

**Feeling Loyal?**  
**The Impacts of Affective Customer Experiences on Business**

**Rouxelle de Villiers\***

*Waikato University, New Zealand*

**Po-Ju Chen**

*University of Central Florida, U.S.A.*

---

**Abstract**

This sub-section focuses on affective (emotional) consumption experiences in service marketing. This customer experience affects not only the immediate valance and intensity of the experience, but also the consumers and employees sense of comfort, joy, and loyalty. Thus negative experiences can be costly to the firm in terms of lost clients, demotivated employees and reduced long-term business performance.

*Key words:* affective; arousal; emotions; hedonic; intensity

---

This section focuses on affective (emotional) consumption experiences in service marketing. The impact of affect/emotion on judgment, assessment, decision and resulting behavior is important to consumer behavior research. Consumer affective experiences result in evaluation of service providers. The resulting judgment, based on perception of interaction with service providers, is also heavily influenced by the situation and the psychological state of mind—which personal values and cultural influences influence.

Affective experiences can be derived from various hedonic consumptions. Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) defined hedonic consumption as consisting of “those facets of consumer behavior that relate to the multisensory, fantasy, and emotive aspects of one's experience with products.” Consumers seek pleasure and enjoyment from consumption – not only from consumption of products but also from interacting with service providers.

Affective experiences are related to three dimensions: valance, arousal, and intensity. Valance in emotional experiences involves consumers’ subjective evaluation. These can be negative reactions and/or positive emotional responses to the services delivered by the organization. Arousal is derived from the stimuli

---

\*Correspondence to: Waikato University, Corporate and Executive Education, Waikato Management School, University of Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton 3240, telephone: +64 7 838 4089 or mobile phone: +64 21 82 81 80, rdevilli@waikato.ac.nz.

induced individual's reactions to their overall consumption experience. For example, happiness, sadness, anger, satisfaction/dissatisfaction, etc. are all stimuli that induce reaction. The intensity of the affective (emotional) consumption experience refers to the perceived significance which translates to follow up actions.

### **Perspectives**

This section includes five cases selected to examine affective (emotional) experiences in various business settings as seen from the consumers' perspective. Each of these cases provides the scenario, as described by the consumer, and the resulting affective (emotional) experience. Consider three of the cases in this section. Zhang's case discusses a traveler's experience trying to purchase a custom-tailored vacation package for her family and friends. The decision to purchase a custom package was based on frustration with substandard products/services previously purchased in the China travel marketplace. Despite a willingness to pay more, the complicated travel products/services, combined with a lack of information, resulted in even greater frustration. Wang's case illustrates how a resort hotel employee empathized with a guests' situation and proactively upgraded the room to accommodate the family's needs. The resort agent's unexpected upgrade translated to increased customer satisfaction and improved customer relations. Lefrid's case describes the failure of an airline company to consider the passenger's desire to be seated next to his young child. The guest services agent, as well as a flight attendant, ignored the passenger's request which naturally resulted in the father's disappointment and anxiety.

These affective experiences result in cognitive, social, and behavioral changes. Please refer to the cases and suggestions in the other sub-section, and specifically the final one on building internal competencies for additional pointers on how organizations can reduce the impact on prospects, consumers, employees, and ultimately the performance of the organization by building internal competencies, capabilities, and capacity to deal with these influential consumer experiences.

### **Reference**

Hirschman, E. C. and M. B. Holbrook, (1982), "Hedonic Consumption: Emerging Concepts, Methods and Propositions," *Journal of Marketing*, 46(3), 92-101.