Total Quality Management & Business Excellence

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Published online: 25 Aug 2010.

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Who are the adorable customers—men or women? Service quality improvement via customers' positive responses

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ABSTRACT *Customer compliments, the positive responses, imply the successes of firms in serving their customers. However, researchers and practitioners devote themselves to the negative responses, complaints, and neglect the more valuable profit-generating element, customer compliments. This research explores customer complimentary behaviours and discloses the importance and power of customers' positive responses. With companies' training programmes, the front-line service providers still often find it difficult and feel frustrated in distinguishing customer characteristics. Gender as a salient indicator could help employees feel much more comfortable in their jobs and be able to provide better services. We investigated whether men or women react differently when they receive satisfactory services. The different responses between men and women disclose the references of male and female customers as well as the potentials of customer recommendation power. Service quality and company profits can be improved by customers' positive responses. This research helps companies to become capable of managing better service quality and effective training programmes by analysing the essential differences in complimentary behaviours between male and female customers.*

Introduction

The recognition of the importance of customer satisfaction, by researchers as well as practitioners, has resulted in customer satisfaction being one of the most widely studied and embraced constructs in marketing (Bitner, 1990; Dubé *et al.*, 1994; Hunt, 1993; Oliver & DeSarbo, 1988; Oliver & Swan, 1989; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988; Peterson & Wilson, 1992). Customers can be satisfied or dissatisfied with the services, therefore they may react in positive or negative responses. Negative responses, such as customer complaints, have been studied relatively extensively compared to the research in positive responses, such as customer compliments. Hunt (1993) has maintained: 'we need to focus more of our efforts on understanding positive disconfirmation. Negative disconfirmation is the equivalent of failure. Positive disconfirmation is the equivalent of success. Let's focus more of our efforts on studying and creating success'.

People are more likely to engage in negative communication. When people ask someone

about a product, they tend to ask, 'Is there anything wrong with this product?' or 'Was there any trouble with this product?' (Hanna & Wozniak, 2001; Silverman, 1997). Good services are expected, hence easily forgotten. Unsatisfactory products/services create frustration and irritation, which are relatively unforgettable. A satisfied customer is likely to tell approximately three people, whereas an unhappy customer is likely to broadcast his/her negative comments to approximately 11 people (Silverman, 1997). That might explain why both researchers and practitioners have focused more on the complaints issues. Nayor & Kleiser (2000), however, challenged the traditional thinking and proposed the contrasting results that negative word-of-mouth (hereafter WOM) was only spread when positive comments were also made. They countered the old faith and claimed that actually there were more people engaged in positive responses rather than in negative responses.

The ubiquitous Internet raises the importance of positive responses. There are numerous researches studying the Internet's impacts on people's life (e.g. Kraut *et al.*, 1996; Stempel & Stewart, 2000; Zettelmeyer, 2000). One conspicuous difference from the past is that the speed and number of communications rise rapidly. Many people, equipped with networked computers, must receive mails forwarded from acquaintances, or even strangers, in large quantities every day. Consumer complaints and recommendations are often seen in those forwarded mails. These WOM mails are highly likely to be passed to other people if the receivers think the content is informative. Sales can be multiplied by 2–5 times through positive WOM (Silverman, 1997). Now accompanied with the power of the Internet, the effect of positive WOM is even greater. Considering how easily WOM can influence people's purchasing decisions (Brown & Reingen, 1987; Duhan *et al.*, 1997; Nayor & Kleiser, 2000; Silverman, 1997), firms should actively inspire customers' positive reactions rather than just implement the traditional promotion strategies (Hunt, 1993). Companies being able to trigger peoples' positive reactions would be the ones with the key to success.

Customers' positive reactions not only boost company's sales (Silverman, 1997) but also promote employees' morale and service attitudes. A smile, an extra order or a larger tip, all those positive reactions from customers raise employee's job satisfaction, which may motivate employees to provide better services in return. When companies are indulging in ameliorating customers' negative responses, they should not forget that there are also positive ways to improve service quality.

The principle of market segmentation recommends dividing the total market by diverse variables, some of which are more difficult for companies to use for differentiating the target customers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001). For example, it is difficult to tell the customers' income levels or purchasing habits at first sight. These problems annoy service representatives because they are at the front-line in communicating with customers (Bitner *et al.*, 1990). Without salient indicators, companies are unable to provide distinct guidelines to identify and satisfy their diverse customers (Garret *et al.*, 1997).

Gender as a salient and conspicuous indicator allows service representatives to easily distinguish customers' characteristics with fewer blunders and to be able to provide tailored services. Employees would feel more comfortable serving customers based on this indicator. As an easy differentiable attribute, gender enables companies to plan their service strategies and training programmes easily and effectively (Garret *et al.*, 1997; Lin *et al.*, 2001). Meanwhile, from the extensive literature reviews about gender roles, there are still debates on the gender differences in many areas, such as communication, social behaviours, verbal ability, work performance, etc (Blustain, 2000; Canary & Hause, 1993; Deaux, 1984; Eagly & Wood, 1991; Hyde & Linn, 1988). However, there is no research work examining gender difference in complimentary behaviours. The purpose of this research is to scrutinize the gender differences in customers' positive responses.

Customers' responses—complaints and compliments

Customer satisfaction is considered as the disconfirmation of customer expectation and perception (Oliver & DeSarbo, 1988; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988, 1994; Peterson & Wilson, 1992). Customers are assumed to have expectations of performance levels of products or services before they make the purchase or experience the product. The expectations are compared with the actual perceptions of the product or service performances. If perception of performance meets or exceeds expectation, customers are satisfied. On the other hand, if the experience of the product or service did not meet customers' expectations, customer dissatisfaction occurs. SERVQUAL, the widely used measurement instrument, provided a good way to understand better consumers' expectations and perceptions. Although SERVQUAL had been challenged and redefined, it still is a fundamental gauge to customer satisfaction (Lin *et al.*, 2001; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988, 1994).

In high-contact service industries, customer satisfaction was mostly judged in the service encounter, which was defined as a period of time when customers interact directly with the firm (Solomon *et al.*, 1985). The favourable and unfavourable incidents in service encounters may incur customer compliments and complaints. That employees make customers feel 'unique' by being attentive to customers' comfort is one example of favourable encounters. On the other hand, ignoring the customers or contact employees treating the customers badly is an unfavourable incident (Bitner *et al.*, 1990).

Companies should recognize and manage the dissatisfiers. A dissatisfier is defined as the situation that easily earns complaints from customers for low performance or absence of a desired feature. The availability of credit is a good example of a dissatisfier. A customer hardly cares about whether a restaurant accepts two or 20 credit cards, as long as the customer's bill can be charged. He/she thinks nothing of it. But if the customer cannot pay the bill by his/her credit card, he/she is quick to complain about it (Cadotte & Turgeon, 1988). The dissatisfier is like a landmine. If you do not step on it, there is no reward. If you stomp incidentally, you hurt yourself badly.

Singh (1988) studied complaint intentions and corresponding behaviours (CCB) and proposed three negative responses taken by consumers: voice response (e.g. seek redress from seller), private responses (e.g. WOM communication), and third party response (e.g. take legal action). Voice and private responses are passive reactions compared to the third party response.

Similar to the dissatisfiers in complaint situations, there is a satisfier in the compliment context. When a feature of the product easily elicits compliments, and the average performance or even the absence of the feature does not cause dissatisfaction or complaints, this feature is a satisfier. Hotel lobbies are an example of a satisfier. The modest size of lobbies and unremarkable decoration do not generate much discussion or dissatisfaction. In contrast, customers receive a pleasant surprise when they see large and open lobbies with delicate ornaments. Satisfiers can surprise customers and raise customer satisfaction (Cadotte & Turgeon, 1988).

How do customers show their compliments in service encounters? Customers do not always voice their appreciation for good services and good values. Unspoken compliments are potential resources that should be addressed and utilized. If customers are willing to stay in the long line for the company's services, the company should take this as a compliment. When the company receives an order by fax or e-mail without any previous questioning or negotiation, it should take this as a compliment (Newton, 2000). Other than keeping silent, customers show their compliments in many ways—such as WOM, tips and rewards, friendly expressions, repeat purchases, etc. Among those positive responses, WOM has the most powerful impact. WOM can easily influence customers' attitudes and buying decisions.

Silverman (1997) proposed treating the WOM as the central part of the marketing mix and urged companies to take marketing as a word of mouth generating system.

The wars of men and women

Do men and women tend to be different or alike? Archer & Lloyd (1985) presented different approaches to research into the differences between men and women by specifying the usage of the words, sex and gender. Sex is defined as biological differences and gender as socially derived distinctions. Eagly & Wood (1991) illustrated the issue by adopting the terms alpha bias and beta bias to describe the preference of exaggerating and ignoring the gender differences respectively. Garrett *et al.* (1997) named 'dual cultures' and 'no differences' to represent the divergent contentions of 'differences do exit' and 'differences do not exit'.

Gender disparity

Much of the research reaches the consensus that male and female are different in many perspectives, such as psychology (Tannen, 1994), and communication (Gefen & Straub, 1997; Tannen, 1994). Men and women's conversational styles are not on the same track. Men do not like to ask, prefer to make report talk, and like to be problem-solvers; on the other hand, women tend to feel free to ask, prefer to make rapport talk, and like to take sympathy rather than advice (Tannen, 1994). Males feel more at ease with computers and technology (Gefen & Straub, 1997).

Gender equality

Egalitarians claimed the equal attributes and rights of human beings. Eagly & Wood (1991) opposed the biological differences and proposed the 'bio-social' model to explain that the gender differences do not come from genes but from roles in society. Men and women will react alike if they have similar status. When expectancies do not differ, there will be no gender differences in their attributions (Eagly & Wood, 1991).

As societies progress, the differences in the effect of gender decrease. Androgynous attributes are studied besides traditional masculinity and femininity (Hofstede, 1998). Women easily accepting the use of e-mail (Gefen & Straub, 1997) settled the illusion about women's 'incompetence' in technology. Canary & Hause (1993) found little difference in communication between male and female managers.

Hypotheses

In developing human society, gender roles become more blurred (Blustain, 2000). We tried to investigate whether male and female consumers respond differently if they are satisfied with the services of the firms.

Men are described as possessing aggressiveness, competition assertiveness, individualism, to be task-oriented and focused on material success. Women are considered, as possessing nurturance, kindness, loquacious, warmth, to be emotion-oriented, and concerned with the quality of life (Archer & Lloyd, 1985; Gefen & Straug, 1997; Tannen, 1994). We expect women, with emotion-oriented and rapport characteristics, to be more likely to show their appreciation than men, because men are regarded as report-like, competitive, and individual.

For the most part, women tend to spend a lot of time talking and making rapport talk (Tannen, 1994). However, Internet usage is very popular and there is no difference in the

use of e-mail between men and women (Gefen & Straub, 1997). Not restricted and intimidated by the communication tools, women have been shown to be more likely to share and spread information.

Martin & Adams (1999) studied the thanking behaviours of service representatives and concluded that female service providers were more likely than male service providers to show their thankfulness to customers. In this research, we will study the thanking behaviours of customers. Women are described as emotion-oriented, warm, and with a social disposition. Men are individualistic, competitive, and with a technical disposition. The characteristics of gender imply the following hypothesis.

H_1: Female customers show more willingness to express their appreciations than do male customers.

Research design

Most customers voluntarily express their complaints and compliments in the hospitality industry (Cadotte & Turgeon, 1988). Hospitality industries have greater potentials to receive compliments than other industries. People tend to reward restaurant servers with large tips or with an oral expression if they feel satisfied, but rarely take time to express thanks to the firms producing splendid tailored products. Cadotte & Turgeon (1988) ranked the frequent compliments in restaurants. We designed the ten scenarios (Appendix A) based on the top ten compliments from customers. Each compliment had a detailed description of a scenario.

Pretests were conducted to make sure all respondents agreed that the scenarios described were satisfactory situations and capable of representing each satisfactory service category. Twenty respondents were presented with 10 scenarios describing satisfactory services and were asked to indicate the likelihood of their engagement in each type of complimentary behaviour in each situation.

To discover customers' complimentary responses, a second pretest was conducted. Two hundred respondents were asked to read the ten scenarios and then list all possible actions they might take if they were satisfied with a restaurant's services. Two researchers classified the actions independently. The third researcher acted as an arbitrator and checked the classification. If there were any discrepancies between the two researchers, a consensus was reached through discussions among the three researchers. Of the total, nine responses, including 'no reactions', to the restaurant satisfactory services were found.

Based on the second pretest, the final questionnaire included ten scenarios and nine complimentary responses for each scenario. After reading each scenario, the respondents were asked to indicate the likelihood of taking each of the nine actions on a Likert-type scale from 1 to 5. The formal questionnaires were sent out to 55 part-time students. Each student was asked to distribute the questionnaires to ten co-workers—a total of 550 questionnaires dispatched, and 398 questionnaires were returned. A questionnaire was eliminated if it was not completed or was judged to be of poor quality. Finally, only 324 responses were available for further analysis. Among the respondents, 149 respondents or 46% were men, and 175 respondents or 54% were women.

Results and analyses

Each satisfactory scenario has nine likely complimentary responses. Table 1 shows men's and women's disposition in the nine complimentary behaviours. The scores of each complimentary behaviour indicated in Table 1 are the average scores across ten scenarios. The individual

Table 1. *Gender differences in complimentary intentions*

Complimentary behaviours	Female		Male		*t*-test value
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
1. Visit the restaurant again	4.55	0.38	4.46	0.50	1.864*
2. Rcommend the restaurant to others	4.32	0.52	4.17	0.54	2.457**
3. Come with friends next time	4.31	0.54	4.12	0.62	2.848**
4. Fill out the restaurant's customer survey	3.30	1.02	3.07	0.97	2.051**
5. Compliment the servers	3.02	0.96	2.97	0.88	0.564
6. Leave a larger tip	2.87	0.95	2.84	0.64	0.207
7. Post it on the Web	2.74	1.00	2.59	0.74	1.352
8. Do nothing	2.51	0.91	2.51	0.93	0.023
9. Write a letter to the restaurant	2.11	0.87	1.92	0.76	2.068**

On a scale from 1 to 5. A higher score means higher intention of engaging the complimentary activities.
Testing the difference in means between male and female
* Significant at $\alpha < 0.1$
** Significant at $\alpha < 0.05$
*** Significant at $\alpha < 0.01$

t-test shows that men and women's behaviours in complimentary responses are systematically different. For example, both male and female consumers show a high intention to 'visit the restaurant again' and like to 'recommend the restaurant to others' because the mean scores are all above 4 out of 5. On the other hand, both male consumers and female consumers show low intentions to 'give a larger tip' and 'write a letter to the restaurant' because the mean scores are about 2 out of 5. The rank of men's complimentary behaviours is the same as that of women's. There are significant differences between men and women in five complimentary behaviours: visiting the restaurant again, recommending the restaurant to others, coming with friends next time, filling out the restaurant's customer survey, and writing a letter to the restaurant. From the result, women demonstrate that they do show more appreciation to companies when they are satisfied with the services.

The correlation matrix of these nine positive response behaviours shows that the variables are highly correlated, indicating that the variables can be grouped. Exploratory factor analysis is first applied to determine the number of factors. Table 2 lists the output of factor analysis. The nine complimentary responses load on two factors. Factor 1 is composed of three variables: 'visit the restaurant again', 'recommend the restaurant to others', and 'come with

Table 2. *Two groups of customers' positive responses*

	Component	
	1 (passive)	2 (active)
Visit the restaurant again	0.880	—
Recommend the restaurant to others	0.887	—
Come with friends next time	0.898	—
Leave a larger tip	—	0.615
Post it on the Web	—	0.718
Fill out the rstaurant's customer survey	—	0.621
Compliment the servers	—	0.748
Write a letter to the restaurant	—	0.814

* Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis
* Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

Table 3. *Passive complimentary intentions across ten satisfactory services*

Satisfactory settings	Female		Male		
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	*t*-test value
1. Price of drinks, meals and other services	4.30	0.63	4.20	0.68	1.407
2. Helpful attitude of employees	4.25	0.63	4.11	0.76	1.841*
3. Quality of service	4.21	0.55	4.08	0.62	1.940*
4. Quantity of services	4.18	0.62	3.99	0.73	2.48**
5. Food quality and method of preparation	4.11	0.61	3.96	0.64	2.167**
6. Neatness of establishment	3.98	0.65	3.87	0.71	1.506
7. Cleanliness of establishment	3.80	0.70	3.73	0.74	0.878
8. Size of portions	3.84	0.69	3.72	0.76	1.403
9. Employees' appearance	3.70	0.80	3.63	0.81	0.830
10. Responsiveness to complaints	2.73	1.00	2.95	1.07	− 1.87*

On a scale from 1 to 5. A higher score means higher intention of engaging the complimentary activities.
Testing the difference in means between male and female.
* Significant at $\alpha < 0.1$
** Significant at $\alpha < 0.05$
*** Significant at $\alpha < 0.01$

friends next time'. These three reactions are relatively effortless responses when people are satisfied with the products or services. Hence, we named the first group as 'passive complimentary responses'. Factor 2 is composed of five behaviours: 'leave a larger tip', 'post it on the Web', 'fill out the restaurant's customer survey', 'compliment the servers', and 'write a letter to the restaurant'. Those reactions require much more effort on the part of customers. We label factor 2 as 'active complimentary responses'. 'Do nothing', having low loading scores on both factors, is not included in either one of the two factors.

We performed individual *t*-tests to see if there is any significant difference between male and female customers across ten satisfactory scenarios and nine customer complimentary responses. The scale is from 1 to 5, with 1 as never and 5 as most likely to take the actions. The scores of passive complimentary responses are the mean scores of the three components of factor 1, while the scores of the active complimentary responses are the mean scores of the five components of factor 2. Passive complimentary responses and active complimentary responses are listed in Tables 3 and 4, respectively.

In all ten satisfactory services, except one—responsiveness to complaints—female's scores surpass men's in all active and passive response items if there is a statistically significant result. The results support the hypothesis that female respondents are more likely to present compliments than male customers. But there is one exception: at the last scenario, responsiveness to complaints, male consumers showed more willingness to visit the restaurant again and complimented the servers than female customers. The result implies that female customers are more likely to take companies' compensation actions for granted.

A closer examination of the output in Tables 3 and 4 reveals that female and male customers show no difference regarding the size of the portions of food. Men usually have a larger appetite than women. Therefore, male customers should be more concerned or care about the size of the portions of food. They are expected to show more appreciation since they care more. However, the result shows there is no difference in reaction between men and women when they were served a large portion, which indicates that female customers actually have a greater tendency in complimenting restaurant services.

From Table 1, 'visit the restaurant again' is ranked first among nine responses, which implies that the return rate of customers can be a major index of customer satisfaction to

Table 4. *Active complimentary intentions across ten satisfactory services*

	Female		Male		
Satisfactory settings	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	*t*-test value
1. Price of drinks, meals and other services	3.38	0.90	3.18	0.81	2.047**
2. Helpful attitude of employees	3.36	0.84	3.17	0.78	2.146**
3. Quality of service	3.29	0.65	3.06	0.65	3.256***
4. Quantity of services	3.26	0.87	2.99	0.73	3.033**
5. Food quality and method of preparation	3.17	0.72	2.98	0.69	2.395**
6. Neatness of establishment	3.12	0.83	2.93	0.71	2.207**
7. Cleanliness of establishment	3.03	0.81	2.85	0.72	2.058**
8. Size of portions	2.97	0.84	2.83	0.75	1.619
9. Employees' appearance	2.90	0.88	2.73	0.78	1.878*
10. Responsiveness to complaints	2.48	0.87	2.62	0.82	− 1.53

On a scale from 1 to 5. A higher score means higher intention of engaging the complimentary activities.
Testing the difference in means between male and female.
* Significant at $\alpha < 0.1$
** Significant at $\alpha < 0.05$
*** Significant at $\alpha < 0.01$

company's service quality. 'Write a letter to restaurant' is the least likely thing customers will do. The score of 'do nothing' is even ranked higher than that of 'write a letter to restaurant'. That result encourages companies to provide incentives or to design an easier way to communicate for customers to deliver their appreciations.

Conclusions

The study supports the hypothesis that female consumers are more willing to deliver complimentary responses than male customers. Female customers show higher intention to take both active and passive complimentary responses on nine satisfactory scenarios, excluding 'responsiveness to complaints'. Male customers show greater intention to present their appreciation in a passive way when a company responds to their complaint. However, the passive complimentary actions consist of 'visit the restaurant again', 'recommend the restaurant to others' and 'come with friends next time'. Those are effortless reactions. It may mean that male customers take a company's flaws as a less serious mistake than do female customers. Since female customers take a company's mistake more seriously, they would expect the company's explanation or compensation as a natural response. Therefore, there is no need to reward or give thanks for it.

The result shows consumers tend to do nothing rather than to write a thank-you letter to the firms. Companies should create diverse and easy interactive channels for customers when consumers feel like showing their appreciation to the firms. Some customers appreciate the manufacturers' services but do not know the ways—or think it is time consuming—to show their thanks.

Female customers reveal significantly higher tendency in five complimentary behaviours. There is no difference between men and women in other three complimentary behaviours: 'compliment the servers', 'leave a larger tip', and 'post it on the Web'. The Taiwanese are considered as conservative people and they tend to hold their feelings. Hence, men and women show no difference in praising servers. In Taiwan, the tip culture is not popular. It is therefore hard to distinguish the difference between men and women. The score of tip reward is low, about 2 out of 5. Males are generally more high-tech talented and interested in high-

tech usage. However, Gefen & Straub (1997) indicated that females used e-mail as easily and as often as men. So it is explainable that there is no difference between men and women on the web recommendation.

Among the ten satisfactory settings, 'price of drinks, meals and other services' is at the top compliment that customers would thank for. The ranks of satisfactory services shown in Tables 3 and 4 demonstrate that customers are very price sensitive. The responsiveness of complaints is ranked at the bottom in all satisfactory services, which means customers think it is normal and necessary for a company to deal with customers' complaints.

Managerial implications and further research

Customer complaints are considered as the source of feedback on the market performance (Garrett et al., 1997). Researchers believe that complaints are valuable because those customers can easily be turned into loyal customers if firms manage their complaints well (Bowen & Shoemaker, 1998; Singh, 1988). But from our study, customers showed least willingness to deliver compliments when companies made up for their mistakes. This result suggested that companies should focus more on the improvement to fundamental functions rather than passively deal with complaints. Companies should not just deal with customers' complaints but should actively probe customers' reactions if the customers feel satisfied (Cadotte & Turgeon, 1988; Newton, 2000).

Positive responses encourage service representatives as well as create multiplier effects to the firms' profits (Duhan et al., 1997; Bowen & Shoemaker, 1998). A most widely used customer response, word of mouth (WOM), has a powerful influence on customer attitudes and behaviours. WOM recommendations strongly affecting customers' buying decisions are from acquaintances considered as strong-tie sources; and the information gained from strangers is considered as weak-tie sources (Brown & Reingen, 1987; Duhan et al., 1997). Strong ties were perceived as more influential than weak ties (Brown & Reingen, 1987), whereas the power of weak ties grows rapidly with the ubiquity and popularity of the Internet. Inspiring customers' positive WOM could speed a stampede of customers to the company.

Customer positive response, consisting of spoken and unspoken compliments, should be well utilized and managed. A company can build its reputation, boost profits, and lower marketing costs as well as boost employees' satisfaction and morale from the valuable customer complimentary behaviours. The immense power of customer positive responses should be recognized and developed. A company may encourage customers to deliver their appreciation by providing incentives or creating easy communication methods. When encouraging customers to present explicit thanks, a company may educate employees to recognize and to appreciate the unspoken compliments, which lead to employee satisfaction as well as customer satisfaction. From the research, companies would be encouraged to develop marketing programmes especially designed for female customers because female customers can generate more beneficial effects than male customers.

The significant result supports the fact that the nature of gender differences exists. This study focuses on customers' responses toward the restaurant services. To avoid the trap of the level of disclosure (Rousseau, 1985), readers are recommended to hold another survey if trying to generalize the conclusions to other industries. For example, are men the more welcomed customers in high-tech industries?

Positive responses are able to create companies' valuable equity by yielding more profits as well as loyal customers, and furthermore to improve employees' morale (Bowen & Shoemaker, 1998; Cadotte & Turgeon, 1988; Duhan et al., 1997). Consumers might be 'willing to step in the store and browse the products' as a complimentary response to the

firms; on the other hand, the firms might not be able to notice this conveyance and therefore neglect the effect. The extent of complimentary behaviour should be well defined for further research. Finally, the study was conducted in Taiwan. Since complimentary behaviour is likely to be related to culture, examining complimentary behaviour within other cultures would provide valuable insights.

Appendix A. Ten scenarios for measuring complimenting intentions

Categories	Scenarios
1. Quality of Service	Assume that you come to a restaurant and are seated immediately. You feel that the servers' efficiency in waiting on you reflects the restaurant's training programme. Familiar with the menu's contents, the server can recommend particular items based on your personal tastes, ensuring that you select the food of your choice. While providing speedy service, the server does not make you feel rushed to finish your meal. Overall, you feel comfortable and enjoy the server's professional courtesy. Afterwards, *what are you likely to do*?
2. Food Quality and Method of Preparation	Assume that you come to a restaurant and make a regular order. The appetizing dish is artistically presented and the entrée tastes delicious. The dessert is served with exquisite kula strawberries grown only in Hawaii and available only one month each year. You are totally satisfied with the meal and can feel the chef's passion in preparing the dishes. Afterwards, *what are you likely to do*?
3. Helpful Attitude of Employees	Assume that you are having dinner with your friends who are accompanied by two children—one is six years old and the other is four years old. The noisy children are creating a chaotic situation, making your friends frustrated over how to handle the situation. The server immediately brings some children's books and toys and helps the children play quietly. This allows the rest of your party to relax, enjoy the meal and even have a good discussion. You all enjoy the dinner and time together, even the kids. Afterwards, *what are you likely to do*?
4. Cleanliness of Establishment	Assume that before entering the restaurant, you are impressed with the cleanliness of its surroundings. Upon entering the restaurant, you clearly view the kitchen facilities from behind a transparent glass divider. In addition to the nicely set table in a clean environment, recognition awards of the restaurant's strict sanitary guidelines hanging on the wall. Afterwards, *what are you likely to do*?
5. Neatness of Establishment	Assume that you come to a restaurant and are immediately struck by the restaurant's delightful style and bright atmosphere. The interior design and decor successfully integrate classical and modern styles. Fresh flowers are appropriately set on the tables. While inspiring your imagination, the restaurant relieves your tension at the same time. Afterwards, *what are you likely to do*?
6. Size of Portions	You are starving and go to a restaurant for a 'good' meal. This is your first time to go to this restaurant. You make a similar order to the one you usually do at other restaurants. The entrée and side dishes are heaped full compared with the standard-size portions provided by other restaurants. You are impressed and do enjoy the large portions of food this restaurant provides. Afterwards, *what are you likely to do*?
7. Employees' Appearance	The stylish and neat appearance of the servers' uniforms stand out as you enter the restaurant. The sharp uniforms give the servers an energetic and professional look. Easily identifiable name tags on their uniforms provide the servers with a personal touch. Your meal is much easier to enjoy with the server's broad smile and friendly service attitude. Afterwards, *what are you likely to do*?

8. Quantity of Services	The large parking lot available to the restaurant's patrons, even during peak time, is an attractive plus when you drive into the establishment's main entrance. The well-trained servers fully present the menu, deliver the food promptly, and ring up your bill on the cash register efficiently. Most importantly, the restaurant's comprehensive menu includes vegetarian, organic, beef-only, pork-free, and seafood-only dishes that appeal to all of your friends' diverse tastes. In addition to offering takeout food delivery from orders taken on their website, the restaurant constantly applies innovative concepts to serve its customers. Afterwards, *what are you likely to do?*
9. Price of Drinks, Meals, and Other Services	Assume that you bring your significant other to the restaurant for a special birthday celebration. While you dine on two haute cuisines, the restaurant plays music especially for the two of you, offers free champagne, and even provides a complementary birthday gift for your partner. Your 'special' friend is delighted with your sweetness and you are delighted too because the price is much lower than you expected. You think it's really a good buy for the price and service. Afterwards, *what are you likely to do?*
10. Responsiveness to Complaints	After the server has taken your order, you wait an inordinately long time for your meal to arrive. You are still waiting for your meal—even after patrons who came after you have already finished their meals. After you complain to the servers, the manager appears immediately, takes the responsibility for the errors, and makes amends by offering the meal for free as well as a free meal in the future without an expiration date. Besides a quick response to your complaints, you have ended up with a free meal. Afterwards, *what are you likely to do?*

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