

INFLUENCE OF CUSTOMER FOCUSED MISSION STATEMENT ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

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Abstract

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The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of customer-focused mission statements on customer satisfaction in selected cell phone manufacturing companies in the United States. The study employed content analysis for the mission statement and data from America customer satisfaction index (ACSI). In analysing our data, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression techniques were used. The result showed that product and service, technology, philosophy, self-concept, and public image mission statement components are strongly positively correlated with customer satisfaction. Customer, survival, growth and profitability and market mission statement components are insignificantly negatively correlated with customer satisfaction. The study, therefore, recommends that companies that want to remain competitive by enhancing customer satisfaction should formulate mission statements from a customer perspective so that they include product and service, technology, philosophy, self-concept, and public image components. The main limitation of the study represents the sample size and structure. This study empirically investigated the correlation and association of nine mission statement components with customer satisfaction.

Keywords: customer, mission statement, customer satisfaction, ACSI score, content analysis

INTRODUCTION

In the age of digital communications and social networks, cell phone manufacturing companies are introducing sophisticated products into the market. The sophistication of consumers' demands, preferences, and changing trends in technology have necessitated the need to manufacture products that satisfy the need of the customers. Mission statements could provide a fruitful approach to enhance customer satisfaction (Devasagayam *et al.*, 2013; Jyoti & Sharma, 2012; Lou *et al.*, 2012).

Mission statements set out the basic goals and philosophies that shape the strategic posture of firms. Pearce & Robinson (2011), assert that mission statement contains the firm's business philosophy, self-concept, product or service and the primary customer needs the firm will attempt to satisfy. The missions set out the purpose that differentiates a firm from its competitors (Campbell & Yeung,

1991; David, 2005; Drucker, 1974; Pearce & David, 1987; Steiner, 1979). They focus on reconciliation of stakeholder divergent views and interest (Abell, 1980; McGinnis, 1981), and represent the overriding purpose of the organisation (Rarick & Vitton, 1995; Want, 1986). A clearly written mission statement could have a positive impact on performance of a company. The mission statement should be written in a way to attract and keep customers externally, rather than solely used internally in strategic planning and to motivate employees and managers (David, *et al.*, 2014). A company mission statement could be an effective tool to attract and retain customers. The mission statement should provide a basis for marketing strategy and action (Collins & Rukstad, 2008). To determine, whether the customer is satisfied with a product or service, customer expectation is compared with the performance of the product or service. Customer

satisfaction is defined as a post-consumption evaluative judgment concerning a specific product or service (Gundersen, *et al.*, 1996). Customer satisfaction is measured after the customer consumes or uses a product or service. According to the expectancy disconfirmation theory (Oh and Parks, 1997; McQuitty, *et al.*, 2000), a customer is satisfied if the expected is lower than the perceived performance. Anderson *et al.* (1994), Yeung *et al.* (2002), Luo & Homburg (2007) concluded that customer satisfaction influences business performance. Several works have focused on the influence of customer satisfaction on customer behavioural patterns (Söderlund, 1998; Dimitriadis, 2006; Faullant *et al.*, 2008). Findings from these studies show that customer satisfaction has a positive relationship with customer loyalty, repurchase intentions, and leads to a positive word-of-mouth. Mission statements often lack a customer perspective and customers are usually not aware if a firm has a statement (Bart & Baertz, 1996; Bartkus, *et al.*, 2000; Collins & Rukstad, 2008). No studies have empirically examined, though, the relationship between customer-centred mission statements with customer satisfaction.

The dearth of empirical research on the subject motivated this study. The research examines the mission statements of six cell phone manufacturing companies in the United States of America with a view of finding out the relationship between customer focused mission statement and customer satisfaction.

Mission statement components

Many studies have been done on mission statement components. Nassehifar & Pourhosseini (2008) identified eight components of a mission statement 1) concern for provision of needs of customers, 2) employees, 3) shareholders and suppliers, 4) concern for society, 5) explanation of values, beliefs, and philosophy, 6) vision, 7) explanation of non-financial goals, 8) product/service. Haghighi *et al.* (2010) suggest nine component of a mission statement; 1) quality of products or services, 2) philosophy of the company, 3) concern for suppliers, 4) geographical domain, 5) concern for survival/growth/profitability, 6) technology, 7) concern for employees, customers and shareholders, 8) public image, 9) distinguished capabilities. Similar components have been identified by Rezvani & Abarzadeh (2010), Bart & Baetz (1996), and Pearce & David (1987). Nine components of mission statement written from a customer viewpoint can be used as a basis for marketing communication with customers (Power, 2012; Rego *et al.*, 2013). Previous studies had not examined the positive aspect of customer-oriented mission statements, though. (David *et al.*, 2014; Powers, 2012) Peyrefitte & David (2006) posit that the content of a company's mission statement could be a source of competitive advantage or disadvantage. David *et al.* (2014) posit that using

the word customer or consumer does not qualify the component to be considered as written from a customer perspective. They add that the mission statement should identify more precisely the target group of customers. Mission statement written from a customer perspective and included in both oral and written communication with customers, could attract customers and enable marketing team to help the company gain and sustain its competitive advantage (Desmidt *et al.*, 2011). Focusing on the product or service component, a mission statement should show the intrinsic value or satisfaction that the company's product or service gives to customer (David *et al.*, 2014). An important component among the nine examined in prior study is self-concept or distinctive competence, where the company shows the competitive advantage that its product or service provides to the customer (Pearce & David, 1987; Power, 2012).

Customer Satisfaction

Deng *et al.* (2009) posit that customer satisfaction is one of the most important aspects of a business because a satisfied customer will continue to do business with the company. A satisfied customer will make repeated purchases, and will also tell other customers to patronize the company's product or service. Guo *et al.* (2009) suggest that customer satisfaction is important if a firm wants to retain its customers. According to Gustafsson *et al.* (2005), customer satisfaction is the present performance of a product or service provided to customers. A dissatisfied customer would not like to have long-term relationships with the company (Lin & Wu, 2011). A customer experience that is not properly managed may lead to loss of patronage and revenue. Most of the research done on the impact of customer satisfaction on customer loyalty shows a positive relationship (Auh & Johnson, 2005; Bodet, 2008; Sabir *et al.*, 2014; Khan, 2012; Shankar *et al.*, 2003; Vesel & Zabkar, 2009). Prior studies show that customer satisfaction has a strong positive relationship with organisational performance (Devasagayarm *et al.*, 2013; Wieseke & Homburg, 2012). David *et al.* (2014) connect in their study the mission statement and customer satisfaction literature, creating a new area for marketing research and practice. The study suggests that an empirical research should be done to examine the influence of customer-centred mission statement on customer satisfaction. (Amato & Amato, 2002; Braun *et al.*, 2012; David *et al.*, 2014) assert that mission statement content, research and practice be realigned from an internal, management focus to external marketing focus in order to enhance customer satisfaction. David *et al.* (2014) infer that customer-focused mission statements could positively impact organisational performance by enhancing customer satisfaction.

Statement of problem

In the age of digital communications and social networks, cell phone manufacturing companies are introducing sophisticated products into the market. The sophistication of consumers' preferences, demands and changing trends in technology has necessitated the need to manufacture products that satisfy the need of the customers. Literature review shows that previous research has not investigated, whether the nine components are written from a customer-focused point of view (McGinnis, 1981; Power, 2012). Little attention has been given to mission statements in marketing literature despite its importance in marketing strategy formulation (Amato & Amato, 2002; Sashittal & Tankersley, 1997). David *et al.* (2014) suggest that a study should be carried out to investigate the correlation and association of customer-centred mission statements with customer satisfaction. Lack of empirical studies on the influence of customer-focused mission statements on customer satisfaction motivated this research. The aim of the study is to investigate the relationship between customer focused mission statements and customer satisfaction.

Mission statements of sample Companies

1. Apple

Apple leads the digital music revolution with its iPods and iTunes online store. Apple has reinvented the mobile phone with its revolutionary iPhone and App store, and is defining the future of mobile media and computing devices with iPad."

2. Samsung

Inspire the world, create the future." As one of the leading electronics companies in the world, Samsung Electronics is characterized by new technology, creative solutions, and innovative products. Its mission statement changes every decade to match the current business and technology climate.

3. Lenovo/Motorola

"Our mission is to become one of the world's great personal technology companies. We aspire to achieve this objective by leading in three key areas:

Personal Computers: Lead in PCs and be respected for our product innovation and quality.

Convergence: Lead the industry with an ecosystem of devices, services, applications and content for people to seamlessly connect to people and web content.

Culture: Become recognized as one of the best, most trusted and most well-respected companies to work for and do business with."

4. High-Touch Communications

To build your business through innovative design strategies and easy-to-use software solutions.

5. Microsoft/Nokia

Our mission is to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more.

6. LG

To become the market leading company with broad market recognition.

Source: Company websites, 2016

In the light of the conclusions of previous research

- H1: Mission statement components have a significant positive relationship with customer satisfaction score.
- H2: The customer component is the most highly associated among the nine mission statement components with customer satisfaction (ACSI) score.
- H3: The self-concept component is the second most highly associated one, among the nine mission statement components with customer satisfaction (ACSI) score.

METHODS

Previous research (David *et al.*, 2014; Kemp & Dyer, 2003; Pearce & David, 1987; Power, 2012) serve as a guide for content analysis of nine component of mission statements (independent variables). The independent variables (nine components of mission statements from customer perspective) were subjectively evaluated by authors using 1–3 scale, where 1 = component is not included, 2 = component is present but not written from a customer perspective, 3 = component is present and is written from customer perspective, as adapted from David *et al.* (2014). No previous studies, though, use customer viewpoint for investigating mission statement content.

For the dependent variable (customer satisfaction), 2016 data collected from American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) website was used. The ACSI releases customer satisfaction benchmarks every year for more than 230 large firms in 43 industries and over 100 federal and local government services. ACSI uses survey data collected by telephone interviews to create a latent variable, e.g., customer expectations, perceived service quality, perceived product quality, and perceived value to compute the customer satisfaction measurement. The customer satisfaction index score (ACSI) is calculated as a weighted average of answers to three survey questions that measure different facets of satisfaction with a product or service: customer expectations perceived quality perceived value. To reduce the statistical problems of extreme skewness, the ACSI uses 10-point (versus 5- or 7-point) rating scales to measure the customer satisfaction variables.

Mission statements of six cell phones manufacturing companies in the United States America were analysed. Customer satisfaction index for the six companies was collected from

the ACSI website. The companies examined are Apple, Samsung, Lenovo/Motorola, High Touch Communication (HTC), Microsoft/Nokia, and LG. The choice of companies, industry, and country stem from the following reasons:

1. The companies control major share of cell phone market in the US.
2. The US population of 324 million is a huge market.
3. The US customers' preference for smartphones.

Pearson correlation matrix could reveal the strength of association and relationship among the variables whereas regression could be used for estimating the relationship among variables. Hence, the adoption of Pearson correlation and regression techniques for testing the strength of relationships and hypotheses in this study. Multivariate regression and correlation coefficient analyses techniques were used in examining the nature of the relationships of particular variables and hypotheses testing. The correlation was calculated to determine the strength of the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer focused mission statements variables. Significance of variables was evaluated by t-test in which the *p*-value will show significance – to what extent do the independent variables (customer focused mission statement) determine the dependent variable (customer satisfaction). The hypotheses were tested at 0.05% significance level. Oztuna *et al.* (2006) suggest that small samples most often pass normality tests. SPSS 24 statistical software is employed in the analyses conducted.

RESULTS

Result of the content analysis based on particular elements of the mission statements for selected firms is presented in Tab. I. It shows, for example, that the mission statement of MOTOROLA/LENOVO includes 7 out of the 9 elements of mission statements written from the customer perspective. This accounts for the highest percentage (78%) of the possible 9 mission statement components. APPLE and HTC have 4 components represented in their mission statements, which means 44% “fulfilment”. Furthermore, SAMSUNG, MICROSOFT/NOKIA, and LG have 3 customer-perspective components in their mission

statements (33%). Authors conclude that the closest mission statement to being written from a customer perspective is the one of MOTOROLA/LENOVO.

Correlation between customer satisfaction and nine mission statement components (customer, product, and service, market, technology, survival, growth and profitability, philosophy, self-concept, public image, and employee) is analysed in Tab. II. The result shows that product and service (0.664), technology (0.717), philosophy (0.591), self-concept (0.591), and public image (0.593), has a strong positive correlation relationship with customer satisfaction. This suggests that a mission statement written from a customer perspective with product and service, technology, philosophy, self-concept, and public image components could enhance customer satisfaction. The finding is in consonance with Pearce & Robinson (2011), that mission statement contains the firm's business philosophy, self-concept, product or service and the primary customer needs the firm will attempt to satisfy. Customer (-0.658), survival, growth, and profitability (-0.667), and market (-0.72) components have a strong negative correlation relationship with customer satisfaction score. Employee component (-0.337) has a weak negative correlation with customer satisfaction. This suggests that customer, survival, growth, and profitability, market and employee components are not related to customer satisfaction level.

From Tab. III coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.432$) for customer component of mission statement indicates that customer component accounts for 43.2% of the variation in customer satisfaction. The calculated *p*-value of 0.156 is higher than the *p*-value of 0.05, therefore the result is not statistically significant. We hereby reject the hypothesis that customer component is the most highly associated among the nine mission statement components with customer satisfaction score. Self-concept ($R^2 = 0.349$) shows that self-concept accounts for 35% of the variation in customer satisfaction level. The *p*-value of 0.217 is higher than the *p*-value of 0.05. We hereby reject the hypothesis self-concept component of a mission statement is the second most highly associated one among the nine mission statement components, with customer satisfaction score. It should be noted that the self-concept component (0.591) has an insignificant positive impact on customer

I: Number of elements covered by the mission statements

Firm	frequency	%
Apple	4	44.44
Samsung	3	33.33
Motorola/Lenovo	7	77.78
HTC	4	44.44
Microsoft/Nokia	3	33.33
LG	3	33.33

Source: authors, 2017

satisfaction at 5% level of significance. This indicates that the inclusion of self-concept component to mission statement written from customer perspective could enhance customer satisfaction. In the case of customer component (-0.658), the variable has an insignificant negative impact

on customer satisfaction at 5% level of significance. Insignificant because the p-value is higher than 0.05. This means that the inclusion of customer component does not have a statistically significant effect on customer satisfaction score.

II: Correlation Matrix

Component		Customer satisfaction	Customer	Product and service	Market	Technology	Survival, growth, profitability	Philosophy	Self-concept	Public image
Customer satis.	Pearson c.	1								
	Sig. (2-tailed)									
customer	Pearson c.	-0.658	1							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.156								
product/service	Pearson c.	0.664	0	1						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.150	1							
market	Pearson c.	-0.072	0	-0.159	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.892	1	0.764						
technology	Pearson c.	0.717	0	0.926**	-0.343	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.109	1	0.008	0.506					
survival/rofit	Pearson c.	-0.667	0.548	-0.293	0.108	-0.316	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.148	0.261	0.573	0.838	0.541				
philosophy	Pearson c.	0.591	-0.433	0.463	0.686	0.250	-0.316	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.217	0.391	0.355	0.132	0.633	0.541			
self concept	Pearson c.	0.591	-0.433	0.463	0.686	0.250	-0.316	1.000**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.217	0.391	0.355	0.132	0.633	0.541	0		
public image	Pearson c.	-0.593	0.594	-0.476	0.294	-0.343	0.759	-0.343	-0.343	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.215	0.214	0.340	0.572	0.506	0.080	0.506	0.506	
employee	Pearson c.	-0.337	0.433	-0.463	0.343	-0.250	0.316	-0.250	-0.250	0.857*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.513	0.391	0.355	0.506	0.633	0.541	0.633	0.633	0.029

Source: Author computation, 2016

III: Impacts of mission components on customer satisfaction

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error
Customer	.658 ^a	.432	.290	2.578
Product and service	.664 ^a	.441	.301	2.559
Market	.072 ^a	.005	-.243	3.413
Technology	.717 ^a	.514	.393	2.385
Survival, growth, profit	.667 ^a	.445	.306	2.550
Philosophy	.591 ^a	.349	.186	2.761
Self concept	.591 ^a	.349	.186	2.761
Public image	.593 ^a	.352	.190	2.755
Employees	.337 ^a	.114	-.108	3.221

Source: Author's Computation, 2016

CONCLUSION

The study examined the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer focused mission statement of six cell phone manufacturing companies operating in the US market. It is evident that product and service, technology, philosophy, self-concept, and public image mission statement components have an insignificant positive correlation relationship with customer satisfaction. This means that the inclusion of these components to mission statements could lead to high customer satisfaction score. The relationship is insignificant because the variables fail t-test at 5% level of significance. Customer, survival, growth and profitability and market mission statement components have an insignificant negative correlation relationship with customer satisfaction. Customer, survival, growth and profitability, employee, and market mission statement components are not statistically significantly related to customer satisfaction score. Mission statements written from a customer perspective could help create and sustain bond between the firm and its customers. Finding from this study will benefit both business managers and executives by providing a better insight on the mission statement components that must be included to improve customer satisfaction. In addition, the result of this study is useful to business managers, marketing practitioners, and executives as it provides a better insight on the importance of mission statement written from a customer perspective and the way it affects customer satisfaction. Furthermore, this study contributes to the existing knowledge in the field of strategic management and marketing research, by exploring the connection between the customer-focused mission statement and customer satisfaction with a specific reference to world's largest cell phones firms operating in the US market. The study, therefore, recommends that companies that want to remain competitive by enhancing customer satisfaction should formulate clearly written mission statements from a customer perspective that will include product and service, technology, philosophy, self-concept, and public image components.

The limitations of the study represent the sample size and structure, methodology, and data. Only ACSI score and mission statements of six cell phone manufacturing companies were used in this study. Though the sample size is small, it is a representative of world's largest cell phones manufacturers. Despite the limitations described above, the applicability of this study adds to the literature as it relates to empirical study of the relationship between customer focused mission statement and customer satisfaction of multinational cell phone manufacturing firms operating in the US market from both theoretical and practical point of view. This study could be further developed by investigating the influence of mission statements on customer satisfaction by comparing service and manufacturing sectors in the United States of America and other countries. Also, the sample size could be increased to include internet services providers in the US using the ACSI score.

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Appendix 1 Benchmarks By Industry

Cellular Telephones															
	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Previous Year % Change	First Year % Change
Apple	NM	NM	NM	NM	NM	NM	NM	NM	83	81	79	80	81	1.3	-2.4
Samsung	73	71	73	70	71	70	76	74	71	76	81	80	80	0.0	9.6
Cellular Telephones	69	69	70	70	71	72	76	75	74	76	78	78	79	1.3	14.5
Motorola (Lenovo)	70	70	71	72	74	72	76	77	73	77	77	79	77	-2.5	10.0
HTC	NM	NM	NM	NM	NM	NM	NM	NM	75	72	75	77	75	-2.6	0.0
Microsoft Mobile (Nokia)	72	70	69	72	74	74	76	73	75	76	77	75	74	-1.3	2.8

Source: ACSI website 2016

[http://www.theacsi.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=149&catid=&Itemid=212&i=Cellular + Telephones](http://www.theacsi.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=149&catid=&Itemid=212&i=Cellular+Telephones) (Assessed, (Retrieved 2016-07-28)