

**EXPLORING THE EFFECTS OF REQUESTS FOR POSITIVE SERVICE
EVALUATIONS ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

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ABSTRACT

Most service industries place a great deal of importance on customer satisfaction. Service providers will go to great lengths to ensure they receive high satisfaction ratings on service evaluations, even if that means pressuring customers to give positive ratings on satisfaction surveys. This research examines the effects of marketers' requests for positive service evaluations on customer satisfaction ratings. Hypotheses are developed drawing largely from psychological reactance theory, extant service satisfaction research, and consumer locus of control theory.

The research employs a scenario approach in which subjects evaluate a service encounter with a cell phone service provider. The quality of the service encounter was manipulated at high and moderate levels, and the request for positive evaluation variable was manipulated as present and absent. The data were then analyzed in relation to the subjects' locus of control. Results showed that individuals with an internal locus of control had significantly lower satisfaction levels when pressured to give a positive evaluation. Those with an external locus of control were hypothesized to have higher satisfaction levels when the request for positive evaluation was present. These effects, however, were not significant, although the means provide directional support. Finally, these effects were larger with lower service quality and smaller when service quality is higher.

**Exploring the Effects of Requests for Positive Service
Evaluations on Customer Satisfaction**

INTRODUCTION

Managers place a great deal of emphasis on high customer satisfaction in most service industries. High customer satisfaction generates high customer service ratings. An easy and nearly ubiquitous method of measuring consumer satisfaction is through customer surveys. Achieving high customer service ratings is such a priority that many service providers go to great lengths to assure that consumers rate them favorably, often resorting to blatant and pleading requests for top-box evaluations from customers. For example, many automotive dealerships as well as auto manufacturers focus extensively on their customer service rating. Manufacturers reward those dealerships that have a high CSI, or customer satisfaction index, by shipping them more preferred inventory and by recognizing them in industry publications. Some dealerships are so concerned with receiving high CSI ratings that they sometimes send surveys to customers within days of a purchase or repair urging them to rate the dealer favorably on their service. Further, sales associates are under pressure to deliver high customer service ratings, and those who do deliver are sent to fancy restaurants, given tickets to sporting events or shows, and even receive cash bonuses (The CSI Bargaining Chip 2004). Similar customer service evaluation tactics have also been reported within the hotel and travel industry, and in education ratings, among others (Ofir and Simonson 2001).

In spite of the widespread practice of requesting positive evaluations from consumers, some industry observers have voiced concern about these practices.

Industry observers have noted that consumer satisfaction evaluations are often favorable, just as many of these same consumers switch services providers. This apparent disconnect between reported satisfaction levels and switching behavior leads some to question just what service satisfaction ratings and evaluations are measuring. Academic research illustrates that consumer preferences, quality, and service evaluations are highly sensitive to evaluation task, context, and measurement characteristics (cf. Ofir and Simonson 2001; Bettman, Luce and Payne 1988; Simonson 1999). This research raises further doubts regarding the veracity of information provided by some service satisfaction evaluations.

Consequently, the present research considers the effect of requests for positive customer satisfaction evaluations on subsequent satisfaction judgments. This research question is not only timely, but is also important as many service businesses seem to assume that requests for positive evaluations produce the desired positive results. There does not seem to be any empirical research that has examined this assumption. Hypotheses are developed drawing largely from psychological reactance theory (Clee and Wicklund 1980), extant service satisfaction research (Ofir and Simonson 2001, Szymanski and Henard 2001), and consumer locus of control theory (Bradley and Sparks 2002). The following section first discusses psychological reactance theory, and then formation of service satisfaction judgments. Finally, locus of control is introduced and hypotheses are developed. Then, the experimental method will be discussed, followed by the results, discussion, and conclusion.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Psychological Reactance Theory

Psychological reactance theory considers people's reaction to freedoms which are perceived to be threatened or eliminated (Brehm 1966). Reactance is an aroused motivational state felt when someone feels their behavioral or attitudinal freedom is threatened. In a social influence context, reactance is likely when the target of an influence attempt feels pressured to change a behavior or attitude, and results in the individual becoming more interested in the behavior or attitude being restricted and less interested in the behavior or attitude advocated. For reactance effects to be operative, the target of the influence attempt must have some expectation of freedom, and feel that freedom is important (Clee and Wicklund 1980).

Within the realm of consumer behavior, Clee and Wicklund (1980) identify instances in the context of personal selling, mass media advertising, product shortages and eliminations, among others, in which psychological reactance is likely to be encountered. Further, they review research showing reactance effects when first amendment rights to free speech are threatened (e.g., Hielman 1976; Wicklund and Brehm 1967; Worchel and Arnold 1973), and in the context of altruism when need is perceived to be great and people feel pressured to help (e.g., Schwartz 1970; Henion and Batsell 1976). As they describe, reactance effects should be most likely when a communicator uses an influence tactic perceived to be high-pressure in a persuasion attempt designed to change a decision or behavior that people generally consider as under their personal purview. Further, reactance effects are most likely when the

consumer is unlikely to have a future relationship with the influencer (Pallak and Heller 1971; Grabitz-Gneich 1971), when the influencer is perceived as not highly competent and not highly liked (Aronson and Golden 1962), and when the influencer has an obvious vested interest in the outcome (Wicklund, Slattum and Solomon 1970).

Service Satisfaction Evaluations

Satisfaction, or dissatisfaction, is defined as “the product of a (dis)confirmation process, whereby a consumer compares actual performance with expectations on relevant attributes (Ofir and Simonson 2001, pg. 171). A satisfied customer is more likely to use the business in the future, and s/he can also increase a company’s business through positive word of mouth. Customer dissatisfaction, on the other hand, creates outcomes such as complaining behavior, negative word of mouth, and a decreased likelihood of repeat buying (Szymanski and Henard 2001). An individual’s satisfaction is based on the expectations of the service or product he or she is about to receive. Although they vary by degree, two general outcomes can be reached. First, if the consumer’s opinion of the experience is better than the expectations he had, the result is customer satisfaction. Secondly, if the individual were to have an experience that was less than his expectations, customer dissatisfaction occurs. Customers’ expectations are rarely, if ever, perfectly matched by performance (Szymanski and Henard 2001).

The Role of Expecting to Evaluate Service. Research has recently explored the impact of customers expecting to evaluate a service on service satisfaction (Ofir and Simonson 2001). Ofir and Simonson’s (2001) results show that when consumers

have high service quality expectations, expecting to evaluate a service significantly lowers subsequent perceived quality, satisfaction and willingness to purchase ratings. The authors consider three competing theoretical accounts (i.e., vigilant processing, negativity enhancement, and role expectations) to explain the attenuating effect of expecting to evaluate on subsequent satisfaction outcomes. The two that are most applicable to the present research are negativity enhancement and role expectation. The negativity enhancement effect suggests that expecting to evaluate a service actually changes how a consumer processes and encodes their purchase experience, which generates more negative quality evaluations. The role expectation effect states that, when asked to evaluate a service experience, buyers may feel it is their job to provide constructive criticism, resulting in lower quality evaluations.

Across five experimental studies, Ofir and Simonson show that the negative impact of expecting to evaluate a service, *prior* to its performance, on subsequent evaluations is best explained by the negativity enhancement account. However, when considering the negative impact of expecting to evaluate a service, *after* its performance, on subsequent evaluations, their results support a role expectation effect as well. Specifically, one experiment's results show that service evaluations were lowest when subjects learned they would evaluate the service prior to processing of the service experience (supporting the negativity enhancement effect). However, when subjects formed an expectation that they would evaluate the service, after they had experienced the service, subsequent evaluations were significantly lower than the control condition (Ofir and Simonson 2001, p. 177). This pattern of results suggests that subjects fulfilled the role expectation of an evaluator.

Requests for positive service evaluations. Ofir and Simonson's (2001)

research demonstrates that expecting to evaluate a service results in more negative evaluations of that service, regardless of whether that expectation is formed prior to or after performance of the service. Service providers may intuitively be aware of this negative effect. In fact, service provider requests for positive evaluations may be an attempt to reduce, as much as possible, the negative effect that expecting to evaluate seems to generate. However, do these requests for positive service evaluations always result in more favorable evaluations? The high-pressure influence attempts that have been reported in some service industries, along with a general consumer belief in freedom of expression regarding service evaluations, suggest that psychological reactance resulting in a boomerang effect against the advocated positive evaluations may occur. The section that follows introduces the concept of consumer locus of control, and proposes that in certain situations, locus of control will moderate whether psychological reactance occurs.

The Locus of Control Construct

Locus of control (LOC) is a general and relatively stable personality variable capturing an individual's disposition regarding control over future oriented outcomes and the way in which a person views the world (Rotter 1966). Individuals who are said to have an internal locus of control believe that their actions directly influence an outcome, while those with an external locus of control believe events are not the result of their own actions, but rather are caused by external forces that they cannot control. The LOC construct has been considered within a services context (Bradley and Sparks 2002). For instance, research suggests that service situations that increase

perceived control (manipulated by choice options and customer density) result in more positive service outcomes (Hau and Bateson 1991). Dholakia's (2006) research additionally shows effects of consumer self-determination, broadly defined as perceptions and beliefs of personal agency relating to locus of causality (Bagazzi and Bholakia 1999; Kivetz 2005), on marketing outcomes.

Within a services context, Dholakia (2006) considers the impact of consumer self-determination on relationship outcomes. Consumers are considered to be self-determined when they perceive that they joined a firm of their own initiative, versus firm-determined consumers who perceive that they joined a firm because of an incentive offer (Dholakia 2006). The consumer self-determination concept hinges on the initiative and motivation of the consumer in seeking out the firm, and is therefore related to that of locus of control. As described by Dholakia (2006), self-determination (versus firm-determination) is consistent with an internal (versus external) locus of control.

Dholakia's (2006) results are germane to the present research issue as the findings show that self-determined consumers engage in more relational behaviors than firm-determined behaviors (e.g., studies one and two). Further, results showed that incentives perceived as controlling (i.e., reminder coupons) had a negative impact on outcomes of self-determined consumers, but a positive impact on outcomes of firm-determined consumers (i.e., study three). Finally, results showed that self-determined consumers who received an incentive perceived as less controlling (i.e., a loyalty program) were more profitable to the company than self-determined who did

not receive this incentive, but this impact on profitability did not hold for firm-determined consumers (study four).

In sum, Dholakia's (2006) research suggests that widely used and endorsed incentives such as loyalty programs and reminder coupons can have managerially significant effects on customer behaviors depending on customer locus of causality. These findings suggest that the effects of service provider requests for positive evaluations may differ depending on consumer locus of control.

HYPOTHESES

Based on the preceding discussion, the following hypotheses are offered.

H1: For internal locus of control subjects, service satisfaction evaluations following a high-pressure request for a positive evaluation will produce less favorable evaluations compared to a control.

H2: For external locus of control subjects, service satisfaction evaluations following a high-pressure request for a positive evaluation will produce more favorable evaluations compared to a control.

The range of satisfaction ratings for moderate quality services is likely wider than the range of satisfaction ratings for high quality service. Because moderate quality services likely have a greater variance in satisfaction ratings, the effects of H1 and H2 are likely to be more pronounced for moderate quality compared to high quality services. This leads to H3.

H3: The effects of H1 and H2 will be larger when service quality is lower, and smaller when service quality is higher.

METHODOLOGY

The experiment involved a 2 x 2 x 2 between-subjects design employing scenarios (Hennig-Thurau and Paul 2006). In this study, two service quality levels (high and moderate service quality) were matched with two requests for positive evaluation conditions (present and absent). The third factor was a locus of control measure that was split at the median to form two groups. Subjects were presented with a service buying scenario and were asked to respond to customer service survey evaluation. Two hundred twenty-nine undergraduate business students were randomly assigned to one of the four service encounter situations. Of those students surveyed, 50.7% were female. The average age of the students surveyed was 23.

A cell phone purchase experience served as the target scenario in this study. A cell phone buying situation was chosen because the vast majority of college students own a cell phone and are familiar with cell phone service providers. The results supported students familiarity with this industry as 82 percent of subjects considered themselves knowledgeable about cell phones.

Scenario Manipulations

In all four scenarios, the subject is asked to assume s/he is shopping for a new cell phone and plan at a cell phone provider retail store where s/he has never visited before. In the moderate quality scenario, the shopper is forced to wait several minutes before being greeted by a salesperson. The salesperson seems distracted and is only able to answer some of the customer's questions. The consumer then is forced wait again before his or her phone is activated. Conversely, in the high quality scenario,

the salesperson is friendly and respectful and makes an effort to help the customer find the best cell phone and plan to fit his or her needs. He answers all of the customer's questions and shows only the phones the customer wishes to see. He does not pressure the customer, and the new phone is activated within minutes.

In all vignettes, the customer is informed by the salesperson that s/he will receive a short survey two weeks after the service encounter. Half of the subjects were strongly urged by their salesperson to give the most positive responses possible on the forthcoming survey. In order to increase the pressure to give a positive rating, the salesperson also expressed that if they do not receive a perfect score, their compensation will be decreased by \$100. In the request absent (i.e. control) scenarios, the other half of subjects are simply asked to respond to the survey. The scenario manipulations are located in Appendix 1.

MEASURES

Subjects first responded to the satisfaction dependent variable. Satisfaction was measured using one 9-point item anchored by "very dissatisfied" (1) and "very satisfied" (9). Subjects next responded to the locus of control measure. Locus of Control was measured using an eleven-item short form of Rotter's *Internal versus External Control of Reinforcement Scale* (Valencha and Ostrom 1974). The subjects' total scores were summed, and a median split was performed to indicate which respondents were more internal or external in nature. Finally, subjects responded to several manipulation check items. The manipulation check for quality is in the form of three 9-point items, anchored by "low quality" versus "high quality;" "bad" versus "good;" and "terrible" versus "excellent." Also, the request for positive evaluation

variable was checked by two items measuring pressure and influence from the salesperson. All measures are shown in Appendix 2.

RESULTS

Manipulations Checks

Examination of the manipulation checks determined that the scenarios were perceived as intended. As expected, the high-quality scenario received a significantly higher rating on the quality measure than the moderate quality scenario ($M_{\text{HIGH QUALITY}} = 7.85$, $n = 115$ versus $M_{\text{CONTROL}} = 5.01$, $n = 113$, $t(220) = 13.22$, $p < .05$).

Participants indicated that they felt significantly more pressure from the salesperson in the scenarios where the request for positive evaluations was present than those where it was absent ($M_{\text{RFPE}} = 6.19$, $n = 113$ versus $M_{\text{CONTROL}} = 3.81$, $n = 115$, $t(220) = 6.81$, $p < .05$). Similarly, the perception of being influenced by the salesperson was significantly higher when the request was present than when it was absent ($M_{\text{RFPE}} = 8.05$, $n = 112$ versus $M_{\text{CONTROL}} = 3.56$, $n = 115$, $t(219) = 16.84$, $p < .05$). Finally, participants felt that this scenario depicted a realistic service encounter. The mean was 6.22 on a 9-point scale for the item “I found the cell phone scenario to be realistic,” anchored “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” This demonstrates that the manipulations were effective.

Effects on Satisfaction

The satisfaction item reflected the respondent’s overall evaluation of the service encounter. A one item scale was used to be consistent with the single item scales common in service industries. The satisfaction measure was first subjected to three-way ANOVA. This analysis found a significant three way interaction between

quality, request for positive evaluation, and locus of control ($F(1, 206) = 3.81, p = .05$). No other main effects or interactions were present. ANOVA results are presented in Table 1. Follow up t-tests were then performed to explore the interactions and to test the hypotheses.

Insert Table 1 Here

H1 predicts that for internal locus of control subjects, service satisfaction evaluations following a high-pressure request for a positive evaluation will produce less favorable evaluations compared to a control. For those individuals with an internal locus of control, satisfaction levels were marginally reduced by a significant amount when the request for a positive service evaluation was present compared with the control condition ($M_{\text{RFPE}} = 6.89$ vs. $M_{\text{CONTROL}} = 7.38, t(110) = 1.60, p = .11$). Because H1 is a directional hypothesis, the two-sided p-value ($p = .11$) may be split in half, producing a marginally significant one-tailed t-test ($p = .055$). Consequently H1 is supported with marginal significance.

For subjects with an external locus of control, H2 predicted that the high-pressure requests for positive evaluations would produce more favorable service satisfaction evaluations compared to control conditions. While the request for positive evaluation did produce slightly higher satisfaction ratings ($M_{\text{RFPE}} = 7.24$ vs. $M_{\text{CONTROL}} = 6.93$), this difference was not statistically significant ($t(100) = .92, p = .36$). Consequently, H2 was not supported, although the means provide directional support.

H3 predicts that the effects of H1 and H2 will be larger when service quality is lower and smaller when service quality is higher. Consequently, H3 predicts a

three-way interaction. A three factor ANOVA provided evidence of a significant three-way interaction of the quality, request for positive manipulation, and locus of control factors ($F(1,206) = 3.81, p = .05$). Follow up t-tests were conducted.

In the moderate quality condition, individuals with an internal locus of control gave satisfaction ratings that were significantly reduced when the request was present versus absent ($M_{\text{RFPE}} = 6.04$ vs. $M_{\text{CONTROL}} = 6.72, t(49) = 1.58, p = .06$ (one tailed), eta-squared = .05). Conversely, in the moderate quality condition, external locus of control subjects gave satisfaction ratings that were significantly higher when the request was present versus absent ($M_{\text{RFPE}} = 6.65$ vs. $M_{\text{CONTROL}} = 5.88, t(53) = 2.02, p = .05$, eta squared = .07). In the high quality condition, individuals with an internal locus of control gave satisfaction ratings that were slightly reduced when the request was present versus absent, but were not statistically significant ($M_{\text{RFPE}} = 7.61$ vs. $M_{\text{CONTROL}} = 7.93, t(59) = .90, p = .37$, eta-squared = .01). Individuals with an external locus of control gave slightly higher satisfaction ratings when the request was present versus absent, but the effect was not statistically significant ($M_{\text{RFPE}} = 7.86$ vs. $M_{\text{CONTROL}} = 8.28, t(45) = .99, p = .33$, eta-squared = .02). H3 was supported because the effects associated with the moderate quality service were larger than the effects associated with the high quality service.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

When the salesperson in the scenario prompted customers for a positive service evaluation, subjects with an internal locus of control responded by actually giving lower satisfaction ratings, compared to the control. This effect is likely because the salesperson's request caused the subject to feel pressure to change their

satisfaction ratings. Since individuals with an internal locus of control feel that a situation's outcome is a direct result of their actions, this request for a positive evaluation will likely lead to feelings of reduced freedom. In turn, this frustration from feeling less freedom triggered a negative response to the customer satisfaction survey. When prompted for a positive service evaluation, external locus of control subjects did give slightly higher satisfaction ratings, however the difference between those and the control ratings were not significant.

These findings, when examined with H3 findings, suggest that locus of control may not be a sufficient driver of satisfaction, but may be qualified by service quality level. In the moderate quality setting, satisfaction levels were significantly influenced by the request for positive evaluations: for subjects with an internal locus of control, the request produced significantly lowered satisfaction, while for those with an external locus of control, the request produced significantly higher satisfaction ratings. In the high quality scenarios, however, the satisfaction levels were not significantly influenced by the request for positive evaluation. This could be because there is more latitude to influence satisfaction ratings when the quality is lower. However, when quality is high, satisfaction would likely already be high, so there is not room for the scores to increase.

These findings are important because they suggest that pressuring customers to give high scores on customer satisfaction surveys, in many cases, does not elicit the desired response. If the customer has an internal locus of control, this attempt to influence their satisfaction rating is likely to offend them and, in turn, significantly lower their satisfaction ratings, especially in a moderate quality setting. Additionally,

if the customer is already satisfied with their service encounter, they likely will give lower satisfaction ratings in response to a request for positive evaluations. These findings could also explain why customers exhibit switching behavior, even after giving positive feedback. It is likely that the high scores on customer satisfaction surveys do not accurately reflect the customer's true opinion of their service encounter, especially if the rating is the result of a sales associate's request/plea for positive feedback.

There are several limitations to this research. First, this research was conducted in only one service category, and results may not generalize to other service industries. Secondly, this experiment used a scenario approach rather than an actual cell phone service encounter. Finally, this study was conducted using student subjects and should be replicated using a more generalizable population. Further research should include more analysis of moderate quality situations and service failure situations that otherwise would have been high quality encounters. Additionally, future research should replicate these results in different service industries and with an actual service experience.

Table 1 – ANOVA Results

	df	F	Sig
Quality Manipulation (QUALMAN)	1	64.65	.00
Request for Positive Evaluation Manipulation (REQMAN)	1	.65	.42
Locus of Control (LOCDICH)	1	.21	.65
QUALMAN*REQMAN	1	1.09	.30
QUALMAN*LOCDICH	1	1.08	.30
REQMAN*LOCDICH	1	2.93	.09
QUALMAN*REQMAN*LOCDICH	1	3.81	.05
Error	206		
Total	214		

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APPENDIX 1

Scenario Manipulations

Moderate Quality – Request for Positive Evaluation

You are shopping for a new cell phone and plan, and you go to a cell phone provider's retail store that you have never before visited. After walking into the store, you wait a few minutes before a salesperson helps you. The salesperson seems a bit reserved and preoccupied, but goes about helping you find a cell phone and plan. The salesperson has reasonably sufficient knowledge of the phones and plans available, and listens to most of what you have to say. The salesperson is able to answer some of your questions, and shows you a couple of phones and their features. You decide to purchase a cell phone and plan from this provider. After waiting a little while, the salesperson gives you your activated cell phone and plan information.

As you are about to leave, the salesperson tells you that in two weeks you will receive a nine-question survey asking you to evaluate your purchase experience. The salesperson asks you to provide a very positive evaluation of your purchase experience on this survey. The salesperson goes on to strongly urge you to provide the most positive responses possible when you receive the survey. The salesperson explains that getting anything other than the most positive responses on the nine-question survey will decrease their compensation by \$100.

Moderate Quality – Request for Positive Evaluation Absent

You are shopping for a new cell phone and plan, and you go to a cell phone provider's retail store that you have never before visited. After walking into the store, you wait a few minutes before a salesperson helps you. The salesperson seems a bit reserved and preoccupied, but goes about helping you find a cell phone and plan. The salesperson has reasonably sufficient knowledge of the phones and plans available, and listens to most of what you have to say. The salesperson is able to answer some of your questions, and shows you a couple of phones and their features. You decide to purchase a cell phone and plan from this provider. After waiting a little while, the salesperson gives you your activated cell phone and plan information.

As you are about to leave, the salesperson tells you that in two weeks you will receive a nine-question survey asking you to evaluate your purchase experience. The salesperson asks you to provide your honest responses regarding your purchase experience on the nine-question survey once you receive it.

High Quality – Request for Positive Evaluation

You are shopping for a new cell phone and plan, and you go to a cell phone provider's retail store that you have never before visited. A salesperson helps you as soon as you walk into the store. The salesperson is friendly and attentive and seems really interested in helping you find the best cell phone and plan for you. The salesperson has excellent knowledge of the phones and plans available, and seems to really listen to you. The salesperson is able to answer all of your questions, and shows you the specific phones and features that interest you. The salesperson encourages you to take your time and ask questions about the features of each phone. You decide to purchase a cell phone and plan from this provider. Within just a few minutes, the salesperson gives you your activated cell phone and plan information.

As you are about to leave, the salesperson tells you that in two weeks you will receive a nine-question survey asking you to evaluate your purchase experience. The salesperson asks you to provide a very positive evaluation of your purchase experience on this survey. The salesperson goes on to strongly urge you to provide the most positive responses possible when you receive the survey. The salesperson explains that getting anything other than the most positive responses on the nine-question survey will decrease their compensation by \$100.

High Quality – Request for Positive Evaluation Absent

You are shopping for a new cell phone and plan, and you go to a cell phone provider's retail store that you have never before visited. A salesperson helps you as soon as you walk into the store. The salesperson is friendly and attentive and seems really interested in helping you find the best cell phone and plan for you. The salesperson has excellent knowledge of the phones and plans available, and seems to really listen to you. The salesperson is able to answer all of your questions, and shows you the specific phones and features that interest you. The salesperson encourages you to take your time and ask questions about the features of each phone. You decide to purchase a cell phone and plan from this provider. Within just a few minutes, the salesperson gives you your activated cell phone and plan information.

As you are about to leave, the salesperson tells you that in two weeks you will receive a nine-question survey asking you to evaluate your purchase experience. The salesperson asks you to provide your honest responses regarding your purchase experience on the nine-question survey once you receive it.

APPENDIX 2

Measures

Dependent Variable:

Satisfaction

Please answer the following questions as if you had the cell phone buying experience described.

1. Based on your overall experience with the cell phone provider, how satisfied are you with this cell phone provider?

Independent Variable:

Locus of Control

Cell phone service providers are interested in how certain important events in our society affect different people. The following questions consist of a pair of alternatives numbered either ① or ②. Please select the statement of each pair (on only one) which you more strongly believe to be the case as far as you are concerned. Be sure to select the one you actually believe to be more true, rather than the one you think you should chose or the one you would like to be true. This is a measure of personal belief; obviously there are no right or wrong answers. Remember, your answers are anonymous and confidential. Your answers will never be used try to sell you anything, and no business will ever view your responses or contact you as a result of answering these questions.

For A – K below, please mark the item number that you more strongly believe to be the case as far as you are concerned.

- A. ① Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck.
② People's misfortunes result from the mistakes they make.
- B. ① In the long run, people get the respect they deserve in the world.
② Unfortunately, an individual's worth often passes unrecognized no matter how hard he tries.
- C. ①. Without the right breaks, one cannot be an effective leader.
②. Capable people who fail to become leaders have not taken advantage of their opportunities.
- D. ① Becoming a success is a matter of hard work; luck has little or nothing to do with it.
②. Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time.
- E. ①What happens to me is my own doing.
② Sometimes I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking.
- F. ① When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work.
② It is not always wise to plan too far ahead, because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune anyway.
- G. ① In my case, getting what I want has little or nothing to do with luck.
② Many times we might just as well decide what to do by flipping a coin.

- H. ① Who gets to be boss often depends on who was lucky enough to be in the right place first.
 ② Getting people to do the right thing depends upon ability: luck has little or nothing to do with it.
- I. ① Most people don't realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental happenings.
 ② There is really no such thing as luck.
- J. ① In the long run, the bad things that happen to us are balanced by the good ones.
 ② Most misfortunes are the result of lack of ability, ignorance, laziness, or all three.
- K. ① Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.
 ② It is impossible for me to believe that chance or luck plays an important role in my life.

Manipulation Checks

Going back to the original cell phone buying experience described earlier, please answer the following questions about that experience.

Quality

The service I received in helping me find my cell phone in the scenario was:

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 1. Low Quality | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ | High Quality |
| 2. Bad | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ | Good |
| 3. Terrible | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ | Excellent |
-

Pressure

1. In the cell phone scenario, I believe I would have felt pressured by the salesperson's request regarding my responses to the nine-question survey.

Strongly Disagree ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ Strongly Agree

Influence

1. In the cell phone scenario, the salesperson tried to influence my responses to the questions in the nine-question survey.

Strongly Disagree ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ Strongly Agree

Realism

1. I found the cell phone scenario to be realistic.

Strongly Disagree ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ Strongly Agree
