

# **The Essential Role of Sense of Community in a High Customer-to-Customer Interaction Service Setting**

**Matthew P. Bunker**  
**University of Northern Iowa**

*This research explores the impact of sense of community within a high customer-to-customer interaction (CCI) service setting. Sense of community was correlated with quality and commitment to explore the effect of sense of community on both constructs within a high CCI setting. 1500 surveys were sent to parents of a private high school and 500 surveys were completed. Results indicated that sense of community had a strong correlation with quality and commitment. Additionally there was an interaction between sense of community and quality. Results showed that sense of community is very important in a high CCI service setting.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is well established in the literature that sense of community within a service setting contributes to customers' feelings of commitment toward a brand (Fraering and Minor, 2006). For example activities related to brand communities have increased loyalty intentions among small groups of Harley riders (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006) and Jeep owners (McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig, 2002). Communities theoretically are instrumental in human well-being (McAlexander et al., 2002), due to the desire to belong to a group. So consequently feelings of community have a strong influence on customers' intentions to continue patronizing a firm in the future (Drengner, Jahn and Gaus, 2012).

Furthermore, sense of community enhances consumers' perceptions of service quality (Wooldridge, 1999). In fact, many consumers have come to expect social support within service settings (Adelman, Ahuvia and Goodwin, 1994). So when social support within a service setting is absent or low, consumers may lower their evaluations of the service quality offered by the organization. Social support is more than just service employees fulfilling interpersonal needs with customers, but also extends to customers fulfilling interpersonal needs with other customers (Adelman et al., 1994). If customer-to-customer social support is inherently high within a service setting, then that social support may have a much larger impact on service quality and commitment than expected.

Consequently friendships formed in settings outside the home and workplace can lead to those same settings as becoming meaningful in people's lives because they fulfill companionship and emotional supportive needs (Rosenbaum, 2006). Sometimes these settings include locations such as cafés, bars, and hair salons, which provide a place for people to engage in conversation; a home away from home, and are referred to as third places (Oldenburg, 1999). The social nature of third places has a large impact on people's lives beyond just feeling loyal to a particular service provider. For example, Rosembaum (2008) studied the impact of socialization among customers in a video arcade, Gold's Gym, and Curves and found that customers reported improved senses of well-being and were willing to pay higher monthly fees

if they received social support from other members and employees. In the larger picture of community, third places allow customers to share local unity, engage in social interaction, and create social bonds with people outside of their immediate kinship relationships (Varman and Costa, 2008). The act of sharing in the community component of service locations enables people to incorporate that service into their sense of identity (Rosenbaum, Ostrom, and Kuntze, 2005). For example, people may mention that they work out at Curves when asked to describe themselves, thus revealing that a part of their identity includes their membership at Curves.

Some service settings, such as private schools and churches may not have the close intimate feel of cafés and taverns, but helping customers feel a sense of community is still important in these settings, as the customers spend a significant amount of their time in that environment (Pretty, 1994). Also, assessing the importance of sense of community within these types of service settings is helpful since much cheaper and easier options exist, such as sending children to public schools or deciding to watch church on television. Specifically, management of expensive service establishments, such as private schools, should worry about other options available to customers, such as public schools, home-schooling, or charter schools, especially since customers are reducing their spending habits.

One important consequence of sense of community is the impact on loyalty. For example, community type activities have increased loyalty intentions among small groups of Harley riders (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006). Customers with a strong sense of community not only show loyalty towards a brand or service provider, but they also display oppositional brand loyalty. In other words, these customers define themselves as much by the brand they consume as by brands they do not consume (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001). Oppositional brand loyalty can apply to services as well. For example, loyal consumers of local coffee shops may define themselves as people who do not patronize large, national coffee shop chains.

Although a sense of community, or feelings of belonging, are important among customers in third place settings, it is possible that other factors, such as perceived value and service quality may play a more important role in customers deciding to stay in an ongoing service relationship, even when community is a central part of that relationship. Consequently it is tempting to reduce prices or offer other financial incentives in order to increase perceived value in order to maintain customer loyalty. However with some services, customers exhibit a stronger sense of loyalty to the firm when they feel a sense of community as opposed to engaging in loyalty programs that do not utilize components of community, such as discount or purchase frequency loyalty programs (Rosenbaum, Ostrom, and Kuntze, 2005). So it is plausible to infer that sense of community experienced by customers of service organizations characterized by high levels of customer-to-customer interaction may have a strong effect on loyalty.

The literature has rarely explored the effect of sense of community in service scenarios in which customer-to-customer interaction is integral to the service. In these settings, sense of community may have a pronounced effect on customers' perception of the service organization as well as their loyalty to that organization. The purpose of this paper is to test the impact of sense of community in a high customer-to-customer setting on customer perceptions of the service quality and their commitment to the service organization. It is difficult to test all of the dimensions involved with service quality, so this paper explores customers' perception of service quality using specific dimensions of qualities unique to the service provider featured in this study (a private school). Additionally, commitment was used as a construct in this study as opposed to loyalty because commitment explains people's intention to support a service organization as opposed to measuring actual loyalty, which includes behavioral as well as cognitive and emotional components (Anuwichanont, 2010).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Sense of Community**

Sense of community is a subjective experience associated with a feeling of belonging (Lyons and Dionigi, 2007). Sense of community allows for members within a specific group to feel a sense of belonging to a larger collective from which they derive emotional safety (Obst and White, 2005). Consequently people feel that they are part of a readily available, supportive, and dependable structure in

which they feel accepted (McMillan, 1996). Sense of community in extended contact services environments such as schools, churches, and retirement communities may result in close friendship ties among customers and discourage them from switching to competitors. For example, students in a high school setting that reported a sense of community are more likely to report higher levels of happiness and interest in academic activities (Bateman, 2002). Similarly in a church setting, a sense of community offers members a sense of well-being and is a place of acceptance and healing. Research conducted by Miers and Fisher (2002) reported that sense of community was cited as one of the best things a church can offer. For example, people described others at church as welcoming and felt as if they were a part of a larger family. The importance of the sense of community has also been demonstrated in a café setting, in which customers who feel social-emotional support from others, not only are more committed to the establishment, but engage in behaviors which help the service provider and consequently have a positive influence on the overall service quality offered by that provider (Rosenbaum and Massiah, 2007).

But if customers feel alienated because of the behavior of other customers, they are not only likely to give a negative evaluation of the service experience, but also give a negative evaluation of the service provider (Martin and Pranter, 1989). For example, students in a university setting who felt less connectedness with their peers gave a negative appraisal of the overall campus climate (Lee, Keough, and Sexton, 2002). One possible contributing factor to the negative appraisal might be due to students feeling lonely. For example, Pretty et. al. (1994) tested the effect of neighborhood sense of community and school sense of community on adolescents' sense of loneliness. The authors found that a sense of community for both school and community had a strong negative correlation with loneliness. In a church setting, people who reported a lack of sense of community tended to concentrate on the negative effects of fellow members of their congregation and inferred that fellowship with other members were the worst things a church can offer. Some of the negative comments of the disenfranchised church members towards their fellow members were: "people were unwelcoming, cliquish, and intolerant to newcomers" (Miers and Fisher, 2002), these types of comments were followed up by negative evaluations of the overall service offered by the church. A sense of community or lack thereof can have a profound effect on how people evaluate a service provider.

### **Perceived Quality**

Quality is a key business performance and strategic driver and is related to increased customer loyalty (Mittal and Gera, 2012). Consequently, studying the components and importance of quality also enables managers and researchers to better understand what makes loyal customers. During the past decades many models of quality have emerged in the marketing literature, such as the technical and functional quality model (Gronroos, 1984), GAP model (Parasuraman et al., 1985), the attribute service quality model (Haywood-Farmer, 1988), and the performance only model (Cronin and Taylor, 1992). These are only a sampling of models, and there are many more in the marketing literature (for a review see Seth, Deshmukh, and Vrat, 2005). The fact that there are many quality models shows that quality has many components and dimensions and is dependent on service and cultural contexts (Mittal and Gera, 2012).

A difficult aspect of service quality as opposed to product quality is service quality cannot be determined before purchase though a pre-defined inspection method. Service quality is determined by the customer either during the actual consumption of the service or after the service is consumed (Pollack, 2009). Ultimately, service quality is made up of those components of a service that result in customer satisfaction (Yoo and Park, 2007). Quality can be perceived by customers as an outcome of a firm's performance as well as their interactions with a firm's personnel (Dedeke, 2003). Due to the complex nature of service quality, this paper used dimensions specific to the service provider that benefited from this research. These dimensions were determined through in-depth interviews with current customers as well as administrators of the actual service. The individual quality components were measured as: quality teaching, academics, sports, music, clubs, and Advanced Placement Courses (APC). These dimensions were measured separately as outlined in the methodology section as well as combined together as a single construct in order to test for the relationship between commitment, quality, and sense of community.

## **Commitment**

Commitment is the intention to behave in a manner supportive of relationship longevity (Fournier, 1998). Committed customers exert more effort to maintain a relationship, are more resistant to persuasion by competitors, and in general can form the core of a good customer base (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Commitment is also referred to as the customer's ultimate relationship disposition in regards to the customer's attitudes and behaviors towards the brand (Hess and Story, 2005). Customers that are committed to the organization not only patronize that organization in the present but would also have the intention of patronizing that same organization in the future. Some customers may even influence future generations to continue patronizing that same organization because they want their descendants to enjoy the same benefits offered by that organization.

Commitment is stronger if customer relationships are formed due to some positive interactions between the service provider and the customer, thus forming a relationship that is more psychological than structural (Barnes, 1997). One component of a psychological relationship between a company and its customers is the psychological sense of community. Past research has shown that a psychological sense of community correlates positively with commitment (Carlson, Suter, and Brown, 2008). Customers in service settings that are determined by the community (schools, country clubs, and retirement homes) would feel more committed to that particular service if they felt a stronger psychological sense of community. In other words, they have to not only be a part of the community, but believe that they are an important entity within that community in order to maintain commitment.

## **Customer-to-Customer Interaction (CCI)**

Customer-to-customer interaction (CCI) has received increased attention over the last two decades (Nicholls, 2010) and is an important aspect of the service experience due to its effect on satisfaction and loyalty (Moore, Moore, and Capella, 2005). In certain service settings other customers are considered essential inputs to the service experience (Moore et al., 2005). So in these service settings, CCI is an integral and even planned component of the service offering (Parker and Ward, 2000). The context of this research, a private school setting, assumes that CCI is high as the potential for ongoing interaction among students and to some degree parents, is extremely high.

Positive CCI is especially important if the service is extended over time, has an affective component, and chances for intimate encounters are experienced by the customers (Price, Arnould, and Tierney, 1995). Customers that are satisfied in extended service situations characterized by CCI may also feel a sense of community, which not only increases satisfaction, but helps with the overall experience of the service encounter (Arnould and Price, 1993). So feeling a sense of community within a CCI service setting is important to enhancing customer satisfaction (Rosenbaum, 2008).

Conversely, negative social encounters in high CCI service settings lead to lower satisfaction and lower intentions to continue patronizing the organization (Raajpoot and Sharma, 2006). Even if customer misbehavior is perceived by the employees as uncontrollable, the people suffering from the misbehavior of other customers may perceive the firm's management of the offending customer's actions as an important aspect of the service process, which then can negatively skew the affected customer's evaluation of the firm (Huang, 2008). It is difficult to control customer-to-customer interaction, especially since the negative and positive encounters between customers are unique to almost any given situation. Although it is difficult to control negative customer-to-customer encounters, it is possible to identify them and eventually plan alternative courses of actions when they do occur. Grove and Fisk (1997) used a critical incident technique to classify negative and positive interactions between customers and identified two categories of customer-to-customer interaction effects: protocol and sociability. Protocol violations were conceptualized as infractions of tacitly or expressly held norms by others. Sociability violations were conceptualized as occasions when others were hostile or antagonistic towards their fellow customers. These conceptualizations are useful in understanding customer interaction among each other in transactional settings, especially since the potential for sociability violations are likely to occur in high customer-to-customer interaction settings.

Furthermore, extended service settings involve customers' behaviors among themselves that involve a network of customer interactions which evolve over time and affect customers' perception of the service organization as well as self-worth (Baron and Harris, 2010). Social networks form through family, current friends, and even people who are initially strangers, due to people's need to belong. The need to belong is among the strongest of human motivations and people go to extraordinary lengths to associate with others (Twenge and Baumeister, 2005). The need to belong is so strong, that when it is not met, people report feelings of isolation, loss of belonging, and lower self-esteem (Williams and Govan, 2005). In order to cope with these feelings, some people may extend their dissatisfaction beyond the personal and social variables to environmental variables. For example, William and Govan (2005) conducted a study in which three people were instructed to play a game in which they pretended they were on a train ride; two of the three people were instructed to ignore the third person. The ostracized person reported the actual game to be aversive and unpleasant. This finding suggests that people who are ostracized by others within a social setting, such as a school or country club, may extend their negative feelings due to social isolation to the establishment itself. More specifically, social ostracism by other customers in a high CCI situation results in less commitment towards the service provider in which that behavior occurred (Hitlan et al., 2006).

As previously explained, sense of community may even have a much bigger impact when there is high CCI within a service setting. This paper hypothesizes that a consumer who reports a high sense of community in a CCI setting may judge the organization as providing high quality service, even in regards to individual components offered by the service organization. Furthermore, customers who feel a high sense of community may indicate higher levels of commitment towards that organization. Also tested was the hypothesis that in a CCI setting, sense of community has a stronger effect on commitment than the individual components of quality.

*H<sub>1</sub>: Sense of community has a positive correlation with the individual components of quality (quality teaching, academics, sports, music, clubs, and Advanced Placement Courses (APC))*

*H<sub>2</sub>: The individual components of quality have a positive correlation with commitment.*

*H<sub>3</sub>: Sense of community has a stronger correlation with commitment than the individual components of quality.*

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Sample**

1500 surveys were mailed to parents that either currently send or have sent their children to a Catholic school located in the upper Midwest. A total of 500 surveys were returned creating a 30% response rate. 329 parents educated all of their children through this parochial school district. 157 parents educated at least one of their children using the parochial school district and educated at least one of their children or all of their children in the public school district. 14 respondents opted not to answer the question regarding their choice to use parochial or public education. A demographic breakdown of the respondents is shown in table 1.

**TABLE 1**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMPLE**

Demographic Category	Demographic Segments	Total Number Within Sample
Sex	Male	102
	Female	392
Religious Affiliation	Catholic	444
	Other	40
Children Attend Catholic School	All children attend or will attend Catholic school	329
	Some or none of the children attend Catholic school (Instead chose public schools)	157
Income	\$35,000-60,000	152
	\$60,001-100,000	172
	> \$100,000	87

**Construct Measurement**

Seven point Likert scales were created to test “sense of community” and were partially derived from McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig (2002). Scale reliability of the community items was tested using Cronbach’s Alpha resulting in alpha = .893. The commitment scales were adapted from Harrison-Walker (2001) and scale reliability testing resulted in alpha = .883. The scale items along with the reliability scores are provided in table 2.

**TABLE 2**  
**SCALE ITEMS WITH RELIABILITY SCORES USING CRONBACH’S ALPHA**

<p><b>Community <math>\alpha = .893</math></b></p> <p>I have met wonderful people because of my association with the Catholic school system.</p> <p>I have a sense of kinship with other parents of the Catholic school system.</p> <p>I feel as if the Catholic schools are an extension of my family.</p> <p>There is a sense of community within the Catholic schools.</p> <p>People in the Catholic schools are real supportive of each other.</p>
<p><b>Commitment <math>\alpha = .911</math></b></p> <p>I want to help this community’s Catholic schools reach their goals.</p> <p>I care about the future of this community’s Catholic school system.</p> <p>This community’s Catholic school system inspires the best in my children in the way of being good students.</p> <p>I like the Catholic schools.</p> <p>Maintaining a relationship with the Catholic school system is enjoyable.</p>

In order to test the quality perception of the individual components of the services offered by the Catholic schools, items were gathered from twenty in-depth interviews in addition to consultation with the Catholic school administration. The following items were determined as important components of the Catholic school educational experience: quality teaching, academic accomplishments, art, sports, music, drama, clubs, advance placement courses, discipline and safety. These components were tested using a graphic rating scale anchored by the options “Local Catholic Schools” and “Local Public Schools.”

Respondents were asked to place an “x” on the scale closest to the option that they felt did better in that particular quality component. The actual name of the Catholic school system and public school system were included on the survey items. Each response was individually measured using a ten centimeter ruler.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested by analyzing the zero order correlations between sense of community and the individual components of quality as well as zero order correlations between commitment and the individual components of quality were tested. All of the zero order correlations were significant at  $p < .001$ . Sense of Community has a positive and significant correlation with all of the components of quality. In turn, all of the components of quality have a positive and significant correlation with commitment.

Hypothesis 3 was tested by using a multiple regression with sense of community and the individual components of quality as the independent variables and commitment as the dependent variable. The only significant independent variable was “sense of community” with  $\beta = .610$ . None of the elements of quality tested significant at  $p = .05$ . This finding was surprising in the sense that none of the elements of quality correlated with commitment which might be due to the multicollinearity of the sense of community items with the quality items. It appears that the correlations among the individual components of quality and sense of community were large enough to affect the relationship between the individual components of quality with commitment. The findings hinted that there might be an interaction between sense of community and quality. Table 3 shows the single order correlations between all of the variables as well as the result of the multiple regression.

**TABLE 3**  
**ZERO ORDER CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SENSE OF COMMUNITY, COMMITMENT**  
**AND ELEMENTS OF QUALITY. ALSO INCLUDED IS A MULTIPLE REGRESSION**  
**ANALYSIS WITH COMMITMENT AS THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE AND**  
**SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND COMPONENTS OF QUALITY AS THE**  
**INDEPENDENT VARIABLES**

		Quality Teach	Academ	Sports	Music	Clubs	APC	Comm	Commit
Zero Order Correlations	Sense of Community	.412*	.434*	.370*	.275*	.324*	.349*	1	.707*
	Commitment	.411*	.444*	.328*	.262*	.342*	.338*	.707*	1
Multiple Regression	DV = Commitment	.088	.090	.014	-.030	.068	-.011	.610	

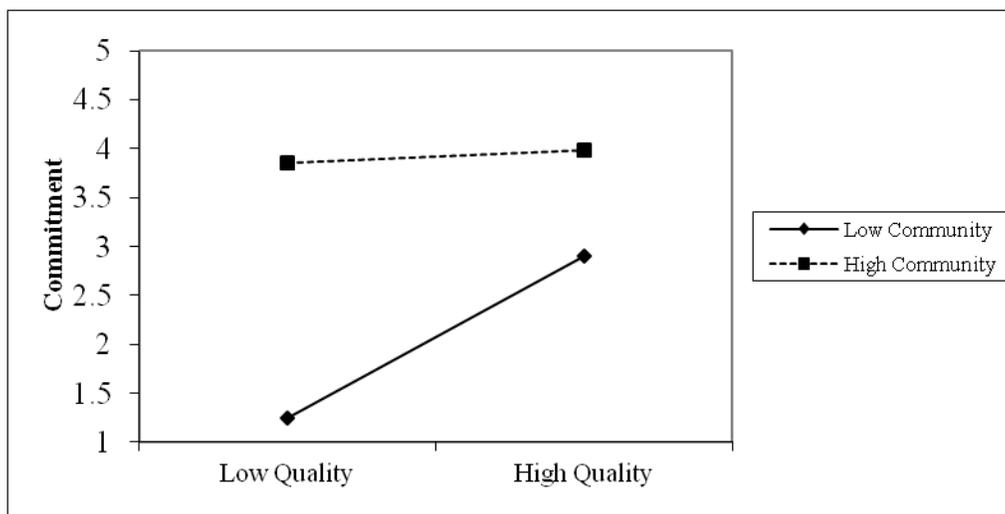
\* $p < .001$

In order to test for a possible interaction between sense of community and quality with commitment as the dependent variable, a quality construct was created using the independent items tested earlier in the study. Cronbach’s alpha was used to test construct reliability which resulted in  $\alpha = .859$ . A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was used to test for an interaction between sense of community and quality with the commitment dependent variable. The results showed a significant interaction between sense of community and quality ( $R^2 = .739$ ,  $F = 467.000$ ,  $F\text{-change} = 11.338$ ,  $P < .001$ ). Table 4 and figure 1 display the results of the interaction test including the standardized beta, the t-scores, and p-scores.

**TABLE 4**  
**RESULTS OF AN INTERACTION TEST BETWEEN QUALITY AND COMMUNITY WITH**  
**THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE COMMITMENT**

Variable	$\beta$	t	p
Quality	.447	5.365	<.001
Community	.922	16.645	<.001
Quality x Community	-.381	-3.367	.001

**FIGURE 1**  
**GRAPHICAL RESULTS OF AN INTERACTION TEST BETWEEN THE DEPENDENT**  
**VARIABLE COMMITMENT AND THE INDEPENDENT VARIABLES**  
**QUALITY AND SENSE OF COMMUNITY**



As table 4 and figure 1 indicate, there is a strong and significant interaction between quality and sense of community. If sense of community is positive then customers may also rate the overall quality of the service as positive. On the other hand, if sense of community is negative, then customers may consequently rate the overall quality of the service as negative. The interaction does indicate that quality perceptions may still be high if sense of community is low, but not as high if sense of community was high. Since the literature shows that quality is a predictor of satisfaction and commitment, then this paper proposes that sense of community has even a greater effect on commitment and possibly even an effect on satisfaction, although the satisfaction construct was not tested for this research.

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY AND PRACTICE

As the results indicated, sense of community had a strong correlation with all of the individual components of quality. So consumers who feel a strong sense of community would judge the individual components of a service as high quality. Customers experience a sense of community when there is social support from other customers. Consequently the social support of other customers within a service setting is sometimes more important than social support from employees (Adelman et al., 1994). In other words, service settings become meaningful to customers because of their relationships with the people in those settings. Furthermore, people who continue to patronize a service provider because of the social support they receive perceive the service provider as a “home away from home.” Subsequently the service

provider becomes a third place in consumers' lives, where consumers can satisfy companionship and emotional needs as well as consumption needs (Rosenbaum, 2006). The results of this research carry the notion of third places a step further by showing that people who feel a strong sense of community within third places will also have a stronger tendency to rate the service quality offered by that service provider in a favorable manner.

Creating a sense of community has many positive outcomes, such as exhibiting more loyalty to the brand (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001). So if a service has a strong customer-to-customer social component it is important to engage in strategies that would strengthen feelings of community among the members. As the results of this research show, strengthening a sense of community not only improves the perception of the service offerings, but also has a strong influence on customer commitment to the service provider. Other research has also shown that a high sense of community correlates with quality perceptions within educational settings. Roberts, Gentry, and Townsend (2011) found that socializing helps students navigate the ambiguities found in processes within the department. Furthermore, students who were socialized in the department also found their coursework to be more relevant to their own studies. The findings of this research project illustrates that the influence of sense of community on commitment may even be stronger than the influence of quality perceptions on commitment, especially when customer-to-customer interaction is high. So, if customer-to-customer interaction is an integral part of the service setting, the service provider must ensure that sense of community is felt by the customers, even if the quality of the service is reportedly high. Additionally, customers may show more loyalty to the actual social relationships within a service setting than to the actual establishment that these settings take place (Rosenbaum and Massiah, 2007). So it is important to separate commitment to an establishment from commitment to social relationships within that establishment because if the social relationships weaken then commitment towards the establishment may weaken as well.

Although not directly tested, the results indicate that customers who do not feel a sense of community in an extended service situation would judge the components of the service as low quality. For example, Research in school settings has found that sense of community was related to students' engagement in school and a lack of a sense of community contributed to students' thoughts of dropping out of school (Royal and Rossi, 1996). The effects of social ostracism, which is an extreme form of a lack of the sense of community, extends beyond the immediate context of the ostracizing event and influences perceptions of the larger organization and effects people's attitudes as well as performance (Hitlan et al., 2006). So lack of sense of community has the potential of negatively influencing every aspect of a consumers' experience to the point of completely distorting a consumers' perception of that brand in a negative manner.

## **LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

One limitation of this paper is the lack of discriminant validity between the constructs commitment and sense of community. This might be due to the fact that consumers in a high customer-to-customer interaction setting might not see much of a difference between the two constructs. If a person is feeling socially isolated from a situation or service setting, then they might already be thinking of ways to exit that service setting. This idea can possibly be tested with other settings and with a variable that measures the extent to which a person feels connected with or isolated from the people associated with the service provider.

Testing in another environment, such as a yacht club, church setting, or country club will also help determine if the hypotheses tested in this setting are generalizable beyond that of a private school setting. To do so, the components of quality would have to change and the research would have to be re-done in this particular setting so constructs would have stronger nomological validity as well.

Furthermore, the current study used a semantic differential scale to measure the perception of quality difference between a private, religious school and a public school within the same city. One problem with using that scale is it does not measure if customers believe the service to have high or low quality. Rather the scales measure if one school has higher quality than another school, so a customer may believe both

schools to have low quality and yet mark the private school as better, which is interpreted in this study as a high quality perception. For this reason, the quality scales should be standardized among the different settings, not only for generalizability purposes, but for scale consistency as well.

Although not tested in this paper, but previously tested in the marketing literature is the idea that commitment towards a service provider increases positive word-of-mouth behavior among the consumers (Harrison-Walker 2001). This would argue that satisfied and committed customers of service settings with high customer-to-customer contact would engage in positive word-of-mouth behavior among their friends and families. On the other hand, in the same condition, customers who feel socially isolated will engage in negative word of mouth behavior to their friends and family. So maintaining a positive social atmosphere in a high customer-to-customer interaction service setting is imperative to that service's success. Although this research was conducted in a single setting (private, religious school), it could also be tested in other contexts such as neighborhood associations, country clubs, and university settings.

## REFERENCES

- Adelman, M. B., Ahuvia, A. & Goodwin, C. (1994). Beyond smiling: Social support and service quality. In R. T. Rust and R. L. Oliver (Eds.), *Service quality: New directions in theory and practice* (pp. 139-171). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Anuwichanont, J. (2010). Examining the relationship between commitment and airline loyalty and the moderating effect of uncertainty avoidance. *Journal of Business and Economics Research*, 8 (9), 127-137.
- Arnould, E.J. & Price, L.L. (1993). River magic: Extraordinary experience and the extended service encounter. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 20 (June), 24-45.
- Bagozzi, R. P. & Dholakia, U. M. (2006). Antecedents and purchase consequences of customer participation in small group brand communities. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 23, 45-61.
- Barnes, J. G. (1997). Closeness, Strength, and Satisfaction: Examining the Nature of Relationships between Providers of Financial Services and Their Retail Customers. *Psychology and Marketing*, 14 (8), 765-790.
- Baron, S. & Harris, K. (2010). Toward an understanding of consumer perspectives on experiences. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 24 (7), 518-531.
- Bateman, H. V. (2002). Sense of Community in the School: Listening to Students' Voices. In *Psychological Sense of Community: Research, Applications, and Implications*, Adrian T. Fisher et al., eds. New York, NY: Kluwer Academic / Plenum Publishers, 161-179.
- Carlson, B. D., Suter, T. A., & Brown, T. J. (2008). Social versus Psychological Brand Community: The Role of Psychological Sense of Brand Community. *Journal of Business Research*, 61 (4), 284-291.
- Cronin, J.J. & Taylor, S.A. (1992). Measuring service quality: A reexamination and extension. *Journal of Marketing*, 6 (July), 55-68.
- Dedeke, A. (2003). Service Quality: A fulfillment-oriented and interactions-centered approach. *Managing Service Quality*, 13 (4), 276-289.
- Drengner, J., Jahn, S., & Gaus, H. (2012). Creating loyalty in collective hedonic services: The role of satisfaction and psychological sense of community. *Schmalenbach Business Review*, 64, 59-76.
- Fournier, S. (1998). Consumers and Their Brands: Developing Relationship Theory in Consumer Research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24 (March), 343-373.
- Fraering, M. & Minor, M.S. (2006). Sense of community: An exploratory study of US consumers of financial services. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 24, 284-306.
- Gronroos, C. (1984). A service quality model and its marketing implications. *European Journal of Marketing*, 18 (4), 36-44.
- Grove, S.J. & Fisk, R.P. (1997). The impact of other customers on service experiences: A critical incident examination of "getting along." *Journal of Retailing*, 73 (1), 63-85.

- Haywood-Farmer J. (1988). A conceptual model of service quality. *International Journal of Operations and Production Management*, 8 (6), 19-29.
- Harrison-Walker, L.J. (2001). The measurement of word-of-mouth communication and an investigation of service quality and customer commitment as potential antecedents. *Journal of Service Research*, 4, 60-75.
- Hess, J. & Story, J. (2005). Trust-Based Commitment: Multidimensional Consumer-Brand Relationships. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 22 (6), 313-322.
- Hitlan, R.T., Kelly, K.M., Schepman, S., Schneider, K.T., & Zarate, M.A. (2006). Language exclusion and the consequences of perceived ostracism in the workplace. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 10, 56-70.
- Huang, W.-H. (2008). The impact of other-customer failure on service satisfaction. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 19 (4), 521-536.
- Lee, R.M., Keough, K.A., and Sexton, J.D. (2002). Social connectedness, social appraisal, and perceived stress in college women and men. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 80 (3), 355-361.
- Lyons, K. and Dionigi, R. (2007). Transcending emotional community: A qualitative examination of older adults and Masters' sports participation. *Leisure Sciences*, 29 (4), 375-389.
- Martin, C. L. & Pranter, C. A. (1989). Compatibility Management: Customer-to-Customer Relationships in Service Environments. *The Journal of Services Marketing*, 3 (3), 5-15.
- McAlexander, J. H., Schouten, J.W., & Koenig, H.F. (2002). Building brand community. *Journal of Marketing*, 66, 38-54.
- McMillan, D. W. (1996). Sense of Community. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 24 (4), 315-325.
- Mittal, S. & Gera, R. (2012). Relationship between service quality dimensions and behavioral intentions: An SEM study of public sector retail banking customers in India. *Journal of Services Research*, 12 (2), 147-171.
- Miers, R. & Fisher, A. T. (2002). Being Church and Community: Psychological Sense of Community in a Local Parish. In *Psychological Sense of Community: Research, Applications, and Implications*, Adrian T. Fisher et al., eds. New York, NY: Kluwer Academic / Plenum Publishers, 141-160.
- Morgan, R. M. & Hunt, S. D. (1994). The Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 58 (July), 20-38.
- Moore, R., Moore, M. L. & Capella, M. (2005). The impact of customer-to-customer interactions in a high personal contact service setting. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 19, 482-491.
- Muniz, A. M. & O'Guinn, T. C. (2001). Brand Community. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 27, 412-432.
- Nicholls, R. (2010). New directions for customer-to-customer interaction research. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 24, 87-97.
- Obst, P. L. & White, K. M. (2005). An Exploration of the Interplay between Psychological Sense of Community, Social Identification and Salience. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 15 (2), 127-135.
- Oldenburg, R. (1999), *The Great Good Place*. New York, NY: Marlowe and Company.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V.A., & Berry, L.L. (1985). A conceptual model of service quality and its implications for future research. *Journal of Marketing*, 49 (3), 41-50.
- Parker, C. & Ward, P. (2000). An analysis of role adoptions and scripts during customer-to-customer encounters. *European Journal of Marketing*, 34, 341-358.
- Pollack, B.L. (2009). Linking the hierarchical service quality model to customer satisfaction and loyalty. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 23 (1), 42-50.
- Price, L. L., Arnould, E. J., & Tierney, P. (1995). Going to extremes: Managing service encounters and assessing provider performance, *Journal of Marketing*, 59, 83-97.
- Pretty, G. M. H., Andrews, L. & Collett, C. (1994). Exploring Adolescents' Sense of Community and Its Relationship to Loneliness. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 22 (October), 346-358.
- Raajpoot, N.A. & Sharma, A. (2006). Perceptions of incompatibility in customer-to-customer interactions: Examining individual level differences. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 20, 324-332.

- Roberts, J., Gentry, D., & Townsend A. (2011). Student perspectives: evaluating a higher education administration program. *Journal of Case Studies in Education*, 1, 1-20.
- Rosenbaum, M.S. (2006). Exploring the social supportive role of third places in consumers' lives. *Journal of Service Research*, 9, 59-72.
- (2008). Return on community for consumers and service establishments. *Journal of Service Research*, 11, 179-196.
- Rosenbaum, M.S. & Massiah, C.A. (2007). When customers receive support from other customers. *Journal of Service Research*, 9 (3), 257-270.
- , Ostrom, A. L., & Kuntze, R. (2005). Loyalty Programs and a Sense of Community. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 19 (4), 222-233.
- Royal, M. A. & Rossi, R. J. (1996). Individual-level correlates of sense of community: Findings from workplace and school. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 24, 395-416.
- Seth, N., Deshmukh, S.G., & Vrat, P. (2005). Service quality models: A review. *The International Journal of Quality and Reliability Management*. 22 (8/9), 913-949.
- Twenge, J. M. & Baumeister R. F. (2005). Social exclusion increases aggression and self-defeating behavior while reducing intelligent thought and prosocial behavior. In D. Abrams, M. A. Hogg, & J. M. Marques (Eds.), *The Social Psychology of Inclusion and Exclusion* (pp. 27-46.). New York, NY: Psychology Press.
- Varman, R. & Costa, J. A. (2008). Embedded Markets, Communities, and the Invisible Hand of Social Norms. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 28 (2), 141-156.
- Williams, K. D. & Govan, C. L. (2005). Reacting to Ostracism: Retaliation or reconciliation?. In D. Abrams, M. A. Hogg, & J. M. Marques (Eds.), *The Social Psychology of Inclusion and Exclusion* (pp. 47-62).
- Wooldridge, B. R. (1999). The impact of communal behaviors on the judgment of service quality. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Louisiana State University—Baton Rouge.
- Yoo, D.K. & Park, J.A. (2007). Perceived service quality: Analyzing relationships among employees, customers, and financial performance. *International Journal of Quality and Reliability Management*, 24 (9), 908-926.