

Association for Information Systems AIS Electronic Library (AISeL)

ICIS 1995 Proceedings

International Conference on Information Systems
(ICIS)

12-31-1995

Sources of Customer Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction With Information Technology Help Desks

Robert Heckman
Syracuse University

Audrey Guskey
Duquesne University

Follow this and additional works at: <http://aisel.aisnet.org/icis1995>

Recommended Citation

Heckman, Robert and Guskey, Audrey, "Sources of Customer Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction With Information Technology Help Desks" (1995). *ICIS 1995 Proceedings*. 38.
<http://aisel.aisnet.org/icis1995/38>

This material is brought to you by the International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS) at AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). It has been accepted for inclusion in ICIS 1995 Proceedings by an authorized administrator of AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). For more information, please contact elibrary@aisnet.org.

SOURCES OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND DISSATISFACTION WITH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY HELP DESKS

Robert L. Heckman
School of Information Studies
Syracuse University

Audrey Guskey
School of Business Administration
Duquesne University

Abstract

As the use, development, and control of information systems continues to become diffused throughout organizations and society, the information technology (IT) help desk function plays an increasingly important role in effective management and utilization of information resources. Various referred to as information centers, software support centers, software hotlines, and PC help desks, such centers have been established to help end users resolve problems and obtain information about new functions in the information systems they use.

This study investigates the determinants of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction with service encounters involving information technology help desks. The IS satisfaction research that has been done to date has viewed satisfaction as an attitudinal, bipolar evaluative construct (Melone 1990; Heckman 1993). Satisfaction as viewed in this way is a relatively enduring, stable cognitive state. In the marketing literature, however, satisfaction has also been conceptualized as a less enduring post-consumption response. In this study, a conceptualization of the satisfaction construct based on the service encounter and consumer product satisfaction literatures (e.g., Bitner, Booms and Tetreault 1990) is adopted as a starting point. After responses to help desk service encounters have been analyzed from this perspective, an attempt is made to integrate these findings with attitudinal satisfaction constructs.

The study employs the Critical Incident Technique (CIT), an inductive, qualitative methodology. It consists of a set of specifically defined procedures for collecting observations of human behavior and classifying them in such a way as to make them useful in addressing practical problems (Flanagan 1954). It is a method that is comparable to other inductive grouping procedures such as factor analysis, cluster analysis, and multidimensional scaling. Unlike other such procedures, however, CIT uses content analysis of stories rather than quantitative solutions in the data analysis stage of the procedure. The study addressed four research questions:

1. What specific behaviors and events lead to user/customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction with IT help desk service encounters?
2. Are the underlying events and behaviors that lead to satisfactory and dissatisfactory encounters similar? That is, are these events and behaviors opposites or mirror images of each other?
3. Are the underlying events and behaviors in help desk service encounters similar to those found in other contexts?
4. Can an understanding of user/customer responses to help desk service encounters shed light on the development and modification of attitudinal satisfaction constructs such as UIS (Ives, Olson and Baroudi 1983), EUIS (Doll and Torkzadeh 1988), and VPIS Satisfaction (Heckman 1993)?

Descriptions of approximately 500 incidents have been obtained to date and analyzed. A tentative classification scheme was developed from the preliminary analysis. It was modeled after the incident classification scheme developed by Bitner, Booms and Tetreault and uses the same three major categories: core service failure, special customer request, and extraordinary provider behavior. As in the Bitner, Booms and Tetreault analysis, results suggest that a core service failure does not inevitably lead to dissatisfaction. Initial analysis also suggests that while the scheme is applicable in some ways, the knowledge-based nature of the IT help desk service encounter requires several additional constructs to account for various customer responses.

REFERENCES

- Adams, D. A.; Nelson, R. R.; and Todd, P. A. "Perceived Usefulness, Ease of Use, and Usage of Information Technology: A Replication." *MIS Quarterly*, June 1992, pp. 227-247.
- Ajzen, I. "From Intentions to Actions: A Theory of Planned Behavior." Chapter 2 in J. Kuhl and J. Beckman (Editors), *Action Control: From Cognition to Behavior*, 1985, pp. 11-39.
- Ajzen, I. "The Theory of Planned Behavior." *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Volume 50, 1991, pp. 179-211.
- Attewell, P. "Technology Diffusion and Organization Learning: The Case of Business Computing." *Organizational Science*, Volume 3, Number 1, 1992, pp. 1-19.
- Barki, H., and Hartwick, J. "Measuring User Participation, User Involvement, and User Attitude." *MIS Quarterly*, March 1994, pp. 59-82.
- Barki, H., and Hartwick, J. "Rethinking the Concept of User Involvement." *MIS Quarterly*, March 1989, pp. 53-63.
- Davis, F. D. "Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, and User Acceptance of Information Technology." *MIS Quarterly*, Volume 13, September 1989, pp. 319-340.
- Davis, F. D. "User Acceptance of Information Technology: Systems Characteristics, User Perceptions, and Behavioral Impacts." *International Journal of Man-Machine Studies*, Volume 38, March 1993, pp. 475-487.
- DeLone, W. H., and McLean, E. R. "Information Systems Success: The Quest for the Dependent Variable." *Information Systems Research*, Volume 3, March 1992, pp. 60-95.
- Doll, W. J., and Torkzadeh, G. "The Measurement of End-User Computer Satisfaction." *MIS Quarterly*, Volume 12, June 1988, pp. 259-274.
- Galletta, D. F., and Lederer, A. L. "Some Cautions on the Measurement of User Information Satisfaction." *Decision Sciences*, Summer 1989.
- Ives, B.; Olson, M. H.; and Baroudi, J. J. "The Measurement of User Information Satisfaction." *Communications of the ACM*, Volume 26, October 1983, pp. 785-793.
- Kapelman, L. A., and McLean, E. R. "The Respective Roles of User Participation and User Involvement in Information System Implementation Success." In J. I. DeGross, I. Benbasat, G. DeSanctis, and C. M. Beath (Editors), *Proceedings of the Twelfth International Conference on Information Systems*, New York, 1991, pp. 339-349.
- Melone, N. P. "A Theoretical Assessment of the User Satisfaction Construct in Information Systems Research." *Management Science*, Volume 36, January 1990, pp. 1-16.
- Moore, J. C., and Benbasat, I. "Development of an Instrument to Measure the Perceptions of Adopting an Information Technology Innovation." *Information Systems Research*, Volume 2, September 1991, pp. 192-222.
- Rogers, E. M. *Diffusion of Innovations*, Third Edition. New York: The Free Press.
- Segars, A. H., and Grover, V. "Reexamining Perceived Ease of Use and Usefulness: A Confirmatory Factor Analysis." *MIS Quarterly*, Volume 17, December 1993, pp. 517-525.