingencies, impacts, and values associated with PCF.

This paper also hopes to stimulate a methodological discussion and invite future researchers to utilize the integrated laddering and ZMET methodology as an appropriate exploratory instrument. From a method point of view, the usage of images proved to be particularly beneficial in engaging the participants to begin talking about their perceptions, be they conscious or unconscious, of PCF. Lastly, as PCF is still scarcely studied within service research, more exploratory studies are needed to further investigate positive service experiences.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to highlight the importance and extend the understanding of the underresearched concept of personal PCF. Through a novel integrated methodological approach and by comparing and contrasting customers' and FLEs' perspectives, we revealed the main elements, characteristics of personal PCF, its various impacts, and the perceived importance of this phenomenon for both parties. Through our rich findings, we conceptualized PCF in the service literature and positioned it as an important concept within customer feedback literature. We also extended PCF understanding beyond what the current literature shows (i.e. gratitude, compliments) by identifying nine characteristics of personal PCF. Subsequently, we revealed a number of potential impacts on both customers and FLEs. Interestingly, we found that both customers and FLEs have a similar understanding of the various elements and characteristics of personal PCF, however, the significance of the various elements and the subsequent impacts vary between the two groups. Finally, we discussed three key themes in PCF handling that help position PCF within the extant customer management literature. This study contributes to a well-rounded understanding of customer feedback by counter-balancing the prevailing focus on customer complaining behaviour and proposing a complimentary look at the positive valence of personal feedback. It also provides managerial implications concerning the management of positive service encounters, an emerging topic within service research.

References

- Altinay, L., Saunders, M.N. and Wang, C.L. (2014), "The influence of culture on trust judgments in customer relationship development by ethnic minority small businesses", *Journal of Small Business Management*, Vol. 52 No. 1, pp. 59-78.
- Bailey, J.J., Gremler, D.D. and McCollough, M.A. (2001), "Service encounter emotional value", *Services Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 23 No. 1, pp. 1-24.
- Barnett, W., Foos, A., Gruber, T., Keeling, D., Keeling, K. and Nasr, L. (2014), "Consumer perceptions of interactive service robots: a value - dominant logic perspective", *The 23rd IEEE International Symposium on Robot and Human Interactive Communication*, Edinburgh, UK, pp. 1134-1139.

- 1
2
3 Baron, S. and Warnaby, G. (2011), "Individual customers' use and integration of resources:
4 empirical findings and organisational implications in the context of value co creation",
5 *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 40 No. 2, pp. 211–218.
6
7
8 Baron, S., Warnaby, G. and Hunter-Jones, P. (2014), "Service(s) marketing research:
9 developments and directions", *International Journal of Management Reviews*, Vol. 16 No.
10 2, pp. 150–171.
11
12
13 Bartlett, M.Y. and DeSteno, D. (2006), "Gratitude and prosocial behavior: helping when it costs
14 you", *Psychological Science*, Vol. 17 No. 4, pp. 319–325.
15
16
17 Ben-Ari, A. and Lavee, Y. (2005), "Dyadic characteristics of individual attributes: attachment,
18 neuroticism, and their relation to marital quality and closeness", *American Journal of*
19 *Orthopsychiatry*, Vol. 75 No. 4, pp. 621-631.
20
21
22 Berry, L.L. (1995), "Relationship marketing of services—growing interest, emerging
23 perspectives", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 23 No. 4, pp. 236–245.
24
25
26 Berry, L.L. and Parasuraman, A. (1997), "Listening to the customer—the concept of a service-
27 quality information system", *Sloan Management Review*, Vol. 38 No. 3, pp. 65–76.
28
29
30 Best, A. and Andreasen, A.R. (1977), "Consumer response to unsatisfactory purchases: a survey
31 of perceiving defects, voicing complaints, and obtaining redress", *Law & Society Review*,
32 Vol. 11 No. 4, pp. 701–742.
33
34
35 Bitner, M. J., Booms, B.H. and Tetreault, M.S. (1990), "The service encounter: diagnosing
36 favorable and unfavorable incidents", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 54 No. 1, pp. 71-84.
37
38
39 Bitran, G.R. and Hoeh, J. (1990), "The humanization of service: respect at the moment of
40 truth", *Sloan Management Review*, Vol. 31 No. 1, pp. 89–96.
41
42
43 Bone, S.A., Lemon, K.N., Voorhees, C.M., Liljenquist, K.A., Fombelle, P.W., Detienne, K.B.
44 and Money, R.B. (2017), "Mere measurement plus": How solicitation of open-ended
45 positive feedback influences customer purchase behavior", *Journal of Marketing*
46 *Research*, Vol. 54 No. 1, pp.156-170.
47
48
49 Brodie, R.J., Hollebeek, L.D., Juric, B. and Ilic, A. (2011), "Customer engagement: conceptual
50 domain, fundamental propositions, and implications for research", *Journal of Service*
51 *Research*, Vol. 14 No. 3, pp. 252–272.
52
53
54 Caemmerer, B. and Wilson, A. (2010), "Customer feedback mechanisms and organisational
55 learning in service operations", *International Journal of Operations and Production*
56 *Management*, Vol. 30 No. 3, pp. 288–311.
57
58
59 Christensen, G.L. and Olson, J.C. (2002), "Mapping consumers' mental models with ZMET",
60 *Psychology and Marketing*, Vol. 19 No. 6, pp. 477–501.

- 1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
- Claeys, C., Swinnen, A. and van den Abeele, P. (1995), "Consumers' means-end chains for think and feel products", *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, Vol. 12 No. 3, pp. 193–208.
- Corbin, J. and Strauss, A. L. (2008), *The Basics of Qualitative Research*, 3rd ed., Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Coulter, R.H. and Zaltman, G. (1994), "Using the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique to understand brand images", in Allen, C.T. and John, D.R. (Eds.), *Advances in Consumer Research Volume 21*, Association for Consumer Research, Provo, UT, pp. 501–507.
- Daunt, K.L. and Harris, L. (2014), "Linking employee and customer misbehaviour: the moderating role of past misdemeanours", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 30 No. 3-4, pp. 221–244.
- Davidow, M. (2003), "Organizational responses to customer complaints: what works and what doesn't", *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 5 No. 3, pp. 225–250.
- Day, R.L. and Landon, E.L. (1977), *Toward a Theory of Consumer Complaint Behaviour*, Consumer and Industrial Buying Behavior, North Holland, New York, NY.
- Deeter-Schmelz, D.R., Goebel, D.J. and Kennedy, K.N. (2002), "Understanding sales manager effectiveness: the link between the sales force and a dynamic marketplace", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 31 No. 7, pp. 617–626.
- Delcourt, C., Gremler, D., De Zanet, F. and van Riel, A. (2017), "An Analysis of the interaction effect between employee technical and emotional competencies in emotionally charged service encounters", *Journal of Service Management*, Vol. 28 No. 1, pp. 85-10.
- Delcourt, C., Gremler, D.D., van Riel, A. and van. Birgelen, M. (2016), "Employee emotional competence: construct conceptualization and validation of a customer-based measure", *Journal of Service Research*, Vol 19 No 1, pp. 72- 87.
- Deterding, S., Dixon, D., Khaled, R. and Nacke, L. (2011), "From game design elements to gamefulness: defining gamification", *Proceedings of the 15th International Academic MindTrek Conference: Envisioning Future Media Environments*, pp. 9–15.
- Eisenberger, R., Fasolo, P. and Davis-LaMastro, V. (1990), "Perceived organizational support and employee diligence, commitment, and innovation", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 75 No. 1, pp. 51–59.
- Ekman, P. and Friesen, W. V. (2003), *Unmasking the Face: A Guide to Recognizing Emotions from Facial Clues*, Malor Books, Los Altos, CA.

- 1
2
3 Emmons, R.A. and McCullough, M.E. (2003), "Counting blessings versus burdens: an
4 experimental investigation of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life", *Journal of*
5 *Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 84 No. 2, pp. 377–389.
6
7
8 Erickson, S.G. and Eckrich, D.W. (2001), "Consumer affairs responses to unsolicited customer
9 compliments", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 17 No. 3-4, pp. 321–340.
10
11
12 Fisk, R. (2009), "A customer liberation manifesto", *Service Science*, Vol. 1 No. 3, pp. 135–141.
13
14 Forgeard, M.J.C., Jayawickreme, E., Kern, M.L. and Seligman, M.E.P. (2011), "Doing the right
15 thing: measuring well-being for public policy", *International Journal of Wellbeing*, Vol. 1
16 No. 1, pp. 79–106.
17
18
19 Forman, J. and Damschroder, L. (2008), "Qualitative content analysis", *Empirical Research for*
20 *Bioethics: A Primer*, Elsevier Publishing, Oxford, UK, pp. 39–62.
21
22 Frow, P. and Payne, A. (2009), "Customer relationship management: a strategic perspective",
23 *Journal of Business Market Management*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 7–27.
24
25
26 Fundin, A.P. and Bergman, B.L.S. (2003), "Exploring the customer feedback process",
27 *Measuring Business Excellence*, Vol. 7 No. 2, pp. 55–65.
28
29
30 Gable, S.L. and Haidt, J. (2005), "What (and why) is positive psychology?", *Review of General*
31 *Psychology*, Vol. 9 No. 2, pp. 103–110.
32
33
34 Garland, E.L., Fredrickson, B., Kring, A.M., Johnson, D.P., Meyer, P.S. and Penn, D.L. (2010),
35 "Upward spirals of positive emotions counter downward spirals of negativity: insights from
36 the broaden-and-build theory and affective neuroscience on the treatment of emotion
37 dysfunctions and deficits in psychopathology", *Clinical Psychology Review*, Vol. 30 No. 7,
38
39
40 Gengler, C.E., Klenosky, D.B. and Mulvey, M.S. (1995), "Improving the graphic representation
41 of means-end results", *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, Vol. 12 No. 3, pp.
42 245–256.
43
44
45 Gengler, C.E. and Reynolds, T.J. (1993), "LADDERMAP: a software tool for analyzing
46 laddering data, version 5.4."
47
48
49 Gentile, C., Spiller, N. and Noci, G. (2007), "How to sustain the customer experience: an
50 overview of experience components that co-create value with the customer", *European*
51 *Management Journal*, Vol. 25 No. 5, pp. 395–410.
52
53
54 Giorgi, A.P. (1989), "Learning and memory from the perspective of phenomenological
55 psychology", in Valle, R.S. and Halling, S. (Eds.), *Existential-Phenomenological*
56 *Perspectives in Psychology*, Plenum, New York, NY, pp. 99–112.
57
58
59
60

- 1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
- Gottlieb, B.H. and Bergen, A.E. (2010), "Social support concepts and measures", *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, Vol. 69 No. 5, pp. 511–520.
- Grainer, M., Noble, C.H., Bitner, M.J. and Broetzmann, S.M. (2014), "What unhappy customers want", *MIT Sloan Management Review*, Vol. 55 No. 3, pp. 31–35.
- Grant, A. and Gino, F. (2010), "A little thanks goes a long way: explaining why gratitude expressions motivate prosocial behavior", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 98 No. 6, pp. 946–955.
- Gremler, D.D., and Gwinner, K.P., "Rapport-building behaviors used by retail employees", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 84 No. 3, pp. 308-324.
- Groth, M., Hennig-Thurau, T. and Walsh, G. (2009), "Customer reactions to emotional labor: the roles of employee acting strategies and customer detection accuracy", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 52 No. 5, pp. 958–974.
- Gruber, T., Reppel, A.E., Szmigin, I. and Voss, R. (2008), "Revealing the expectations and preferences of complaining customers by combining the laddering interviewing technique with the Kano model of customer satisfaction", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, Vol. 11 No. 4, pp. 400–413.
- Grunert, K.G. and Grunert, S.C. (1995), "Measuring subjective meaning structures by the laddering method: theoretical considerations and methodological problems", *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, Vol. 12 No. 3, pp. 209–225.
- Gutman, J. (1982), "A means-end chain model based on consumer categorization processes", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 46 No. 2, pp. 60–72.
- Henneberg, S.C., Gruber, T., Reppel, A., Naudé, P., Ashnai, B., Huber, F. and Chowdhury, I.N. (2015), "A cross-cultural comparison of business complaint management expectations", *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, Vol. 23 No. 3, pp. 254–271.
- Hennig-Thurau, T., Groth, M., Paul, M. and Gremler, D.D. (2006), "Are all smiles created equal? how emotional contagion and emotional labor affect service relationships", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 70 No. 3, pp. 58–73.
- Hennink, M.H., Hutter, I. and Bailey, A. (2011), *Qualitative Research Methods*, SAGE Publications Ltd., London.
- Heskett, J., Jones, T., Loveman, G., Sasser, W. and Schlesinger, A. (1994), "Putting the service profit chain to work", *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 72 No. 2, pp. 164–174.
- Howells, K. and Cumming, J. (2012), "Exploring the role of gratitude in the professional experience of pre-service teachers", *Teaching Education*, Vol. 23 No. 1, pp. 71–88.

- 1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
- Iacobucci, D., Grayson, K., and Rust, R. (2001), "Interrater reliability", *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, Vol. 10 No.1-2, pp. 71-73.
- Jones, M.A., Reynolds, K.E., Arnold, M.J., Gabler, C.B., Gillison, S.T. and Landers, V.M., (2015), "Exploring consumers' attitude towards relationship marketing", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 29 No. 3, pp.188-199.
- Kania, N. and Gruber, T. (2013), "Understanding satisfying service encounters in retail banking – a dyadic perspective", *International Journal of Services, Economics and Management*, Vol. 5 No. 3, pp. 222–255.
- Keegan, S. (2009), *Qualitative Research: Good Decision Making Through Understanding People, Cultures and Markets*, Kogan Page Publishers.
- Kaoa, P.-J., Paib, P., Lina, T. and Zhonga, J.-Y. (2015), "How transformational leadership fuels employees' service innovation behavior", *The Service Industries Journal*, Vol. 35 No. 7-8, pp. 448–466.
- Kotsou, I., Gregoire, J., Nelis, D. and Mikolajczak, M. (2011), "Emotional plasticity: conditions and effects of improving emotional competence in adulthood", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 96 No. 4, pp. 827–839.
- Kraft, F. and Martin, C. (2001), "Customer compliments as more than complementary feedback", *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior*, Vol. 14, pp. 1–13.
- Krippendorff, K. (2004), *Content Analysis*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Kunz, W.H. and Hogreve, J. (2011), "Toward a deeper understanding of service marketing: the past, the present, and the future", *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, Vol. 28 No. 3, pp. 231–247.
- Larivière, B., Bowen, D., Andreassen, T. W., Kunz, W., Sirianni, N. J., Voss, C., Wunderlich, N. V. and De Keyser, A. (2017), "'Service Encounter 2.0': an investigation into the roles of technology, employees and customers", *Journal of Business Research*.
- Lee, M.S.Y., McGoldrick, P.J., Keeling, K.A. and Doherty, J. (2003), "Using ZMET to explore barriers to the adoption of 3G mobile banking services", *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, Vol. 31 No. 6, pp. 340–348.
- Litvin, S.W., Goldsmith, R.E. and Pan, B. (2008), "Electronic word-of-mouth in hospitality and tourism management", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 29 No. 3, pp. 458–468.
- Lusch, R.F., Vargo, S.L. and O'Brien, M. (2007), "Competing through service: insights from service-dominant logic", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 83 No. 1, pp. 5–18.

- 1
2
3 Malhotra, N. and Birks, D. (2006), *Marketing Research: An Applied Approach, 2nd European*
4 *ed.*, Pearson Education, Harlow.
- 5
6
7 Martinuzzi, B. (2009), *The Leader As A Mensch: Become The Kind Of Person Others Want To*
8
- 9
10 Mattila, A.S. and Enz, C.A. (2002), "The role of emotions in service encounters", *Journal of*
11 *Service Research*, Vol. 4 No. 4, pp. 268–277.
- 12
13 Mattila, A.S. and Wirtz, J. (2004), "Complaining to firms: the determinants of channel choice",
14 *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 18 No. 2, pp. 147–155.
- 15
16
17 Morris, J.A. and Feldman, D.C. (1996), "The dimensions, antecedents, and consequences of
18 emotional labor", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 21 No. 4, pp. 986–1010.
- 19
20 Nasr, L., Burton, J. and Gruber, T. (2015), "When good news is bad news: the negative impact of
21 positive customer feedback on front-line employee well-being", *Journal of Services*
22 *Marketing*, Vol. 29 No. 6/7, pp. 599–612.
- 23
24
25 Nasr, L., Burton, J., Gruber, T. and Kitshoff, J. (2014), "Exploring the impact of customer
26 feedback on the well-being of service entities: a TSR perspective", *Journal of Service*
27 *Management*, Vol. 25 No. 4, pp. 531–555.
- 28
29
30 Olson, J.C. and Reynolds, T.J. (2001), "The means-end approach to understanding consumer
31 decision making", in Olson, J.C. and Reynolds, T.J. (Eds.), *Understanding Consumer*
32 *Decision Making: The Means-end Approach to Marketing and Advertising Strategy*,
33 Lawrence Erlbaum, Mahwah, NJ., pp. 3–20.
- 34
35
36 Ordenes, F. V., Theodoulidis, B., Burton, J., Gruber, T. and Zaki, M. (2014), "Analyzing
37 customer experience feedback using text mining: a linguistics-based approach", *Journal of*
38 *Service Research*, Vol. 17 No. 3, pp. 278–295.
- 39
40
41 Palmatier, R.W., Jarvis, C.B., Bechhoff, J.R. and Kardes, F.R. (2009), "The role of customer
42 gratitude in relationship marketing", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 73 No. 5, pp. 1–18.
- 43
44
45 Palmer, A. (2010), "Customer experience management: a critical review of an emerging idea",
46 *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 24 No. 3, pp. 196–208.
- 47
48
49 Parker, S.K. and Axtell, C.M. (2001), "Seeing another viewpoint: antecedents and outcomes of
50 employee perspective taking", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 44 No. 6, pp. 1085–
51 1110.
- 52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60 Patterson, P.G., M.K. Brady, and McColl-Kennedy, J.R. (2016), "Geysers or bubbling hot
springs? a cross-cultural examination of customer rage from eastern and western
perspectives", *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 19 No. 3, pp. 243-259.

- 1
2
3 Poblete, B. and Baeza-Yates, R. (2008), "*Query-sets: using implicit feedback and query patterns*
4 *to organize web documents*", Proceeding of the 17th international conference on World
5 Wide Web - WWW '08, ACM Press, New York, NY, pp. 41–50.
6
7
8 Perreault, W. D., and Leigh, L. E. (1989), "Reliability of nominal data based on qualitative
9 judgments", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 26 No. 2, p. 135.
10
11 Pugh, S. D. (2001), "Service with a smile: Emotional contagion in the service
12 encounter", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 44 No.5, pp. 1018-1027.
13
14
15 Reynolds, T., Dethloff, C. and Westberg, S.J. (2001), "Advances in laddering", in Reynolds,
16 T.J. and Olson, J.C. (Eds.), *Understanding Consumer Decision Making – The Means-End*
17 *Approach to Marketing and Advertising Strategy*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah,
18 NJ., pp. 91–111.
19
20
21 Reynolds, T.J. and Gutman, J. (1988), "Laddering theory, method, analysis, and interpretation",
22 *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 28 No. 1, pp. 11–31.
23
24
25 Reynolds, T.J. and Phillips, J.M. (2008), "A review and comparative analysis of laddering
26 research methods: recommendations for quality metrics", *Review of Marketing Research*,
27 Vol. 5, pp. 130–174.
28
29
30 Rodríguez-Muñoz, A., Sanz-Vergel, A.I., Demerouti, E. and Bakker, A.B. (2014), "Engaged at
31 work and happy at home: A spillover–crossover model", *Journal of Happiness*
32 *Studies*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp.271-283.
33
34
35 Robinson, L.M. and Berl, R.L. (1979), "What about compliments? a follow-up study on
36 customer complaints and compliments", *Refining Concepts and Measures of Consumer*
37 *Satisfaction and Complaining Behavior, Papers from the fourth annual conference on*
38 *Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior*, Bloomington, Indiana,
39 pp. 144–148.
40
41
42 Roger, C. and Farson, R.E. (1984), "Active listening", in Kold, D.A. and McIngyre, J.
43 (Eds.), *Organizational Psychology*, Prentice Hall, New York, NY, pp. 255–266.
44
45
46 Rokeach, M. (1973), *Understanding Human Values*, The Free Press, New York, NY.
47
48
49 Sampson, S.E. (1996), "Ramifications of monitoring service quality through passively solicited
50 customer feedback", *Decision Sciences*, Vol. 27 No. 4, pp. 601–622.
51
52
53 Schwartz, S.H. (1994), "Are there universal aspects in the structure and content of human
54 values?", *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 50 No. 4, pp. 19–45.
55
56
57 Seal, C.R. and Andrews-Brown, A. (2010), "An integrative model of emotional intelligence:
58 emotional ability as a moderator of the mediated relationship of emotional quotient and
59 emotional competence", *Organization Management Journal*, Vol. 7 No. 2, pp. 143–152.
60

- 1
2
3 Tsai, W.-C. and Huang, Y.-M. (2002), "Mechanisms linking employee affective delivery and
4 customer behavioral intentions", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 87 No. 5, pp. 1001–
5 1008.
6
7
8 Van Doorn, J., Lemon, K.N., Mittal, V., Nass, S., Pick, D., Pirner, P. and Verhoef, P.C. (2010),
9 "Customer engagement behavior: theoretical foundations and research directions", *Journal*
10 *of Service Research*, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 253–266.
11
12 Van Dolen, W., Lemmink, J., De Ruyter, K. and De Jong, A. (2002), "Customer-sales employee
13 encounters: a dyadic perspective", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 78 No. 4, pp.265-279.
14
15
16 Verhoef, P.C. (2003), "Understanding the effect of customer relationship management efforts on
17 customer retention and customer share development", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 67 No. 4,
18 pp. 30–45.
19
20
21 Verhoef, P.C., Lemon, K.N., Parasuraman, A., Roggeveen, A., Tsiros, M. and Schlesinger, L. A.
22 (2009), "Customer experience creation: determinants, dynamics and management
23 strategies", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 85 No. 1, pp. 31–41.
24
25
26 Verhoef, P.C., Reinartz, W.J. and Krafft, M. (2010), "Customer engagement as a new
27 perspective in customer management", *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp.
28 247–252.
29
30
31 Voss, C.A., Roth, A. V., Rosenzweig, E.D., Blackmon, K. and Chase, R.B. (2004), "A tale of
32 two countries' conservatism, service quality, and feedback on customer satisfaction",
33 *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 6 No. 3, pp. 212–230.
34
35
36 Vroom, V.H. (1964), *Work and Motivation*, Wiley, New York.
37
38 Weißhaar, I. and Huber, F. (2016), "Empathic relationships in professional services and the
39 moderating role of relationship age", *Psychology & Marketing*, Vol. 33 No. 7, pp.525-541.
40
41
42 Wieseke, J., Geigenmuller, A. and Kraus, F. (2012), "On the role of empathy in customer-
43 employee interactions", *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 15 No. 3, pp. 316–331.
44
45
46 Wirtz, J., Tambyah, S.K. and Mattila, A.S. (2010), "Organizational learning from customer
47 feedback received by service employees: a social capital perspective", *Journal of Service*
48 *Management*, Vol. 21 No. 3, pp. 363–387.
49
50
51 Wirtz, J. and Tomlin, M. (2000), "Institutionalizing customer-driven learning through fully
52 integrated customer feedback systems", *Managing Service Quality*, Vol. 10 No. 4, pp. 205–
53 215.
54
55
56 Witell, L., Kristensson, P., Gustafsson, A. and Löfgren, M. (2011), "Idea generation: customer
57 co-creation versus traditional market research techniques", *Journal of Service Management*,
58 Vol. 22 No. 2, pp. 140–159.
59
60

- 1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
- Worth, T. (2010), "Ten careers with high rates of depression", available at: <http://www.health.com/health/gallery/0,,20428990,00.html> (accessed 1 August 2015).
- Young, M.E. and Hutchinson, T.S. (2012), "The rediscovery of gratitude: implications for counseling practice", *Journal of Humanistic Counseling*, Vol. 51 No. 1, pp. 99–113.
- Zablah, A.R., Sirianni, N.J., Korschun, D., Gremler, D.D. and Beatty, S.E. (2016), "Emotional convergence in service relationships: the shared frontline experience of customers and employees", *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 20 No. 1, pp. 76-90.
- Zaltman, G. (1997), "Rethinking market research: putting people back in", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 34 No. 4, pp. 424–437.
- Zaltman, G. and Higie, R.A. (1993), *Seeing The Voice of The Customer: The Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique*, Marketing Science Institute, Cambridge, MA.
- Zeithaml, V.A., Berry, L.L. and Parasuraman, A. (1996), "The behavioral consequences of service quality", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 60 No. 2, pp.31-46.

Table 1: Characteristics of customer and FLE samples

	<i>Customers</i>	<i>FLEs</i>
Number of participants	20	20
Gender		
Male	35%	35%
Female	65%	65%
Age		
Average	29	36
Minimum	21	24
Maximum	55	63
Years of employment		
Average	---	15
Minimum	---	4
Maximum	---	51

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Table 2: Laddering variations

Questions to Customer	Questions to FLE
Values Why is it important for you?	Values Why is it important for you?
Consequences What is the impact of giving positive feedback on you?	Consequences What is the impact of receiving positive customer feedback on you?
Attributes What kind of positive feedback do you give to FLEs?	Attributes What kind of positive feedback do you receive from customers?

Laddering down

Laddering up

Journal of Services Marketing

Table 3: Overview of PCF attributes

<i>Name of attribute</i>	<i>Number of times mentioned by customers (in ladders)</i>	<i>Number of times mentioned by FLEs (in ladders)</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Acknowledgment</i>	84	147	Customer acknowledges and recognises that something positive occurred. e.g. "This is very good"
<i>Connection</i>	75	43	Customer creates a personal bond by exchanging feelings of care and friendliness which might help build personal connections leading to the development of relationships with the employee. e.g. "Remembering the name of the FLE, engaging in humour"
<i>Cooperation</i>	18	28	Customer is fully cooperating and engaged with the service. e.g. "Trying new food, wanting to learn more"
<i>Counsel</i>	11	7	Customer gives suggestions and constructive critical reviews. e.g. "Giving tips on how to make the service even better"
<i>Encouragement</i>	92	96	Customer shows support and social encouragement. e.g. "Recommending the FLE for a reward, or talking about him to the manager".
<i>Gifts and tips</i>	14	6	Customer offers a tangible gift or monetary tips as an expression of PCF.
<i>Gratitude</i>	26	30	Customer expresses his gratefulness and appreciation in exchange for the received service e.g. "Saying thank you"
<i>Loyalty</i>	58	10	Customer visits the same FLE over a period of time. e.g. "Standing in line to receive the service from a particular employee when others are available"
<i>Sensory Expressiveness</i>	52	25	Customer displays <i>positive</i> body posture, facial expression, tone of voice, etc. when communicating with the FLE. e.g. "Smiling, maintaining eye contact"

Table 4: Overview of consequences for customers

<i>Name of consequences</i>	<i>Number of times mentioned by customers (in ladders)</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Feeling Altruistic</i>	76	Customer experiences empathy and a desire to help others coupled with a lack of selfishness. e.g. "Doing the good deed of the day"
<i>Belongingness</i>	16	Customer feels associated and part of a group. e.g. "Feeling associated with the service /brand /fanclub /organization"
<i>Enhance Self-image</i>	28	Customer self-image (or self-evaluation) is boosted. e.g. "Feeling likeable, feeling proud after expressing positive feedback"
<i>Feeling Comfortable</i>	67	Customer feels comfortable, satisfied, and content. e.g. "Feeling calm and relaxed after giving positive feedback"
<i>Feeling Enthusiastic</i>	70	Customer experiences positive emotions and mood, feels enthusiastic and excited. e.g. "Feeling positively charged"
<i>Feeling in Control</i>	32	Customer feels in control of what he/she is doing and saying. e.g. "Feeling powerful"
<i>Preferential Treatment</i>	18	Customer gets preferential treatment in the form of tangible and intangible benefits. e.g. "Getting more attention from the FLE or getting a complimentary free service"
<i>Raised Expectations</i>	9	Customer is yearning for even better service in the future e.g. "Expecting better service after giving positive feedback"
<i>Reduced Uncertainty</i>	20	Customer uncertainty about the service is reduced. e.g. "Feeling more confident about the purchase after expressing positive feedback"
<i>Relationship</i>	75	Customer builds a relationship with the employee. e.g. "As a result of PCF, we become closer to each other"
<i>Spillover</i>	7	PCF will affect customer's other aspects of life beyond the particular service encounter (extended impact) e.g. "Treating family and friends better"

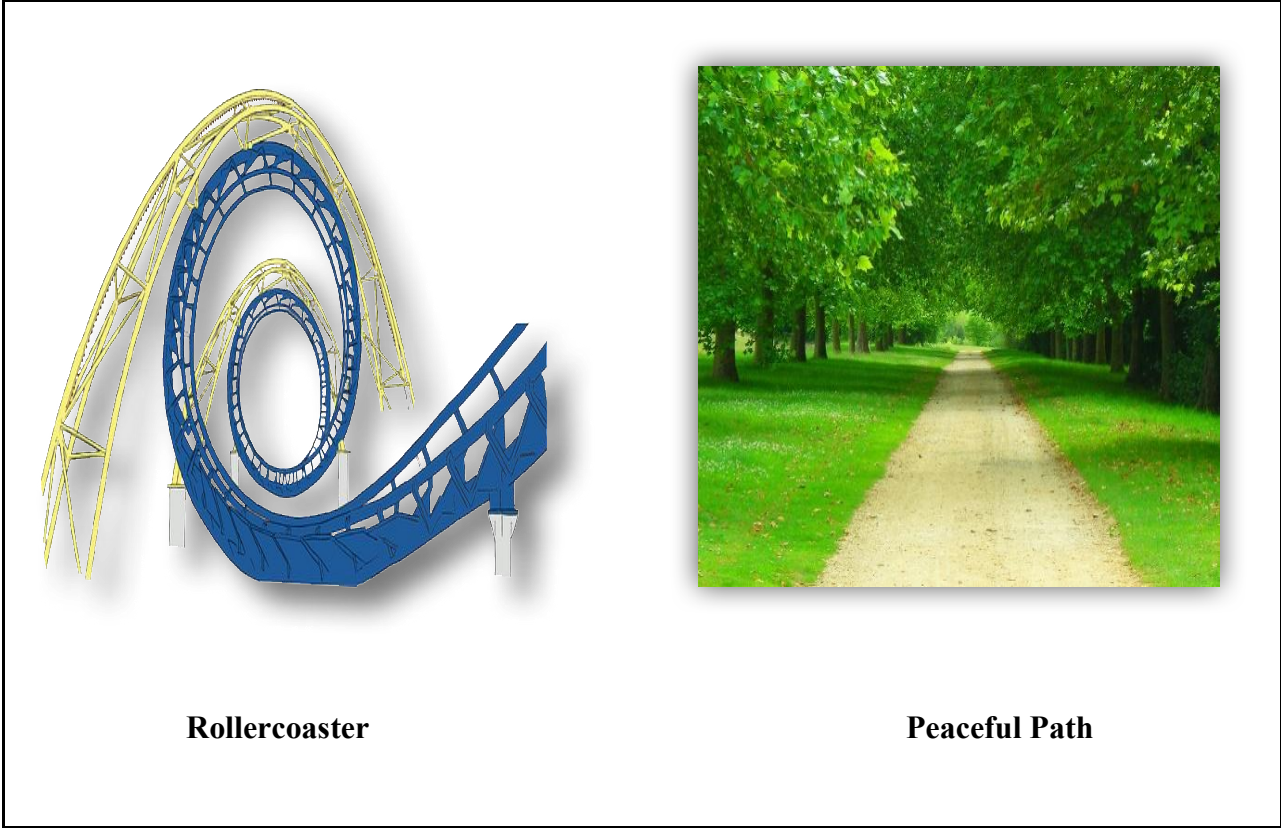
Table 5: Overview of consequences for FLEs

<i>Name of consequences</i>	<i>Number of times mentioned by FLEs (in ladders)</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Belongingness</i>	18	Employee feels part of the organization/team e.g. "We celebrate and share positive feedback with the team, it makes us bound"
<i>Enhance Self-image</i>	32	Employee self-image (or self-evaluation) is boosted. e.g. "Feeling likeable, feeling proud"
<i>Feeling Comfortable</i>	16	Employee feels comfortable and at ease. e.g. "Feeling calm and relaxed"
<i>Feeling Enthusiastic</i>	101	Employee experiences positive emotions and mood, feels enthusiastic and excited. e.g. "Being over the moon from happiness"
<i>Feeling Hopeful</i>	4	Employee yearns for similar or better feedback and outcome in the future. e.g. "Hoping that the management will do something about it"
<i>Feeling Responsible</i>	24	Employee becomes more responsive and take more responsibility for his/her actions. e.g. "Acknowledging the importance of the job"
<i>Job Satisfaction</i>	37	Employee is satisfied with his/her performance and job. e.g. "Experiencing satisfaction from what I am doing for living"
<i>Learning</i>	17	Employee better understands the customer and learns more about the service encounter. e.g. "Learning how customers like to be treated"
<i>Managerial Reward</i>	22	Employee is rewarded by management. e.g. "Receiving a promotion, bonus or gift as a result of PCF"
<i>Motivation</i>	28	Employee is willing to work harder in the future. e.g. "Willing to do the best for the customer"
<i>Relationship</i>	34	Employee builds a relationship with the customer. e.g. "As a result of PCF, we become closer to each other"
<i>Self-Efficacy</i>	53	Employee believes in his/her abilities and becomes more confident about his/her performance. e.g. "Gaining confidence in own strength"
<i>Spillover</i>	20	PCF will affect employee's personal life beyond the particular service encounter and workplace in general (extended impact) e.g. "Treating family and friends better"
<i>Surprise</i>	3	Employee is surprised as PCF is not expected. e.g. "Feeling astonished as the positive feedback was totally unexpected"
<i>Taken Seriously</i>	33	Employee feels that he is taken and considered seriously such as being valued and appreciated. e.g. "Feeling treated like an individual, not as a number or slave"

Table 6: Overview of values

<i>Name of value</i>	<i>Number of times mentioned by customers (in ladders)</i>	<i>Number of times mentioned by FLEs (in ladders)</i>	<i>Description *</i> <i>*Definitions from Schwartz (1994, p. 22)</i>
<i>Achievement</i>	36	38	"Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards"
<i>Benevolence</i>	49	41	"Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact"
<i>Conformity</i>	6	12	"Restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms"
<i>Hedonism</i>	29	31	"Pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself"
<i>Power</i>	50	32	"Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources"
<i>Security</i>	51	49	"Safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and of self"
<i>Self-Direction</i>	38	32	"Independent thought and action-choosing, creating, exploring"
<i>Stimulation</i>	19	30	"Excitement, novelty, and challenge in life"
<i>Tradition</i>	23	5	"Respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide"
<i>Universalism</i>	56	28	"Understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature"

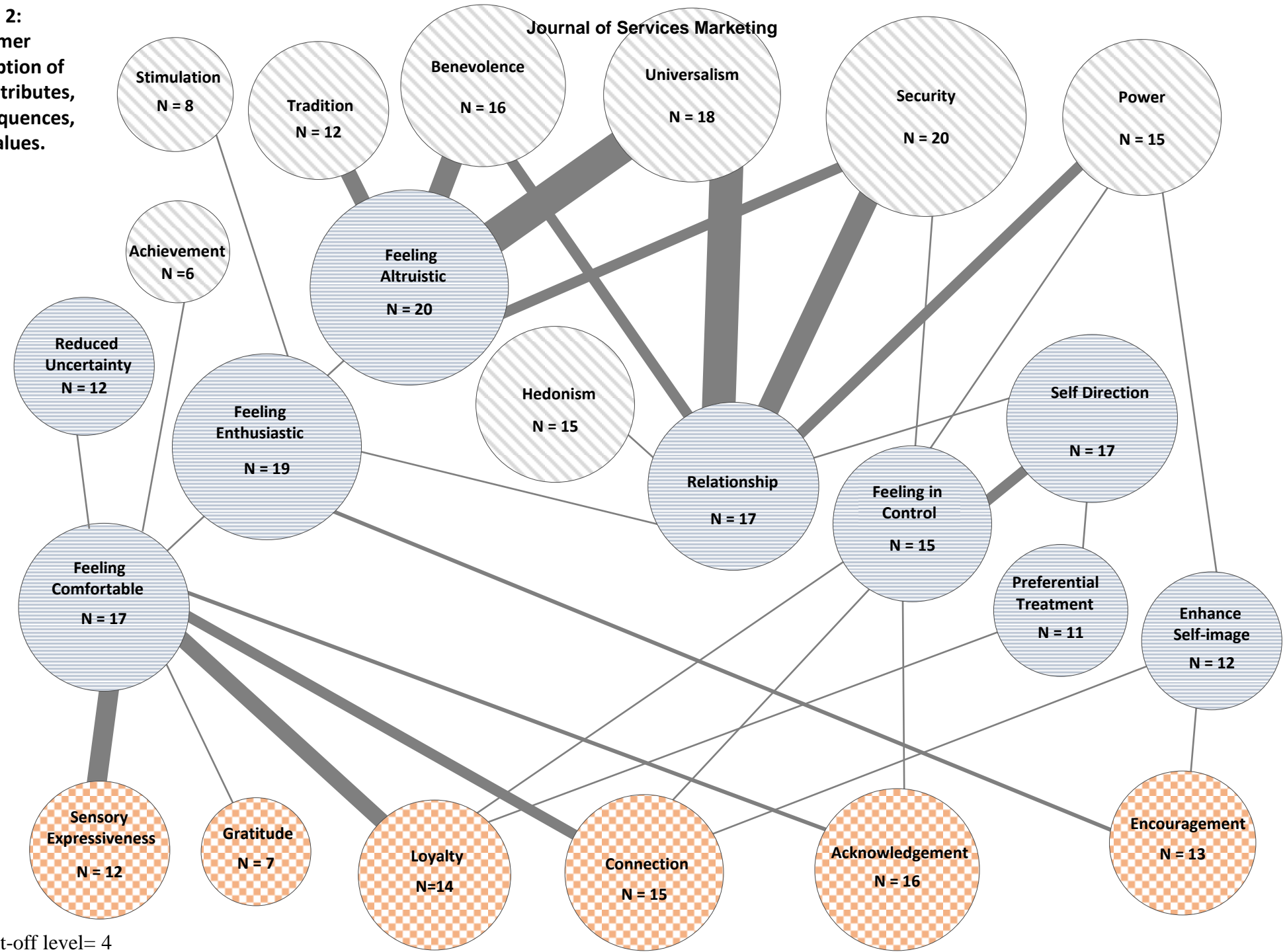
Figure 1: Sample ZMET image



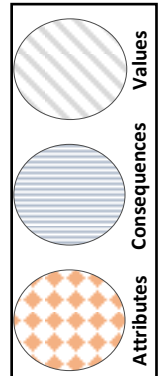
?

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43

Figure 2: Customer perception of PCF attributes, consequences, and values.

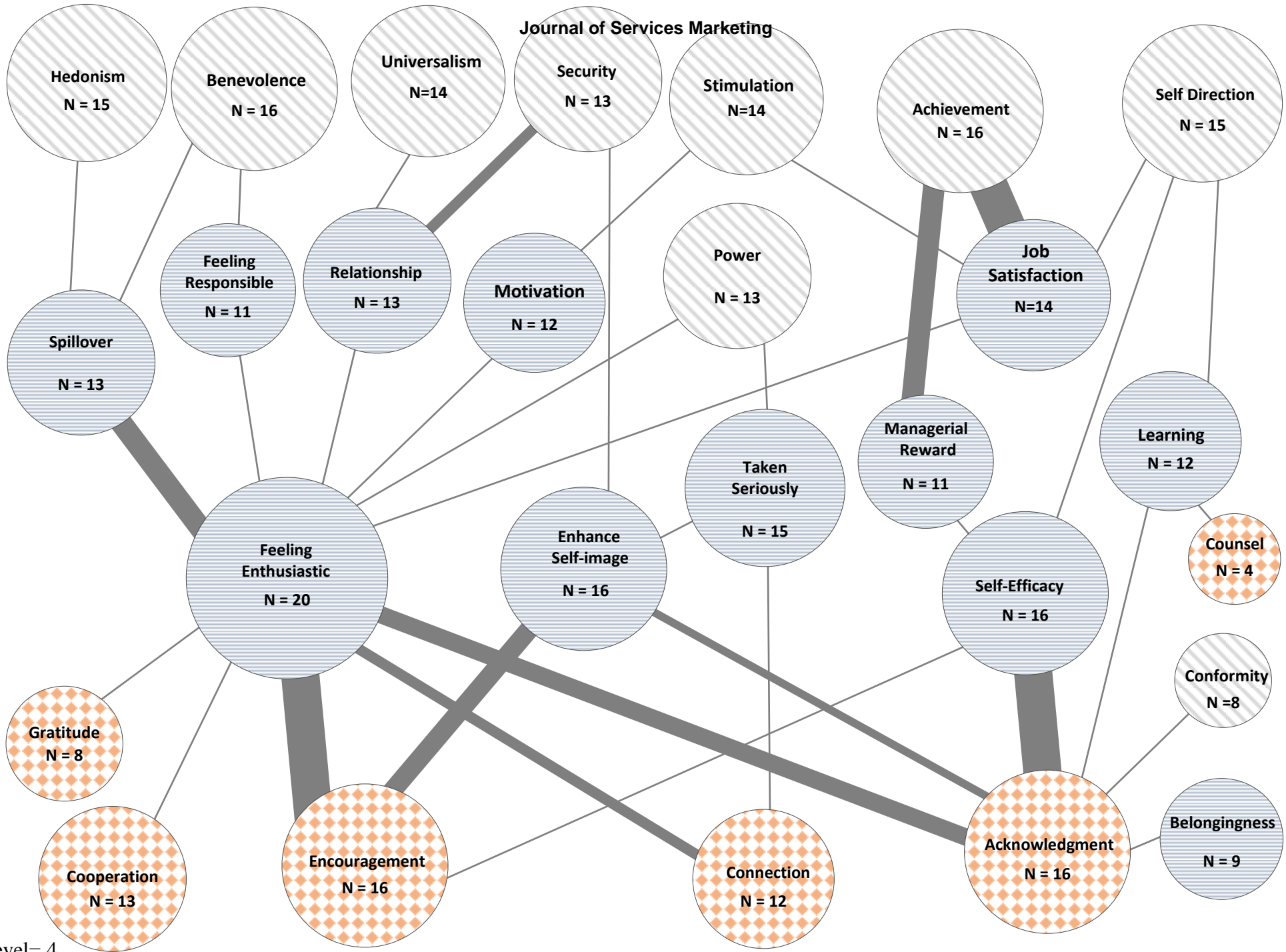


Note: Cut-off level= 4



1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43

Figure 3: Employee perception of PCF attributes, consequences, and values.



Note: Cut-off level= 4

