

Chapter 21

Value Co-Creation in Fitness Centers: The Role of Customer Citizenship Behavior on Perceived Value, Satisfaction, and Repurchase Intention

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this chapter were (1) to identify the role of customer citizenship behavior (CCB) in value co-creation and (2) to examine the relationships among CCB, perceived value, satisfaction, and repurchase intention of customers in the context of fitness centers. Data were collected from customers at commercial fitness clubs in the region of Greater Taipei. The results showed that CCB has a positive influence on perceived value and satisfaction, which in turn have positive influences on repurchase intention. Besides, perceived value has a positive influence on satisfaction. Although a direct relationship between CCB and repurchase intention was not found, an indirect influence of customer citizenship behavior through perceived value and satisfaction on repurchase intention was revealed. The findings of this chapter fill the academic gaps in the literature regarding the role of CCB on value co-creation in fitness centers. It also provides practical implications for fitness centers to vigorously encourage customers to act with citizenship behaviors.

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INTRODUCTION

It has been known that the employee behavior plays a critical role in service delivery. According to the service-profit chain, it demonstrates that the employee attitude and behavior lead to customer perception of service quality, which in turn positively influences customer satisfaction and loyalty (Chiu, Cho, & Won, 2014; Hong, Liao, Hu, & Jiang, 2013). However, the links in the service-profit chain miss the participatory role of the customer in producing the service value. Scholars have also argued that the literature of organizational behavior has laid particular stress on the employee rather than the customer (Groth, 2005; Yi, 2014).

Traditionally, customers are viewed as recipients in the locus of service delivery and get involved merely at the point of the interaction of services (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Recently, researchers have paid increasing attention to the customer behavior, which can actively contribute to the value and quality of services (Groth, 2005; Yi & Gong, 2008b; Yi, Gong, & Lee, 2013). According to service-dominant logic (SDL), the customer is always a co-creator of value and ultimately determines the value of services (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008). It implies that the customer actively engages in the service delivery process. On the other hand, customers are also viewed as “partial employees” and human resources of the organization (Bowen, Schneider, & Kim, 2000; Chiu, Kwag, & Bae, 2015). That is, customers can behave like employees to a large extent. They interactively cooperate with employees and other customers for a better value of services. Indeed, the efficient management of customers can be a strategic and competitive advantage for organizations (Lengnick-Hall, 1996).

Groth (2005) initially proposed the concept of customer citizenship behavior (CCB) and defined CCB as “voluntary and discretionary behaviors that are not required for the successful production and/or delivery of the service but that, in the aggregate, help the service organization overall” (p. 11). These actions constitute extra-role behaviors, consisting of positive, voluntary, helpful, and constructive behaviors toward the organization and other customers (Bove, Pervan, Beatty, & Shiu, 2009). Consequently, it may lead to a more friendly service environment and better service quality, because a customer exhibiting citizenship behavior may encourage other customers to display citizenship behaviors, starting a chain of voluntary actions. For example, customers may provide constructive feedback to organizations to improve the service quality. Moreover, customers may also recommend a service business to their friends or family to enhance the reputation of the organization. Such behaviors are generally of value to the organization.

In the context of fitness centers, customers’ citizenship behaviors probably play an even more important role in the service delivery process (Chiu et al., 2015). The fitness service industry is distinctively different from other service industries. According to Bitner, Faranda, Hubbert, and Zeithaml (1997), customers of fitness centers have a higher frequency of service encounters with employees who deliver service as compared to other service industries. Customers are required to be physically present and actively exercise in order for the service delivery process to be successful. Hence, their active participation in the co-production of the service to a large extent determines the success of the service outcomes (e.g., increasing physical health or losing weight). Consequently, customers may perceive better service value and satisfaction from these service outcomes.

Although the critical role of customer behavior and the unique characteristics of fitness service have been addressed, there has been very limited research on identifying the role of CCB in the context of fitness services. It also should be noted that there have been few attempts to examine the causal relation-

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