

Full Length Research Paper

The Emotional Core of Service Success: Empirical Evidence from the Service Sector

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Accepted December, 2025

Service responsiveness is an important contemporary issue related to organization responsiveness. Meanwhile, the extent to which service responsiveness influences emotions and service outcomes has seldom been examined empirically. The analytical results of this study are based on applying questionnaire method to accumulate dyadic data from managers and subordinates. According to those results, mechanistic and organic service responsiveness are positively correlated with positive employee social emotions and the influence of mechanistic service responsiveness exceeds that of organic service responsiveness. Mechanistic and organic service responsiveness enhances employee negative social emotions and the influence of organic service responsiveness exceeds that of mechanistic service responsiveness. Positive social emotions positively influence job and customer satisfaction. Academic and managerial implications are discussed as well.

Key words: Mechanistic service responsiveness, organic service responsiveness, social emotion, job satisfaction, customer satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Marketing research has focused recently on organizational responsiveness and scholars demonstrated that, the application of organizational responsiveness is an effective tool that marketers can use in managing relationships with customers (Homburg et al., 2007; Jayachandran and Varadarajan, 2006). Therefore, this issue is a key focus of marketing research. However, scholars also argue that research on organizational responsiveness must begin from both quantitative and qualitative directions (Bhatt and Troutt, 2005;

Jayachandran and Varadarajan, 2006). Furthermore, with regard to marketing, it is particularly interesting to examine other important dimensions (such as service responsiveness).

Even though various researchers of different fields have begun to examine organizational responsiveness

(Parasuraman et al., 1988), for instance, Homburg et al. (2007) surveyed customer-related responsiveness¹ based on the speed of reaction to customer-related change. Only a few scholars used multi-dimensions or different perspectives (e.g., system theory) to evaluate service responsiveness. Thus, the first purpose of this study was to use different perspective to measure the key elements of service responsiveness and could enrich the knowledge of marketing field. According to the research method of Homburg and Fürst (2005), this work applies

¹Organizational responsiveness, customer responsiveness and service responsiveness all emphasize the responding speed, but their focuses were different. For instance, the definition of organizational responsiveness was "the ability of firms to quickly respond to changes in their external environment (Hoyt et al., 2007). Customer responsiveness was "the speed of reaction to customer-related change" (Homburg et al., 2007), and service responsiveness's definition was "organization integrating mechanistic system and organic culture to match customer service needs as well as quick response speed". Therefore, service responsiveness in this study indicates an organization's quickness of response to satisfy customer service need based on mechanistic and organic service system.

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the system perspective of organizational theory and the concept of service encounter, empirical studies of organizational responsiveness and the results of 27 interviews with managers to create a theoretical and empirical basis of service responsiveness. Service responsiveness in this study thus, includes mechanistic service responsiveness and organic service responsiveness.

Meanwhile, on to the reason firms spend a lot of resources to establish perfect service environment or service responsiveness. Barsade and Gibson (2007) argue that managers need to know the how and why of work characteristics with multi-management design, because service work characteristics can influence employee emotional organizational behavior and then, influence customers' response (Brotheridge and Lee, 2003). Their argument thus, illustrates not only the importance of exploring service responsiveness, but also following another important research direction- "employee's emotion management" (Homburg et al., 2007; Jayachandran et al., 2005; Wegge et al., 2006).

Numerous scholars discuss employee's emotion management with "emotion contagion" or "emotional labor" (Brotheridge and Lee 2003; Hochschild, 1983); this study discusses employee emotion management by "social emotion" perspective based on two reasons: (1) social emotion is connected with inter-personal relationships; and (2) front-line employees are a medium for delivering products or services, consistency business value to customers via service encounters (Bagozzi, 2006).

Organizations can thus understand, analyze and transfer individual goals and activities by characteristics of social emotions. Based on the social emotions perspective, the second purpose of this investigation thus, identifies potential influences on interpersonal or individual positive or negative emotions between managers and employees.

Finally, owing to limitations associated with collecting dyadic data (Rucci et al., 1998), few studies have considered whether business strategy planning matches managers, employee or consumer expectations when investigating the relationships among business, employees and consumers. Therefore, the third purpose of this study was to examine managers and employees assessments and feelings (such as satisfaction) regarding service simultaneously. The theoretical contributions of this study are:

(1) Based on the literature and the results of interviews that we conducted, and guided by theory to form and implement effective, efficient and responsive service, we test a novel model.

(2) Adopt the perspective of social emotions to enrich the influence of employee social emotions on service outcomes.

(3) Combine dyadic data with the assessments of managers and employees to explore their perceptions of customer service based on their perspectives and also to

reduce the influence of common method variance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Service responsiveness: Development of the construct

Similar to the process followed by Ramani and Kumar (2008), this study used the concept of organizational responsiveness and the findings from a pre-test consisting of 27 in-depth interviews to clarify from business-to-consumer firms. There were 18 respondents from 2 convenience chain stores and 9 from a financial insurance firm. This was in line with contemporary marketing thought that relational aspects of marketing are now implemented by all types of firms (Coviello et al., 2002). Meanwhile, the continuum argument of Grönroos (2000) is also demonstrated in service marketing concept. It means we need to understand service responsiveness comprehensively from different type of firms (convenience chain store versus financial insurance company) and this interview design can conceive service responsiveness deeply.

We summarized the responses of respondents to the two key questions asked during the interviews: (1) in your company, how does customer needs vary from each other? What are the needs varying in? How would you classify them? (2) What is the complete service program you use to deal with customer requests? Most managers voiced that analysis of the business response activities can be separated into two categories to serve customers' need: (1) routine service need or common service need in daily life and (2) unexpected service need or difficult to find a service paradigm from job description. Therefore, organizations resolve routine and common service needs through clear definition and standard service process to satisfy customers or resolve unexpected service needs through flexibility and un-standard service process², we term clear definition and routine service process as the "mechanistic service responsiveness" and term flexibility and un-standard service process as the "organic service responsiveness".

Mechanistic service responsiveness includes: (1) Employee response: service personnel must know everything necessarily and professional ability is just a basis to solve the problems. Moreover, service personnel must have sufficient responsibility, flexibility and willingness to help customers. Parasuraman et al. (1998) indicated that, employee service behavior can enhance

²This study is based on the metaphor of system theory: mechanistic-organic perspective to understand business - how to form an effective responsiveness model through service system and solve customers' needs or problems. For instance, mechanistic construct can help employees to resolve routine work, and organic construct can help employees to resolve un-standard work (Duncan, 1973). In the meantime, March and Simon (1993) proposed that business adopts these two methods mentioned above to influence employees' service behavior.

and maintain service quality, which is important in implementing organizational service strategy. (2) Response time: companies set specific rules regarding response time, provide what the customer wants and handle their requirement instantly. Lockamy (1994) considered the performance measure system perspective to indicate that, timely control and rapid product delivery significantly influences customer responsiveness. (3) Response speed: it refers to the ability of a firm's systems to respond to heterogeneous customers' needs instantly and in real-time. Katz and Kahn (1978) argued that, organizations must control internal resources to rapidly respond to threats and environmental changes. (4) Information integration: it represents the degree to which the firm offers excellent service information system to receive, analyze, record and track customers' needs. Reid et al. (2005) indicated that, the basis for enhancing organizational responsiveness is to design an integration marketing communication model from outside to inside (from customer side to organization side) (Duncan and Moriarty, 1998). In this model, the relationships among customers, departments and organization can link with each other and shape positive organizational responsiveness (Pickton and Hartley, 1998). (5) Procedural response: it indicates a standard operational procedure to connect, deliver and record and a different process to cope with varying needs. Anderson et al. (1994) defined process management as, "the set of methodological and behavioral practices emphasizing the management of process, or means of actions, rather than the results".

Organic service responsiveness includes: (1) organizational culture support: it reflects the ability of a firm's systems to provides business members with clear service vision; willingness to invest in training expenses; constructive attitude towards failure and positive service attitude when serving unstable customers' needs. (2) Team work cohesion: means teamwork attitude and cooperation in cross-departments and acceptance of different opinions. When Homburg et al. (2007) observed culture and emotion in the service and manufacturing business, they discovered that service system can influence employee response behavior in internal business environments and is also the key determinant of organizational responsiveness (White et al., 2003). For instance, the support of service responsiveness in internal environment and team work can enhance employee cohesion and thus, promote customer service (Deeter-Schmelz and Kennedy, 2003).

Constructs related to social emotions and service outcomes

Social emotions are used to coordinate individual responses to better fit the social relations and groups in which they are embedded. Bagozzi (2006) identified four positive emotions in relationships between salesperson

and customers including pride, attachment, empathy and emotional wisdom, as well as six negative emotions including guilt, shame, embarrassment, envy, jealousy and social anxiety.

Pride can be defined as the phenomenological experience of "joy in relation to an action, thought or feeling well done" (Lewis, 2000). Attachment: attachment can be defined as the feelings of attachment, in the sense of security, reliability and personal comfort, influenced satisfaction and trust in business-to-business (B to B) relationships. Empathy: empathy can facilitate communication between salespersons and customers by promoting interpersonal liking and attachment and can improve information processing by both salespersons and customers. A final area where further research is required is the role of emotional wisdom in customer-salesperson relationships, particularly in the sense of determining how people react to and cope with emotions once they have experienced service encounters or how functional emotions can be promoted and dysfunctional ones avoided.

Negative social emotions (such as shame, embarrassment) are the key emotional elements between salesperson and customers (Bagozzi et al., 2006). These emotions can have positive consequences in the sense of promoting goal attainment, including relationship enhancing, coping or simply helping people adapt to changing or adverse environments. Obviously, ineffective coping mechanisms imply that negative social emotions can become dysfunctional in terms of businesses and customers relationships.

Service outcomes include customer perspective (such as customer satisfaction or loyalty), employee perspective (e.g., job satisfaction, turnover) and business perspective (e.g., service performance, profit rate) (Reynolds and Beatty, 1999). This study adopts job satisfaction and customer satisfaction to measure service outcomes. For instance, Harris et al. (2006) examined bank managers in the southeast United States, specifically investigating the influence of employee work intelligence on customer orientation, job satisfaction and turnover intention. Evans et al. (2002) also examined service outcomes based on salesperson performance, salesperson satisfaction, salesperson commitment and role ambiguity.

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Service responsiveness and social emotions

Service responsiveness is a widespread system for helping employees to exhibit appropriate emotional responses. Service environment significantly influences employee emotions. Hence, employees shape their own emotional response if an organizational environment creates a "mechanistic service system" to ask employees

to provide excellent service (Cummings et al., 1989). Additionally, past studies also indicate that, based on mechanistic approach; organizations can create standard guidelines to increase role clarity by informing customer-contact employees of how to perform their jobs (Michaels et al., 1987). Such customer-oriented guidelines can benefit employees by identifying the appropriate service rules to follow, ultimately reducing inconsistencies in role expectations and also decreasing role conflict.

Wegge and Neuhaus (2002) surveyed college employees and indicated that, work pressure and negative emotion are positively correlated. Price et al. (1995) argued that emotional work arouses role pressures and conflicts. In service encounters, managers ask employees to provide service to form positive work enthusiasm and empathy, but also shape negative emotions such as anxiety and shame based on work pressure and conflict.

James et al. (1977) argued that, strategy and "psychology culture climate" positively affect employee emotions. Basch and Fisher (2000) surveyed 101 hotel employees and found out that when employees accept job content (for example, answer customer's question quickly) they exhibit positive emotions such as pleasure, happiness and pride. Role conflict is thus reduced. In addition, Zapf et al. (2001) indicated that, complex or un-standard tasks require employees to contact clients to solve the tasks. Firms thus ask and push service employees to handle difficult problems immediately and thus, foster employee-displayed negative emotions and sensitivity requirements. Overall, this study assumes that employees are influenced by specific service systems and those service systems influence their emotional responses to service work.

H₁: The level of mechanistic service responsiveness positively impacts perceived positive social emotions and negatively impacts perceived negative social emotions.

H₂: The level of organic service responsiveness positively impacts perceived positive social emotions and negatively impacts perceived negative social emotions.

Social emotions and service outcomes

In emotional contagion theory, individuals exhibiting positive (negative) emotions can encourage others to exhibit similar emotions. McHugo et al. (1985) demonstrate that, when employees provide service with a smile, they positively influence customer cognitions, behaviors and attitudes.

Lyubomirsky et al. (2005) adopted meta-analysis to examine the relationships among employee positive emotions, mood and work performance. The research results indicated that, when employees exhibit positive emotions or mood, the results revealed more positive evaluations of his/her manager, enhanced communication

ability and increased profits or organizational level. Wegge et al. (2006) also indicated that, positive work emotions are positively correlated with job satisfaction. The presumed mechanism for this effect was that positive emotional displays by employees increased customer willingness to return to the store and provide positive feedback to others.

According to the negative emotion perspective, Richards et al. (2002) examine the relationship between employee negative emotion and antisocial behavior. Wegge et al. (2006) also indicated that, negative work emotions are negatively correlated with job satisfaction. Additionally, employee work emotions mediate job satisfaction. Scholars indicate that, negative employee emotions are associated with antisocial behavior and irregular organizational behaviors (such as stealing). Consequently, we present hypothesis 3 and 4:

H₃: Employee positive social emotions positively influence perceived job satisfaction and customer satisfaction.

H₄: Employee negative social emotions negatively influence perceived job satisfaction and customer satisfaction.

Roger et al. (1996) indicated that, service behavior improves when employees have high job satisfaction. Empirical results also indicate that satisfied front-line employees positively influence customer satisfaction (Bernhardt et al., 2000). Additionally, Homburg and Stock (2004) investigated dyadic data of salespersons and customers and found that, service employee job satisfaction positively affects customer satisfaction. Therefore, if employees display passion or partiality in service work, they will deliver satisfaction to customers. These satisfied customers will then promote the image of the business.

H₅: Customer satisfaction increases with employee job satisfaction.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research framework

Based on the system theory perspective, literature review and 27 in-depth interviews, this study creates a comprehensive service responsiveness model (as shown in Figure 1).

Samples

This study chose to focus on the convenience store and financial insurance industries for two reasons. First, based on the sampling method of Homburg and Fürst (2005), this study focuses on a service industry and contacted the top three companies by market share from the banking/insurance, retailing and transport industry. Second, the top managers in the sample companies were asked to assist the authors in questionnaire distribution and collection (Hellier et al., 2003). This method can help in adopting random

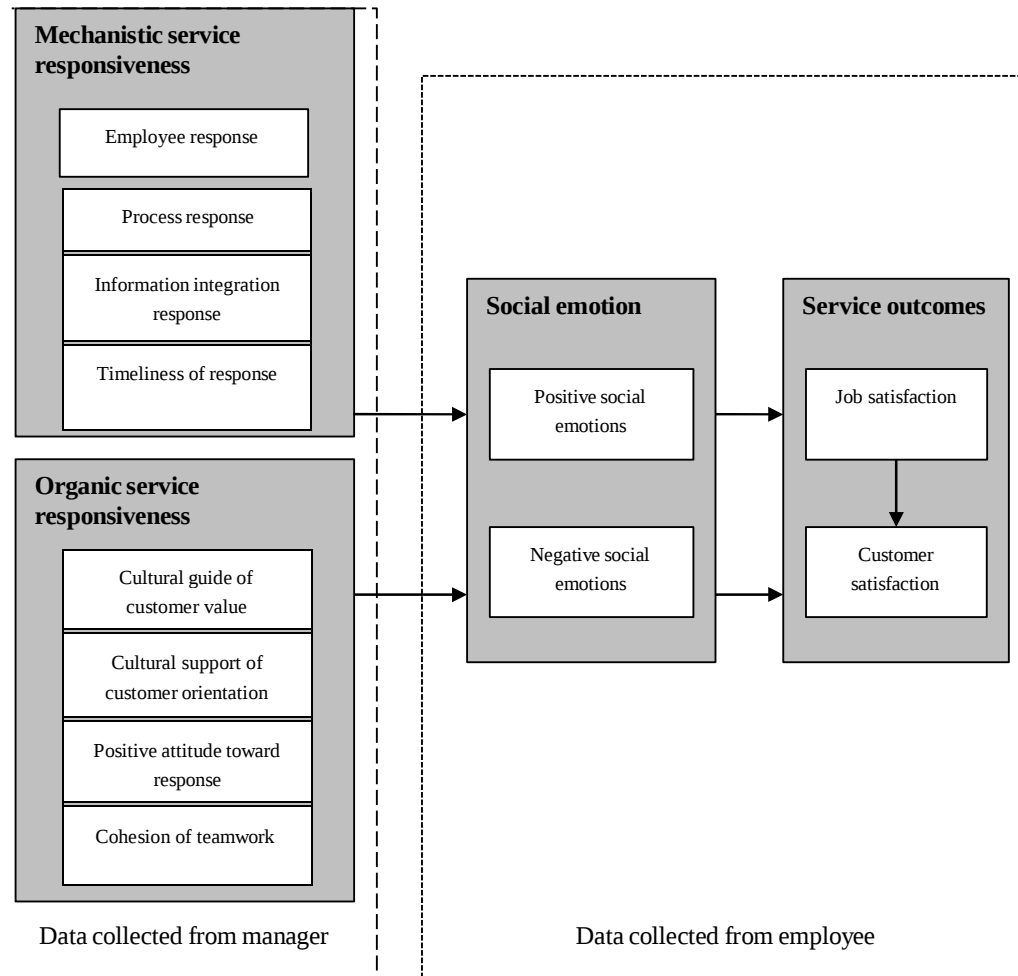


Figure 1. Concept framework.

sampling and increasing participation. However, only two convenience store firms and one financial insurance firm promised to distribute questionnaires.

The initial sample comprised the top three international convenience store and insurance firms leading by market share. After contacting these companies and soliciting their responses to inclusion in the survey, a final sample of two convenience store firms and one insurance firm was obtained. Dyadic data was obtained from managers and their subordinates. In the case of the convenience store firms, operational consultants or marketing managers were asked to respond to the questionnaire (which included questions on mechanistic and organic service responsiveness) and each participating marketing manager helped forward the questionnaire to two subordinates (convenience store managers). In the insurance company, junior managers or above were asked to respond to the questionnaire (including positive and negative social emotions and service outcomes) and participants then helped distribute the questionnaire to two subordinates (such as salespersons).

Data collection procedure

The sample comprised; (1) FA convenience stores in North Taiwan area (Taipei City, Taipei County and Keelung City); (2) SE convenience stores in South Taiwan area (Kaohsiung City, Kaohsiung

County, Tainan City and Tainan County); (3) GT insurance company in South Taiwan area (Kaohsiung City, Kaohsiung County, Tainan City and Tainan County), and census sampling was used to distribute the questionnaire. After branch marketing managers agreed to answer the questionnaire, questionnaires were distributed to them together with return envelopes. Marketing managers also helped in randomly distributing questionnaires to two employees on the same day as they received their own questionnaires³. In addition, questionnaire forms for managers and employees were all coded to indicate the recipient and were distributed and returned by mail.

Finally, 150 questionnaires were distributed to managers and another 300 questionnaires were distributed among employees at FA convenience stores. Moreover, 100 questionnaires were distributed to managers and another 200 questionnaires were distributed to employees at SE convenience stores. 100 questionnaires were distributed to managers and another 200 questionnaires were distributed to employees at GT insurance company. A gift (cost

³ We asked managers to send questionnaire to their subordinates in the office immediately when they received the questionnaire on the first day. This method can distribute questionnaires randomly, avoid manager choosing respondents based on their own preferences, and decrease sampling errors. In addition, to ensure this dyadic relationship was maintained, the surveys in each envelope were coded, with A1 indicating manager and B1 and B2 indicating their subordinates

US\$40) was presented to respondents to increase their intention to complete the questionnaires. A total of 120 manager and 240 employee questionnaires were received from FA convenience stores; 50 manager and 100 employee questionnaires were received from SE convenience stores and 80 manager and 160 employee questionnaires were received from GT insurance company. After eliminating incomplete and non-responsive questionnaires, usable questionnaires totaling 105/210 (manager/employee) questionnaires of FA convenience stores, 36/72 (manager/employee) questionnaires of SE convenience stores and 62/124 (manager/employee) questionnaires of GT insurance company were taken into consideration.

Additionally, tests demonstrated no significant differences among the responses of early versus late respondents (chi-square higher than 10) for all of our major constructs and for key demographic variables, indicating an absence of non-response bias (Homburg et al., 2007).⁴

This study used dyadic data sampling method (the proportion of managers to employees is 1:2) and was conducted in 203 convenience store and insurance firm branches, with 203 managers and 406 employees participating in the questionnaire survey. One manager filled in a responsiveness scale and two employees answered questions on social emotion, employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction. In order to ensure consistency of sampling unit, this study used Rwg, ICC1 and ICC2 as standards to ensure that the quality of intra-rater and within-group inter-rater is adaptable to be group variables.

Eighty employee responses were eliminated from among the 406 questionnaires owing to missing data. On average, approximately 1 to 2 employees per manager responded to the questionnaire. This work assessed homogeneity within groups (total 326 employees) with regard to individual social emotion, job satisfaction and customer satisfaction based on within-group inter-rater reliability (Rwg) (George and Bettenhausen, 1990; James et al., 1993). The statistical results indicate that, the average within-employee inter-rater agreement range was 0.72 to 0.98, showing high agreement. The average range of intra-class correlation (ICC1) and reliability of mean (ICC2; Bliese, 2000; James, 1982; Richey et al., 2007) for social emotion, job satisfaction and customer satisfaction were: ICC(1) = 0.13 to 0.19 and ICC(2) = 0.62 to 0.83.

Measures

Literature review and in-depth interviews with 27 practitioners were used to develop initial multi measurements of all dimensions. These questions were structured using seven-point Likert scales ranging from strong disagree to strongly agree. Service responsiveness includes both mechanistic and organic service responsiveness. For every facet of mechanistic service responsiveness (namely, employee response, process response, information integration response and timeliness of response), the study employed a set of 4 to 5 items. Moreover, for every facet of organic service responsiveness (i.e., culture supportiveness of internal environment regarding respect to response and cohesion of team work), the study employed a set of 3 to 6 items.

Additionally, culture support of internal environment regarding respect with response was measured using items adapted from the work of Homburg and Fürst (2005). According to the definition that

is in supportive of an internal environment with respect to complaint handling, this study separates them into three dimensions, including cultural guide of customer value, cultural support of customer orientation, positive attitude towards response and cohesion of teamwork. All the mentioned items sought to identify respondent perceptions of business service responsiveness.

This study only applied the scales to measure social emotions with high measurement reliability and validity. Therefore, this study only selected empathy (Parasuraman et al., 1988) and pride (Bagozzi, 2006; Bagozzi et al., 2006) for measuring positive social emotions. Negative social emotions include embarrassment and work anxiety (House and Rizzo, 1972). Based on the emotion measure process, this study asks respondents to indicate the degree to which they experienced specific emotions during their interaction with the business service responsiveness system during the last week. Service outcomes scales included job satisfaction and customer satisfaction (Wangenheim et al., 2007).

All items mentioned earlier asked respondents questions regarding their perceived level of satisfaction with respect to work and service. In pilot survey, three consultants were asked to answer the questions and comment on the complexity of the scales, as well as the wording and length of the survey and applied to 40 managers and employees, with usable responses being obtained from 30 and 33, respectively. The Cronbach α of all scales was higher than 0.7 in each case. Measures are listed in the Appendix.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Construct measurement model

Based on the suggestion of Anderson and Gerbing (1988) regarding the assessment of the measurement model, this study uses confirmatory factor analysis to measure the reliability and validity for each factor. However, this study eliminated the five items with a dimensional respect that is lower than 0.5, that is, EM1, EF5, EMBA5, TE1 and TE3. Overall, the results indicate acceptable psychometric properties (Table 1). Each construct exhibits a composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) exceeding the recommended threshold values of 0.6 and 0.5. Additionally, for all constructs, the coefficient alpha values exceed 0.8, thus demonstrating high internal consistency among the corresponding indicators.

This study performs discriminant validity analysis based on the recommendations of Anderson and Gerbing (1988) by limiting the correlation coefficient of the paired dimensions to 1, then performing a Chi-square variance test of the limited and unlimited measurement patterns. If the chi-square value of the limited pattern exceeds the chi-square value of the unlimited measurement pattern and reaches a level of significance, then both dimensions have discriminant validity. The chi-square values of limited patterns do not exceed those of unlimited patterns and reach a level of significance (as shown in Table 2), indicating discriminant validities among all dimensions are accepted.

Generally, reliability was found to be high, indicating that the items are heavily influenced by underlying construct, strongly suggesting that the scales are unidimensional. The values were thus, averaged on the

⁴We test the mean score of mechanistic and organic service responsiveness, positive and negative social emotions, and service outcomes with F test from three different companies to measure invariance problem. The statistic results indicate that three companies didn't have significant difference on mechanistic and organic service responsiveness ($F=1.82, 1.49; p>0.1$), positive and negative social emotions ($F=1.975, 2.168; p>0.1$), and service outcomes (including job satisfaction and customer satisfaction) ($F=1.25, 2.78; p>0.05$).

Table 1. Reliability information for the measurement model.

Mechanistic service responsiveness						
Dimensions (a value)	Variables	Standard factor loading	SMC	Error	CR	AVE
Employee response(EM) (0.93)	EM2	0.88	0.77	0.23	0.923	0.77
	EM3	0.91	0.83	0.17		
	EM4	0.86	0.74	0.26		
	EM5	0.85	0.72	0.27		
Process response (PR) (0.84)	PR1	0.77	0.59	0.41	0.84	0.57
	PR2	0.73	0.53	0.47		
	PR3	0.77	0.59	0.40		
	PR4	0.74	0.55	0.45		
Information integration response (IN) (0.90)	IN1	0.67	0.45	0.55	0.91	0.66
	IN2	0.84	0.71	0.29		
	IN3	0.89	0.79	0.21		
	IN4	0.84	0.71	0.30		
	IN5	0.81	0.66	0.35		
Timeliness of response (EF) (0.92)	EF1	0.79	0.62	0.37	0.88	0.65
	EF2	0.81	0.66	0.35		
	EF3	0.82	0.67	0.33		
	EF4	0.81	0.66	0.34		
x2=3150.85; x2/df=20.79; GFI=0.84; AGFI=0.80; NFI=0.95; NNFI=0.96; CFI=0.97; IFI=0.97; SRMR=0.067						
Organic service responsiveness						
Cultural guide of customer value(CV) (0.90)	CV1	0.78	0.61	0.40	0.91	0.61
	CV2	0.75	0.56	0.43		
	CV3	0.75	0.56	0.43		
	CV4	0.84	0.71	0.30		
	CV5	0.83	0.69	0.32		
	CV6	0.75	0.56	0.44		
Cultural support of customer orientation (CO) (0.92)	CO1	0.71	0.50	0.49	0.83	0.57
	CO2	0.87	0.76	0.24		
	CO3	0.84	0.71	0.29		
	CO4	0.53	0.28	0.71		
Positive attitude towards response (PA) (0.80)	PA1	0.82	0.67	0.33	0.93	0.76
	PA2	0.90	0.81	0.18		
	PA3	0.93	0.86	0.14		
	PA4	0.82	0.67	0.33		
Cohesion of teamwork (TW) (0.92)	TW1	0.89	0.79	0.20	0.91	0.76
	TW2	0.91	0.83	0.18		
	TW3	0.82	0.67	0.33		
x2=2500.75; x2/df=20.22; GFI=0.87; AGFI=0.83; NFI=0.95; NNFI=0.96; CFI=0.97; IFI=0.97; SRMR=0.056						
Positive social emotions						
Empathy(EMP) (0.89)	EMP1	0.85	0.72	0.28	0.89	0.73
	EMP2	0.85	0.72	0.28		
	EMP3	0.87	0.76	0.25		
Pride(RES) (0.95)	RES1	0.82	0.67	0.33	0.95	0.79
	RES2	0.83	0.69	0.30		
	RES3	0.94	0.88	0.13		
	RES4	0.95	0.90	0.10		
	RES5	0.90	0.81	0.20		
x2=780.27; x2/df=40.12; GFI=0.91; AGFI=0.83; NFI=0.97; NNFI=0.97; CFI=0.98; IFI=0.98; SRMR=0.032						

Table 1. Contd.

Negative social emotions							
Embarrassment (EMBA) (0.84)	EMBA1	00.63	00.40	00.61	00.85	00.53	
	EMBA2	00.82	00.67	00.32			
	EMBA3	00.69	00.48	0.52			
	EMBA4	00.89	00.79	00.21			
	EMBA6	00.57	00.32	00.68			
Work anxiety (TE) (0.88)	TE2	00.84	00.71	00.29	00.88	00.60	
	TE4	00.86	00.74	00.26			
	TE5	00.85	00.72	00.28			
	TE6	00.65	00.42	00.58			
	TE7	00.64	00.41	00.59			
x2=970.29; x2/df=20.86; GFI=0.91; AGFI=0.86; NFI=0.95; NNFI=0.95; CFI=0.96; IFI=0.96; SRMR=0.054							
Service outcomes							
Job satisfaction (WS) (0.90)	WS1	00.87	00.76	00.23	00.94	00.79	
	WS2	00.86	00.74	00.26			
	WS3	00.89	00.79	00.20			
	WS4	00.92	00.85	00.15			
Customer satisfaction (CS) (0.91)	CS1	00.89	00.79	00.20	00.91	00.71	
	CS2	00.88	00.77	00.22			
	CS3	00.80	00.64	00.36			
	CS4	00.80	00.64	00.36			
x2=790.01; x2/df=40.16; GFI=0.91; AGFI=0.83; NFI=0.97; NNFI=0.96; CFI=0.97; IFI=0.97; SRMR=0.047							

SMC: Squared multiple correlations.

Table 2. Correlations among the constructs.

Pattern	X ²	d.f.	ΔX ²	Pattern	X ²	d.f.	ΔX ²
Social emotion				Service outcomes			
Unlimited measurement pattern	375.70	129	--	Unlimited measurement pattern	79.01	19	--
EMP and RES	461.29	130	85.59	WS and CS	304.12	20	225.11
EMP and EMBA	710.01	130	334.31				
EMP and TE	679.91	130	304.21				
RES and EMBA	832.36	130	456.66				
RES and TE	931.51	130	555.81				
EMBA and TE	704.12	130	328.42				
Mechanistic service responsiveness				Organic service responsiveness			
Unlimited measurement pattern	315.85	113	--	Unlimited measurement pattern	250.75	113	--
EM and PR	444.66	114	128.81	CV and CO	888.39	114	637.64
EM and IN	862.80	114	546.95	CV and PA	297.69	114	46.94
EM and EF	556.23	114	240.38	CV and TW	557.12	114	306.37
PR and IN	460.37	114	144.52	CO and PA	586.01	114	335.26
PR and EF	418.7	114	102.85	CO and TW	609.10	114	358.35
IN and EF	558.69	114	242.84	PA and TW	458.30	114	207.55

respective scales and these four average values were used to indicate the higher-level construct (that is,

mechanistic service responsiveness). We applied the same measurement approach for organic service

Table 3. Structural model.

Dimensions	Standard factor loading	t value	Error	CR	AVE
Mechanistic service responsiveness					
λ_{x11} EM	0.88	--	0.23	0.87	0.63
λ_{x21} PR	0.88	11.48	0.23		
λ_{x31} IN	0.72	11.15	0.48		
λ_{x41} EF	0.72	11.64	0.48		
Organic service responsiveness					
λ_{x52} CV	0.95	--	0.08	0.82	0.50
λ_{x62} CO	0.52	4.34	0.72		
λ_{x72} PA	0.82	11.68	0.33		
λ_{x82} TW	0.57	8.08	0.68		
Positive social emotion					
λ_{y11} EMP	0.88	--	0.23	0.87	0.63
λ_{y21} RES	0.88	14.61	0.23		
Negative social emotion					
λ_{y32} EMBA	0.73	--	0.47	0.70	0.53
λ_{y42} TE	0.73	3.23	0.47		
Job satisfaction					
λ_{y53} WS1	0.89	--	0.20	0.93	0.78
λ_{y63} WS2	0.85	16.41	0.29		
λ_{y73} WS3	0.88	17.76	0.23		
λ_{y83} WS4	0.92	19.54	0.16		
Customer satisfaction					
λ_{y94} CS1	0.94	--	0.11	0.94	0.81
λ_{y104} CS2	0.90	21.84	0.19		
λ_{y114} CS3	0.90	22.25	0.18		
λ_{y124} CS4	0.84	18.10	0.29		

responsiveness, positive social emotions and negative social emotions (Homburg et al., 2007). The analytical results demonstrate that, the proposed model is predominantly supported and the structural model also fits the variance-covariance matrix satisfactorily, with a chi-square value of 452.41 (df = 161); GFI = 0.81; CFI = 0.92; NNFI = 0.90; PNFI = 0.75. Consequently, the model contributes significantly to better understanding of the endogenous variables (as shown in Table 3).

As shown in Table 4, mechanistic and organic service responsiveness are antecedents of employee positive social emotions and indirectly influence service outcomes. The statistical results indicate that, mechanistic service responsiveness ($Y_{11} = 0.17$) and organic service responsiveness ($Y_{12} = 0.26$) both significantly and positively impact positive employee social emotions and the influence of organic service responsiveness exceeds

that of mechanistic service responsiveness. Additionally, mechanistic service responsiveness ($Y_{21} = -0.23$) and organic service responsiveness ($Y_{22} = -0.19$) both significantly and negatively influence negative social emotions of employees and mechanistic service responsiveness exceeds organic service responsiveness. Thus, hypotheses 1 and 2 are also supported by the findings of this study.

This study also demonstrates that, positive social emotions significantly and positively influence job satisfaction ($\beta_{31} = 0.77$) and customer satisfaction ($\beta_{41} = 0.56$). Thus, hypotheses 3 was supported. However, this study fails to identify statistical support for the predicted negative link between negative social emotions and job satisfaction and customer satisfaction. Meanwhile, no statistical support is found for the predicted positive link between job satisfaction and customer satisfaction. Thus, hypotheses

Table 4. Structural equation model results.

	Path	Estimate	Hypothesis
Y ₁₁	Mechanistic service responsiveness→ positive social emotions	0.17(2.14)*	H ₁
Y ₂₁	Mechanistic service responsiveness→ negative social emotions	-0.23(-2.32)*	
Y ₁₂	Organic service responsiveness→ positive social emotions	0.26(3.40)**	H ₂
Y ₂₂	Organic service responsiveness→ negative social emotions	-0.19(-2.03)*	
β ₃₁	Positive social emotions→ job satisfaction	0.77(10.93)***	H ₃
β ₄₁	Positive social emotions→ customer satisfaction	0.56(4.90)**	
β ₃₂	Negative social emotions→ job satisfaction	-0.01(-0.01)	H ₄
β ₄₂	Negative social emotions→ customer satisfaction	0.12(1.08)	
β ₄₃	Job satisfaction→ customer satisfaction	0.13(1.80)	H ₅

* p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001

4 and 5 were not supported.

DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this study is to examine the relationships among service responsiveness, social emotions and service outcomes. Therefore, this study used 27 in-depth interviews to create service responsiveness with a strong practice phenomenon via precise and complete steps designed to adhere to specific service situations. The definition and dimensions of service responsiveness presented in this study thus have a theoretical and practical framework. We believe that service responsiveness indicates that, an organization possesses a “customer first” service culture and cohesive teamwork. The organization efficiently provides products or services, employees, process controls and information integration to response to and fit customer needs.

Overall, as suggested by Homburg et al. (2007), we believe that the mechanistic and organic perspectives can be used to efficiently distinguish service responsiveness into two parts. This argument can be applied in marketing strategy planning to explore the influences of employee service behavior. On the one hand, according to previous studies, organizations must provide a stable and consistent product or service via a standardized service model. For instance, businesses should provide customers with standardized services and emphasize the importance of that standardization. On the other hand, customized and flexible services (e.g., employee provide different insurance products according to customer requirements) are also available in the market. However, whether the two approaches possess a complementary or compensatory relationship is a worthwhile issue for discussion. This study presents evidence of the primarily complementary nature of the relationship between the two approaches.

The complementary nature of the two approaches becomes evident because each approach significantly affects employee social emotions. That is, each approach

explains a variance in perceptions of employee social emotions. Meanwhile, the finding that employee negative social emotions are more strongly impacted negatively by mechanistic service responsiveness, whereas employee positive social emotions are more strongly driven by organic service responsiveness also stresses the complementary nature of the two approaches.

According to our findings, only positive social emotions significantly and positively influence job satisfaction and customer satisfaction, while negative social emotions do not significantly and negatively affect service outcomes. This study thus demonstrates that, employees that present positive emotions (e.g., empathy), can foster them to build positive job satisfaction or customer satisfaction. Service employees thus contribute crucially to delivering high quality service (Homburg et al., 2007; Wu et al., 2008). We believe that, mediators or moderators exist between negative social emotions in employees and service outcomes. Some interview respondents indicate that, employees must regulate their emotions to serve and satisfy customer needs and individual characteristics thus, may moderate the relationship among variables. Future studies should examine other variables between negative social emotions and service outcomes.

The findings of job satisfaction do not positive significantly influence customer satisfaction; possible reason is that mediator available between job satisfaction and customer satisfaction. For instance, Vilares and Coelho (2004) indicated perceived value and Heskett et al. (1994) proposed that, employee loyalty were the mediators between job satisfaction and customer satisfaction. Another possible reason is that, we believe job satisfaction should have positive influence on customer satisfaction. In Table 5, their relationship was closely significantly level ($0.05 < p < 0.1$). We thus suggest that, future research should test their relationship with control variables (e.g., employee sex or age) in different industries.

Finally, a managerial perspective is adopted to explore service responsiveness and employee perspective is applied to explore social emotions and service outcomes.

As suggested by previous scholars (Homburg et al., 2007), dyadic data from different sources offers a better way of exploring the perceptions of different respondents of service, while simultaneously reducing the possibility of common method bias.

Contributions to scholarship

This study investigates three important theoretical issues. First, the qualitative method is applied to interview 27 managers and the mechanistic and organic perspectives are combined to explain the concept of service system. Bhatt and Troutt (2005) and Jayachandran and Varadarajan (2006) indicate that, future studies should examine other critical dimensions; in particular, there is a dearth of published research on service marketing investigating the different critical dimensions of organization responsiveness based on quantitative or qualitative methods (Homburg et al., 2007). This study thus, responds to important scholarly arguments and discusses the dimensions of service responsiveness. The dimensions of service responsiveness of this study are constructed based on the service system concept and interviews. Therefore, this study attempts to discuss service responsiveness from various perspectives.

Second, the issue of employee emotions has recently attracted increasing attention from organizational or marketing scholars (Tsai, 2001). Although, scholars argue that "how and why an organization adopts multi management strategy to design work characteristics and create appropriate service system to influence employee's emotional organization behavior is an important issue that businesses need to understand" (Barsade and Gibson, 2007), past research has distinguished between employee positive and negative emotions (Wegge et al., 2006), but has failed to integrate the concepts of service encounter or social interaction to form employee emotions in service situations. This study thus, adopts the argument of Bagozzi (2006) to construct employee positive social (interactive) emotions and negative (interactive) emotions from the perspective of social interaction. This investigation thus not only explores the dimensions of employee social emotion, but also examines the relationships among service responsiveness, social emotions and service outcomes.

Third, Wegge et al. (2006) indicated that future studies should discuss the relationship between employee emotions and work performance. This study discusses the influence of employee social emotions on service outcomes. Meanwhile, the study findings indicate that employee positive social emotions significantly and positively influence service outcomes (such as job satisfaction and customer satisfaction). However, this study fails to find statistical support for the predicted negative link between negative social emotions and service outcomes. This result is the same as the findings of Dolen et al. (2004). This phenomenon may result from

the existing of other mediating or moderating variables between the relationship of negative social emotions and service outcomes.

Applied implications

The analytical results provide guidance for designing firm service responsiveness and assisting employees in establishing positive service behavior. Given mainly complementary relationship between the mechanistic and organic approaches (McDonough and Leifer, 1983), this study recommends that managers use both approaches together.

Particularly, this result implies the following specific phenomenon. First, mechanistic service responsiveness impacts employee negative social emotions more strongly than does organic service responsiveness. Employee embarrassment or work anxiety is reduced under stable and standard situations. We believe role clarity may explain this result. Although, mechanistic service responsiveness and organic service responsiveness both help employees to provide service, mechanistic service responsiveness can increase role clarity by orienting employees on how to best perform their jobs with a uniform procedure. Therefore, customer-contact employees avoid problems arising from embarrassment or work anxiety when serving customers. Compared with the mechanistic service responsiveness, organic service responsiveness exerts a stronger and more positively influence on employee positive social emotions. We posit that greater internal environmental support for service responsiveness implies a lower likelihood of employees perceiving incompatibility between role expectations derived from the internal environment and customers, ultimately increasing employee confidence and pride.

This study demonstrates that, if businesses want to help employees increase positive social emotions, organic service responsiveness (e.g., soft factors) can provide a safeguard to ensure effective service behavior. Otherwise, businesses can emphasize mechanistic service responsiveness (e.g., hard factors) to decrease employee negative social emotions. This study adopts the arguments of Beer and Nohria (2000) and conducts clear and detailed discussions to clarify how the service responsiveness model can help businesses allocate appropriate resources (such as time and money) among different steps (e.g., planning step) of service responsiveness, thus, successfully developing or growing their businesses.

Finally, the findings of this study indicate that positive employee social emotions significantly influence work and customer satisfaction positively. The perspective of Bagozzi (2006) can clarify the responses of employees, as well as coordinate individual behavior and the fit between individual and service behavior. According to this result, businesses can transfer or regulate employees' feelings and actions to complete business goals.

Employee empathy and pride can be enhanced not only to satisfy customers, but also to better fit the social relations and group in which they are embedded.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This study strives to investigate the research framework using scientific methods and standards, it still has certain limitations. First, the limitations of the industries researched in this study, that is, the convenience store and insurance industries, although, there are a wide variety of firms in the service industry, this study is limited to only using convenience stores and insurances firm as main sample. Therefore, whether or not the results of this study can be generalized to other kinds of service industries needs further validation.

Second, this study is also limited with respect to sampling size; this study adopted questionnaire survey and random sampling methods to discuss research issues. However, the objective was to understand the planning and design of service responsiveness of different business and collect dyadic data from managers and employees', meaning it was impossible to collect a large sample. Third, this study examines the definitions and dimensions of service responsiveness, as well as the relationships among service responsiveness, employees' social emotions and service outcomes. However, the research framework is too large to include comprehensive variables. Fourth, the GFI of the proposed model is slightly below the recommended threshold value ($GFI > 0.9$) of Anderson and Gerbing (1988), but still above the recommended threshold value ($GFI > 0.8$) of Bentler and Wu (1993), resulting in a relatively small sample size.

Finally, this study presents some suggestions for future research. First, a control variable could be added to examine how the main variables, for example, service responsiveness and employee social emotions, are related. Future research should attempt to verify the results of this study in a B2C context and consider other control variables by obtaining responses from a larger number of customers. Second, we confer with Coviello et al. (2002) that, different industry settings or exchange categories are seldom compared in literature. For instance, future research could benefit from using the retail banking or travel agency industries to further insight into different service scenarios. Third, the measurement of service responsiveness in this investigation is based on research on organizational responsiveness and interviews. Future research can either develop different measurements to assess their influence or consider a more diverse range of sources, such as the perspectives of customers or front-line employees.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We appreciate the very thoughtful and insightful comments from anonymous reviewers of AJBM since they

helped to establish an appropriate direction for the article and would like to thank the National Science Council of the Republic of China, Taiwan, for financially supporting this research under contract no. NSC 97-2410-H-346-007-.

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