A MULTI-VALENCED INVESTIGATION OF CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT WITHIN A SOCIAL SERVICE

by

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ABSTRACT

The literature on consumer engagement continues to favour its positive valence, leaving limited research on the negative valences of consumer engagement and the detrimental impact they have on service relationships. This thesis explores *positive engagement*, *disengagement* and *negative engagement* to provide a more encompassing perspective of customers' service experiences. This thesis is the first study to explore three valences of engagement concurrently within a social service relationship, and, uncover their affective cognitive and behavioural dimensions. In addition, consumer engagement, or CE, has seldom been applied in a social service context, despite the importance and centrality of social services to consumers' lives. This thesis therefore explores positive, negative and disengaged valences of CE within a social service, being Australian Local Governments. Further, the literature has rarely considered how consumers engage with other touch points, or objects, outside their direct interactions with a brand. As such, this thesis explores multiple valences of CE in relation to dual engagement objects, being a focal service organisation, and, a service community. In order to examine the degree to which CE is generalisable or contextually contingent, the thesis tests an empirical model of positive and negative CE across two contrasting service sectors: Australian Local Governments, and, Social Networking Sites.

The qualitative phase employed four focus groups and one in-depth interview to uncover the nature and characteristics of each engagement valence. Disengagement was characterised by passive, yet negatively-valenced responses of distrust, frustration, rejection and neglect. Negative engagement was more active and persistent, and involved anger, confrontive coping and collective complaining. Positive engagement was highly social, and manifested through trust, altruism and autonomous co-creation. Interestingly, consumer disengagement and negative CE were directed exclusively at the 'service

organisation' object, being respondents' local governing body, whereas positive CE manifested exclusively towards their 'community' object, being the local community.

The second, quantitative phase comprised of an empirical survey (n=625) administered to customers of Australian Local Government areas, and, users of the Social Networking Sites (Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter). Structural Equation Modelling using AMOS 24 was employed. The results revealed involvement to be a strong antecedent of positive CE, and, positive CE to be a strong driver of WOM. These relationships were consistent across the dual objects and service types, suggesting the process of positive CE is generalisable across different foci and service contexts. Conversely, involvement had a moderately negative impact on negative CE, whereas negative CE acted as a positive driver of WOM. These relationships were revealed to have context specificity, as the negative impact of involvement on negative CE was stronger within the social service compared to Social Networking Sites. Further, negative CE was a stronger driver of WOM for the 'organisation' object in the social service. This suggests that negative feelings such as hatred and contempt, and anti-brand behaviours such as boycotting and blogging may be more relevant indicators of negative CE in local governments compared to social media platforms.

The findings of this thesis provide several new insights into the nature of CE. Firstly, it clarifies how engagement can manifest through multiple valences by exploring customer disengagement and negative CE in conjunction with positive engagement. This illustrates that engagement is not exclusively positive, but, can adopt a range of valences that have both positive and negative impacts on service relationships. Secondly, this study elucidates the dynamic nature of engagement by exploring how it manifests towards two key aspects of a service relationship. Lastly, this thesis uncovers the contextual generalisability of CE by firstly, applying it within a new and unique social service setting, and secondly, testing its operation across two contrasting service types.

STATEMENT OF CANDIDATE

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled "A Multi-Valenced Investigation of Customer Engagement within a Social Service" has not previously been submitted for a degree, nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University. I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

The research presented in this thesis was approved by Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee reference number(s) 5201400639, on the 3rd of September, 2014 and 5201600333 on the 14th of May 2016.

Kay Naumann

24.07.2017

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Chapter One

Research Objectives and Contributions

1.1 Introduction

As services marketing literature continues to move away from a traditional, dyadic view of the service experience towards a more encompassing 'ecosystem' perspective, marketing practitioners and academics must consider the impact of a broader range of networks, environments and outcomes on service relationships (Vargo and Lusch, 2008; Chandler and Lusch 2015; Anderson et al., 2013). In the evolving marketing paradigm, relationships are now not simply between buyers and sellers, but "between any combination of (and among) prospects, potentials, society, buyers, and sellers" (Vivek Beatty and Morgan, 2012, p. 130). Within these networks, customers are increasingly adopting highly collaborative and interactive roles which drive a continuous process of value co-creation or, in the case of negative service relationships, value co-destruction (Vivek et al., 2014; Chandler and Lusch, 2015).

Customer engagement plays a crucial role in this expanded perspective by exploring how value is created and destroyed throughout the range of interactions within customers' whole-of-service experience (Chandler and Lusch, 2015; Brodie et al., 2011; Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014). Customer engagement enables management to create a customer base that is not only satisfied and loyal but actively and *positively engaged.* This area of research has consequently remained an important area of investigation (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015; Hollebeek, et al., 2016). The most widely-cited definition of customer engagement remains that of Brodie et al. (2011, p. 260) who define it as:

> *"A psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, co-creative customer experiences with a focal agent/object (e.g., a brand) in focal service relationships. It occurs under a specific set of context dependent conditions generating differing CE levels; and exists as a dynamic, iterative process within service relationships."*

When customer engagement is positive it benefits service organisations through outcomes such as affective commitment, brand equity, trust, self-brand connections,

customer retention, loyalty, and profitability (Sashi, 2012; van Doorn et al., 2010; Bowden, 2009a,b; Gummerus et al., 2012). Positive customer engagement is defined as:

"*A consumer's positively valenced brand-related cognitive, emotional and behavioural activity during or related to focal consumer/brand interactions*" (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014, p. 154).

The majority of literature frames customer engagement, or CE, as a multidimensional concept involving affective, cognitive and behavioural elements. This tri-dimensional framework is mirrored across other streams of engagement research, such as the literature on employee engagement, which involves emotional, cognitive and physical components, and student engagement which involves emotional, behavioural and cognitive dimensions (Khan, 1990; Sim and Plewa, 2017). The affective dimension relates to a customer's emotional reactions towards an engagement object, the cognitive aspect captures their mental states and thought processing, and the behavioural dimensions manifests through their actions towards an engagement object beyond purchase, e.g. recommendations or complaints (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2016; Sim and Plewa, 2017). Importantly, these dimensions are not inherently positive or negative, and can thus can capture a range of engagement valences (Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). Whilst the dimensionality of CE has gained some consensus, little is known of how these dimensions operate, and further research is needed to uncover the affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions of positive, disengaged and negative CE.

Whilst CE was once regarded as a subset of the relationship marketing (Brodie et al., 2011) and service-dominant logic literature (Vargo and Lusch, 2008) it has progressed to represent a body of marketing literature in its own right (Chandler and Lusch, 2015). Despite the advancements made within CE literature, many gaps remain as CE has yet to reach its conceptual and empirical clarity (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2016). The majority of research frames CE as a process leading to positive outcomes, yet, it is important to note that engagement was not introduced within the marketing literature as an exclusively positive concept (Higgins and Scholer, 2009). Existing research is

criticized for its skew towards the positive manifestations of engagement at the expense of other valences including negative customer engagement and customer disengagement (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Dolan et al., 2016a,b, 2017). Secondly, CE is often framed as being directed at one object, yet service relationships are multifaceted and customers can be simultaneously engaged with *multiple* objects within a service relationship (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015, 2016; Hollebeek et al., 2016). Lastly, research largely neglects how engagement operates within the social services and the potential that such exploration may have for advancing our knowledge of how engagement functions *across* contexts (Hollebeek and Brodie, 2011; Hollebeek et al., 2016). It is no longer sufficient to explore CE within these limitations given the literature is shifting towards a more dynamic and ecosystem perspective of the service experience.

The focus of this thesis is on the development of an expanded framework of customer engagement. This framework examines the operation of three different valences of engagement, being positive customer engagement, customer disengagement and negative customer engagement. It will explore this framework within a social services context, being local government, as well as on social networking sites. Each valence is explored in relation to two objects, being a service organisation, and a service community.

In addition, this thesis quantitatively examines how the factor of involvement drives positive and negative customer engagement, and the effect each valence has on the outcome of word-of-mouth. Lastly, this thesis explores the moderating effect of engagement objects on the operation of positive and negative customer engagement.

The present chapter introduces the research problem guiding this enquiry and outlines the contributions that this thesis makes to the literature. Research objectives are then proposed. The chapter then concludes with a summary of the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Research Justification and Contributions

The model developed in this thesis seeks to contribute to our understanding of the processes by which positive, disengaged and negative valences of CE develop within the

social services sector. It explores each valence of engagement through affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions. It also examines positive and negative CE in relation to the antecedent factor of involvement, and, how it impacts the outcome of word-of-mouth recommendation. Recognising that customer relationships develop and transpire over multiple service encounters, and, given these relationships involve a range of service foci, this thesis additionally considers how these engagement valences manifest towards dual engagement objects, being the focal service organisation, and the service community. Lastly, this thesis acknowledges that CE is a contextually contingent concept, and thus applies the empirical (structural) exploration of the positive and negative CE across two service contexts: Australian Local Governments, and social networking sites.

While the term 'engagement' as a relational concept features across various fields of study, including: organisational behaviour, political science, psychology, sociology, education and advertising, its application within services marketing literature is relatively recent (Brodie et al., 2011; Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012). Despite this, the importance of CE to the marketing literature was highlighted early through its designation as the Marketing Science Institute of America's main research priority for 2010-2012 (Brodie et al., 2011). This was mirrored in 2016 when the question '*How should engagement be conceptualised, defined and measured?'* formed part of the Marketing Science Institute's 2014–2016 Tier 1 Research Priority: 'Understanding Customers and Customer Experience' (Hollebeek et al., 2016). A number of special issues dedicated to CE also exist across leading marketing journals including: *Journal of Service Research (2010); Journal of Consumer Psychology (2009); Journal of Strategic Marketing (2011); Journal of Marketing Management (2016)* and *Journal of Services Theory and Practice (2017).*

Understanding the positive, disengaged and negative valences of CE is also important from a managerial perspective. Research by Gallup Consulting (2009) reveal positively engaged customers can boost profitability, relationship growth, share-of-wallet and revenue by 23%, whereas disengaged customers can diminish those same measures by

13% (Pansari and Kumar, 2017). As such, marketing practitioners are recognising the value of understanding the spectrum of customer experiences, including those of their brand fanatics and adversaries, but also, the 'grey-area' of customers who may remain with a provider but in a disengaged and neglectful state.

To this end, it is important to understand that CE is not intended to only capture *positive* attraction towards a relationship but can also encompass a negative *detachment* from and a *negative attraction* towards a service relationship (Higgins and Scholer, 2009; Pham and Avnet, 2009). As such, the *first research theme* is to uncover how positive CE, negative CE and customer disengagement operate. Thus far, research has focused on the positive valence of engagement at the expense of its negative expressions (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Dolan et al., 2016a,b). As such, both marketing academics and practitioners are provided with an incomplete understanding of CE and how a service relationship can sustain disengaged or negative manifestations of engagement (Brodie and Hollebeek, 2011; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Bowden et al., 2017; Dolan et al., 2016a,b).

The negative valences of engagement are proposed to manifest in two ways. The first is termed 'customer disengagement', which is defined as:

> *"The level of a customer's physical, cognitive and emotional absence in their relationship with a service organisation."* (Khuhro, Khan, Humayon and Khuhro, 2017, p.24).

Customer disengagement, or CD, provides a broader understanding of the factors guiding a customer's emotional, cognitive and behavioural withdrawal from a service relationship (Khuhro et al., 2017; Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann, 2015). Research by Chebat, Davidow and Codjovi (2005) suggests that up to two-thirds of dissatisfied customers fall into a disengaged segment, who in the face of service failures: take no action against a service provider; become apathetic from lack of success with past experiences; ignore or deny the severity of the problem; or terminate the service relationship. Subsequently, these customers often remain invisible to service managers, who only develop an awareness of this segment when the customers leave or display more active forms of

negative CE (Dolan et al., 2016a; Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016; Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann, 2015). Although largely overlooked, disengaged customers are important to understand, as research reveals that once customers become disengaged, a negative confirmation bias develops which is very difficult to reverse (Chebat, Davidow and Codjovi, 2005; Liljander and Strandvik, 1995, Dolan et al., 2016a). Developing a more in-depth picture of CD may enable service managers to devise strategies to prevent their customer base from developing this orientation, or even, restore a sense of positive engagement among this segment.

The second, and more active form of engagement proposed is termed negative engagement. *Negative customer engagement* is defined as:

> *"Consumers' unfavorable brand-related thoughts, feelings, and behaviors during focal brand interactions"* (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014, p. 63).

Whilst positive CE reflects how value is co-created during service interactions (Brodie et al., 2011; Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014) negative CE captures negative contributions and co-destruction within a service relationship (Ple´and Ca´ceres, 2009; Echeverri and Skålén, 2011, Dolan et al., 2016a). The co-destruction of value occurs when negatively engaged customers seek to exhibit their frustration towards one or multiple aspects of a service relationship (Dolan et al., 2016a). This may be done through the spread of negative WOM, co-opting others to adopt a particular attitudinal and/or behavioural position about a provider; brand switching, avoidance and rejection; and retaliation and revenge behaviours (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Dolan et al., 2016a; Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2015). Negative CE is therefore important to identify and understand, as experiencing negative emotions, thoughts and behaviours can be distressing for customers, and the strong emotional aspect carries the risk of 'spilling over' to affect other aspects of the relationship, or, other customer segments (Surachartkumtonkun, McColl-Kennedy and Patterson, 2015; Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2015; Bowden et al., 2017). Negative CE can also damage an organisation's reputation as customers invest time and effort into venting their negative thoughts and feelings about a brand (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2015). Despite the detrimental nature of

negative CE, the literature surrounding its operation and conceptualisation is sparse, and research is needed to conceptualise its nature, processes and implications for service organisations (van Doorn et al., 2010; Brodie and Hollebeek, 2011; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). In light of the above, it appears that broadening the scope of research on engagement to include the positive, disengaged and negative valences of engagement provides a more complete picture of customers' experiences within service relationships (Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014).

Few studies consider how positive, disengaged and negative valences of CE exist concurrently throughout a customer's whole-of-service experience (Bowden et al., 2017; Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014). Importantly, these different valences can manifest in encounters aside from customers' direct interactions with a service brand. To this end, the literature is starting to consider the 'non-transactional' engagement occurring beyond the customer-firm dyad, such as relationships *between* customers (Harwood et al., 2015; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015, 2016). Therefore, the *second research theme* is to explore these three valences of CE in relation to dual engagement objects of service brands, and, service communities.

Engagement can be directed at multiple objects, including: a brand/firm/organisation, other customers, virtual platforms, staff, stakeholders, brand intermediaries and brand communities (Brodie et al., 2013; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015, 2016; Schamari and Shaefers 2015; Maslowska, Malthouse and Collinger, 2016; Briedbach et al., 2014; Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014). The object/s of engagement will differ according to the context in which it is being examined. However, the majority of studies that explore dual objects have a focal brand/organisation, and a service community as two important engagement foci (Brodie et al., 2013; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015, 2016; Bowden et al., 2017). For example, Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas (2015, 2016) find the interactions customers have with a brand, and, its community members on social networks, exerted different influences on the affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions of engagement. Likewise, within the Local Government context, the dual objects of engagement have been found to include the

service organisation (local governing body) and the local community that benefits from the services provided by the host organisation (Putnam, 2001; Fennema, 2004; Naumann, Bowden and Gabbott, 2017). In light of the above, the dual engagement objects considered within this thesis will be the focal service organisation, and its service community.

Research to date has mainly applied CE within commercial service relationships as opposed to those in the social and public sectors (So, King and Sparks, 2014; Gummerus et al., 2012; Islam and Rhaman, 2016b). As such, the broad application of CE across commercial services has created an "urgent need in the service literature to account more fully for the influence of context and experience on customer engagement" (Chandler and Lusch, 2015, p.9). There are calls for research to branch away from exploring only those 'extraordinary' events had by customers in commercial (usually hedonic) services, to consider the more mundane experiences customers have within a range of service types, including those in the social and public sector (McColl-Kennedy et al., 2015). Researchers are being urged to consider CE in contexts where the option to 'buy-into' the relationship is not given, such as being a patient of healthcare services, within compulsory public services, during travel or in other forced exchanges (McColl-Kennedy et al., 2015). As such, the *third research* theme addresses the contextual application of customer engagement. CE is contextually contingent, highly interactive and experiential and thus its operation is best understood in light of the environment in which it is being applied (Brodie et al., 2011; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015, 2016; Dolan et al., 2016a).

This thesis addresses this gap by exploring CE within a social service. Social services include non-profit, charitable and government agencies concerned with enhancing the well-being of their users (Anderson et al., 2013, 2015; Gainer and Padanyi, 2005). Despite customer engagement being a concept that is critical to the success of many public sector enterprises, few studies have examined CE within these types of services (Sashi, 2012). This thesis focuses specifically on the Australian Local Government sector. According to Freund, Spohrer and Messinger (2013, p. 38) local governments

“have not received research attention in the service literature in proportion to their importance in people's lives”, and further research is needed on how customers experience service relationships within this setting. The application of customer engagement within a new and novel social service context such as local governments aligns with research exploring CE across more diverse contexts, such as nursing homes, public transportation, tourism and higher education (Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014; Verleye, Gemmel and Rangarajan, 2014; Jarvis et al., 2014; Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012). Furthermore, applying CE within a multifaceted context such as local governments contributes to emerging literature on dual engagement objects (Hollebeek, 2016), as it illuminates how different CE valences manifest towards multiple objects (Naumann, Bowden and Gabbott, 2017; Putnam, 2004; Roskruge et al., 2013). Lastly, this thesis tests the operational generalisability of CE by applying it across contrasting service types. To date, research has applied engagement at a context-specific level, and little is known of whether the process of different CE valences are generalisable, or contextually contingent in nature (Islam and Rahman, 2016b; Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012). According to Hollebeek et al. (2016, p. 590) “the undertaking of academic engagement-based research across a broad range of online and offline environments is imperative”. As such, this thesis will introduce a second research context of social networking sites (SNS) in order to test the generalisability of CE across a range of offline (social service) and online (SNS) service relationships.

1.3 Research Objectives

The research model guiding this study is underpinned by three research themes. The first of these themes focuses on exploring how positive, disengaged and negative valences of CE operate through cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions within a social service context, being Australian local government services. The second theme examines how these three valences of CE manifest towards dual engagement objects. The third theme explores the extent to which different service context influence these interrelationships. As an overview, there are a number of broad research themes guiding this study:

Research Theme One: Operation of positive, disengaged and negative valences of customer engagement

- Uncover the nature and sub-dimensionality of the cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions involved in the process of positive customer engagement within a local government service context
- Identify the nature and sub-dimensionality of the cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions involved in the process of customer disengagement within a local government service context
- Identify the nature and sub-dimensionality of the cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions involved in the process of negative customer engagement within a local government service context
- Examine the role of involvement as a driver of positive, disengaged and negative valences of CE across local government services, and social networking sites.
- Examine the effect of positive, disengaged and negative valences of CE on the outcome of word-of-mouth across local government services, and social networking sites.

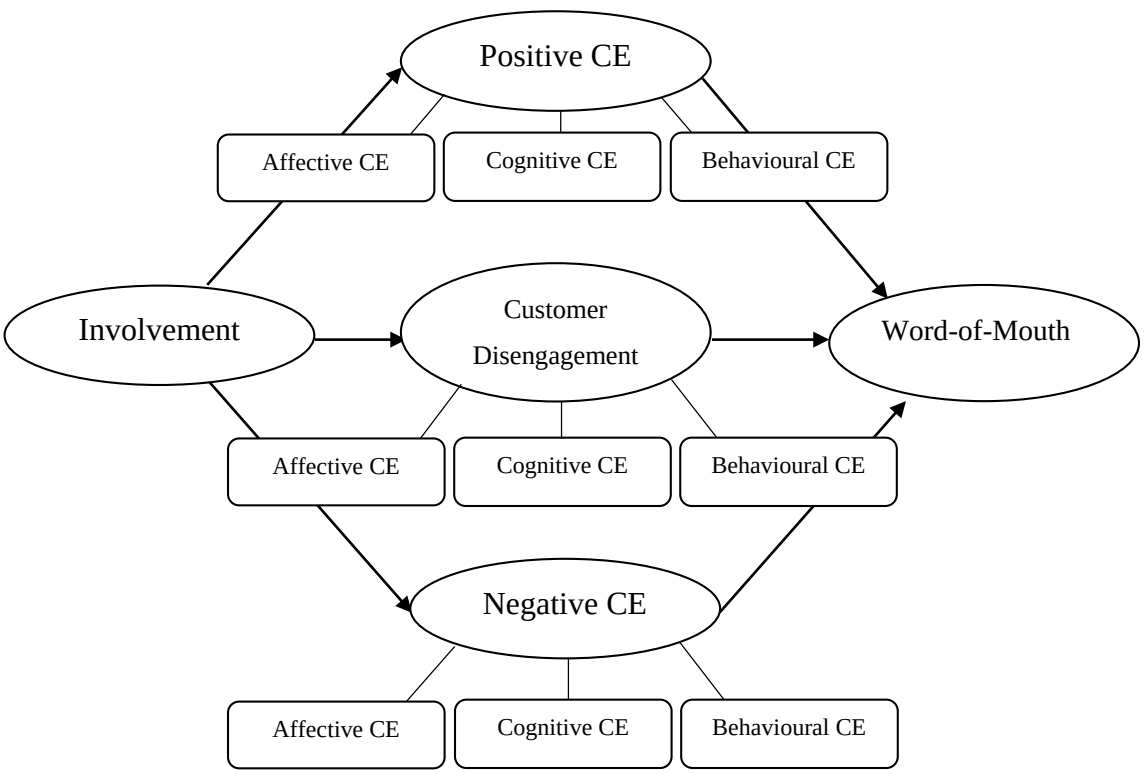
Research Theme Two: Dual engagement objects

- Explore the salience of affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions of positive CE in relation to a focal service organisation, and, a service community.
- Explore the salience of affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions of customer disengagement in relation to a focal service organisation, and, a service community.
- Explore the salience of affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions of negative CE in relation to a focal service organisation, and, a service community.
- Determine the extent to which engagement object moderates the relationship between involvement, positive customer engagement, customer disengagement, negative customer engagement and word-of-mouth.

Research Theme Three: Cross-context application of customer engagement

- Determine if the operation of positive customer engagement, customer disengagement and negative customer engagement is generalisable across social services, and, social networking sites.
- Determine if the relationship between involvement, positive customer engagement, customer disengagement and negative customer engagement and word-of-mouth is generalisable across social services, and, social networking sites.

Figure 1.3.1 Proposed Model of the Process of Positive, Disengaged and Negative Customer Engagement



1.4 Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions Underlying the Thesis

This thesis employs both qualitative and quantitative research techniques to explore the research objectives presented in section 1.3. Qualitative techniques in the form of a literature review, focus groups and in-depth interviewing will be used first, followed by a quantitative phase involving a large-scale survey (Morse, 1991). A triangulation approach is often adopted in doctoral theses to enhance the understanding of the phenomena being explored, and, increase the accuracy and credibility of the findings (Hussein, 2015; Golafshani, 2003). However, triangulation can attract criticism given the ontological and epistemological assumptions of qualitative and quantitative techniques differ. Namely, debate exists as to whether the assumptions underlying each can be mutually exclusive for the purpose of researching the same phenomenon, such as in a doctoral thesis (Hussein, 2015; Hunt, 1991; Healy and Perry, 2000). This section will justify a triangulation approach by clarifying how the combined ontological and epistemological assumptions of qualitative and quantitative techniques can enhance the understanding of the central phenomena being explored, being customer engagement.

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), three components must be addressed in order to conduct a comprehensive research project: the ontology; epistemology; and methodology. Ontology addresses the known reality and factual claims of the phenomenon being examined (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Sutrisna, 2009). Ontological questions address the real facts, evidence and reality about the central phenomenon, and are largely considered to precede the epistemological components of research (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Healy and Perry, 2000). Epistemology considers the methods by which the researcher can gain knowledge and validate the factual reality of the phenomena (Hussein, 2015; Golafshani, 2003; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The epistemological component naturally precedes the methodological component, which addresses the techniques and methods by which the research can be conducted (Sutrisna, 2009; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Naturally, these three components have a symbiotic when designing, conducting and analysing a research project, as summarised by Healy and Perry (2000, p. 120)

"Briefly, ontology is the "reality" that researchers investigate, epistemology is the relationship between that reality and the researcher, and methodology is the technique used by the researcher to investigate that reality."

A research paradigm has been defined as "a set of linked assumptions about the world which is shared by a community of scientists investigating that world" (Deshpande 1983, p. 101). According to Filstead (1979), paradigms play a fundamental role in research, as they: indicate the important problems and issues revolving a research topic; develop explanatory models and theories that can be transformed into practical frameworks; and guide how data on specific research topics should be collected.

As stated above, this thesis uses a triangulation approach to explore positive, disengaged and negative valences of CE. Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques can result in a more precise and insightful research project, as triangulation allows researchers to combine information from a variety of sources when developing themes and findings for the central phenomena (Hussein, 2015). Qualitative research focuses on uncovering the *qualities* of the research issue rather than its numeric measurement (Sutrisna, 2009). Qualitative techniques, such as focus groups and in-depth interviews, are particularly useful for the social sciences given they provide rich, nuanced and contextualised insight into human behaviour (Sutrisna, 2009; Hussein, 2015). This is of paramount importance, as a multi-valenced exploration of CE has yet to be applied to the local government sector. As such, qualitative techniques will allow the researcher to assess the customers' experience of positive, negative and disengaged valences of CE within the grounded context of their local government service relationships (Sutrisna, 2009; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Qualitative techniques are considered to be more inductive than deductive, and relate to the 'Constructivism' and 'Idealist' aspects of research methodology (Sutrisna, 2009; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Healy and Perry, 2000; Hussein, 2015; Deshpande, 1983). This is because qualitative methods are based on the assumption that there is no objective reality, rather, the observed reality of the phenomena is based on the researcher's interaction with the data, which may result in unexpected

findings that add new dimension and direction to the research issue (Sutrisna, 2009). Qualitative techniques are often employed when research seeks to generate new theories by gaining an understanding of human behaviour from the actor's frame of reference (Deshpande, 1983). Idealist research places emphasis on the meaning of observed data, more so than the measurement (Perry 1989). Therefore, unlike a positivist paradigm, idealism considers subjective factors as influential for research outcomes (Healy & Perry 2000). However, idealist paradigms have been criticized for their lack of theoretical sensitivity; inability to gain valid insights; and lack of contribution to effective decision-making and theory development (Goulding 2005).

On the other hand, quantitative techniques, such as surveys and experimentation, yield quantifiable results that are presented as objective, reliable and valid findings (Sutrisna, 2009; Healy and Perry, 2000). Unlike qualitative techniques, quantitative methods render researchers as impartial observers of the research phenomena (Sutrisna, 2009). Quantitative techniques are more aligned with a positivist ideal, as they are concerned with discovering facts and causes of phenomena through empirical knowledge, reason and quantitative data (Deshpande, 1983). Positivist methods are outcome-orientated, and obtain quantitative data through controlled-measurement that has little regard for subjective factors (Healy & Perry, 2000). Within this paradigm, surveys and experiments are common methodologies used to test hypotheses and further verify relationships between variables. Positivist researchers view the world from a non-biased perspective and use deductive approaches to obtain objective data (Perry, 1989). Critics of these techniques argue that viewing respondents as independent, non-reactive entities may render researchers unable to capture the subjective influences of human nature and its potential implication for understanding consumer behaviour (Healy & Perry, 2000).

The different ontological and epistemological assumptions underlying qualitative and quantitative methods can draw criticism to triangulation. However, triangulation is now commonplace within social science research for confirmatory and completeness purposes (Hussein, 2015). Firstly, triangulation can be used for confirmation purposes as it can "overcome challenges related to a single-method, single-observer and single-theory

biasness and thus can be applied to confirm the research results and conclusions the findings between both stages" (Hussein, 2015, p. 6). The most common way, and the one adopted in this thesis, is to conduct the qualitative stage first in order to develop a familiarity with the phenomenon and gain contextualised findings into its operation (Deshpande, 1983; Hussein, 2015). Following this, the second stage conducts a quantitative inquiry into the operation of the phenomenon using the insights gained from the preceding qualitative methods (Desphande, 1983). As such, triangulation can also provide a more *complete* picture of the phenomenon being examined. This is because it allows the research insight into the 'multiple realities' of the phenomena, which is important for ill-defined, or new research ideas. Qualitative research can firstly provide the rich, contextualised and grounded background into CE, the findings of which can be further developed into hypotheses to be tested quantitatively, therefore ensuring a more complete picture into CE in a social service (Hussein, 2015; Deshpande, 1983). Ultimately, whether used for confirmation, completeness or other purposes, the benefit of triangulation is such that weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative methods are often compensated when combined to explore a central research issue (Deshpande, 1983; Hussein, 2015).

1.5 Structure of Thesis

This thesis is structured in six chapters. It is presented in the format of a thesis by publication. Chapters Three, Four and Five are therefore presented in their original journal article and conference article formats. Beyond the first chapter these chapters include: theoretical foundations for the study; the contextual background; development of the conceptual model and research propositions; qualitative research analysis and findings; analysis of the structural model and testing of the research hypotheses; and conclusions, contributions and implications. A review of the contents from Chapter Two onwards is now provided.

Chapter Two provides a theoretical foundation for this thesis. It commences by discussing the importance of CE, including the major theoretical frameworks that guided its development. Engagement is then defined in its neutral valence, and the ways in which

it has been conceptualised and measured is discussed. Consideration is given to the moderating effect of object type on the process of engagement. A discussion of CE application within the chosen context of Local Governments is provided, and the contributions to be made by incorporating marketing-based theories of engagement within this sector are discussed. This is followed by a detailed discussion of positive, disengaged and negative valences of CE. The antecedent factor of involvement is discussed in relation to its effect on each valence, followed by an exploration of word-of-mouth as an outcome of each valence of CE.

The methodological approach used in this study is underpinned by the phenomenological research paradigm (Creswell, 2012). The research methodology presented combines an exploratory and an explanatory phase. The exploratory research phase is presented in both Chapters Three and Four, as the first two manuscripts draw on data from the focus groups to build the conceptual models. Chapter Three draws heavily on the literature to guide the development of the conceptual model presented, whereas Chapter Four is guided by the qualitative investigation. Therefore, whilst both papers use qualitative data, Chapter Three is considered more conceptually based and Chapter Four is underpinned by qualitative inquiry. The exploratory phase consisted of four focus groups and one in-depth interview with respondents recruited from local government areas within a large metropolitan city in Australia. The qualitative data from these sessions was integrated with the theoretical concepts from Chapters Two and Three. This data was also used to inform development of the survey methodology used in the explanatory phase of the research. The qualitative findings provided rich insights into the different valences of CE and how they manifest towards dual objects within the social service sector.

Building on the critical review of the literature presented in Chapter Two, Chapter Three develops a conceptual framework which outlines the process by which positive, disengaged and negative valences of CE manifest towards dual objects. This Chapter is presented in manuscript format. Two manuscripts are presented. The first consists of a manuscript which is accepted for publication in the *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*. This manuscript identifies four research propositions that underpin the

qualitative investigation of the model, which is presented in Chapter Four and from which the research hypotheses are presented and empirically tested in Chapter Five. A second peer reviewed manuscript is presented to support the conceptual model, which was accepted for publication in the proceedings the Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy Annual Conference hosted in December 2014 at Griffith University, Brisbane, QLD, Australia.

Chapter Four is also presented in manuscript format and consists of two separate manuscripts. Both manuscripts focus on uncovering the affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions of positive, disengaged and negative valences of CE. The first manuscript was accepted for publication in the *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*. An additional manuscript is presented to support the findings of the exploratory research phase. This manuscript was peer reviewed and accepted for publication in the proceedings of Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy Annual Conference hosted in December 2015 at University of New South Wales, NSW, Australia.

Chapter Five presents the explanatory phase of the research. This Chapter is presented in manuscript format. The manuscript has been submitted to the *European Journal of Marketing*. The explanatory stage adopted a survey research methodology. The development of this instrument was informed by the findings of the exploratory phase and was based on pre-existing scales which were adapted from the literature. Residents of Australian Local Governments, and, users of social networking sites (Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter) formed the basis of the research sample collected for this study. The data analysis followed a two-step structural equation modelling procedure. This involved estimation of the measurement model followed by estimation of the structural model and rival model in order to analyse its path coefficients. Four research hypotheses were developed. Chapter Five reports the testing of these hypotheses and the analysis of the theoretical model guiding this enquiry. Results of a detailed preliminary data analysis concerning the purification, confirmation and validation of latent constructs and measurement items used in the study are presented in Appendix A.

Conclusions from the study, implications and research limitations are presented in Chapter Six. The chapter commences with a reintroduction of the research themes guiding this study and summarises the research findings for each of these themes based on the theoretical, qualitative and empirical stages of the research. The contributions of this inquiry are then discussed at the theoretical level. Specifically, the dimensionality of positive, disengaged and negative valences of CE are discussed, and the moderating effect of object type on their operation is presented. The interrelationships between involvement and positive/negative CE is explored, as well as the impact each valence has on word-of-mouth. The implications of this study for social services as well as social media brand managers are then discussed. The chapter concludes with an acknowledgement of the limitations of the inquiry and proposes directions for future research.

1.6 Conclusion

This thesis makes a significant contribution to our understanding of customer engagement by firstly, examining its multiple valences, and secondly, examining how these valences manifest in relationship to dual objects across a range of service types. This chapter has established the foundations for the study by introducing the research problem, outlining the research objectives, presenting the contributions of this research and by orienting the reader to the context of this study. Chapter Two, which provides a review of the relevant literature surrounding the research problem, follows.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Foundations for the Study of Customer Engagement

Theoretical Foundations for the Study of Customer Engagement

2.1 Introduction

Chapter One introduced the research problem and the research objectives of this study. This chapter aims to provide a theoretical foundation for the conceptual model that is developed in Chapter Three. To begin, the concept of customer engagement is discussed, and a critical review of its development within the literature, including its place within relationship marketing and service-dominant logic, is presented. A discussion on the conceptualisation and measurement of customer engagement will follow. Research concerning the differences between engagement with two types of objects (the focal organisation and the service community) is then presented, and the moderating effect of these engagement objects on the process of customer engagement is discussed in Chapter Five. The application of customer engagement within a social service is then discussed. Customer engagement in three valences (positive, disengaged and negative) will then be conceptualised through affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions. A detailed discussion of each of these valences and their relationship to the antecedent factor of involvement, and outcome of positive word-of-mouth, is considered. Throughout this chapter, the knowledge gaps identified in the literature are synthesised. These gaps form the foundation of the conceptual model and research propositions developed in Chapter Four, and the research hypotheses presented and empirically tested in Chapter Five.

2.2 The Importance of Customer Engagement

Customer engagement has established itself as an important concept within services marketing literature due to the increasingly interactive nature of the customer-provider relationship (Hollebeek et al., 2016; Brodie et al. 2011; van Doorn et al. 2010). Customer engagement, or CE, continues to receive attention within academia as it is suggested to provide marketers with a more in-depth exploration of the nature of customer relationships (Brodie et al., 2011). When CE is positive it can benefit organisations through increased sales, profitability; and provide a competitive advantage through customers' positive word-of-mouth and contributions to product and service development (Brodie et al. 2011; Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014; van Doorn et al.,

2010; Chandler and Lusch, 2015). Positively engaged customers often adopt co-creative roles in service interactions, are usually more loyal to a brand and have higher levels of satisfaction with its offerings (Hollebeek et al., 2016).

However, CE also provides insight into the *negative* ways customers engage with a service relationship (Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2016). When CE is negative it can damage a business through negative WOM, dissatisfaction, value co-destruction, complaint and revenge behaviours, and brand sabotage (Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2016; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). Customers who are negatively engaged can exhibit a range of behaviours, such as posting negative reviews online and protesting an organisation, that can subsequently diminish brand value as well as social capital among a service community (Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016). Furthermore, customers may be in a state of disengagement, whereby they remain in a relationship whilst avoiding and/or ignoring a brand and its service community (Dutot and Mosconi, 2016; Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016). Therefore, the CE framework involves multiple valences and intensities that capture how different customers interact with a service brand and service community (Dwivedi et al., 2016; Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Hollebeek et al., 2016).

While the term ‘engagement’ as a relational concept features across various fields of study, including: organisational behaviour, political science, psychology, sociology, education and advertising, its application within services marketing literature is relatively recent (Brodie et al., 2011; Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012). The importance of CE to the marketing literature is highlighted through its designation as the Marketing Science Institute of America’s main research priority for 2010-2012 (Brodie et al. 2011). This was mirrored in 2016 when the question *‘How should engagement be conceptualised, defined and measured?’* formed part of the Marketing Science Institute’s 2014–2016 Tier 1 Research Priority: ‘Understanding Customers and Customer Experience’ (Hollebeek et al., 2016). Customer engagement's designation as an MSI research priority twice within

a six year period highlights the relevance and importance that academic research on engagement has to service industry.

To this end, CE has also attracted considerable attention within the practitioner literature. Direct Marketing News dubbed engagement the 'True Currency' of successful brands, taking over traditional measures like profit and acquisition (Maslowska, Malthouse & Collinger, 2016). In order to succeed companies must now engage their customers at multiple touch points to create and sustain long term and mutually beneficial relationships. The importance of having meaningful engagement occur on a multi-platform level is highlighted in today's marketplace where customers' attention is being attuned to both brand sponsored and customer-driven messages.

2.2.1 Theoretical Roots of Customer engagement: Relationship Marketing and Service-dominant Logic

Although CE has developed to represent a framework in its own right, it is widely thought to have been conceived and developed from two frameworks: Relationship marketing and Service-dominant (S-D) Logic (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, Srivastava and Chen, 2016; Sashi, 2012). The evolution of these frameworks and their relation to customer engagement is discussed next.

Developing and maintaining successful exchange relationships forms the crux of the marketing discipline (Hunt, 1983; Fournier, 1998; Czepiel, 1990). Relationship marketing is defined as: "all marketing activities directed toward establishing, developing, and maintaining successful relational exchanges" (Morgan and Hunt, 1994, p. 22). Relationship marketing emerged in the late 1990s as a new wave of 'relational' thinking to replace the transactional-based perspectives that previously dominated (Pansari and Kumar, 2017; Berry, 1995; Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Within relationship marketing, the customer experience is no longer measured as a collection of individual transactions but as a series of continuous interactions that strengthen, and sometimes, erode and weaken the connection between a service provider and its customers (Dwyer,

Schurr and Oh, 1987). As such, relationship marketing is a more holistic framework that extends the transactional nature of the exchange to encompass the motivations and outcomes of the various relationships involved within the exchange (Gronroos, 1996).

Relationship marketing focuses on the constructs required to form close, attached and reciprocal relationships between a customer and provider (Sashi, 2012). Importantly, 8 and commitment are considered key factors in determining whether an exchange is calculative and transactional, or, relational and enduring (Sashi, 2012; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Bowden, 2009a). Brands that implement relationship marketing approaches are therefore more likely to experience long-term business success, as they highlight the importance of fostering trust and commitment in order to ensure a satisfied and loyal customer base (Barnes, 2003; Liljander and Roos, 2002; Gummesson, 2002). Relationship marketing places a strong focus on loyalty as an indicator of a successful relationship (Berry, 1995). Loyalty is defined as "a deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, *despite* situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior" (Oliver, 1996, p. 349). Customers who demonstrate an ongoing commitment to re-purchase a brand undoubtedly play a crucial role in the success of that brand (Fournier and Yao, 1997).

However, maintaining a loyal customer base is no longer sufficient for a brand to create a strong point of differentiation or ensure long term success (Pansari and Kumar, 2017). This is because the traditional constructs such as satisfaction, commitment, trust and frameworks such as SERVQUAL are no long sufficient to predict loyalty alone. Furthermore, loyalty can no longer function as the ultimate outcome of successful service relationships (Bowden, 2009a). Engagement therefore serves as both a new measure of service success as well as a superior predictor of outcomes such as loyalty (Patterson, Yu and De Ruyter, 2006; Bowden, 2009a).

The increasingly interactive and dynamic nature of service relationships highlights the need for relationship marketing to evolve past the interactions occurring between a customer and provider and towards a more overarching perspective that explores how existing (and prospective) customers engage within a number of service actors (Brodie et al., 2013; Pansari and Kumar, 2017). In light of this, the service literature has started to address the more interactive and experiential nature of service relationships and the active roles customers take in creating value within the exchange (Vargo and Lusch, 2004, 2008; Brodie et al., 2011; Karpen, Bove and Lukas, 2012). A new framework, coined Service-Dominant logic (S-D) is introduced as a progression from the traditional Goods-Dominant approach to focus on the interactions involving existing and prospective customers, customer communities and stakeholders' interactive experiences that take place in a co-creative environment (Vargo and Lusch, 2004, 2008; Brodie et al., 2011; Karpen, Bove and Lukas, 2012; Hollebeek, Srivastava and Chen, 2016).

Vargo and Lusch (2004) develop eight propositions of S-D logic that identify and describe how the perspective of marketing sees customers turn from operand resources (something to market *to*) to operant resources (something to market *with*). These eight propositions are later refined and extended to 10 propositions (Vargo and Lusch, 2008; Karpen, Bove and Lukas, 2012). In their seminal paper, Brodie et al. (2011) use four of the 10 propositions in Vargo and Lusch's (2008) updated framework as the basis of the customer engagement concept. These include: the role of customer co-creation in the exchange; the ability for all social and economic actors in a service ecosystem to be resource integrators; that value is defined by the beneficiary; and, a service approach is always inherently customer-orientated (Brodie et al, 2011; Vargo and Lusch, 2004). In 2016, the Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science (JAMS) featured an update and extension of the original framework of both S-D logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2016) and CE (Hollebeek, Srivastava and Chen, 2016). A summary of the original and updated propositions of CE, and the S-D logic propositions guiding both original and updated proposition is presented in Table 2.2.1.

Table 2.2.1 Original and Updated S-D Logic and CE propositions

(Adapted from Hollebeek, Srivastava and Chen, 2016 and Vargo and Lusch, 2016).

Original/Updated S-D Proposition Vargo and Lusch (2004, 2008, 2016)	**Original CE Fundamental Propositions** Brodie et al. (2011)	**Updated CE Fundamental Propositions** Hollebeek, Srivastava & Chen (2016)
S-D P1: Service is the fundamental basis of Exchange (2008).	**OFP1:** CE reflects a psychological state, which occurs by virtue of interactive customer experiences with a focal agent/object within specific service relationships.	**FP1:** CE reflects a customer's motivationally driven, volitional investment of specific operant and operand resources into brand interactions in service systems.
S-D P6: Value is cocreated by multiple actors, always including the beneficiary (2016). **S-D P10**: Value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary (2008).	**OFP2:** CE states occur within a dynamic, iterative process of service relationships that cocreates value.	**FP2:** The CE benefits of customer individual and interpersonal operant resource development and cocreation result from CE within service systems.
S-D P9: All social and economic actors are resource integrators (2008).	**OFP3:** CE plays a central role within a nomological network of service relationships.	**FP3:** The CE foundational processes of customer resource integration, knowledge sharing and learning represent either necessary (i.e., for customer resource integration), or conducive (i.e., for customer knowledge sharing/learning) factors for the development of CE in service systems.
S-D P11: Value cocreation is coordinated through actor-generated institutions and institutional arrangements (new 2016).	**OFP4:** CE is a multidimensional concept subject to a context- and/or stakeholder-specific expression of relevant cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions.	**FP4:** CE reflects a customer's investment of focal cognitive, emotional, behavioral and social resources during, or related to, specific brand interactions in service systems.
S-D P11: Value cocreation is coordinated through actor-generated institutions and institutional arrangements (new 2016).	**OFP5:** CE occurs within a specific set of situational conditions generating differing CE levels.	**FP5:** CE is contingent on focal context-specific characteristics in service systems. Customer manifestations (including intensity, valence) of CE, the CE foundational processes and CE benefits may thus vary across contextual contingencies.

As seen in Table 2.2.1, a number of adaptations reflecting the changing nature of CE research have been made to Brodie et al.'s (2011) original propositions. All propositions have been updated to include the notion of 'service systems', which are defined as "a

value creation configuration comprising the exchange parties (providers and customers) and their networks that indirectly influence value co-creation" Jaakkola and Alexander (2014, p.274). Recent studies embed CE within this broader ecosystem perspective by observing how value co-creation and co-destruction occur between customers and a brand vis-a-vis the larger network of stakeholders in which the service relationship is situation in (e.g. Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014; Maslowska, Malthouse and Collinger, 2016; Karpen, Bove and Lukas, 2012).

The adaptation of FP2 acknowledges the potential for positive CE benefits, or negative CE 'detriments', to arise from individual, brand and external factors in the service system. This is evidenced in recent research on personality traits as predictors of CE. For example, Juric, Smith and Wilks (2015) find a customer's level of assertiveness and inclination to attribute blame act as strong motivators of negative CE behaviours. Research on positive CE by Islam, Rahman and Hollebeek (2017) find the traits of 'extraversion' and 'openness to experience' as the strongest predictors of engagement in online brand communities.

The adaptation to FP3 addresses the role of knowledge sharing and customer learning as determinants of CE. The ability of customers to share their brand experiences and learn from others is especially pertinent in the context of online platforms. For example, Baldus, Voorhees and Calanton (2015) explore 'like-minded discussion' and 'up to date information' as drivers of CE in online communities. Similarly, Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas (2016) incorporate 'learning' and 'sharing' as sub dimensions of behavioural CE in their research on the duality of CE towards brands and brand communities. This conflicts with research by Verhagen et al. (2015), who explore 'access to knowledge' as a *cognitive* benefit motivating CE in virtual environments.

The adaptation of FP4 and FP5 both stem from the new S-D logic proportion (SD-P11): "Value co-creation is coordinated through actor-generated institutions and institutional arrangements" (Vargo and Lusch, 2016, p. 8). The general angle of CE's

multidimensionality from OFP4 is refined in FP4 to include its cognitive, behavioural, emotional, and the newly added 'social' dimensions. This is coupled with a broadening of the customer-provider dyad to include the resources customers exert during *or* related to brand interactions in service systems. Service relationships are not confined to the interactions between a customer and a brand, but are becoming increasingly public as customers use their brands as a means of social status enhancement and connection (Baldus, Voorhees and Calanton, 2015; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2016; Gummerus et al., 2012). Marketers must consider how the interactions customers have with others in their service networks impact on the overall relationship. This is evidenced by Vivek et al.'s (2014, p. 408) inclusion of a 'social connection' dimension of CE, which explores the "enhancement of the interaction based on the inclusion of others with the focus of engagement, indicating mutual or reciprocal action in the presence of others." Likewise, Baldus, Voorhees and Calantone (2014) incorporate several social dimensions such as 'connecting', 'like-minded discussion' and 'validation' in their scale of CE within social media communities.

Lastly, OFP5 is adapted to reflect the contextually contingent nature of CE and highlight the context-specific factors that may influence its intensity and valences. There has been a shift from general applications of CE to more context specific studies that seek to validate and refine the theoretical frameworks (Islam and Rahman, 2016b; Hollebeek et al., 2016). Recent empirical research has applied CE at a brand/firm level (e.g. Dwivedi et al., 2016), service industry level (e.g. So, King and Sparks, 2014) and within specific online platforms (e.g. Baldus, Voorhees and Calanton, 2015).

The research objectives of this thesis align with a number of adaptations made by Hollebeek et al. (2016) to the fundamental propositions of CE. Firstly, this thesis extends the application of CE beyond the customer-provider dyad to include multiple engagement objects within a customer's service ecosystem (service brand and community) (Hollebeek et al., 2016). It also broadens the valences of CE through the inclusion of positive, disengaged and negative valences. By applying CE at a context-specific level

across contrasting service contexts (local government and social media), this thesis also explores whether context-specific factors may influence the operation of CE, or whether the process of CE can be generalisable across different service environments (Hollebeek et al., 2016).

2.3 Conceptualising Customer Engagement

The literature has been criticised for offering vague and incoherent definitions of CE (Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016). This disparity is confounded by CE's relatively recent introduction to the services marketing literature and further research is needed to clarify how CE is best conceptualised and measured (Hollebeek et al., 2016). The majority of studies adhere to the process-based perspective highlighted in Brodie et al.'s (2011, p. 260) definition: *"it exists as a dynamic, iterative process within service relationships"* (e.g. Verhoef et al., 2010, Bowden, 2009b; Hollebeek 2011a, 2011b, 2012; Sashi, 2012, So, King and Sparks, 2014; Gambetti and Graffigna, 2010; Gummerus et al. 2012). Some conceptualise CE as a psychological state involving specific relational drivers (e.g. Patterson, Yu, and De Ruyter 2006; Mollen and Wilson, 2010; Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012; Gambetti, Graffigna, & Biraghi, 2012) while others explore engagement in terms of its behavioural manifestations (van Doorn et al., 2010; Kumar et al., 2010; Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014; Verleye, Gemmel and Rangarajan, 2014). Whilst the majority of research frames CE as a process leading to positive outcomes, it is important to note that engagement was not introduced within the marketing literature as an exclusively positive concept. A brief overview of engagement definitions that are neutral (no specified valence) is provided in Table 2.3.1.

Table 2.3.1 Definitions of Customer Engagement with no specified valence (adapted from Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014)

Source	**Term**	**Definition**
Higgins & Scholer (2009)	Engagement	A state of being involved, occupied, fully absorbed, or engrossed in something.
Patterson, Yu and de Ruyter (2006)	Engagement	The level of a customer's various "presence" in their relationship with the organisation. The presences include physical presence, emotional presence and cognitive presence.
Gummerus et al. (2012)	Customer Engagement	Customer engagement behaviours go beyond transactions, and may be specifically defined as a customer's behavioural manifestations that have a brand or firm focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers.
Hollebeek (2011a)	Customer Brand Engagement	The level of an individual customer's motivational, brand-related and context-dependent state of mind characterized by specific levels of cognitive, emotional and behavioural activity in brand interactions.
Brodie et al. (2013)	Consumer Engagement	A multidimensional concept comprising cognitive, emotional, and/or behavioural dimensions, [which] plays a central role in the process of relational exchange where other relational concepts are engagement antecedents and/or consequences in iterative engagement processes within the brand community.
Vivek et al. (2014)	Customer Engagement	CE goes beyond purchase and is the level of the customer's (or potential customer's) interactions and connections with the brand or firm's offerings or activities, often involving others in the social network created around the brand/offering/activity.
Schamari and Schaefers (2015)	Online Customer Engagement	Consumers' non-transactional interactions with a brand or with other consumers in brand context.
Bowden et al. (2017)	Engagement	A consumer's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral investments in interacting with focal objects or agents.

Early research on regulatory engagement theory by Pham and Avnet (2009, p. 6) conceptualise engagement as a pattern of "action or withdrawal with respect to the target object". Their research highlights the idea of engagement being the strength of attraction or repulsion towards different goal pursuits. This supports research by Higgins and Scholar (2009) on engagement strength as a dictator of value reactions. Higgins and

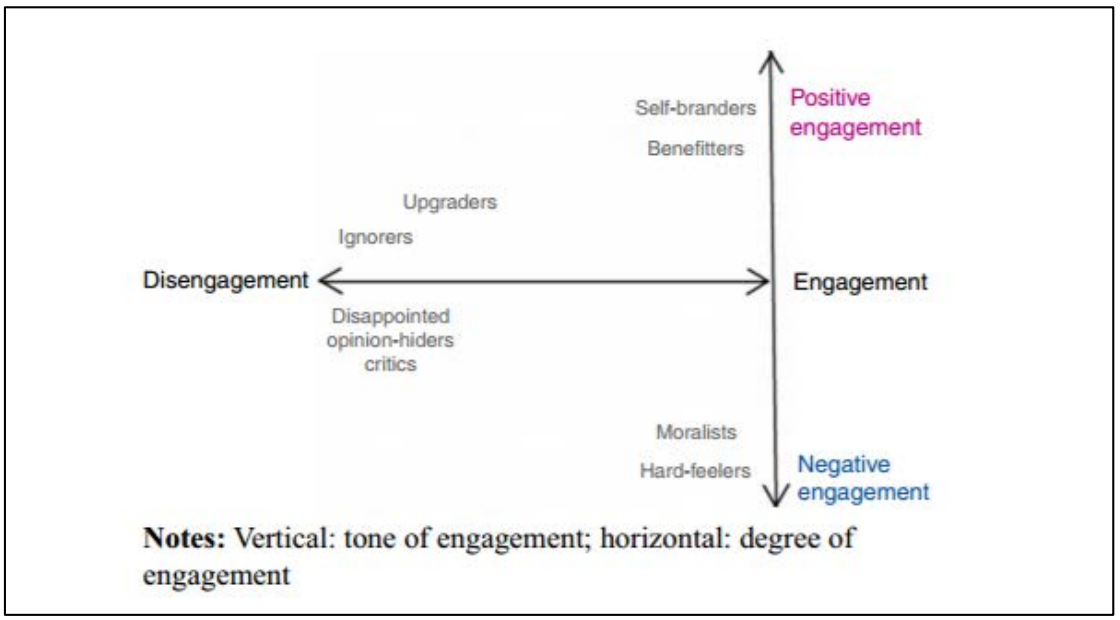
Scholar (2009) use regulatory engagement theory to explore how customers pursue and avoid positive and negative goals respectively, finding engagement strength to dictate customers' reactions to different outcomes. That is, the more a customer is engaged in achieving a positive goal, the more positive value they gain in obtaining that goal, and the stronger their engagement in avoiding a negative goal, the more negative their experience will be when that outcome (of a negative goal) is unintentionally met (Higgins and Scholar, 2009).

A seminal paper by Patterson, Yu and de Ruyter (2006, p. 1) also conceptualises CE without any pre-determined valence, defining it as "a customer's various 'presence' in their relationship with the organisation" which includes physical, emotional and cognitive aspects. However, they then discuss this presence through four inherently positive dimensions of: vigour, absorption, interaction and dedication (Patterson, Yu and de Ruyter, 2006). More recent definitions focus on CE as a brand-focused activity occurring in response to motivational drivers. Gummerus et al., (2012) consider CE to include a customer's total-set of behavioural activities towards a firm, whereas definitions by Hollebeek (2011a) and Brodie et al. (2013) centre on CE's tri-dimensionality of affect, cognition and behaviour. Vivek et al. (2014) and Schamari and Schaefers (2015) both offer a more transcending view of CE, which they define as the non-transactional interactions that customers have that are embedded in a wider network of service activities, offerings and actors.

More recent conceptualisations recognise the potential for CE to have varying degrees and valences by framing it as a continuum upon which customers sit based on their motivation. For example, research on CE in social media by Malthouse et al. (2013) explores 'low' and 'high' engagement, with the former being expressed through passive consumption of content (i.e. liking a post) and the latter describing more active forms of co-creation like posting Vlogs and reviews on a brand's page. Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs (2016) provide a more complex continuum of CE that features degree of tone (disengaged or engaged) and valence (positive-negative engagement). Their qualitative

research into the engagement types of Finnish millennials on social media highlights the importance of capturing disengagement in the engagement framework. Their continuum is displayed in Figure 2.3.1.

Figure 2.3.1. Continuum of Engagement (Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016)

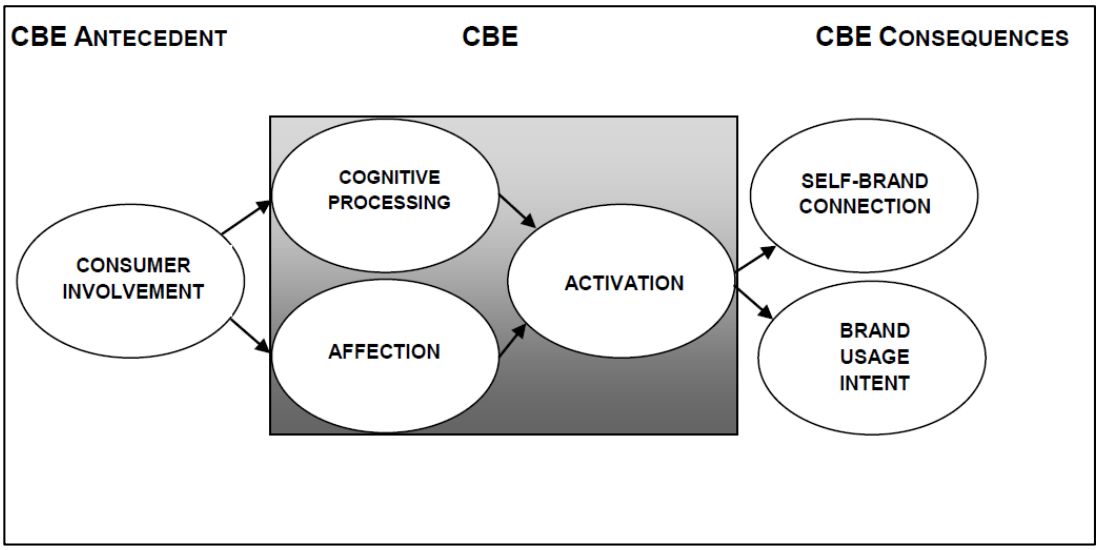


Based on the above, it is evident that the definitions of CE continue to evolve, with the more recent conceptualisations recognising the multi-dimensionality of CE (e.g. Brodie et al., 2013) and its potential to vary in intensity and valence (e.g. Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016). In keeping with recent conceptual (Brodie et al., 2011) and empirical (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014) research, this thesis adopts the tri-dimensionality perspective of CE, one that explores it through affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions. The next section will outline how CE can be measured through these dimensions, and explore how CE may operate towards multiple engagement objects within service relationships.

2.4 Measuring Customer Engagement: Dimensionality, Objects and Contextual Application

Until recently, much of the literature surrounding CE has been conceptual or exploratory in nature. However, there has been a rapid rise in the number of empirical studies following Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie's (2014) seminal paper in which they developed and empirically tested scales for engagement. They conceptualise CE to consist of three dimensions, each relating to the cognitive, affective and behavioural components of CE. These are aptly named: cognitive processing, affection and activation. Their model is presented in Figure 2.4.1.1.

Figure 2.4.1.1 The Process of CE (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014)



Based on Brodie et al.'s (2011) original definition and the recent measures of engagement created by Hollebeek et al. (2014) this thesis conceptualises positive, disengaged and negative valences of CE as processes involving affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions. Whilst other dimensions of positive CE exist, such as absorption, immersion, interaction, passion, participation, attention, civic, utilitarian, emotional, identity and social (Patterson et al., 2006; Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012; Calder, Isaac and

Malthouse, 2016; Hollebeek, 2011), many of these are still reflective of the broader categories of affect, cognition or behaviour (Sim and Plewa, 2017). In light of this affect, cognition and behaviour will form the basis for further examination of engagement within this study. The reasons for adopting this tri-dimensional framework are threefold. Firstly, the combination of these dimensions have thus far been the most widely-accepted across literature on positive (e.g. Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015; Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014; Sim and Plewa, 2017), disengaged (Khuhro et al., 2017) and negative valences of CE (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Bowden et al., 2017). Secondly, affect, cognition and behaviour can vary in both valence (positive to negative) and magnitude (strong to weak) (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015; Bowden et al., 2017). Thirdly, these dimensions are broad enough in scope to contain different sub-dimensions germane to the operation of each valence within the specific context in which they are applied (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015; Khuhro et al., 2017; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). In light of this, these three dimensions will form the framework for exploring the three CE valences throughout this thesis.

The affective dimension is the "summative and enduring levels of emotions experienced by customers with respect to a focal engagement focus" (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015, p. 35) and captures a customer's degree of passion and emotional reactions towards a service relationship. Importantly, these emotions develop over the trajectory of a service relationship, rather than during discrete brand encounters, and are thus transpiring and long-lasting (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015, 2016; Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). The cognitive dimension reflects an 'engagement of the mind', and is defined as "a set of enduring and active mental states that a customer experiences with respect to focal objects of engagement" (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015, p. 35). It captures a customer's level of interest and sustained attention towards an engagement object. This can include the level of attention paid to brand communications, time spent reflecting about past service encounters and seeking information about a focal service relationship (Vivek et al., 2014;

Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015; Sim and Plewa, 2017). Lastly, the behavioural dimension includes "behavioural manifestations towards an engagement focus, beyond purchase which results from motivational drivers" (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015, p. 35). The behavioural dimension of CE features the most heavily in prior research, CE was originally conceptualised to capture behaviour beyond purchase (van Doorn et al., 2010; Brodie et al., 2011; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015). Behavioural engagement captures the degree of time, effort and resources customers dedicate to interacting with a focal service relationship, including blogging, WOM recommendations, participating in brand communities, engaging in the co-creation/co-destruction of service value (van Doorn et al., 2010; Dolan et al., 2016b; Hollebeek et al., 2016; Vivek et al., 2014).

Another major theme concerning the measurement of CE is its objects. This thesis will use a dual-focus approach to explore how different valences of CE operate towards multiple objects in a service relationship. Literature to date has mainly adopted a single-object approach (see Table 2.4.1.1), with the majority of research focusing on either a brand/firm/organisation, or, an online brand community. Few studies have considered how CE manifest towards these objects *concurrently*. As such, little is known of how multiple objects can function as mutually enhancing or opposing forces on the type of CE experienced given the skew to single-object research. This is worrying as it "may obscure the relevance of other objects, casting doubt on the validity of the research models" (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2016, p.400).

Table 2.4.1.1 Single Engagement Object Research

Engagement Object	Conceptual/Theoretical Studies	Empirical (incl. qualitative) Studies
Brand/Firm/ Organisation	Patterson and De Ruyter (2006); Bowden (2009a); van Doorn et al. (2010); Roberts and Alpert (2010); Brodie et al. (2011); Hollebeek (2011b); Kaltcheva et al., (2014)	Bowden (2009b); Hollebeek (2011a); Vivek, Beatty and Morgan (2012); So, King and Sparks (2014); Naumann, Hollebeek (2013); Hollebeek and Chen (2014); Leckie et al. (2016); Calder, Issac and Malthouse (2016)
Online Brand Community	Dolan et al. (2016); Wirtz et al. (2013); Zhang, Kandampully and Bilgihan (2015)	Verhagen et al. (2015); Marbach, Lages and Nunan (2016); Gummerus et al. (2012); Baldus, Voorhees and Calantone (2015); Islam and Rahman (2016); Habibi et al., (2014)

However, the notion of engagement having only one object is starting to be challenged, as an 'ecosystem' perspective of the customer experience is being adopted through the literature (Chandler and Lusch, 2015; Breidbach, Brodie and Hollebeek, 2014; Maslowska, Malthouse and Collinger, 2016; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015, 2016). This perspective recognises that customers engage with multiple touch points in a relationship simultaneously, and considers the broader range of networks beyond the customer-provider dyad in which value can be created and diminished (Chandler and Lusch, 2015; Hollebeek et al., 2016a; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015, 2016). It is important to have an understanding of multiple engagement objects (e.g. customers, brand communities, online platforms) as the nature and quality of a customer's interaction with these foci can significantly impact the host brand and the overall relationship (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015, 2016).

Table 2.4.1.2 provides an overview of research focusing on multiple engagement objects. Early research by Brodie et al. (2013) highlight how positive CE can be mutually enhanced between dual objects, finding that customers will first engage with a product or service before discussing these experience with others on social media. Likewise, Verleye, Gemmel and Rangarajan (2014) reveal the interactions customers have with

staff, the organisation and family members reinforce the development of positive CE in the context of aged care homes.

Conversely, Lee, Kim and Kim (2011) find object types to differ in their effect on positive CE, revealing altruism to drive positive CE in customer-created communities, but not on brand-managed platforms (Lee, Kim and Kim, 2011). Likewise, Schamari and Shaefers (2015) reveal the provision of online web care to generate positive CE in consumer-generated platforms but not on brand-generated platforms. This may be due to the importance of seeking credible advice within service relationships. Customers are increasingly seeking the opinions of people "just like me" as trusted and reliable sources of information in both offline and online settings (Luoma-aho, 2015), and as such, may be hesitant to accept efforts to engage as sincere in brand dominated environments. Similarly, Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas (2015, 2016) find the interactions customers have with a brand and its community on SNS exert different influences on the affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions of engagement. This supports research by Sim and Plewa (2017) that finds the salience of CE dimensions with dual objects to differ in influence on CE dimensions with the overall service context. For example, they find that affective engagement with the 'service provider' object positively influences cognitive engagement with the overall service context, but has no effect on 'affective' or 'behavioural' engagement with the overall context (Sim and Plewa, 2017). The research by Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas (2015, 2016) and Sim and Plewa (2017) provides a new and important insight into how the dimensionality of CE can vary in influence across different objects, and how the salience of one dimension of CE with an object may not translate to the same dimension with another object. As such, a more nuanced and object-specific perspective may need to be adopted when examining the interrelatedness of CE across different objects.

Table 2.4.1.2 Multiple Engagement Object Research

Objects	**Authors**	**Finding**	**CE Dimensions (if present)**	**Research Type**
'Engagement ecosystem' Objects can be: brand actions, other actors, customer brand experience, shopping behaviours, brand consumption and brand-dialogue behaviours	Maslowska, Malthouse & Collinger (2016)	The engagement ecosystem is one of highly networked and empowered customers who engage with multiple objects in a non-linear and dynamic way. Each interaction with one of the six objects carries a reaction throughout the whole ecosystem.	n/a	Conceptual/ Literature Review
Physical engagement platforms and virtual engagement platforms	Breidbach, Brodie & Hollebeek (2014)	In order to maximize revenue, brands should offer both virtual and physical engagement platforms for customers, e.g., Google offers both Android phones (physical) and YouTube (Virtual).	Cognitive, behavioural and emotional investment in focal interactive experiences.	Conceptual/ Literature Review with Case Studies
Themes (brands/products & services/organisations/industry), and Online Community (community/roles/members)	Brodie et al. (2013)	CE in virtual brand communities is multifaceted and customers interact with several types of objects. Customers typically engaged with a product/service (theme) and then discuss their experience with others on the platform (online community).	Cognitive, emotional and behavioural	Qualitative
Interactions with brand, and interactions with customers (within the same online community group)	Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas (2015, 2016)	A customer's interaction with other community members, and their interactions with the host brand are mutually sustaining in the creation of positive CE.	Affective - Enthusiasm - Enjoyment Cognitive - Attention - Absorption Behavioural - Sharing - Learning	Qualitative (2015) Empirical (2016)

			- Endorsing	
Focal brand, and stakeholders in the Scottish Rail public transport context	Jaakkola & Alexander (2014)	Customers' contributions to the focal firm and wider stakeholder network via their customer engagement behaviours (CEBs) can impact the service offering through co-creation. CBEs that contribute to the brand directly through service innovation or improvement, or, seek to inform other customers of their own experiences, can modify the entire value process as it affects the perceptions, expectations and actions of other stakeholders in the service ecosystem.	Customer engagement behaviours (CEBs) 1. Augmenting 2. Co-developing 3. Influencing 4. Mobilizing	Qualitative
Nursing homes and their employees, and nursing home residents.	Verleye, Gemmel and Rangarajan (2014)	Support from the organisation and its staff, and support from other customers, will encourage family members' customer engagement behaviours more so than the organisation's perceived overall service quality. Firms should encourage socialisation and support to occur between family members, the employees and other customers of nursing homes to enhance CEBs.	Customer engagement behaviours (CEBs) 1. Compliance 2. Co-operation 3. Helping others 4. Feedback 5. Positive WOM	Empirical
Brand-managed, and customer-managed online brand communities (OBCs)	Lee, Kim and Kim (2011)	Intrinsic motives of altruism and social identification work as stronger drivers of engagement intention within customer-generate OBCs compared to brand-generated OBCs. Customers perceive a marketer's efforts to engage in brand managed OBCs to be driven by profit and exploitation and are thus likely to engage in altruistic behaviour and social bonding in these types of communities.	Online Brand Community Engagement Intention	Empirical (with moderation test)

Brand-generated web care platforms, and consumer-generated web care platforms	Schamari & Shaefers (2015)	The drivers of CE are found to be moderated by platform type. Both personal and impersonal web care increases CE intentions on consumer generated platforms only. The effects of personal and impersonal web care on CE intentions are positively mediated by surprise on consumer generated platforms only. There is an indirect effect of conversational human voice on CE intentions on brand-generated platforms only.	Customer Engagement Intentions e.g. intention to: post experiences, support others, spread positive WOM & recommend a brand on web care platforms	Empirical (with moderation test)
Online Brand Community (OBC), and focal brand	Bowden et al. (2017)	A 'spillover' effect existed between dual engagement objects for each valence of CE. Positive CE with an OBC further enhanced customers' positive CE with the focal brand. However, negative CE with an OBC detracted from their engagement with focal brand. As such, the type of CE experience in multiple objects is not contained within that interaction, and can spill over to affect customers' engagement with other objects.	Positive/Negatively Valenced: - Affect - Cognition - Behaviour	Qualitative- In-depth interviews
Customer-to-customer platforms (online group discussions, face-to-face group meetings and tutorials), and Customer-to-Provider platforms (online management system, lecturers, and lecturer correspondence) in Higher Education Sector	Sim and Plewa (2017)	Students' engagement with the customer-to-provider objects enhanced their engagement with the service context, yet their engagement with C2C objects only partially enhanced their engagement with the context. Further, the dimensions of CE with each object had different effects of the dimensions of CE with the context. Thus, engagement with the service context is positively moderated by engagement with the service provider object.	Customer Engagement (Positive) - Affective - Cognitive - Behavioural	Empirical (with moderation test)

Whilst prior studies recognise that dual objects can co-exist in service relationships, and may have different effects on the drivers of positive CE, only one study to the author's knowledge has considered how the duality of objects may influence positive and negative CE concurrently. Bowden et al., (2017) find a relationship between customers' engagement with online brand communities (OBC) and their engagement with the focal brand itself. Specifically, a 'spillover' effect existed whereby customers' positive CE with their OBC further enhanced their engagement with the brand, yet, experiencing negative CE within the OBC detracted from brand engagement. This finding highlights the fluidity of CE valences throughout a relationship, as the type of CE experienced by customers in one interaction is not contained within that exchange, and can spill over to add or detract value from their engagement with other objects (Bowden et al., 2017). Whilst Bowden et al (2017) make an important contribution to the literature on dual valence and objects, their study is qualitative in nature, and does not observe the moderating effect that object type has on CE valences. Further, existing research has not considered how involvement drives positive and negative CE, and, how these valences influence the outcome WOM across object type as explored in this thesis. This thesis provides much needed empirical research on how object type can affect positive *and* negative CE.

Thus far, the moderating effect of object type has only been observed for positive CE and further research is needed to uncover how different sets of antecedents affect positive, disengaged and negative valences of CE across multiple foci. In addition, the moderating effect of object type has only been observed on the *drivers* of CE and not on the relationship between CE and outcomes such as WOM. Having an understanding of how different CE valences manifest across objects is crucial to service managers, as it may help diagnose the sources of positive and negative CE. This is highlighted by Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas (2016, p.419) who claim: "the distinction between engagements with different foci seems of paramount importance: there is little point in changing brands when the root cause of disengagement may concern community

features". This thesis contributes to the growing literature on dual engagement objects by examining how brand and community platforms moderate the process of positive and negative valences of CE. In doing so, it will provide much needed qualitative and empirical research on how object type can affect negative CE, something which has not been addressed in the literature to date.

2.4.2 Applying Customer Engagement within Australian Local Governments

Under the Australian Commonwealth, local governments combine with state and federal bodies to form a three-tiered system of governance. Traditionally, local governments, or councils, have provided services for building planning and development, road and transport management, parks maintenance and waste collection. However, the focus of local government has expanded to include services that enhance the cultural, social and environmental wellbeing of their residents (Dollery and Johnson, 2005; Local Government Acts Taskforce, 2013; Measham et al., 2011). As explained by Dollery and Johnson (2005, p. 555) "Australian councils are moving away from their traditional narrow emphasis on 'services to property' towards a broader 'services to people' approach". This shift has been driven by a number of factors, namely, the devolution of service responsibilities from state and federal governments to local governments and the increased pressure to deliver a more holistic range of services tailored to the needs of their individual communities (Dollery and Johnson, 2005; Thompson and Maginn, 2012).

Recent structural reforms for the amalgamation of local governments has left many councils facing a volatile and uncertain future (Drew, Kortt and Dollery, 2015; Ryan et al., 2015). The planned amalgamations are based on the rationale that larger, consolidated local governments provide more efficient, financially viable and streamlined services (Drew, Kortt and Dollery, 2015; Ryan et al., 2015). Yet, many of the services provided by local governments are idiosyncratic and tailored to the specific needs of their community. Further, local governments have historically served as "place shapers" as

approximately 59% of Australians consider the place in which they live to reflect their sense of identity (Ryan et al., 2015). As such, the amalgamations, which would see several council areas consolidate under a new council name (e.g. the Inner West Council, Sydney), carry implications not only for local governments, but their customers who feel a sense of attachment and belonging within their current local area.

Subsequently, there is a crucial need for local governments to be perceived by customers as valued and efficient service providers. This can be achieved through establishing strong, positive engagement with their communities (Dollery and Johnson, 2005; Thompson and Maginn, 2012; Herriman, 2011). Over the past two decades, 'engagement' has emerged as a mechanism for federal, state and local government to better understand their communities' wants, needs and expectations and connect with citizens in a more collaborative manner (Holmes, 2011; Grant, Dollery and Krott, 2011; Stewart, 2009; McCabe et al., 2006). Importantly, engagement has surfaced as a way to counteract the rising distrust, cynicism and apathy felt in communities that feel detached from the decision making process (Artist et al., 2012). As such, engagement has been considered a way to allow communities to have a more meaningful influence on the type of services delivered by their council (Holmes, 2011).

Enhancing community engagement is an ongoing issue facing all levels of government within Australia, yet, engagement is considered to be most empirically salient at the local level (Grant, Dollery and Krott, 2011). This is because residents have the most accessible links with their local government and the opportunities for direct engagement are most feasible on a municipal scale (Gardiner and Brown, 1999). In addition, local governments have a greater understanding of their individual community's needs and wants, allowing councils to better engage their residents through customised community services (Drew, Krott and Dollery, 2015). In light of this, it seems the application of CE is urgently needed within local governments, where the need for better collaboration and engagement is most strongly felt.

However, few theories from ‘mainstream’ marketing literature can be readily transferred into social services, and the application of CE into a local government context needs careful consideration (Anderson et al., 2013). The reluctance of scholars to adequately modify marketing theories to suit the nature of local governments means that few are successful in their attempts to implement them within this unique service context (Freund, Spohrer and Messinger, 2013). Therefore, in order to explore positive, disengaged and negative valences of CE in relation to dual objects within this sector, it is vital to take into account the characteristics of local government services.

A detailed discussion of the unique characteristics of the local government sector and their implications for the objective of this thesis is provided throughout Chapters Three, Four and Five. However, it is important to note how the rhetoric behind service delivery in local governments differs from commercial services. Whereas commercial services are motivated to maximise revenue for shareholders, social services such as local governments follow a more collective rhetoric that balances the financial, political and social obligations between a number of different stakeholders, which can include: shareholders; suppliers; administrative employees; Councillors; local organisations; community groups; commercial business and industry within the area; visitors; residential ratepayers; tenants; customers; government agencies; not-for-profit organisations and special interest groups (The Stakeholder Engagement Framework, 2011; Gardiner and Brown, 1999). Importantly, local governments oversee the relationships formed *between* these different stakeholders. Two relationships of particular relevance to this thesis are those formed between ratepayers and their local government, and, between ratepayers of a community. As such, a traditional ‘B2C’ exchange relationship exists between residential ratepayers and their council, and a more communal ‘C2C’ exchange exists within the community (Roskruge et al., 2013; Bowden and Naumann, 2013). These exchanges have been explored as ‘vertical’ (B2C) and ‘horizontal’ (C2C) networks in sociology and literature (Fennema, 2004).

Horizontal networks are characterised by feelings of reciprocity and mutuality developed by partners of equivalent status and ability (Putnam, 2001; Middleton et al., 2005; Chui,

2005). Horizontal networks are founded on values of equality, fellowship and mutual obligation and as such involve highly participatory and trusting exchanges (Onyx and Bullen 2000; Putnam and Leonardi, 1993; Theiss-Morse and Hibbing, 2004). According to Putnam and Leonardi (1993, p.173), the equality felt between residents is considered a "crucial driver of engagement" as it motivates social cohesion and collective action among a community. On the other hand, vertical networks feature an asymmetry of authority and dependence between partners (Putnam and Leonardi, 1993; Stolle, 2001; Onxy and Bullen, 2000; Hocutt, 1998). Flows of information follow a top-down, highly consultative approach which can diminish sense of co-production within the relationship (Maloney et al., 2000; Kurpius and Fuqua, 1993). Vertical networks can generate feelings of distrust and cynicism between members, which can prompt the submissive partner to neglect, ignore, criticise or behaviourally withdraw from the relationship (Naus, 2007; Chui, 2005; Stolle, 2001; Lewicki and Mcallister, 1998).

In light of the above, it appears that nature of horizontal relationships may be reflective of the highly interactive and co-creative value that is associated with positive CE (Hollebeek, 2011a; van Doorn et al., 2010; Bowden and Naumann, 2013). Contrastingly, vertical relationships appear to limit the opportunities for residents to play participatory and co-creative roles in service delivery, which in turn may influence their propensity to be disengaged, or, negatively engaged within their local government relationship (Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann, 2015). This supports earlier research by Bowden and Naumann (2013), which reveals these two relationships, or 'object' types, to work as opposing forces on positive and negative CE. Namely, finding that residents are highly engaged and positive towards their horizontal community object, and highly negative and disengaged towards their vertical council object (Bowden and Naumann, 2013).

2.5 Synthesis of Knowledge Gaps for the Customer Engagement Concept

The theoretical, conceptual and empirical knowledge of customer engagement has undoubtedly advanced in the relatively short time since its emergence in the service marketing literature. However, in light of the preceding discussion a number of knowledge gaps remain. To date, there is no resounding consensus on the dimensions,

valences, antecedents or outcomes of the engagement process (Maslowska, Malthouse and Collinger, 2016). This thesis will aim to address three major gaps within the literature. Firstly, CE continues to be framed largely in light of its positive valence (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014; Vivek et al., 2014; Hollebeek, 2016; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015, 2016). This is despite the numerous and growing calls for the conceptual lens of CE to be expanded to capture its negative valences (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Khuhro et al., 2017; Hollebeek, 2016). As such, there is a dearth of research on the negative ways that CE can manifest in a service relationship. At the time of writing, only a handful of theoretical and conceptual frameworks exist for customer disengagement (Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann, 2015; Naumann, Bowden and Gabbott, 2017; Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016) and negative customer engagement (Naumann, Bowden and Gabbott, 2017; Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2015), and no empirical scales or measures exist for either. To address this gap in the literature and provide a clearer understanding of the process of positive, negative and disengaged valences of customer engagement than is currently available, this thesis develops a conceptual framework showcasing the affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions of these three valences. It will then empirically test this framework and explore the differential effects of involvement as a driver of each valence, and, the differential effects that each valence has on the outcome of word-of-mouth.

The second research gap regards the duality of engagement objects. The majority of research on positive CE and the entirety of studies on CD and negative CE adopt a single foci approach. This single object approach risks masking the unique and nuanced nature of the customers' encounters with multiple service objects and how they may affect the process of CE (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2016; Lee, Kim and Kim, 2011; Schamari and Shaefers, 2015). To address this gap this thesis will observe three valences of CE within the relationship customers have with a service brand, and, the relationship they have with a service community related to that brand. The last research gap addressed by this thesis is the contextual application of CE. This thesis will apply CE within the unique and novel context of Australian Local Governments. To date, the application of

CE has revolved around commercial services and there is limited research on how CE manifests within a social service whereby the motives, process and outcomes of engagement may differ.

2.6 Positive Customer Engagement

Positive customer engagement (CE) is the process by which customers form positive relationships with the providers they patronise (Bowden, 2009a). Positive CE is defined as "A consumer's positively-valenced cognitive, emotional and behavioral brand-related activity during, or related to, specific consumer/brand interactions" (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014, p.154). It has been argued to include a range of drivers, such as satisfaction, participation and involvement (Brodie et al. 2011; Hollebeek et al. 2014); and outcomes, such as loyalty (Gummerus et al. 2012; Bowden, 2009a) and self-brand connections (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014). Positively engaged customers are more emotionally-connected to their favoured brands, and can act as unofficial 'spokespersons' of an organisation, who help spread positive WOM and enhance reputation and trust among other stakeholders (Pansari and Kumar, 2017).

Although the issue has been discussed at length in the literature (e.g. Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012; Pansari and Kumar, 2017) it should be noted that positive CE is distinct from concepts such as involvement, participation, satisfaction and loyalty. Namely, positive CE extends more static measures of relationship quality, such as involvement and participation, as it captures the range of positive thoughts feelings and behaviours a customer holds towards a relationship (Pansari and Kumar, 2017; Brodie et al., 2011). Pansari and Kumar (2017) provide a useful and succinct overview of how positive CE differs from related constructs (see Table 2.6.1). For example, whereas satisfaction depends on fulfilment of expectations, CE is driven by a range of factors that go beyond consumption-related events (Pansari and Kumar, 2017). Likewise, participation reflects the degree to which the customer is involved in the creation of an offering which is not reflective of the psychologically connected nature of the engaged customer (So, King and

Sparks, 2014; Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012). CE is distinct from brand experience as it includes actions towards a firm and considers the motivational state driving cognitive, emotional and behavioural manifestations towards a firm (Hollebeek, Srivastava and Chen, 2016; Pansari and Kumar, 2017). Lastly, CE is different from loyalty in that engagement does not include comparative evaluations or repeat purchase (actual or intent) but instead, is a multidimensional concept that captures a customer's affect, cognition and behaviour regarding a brand experience or relationship rather than a discrete encounter (Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012; Pansari and Kumar, 2017; So, King and Sparks, 2014).

The conceptualisations of positive CE put forth in the literature are varied. For example, Sashi (2012) frames positive CE as a cycle consisting of identification, enthusiasm, absorption, attention and interaction which lead to trust and relationship commitment (Sashi, 2012). Others explore engagement in terms of its behavioural manifestations alone (e.g., Kumar et al., 2010; van Doorn et al., 2010). However, the majority of research positions positive CE as a process involving a range of relational drivers and outcomes. Brodie et al.'s (2011, p.260) seminal paper conceptualises positive CE as both a process involving highly co-creative service experiences, as well as an end state resulting from a range of motivational drivers. These drivers are thought to include constructs such as: satisfaction, trust, affective and calculative commitment, rapport; which result in outcomes such as self-brand connections and loyalty. Bowden (2009a) examines how the process of engagement develops for new, versus repeat, customers, finding that new customers became engaged through satisfaction, calculative commitment and delight, and existing customers through trust, involvement, affective commitment and loyalty. Vivek, Beatty and Morgan (2012) also position engagement as a process driven by involvement and participation, and resulting in trust, affective commitment, loyalty and enhanced customer WOM and value, which supports research by Gummerus et al. (2012) who find the process of positive CE to enhance loyalty.

Table 2.6.1 Constructs related to Customer Engagement (Pansari and Kumar, 2017)

Related Constructs	**Definition**	**Operational Definition**	**Relation to Customer Engagement**	**Other Comments**
Customer Involvement	A person's perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interests (Zaichowsky 1985, p 342).	Zaichowsky (1985) provides a 20- item scale. Some of the items of the scale reflect the importance, relevance, value, excitement, appeal, want, and benefits of the product. These items are measured as a 7-point semantic differential scale. The reliability of this scale exceeds 0.90. Other scales to measure involvement are Putrevu and Lord (1994); Kim and Lord (1991).	Involvement is viewed as motivating the customer to seek information that may be used to manage and moderate any potential risk inherent in the decision-making process. This would occur before the customer makes a purchase. CE includes the customer purchases and other indirect effects.	The search process would also help customers set expectations for the product/ service, which would affect the relationship between the level of satisfaction, emotion, and the actions. Therefore, the level of involvement would moderate the relationship between emotions, satisfaction, and CE.
Customer Experience	It is holistic in nature and involves the customer's cognitive, affective, emotional, social and physical responses to the entity, product and service (adapted from Verhoef et al. 2009).	Gentile (2007) identifies 6 factors for CE – sensorial, emotional, cognitive, pragmatic, lifestyle, and relational – measured these with a four-point scale. Other scales measuring experience are Olson et al. (1995); Froehle and Roth (2004); Klaus and Maklan (2011).	Customer experience is a cognitive measure that is an outcome of the firm's actions and may not include the actions of the customer toward the firm. However, CE is a measure of the customers' actions toward the firm.	Customer experience can be at various levels and for various marketing activities like experience with the promotion, price, location, merchandise, etc.
Customer Satisfaction	A judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfilment, including levels of	Bruner et al. (2001) suggest a generalized set of 12-item scales measuring various aspects of the purchase and use of the product and service with a high average reliability of	If a customer is satisfied with a product or service then he may buy the product/service again. However, if the customer is engaged with the firm, he would go beyond purchases and	Customer satisfaction has been linked to firm profits and shareholder value.

	under- or over fulfilment (Oliver 1997, p. 13).	over 0.9. Other scales to measure satisfaction are Spreng and Mackory (1996); Spreng et al. (1996).	provide referral, talk about the brand on social media, and provide feedback to the company, all of which are components of CE.	
Customer Loyalty	A favorable attitude toward brand resulting in consistent purchase of the brand over time (Assael, 1992).	Mittal (1994) provides a 3-item scale measuring consumers preference to a few brands and limiting their purchases to the same. It is measured using a 5-point Likert scale and the reliability of this scale is 0.76. Other scales for measuring customer loyalty are Bettencourt (1997) and Zeithaml et al. (1996).	Loyalty measures only repeated purchase transactions of the customer and focuses only on the revenue of the firm. CE focusses on four different behaviors of customer (purchases, referrals, influence, and feedback). Further, CE goes beyond the revenue of the firm and looks at overall firm profits.	The loyalty of the customer could be toward the brand, the product or the employee of the company. Loyalty can be either attitudinal or/and behavioural.
Customer Trust	Willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence (Moorman et al. (1993), p. 82).	Garbarino and Johnson (1999) develop a scale for consumer trust which measures confidence in quality and reliability, perceptions of risk and variability. They use a 5-point Likert scale to measure the items.	Trust is the breadth of the attitude toward the brand, which is embedded in CE in the form of enhanced purchases, referrals, and word-of-mouth.	Trust is one of the two components of the relationship marketing framework.
Customer Commitment	An enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship (Moorman et al. 1992, p. 316).	Garbarino and Johnson (1999) develop a scale for commitment which captures the identification with the company, psychological attachment, concern with long-term welfare, and loyalty. They use a 5-point Likert scale to measure the	Commitment is the depth of the attitude toward a brand, which is embedded in the CE framework in the form of spending more resources (time and money).	Commitment is one of the two components of the relationship marketing framework.

		items.		
Customer Brand Value	The differential effect of a customer's brand knowledge, brand attitude, brand purchase intention, and brand behavior on his or her response to the marketing of a brand (Kumar et al. 2015).	Kumar (2013) provide a scale that reflects brand awareness, image, trust, affect, loyalty, advocacy, purchase intention, and price premium. Each of these measures is measured on a 1–10 scale. The reliability of the scale items exceeded 0.80 (Kumar et al. 2015).	Customer brand value offers a quantitative view of the customer perceptions of the brand. It interacts with the components of CE to develop a good customer–firm relationship.	Customer-based brand equity is the summation of the customer's individual brand value.

Recently, the literature has progressed towards more empirical testing of the process of positive engagement. Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie (2014) measure positive CE through 'cognition' 'activation' and 'affection', which capture the knowledge processing, behavioural manifestations and emotional responses involved in CE respectively. This tri-dimensional framework has been adopted in the majority of empirical research on positive CE (e.g. Leckie, Nyadzayo & Johnson, 2016; Vivek et al., 2014; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2016). In keeping with recent empirical research, this thesis also frames positive CE to operate through the three dimensions of affect, cognition and behaviour.

The affective component of positive CE includes the feelings of pride, happiness, enjoyment, excitement and positivity customers experience during focal customer/brand interactions (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2016). These positive emotions are said to be "summative and enduring" and thus develop and transpire over the trajectory of a service relationship, as opposed to discrete events (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2016, p.35). The cognitive dimension centres on a customer's positive mental states during and after interacting with engagement objects (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2016). This can include the level of positive attention, interest and reflection paid to a brand or its service community (Vivek et al., 2014; Hollebeek and Chen 2014; Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014). The behavioural dimension captures a customer's level of participation, energy and passion towards various engagement objects (Vivek et al., 2014). It can also include the time spent using/interacting with an object and the degree to which they share and endorse a focal brand (etc.) with others (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2016).

2.6.1 Synthesis of Knowledge Gaps for Positive Customer Engagement

Despite the advancements made within the literature, the conceptualisations of positive CE remain disparate and further research is needed to clarify its dimensionality and operationalisation (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2016). Thus far the majority of studies apply positive CE in commercial contexts (e.g. So, King and Sparks, 2014; 2016; Bowden, 2009a), or on online platforms (e.g. Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014) with few studies considering how positive CE manifests within social services, or, how its operation may vary across contexts. In addition, positive CE has mostly been

examined in relation to one object, usually the focal service brand (Islam and Rahman, 2016b) and limited research exists on how different object types may moderate the process of positive CE.

2.7 Customer Disengagement

Customer disengagement has been recently defined as "a process by which a customer-brand relationship experiences a trauma or disturbance which may lead to relationship termination; which involves a range of trigger based events; which varies in intensity and trajectory; and which occurs within a specific set of category and individual customer-dependent conditions" (Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann, 2015, p. 779). These disturbances can diminish the opportunity that exchange partners have to effectively communicate and interact with each other (Baxter, 1984) and can prevent customers from developing positive affective bonds with a provider (Perrin-Martinenq, 2004).

Like positive CE, customer disengagement aims to provide marketers with a broader understanding of how brand relationships operate - specifically the conditions and factors that affect a customer's withdrawal from negative service relationships (Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann, 2015). However, unlike CE which has a relatively large conceptual base, the theoretical roots of disengagement are lacking and confusion exists regarding the factors involved in its process. The concept of disengagement is mentioned in early engagement literature by Kumar et al., (2010) who highlight the possibility for customers to be engaged with and disengaged from a firm. However, literature specific to customer disengagement, hereby referred to as CD, remains relatively sparse as research on brand relationships tends to focus on their development and maintenance as opposed to their deterioration and termination (Dutot and Mosconi, 2016). A summary of definitions of disengagement from marketing literature is presented in Table 2.7.1.

Table 2.7.1 Definitions of disengagement in marketing literature

Authors	Definition	Research type
Dwyer, Schurr and Oh (1987)	*Summarised* A unilateral uncoupling from a relationship. The process of disengagement is distinct from the reversal of relationship development.	Conceptual

Yi and Baumgartner (2004)	*Mental disengagement (summarised)* When customers try to forget the unfavourable experience all together. It involves doing other things to take one's mind off the problem and denial (refusing to believe that something has happened). It also includes distancing (refusing to think about the problem too much) and escape/avoidance (wishfully thinking that the problem would go away or somehow be over. *Behavioural Disengagement* Consumers decide that nothing can be done about the situation and give up further action.	Empirical-Survey
Goode (2012)	Disengagement involves avoiding or downplaying the stress agent, such that the individual moves away from the negative effects. It provides some distance between the individual and the stress, perhaps in the form or space, time, or importance.	Empirical-Survey
Evanschitzky, Ramaseshan, Fazlul and Brock (2012)	The process of disengagement has not led to switching; yet, the likelihood of it happening increases. It is the cognitive-emotive process consumers pass through before arriving at a decision of terminating an affective relationship with a brand.	Qualitative-Interviews
Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann (2015)	A process by which a customer-brand relationship experiences a trauma or disturbance which may lead to relationship termination; which involves a range of trigger based events; which varies in intensity and trajectory; which occurs within a specific set of category conditions and which is dependent on prior levels of customer engagement.	Qualitative-Focus Groups
Dutot and Mosconi (2016)	A person who stops being involved or interested in the community, or is restrained by something.	Empirical - Survey
Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs (2016)	Disengagement results when the cost of engagement becomes too high or a consumer has a disappointing experience (without high expectations) – or just loses interest.	Qualitative-Focus groups
Maslowska, Malthouse and Collinger (2016)	Disengagement describes an absence of focal brand-related behaviours (withdrawal), meaning that a consumer spends no resources.	Conceptual-Literature Review
Khuhro, Khan, Humayon and Khuhro (2017)	The level of a customer's physical, cognitive and emotional absence in their relationship with a service organisation.	Empirical-Survey

The process by which customer relationships end is examined under a variety of terms including, and in addition to, disengagement. For example, dissolution (Pressey and Mathews, 2003); dissatisfaction (Mattila and Ro, 2008) disillusionment (Pervan and Martin, 2012; Korczynski and Evans, 2013); disaffection (Dawes and Rowley, 1999) and detachment (Mai and Conti, 2008) all feature as ways to explore the process by which

customer-brand relationships breakdown. The term *disengagement* is discussed briefly in the marketing literature by Dwyer, Schurr and Oh (1987) who conceptualise it as a dissolution of a buyer-seller relationship that is capable of occurring at any time throughout the exchange. They emphasise the importance of understanding the process of disengagement in light of the history of the relationship (Dwyer, Shurr and Oh, 1987). Although Dwyer, Shurr and Oh's (1987) discussion on disengagement is largely speculative, it highlights an important aspect of disengagement not simply being the reversal of relationship development, but instead, a process with its own unique trajectory.

Despite the scarcity of research on CD, a handful of studies examine disengagement in a more specific manner. For example, Evanschitzky et al. (2012) conceptually map the customer's journey to brand disengagement through three stages: 'disillusion', which stems from a customer's ambiguity about what a brand can and can't deliver; 'disaffection', when a customer focuses on the negative attributes of their current brand vs. the positive traits of the alternatives; and finally 'crossroads', when customers become indifferent towards their brand and lose interest in the relationship. However, this conceptualisation of disengagement has yet to be empirically explored within marketing literature.

Disengagement is also explored within the consumer psychology literature. Research on customer coping and emotion by Yi and Baumgartner (2004) features mental and behavioural disengagement as part of a typology of consumer responses to purchase failures. They find customers to mentally disengage by using denial and escape/avoidance techniques to forget a negative brand experience. Customers are likely to employ this method after experiencing emotions of disappointment and worry (Yi and Baumgartner, 2004). Behavioural disengagement involves a more apathetic approach whereby customers regard the situation as unchangeable and give up further efforts to improve their brand relationship. Yi and Baumgartner's (2004) study does not reveal specific relationships between negative emotions and behavioural disengagement, however, research by Gelbrich (2010) finds customers who experience feelings of helplessness and frustration are likely to display behavioural disengagement by taking no action in response to a failure.

A later study on customer coping and emotions by Goode (2012) combines Yi and Baumgartner's (2004) mental and behavioural disengagement to create a measure of disengagement in response to online service failures. Goode (2012) finds customers to disengage by distancing themselves from sources of stress, ignoring the problem, reducing the importance of the problem and allowing the situation to worsen. Customers who use emotion-focused coping problem solving (using emotions such as worry to offset the impact of negative events) are found to be more likely to disengage compared to users who use cognitive-focused coping based problem solving (evaluating the actions needed to solve a problem), who are more likely to engage with a service in order to rectify the failure (Goode, 2012).

The measures of disengagement presented by Yi and Baumgartner (2004) and Goode (2012) align with the construct of neglect, which is demonstrated when one seeks to alienate themselves from a dissatisfactory relationship (Lyons and Lowery 1986). Within marketing literature, neglect is defined as a "withdrawal response whereby the individual becomes apathetic to the relationship and is not willing to communicate the dissatisfaction" (Ro, 2013, p. 31). Neglectful customers passively allow conditions to worsen within an exchange and reject attempts made by a provider to salvage the relationship (Ping, 1993; Ro, 2013). According to Carver and Scheirer, (1994) disengaging from a stressful situation allows people to take respite when more direct forms of coping, such as addressing the failure, are too daunting. It therefore follows that disengagement would entail a state of neglect, as disengaged customers choosing to ignore and avoid a provider on the belief that the relationship will by default continue to decline regardless (Rusbult and Lowery, 1985; Ping, 1993; Ro, 2013). The implications of this can be damaging to a brand, as the problems that are neglected are likely to worsen given customers' unwillingness to voice their dissatisfaction (Dutot and Mosconi, 2016).

The conceptualisations of disengagement presented thus far focus on its passive and neglectful nature. However, recent research on disengagement within the engagement-specific literature reveals it goes beyond a passive response to be a more critical evaluation of a provider, entailing concepts such as distrust, cynicism and frustration. This is reflected in research by Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann (2015), which compares engagement and disengagement across utilitarian and hedonic services. Unlike research by Goode (2012) and Yi and Baumgartner (2004) that focuses on CD in response to

service failures, Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann (2015) find disengagement to stem from attribute-level services failures *as well as* more negative emotional reactions towards a brand. This supports research on the brand detachment process by Mai and Conti (2008) that finds detachment to be influenced by two forces: unmet expectations from poor service quality, and, negative emotional involvement. Interestingly, Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann (2015) found pre-existing negative biases or perceptions towards a brand to also influence a customer's propensity to disengage once a service failure occurs.

The propensity for disengagement is also found to be higher in utilitarian services whereby customers are generally more cynical towards the service category as a whole (e.g. telecommunications, banking, insurance and transport) and have lower tolerance for services failures (Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann, 2015). Specifically, Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann (2015) reveal disengaged customers to harbour negative emotions such as frustration, resentment and annoyance. Frustration is a negative emotion that arises in response to unfavourable service encounters and is closely related to feelings of despair, resignation and powerlessness (Tronvoll, 2011). Frustration is regarded as an 'other attribute' emotion, meaning frustrated customers direct blame towards external sources (i.e. the service provider) as opposed to themselves in the wake of service failures (Tronvoll 2011). This is supported by Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann (2015) who find disengaged customers to have low tolerance for service failures and high willingness to switch in response to service failures.

A later study by Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs (2016) explores the willingness of millennials (those born in 1980-early 2000s) to engage with/disengage from brands via social media. Their qualitative research provides a typology of disengaged customers: upgraders, disappointed, critics, ignorers and opinion hiders. Disengagement is found to be driven by both functional and emotional reasons, which supports prior research by Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann (2015). The functional motivations for disengagement include service failures, unmet expectations, finding a better service alternative, disinterest and when engaging with an online community requires too many resources. The emotional reasons behind disengagement include bad personal experiences with brands, perceptions of unethical behaviour, when a service appears 'cold and distant' and when engaging via social media is seen to be *embarrassing*. Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs (2016) find the motivation for disengagement is similar to that of negative

engagement, but the lack of 'passion' among the disengaged segment led them to display more passive responses, as opposed to actively voicing their dislike (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). This was found to be true regardless of whether a disengagement was for functional or emotional reasons, which suggests disengagement entails a stance of neglect and non-action regardless of the reason behind it. Whilst Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs (2016) provide an interesting insight into CD among millennials, their research focuses on the motivations behind disengagement rather than exploring its nuanced characteristics and dimensions.

Recent empirical research from Khuhro et al. (2017) explores disengagement within the telecommunications and banking industry in Pakistan. They conceptualise disengagement to be a customer's cognitive, behavioural and emotional absence in the relationship, which can be demonstrated by neglecting or ignoring a provider during service interactions and becoming emotionally 'estranged' from a brand (Khuhro et al., 2017). This supports research by Dutot and Mosconi (2016) who find a lack of affection towards a brand-focused virtual community to be a key driver of disengagement.

Based on the above review, this thesis conceptualises CD as a process involving cognitive, behavioural and emotional dimensions. Therefore, one of the major contributions of this study is to conceptualise and empirically test how the process of CD operates within a service relationship through these dimensions. In order to construct a conceptual model of CD, this thesis relies on existing measures of disengagement from the consumer psychology literature created by Yi and Baumgartner (2004) and measures of neglect developed by Ping (1993). These measures combined provide behavioural, emotional and cognitive dimensions of CD. A synthesis of the knowledge gaps for CD is presented in the following section.

2.7.1 Synthesis of Knowledge Gaps for Customer Disengagement

It is apparent from the above review that CD is the least understood valence of engagement. Further research is needed to determine where CD sits in the larger framework of engagement, whether it simply represents the 'absence' of strongly valenced positive/negative CE, or, if it is its own, negatively-valenced but passive

manifestation of engagement. Furthermore, research is needed to identify if CD can be measured through affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions, or if it manifests as a uni-dimensional construct. The lack of empirical research on CD also means limited scales of CD exist, and there is a lack of understanding about the drivers, outcomes and dimensions involved in its process, and, how it manifests towards multiple foci. This thesis addresses these gaps by qualitatively exploring disengagement through affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions. It also explores how CD manifests towards a brand and community object, and, in conjunction with positive and negative valences of CE in a local government service setting.

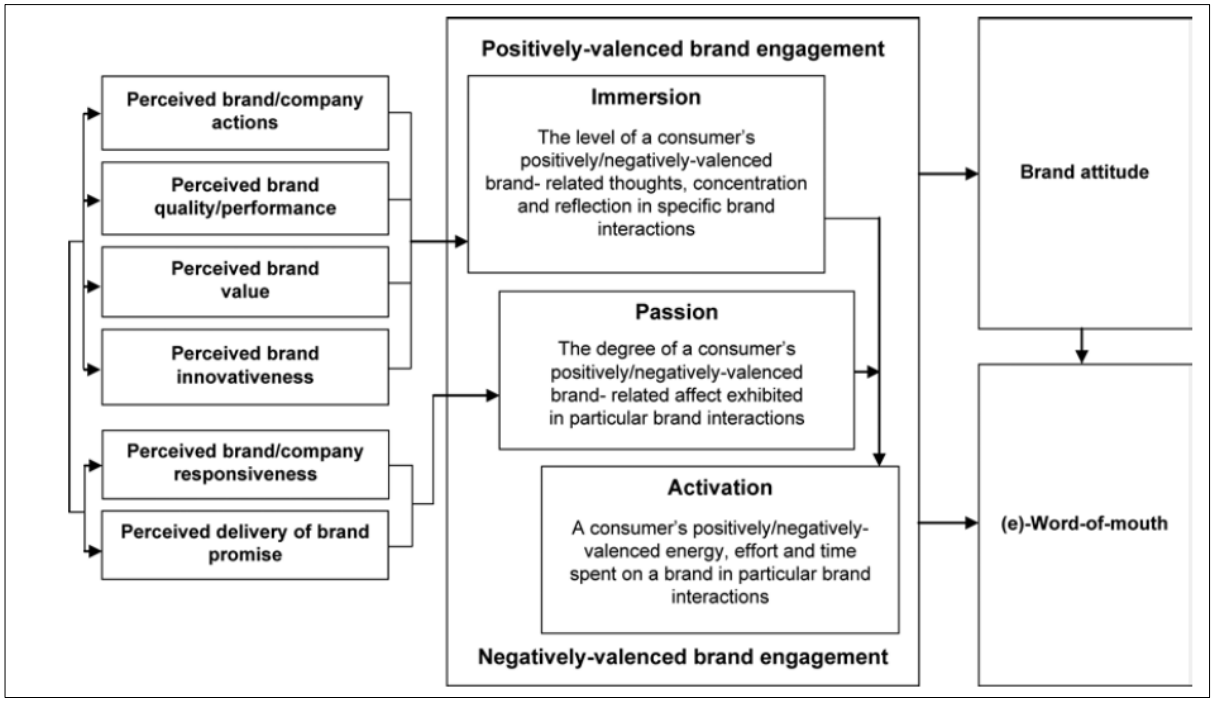
2.8 Negative Customer Engagement

Negative customer engagement is defined as "Consumers' unfavorable brand-related thoughts, feelings, and behaviors during focal brand interactions" (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014, p. 63). It encapsulates the active, dedicated and persistent expressions, beliefs and behaviours customers exhibit towards one or many aspects of a service relationship (Luo-ahmo, 2016; Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016). Customers who are negatively engaged within a service relationship may act as 'brand adversaries', who are highly committed to the relationship, yet in a negative way (Hollebeek and Chen, 2013). Negative customer engagement, or negative CE, is a relatively new addition to the engagement literature, with only a handful of studies in the literature focusing on this valence (e.g. Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2015; Naumann, Bowden and Gabbott, 2017; Luoma-aho, 2015; Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016).

The notion of negatively-valenced CE features in early research by Hollebeek and Chen (2011), who conceptualise CE in both its positive and negative valence. They posit negative CE to encapsulate customer apathy, brand avoidance, denial, rejection, negative WOM and adversarial brand attitudes (Hollebeek and Chen, 2013). Negative CE is segmented based on commitment levels, with highly committed customers labelled 'brand adversaries' and low commitment customers as 'brand apathists' (Hollebeek and Chen, 2013). In a later study, Hollebeek and Chen (2014) refine their conceptualisation to be more in line with early research on regulatory engagement theory by Higgins and

Scholer (2009), who view engagement as a reflection of one's involvement and interest in a relationship, which can be positive or negative. Hollebeek and Chen (2014) employ netnography to create a conceptual model of CE in which positive and negative CE are both captured by activation, immersion and passion, but exist on opposite ends of the 'favourable-unfavourable' spectrum. Their model can be seen in Figure 2.8.1.

Figure 2.8.1.1 Conceptual model of positive-negative CE (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014)



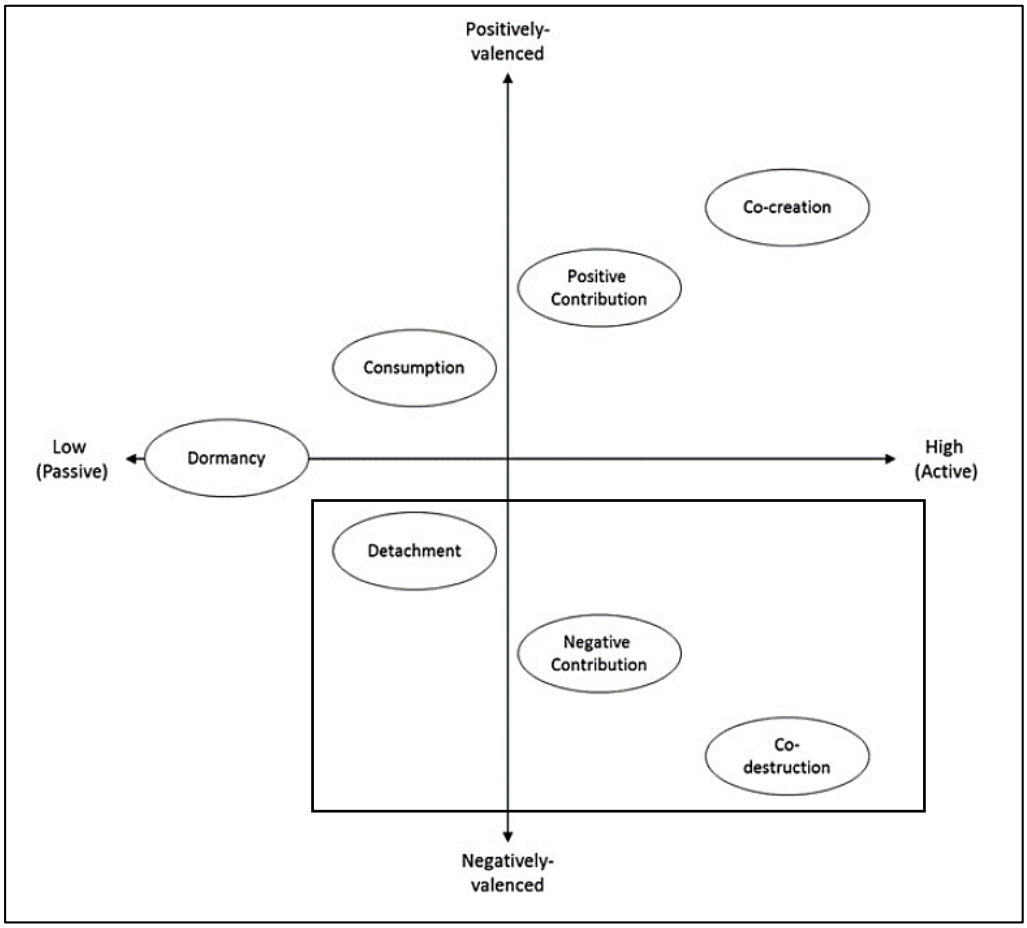
The 'immersion' dimension captures negative cognitive processing involved in brand interactions, as well as the speculative and reflective thoughts occurring prior to and after the interactions take place. 'Passion' encompasses the negative feelings and emotions exhibited, and 'activation' captures a customer's negatively-valenced behavioural manifestations during brand encounters (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016). The tri-dimensional framework aligns with research by Juric, Smith and Wilks (2015) who explore negative brand engagement through cognitive, emotive and behavioural elements. Hollebeek and Chen (2014) find negative perceptions of brand actions, quality, value and innovativeness to drive the immersion dimension, whereas the passion dimension is driven by perceived responsiveness and delivery of brand promises. This suggests that problems with the utility of a brand are more likely to drive the cognitive aspect of negative CE, whereas the emotional dimension is motivated

by failed promises and an unresponsive customer service (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). This supports research by Juric, Smith and Wilks (2015) finding that concerns over service quality, value and dissatisfaction can trigger negative brand engagement. The activation dimension is not modelled to have direct drivers, suggesting the affective and cognitive dimensions drive the behavioural component of negative CE, which supports Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie's (2014) empirical model of positive CE (Figure 2.4.1.1).

Whilst Hollebeek and Chen (2014) provide a preliminary exploration into negative CE, their model does not capture the nuances involved in its process. The author argues that negative CE is not simply the reversal of positive CE, but manifests through its own unique characteristics. Whilst negative CE may share the same driver(s) and dimensions (affect, cognition and behaviour) as positive CE, how these dimensions are measured and operate are ultimately distinct (Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2015). This perspective is in line with research by Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs (2016) and Dolan et al., (2016a) that suggests positive and negative CE share the same high degree of involvement, but are driven and manifest in different ways.

Customers can become negatively engaged for a number of reasons, including to take 'vengeance' on a brand, as a means of reducing a consumption related loss and anxiety, and to warn other customers about product/service failures (Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2015; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Dolan et al., 2016a; Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016). Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs (2016) conduct a qualitative inquiry into engagement types of millennials on social media, segmenting negatively engaged customers on the basis of motivation. 'Moralists' retaliate when a brand is seen to act against personal or ethical values, whereas 'hard-feelers', becoming negatively engaged in response to customer mistreatment and product/service failure (see Figure 2.3.1). Dolan et al., (2016a), provide a similar typology of CE behaviours in social media that are segmented by intensity (low-high) and valence (positive-negative). Their typology can be seen in Figure 2.8.1.2. 'Detachment' is the lowest degree of negative behaviour, which manifests when customers temporarily or permanently cease membership on social media accounts by unlinking, unfollowing or unfriending. 'Negative contribution' is displayed through moderately negative behaviour such as writing negative comments or leaving poor reviews on a brand's social media, and 'co-destruction' is the strongest form of negative CE behaviours (Dolan et al., 2016a).

Figure 2.8.1.2 Customer engagement behaviours in social media (Dolan et al., 2016a)



The concept of value co-destruction parallels with co-creation, yet, encompasses the range of customer *misbehaviours* that arise in response to negative brand experiences and perceptions (Gebauer, Fuller and Pezzei, 2013; Plé and Cáceres, 2010; Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2015). These include: spreading negative WOM; boycotting and protesting against an organisation; venting anger and frustration; starting conflicts with other community members; engaging in a 'doppelgänger effect' whereby customers re-create brand images by distorting them in ways that harm its reputation; reporting a Brand's Facebook page for misconduct; and creating alias online accounts or "I hate…" pages as a way of recruiting other members (Dolan et al., 2016a; Gebauer, Fuller and Pezzei, 2013; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). Although the conceptual typologies created by Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs (2016) and Dolan et al. (2016a) provide a preliminary grouping of negative engagement 'types', they are limited in their ability to predict the motivation

behind these types of engagement, or, what their outcome are for both the organisation and the customer.

Existing research on negative CE suggests its outcomes can have a significant detrimental effect on organisations. Hollebeek and Chen (2014) find negative CE to result in unfavourable brand attitudes and electronic WOM, which supports research by Juric Smith, and Wilks (2015) that reveals brand distrust and negative WOM to be key impacts of negative engagement. However, the lack of empirical research on negative CE means little is known of its potential outcomes (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). Whilst it may seem negative CE would be exclusively damaging for a brand, the adage 'any publicity is good publicity' may apply, as negative reviews and WOM can boost the exposure of a brand (Hollebeek et al., 2016). Furthermore, customers may benefit from a reclaimed sense of self-esteem, control and efficacy gained whilst expressing their negative thoughts, feelings and behaviours (Smith, 2013). As such, the motivations and outcomes of negative CE may be more nuanced, and, carry unique rewards benefits for both a service organisation and its customers.

2.8.2 Synthesis of Knowledge Gaps for Negative Customer Engagement

Negative CE has recently begun to be incorporated into frameworks of CE, however, it is apparent from the preceding discussion that many research gaps remain. Conceptual and theoretical confusion exists over how negative CE should be positioned: as an exact reversal of positive CE with negatively-valenced affect, cognition and behaviour (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014); on a continuum in which positive and negative CE share high involvement but manifest differently (Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016); or within a typology of positive to negative behavioural responses (Dolan et al., 2016a). This thesis addresses this gap by developing and testing a conceptual framework of negative CE involving affective cognitive and behavioural dimensions, which extends the framework developed by Hollebeek and Chen (2014) by incorporating the unique characteristics of negative CE. Secondly, the lack of empirical research means that no scales of negative CE currently exist. Subsequently, there is limited understanding of the drivers, outcomes and dimensions involved in the process of negative CE. This thesis addresses these gaps by developing a scale of negative CE's affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions using existing measures from relevant streams of literature. It

will empirically test how involvement acts as an antecedent of negative CE, and how negative CE drives the outcome of WOM. Negative CE has not been explored in relation to various engagement objects, or, across different contexts. This thesis addresses these issues by exploring negative CE in conjunction with positive and disengaged valences of CE in relation to two objects, and, in the empirical stage, across two service types.

2.9 Antecedent and Consequence Factors of Customer Engagement

The literature surrounding the antecedents and consequences of CE is disparate. Various relational drivers of CE have been explored within commercial service contexts, including involvement, trust, participation, self-brand congruity and flow (Brodie et al., 2011a; Leckie, Nyadzayo & Johnson, 2016; De Vries and Carlton, 2014). However, recent research has emphasised the need to focus more on the social determinants of CE, such as identification (Nambisan & Baron, 2007Lee, Kim and Kim, 2011; Verhagen et al., 2015; Hammedi et al., 2015). For example research in online communities by Verhagen et al. (2015) posit that the social ties customers' develop with other members through a sense of belonging, identification and reciprocity can lead to higher levels of engagement. Similarly, bonds of personal identification with a brand, and, experiencing hedonic benefits via consumption, or, from helping other customers also drives CE with a focal brand and online community (Gambetti et al., 2012; Hammedi et al., 2015). Whilst identity may serve as a relevant driver of *positive* CE within a social media context, and arguably, towards the 'community' object in Local Government context, it may not be a useful predictor of positive, negative and disengaged valences of CE across both object types and service contexts. In particular, a highly social and personal construct like 'identification' may not translate to the forced and bureaucratic nature of local government services (Luoma-aho, 2015). Instead, it is more conceivable for a customer to be cognisant of their involvement with the local government more so than their sense of identity, or, the hedonistic value gained from their service experiences. In light of this, involvement is chosen as the focal antecedent given its relevance and application to each engagement valence. That is, a positively engaged customer may experience high levels of involvement (Islam & Rahman, 2016; Leckie, Nyadzayo & Johnson, 2016), yet, a disengaged customer may feel less involved with their service provider (Dutot and Mosconi, 2016; Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016). Additionally, a negatively engaged customer may be highly involved, but the outcome

of this involvement leads to the co-destruction of service value (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016). Further, involvement has been noted as a driver of all three valences of CE in prior literature, which supported its use in this thesis. A detailed discussion and justification of involvement as a key antecedent to CE is provided in section 2.9.1.

A number of relational outcomes of CE have also been proposed, including trust, loyalty, satisfaction, self-brand connections, affective commitment, brand value (Brodie et al., 2011a; Pansari and Kumar, 2017; Maslowska, Malthouse and Collinger, 2016; France, Merrilees and Miller, 2016; Pansari and Kumar, 2016). In particular, brand loyalty is noted as a significant outcome of CE (Brodie et al., 2011; Brodie et al., 2013; Gummerus et al., 2012; Leckie, Nyadzayo and Johnson, 2016). Loyalty can be measured as behavioural manifestation (e.g. repeat purchase, purchase frequency), or as an attitude (a sense of brand attachment and *intention* to repurchase) (Leckie, Myadzayo and Johnson, 2016; Vivek et al., 2012). Loyalty is often used as a key CE outcome within commercial service contexts given its importance in generating revenue, enhancing brand equity and increasing sales volume (Leckie, Myadzayo and Johnson, 2016; Vivek et al., 2012; France, Merrilees and Miller, 2016). However, loyalty was not considered the most appropriate outcome of CE given the nature of the social service context. Unlike commercial services, local governments represents a highly bureaucratic, forced and monopolistic exchange with high barriers to exit (Liljander and Strandvik, 1995; Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann, 2015). As such, customers exist may exist in a false sense of 'loyalty' as they continue to use the services of their local government regardless of whether they have a positive, disengaged or negative valence of engagement with the service relationship. Instead, Word-of-Mouth (WOM) was considered to be a more suitable and relevant outcome of CE given its applicability to a wider range of services. That is, WOM can be captured in a more uniform way across distinct service types (commercial or social services) compared with other outcomes such as loyalty and brand value, which are more nuanced and context specific. A detailed discussion and justification of word-of-mouth as a key outcome of CE is provided in section 2.9.2.

It should lastly be mentioned that several constructs are presented in the literature as both potential antecedent and consequences of CE (i.e. trust, satisfaction, satisfaction, trust, rapport, commitment and interaction (Brodie et al., 201la; Gambetti et al., 2012; Hollebeek, 201lb; Tsai et al., 2012; van Doorn et al., 2010; Vivek et al., 2012). For

example, Brodie et al., (2011a) posit satisfaction and trust as antecedents of CE for existing customers, and as a consequences for new customers. Contrastingly, Van Doorn et al., (2010) position trust and satisfaction exclusively as customer-based drivers of CE, whilst Vivek et al., (2012) and Wirtz et al., (2013) position trust and satisfaction as outcomes of CE respectively. The disparity in the literature further justifies the selection of involvement and word-of-mouth as the key driver and outcome of CE, given their roles in the process of CE have a clearer grounding in the literature compared with other potential constructs mentioned above.

2.9.1 Involvement as a Driver of Customer Engagement

Involvement is defined as a customer's "perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interests" (Zaichkowsky 1985, p. 342). A service relationship must carry a degree of relevance and value for a customer in order for it to be meaningful, and, foster engagement (Kinard and Capella, 2006; Islam and Rahman, 2016a). In light of this, involvement has featured in engagement literature as a distinct but related concept that motivates a customer's attention and commitment to a service relationship (Brodie et al., 2011; Pansari and Kumar, 2017; Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014). Specifically, whilst involvement indicates the degree of relevance and importance a relationship holds to customers, CE extends mere involvement by encompassing the co-creative and interactive nature of service relationships in which customers create both experiential and instrumental value from service encounters (Mollen and Wilson, 2010; Brodie et al., 2011; Pansari and Kumar, 2017). Involvement has been positioned as an important driver of engagement, as customers are more likely to pay attention to brand communications and devote higher levels of cognitive processing while interpreting and comprehending brand messages (Islam and Rahman, 2016a; Bowden, 2009a; So, King and Sparks, 2014). This heightened interest can surround a particular brand, a brand community, or in some cases, span to the entire product category in which the brand is situated (Bowden, 2009a; De Vries and Carlton, 2014; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015; Dwivedi et al., 2016). As such, involved customers are seen to have intensified engagement with many aspects of a service relationship (So et al., 2016).

Although the relationship between involvement and engagement has been explored conceptually (Brodie et al., 2011; Pansari and Kumar, 2017), it has only recently been

empirically tested. Table 2.9.1 provides a summary of quantitative empirical works exploring involvement as a driver in the process of positive CE.

Table 2.9.1. Empirical Research on Involvement as an Antecedent of Positive CE

Authors	**Role of involvement**	**Engagement Outcomes**
Islam & Rahman (2016a)	Involvement as an antecedent to CE	WOM and trust
Leckie, Nyadzayo & Johnson (2016)	Involvement, participation and self-expressive brand as drivers of CE dimensions: affect, cognition and activation	Loyalty
So et al. (2016)	Involvement as driver of CE dimensions: identification, enthusiasm, attention, absorption and interaction	Brand relationship quality (trust & satisfaction) and brand loyalty
France, Merilees and Miller (2016)	Involvement and brand-self congruity as part of 'customer centred influences' that drive CE	Loyalty and brand value
Dwivedi, Wilkie, Johnson and Weerawardena (2016)	Brand category involvement as a driver of brand engagement behaviours: collecting information, participating in marketing activities and interacting with others	Willingness to pay premium price
Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie (2014)	Consumer involvement as a driver of CE dimensions: affect, activation and cognition	Self-brand connections and loyalty
De Vries and Carlton (2014)	Brand involvement and self-brand congruity as part of a 'brand strength' construct that drives CE with BFP (brand Facebook pages)	Brand loyalty

Several works examine CE as a mediator between involvement and outcomes such as loyalty, WOM and trust. Recent research by Islam and Rahman (2016a) explore the role of involvement as driver of positive CE in Facebook, revealing the influence of involvement on WOM and trust to be mediated by CE. That is, the customers who are not merely involved, but actively engaged, were more likely to demonstrate WOM and trust. This supports research by Leckie, Nyadzayo and Johnson (2016) who explore how involvement drives positive CE in the context of Australian mobile phone providers. A partial mediation was found between involvement and the dimensions of affect, cognition and behaviour leading to repeat purchase intention. So et al. (2016) also examine positive CE as a mediator between involvement and relationship quality and loyalty. They find positive CE, measured through dimensions of identification, enthusiasm, attention,

absorption and interaction, to be a significant mediator between a customer's involvement and loyalty, and relationship quality with retail store brands.

Other studies focus on involvement purely as a driver of positive CE. France, Merilees and Miller (2016) reveal involvement to be a driver of positive CE across various product and service categories. This supports research by De Vries and Carlton (2014) that finds involvement as a component of 'brand strength' to positively influence CE in Facebook brand pages. Similarly, Dwivedi et al. (2016) find product category involvement, defined as a customer's enduring sense of relevance and interest in a product category, to be a significant driver of brand engagement in the context of Australian tablet device users. In their seminal paper on engagement in social media, Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie (2014) also find involvement to have a varied effect on the CE dimensions of activation, affection and cognitive processing. Specifically, involvement was the strongest driver of the affective component of CE, suggesting that a brand's perceived relevance and importance to a customer will motivate the degree to which they feel emotionally engaged. Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie (2014) also reveal a significant indirect effect between involvement and the outcomes of self-brand connection and loyalty (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014).

As can be seen in Table 2.9.1., existing research has only examined the relationship between involvement and positive CE, and has not empirically explored involvement as a driver of CD or negative CE. However, recent qualitative research suggests CD to be characterised by a loss of interest and involvement in a relationship (Dutot and Mosconi, 2016; Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016). Further, Maslowska, Malthouse and Collinger (2016) suggest disengaged customers spend no resources on engaging in an exchange, instead choosing to silently 'critique' a provider and ignore the relationship entirely. Based on this, it may follow that low or negative levels of involvement with a service provider/community would be indicative of a customer's disengagement from the relationship (Dutot and Mosconi, 2016; Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016; Maslowska, Malthouse and Collinger, 2016). Involvement has also been qualitatively explored as a driver of negative CE. Hollebeek and Chen (2014) and Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs (2016) find positive and negative CE are both motivated by a high degree of interest and involvement, but manifest in different ways to exert a positive or negative impact on a service relationship.

This thesis will explore involvement as a driver of positive, negative and disengaged valences of CE. In so doing, it will uncover if involvement can serve as a shared driver of strongly valenced positive and negative CE, and a weak driver of CD, or, if it has an opposing effect on different types of engagement. This will help clarify if positive and negative valences of CE can be observed as 'two sides of the same coin', or whether there are more conceptually distinct phenomena that require unique drivers.

2.9.2 Word-of-Mouth as an Outcome of CE

Word-of-mouth (WOM) is defined as "informal, person-to-person communication between a perceived non-commercial communicator and a receiver regarding a brand, a product, an organization, or a service" (Harrison-Walker, 2001, p. 63). The changing landscape of the customer experience has expanded WOM beyond physical conversations to encompass electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), which is spread through a range of digital platforms including online communities and social media (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010; Islam and Rahman, 2016a; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). To this end, eWOM is defined as "any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet" (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004, p.39).

Positively engaged customers are more willing to advocate a brand and act as unofficial 'spokespersons' when discussing positive feedback and experiences with others (Pansari and Kumar, 2017; Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012). Favourable WOM is therefore a desired outcome of brand relationships, as it serves as 'outsourced' advertising that creates more trustworthy perceptions of a brand among current and potential customers (Harrison-Walker, 2001). Customers often perceive WOM to be more credible compared to brand initiated communication, and positive WOM can thus transform neutral brand attitudes into stronger, more positive ones among customer networks (Harrison-Walker, 2001; Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012). This credibility is crucial in service relationships, and in particular, complex services whereby perceptions of risk are heightened (File et al., 1992).

Several recent studies have explored WOM as an outcome of positive CE. Qualitative research by Vivek, Beatty and Morgan (2012) find positive CE (measured through affect, cognition, behaviour and social dimensions) to drive favourable WOM. This supports research by Hollebeek and Chen (2014) that finds positive and negative CE to result in favourable and unfavourable eWOM respectively in virtual brand communities. There is limited quantitative empirical research on the relationship between positive CE and WOM. Although Vivek et al. (2014) establish discriminate validity between their measure of positive CE and WOM (Harrison-Walker, 2001), they do not test the relationship between the two. However, a recent study by Islam and Rahman (2016a) finds positive CE to be a strong driver of WOM activity within Facebook communities. They find engaged customers are more likely to recommend and say positive things about a brand community, and encourage friends to participate and interact within the community (Islam and Rahman, 2016a).

Less is known of how negative valences of CE may drive unfavourable WOM. Negative WOM can damage a service relationship due to loss of trust and reputability which can lead to brand switching and loss of repeat purchase (Richins, 1983; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Ferguson and Johnston, 2011). Unfavourable WOM can have a weighted impact on customers' brand evaluations, as negative information is considered more salient than positive information when making purchasing decisions (Richins, 1987; Ferguson and Johnston, 2011). Unfavourable WOM has been conceptually explored as a behavioural manifestation of negative CE (Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2015; van Doorn et al., 2010). Juric, Smith and Wilks (2015) suggest negatively engaged customers exhibit negative WOM in response to poor customer service, dissatisfaction, unethical brand behaviour, and as a way to take vengeance on an organisation. This supports prior research by van Doorn et al. (2010) who suggest spreading negative WOM is a way for customers to express their negative engagement. To the author's knowledge, only one study has explored the relationship between negative CE and WOM. Qualitative research by Hollebeek and Chen (2014) reveals eWOM to be a key outcome of negative CE in brand communities. Furthermore, they suggest the impact of negative eWOM to be greater than positive eWOM on outcomes such as product sales. This supports previous research that highlights the asymmetrical impact of negative vs. positive WOM for a range of brand outcomes (e.g. De Matos and Rossi, 2008; Ferguson and Johnston, 2011).

CD is unlikely to be a strong predictor of WOM given the reluctance of disengaged customers to voice their dislike towards a service brand or community (Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016; Dutot and Mosconi, 2016; Khuhro et al., 2017). Disengaged customers feel that expressing their opinions and experiences to others to be pointless (Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016) and subsequently invest few resources into thinking about, acting upon or discussing the relationship (Dutot and Mosconi, 2016; Khuhro et al., 2017). As such, it is suggested that CD will be a weak driver of WOM.

The outcome of WOM will be conceptualised in its neutral valence, which is in keeping with recent engagement research by Vivek et al. (2014) that measures WOM as a type of communication rather than a positive or negative construct. This thesis is concerned with the extent to which positive, disengaged and negative valences of CE motivate customers to discuss a service brand or community with others. As such, using a valenced measure of WOM may produce a biased result of the relationship between the different types of CE and WOM. This thesis will measure 'WOM Activity' as the outcome variable of CE, as it focuses on the frequency, number of people and amount of information shared about an object as opposed to whether that information is positively or negatively valenced (Harrison-Walker, 2001; De Matos and Rossi, 2008).

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter began by identifying the importance of CE and its theoretical development from the Relationship Marketing and S-D Logic literature. The construct of CE in its neutral valence was introduced to the reader and approaches to its measurement were discussed, including: 1) the tri-dimensional framework of affect, cognition and behaviour 2) the moderating role of object type on the valence of CE, and 3) the application of CE within a local government context. Following this, a detailed discussion of positive, disengaged and negative valences of CE was presented. Literature concerning the antecedent factor of involvement, and the outcome of WOM were considered in light of their role in the development of the three valences of CE. Throughout this review, knowledge gaps in the literature were identified and synthesised. By the conclusion of this chapter, a broad theoretical foundation for the study of the development of positive,

disengaged and negative valences of CE had been discussed. Based on this foundation, Chapter 3 builds the conceptual model and research propositions for this study.

Chapter Three

Conceptual and Qualitative Model and Research Propositions Guiding the Inquiry

Chapter Three: Conceptual and Qualitative Model and Research Propositions Guiding the Inquiry

3.1 Introduction

While the previous chapter provided the theoretical foundation for the study of customer engagement, this chapter presents the conceptual model and research propositions guiding the inquiry. The first of these themes provides a qualitative investigation into the nature and dimensions of positive, disengaged and negative valences of CE, and explores the effect they have on overall service value. A second related theme examines these three valences in relation to dual engagement objects, being the focal service organisation, and, the service community. The third research theme applies this exploration within a new social sector context, being Australian Local Governments. To date, a comprehensive model of how positive, negative and disengaged valences manifest towards dual objects, and within a social service has not been presented in the literature. The development of this model therefore represents a significant contribution to marketing theory and practice.

This chapter is presented in the form of two manuscripts in their original journal, and conference article format. Both manuscripts have been accepted for publication and/or have been published. The first manuscript is a journal article which has been accepted for publication in the Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics. The second is a conference proceeding, which was presented at the Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy Annual Conference in Griffith University, Brisbane, QLD, Australia, December, 2014.

This chapter is comprised of the following co-authored articles:

1. **TITLE**: Exploring Customer Engagement Valences in the Social Services

   AUTHORS: Kay Naumann (60%) Jana Bowden (30%) Mark Gabbott (10%)

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2. **TITLE**: Conceptualising customer engagement, disengagement and wellbeing within local government services: A transformative service approach|
   AUTHORS: Kay Naumann and Jana Bowden

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   STATUS: Published December, 2014

3.2 ARTICLE

Exploring Customer Engagement Valences in the Social Services

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Exploring Customer Engagement Valences in the Social Services

Abstract

Purpose: Minimal attention is given to the negative valences of customer engagement and how they detract from service value. This study aims to uncover the meaning and conceptual dimensions of disengagement and negative engagement in conjunction with positive engagement. It explores how these three engagement valences manifest towards dual objects: the service community and the focal service organisation. This exploration is based within a new and novel social service context.

Methodology: A qualitative approach using (4) focus groups is used.

Findings: A conceptual model of customer engagement is derived from the groups showcasing: strongly-held and positive customer engagement; passive, yet negatively-orientated customer disengagement; and active and destructive negative customer engagement. Positive customer engagement is found to be directed at the service community object, whereas customer disengagement and negative engagement are directed at the focal service organisation object. A 'spillover' effect is revealed whereby negative engagement with the focal service organisation detracts from customers' positive engagement within their service community. This suggests that engagement within a social service is multifaceted, and several engagement valences may exist within one service relationship.

Originality: This is the first article to apply three valences of engagement within the one focal relationship and examine how they manifest towards dual objects, providing a unique perspective of how different interactions within the service ecosystem can influence engagement.

Key Words: Customer engagement; engagement valences; customer disengagement; negative engagement; engagement objects; social services.

Type: Research Paper

Introduction

Customers are motivated to engage within a service relationship for a number of reasons. Customers may demonstrate *positive* engagement, defined as "positively-valenced brand-related cognitive, emotional and behavioral activity during or related to focal consumer/brand interactions" (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014, p.154), out of self-interest in order to maximise consumption or relational benefits, to acquire news skills, or obtain incentives (Van Eijk and Steen, 2014; van Doorn *et al*., 2010). Others engage for more altruistic reasons to help other customers, offer advice and suggestions for improvement, or assist employees to better perform their job (van Doorn *et al.,* 2010). Customers may also engage with a brand and its brand community in order to build social networks, find a sense of belonging or to create a shared brand identity (Kumar *et al.*, 2010). Considerable advancements have been made in the literature on positive customer engagement, however, a number of opportunities exist to expand the theoretical and operational application of the engagement concept (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015, 2016; Hollebeek *et al.*, 2016).

Firstly, it must be acknowledged that not all engagement, or the motivation behind it, is positive (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2015). Yet, the literature largely focuses on positive customer engagement and has limited application in exploring how engagement can manifest in more negatively-valenced ways (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). As such, there is a dearth in the literature exploring the negative valences of customer engagement (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Dolan *et al.*, 2017). Customers may demonstrate *negative customer engagement*, defined as " unfavorable brand-related thoughts, feelings, and behaviors during focal brand interactions" (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014, p. 63) to vent their frustration and anger with a brand; as a means of self-preservation during stressful or unpleasant service encounters;

or, as is the case within social services, to bond with others by demonstrating an ideological viewpoint against an organisation (Yi and Bauermauter, 2004; Van Eijk and Steen, 2014; Vohra and Bhardwaj, 2016). Further, customers may not always display strongly positive or negative engagement, but may be *disengaged* from a service relationship (Dutot and Mosconi, 2016; Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016; Quintal *et al.*, 2016). Customer disengagement is defined as "a customer's physical, cognitive and emotional absence in their relationship with a service withdraw from a service relationship (Dolan *et al.*, 2017; Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann, 2015; Dutot and Mosconi, 2016; Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016). In order to understand service relationships in their entirety, we propose that *negative customer engagement* and *customer disengagement* should be conceptualised and examined in conjunction with positive customer engagement (Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs. 2016). This is because service relationships are multifaceted, and customers can be positively *and* negatively engaged with different aspects of a service relationship (Bowden *et al.* 2017; Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016).

The contextual application of customer engagement also needs expansion (Hollebeek et al., 2016). Thus far, the exploration of customer engagement, or CE, has revolved around commercial services as opposed to social and public services (So, King and Sparks, 2014; Gummerus *et al.*, 2012). There are calls for research to branch away from exploring only those 'extraordinary events' germane to commercial services to consider how customers engage with a range of service types, including those in the public sector (McColl-Kennedy *et al.*, 2015). Researchers are being urged to consider how customers engage with services where the option to 'buy-into' the relationship is not given, such as being a healthcare patient, within compulsory public services, or in other forced exchanges (McColl-Kennedy *et al.*, 2015). This is echoed in service

ecosystem literature, which expands the notion of the 'service context' to reflect the diversity of institutions that customers encounter throughout their lives (Akaka and Vargo, 2015). CE is contextually contingent, highly interactive and experiential, and thus its operation is best understood in light of the environment in which it is being applied (Brodie et al., 2011; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015, 2016; Dolan *et al.*, 2017). As such, the broad contextual application of CE has created an "urgent need in the service literature to account more fully for the influence of context and experience on customer engagement" (Chandler and Lusch, 2015, p.9). A secondary aim of this paper is to therefore explore CE valences within a new and novel social service.

Social services can be privately or publically owned, and include non-profit, charitable and government agencies concerned with enhancing the well-being of their users (Anderson *et al.*, 2013, 2015; Gainer and Padanyi, 2005). This article focus specifically on local governments, which provides services such as community infrastructure, waste management, parks and recreation, tourism management, youth services, crime prevention, library and education services and aged care. Local governments are a complex service given variety of services they provide, their exposure to macro environmental and stakeholder influences, and their obligation to cater to the needs of a diverse customer base (Holmes, 2011; Ryan *et al.*, 2015).

Despite customer engagement being a concept that is "critical to the success" of public sector enterprises, few studies have examined CE within these types of services (Sashi, 2012, p. 255). The application of CE within a local government context joins the emerging research exploring CE within more diverse settings such as nursing homes (Verleye, Gemmel and Rangarajan, 2014); public transportation services (Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014); and higher education (Jarvis *et al.*, 2014). Applying CE within a multifaceted local government context also contributes to emerging literature on dual

engagement objects, as it allows us to examine multiple valences of engagement in relation to two objects: the Local Government 'brand' that provides the services, and, the wider local community governed by that brand.

To summarise, this paper makes two main contributions. Firstly, it develops, defines and conceptualises three different CE valences including positive engagement, disengagement and negative engagement. Secondly, it explores the way in which these valences manifest within local government services, which allows for an exploration of how engagement operates within a dynamic and multi-stakeholder social service environment. It also examines the impact of these valences on overall service value, which provides service managers with a more holistic approach to conceptualising, measuring and monitoring the health of their customer relationships.

This article begins with a review of the literature on positive, disengaged and negative valences of CE, and, how they can be applied within a social service. The method is then described, followed by the findings and discussions of positive engagement, disengagement and negative engagement. Finally, a discussion of the theoretical and managerial implications of this study is provided.

Expanding the Engagement Concept

CE has remained an important area of research since its introduction to mainstream services marketing literature (Brodie *et al.*, 2011; Lemon, 2013; Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014). CE is conceptualised in a number of ways including as a: process (Brodie *et al.*, 2011); behaviour (van Doorn *et al.*, 2010); cycle (Sashi, 2012); and in terms of engagement 'value' (Kumar *et al.*, 2010). Some define engagement as a psychological state involving specific relational drivers (e.g., Brodie *et al.*, 2011; Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012), while others explore engagement in terms of its behavioural

manifestations (e.g., Kumar *et al.,* 2010; van Doorn *et al.,* 2010). The most widely-accepted definition of CE remains that by Brodie *et al.,* (2011, p. 260) who define engagement as:

"The psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, co-creative customer experiences with a focal agent/object (e.g., a brand) in focal service relationships. It occurs under a specific set of context dependent conditions generating differing customer engagement levels; and exists as a dynamic, iterative process within service relationships that co-create value".

To date the literature has skewed towards the positive manifestations of CE. Positive CE aggregates both firm-focused and customer-initiated processes through which value is co-created in a service relationship (Gummerus *et al.,* 2012; Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014; Bijmolt *et al.,* 2010; Benjarongrat and Neal, 2017). Positive CE captures the range of positive thoughts feelings and behaviours a customer holds towards a relationship, and is thus considered more transcending compared to related contrasts of involvement and participation (Pansari and Kumar, 2017; Brodie *et al.,* 2011). Positive CE can benefit service organisations though outcomes such as customer loyalty, affective commitment, satisfaction, self-brand identity and connection, and positive service reputation (Benjarongrat and Neal, 2017; Brodie *et al.,* 2011; Bijmolt *et al.,* 2010; Vivek *et al.,* 2014). Customers are motivated to become positively engaged based on a number of factors, including the history of their service interactions, the current valence of their engagement (positive/negative), as well as the anticipated propensity for future engagement (Chandler and Lusch, 2015; Hollebeek *et al.,* 2016).

Whilst the literature on positive CE has advanced considerably, very limited research explores how a service relationship sustains disengaged or negative

manifestations of engagement (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2015). These valences are important to understand, as not all service relationships are inherently positive (Perrin-Martinenq, 2004; Evanschitzky *et al.*, 2012). Within some contexts, the presence of negative brand relationships are "more common than positive relationships, with an average split across categories of 55%/45% for negative and positive relationships, respectively" (Fournier and Alavarez, 2012, p.253). The need to understand negative valences of CE is supported by Morgan and Hunt (1994, p. 33) who state: "just as medical science should understand both sickness and health, marketing science should understand both functional and dysfunctional relationships."

The term *disengagement* was briefly introduced into the marketing literature by Dwyer, Shurr and Oh (1987) who conceptualise it as a dissolution of a buyer-seller relationship, capable of occurring at any time throughout the exchange. Since Dwyer, Shurr and Oh's (1987) initial discussion, the services marketing literature has mostly ignored disengaged customers who do not display overtly negative cues, but who are emotionally, cognitively and behaviourally 'absent' from the relationship (Khuhro *et al.*, 2017; Maslowska, Malthouse and Collinger, 2016; Hamzelu *et al.*, 2017). Yet, research by Chebat, Davidow and Codjovi (2005) suggests that up to two-thirds of dissatisfied customers fall into a disengaged segment, who take no action against a service provider in the wake of service failures. According to Khuhro *et al.*, (2017) this 'inaction' can take a physical, cognitive and emotional form. Customers can refuse to interact with a service by ignoring the provider and becoming emotionally 'estranged' from the brand entirely (Khuhro *et al.*, 2017; Quintal *et al.*, 2016). subsequently, disengaged customers can be 'silent killers' who refuse to complain directly to service organisations and instead allow conditions to worsen in a dissatisfactory relationship (Hamzelu *et al.*, 2017).

Research by Evanschitzky *et al.* (2012) explores the motivation behind a consumer's journey to disengagement through three stages: 'disillusion', which stems from ambiguity about what a brand can and cannot deliver; 'disaffection', when a customer focuses on the negative attributes of their current brand in relation to the positive traits of the alternatives; and 'crossroads', when customers become disinterested and lose interest in the relationship entirely. The theme of disinterest in Evanschitzky et al.'s (2012) 'crossroads' stage is supported by Yi and Baumgartner (2004), who note that *mentally disengaged* consumers try to forget their brand experience through denial and escape/avoidance techniques, whereas *behaviourally disengaged* customers cope by regarding the situation as unchangeable and giving up further efforts to improve their brand relationship. As such, disengaged customers will neglect a service provider by ignoring the problem and allowing the situation to worsen (Goode, 2012; Quintal *et al.*, 2012). Although customer disengagement, or CD, may manifest through more neutral themes of indifference and apathy, the motivation behind CD stems from a customer's need to self-preserve by withdrawing in the wake of service failures (Kahn, 1990; Goode, 2012). This is supported by White, Breazeal and Webster (2012) who find customers to disengage by becoming 'passive offenders' when a relationship acts as a conduit for negative thoughts or emotions. CD is thus considered be driven by a history of failed service encounters that cause customers to display coping mechanisms as means of self-defence and preservation (Kahn, 1990; Yu and Baumgartner, 2004).

Gaining a further understanding of how CD manifests is important, as once customers are committed to this orientation a negative confirmation bias may develop which is difficult to reverse (Chebat, Davidow and Codjovi, 2005; Liljander and Strandvik, 1995; Dolan *et al.*, 2017). Uncovering the triggers and characteristics of CD may therefore enable service managers to devise strategies to prevent customers from

becoming disengaged, or even, restore a sense of positive engagement among this segment.

Whilst CD involves more passive responses, *negative CE* manifests through highly active cues such as: negative (WOM); co-opting others to adopt a particular attitudinal and/or behavioural position about a provider; demonstrating brand switching, avoidance and rejection; as well as retaliation and revenge behaviours (Hollebeek and Chen, 2013; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2015). Negative CE is conceptualised as a negatively-valenced manifestation of engagement consisting of cognitive, emotional and behavioural components (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). Negative CE is more extreme than disengagement as it involves premeditated, activated and dedicated expressions of negativity towards various aspects of a service relationship. Customers who are negatively engaged with a service provider are still involved in their relationships, yet the outcomes of their engagement have a *detrimental* impact on service value (Hollebeek and Chen, 2013, 2014; van Doorn *et al.,* 2010). The strong emotional aspect of negative CE also carries the risk of creating a 'spillover' effect onto other customers (Surachartkumtonkun, McColl-Kennedy and Patterson, 2015; Bowden *et al.,* 2017). Negative CE is thus important to identify and understand as experiencing negative emotions, behaviours and cognitions can be distressing for customers and detract from overall service value (Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2015).

Although there is a lack of research exploring the negative valences of CE, a handful of studies exploring the 'dark side' of service relationships exist in parallel streams of research. Frow *et al.* (2011) identify ten triggers that antagonise customers, which range from: provider dishonesty, information misuse and privacy invasion; to unfair customer favouritism, misleading or lock-in contracts and financial exploitation. A number of these behaviours are reflected in the abusive and adversarial relationship

types developed by Fournier, Miller and Allen (2012). Abusive relationships occur when customers feel powerless, under-valued and exploited, whereby adversarial relationships develop due to value incongruence, a strong hatred of the product/service brand and perceptions of rivalry with other liked/loved brands (Fournier, Miller and Allen, 2012). These behaviours can cause customers to retaliate through excessive complaining, deliberate service misuse and spreading negative WOM.

Recent research also investigates the dark side of co-creation, which is pertinent given the centrality of co-creation to the engagement concept (Brodie *et al.,* 2011; Hollebeek *et al.,* 2016). Gebauer, Fuller and Pezzei (2013) find that perceived unfairness and dissatisfaction with brand decisions can cause members of an online brand community to demonstrate a range of 'misbehaviours' leading to the co-destruction of service value. These include: spreading negative WOM; venting anger and frustration; starting conflicts with other community members; engaging in a 'doppelgänger effect' whereby customers re-create brand images by distorting them in ways that harm its reputation; and creating alias online accounts to spread brand hatred using multiple profiles as a way of recruiting other members (Gebauer, Fuller and Pezzei, 2013; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). Park, Eisingerich and Park (2013) reveal customers become angry and hostile towards brands when their sense of autonomy and efficacy within the relationship diminishes. Interestingly, this negativity can occur irrespective of relationship closeness, that is, customers do not have to be in a close relationship with a brand in order for them to develop negative thoughts, feelings and behaviours (Park, Eisingerich and Park, 2013). Despite the detrimental nature of negative engagement, the literature surrounding its operation and conceptualisation is sparse and research is needed to uncover its drivers, hallmarks and outcomes, and their implications for service

organisations (van Doorn *et al.*, 2010; Brodie and Hollebeek, 2011; Hollebeek *et al.*, 2016).

In light of the above, it appears engagement research needs to be broadened to include its positive, negative and disengaged valences (Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016). This article views these three CE types to be discrete but related states that sit within a broader process of customer engagement. This conceptualisation is in line with Hollebeek, Srivastava and Chen (2016, p.4) who state: "CE and its associated intensity and valence (e.g., positive/negative) at a particular time as a state, with a series of aggregated CE states accumulating to a broader CE process". Exploring these new negative valences in conjunction with positive engagement provides a more holistic and complete account of the dynamic and transitory nature of service relationships (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). Importantly, it also allows management to explore the strategic implications of these varying engagement states for service value at an individual level, as well as the health of the overall service relationship (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016).

This paper uses a qualitative approach to develop a conceptual model of positive engagement, customer disengagement and negative engagement, which will be applied within a social service context. Social services are a unique and useful context in which to broaden the contextual application of engagement, and, explore how multiple valences manifest towards dual objects within a relationship.

Social services form an important part of consumers' lives, yet this sector is often overlooked within services marketing literature (Anderson *et al.*, 2013; Wright *et al.*, 2012). Social services differ from the commercial sector due to the heightened potential

to positively and negatively influence consumers' lives (Anderson *et al.*, 2013, 2015; Donovon, 2011). Social services often involve a number of interdependent service actors which allows customers to be engaged with multiple touch points simultaneously (Donovon, 2011; Wright *et al.*, 2012; Anderson *et al.*, 2013). This aligns with current CE literature, which is realising the ability for customers to have *multiple* points of focus, or objects, of engagement (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015, 2016; Lee, Kim and Kim, 2011; Bowden *et al.*, 2017).

This study explores CE within a social service, which is operationalised in this article as local governments. Customers encounter and use municipal services daily, yet, local governments have "not received research attention in the service literature in proportion to their importance in people's lives… despite the fact that cities have always provided extensive community service systems" (Freund, Spohrer and Messinger, 2013, p. 38). Local governments are the third tier of governance in Australia, and are charged with providing services that enhance the social, cultural and environmental well-being of their municipal customers (Dollery and Johnson, 2005). They offer a wide range of services, including community safety, parks and recreation services; provision of local healthcare; youth and aged care; art and cultural services; local road maintenance; residential and commercial development services; and sanitary and waste services (Ryan *et al.*, 2015; Freund, Spohrer and Messinger, 2013). It is crucial for local governments to act as positive 'place shapers' in order to ensure residents have satisfaction with and attachment to their local area, as approximately 59% of Australians consider the place in which they live to reflect their sense of identity (Ryan *et al.*, 2015).

The complexity of local governments may allow a more nuanced insight into how different points of focus within a service relationship may or may not act as "simultaneous and inter-related, mutually enhancing practices" for engagement and

service value (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015, p. 39). Within this context, the dual objects of engagement have been found to include the service entity/organisation (local governing body) and the local community that benefits from the services provided by the host organisation (Putnam, 2001; Fennema, 2004). In light of this, we examine CE in relation to two objects, the focal service organisation and the service community (Dessart Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015, 2016; Bowden *et al.*, 2017).

Although useful for the exploration of engagement, the local government context is novel and its unique characteristics should be acknowledged. Firstly, the forced nature of local governments remove the power for customers to 'buy into' and 'opt out' of this relationship as they would a commercial service. As such, customers are required to have a relationship with their local government irrespective of whether they perceive a need for it (Freund, Spohrer and Messinger, 2013). In addition, switching local governments in the face of dissatisfaction is not an option for most customers, which may increase the occurrence and severity of confrontational coping behaviours, such as venting and negative WOM. Local governments are often perceived by customers to have the balance of power and control over service design and delivery, which can intensify responses of anger in response to service failures (Bougie, Pieters and Zeelenberg, 2003; Waheed and Gaur, 2012). This is confounded by the nature of the public sector, where displays of collective anger and blame towards an organisation often serve as important acts of bonding and unification among people (Luoma-aho, 2009).

Whilst these factors illuminate the novelty of the local government context, they also highlight its usefulness for exploring the duality of positive and negative manifestations of CE. For example, customers might not engage with their local community out of love for the host 'brand' as they would in a commercial service relationship. In fact, customers may hold negative thoughts and feelings towards their

local government whilst maintaining positive engagement with their community (Roskruge *et al.,* 2013; Fenemma, 2004). The nature of local governments may therefore enhance our understanding of how CE manifests differently towards dual objects within a service relationship. The next section outlines the methodology used to explore positive CE, CD, and negative CE and their impact on service value within a social service context.

Method

CE in its positive, negative and disengaged valence has seldom been explored within a social service and relying on existing literature to guide its theoretical development may mask a number of important contextual differences. In light of this, focus groups were used to uncover the characteristics of positive CE, negative CE and CD within local governments. Focus groups allow the researcher to analyse the meanings, processes and normative perceptions of the respondents and provide a deep and applied understanding of the service context being explored (Creswell, 2012). Whilst focus groups can be criticised for their small sample sizes, they allow researchers to gain detailed reflection and insight through the examination of respondents' engagement within their local government areas. This is critical for understanding the reality of service relationships in this context (Crouch and McKenzie, 2006; Creswell, 2012). The respondents were rate-paying customers of various areas within a major Australian capital City. The respondent profile is 35-60, of various ethnicities. Respondent demographics and local government areas are presented in Table 1. Significant differences between gender and age are present in the respondent profile. Females are overrepresented (86%) along with the age group 45-60 (62%). Therefore the findings may be skewed towards perceptions held by women in this age cohort. However, the respondents were from a range of council areas of varying population, geographical size

and locality, which helped to ensure a wide range of experiences with different types of councils were represented. A total of four focus groups were conducted. Using four to six focus groups falls into the acceptable 'rule of thumb' for qualitative research in order to prevent the data from becoming saturated and decreasing the moderator's predictive ability (Krueger and Casey, 2014; Morgan, 1996). This is supported by Kitzinger (1994) who regards four or five groups as adequate when working with particular or specialised populations. The number of focus groups used appears appropriate given the new and novel nature of this study.

Table 1: Respondent Profile

Items	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
Gender		
Male	4	14%
Female	24	86%
Age		
35-45	9	32%
45-60	19	68%
Council Area		
Roseville	5	17.86%
Mosman	4	14.29%
Ryde	3	10.71%
Ku-ring-gai	3	10.71%
Warringah	2	7.14%
Maitland	2	7.14%
North Sydney	2	7.14%
Lane Cove	2	7.14%
Hornsby	1	3.57%
Willoughby	1	3.57%
Sydney	1	3.57%
Manly	1	3.57%

Pittwater	1	3.57%

A sound qualitative inquiry aims to achieve a degree of trustworthiness, quality and rigour despite the limitations that qualitative studies have in achieving these criteria (Shenton, 2004; Golafshani, 2003). According to Guba (1981) reliability and validity in qualitative research can be addressed though ensuring credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Shenton, 2004). A qualitative inquiry is considered credible if the data provides an accurate picture of the phenomenon being investigated. This can be achieved by using appropriate research methods that suit the field of study (Guba, 1981). Focus groups are used often within service marketing literature and suit the exploratory nature of the study. The moderator, who is the first author, used reflective commentary and iterative questioning throughout the discussions to aid in honest and authentic responses (Guba, 1981). A main objective of this study is to uncover the structures and themes surrounding positive engagement, disengagement and negative engagement and how these valences manifest towards dual engagement objects. Respondents were therefore asked to share and discuss their engagement within their local government relationship, which allowed them to explore common feelings, thoughts and perceptions with other respondents (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989). This discussion was facilitated further with word and image association tasks which helped the researchers explore the customers' underlying motivations, attitudes, values and perceptions. Lastly, the credibility of this study was addressed by using previous research on positive, disengaged and negative valences of engagement to help frame the findings (Guba, 1981).

A study is considered transferable if its results can be generalisable to a larger population (Golafshani, 2003). It is impossible for qualitative research to be 'truly'

generalisable given the nature of qualitative inquiry which is usually small scale and heavily influenced by contextual factors (Shelton, 2004). However, a researcher may help others assess the transferability of the findings by providing adequate information on: the context; the methods and techniques used to analyse the data; and the factors that may impede the study's generalisability. Outlining the boundaries and limitations of the research also aids in assessing the transferability of a study's results. The information on these factors is provided in the research approach and within the limitations section of the paper.

Dependability is achieved if a similar result would arise if the study was repeated with the same respondents using the same context and methods (Shelton, 2004). Likewise with transferability and credibility, qualitative researchers are limited in their ability to achieve true dependability. The dependability of the findings is addressed by having the second author cross-analyse the data (Guba, 1998). Lastly, confirmability is ensured if an investigator takes all steps possible to guarantee the results are reflective of the respondents' lived experiences and perceptions, as opposed to the investigator's bias or preference for the framework (Golafshani, 2003). In order to achieve this, the respondents are encouraged to take part in open and unstructured discussions about their engagement to avoid a rigid research agenda being imposed (Lahteenoja and Pirtila-Backman, 2005).

The data was analysed using NVivo 10, a qualitative analytic program which allows for coding and thematic development. In line with recommendations from Bazeley and Jackson (2013) a broad thematic node structure was developed using the verbatim, which was then further analysed, reviewed and condensed into more structured themes for each valence of customer engagement. Analysis was undertaken by the first two authors, who are trained in qualitative data interpretation. A key objective of this

stage was to elucidate the characteristics of positive engagement, disengagement and negative engagement in relation to two objects. This process enabled the data to be linked to specific ideas and assisted the authors to categorise the different engagement types. Descriptive and interpretive frameworks were then formed in Nvivo 10 surrounding the fabric and nature of positive engagement, disengagement and negative engagement. The next section reports the findings of the study and presents a number of research propositions.

Results and Discussion

The groups reveal that dual engagement objects, being the community and the focal service organisation, did exist simultaneously which supports research within engagement literature (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015); as well as local government literature (Fenemma, 2004; Roskruge, 2013). Respondents identify these dual engagement objects to be their relationships with other customers, seen as their 'community' object, and their relationship with local government, regarded as the 'focal service organisation' object.

However, unlike prior engagement research by Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas (2015, 2016) that reveals these dual engagement objects to be mutually enhancing for positive engagement, within the current study, these objects hold opposite propensities for engagement valences. Namely, positive engagement is found to be directed exclusively towards the service community, whereas negative engagement is found to exist in customers' exchanges with the focal service entity.

Positive Customer Engagement

It is revealed that CE within a social context manifests through affective, social and communal-based concepts such as generalised and affective trust, reciprocity, altruism, knowledge sharing and feelings of belongingness.

> *"Once you start meeting people in the community it becomes your community. You get to share it with people and that's what makes it become a community for you."* Focus group 4, Female

> *"We have street parties and we go to lunch and have them for lunch and babysit and stuff like that."* Focus group 4, Female

> *"When you're in the community and meeting people you suddenly find out there's a kayak group. There's lots of other areas you find out that they drop their kayaks there and do water sports and leisure activities there. You just learn more and more about your area through meeting people and sharing your stories."* Focus group 1, Female

This aspect of positive CE is reflective of social capital, a type of collective value created within social structures that establishes norms of trustworthiness, reciprocity, security and belonging (Putnam, 2001; Zwass *et al.*, 2012). Positive CE thus appears to benefit multiple actors within the service ecosystem by creating shared norms of respect, trust and participation (Lee, Eze and Oly, 2012). Customers are motivated to engage within their service community for solidary reasons (to find group identification and sense of belonging) and to obtain expressive benefits (satisfaction from contributing to worthwhile cause) (Kaltcheva *et al.*, 2014; Van Eijk and Steen, 2014).

Another characteristic of CE is reflected in respondents' willingness to co-create within their community by sharing resources, volunteering ideas and helping others

(Kaltcheva *et al.*, 2014; Mitchell and Imrie, 2011). These is reflective of 'autonomous' co-creation, which occurs when "consumer communities produce marketable value in voluntary activities conducted independently of any established organization, although they may be using platforms provided by such organizations" (Zwass *et al.*, 2012, p. 11). This co-creation served as a mechanism through which customers added psychological, safety and social value to their community by collaborating with others and sharing experiences.

> *"There's a level of respect for the community that you're in and people want to contribute."* Focus group 4, Female

> *"Everyone looks out for each other's children and I often see kids that I know and they might not be with their parents and you keep an eye out for them so there's someone they know nearby. It happens all the time. And then you share those stories when you see your friends next. And that's a big part of the community too because they know so many people and we all look out for each other."* Focus group 4, Female,

The willingness of respondents to engage with their community supports research by Fountain (2001) that finds customers to be more willing to demonstrate altruistic behaviours within a social services, as it helps to establish their role as desirable 'citizens' of the wider service community. This is compared with commercial services, where customers often engage for more self-centred reasons to maximise consumption as opposed to altruistic benefits (Van Eijk and Steen, 2014, p.362). Importantly, the need to be seen as a valued group member increased the respondents' willingness to engage for

the collective benefit of the group rather than individual gain (van Doorn *et al.*, 2010; Mitchell and Imrie, 2011).

It appears that positive CE within a social service unfolds through the interactions customers have with others in their service community. Respondents are emotionally attached to their community and seek opportunities to engage not only for their own benefit, but the benefit of others. Creating a sense of belonging and identification with others appears to be an important component of their positive engagement within this relationship.

We therefore propose:

P1: Positive engagement is characterised by trust, reciprocity, altruism, belongingness and autonomous value co-creation.

Customer Disengagement

The groups reveal many respondents to be disengaged and detached from their local government. A sense of decreased autonomy, perceived unfairness with the service process, confusion about service protocol and general frustration appears to be motivating their disengagement. This is a stark contrast to the highly positive engagement they hold towards their community.

Some respondents have no involvement with their local government and place little importance on this relationship. Many of the respondents appear to be at Evanschitzky et al.'s (2012) final 'crossroads' stage evidenced by their lack of interest in their service provider entirely.

"To be honest, I'm now in the mindset that I just send it not expecting anything back." Focus group 3, Female

"Well, the awful thing is it was an expected response from them. I had come to be accustomed to having no relationship with Council." Focus group 3, Female

"A lot of people like myself now are going 'I can't be bothered'". Focus group 4, Female

"I think with myself I was a fighter – I'm 72 now – I think my fighting days I've learnt, like with developments next door to us and different things, you know, my husband and I, now we just close our eyes, we just go "Why waste our breath?" Focus group 4, Female

The respondents appear to have a low tolerance for service failures with their local government, and few were willing to grace it with a 'second chance' following an indiscretion. This supports research by Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann (2015) who find customers to be more critical and susceptible to disengagement within services they consider functional or utilitarian in nature, as many respondents did their local government. The groups revealed many respondents to act as 'silent killers', who are reluctant to alert their local government of the causes of their disengagement (Hamzelu *et al.,* 2017). One customer highlights just how vulnerable this relationship is to disengagement, as it took only one bad experience to cause them to detach from their local government.

"I think that we've been through a period of Councils becoming anonymous and losing their community interface. I got used to that lack of contact because my only contact wasn't a good experience, I wasn't got back to, as a matter of fact I was considered a nuisance, and so I think that my whole expectation around

what the Council is there for changed, and it was purely administrative, collecting rates, you know, rubbish." Focus group 3, Female

The groups also reveal CD to contain an emotive dimension. The respondents appear cynical towards their local government and question both its competence and the motives behind its actions. This also supports research by Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann (2015) that finds disengagement to manifest through the distrust, cynicism and annoyance customers feel towards a service relationship or the service category as a whole. This is an important finding, as cynicism and distrust can create a lower tolerance for service failures which renders customers more likely to terminate the relationship (Bougie, Pieters and Zeelenberg, 2003). Emotive hallmarks of CD emerge through the groups with many respondents' appearing to question the capability of both their specific local government and the service 'category' of local government as a whole.

"They don't have any aesthetics – the people who are reading the plans really don't know what they're talking about." Focus group 2, Male

"That's every council. They send 18 of their friends, 1 person works and everybody else just supervisors that." Focus group 4, female

"Councils are filled with people that are too lazy to work for themselves and that aren't very well educated - and that's why they go and work for a council." Focus group 2, Male

Based on the above it appears that disengagement within a social service involves emotional, psychological and behavioural hallmarks. The groups also reveal CD to be directed at the focal service organisation object. Respondents feel disappointed and frustrated by their local government, which causes them to become cynical towards and ultimately neglect this relationship. Their local government appears to have left a 'sour

taste' with these disengaged customers who are unwilling to grace this provider with a second chance. Instead, they continue to have minimal involvement with their provider and consider the service relationship to be of little value except for its most basic functions.

We therefore propose:

P2: Disengagement is characterised by frustration, neglect, distrust and cynicism.

A discussion of negative engagement is provided next.

Negative Customer Engagement

The discussion of negative CE elicits a strong emotive response by respondents, and many are quick to identify the feelings of anger they hold towards their local government. Interestingly, displays of negative emotion often have the strongest valence within the not-for-profit and public sectors (Luoma-aho, 2015). This is because many non-profit, public and government agencies deal with social issues, and operate within an environment that is more germane to customer groups that support or oppose an ideology, organisation or cause.

"I've just got a flush of anger about it still because I was the one who lost out." Focus group 4, Female

"It infuriates the community." Focus group 1, Female

Feelings of anger and contempt can motivate different types of responses (Romani, Grappi and Baggozi, 2013). Customers who feel contempt towards a provider are more likely to display *destructive* punitive actions to 'seek revenge' by spreading negative WOM and recruiting other customers to boycott the provider (Romani, Grappi

and Baggozi, 2013). On the other hand, anger can prompt more *constructive* behaviours that are directed at changing the problem, for example, through demonstrations, e-mail campaigns or temporary boycotts (Romani, Grappi and Baggozi, 2013). One respondent relays the process by which his community was motivated to display collective complaint against their local government.

> *"I was working with people who knew exactly what to do and the council would not listen to them. And then the idiots got rid of the ability to even plan and put in a planning council - they took it away from us. It was just awful. It was one of the worse things I'd seen. But that actually drew 1000 people for a meeting one Wednesday night."* Focus group 1, Male

Negative CE appears to be triggered when customers feel their ideologies or personal values are being threatened by their local government, supporting recent research by Luoma-aho (2015) on stakeholder engagement within public sector service. The groups reveal customers to be highly passionate and engaged within the relationship, but in a negative way.

> *"I am passionate about it. They don't realise how angry all those of us who are involved. When the others see it and when they look and think, "How did this happen?" well, that's when I'm hoping I'm no longer alive because I would, well, not only will I tell them I'll probably strangle a few of them."* Focus group 1, Male

A more novel finding from the groups is the association customers have between their level of involvement with their local government and likelihood of experiencing negative emotions.

"When you are very involved you get very pissed off. When you're involved and you are committed in one way or the other, you are tossed often by the issues. But you're being effective because you have a view about something." Focus group 1, Female

This perception is problematic given the aim of a local government is to involve their customers in the creation of valued community services (Holmes, 2011). Having an association between involvement and negative emotions may deter customers from engaging with their provider, or, may heighten their reactions to service failures which then drives their negative engagement.

The respondents' negative engagement also appears to be on the verge of spilling outside of their direct exchange with their local government and towards their 'community' object. As their frustration with the apathy of other customers grows, the lines between the object of their negative and positive CE become blurred. Negative CE within this social context thus appears to, like positive CE, contain a communal element in that it has a heightened potential to extend to multiple actors within the service environment. However, unlike positive CE which added positive value to the overall relationship, the emotional contagion of NE was of detriment to the entire service ecosystem.

"One thing I'm involved with that is connected with the council is actually how I've developed my annoyance with my neighbours who don't - who are not just apathetic but worse than apathetic." Focus group 1, Male

Although the council remains the object of customers' negative engagement, the detrimental effects of these negative emotions and behaviours stems beyond this relationship and into what is as a conduit for positive engagement, being the service

community. This aligns with the ‘common enemy’ effect that can occur when customers aim to reinforce their views by recruiting others to support their disdain, anger and annoyance for a service provider (Luoma-aho, 2015; Romani, Grappi and Baggozi, 2013).

> *“The amount of people who say after it’s happened, ‘Geez, I didn't know that was going to happen.’ I say, ‘Well, why don't you get bloody well involved in the community then,’ you know??”* Focus group 1, Male

The emotional contagion of negative engagement may be exacerbated by the exposure social services have to higher regulatory, legal and other macro environmental forces, which can limit the degree of choice and control customers have over the service process (Anderson *et al.*, 2013). This can subsequently heighten consumers’ responses of anger and blame attribution towards the host organisation, as well as other actors within the service environment (Bougie, Pieters and Zeelenberg, 2003; Waheed and Gaur, 2012). Importantly, the emotional contagion of customers’ anger can spread to other segments who may be susceptible to becoming more negatively engaged.

> *“That one issue is so strong. I think that's how an entire community gets involved; apathy goes out the window.”* Focus group 1, Male

For some customers, the stress of their negative emotions, thoughts and behaviours is not only contained within their relationship with their local government, but appear to ‘spillover’ to affect their sense of well-being (Sirgy *et al.*, 2008).

> *“It’s a lot of pressure, you don't want to be there fighting all the time. You don't want your kid to be brought up in a very stressful situation.”* Focus group 3, Female

"The local residents feel jaded and we don't feel cared for. The council do not care about our everyday lives here and the increased pressure and stress on all of us." Focus group 3, Female

This supports recent research by Fournier and Alvarez (2012, p. 254) that finds negative service relationships to "affect not only the quality of the focal brand engagement, but also the quality of the consumer's life overall". In light of this, it appears that negative CE may not be restricted to its respective object within a service relationship, but may have a more transcending impact on how customers interact with other engagement objects (the service community) and their well-being in other aspects of life outside of the focal relationship.

Based on the above findings, it appears that negative CE within the social context entails feelings of anger, hatred and stress which manifest through more constructive coping behaviours such as individual and group complaint behaviour. Importantly, negative engagement is revealed to have a heightened risk to negatively affect not only the focal service organisation, but also, those in the wider service community and the well-being of the customer. This makes negative CE particularly harmful to social organisations, as a negatively engaged customer may seek to recruit others in order to have greater impact on the organisation, its reputation and constituents.

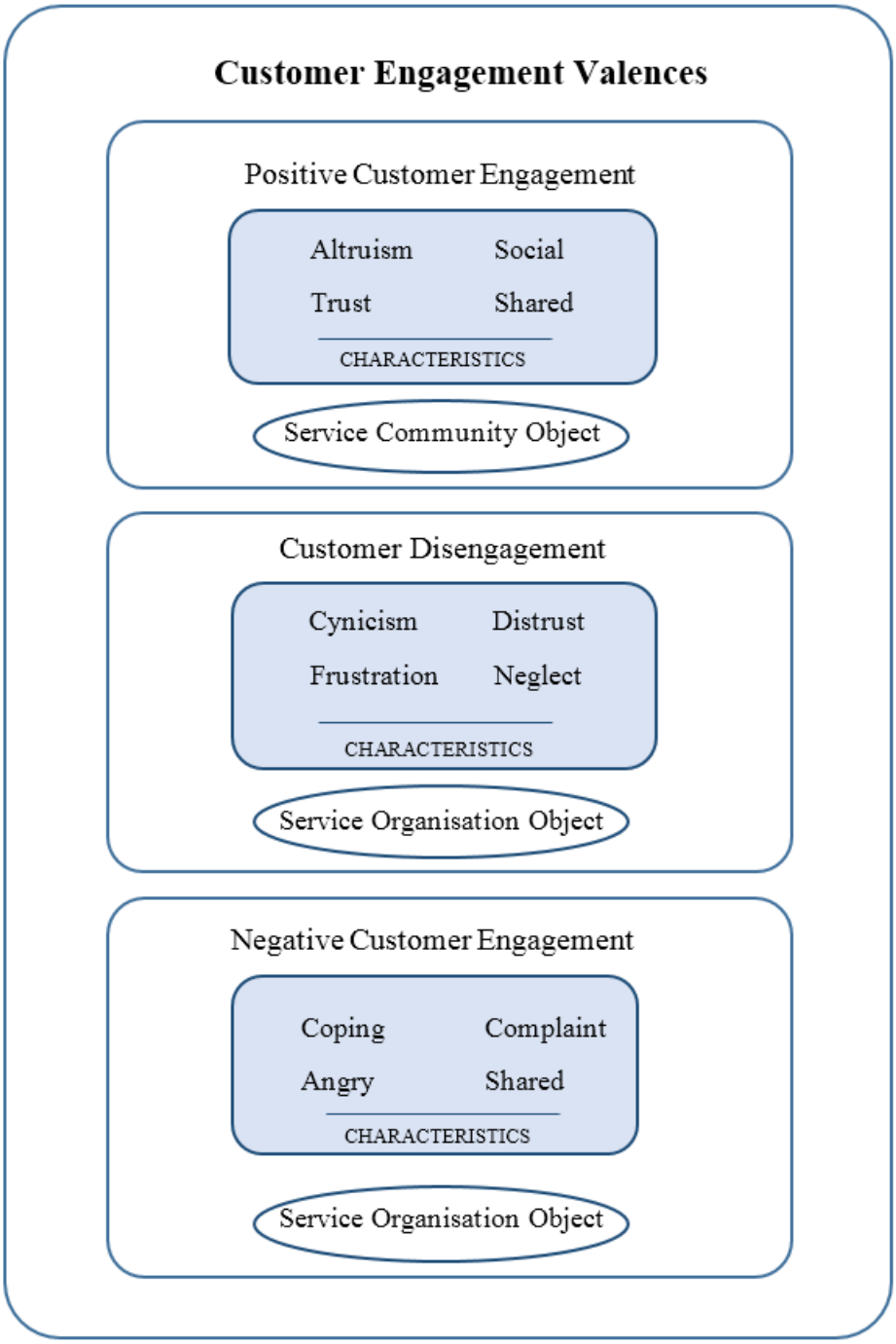
We therefore propose:

P3: Negative engagement is characterised by hatred, anger, stress and collective complaint behaviour.

P4: Engagement valences and the focal engagement levels within the service relationship are interrelated.

A conceptual model identifying the characteristic of positive CE, CD and negative CE, and the interrelationship between them is presented below in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Conceptual model of customer engagement valences within local government



Implications

A number of important theoretical implications can be drawn from this paper. The newfound potential for engagement to have multiple valences (positive, disengaged and negative) and objects (focal service organisation and service community) aligns with the expanded ecosystem perspective on service explored by Chandler and Lusch (2015) by highlighting the potential for engagement to have both positive and negative valence, and, to occur within and beyond the customer-provider dyad (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). However, unlike research by Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, (2015) that found dual engagement objects to be mutually enhancing, this study reveals them to act as opposing forces on engagement.

Positive CE is directed exclusively at the service community whereas CD and negative CE are both directed at the focal service organisation. However, negative engagement was more complex as it appears to spillover to the service community object. Importantly, the detrimental effect of negative CE holds a high propensity to detract value from other interactions within the service ecosystem. This suggests that CE valences are fluid, and able to extend to multiple aspects of a service relationship. This finding presents organisations with opportunities to leverage the value of positive engagement, however, it may also be of detriment when negative engagement directed at one aspect of the service relationship begins to taint the positive aspects of a customers' service experience.

This study broadens the scope of CE to include its positive, disengaged and negative valences. Importantly, the findings reveal a more comprehensive engagement journey by revealing negative engagement to operate though an active form *as well as* a more passive manifestation through disengagement. This broadened approach to

engagement provides a more realistic perspective of service relationships and how different objects can be the focus of different valences and intensities of engagement.

Lastly, applying these engagement valence within a social context highlights CE's communal and social dimensions, which have not been extensively explored in previous research. Positive engagement is realised on a more collective scale and respondents are motivated to engage for the benefit of their community as opposed to their individual needs. Disengagement adheres to that explored in marketing literature in that respondents were neglectful of their local government relationship, however, this study reveals a more negative dimensionality of CD manifesting through cynicism, distrust and an ingrained negative confirmation bias. This suggests that although not actively destructive within a relationship, disengaged customers are possibly more detrimental to a service relationship over time given their reluctance to be involved, voice concerns or take action to rectify problems within a relationship.

The exploration of negative CE highlights the willingness of this segment to take action against a provider and to recruit other customers for a common cause. To this end, negative engagement is highly interactive in that it is deliberate and motivated. It is also contradictory since it creates positive reward for the individual engaging in it, therefore creating personal satisfaction and value, whilst at the same time damaging the organisation's reputation. This segment is highly passionate, involved and dedicated to the relationship, yet for negative reasons. Whilst customers contribute to the co-destruction of value through their anger and rage towards their local government, this behaviour may have some benefits to an organisation. Unlike the disengaged segment who simply ignore problems, negatively engaged customers use more constructive forms of coping with service failures, such as complaining and protesting, which guides organisations to not only be aware of the problem, but also provide a chance to rectify it.

This suggests that in the social services, negatively engaged customers may serves as a valuable resource for not only identifying service problems, but also trying to motivate other disengaged customers' to become more engaged in the relationship.

In light of these findings, there is a need for CE theory to become more sensitive to the different valences of engagement and the implications they have for service relationships. Therefore, the 'broad brush' approach to understanding only positive CE does not reflect the reality of services relationships within the social sector and the way in which they need to be managed.

Managerial implications

This article also highlights a number of important managerial implications. Firstly, exploring dual engagement objects emphasises the need for managers to be cognisant of how various aspects of a customer's whole of service process (i.e. not just the direct customer-to-provider encounters) can impact value. Managers need to take a proactive stance towards mitigating the effects of negative engagement both during direct interactions with customers as well as within customers' interactions outside of the host organisations' control. If left untreated, customers' negative engagement may become detrimental to not only the reputation of the organisation, but may start to diminish customers' interactions with other service actors within the service relationship.

This study also suggests a need for management to understand the hallmarks and propensity for positive CE, negative CE and CD for segmentation and strategy purposes. By identifying the key characteristics of each engagement valence, management may in effect use engagement as a basis for segmenting their customer base and developing strategies tailored to managing each engagement type.

The highly social nature behind engagement suggests service organisations should focus their strategies on enhancing the quality of customer-to-customer interactions and harnessing the value that customers gain through their positive social encounters with others. This approach recognises that positive engagement is facilitated through customer-to-customer interactions and the co-creation of value between service consumers. Organisations should help customers to be a positive 'citizen' of their service community by ensuring customers have opportunities to engage in autonomous co-creation with others (Fountain, 2001). Encouraging co-creation is especially relevant within the social service sector, as these services are focused on empowering consumers to contribute through their active and sustained involvement within the service process. Thus, creating platforms for co-creation can "enhance both the customer experience and firm innovativeness" (Zhang, Kandampully and Bilgihan, 2015, p.15). It also allows customers to engage in the creation of service experiences. This provides customers with a sense of purpose and control over their service relationship. It may also enhance customers' self-esteem, sense of autonomy and well-being which are important measures of success within the social sector.

This study suggests that, whilst challenging to manage, the disengaged segment may provide organisations with a unique opportunity for reclamation, recovery and positive engagement. From a strategic perspective, discovering how customer disengagement manifests is critical as it can hinder the ability of service providers to effectively interact with this passive and reluctant segment. The finding that disengagement taints the customers' future outlook of their service relationship is important, as many of the relationships within the social service sector are long-term and ongoing, i.e. government services, welfare services, charitable services (Anderson *et al.*, 2013; Rosenbaum *et al.*, 2011). By uncovering how customer disengagement manifests,

this study provides management with an opportunity to intercept the cycle and identify the triggers that may cause customer to become disengaged.

In order to proactively manage disengaged customers, management should firstly identify customers who could be classified as a part of this 'silent' segment. Given that these customers are unlikely to approach a provider to complain, management may need to proactively seek to explore the reasons driving this segment's disengagement. Once these triggers have been identified, strategies may then be developed to intercept disengaged customers, to redress specific aspects of the service process to prevent further disengagement among this segment and to ensure currently disengaged customers do not become negatively engaged.

The strategies concerning management of the negatively-engaged segment should revolve around containing the potential damage already done, and preventing the further co-destruction of value of the service. Seeking to prevent the further destruction of value by these consumers is crucial for protecting the value and reputation of the organisation. Negative engagement may entail a dual source of value in which customers benefit through the satisfaction and value gained from their collective complaining whilst the organisation suffers. Negative CE may, therefore, not only be detrimental to brand value, but may also have a more long-term negative effect on service value overall.

In some cases however, negatively engaged customers may be highly valuable managers for identifying major problems or area of service failures. In the same way that brand 'fanatics' are often the most in tune with a brands' core offering (Cova and Pace, 2006), the same could apply for negatively engaged customers within the social context, who have a highly invested role in the actions of the focal service organisation. Management should thus be aware of the potential value this segment holds.

In summary, research exploring engagement should be as encompassing and dynamic as the engagement concept itself. It is no longer sufficient to view engagement exclusively in its positive manifestation, within a commercial service context or towards a single engagement object. This article serves as a first step towards recognising the multiple valences of engagement, how they manifest within a new social service context, and their ultimate influence on overall service value. The theoretical framework developed by this article provides a new, expanded perspective on what CE can ultimately achieve within service relationships.

Limitations and Direction for Future Research

The findings of this article need to be considered with several limitations in mind. Firstly, this study represents a qualitative and exploratory investigation into the different valences of engagement, their operation within a social sector and how they may ultimately influence service value. Further research is required to conduct a more robust empirical test of the research propositions developed throughout this article in order to validate their applicability to exploring engagement and its impact on service value within the social sector. Developing a scale of positive, disengaged and negative valences of CE would provide a more accurate insight into their processes including their drivers and outcomes, and how they can be applied in other service contexts. Regarding the nature of engagement, it would be useful for future research to explore the emotional underpinnings of each engagement valence, whether it is possible to have different intensities of each valence, and whether a 'tipping' point exists between the different valences and the triggers that may cause a customer to transition from one valence to the next. This article conceptualises CD to be inherently negative in valence, however, it would be useful for research to explore whether a customer has to be dissatisfied in order to be disengaged, or whether CD reflects more neutral stances of apathy and disinterest.

Following this, future research is needed to understand if CD exists within commercial contexts where customers are free to switch between providers, or, whether it is a phenomenon only occurring within sectors that have high barriers to exist or where the customer does not have the option to 'buy into' the service (e.g. monopolies, forced exchanges). Lastly, this article explores these engagement valences within one service context. It would be useful for future research to explore the research propositions developed within this article across multiple service contexts in order to test the generalisation or general applicability of these three engagement valences in other service environments.

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3.3 ARTICLE

Conceptualising customer engagement, disengagement and wellbeing within local government services: A transformative service approach

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Abstract

Whilst the social services have been largely over looked within services marketing literature, academics are increasingly recognising the need for 'traditional' marketing theories to extend beyond their commercial contexts. This paper offers an initial conceptualisation of how emerging concepts from service marketing, namely customer engagement (CE) and customer disengagement (CD), may be applied within a social service, being local governments. This conceptual paper will discuss the relevance of exploring CE and CD within Australian local governments, which have experienced recent legislative pressure to ensure high levels of engagement among their communities. It will also consider how the horizontal and vertical network types within this unique service environment may affect the operation of CE and CD. In light of increasing interest surrounding transformative service research (TSR), this paper will introduce the notion of consumer wellbeing; and suggest how CE and CD may influence measures of wellbeing among local government service customers.

Key Words: *Customer Engagement, Customer Disengagement, Local Government Sector, Horizontal and Vertical Network Types, Transformative Service Research.*

Track: Services Marketing

Introduction

Transformative service research (TSR) is an emerging area of marketing literature that explores how the interaction between service entities- such as employees, organisations and whole sectors- and customer entities - such as individuals, social networks and neighbourhood and communities- can influence the wellbeing outcomes of both (Anderson et al., 2013). TSR particularly focuses on the 'transformative potential' of service entities to enhance the wellbeing of consumers both individually; and as a collective group (Bitner, 2014; Anderson et al., 2013). This potential is arguably stronger within social services, which include non-profit, charitable and government organisations, as they are primarily motivated to monitor and enhance the quality of life and wellbeing of their users (Donovon, 2011; Anderson et al., 2013). The recent focus on TSR has seen traditional marketing literature drawing on the social sector as guides for enhancing individual and collective consumer wellbeing outcomes. To date however, service marketing has paid little attention to understanding the customer experience within social services, instead focusing largely on the commercial sectors (Anderson et al., 2013). This reluctance to apply 'commercial' marketing theories within social and non-profit services may stem from the incongruences between the two contexts, which on the surface, appear too different, or difficult, to reconcile (Gardiner & Brown, 1999). Indeed, social services are complex. They cater to a highly diverse customer base; are subject to intense influences from stakeholder and macro-environmental forces; and measure success through their ability to disseminate information and facilitate positive societal change rather than quantitative measures of profit, market share and customer satisfaction (Anderson et al., 2013; Donovon, 2011). However, the increased consumerism, privatisation and competitiveness of social services (Holmes, 2011; Laing, 2003), coupled with rising expectations for them to be more responsive and adaptive to consumers' needs (McLaughlin, Osborne & Chew, 2009), means that social services are increasingly looking to their commercial counterparts for benchmarks relating to areas such as customer satisfaction, relationship management and brand equity (McLaughlin et al., 2009; Donnelly, Wisniewski, Dalrymple & Curry, 1995). As such, it appears that the chasm between social and commercial services marketing literature has started to close (Anderson et al. 2013; Russell-Bennett, Wood & Previte, 2013). This paper aims to further close the divide by exploring how emerging concepts from services marketing literature, namely customer engagement and customer disengagement, may contribute to

wellbeing outcomes within a social service context, namely, Australian local governments. Applying marketing concepts such as CE and CD within local governments will provide a more process-based, service oriented perspective on the different triggers and experiences that enhance or detract the value of the residential experience (Osbourne, Radnor and Nasi, 2013). This allows public managers to focus beyond the direct relationships between residents and government organisation to consider how customers become engaged or disengaged within a variety of municipal relationships. It also allows marketing academics and practitioners to observe how commercially-based concepts function within a social service and within a context whereby customers have limited ability to switch providers in the case of dissatisfaction. Understanding how customers become engaged and disengaged in such environments creates meaningful implications for the salient factors needed for engagement within different types of service relationships.

Customer engagement, or CE, is the process by which consumers form positive, interactive and co-creative relationships with service providers (Brodie, Hollebeek, Juric & Illic, 2011). Interestingly, the issue of engagement has developed in parallel across local government (Holmes, 2011) and services marketing literature (Brodie et al., 2011). However, no attempts have been made to compare the different conceptualisations of engagement across the two streams of research; or to explore the implications such integration may have for the overall study of engagement. Customer disengagement, or CD, is the process whereby consumers withdraw from negative service relationships through disparaging behaviours (Perrin-Martinenq, 2004). Research on disengagement has been less prevalent within services marketing (Evanschitzky, Ramaseshan, Fazlul & Brock, 2012) and local government literature, as both focus on the development and maintenance of engagement as opposed to its deterioration (Bowden, Gabbott & Naumann, 2013).

Method

This conceptual paper will conduct multidisciplinary literature review to achieve the following: Firstly, a brief overview of the Australian local government service sector, including the recent initiatives towards engagement, will be provided. A discussion of CE and CD within services marketing; and the research themes surrounding their

operation within local government services will follow. Lastly, a potential conceptualisation of CE and CD within local government services that considers their implications for wellbeing will be provided, before concluding with implications and directions for future research.

Literature Review

3.1 Engagement within Australian Local Government

There are 565 local governments, or councils, in Australia that combine with state and federal government to form a three-tiered system of governance. Once responsible for providing only functional services such as transport and waste collection, local councils now provide a range of community services aimed at enhancing the cultural, social and environmental wellbeing of their residents (Donnelly et al., 2005). Consequently, local councils are required to understand their residents on a deeper level by exploring their wants, needs and expectations relating to a variety of community and life domains (Holmes, 2011). Community engagement has emerged as a way for local councils to gain this deeper understanding through building more inclusive and co-creative relationships with their residents. It is important to note that community engagement differs from CE in its focus and objective. Community engagement focuses on the direct relationship between residents and their government and aims to involve, or re-involve, citizens within the process of governance via participative relationships. On the other hand, CE adopts a more overarching view of the service ecosystem that considers both the direct firm-focused relationship, and the indirect customer-to-customer interactions that take place. Importantly, CE advocates the importance of placing co-creation at the core of service touch points and interactions (Brodie et al. 2011). Co-creation is defined as "an active, creative, and social process, based on collaboration between producers (retailers) and customers (users)" (Piller, Vossen & Ihl, 2012, p.5). In the same way that commercial services aim to leverage co-created value to provide customised offerings and gain a competitive advantage (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004), local councils are now likewise trying to harness their residents' knowledge in order to deliver community services that are highly valued by their communities (Holmes, 2011). Importantly, it is through such co-creation that community engagement may help reverse the feelings of cynicism, distrust and apathy felt by communities who feel detached from the decision making

process (Holmes, 2011). Community engagement is thus regarded as a nation-wide priority within Australia, emphasised by recent legislative frameworks including the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework (2009) [NSW]; and the Local Government Act (2009)[QLD].

However, the way in which engagement manifests at the community level appears detached from the collaborative rhetoric championed by these frameworks, as councils continue to engage with residents though one-way, static consultation as opposed to a more dynamic and deliberative methods of co-creation (Holmes, 2011). Unlike CE which views co-creation as a core service process, many local councils regard co-creation as an 'add-on' strategy reserved for specific community issues. This however does not aid in reversing the long-running themes of distrust, cynicism and withdrawal reported among Australian citizens who feel detached from governmental processes (Gollop, 2002); and residents may continue to adopt more passive and distrusting roles for as long as councils "define the issues for consultation, set the questions and manage the process" (Holmes, 2011, p.14).

It appears that the local government sector may benefit from drawing on the conceptualisations of engagement presented within services marketing, that recognise "contemporary consumers' active, rather than passive, roles and behaviors" within service relationships (Hollebeek, 2014, p.150). Importantly, CE advocates the co-creative role customers adopt during the creation and delivery of services offerings (van Doorn et al., 2012) and is thus more aligned with the collaborative nature of community engagement presented within current legislative frameworks (i.e. IP&R). In addition, residents' negative attitudes and behaviours towards local councils may be better understood through the process of CD, which explores the conditions and triggers involved in a consumer's decision to withdraw from negative service relationships (Bowden et al., 2013). Before CE and CD can be applied to local governments, it is important to understand how they are conceptualised within mainstream services marketing literature.

3.2 Customer Engagement & Customer Disengagement within Services Marketing Literature

CE is the process by which consumers form positive, interactive and co-creative relationships with their service providers (Brodie et al., 2011). This process occurs within a specific set of context-dependent conditions, which in turn lead to different levels of engagement (Brodie et al., 2011). CE is regarded as a more in-depth way for marketers to understand the nature of customer relationships (Hollebeek & Chen, 2012), as it considers the value that is created both directly through company/brand-focused customer activities and indirectly through C2C interaction such as WOM behavior and participation in brand communities (Gummerus, Liljander, Weman & Pihlström, 2012). CE is thus a complex and multidimensional concept that can manifest cognitively, behaviourally, affectively and socially (van Doorn et al. 2010; Brodie et al. 2011; Vivek Beatty and Morgan, 2012) via customers' experiences both within and outside of direct exchange situations. It has been conceptualised as both a process (Brodie et al. 2011; Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012); and an end state (Brodie et al. 2011) resulting from a range of drivers such as satisfaction, commitment, trust, participation and involvement (Brodie et al. 2011; Hollebeek et al. 2014); and outcomes, such as loyalty and self-brand connections (Hollebeek et al. 2014). Recently, Hollebeek, Glynn & Brodie (2014) were the first to develop and empirically test engagement scales, which consisted of three dimensions relating to the cognitive, affective and behavioral components of consumers' CE with online activities. Further research is needed to validate this measure across different offline contexts (Hollebeek et al., 2014); and to clarify the concepts within the process of CE across different service settings, including social services.

Service relationships however are not always positive and marketers must be cognisant of customers' negative expressions of engagement (Hollebeek & Chen, 2014). CD provides marketers with insight into the factors and conditions that cause consumers to withdraw from negative service relationships (Bowden et al., 2013). Unlike CE, the theoretical roots of CD are lacking; and literature specific to CD has been sparse (Dwyer, Shurr & Oh, 1987). Yi and Baumgartner (2004) measure disengagement as having a mental and behavioural component. Whereas mentally disengaged consumers try to forget brand experiences through denial and escape/avoidance techniques, behaviourally disengaged customers take more apathetic stances by totally neglecting the relationship. Evanschitzky et al. (2012) conceptualises disengagement as a 3-step process involving disillusion, disaffection and crossroads, however this has yet to be empirically examined. More general research on relationship 'fading' revealed service relationships to have a

higher chance of dissolution when brand alternatives are high and customer satisfaction is low; and a higher chance of survival when these conditions are reversed (Pokorska, Farrell, Evanschitzky& Pillai, 2013). However, dissatisfied or disillusioned customers often remain in service relationships due to a lack of alternatives, high switching costs or contractual obligations (Hollebeek & Chen, 2014; Pervan & Martin, 2012); and marketers must understand how CD manifests among these types of relationships. The issue of 'negatively-valenced CE' has recently been explored within CE literature (Hollebeek & Chen, 2014) and is thought to include a range of negative brand expression including: customer apathy, brand avoidance and boycotting, complaints, denial, rejection, negative WOM (on and offline) and adverse brand attitudes (Hollebeek & Chen, 2011, 2014; van Doorn, 2011). As it stands, no definitive conceptualisation of CD within service literature exists, and further research is needed to develop and empirically test a model of CD as a process separate to CE.

It is important to understand how CE and CD manifest within a variety of contexts (Brodie et al., 2011), as the nature of a service relationship can affect the way in which customers become engaged or disengaged within it. CE and CD have yet to be applied within a social service; and within a context where consumers have limited access to alternatives and ability to switch. The operation of CE and CD within local government services may thus differ from that of commercial services whereby consumers have more choice and autonomy. In addition, marketing literature has focused on customers' positive expressions of engagement whilst largely neglecting the negative aspects (Hollebeek & Chen, 2014); despite earlier research suggesting that customer relationships can oscillate from a positive to a negative state over time and through different service encounters (Johnston, 1995). Importantly, the presence of CE may not negate that of CD and vice versa; and the different aspects of a customer's relationship may cause them to display both engaged and disengaged behaviours. Lastly, CE and CD have yet to be linked to consumer wellbeing; and further research is needed regarding the implications they may have on measures of wellbeing; especially within service relationships whereby consumers have high barriers to exit and thus limited ability to switch in response to dissatisfaction. The local government service context has many unique factors that lend themselves to understanding CE and CD in light of the above research themes. These will be discussed next.

3.3 Conceptualising CE and CD within Local Government Services

In order to successfully apply marketing concepts to local government settings, the complexities facing this service environment must be considered (Gardiner & Brown, 1999). The following section will offer a potential conceptualisation of how CE and CD may operate and co-exist within local councils; consider the role that network type may have on their operation; and suggest possible of implications of CE and CD on consumer wellbeing outcomes. Firstly, conceptualisations of CE and CD from service marketing may not readily transfer into a local government setting. For example, commitment and loyalty (Brodie et al., 2011) may have little relevance as indicators of engagement within a context whereby consumers are essentially 'forced' to remain in a service relationship. In light of this, additional constructs that reflect the customer experience within local councils need to be considered. Based on a multidisciplinary literature review, and preliminary qualitative research within an Australian local council (Bowden & Naumann; 2013), ten potential constructs have been identified. The suggested indicators of CE within a local council service include: reciprocity; mutuality participation; trust and belongingness. The suggested indicators of CD are: consultation; distrust; cynicism; decreased participation; and neglect. These constructs are considered to be more representative of how CE and CD may operate manifest among local councils. Furthermore, the way in which these ten constructs function as part of CE and CD may be influenced by another characteristic unique to local government settings, being the network of relationships that exist within this setting

Local governments exist within a complex ecosystem of interdependent stakeholders (Oliver, 2013). As such, the customer experience within local governments is multifaceted, and stems beyond their direct transactions with the council to include the networks they form with a number of municipal entities. Two focal networks within local governments are suggested to be the horizontal 'C2C' networks residents build with other members of their community; and the vertical 'B2C' relationship residents have with their council (Fennema, 2004). The different orientation of these networks may influence the degree to which CE and CD can occur within each of them. Horizontal networks emphasise power equality, and focus on mutual dependence and fellowship among community members (Fennema, 2004). They foster participation and trust among members (Onxy & Bullen, 2000); and may thus allow for co-creation to occur, which is central to the operation of CE (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Brodie et al., 2011). Vertical networks are power asymmetrical and are centred on unequal dependency and

authority (Fennema, 2004). The bureaucratic nature of vertical networks can limit participation among members (Putnam and Leonardi, 1993); in turn limiting the potential for co-creation and subsequently, CE to occur. Preliminary qualitative research by Bowden and Naumann (2013) confirmed this prediction by revealing residents to be both highly engaged and disengaged within their horizontal and vertical relationships respectively. Exploring how CE and CD operate within these opposing networks may thus help to understand firstly why and how CE and CD co-exist within a single service relationship; and whether salience of constructs within each process are influenced by the different networks that comprise a resident's municipal experience.

Finally, exploring how CE and CD ultimately impact consumer wellbeing within local governments may help understand the drivers and consequences of wellbeing within social services (Anderson et al. 2013). Within TSR, wellbeing is defined as "alignment of individual and societal needs as they relate through consumption" (Pancer & Handelman, 2012, p. 186) It is thought to be an aggregate measure of consumers' satisfaction within emotional, social, economic, physical, spiritual, environmental, and political life domains (Sirgy et al., 2008). A local government context may thus be particularly suited to the exploration of wellbeing, as council services are now orientated towards benefitting communities within number of these life domains (Holmes, 2011). CE and CD have yet to be linked with wellbeing outcomes, however, it is of worthwile interest to understand if and to what extent the presence of CE enhances; and CD diminishes residents' evaluations of wellbeing; and how these relationships may be influence by the network in which the operate through. That is, the way in which CE enhances wellbeing may be greater within residents' horizontal networks compared to their vertical council relationships. Likewise, the detrimental effect of CD on wellbeing may be exacerbated by the nature of their vertical relationships. In addition, it is of worthwhile interest to explore how wellbeing manifests within a service environment where consumer choice and sovereignty are limited (Pancer & Handelman, 2012).

Implications and Future Research

This paper offers a preliminary 'blueprint' for how CE and CD may be conceptualised within a social service, being Australian local governments. Further conceptual, exploratory and empirical research is needed to address the research themes explored above. This will advance theoretical knowledge into how of CE and CD operate within

a local government service; how they may co-exist within the same service setting; the extent to which their operation is enhanced or limited by horizontal and vertical network types; and how their operation ultimately impacts on measure of consumer wellbeing. Given the increased interest in engagement within Australian local governments; the insights generated by further research may help managers understand the specific triggers and conditions causing residents to be engaged or disengaged; and the impact that these two opposing processes have on the overall wellbeing and happiness of their communities.

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Chapter Four

Qualitative Investigation and Analysis Guiding the Inquiry

Qualitative Investigation and Analysis Guiding the Inquiry

4.1 Introduction

While the previous chapter provided the conceptual model and foundation for the study of customer engagement, this chapter presents the results of the exploratory, qualitative phase of the investigation. Underpinning the qualitative investigation and analysis are three research themes: firstly, uncovering the affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions of positive, disengaged and negative valences of CE, secondly, examining how they manifest towards dual engagement objects, and thirdly, applying this exploration in a social service, being Australian Local Governments.

The data for this analysis was provided by four focus groups, and one in-depth interview with residential ratepayers from local government areas in Sydney, Australia. This chapter explores the conceptual model developed in Chapter three and provides a more detailed investigation of the dimensionality of each valence. A qualitative investigation of customer engagement which firstly, explores affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions of each, and secondly, examines how they operate toward dual engagement objects in a social service has not been presented in the literature. The qualitative investigation of this model therefore represents a significant contribution to marketing theory and practice.

This chapter is presented in the form of two manuscripts formatted in their original journal and/or conference style. Both manuscripts have been published. The first manuscript represents a journal article which was published in the Journal Marketing Theory and Practice in March 2017. It is supported with the reviewer's reports (See Appendix C). The second manuscript was presented at Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy Annual Conference at the University of New South Wales, in Australia, December, 2015.

This chapter is comprised of the following co-authored articles:

1. **TITLE**: A Multi-Valenced Perspective on Consumer Engagement Within a Social Service

   AUTHORS: Kay Naumann (60%) Jana Bowden (30%) Mark Gabbott (10%)

   JOURNAL: *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*

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2. **TITLE**: A multi-valenced perspective on customer engagement; and its impact on consumer well-being within the social service sector
   AUTHORS: Kay Naumann and Jana Bowden

   PROCEEDINGS: Presented at Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy Annual Conference, University of New South Wales, NSW, Australia, December 2015.

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4.2 ARTICLE

A Multi-Valenced Perspective on Consumer Engagement Within A Social Service

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ABSTRACT

The literature on customer engagement has focused on its positive valence at the expense of its negative manifestations. This study seeks to address this gap by exploring how positive, disengaged and negative valences of engagement operate within the social service sector. Focus groups are used to create a multidimensional model exploring how different customer engagement valences operate through affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions, and in relation to two objects (service community and service provider). This approach provides a new and expanded view of customer engagement, and the process by which multiple valences of engagement manifest within a focal service relationship.

Services marketing is shifting from a dyadic view of the service experience towards an 'ecosystem' perspective that considers how value is constructed directly between an organisation and its customers, as well as socially during customers' engagement with multiple service actors (Blocker and Barrios 2015). Customer engagement plays a key role in this shift by allowing the conventional, linear, and exchange-based perspectives of service relationships to be "relaxed and expanded to provide a richer notion of relating to a brand" (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas 2015, p. 28). It does this by extending the customer-provider dyad to explore how value is co-created throughout the range of interactions that customers have within their whole-of-service experience (Chandler and Lusch 2015; Jaakkola and Alexander 2014). Customer engagement maintains its interest from marketing academics and practitioners, as creating a customer base that is not only satisfied and loyal, but actively and positively *engaged* is an important area of investigation (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas 2015). However, despite the interest surrounding customer engagement much of the literature is theoretical or conceptual which contributes to the lack of empirical clarity surrounding its operation.

The majority of research on customer engagement explores its positive manifestation in service relationships. Yet conceptualising engagement solely in terms of positive dimensions (e.g. passion, immersion, flow) and outcomes (e.g. commitment, trust, self-brand connections, loyalty) (Hollebeek and Chen 2014; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas 2015) does not provide a full understanding of engagement. Engagement can also "manifest in behaviors that could be either beneficial or unbeneficial toward the firm" (Chandler and Lusch 2015, p. 248). Yet, little attention is given to understanding the negative valences of engagement, including passive *disengagement* as well as active *negative engagement* (Hollebeek and Chen 2014).

Customer *disengagement* is a negative orientation towards a service relationship that manifests when customers behaviourally, emotionally and cognitively distance themselves from an exchange (Goode 2012). Disengagement is considered to be a milder negative response that is not obviously exhibited through emotional or behavioural cues. On the other hand, *negative customer engagement* encompasses those more active and dedicated "unfavourable brand-related thoughts, feelings and behaviours" (Hollebeek and Chen 2014, p. 62). Negative customer engagement is stronger in its intensity, depth and emotive, behavioural and cognitive dimensions. Although a handful of studies

explore negative customer engagement (e.g. Hollebeek and Chen 2014; van Doorn et al. 2010), this research is sparse and nascent when compared to the literature on positive customer engagement. The lack of research on these negative expressions of engagement is somewhat surprising since customers can remain silently dissatisfied within service relationships (Chebat, Davidow and Codjovi 2005) or, within relationships that cause them to display more extreme responses such as rage, anger and contempt (Romani, Grappi and Bagozzi 2013). Furthermore it is suggested by Fournier and Alavarez (2012, p. 253) that within some sectors "negative brand relationships are in fact more common than positive relationships, with an average split across categories of 55%/45% for negative and positive relationships, respectively". Given that service relationships are not always positive, for either the organisation or customer, research should be expanded to view engagement in light of its positive, disengaged and negative manifestations.

In addition, engagement research mainly focuses on how it operates within a commercial context despite the nature of engagement being contextually contingent (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie 2014). There is a lack of research exploring how engagement operates within the social services and the way in which customers engage within service relationships *across* contexts (Chandler and Lusch 2015; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas 2016). Many customers spend a large part of their lives interacting with services from the government, health education and charitable sectors (Anderson et al. 2015), however, customer engagement is seldom explored within a social service context. This is starting to change with the increasing interest in the 'transformative' potential of services which expands traditional notions of services marketing research to include the more socially-geared contexts of health, welfare, government and charitable services (Anderson et al. 2013).

This article contributes to the literature on customer engagement by exploring its positive, disengaged and negative manifestations within a local government service environment. In doing so, this article adds to the knowledge on customer engagement by qualitatively exploring how it operates through positive *and* negative valences within a focal service relationship. To date, such exploration has not been conducted.

LITERATURE

Customer engagement, or CE, remains an important area of research on value creation within the services marketing literature (Chandler and Lusch 2015). Positive CE is a

multidimensional concept defined as “a consumer's positively valenced brand-related cognitive, emotional and behavioural activity during or related to focal consumer/brand interactions” (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie 2014, p. 154). This activity is contingent on a number of factors including the customer’s history of service interactions, the current valence of their engagement (positive/negative), as well as the anticipated propensity for future engagement (Chandler and Lusch 2015).

Positive CE indicates that a customer is willing to dedicate a high degree of cognitive, emotional and behavioral effort within their service relationships in ways that enhance service value (Brodie et al. 2011; Hollebeek and Chen 2014). Other dimensions used to measure positive CE include: absorption, immersion, interaction, passion, civic, utilitarian, emotional, identity and social (Patterson, Yu and De Ruyter 2006; Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012; Calder, Malthouse and Maslowska, 2016; Hollebeek, 2011). There are inconsistencies within the literature about the optimum number and type of dimensions that should be used to represent engagement (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas 2016, 2015). Some authors posit CE to be one-dimensional (van Doorn et al. 2010; Sprott, Czellar, and Spangenberg 2009) while the majority of engagement research frames it as multidimensional (Brodie et al. 2011; Vivek et al. 2014). To date there is no consensus on the exact characteristics of engagement and further research is needed to clarify the dimensionality of CE, in particular, its multidimensionality (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas 2016). This study helps to fill this gap by examining how positive, disengaged and negative valences of engagement manifest through the three dimensions of affect, cognition and behaviour. The affective dimension of engagement is the “summative and enduring levels of emotions experienced by consumers with respect to a focal engagement focus”; the cognitive component involves “a set of enduring and active mental states that a consumer experiences with respect to focal objects of engagement”; and the behavioural aspect includes “behavioural manifestations towards an engagement focus, beyond purchase which results from motivational drivers” (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015 p. 35).

Although the extant literature skews to positive manifestations of engagement, recent research is starting to address how service value is diminished when customers experience a *range* of negative engagement states (Hollebeek and Chen 2014; Blocker and Barrios 2015). To this end, CE is not always measured at ends on a positive-negative spectrum but may sit in between at a weaker, *disengaged* state when a customer is in a

permanent or temporary state of detachment and lacks motivation to engage within a service relationship (Dolan et al. 2016). Customer disengagement, or CD, involves an affective, cognitive and behavioural withdrawal that is motivated by a customer's need to cope with unpleasant service ordeals, and/or minimise loss from failed service exchanges (Yi and Baumgartner 2004; Goode 2012). In contrast, negative CE is more extreme and captures a customer's premeditated, activated and dedicated expressions of negativity within a service relationship (Luoma-aho 2015; Juric, Smith and Wilks 2015; Hollebeek and Chen 2014). The dimensions of negative CE include unfavorable cognitive (e.g. negative bias, cynicism), emotional (e.g. hatred, fear, resentment, shame, humiliation) and behavioural inclinations (e.g. negative word-of-mouth and boycotting) (Hollebeek and Chen 2014; Juric, Smith and Wilks 2015). The triggers of negative CE are diverse and can be based off cumulative or one-off incidents. Importantly, this segment holds a degree of involvement and passion similar to positively engaged customers, yet the outcome of this engagement has a *detrimental* impact on service value (Hollebeek and Chen 2014). There is a lack of conceptual knowledge on negative CE, however, understanding how it manifests and how it can be managed is necessary given today's marketing environment is "laced with distrust, hyper-criticism, and increased consumer power" (Fournier and Alvarez 2012, p. 254). A secondary contribution made by this study is to examine positive engagement in conjunction with two negative valences of engagement, being CD and negative CE.

Lastly, the literature is challenging ideas of engagement having one point of focus within a relationship by focusing on the duality of engagement objects (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas 2016). Research within online brand communities reveals customers' engagement to be directed at two objects, one being their interactions with the focal brand, and the other, their interactions with members of the community (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas 2015, 2016). This finding is in-line with recent calls to consider the "non-transactional" engagement that occurs beyond the customer-firm dyad, such as relationships between customers, or between customers and other brand intermediaries (Harwood et al. 2015 p. 1). The exact objects of engagement differ according the dynamics and nature of the context in which it is being examined. However, in light of the recent developments made within the literature, the dual engagement objects within this study are the focal service organisation, and the focal service community.

To summarise, the primary aim of this article is to conceptualise how positive engagement, negative engagement and (dis)engagement operate in relation to two focal engagement objects within a service relationship. Three central contributions are made by this exploration: 1) expanding the valence of CE to include negative manifestations 2) exploring the multidimensionality of CE through affect, cognition and behavior, and 3) examining the duality of CE by exploring how customers engage with a service community compared to their focal service organisation. The secondary aim of this article is to conduct this exploration of engagement within a social service sector.

Customer Engagement within the Social Services

Social services include those charitable, non-profit and government organisations that aim to engage with and enhance the lives of their customers (Anderson et al. 2013). Social services provide a useful context to explore how CE operates, as they often involve a number of interdependent service actors that aggregate to form a complex service ecosystem (Anderson et al. 2013; Donovon 2011). This complexity allows a more nuanced insight into how different engagement valences manifest towards different objects of a customer's service relationship - their interactions with staff or service intermediaries compared to those with other consumers - rather than their engagement with the service relationship as a whole (Anderson et al. 2013).

This exploration is further illuminated by the chosen social service used, being the local government context. Within this context, customers are found to engage within two distinct exchanges that can be categorised into two points of engagement foci or objects. Namely, the traditional, and often transactionally-based, relationships between customers and their service provider (coined vertical networks); and the more communal and social (horizontal networks) formed between customers and other members of their residential community (Putnam 2001; Fennema 2004). These networks are found to function as opposing positive and negative forces on customers' satisfaction within their local area (Roskruge et al. 2013). Namely, horizontal community networks are been found to foster higher satisfaction among residents, whereas vertical networks generate more dissatisfaction among residents (Roskruge et al. 2013). Exploring positive and negative CE valences in a context that has these defined networks may illuminate how different valences of CE manifest towards dual objects.

Furthermore, social services are more likely to host *complex exchanges* (between 3 or more parties) within which the traditional customer-provider market condition of mutual satisfaction is not always required (Gardiner and Brown 1999; Bagozzi 1975). Thus, customers may be in a relationship without having full awareness of the benefits they receive from the exchange (Gardiner and Brown 1999). This is in contrast to commercial services whereby mutual benefit and satisfaction between the provider and customer is expected, and where consumers have more freedom, choice and ability to switch in response to service failures (Gardiner and Brown 1999). The high procedural regulation, bureaucracy and invasive processing surrounding government and public services can place additional stress, frustration and confusion on their end users (Anderson et al. 2013). These factors may serve useful for exploring negative CE. Additionally, customers are *less* likely to take action against their service providers due to: a fear of retaliation, sanctions or fines; their limited ability to switch providers; or because they have become apathetic from lack of success with past experiences (Putnam et al. 2004; Luoma-aho 2015). These factors may aid in examining CD, which involves more passive coping mechanisms.

Social services, such as local governments, can also operate as 'captive' services that prohibit customers from switching in the face of negative experiences or dissatisfaction. Whilst unique, this element of captivity can be beneficial for understanding the nature of CD and negative CE. This is because the nature of this service helps highlight those "CE detriments" that may only surface over time as the customer remains in the service relationship in a negatively engaged or disengaged state (Hollebeek, Rajendra and Chen 2016, p.8). Customers cannot 'op-out' of their local government service, thus they are afforded more opportunity to demonstrate a range of co-destructive behaviours or to develop more covert negative thoughts and feelings towards the provider that may not develop within services where switching is easier (Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2015).

In addition, exploring negative and disengaged valences of CE within a captive social service may aid our understanding how these concepts operate within similar types of services in the commercial sector. According to Liljander and Strandvik (1995) some services, such as banks, are more likely to entail 'forced relations' in which a customer wishes to switch but is restricted by a number of restraints (e.g. economic, technological, financial, time, knowledge), or, by a lack of alternative services. In this case, dissatisfied customers may remain captive in an indifferent or negatively-committed state for the

duration of the exchange (Liljander and Strandvik, 1995). Furthermore, recent research within engagement literature finds customers to have a higher propensity to disengage from utilitarian services such as insurance, banking and telecommunication, which typically entail more restraints to exit, compared to experiential services such as fine-dining and hotels (Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann, 2015). These utilitarian services are somewhat similar in nature to that of local governments, in that once a service discretion occurs customers often remain in the relationship due to a number of barriers or restraints (Liljander and Strandvick, 1995; Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann, 2015). Thus exploring CD and negative CE within a local government service may provide a more in-depth picture of how these valences operate through affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions within similar services in the commercial sectors. As such, the secondary aim of this article is to examine CE in its three valences within a local government service context. The next section outlines the research approach taken and further explores the issues of engagement within the chosen social service.

RESEARCH APPROACH

This article explores CE within the Australian Local Government context. Local governments are the tier of government closest to citizens and are responsible for providing services that enhance the cultural, social and environmental well-being of their municipal customers (Dollery and Johnson 2005). These services include, but are not limited to: parks and recreation services (including park development, upkeep, sports fields, walking tracks, bike tracks, etc.), community safety; provision of local healthcare; youth and aged care; art and cultural services; local road maintenance; residential and commercial development services; and sanitary and waste services (Ryan et al., 2015). Thus, there are numerous opportunities for residents to engage with their local government through the diverse and complex portfolio of services they offer. It is imperative for local governments to meet the needs of their citizens and act as positive ‘place shapers’ in order to ensure residents have satisfaction with and engagement within their local area, as around 59% of Australians agree that the place in which they live reflects their sense of identity (Ryan et al. 2015).

Although useful for the exploration of engagement, the local government context has unique characteristics that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the customer is not awarded the option to ‘buy-into’ a relationship with their local government as they would a

commercial service, and may enter this relationship regardless of whether they perceive a need or want for it. Customers are unable to easily switch their local government and the occurrence and severity of confrontive coping behaviours such as negative WOM can be heightened in the wake of service failures, especially as displays of public anger and blame towards organisations can become an important part of identity unification within the public service sector (Luoma-aho 2009). In addition, customers perceive their local government to have a high degree of bureaucratic control over service design and delivery, which has been shown to heighten responses of anger response to service failures (Bougie, Pieters and Zeelenberg 2003). Although these characteristics highlight the novelty of the chosen context, they also highlight its usefulness for exploring the negative manifestations of CE, especially CD. Local governments also involve a variety of stakeholder networks (Fenemma 2004), which may enhance our understanding of how CE manifests towards a range of engagement objects at an individual, collective and organisation/ecosystem level within a service relationship (Dessart Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas 2015; Anderson et al. 2013).

The authors adopt a qualitative approach towards the research. Focus groups are selected in order to uncover an analysis of the meanings, processes and normative perceptions of the respondents and to provide a deep and applied understanding of the service context being explored (Creswell, 2012). The respondents are rate-paying customers of various areas within a major Australian capital City. The respondents are aged between 35-60 years and are of various ethnic backgrounds. Respondent demographics and local government areas are presented in Table 1. There are significant differences between gender and age in the respondent profile. Females are overrepresented (86%) along with the age group 45-60 (62%). Therefore the findings may be skewed towards those perceptions held by women in this slightly older cohort.

Four focus groups are conducted along with one in-depth interview. According to Krueger and Casey (2014) using four to six focus groups falls into the acceptable ‘rule of thumb’ for qualitative research. It also falls in the acceptable range to prevent the data from becoming saturated and decreasing the moderator’s predictive ability (Krueger and Casey 2014). This is supported by Kitzinger (1994) and Morgan (1997) who regards four or five groups as adequate when working with particular or specialised populations. The number of focus groups used appears appropriate given the new and novel nature of this study.

The single, one hour in-depth interview is conducted with a female (41 y/o) Lane Cove resident who has lived in the area for more than 10 years. An in-depth interview is employed in conjunction with the focus groups for a number of reasons. Firstly, in-depth interviews help uncover the more nuanced contextual factors surrounding novel research application (Stokes and Bergin 2006). This aids with understanding the unique nature of the customer experience within local government services, which has not been thoroughly explored in services marketing or customer engagement literature. The one-on-one nature of in-depth interviews creates a more flexible inquiry and can establish a greater sense of trust and rapport between interviewer and interviewee which can improve the comprehensiveness and quality of the data (Stokes and Bergin 2006; Vicsek 2010). Individual interviews can also reduce the issue of conformity found in group interviews (Vicsek 2010; Stokes and Bergin 2006). This is because the intimate and anonymous nature of individual interviews can create a sense of empowerment for the interviewee which results in more candid responses (Stokes and Bergin 2006). Using a single in-depth interview can be adequate, as a strong interview subject can provide rich accounts of subjectivity, and allow the researcher to address the complexity of the phenomena (Baker and Edwards, 2012). In the case of this article, the data gain from the single in-depth provided a rich account into CE within local government services, as was deemed sufficient in conjunction with the employment of focus groups.

Although the relevance of reliability and validity to qualitative inquiry is debated amongst researchers (Shenton 2004) a good qualitative investigation still aims to achieve a degree of trustworthiness, quality and rigour (Golafshani 2003). Guba (1981) provides a widely-accepted criteria for addressing reliability and validity in qualitative studies via the four factors of credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Shenton 2004). Credibility ensures that the research portrays an accurate picture of the phenomenon being investigated. In order for qualitative research to be credible, it should adopt appropriate methods used previously in the field of study (Guba 1981). Focus groups are often used within service marketing literature and suit the exploratory nature of the study. In keeping with Guba (1981) the moderator, who is the primary author, uses iterative questioning and reflective commentary throughout the conversations to aid in honest and authentic responses. A main objective of the research is to understand the universal structures and themes concerning the respondents' positive engagement, disengagement and negative engagement within the service environment and how they

manifested towards dual engagement objects. To gain this insight, respondents are asked to discuss a spectrum of positive and negative experiences and are encouraged to openly discuss their important experiences. This allows them to share their common feelings, thoughts and perceptions with other respondents (Thompson, Locander and Pollio 1989). This is facilitated further with word and image association tasks which helps the researchers to explore the customers' underlying motivations, attitudes, values and perceptions. Lastly, the credibility of the research was addressed by using previous research on positive, disengaged and negative valences of engagement to help frame the findings (Guba 1981).

Transferability ensures that the results of a study can be generalisable to a larger population (Golafshani 2003). According to Shelton (2004), it is impossible for qualitative researchers to ensure the true generalisability of their work given the small scale of qualitative projects and the role that context has on framing the findings. However, a researcher may aid others in assessing the transferability of their findings by providing adequate information on: the context; the methods and techniques used to analyse the data; and the factors that may impede the study's generalisability. Transferability is also aided by outlining the boundaries and limitations of the research. The descriptions of this information are provided in the research approach and within the limitations section of the paper.

A qualitative enquiry is considered dependable if a comparably similar result would be obtained when repeated with the same respondents using the same context and methods (Shelton 2004). As with the issue of transferability and credibility, qualitative researchers are also limited in their ability to achieve this. However the use of 'overlapping' techniques can help to cross validate the data (Guba 1981). This study achieves this on a small scale, by using in-depth interviewing in conjunction with focus groups. The dependability of the findings is also addressed by having the second author analyse the data.

Lastly, confirmability is achieved when the investigator has taken all steps possible to ensure the results are reflective of the respondents' lived experiences and perceptions, as opposed to the researchers' bias or preference for the framework (Golafshani 2003). In order to achieve this, the respondents are encouraged to engage in interaction that is open and unstructured in order to discover shared perceptions and experiences and to avoid a

rigid research agenda being imposed on the participants (Lahteenoja and Pirtila-Backman 2005).

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Items	**No of Respondents**	**Percentage**
Gender		
Male	4	14%
Female	24	86%
Age		
35-45	9	32%
45-60	19	68%
Council Area		
Roseville	5	17.86%
Mosman	4	14.29%
Ryde	3	10.71%
Ku-ring-gai	3	10.71%
Warringah	2	7.14%
Maitland	2	7.14%
North Sydney	2	7.14%
Lane Cove	2	7.14%
Hornsby	1	3.57%
Willoughby	1	3.57%
Sydney	1	3.57%
Manly	1	3.57%
Pittwater	1	3.57%

The data is analysed using the qualitative analytic program NVivo 10, which allows for coding and thematic development. In line with recommendations for coding in Nvivo 10 from Bazeley and Jackson (2013) a broad thematic node structure is developed using the verbatim, which was then further analysed, reviewed and condensed into more structured themes for each valence of CE. Analysis is undertaken by the first two authors, who are trained in qualitative data interpretation. A key objective of this stage is to elucidate the affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions of positive engagement, disengagement and negative engagement in relation to two objects. This process enables the data to be linked to specific ideas and assisted the authors to focus on the salient features of the qualitative data in order to categorise the different engagement types. Descriptive and interpretive frameworks are then formed in Nvivo 10 concerning: (a) the fabric and nature of positive engagement, disengagement and negative engagement (b) the

operation and process of these three valences through the dimensions of affect, cognition and behaviour.

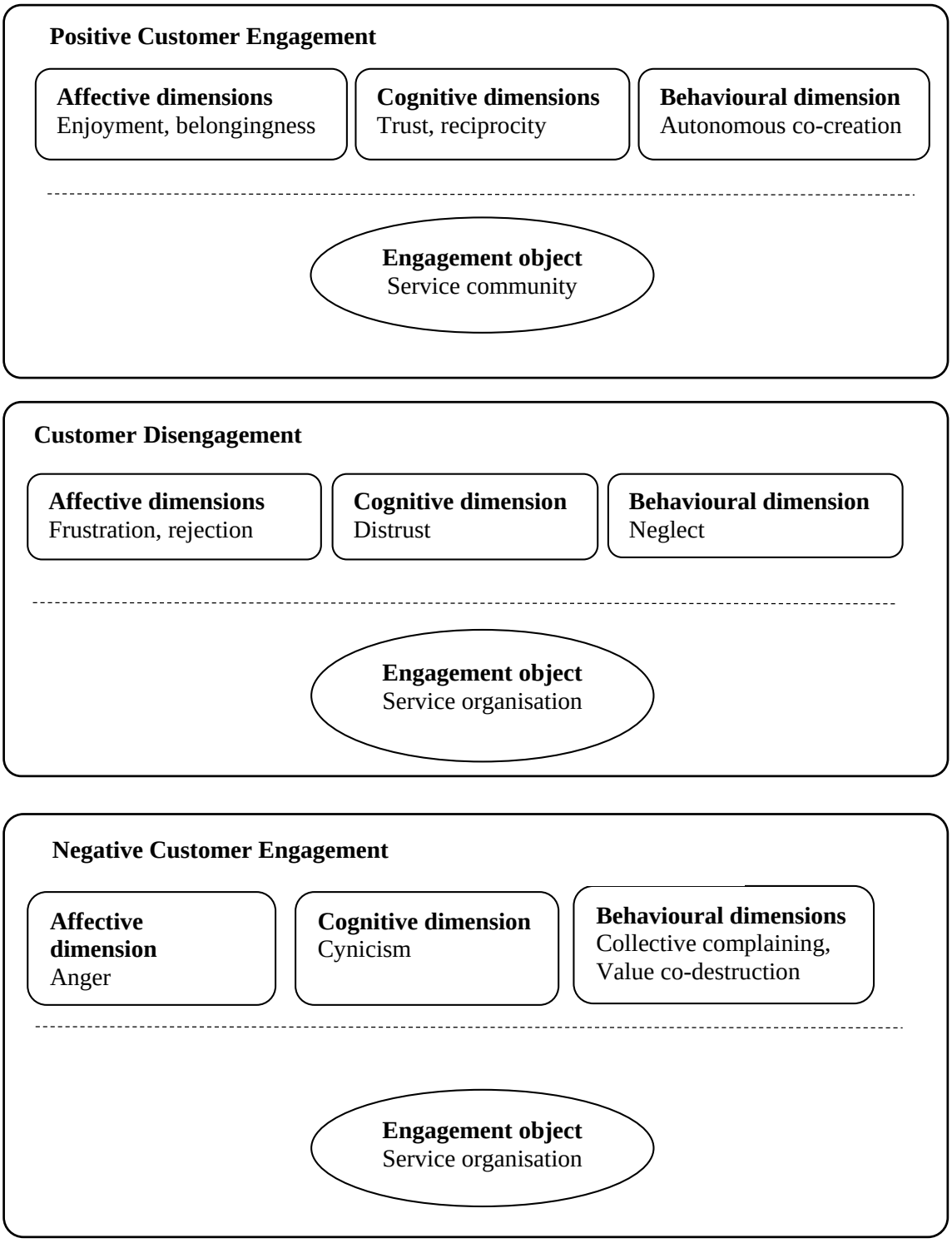
More specifically, the coding process follows the three-step constant comparative method developed by Strauss and Corbin (1998) which is also used within marketing research Fournier (1998), and specifically, CE research (Hollebeek 2012; Brodie et al. 2013). Firstly, open coding is used to break down the raw data and assign properties and characteristics to the verbatim. Next, axial coding brings together several codes of a similar nature, scope or interest and then examines how these categories relate to each other. To illustrate, the respondents use words such as 'love' 'social', 'help', 'belonging' 'friends' 'connection' and 'shared' when discussing their community experiences. These word were grouped to represent the underlying affective component of positive CE. The selective coding then groups these categories into central categories that form the emergent theory. The objective is to understand the nature of participants' engagement with their council and their community. Respondent expressions offering insight into the broad engagement dimensions are sought. The broad coding framework is based on Fournier (1998), and concerned dimensionality (affect, cognition and behaviour), affective character (strength and intensity), and direction of engagement over time (local government and community). Through this process, the authors are able to link the data to specific ideas and focus on the salient qualitative data features in order to categorise the nature of these three engagement valences. A total of 74 pages of coded text was produced that was cross coded by the second author who has expertise in the area of qualitative coding. The next section reports the findings of the study and presents a number of research propositions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis generates three central insights into the existence and nature of positive engagement, disengagement and negative engagement. Firstly, all three valences are found to exist within the one focal service relationship, with each unfolding through cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions. As such, CE is found to be multi-valenced and multidimensional. Secondly, the valences of CE are directed at different engagement objects. Positive CE is directed exclusively towards the service community

object, whereas negative CE in both its disengaged and active forms are directed exclusively at the focal service organisation. In order to express the depth and richness of these key findings, qualitative verbatim is drawn from the focus groups to illustrate the preceding themes. These are reported upon in the next section. A conceptual model is presented in Figure 1. This model illustrates the characteristics of positive CE, CD and negative CE through affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions and identifies the object of each valence, being either the service community or focal service organisation.

Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Positive, Disengaged and Negative Valences of Engagement within a Social Service



Positive Customer Engagement within a Social Service

The focus groups reveal that positive CE is socially constructed and manifests through the interactions respondents have with other citizens in their service community. This finding answers calls for research to branch "away from value creation as a process that is always service-related towards a process that stems from customers' social experiences and practices" (Heinonen et al. 2013 p. 555). Thus, the service community is the object of positive CE within this study. The next section will conceptualise the affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions of positive CE using the data gathered from the focus groups.

Affective Dimensions

The discussion on the affective dimension of positive CE strong elicits responses from the groups. The affective component manifests through the long-term and continuous sense of enjoyment, happiness, joy, belongingness and social identification that present in respondents' interactions with their service community. This supports research by Kaltcheva et al. (2014) who found customers to engage in ways that confirm and strengthen their relational connections when in a social context. Respondents report a sense of enjoyment from their interactions with others in their community and appear to be highly dedicated to their local areas, as evident through their sense of identification and belongingness (Kaltcheva et al. 2014). This supports previous research which has revealed enjoyment within social interactions as an important affective component CE (Dessart Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015).

"I love living where we are." Focus group 1, Female

"It gives you a feeling of connectedness I think, I'm part of their lives." Focus group 1, Female

"I feel relaxed and quite proud actually and I think we are very lucky and I almost feel it's Sydney's best kept secret." In-depth interview, Female

"Once again, it is that sense of community. It's that nice feeling where you see people you know without having to formally arrange to meet them." Focus group 1, Female

"Just the general fitness in the area, morale, community spirit. I love it. It sort of gives you sort of tranquil feeling - I think it's peaceful." Focus group 1, Female

It was apparent that respondents hold a deep sense of attachment and connection to the community. Their community provides a platform in which they could relax, forge connections with others, construct and demonstrate a social identity and form a sense of attachment and belonging, which supports research by Middleton, Murie and Groves (2005). Feelings of dedication and belongingness are also indicative of confidence, enthusiasm, pride and passion that highly engaged customers hold towards one or multiple aspects of a service relationship (Hollebeek 2011; Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012).

Cognitive Dimensions

The respondents also demonstrate positive cognitive engagement within their service community through norms of mutual trust and reciprocity. Reciprocity forms an important component of a customer's cognitive appraisals of a relationship as it reinforces self-esteem, establishes predictability and collates information about prior exchanges to frame expectations about future reciprocation within a relationship (Bagozzi 1975; Pesämaa et al. 2013). However, reciprocity is not always confined to an individual exchange, but can have more transcending societal implications as it helps establish norms of solidarity and benevolence "not necessarily directly one-to-one, but a situation in which one reciprocated activity is likely to stimulate others to help yet a third person (i.e., shared interests)" (Pesämaa et al. 2013, p. 81). An appraisal of shared respect and reciprocity is highlighted by the respondents.

"I think that's part of the deal in a community, it's about mutual respect." Focus group 2, Female

"We look out for each other. For example, if we go on holidays and you want someone to look at your house to make sure it's all safe. Not just our neighbours, even few houses down, we've gotten to know them as well."

"That's good, you give your key and your alarm combo to your neighbour and then they watch it and then when they go you do the same for them." Focus group 1, Female

"I think you always notice when something's going on in your street. When there was all these bush fires happening, I'm thinking, 'Okay well Mr 80 year old man over there probably doesn't know about this fire' so we ran across the road – I think it's just keeping everybody connected." Focus group 2, Female

"I think we attract good people into our neighbourhood. There's a lot of positive spirits." Focus group 1, Female

"I think that's a part of the puzzle of overall well-being. I enjoy living here and have established that relationship over ten years and that's nice to know you can trust people." In-depth interview, Female

Respondents follow the rationale of working towards a 'common good' by keeping the needs of others at the forefront of their minds when discussing their service community. It was evident that respondents are willing to: trust those in their service community; help others by reciprocating good deeds; and show mutual respect to their fellow community members.

Behavioural Dimensions

A strong indicator of the behavioural dimension of positive CE was autonomous co-creation, which occurs when "consumer communities produce marketable value in voluntary activities conducted independently of any established organization, although they may be using platforms provided by such organizations" (Zwass 2010, p. 11). Whilst autonomous co-creation has no direct input from the host organisation, it adds value to both customers and their local government through the utility gained from new and improved services, as well as the more holistic value stemming from the sense of collective action, collaboration and belongingness felt by residents when they partake in these activities. This supports recent research on autonomous co-creation which reveals it to add a sense of social, psychological, moral and aesthetic value to a customers' service experience (van Doorn et al. 2010; Evardsson et al. 2014).

"I think it's really advantageous when people get together, it's a great feeling and promotes camaraderie and I think there's just a lot of positives to come out of that". Focus group 4, Female

"There's an elderly couple that live directly opposite me and the guy can barely walk, so the neighbours next door have arranged for their teenage boys to take out the bins. I don't know what they work out money-wise, it's just nice to do." Focus group 2, Female

By engaging in altruistic behaviours such as helping others, organising social events and collaborating for common projects, customers are able to create value by being a positive

member of their service community (Fountain, 2001), which provides a sense of social relatedness, security and belonging (Mosteller and Mathwick 2014).

"I got to know people in the area and they organise social events together now I'm a lot happier now. It's a good social vibe." Focus group 2, Female

"I love the fact I can walk down there and join the group. It's fabulous for a point of view of meeting other people that I normally wouldn't have met." Focus group 2, Female

"It's a nice area to come to and spend time, so you've got the beach and you've got the zoo, and you've got beautiful bush walks. It brings people into the area and I think they're all positive things, they're outside activities." Focus group 4, Female

Respondents appear to have a shared goal to act in ways that benefit the wider community. This supports research by Fountain (2001), that finds customers are more likely to engage with others in ways that are socially meaningful - such as being helpful - within social services because it helps to establish their role as desirable 'citizens' of the wider service community.

Based on the above, it appears that the dynamic and often collective nature of the social context and the different types of consumption goals within this sector see positive CE manifesting through socially-embedded constructs such as enjoyment, belongingness, reciprocity and autonomous co-creation.

Negative Valences of Customer Engagement within a Social Service

Attempting to understand CE in its entirety requires consideration of the *negative* ways engagement manifests within service relationships (Hollebeek and Chen 2014; van Doorn et al. 2010). The authors posit that negative CE may not always involve premeditated, activated and dedicated expressions of negativity, but may also encompass a customer's more passive and dormant negative disposition. Categorising negative engagement as either passive or active allows a more nuanced view into the scope of negative CE, and helps to further clarify the dimensions involved. The next section conceptualises these two types of negative CE and explores their cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions.

Customer Disengagement

Disengagement manifests when customers behaviourally, emotionally and cognitively distance themselves from one or many aspects of an exchange in response to negative service experiences or perceptions (Yi and Baumauter 2004; Goode 2012). The engagement literature mostly ignores disengaged customers given they do not display overtly negative thoughts, feelings and behaviours. However these customers are important to understand given their risk of developing into a more active state of negative engagement, or, terminating the relationship entirely. The groups reveal CD to be directed exclusively at respondents' service organisation. The next section will conceptualise CD through its affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions.

Affective Dimensions

Discussing the affective dimension of CD does not elicit particularly strong reactions or themes within the groups. This may be due to CD involving more passive coping mechanisms which do not involve a strong emotional component. Respondents do however appear to be frustrated with their local government (council). Frustration is a negative emotion that arises in responses to an unfavourable service encounters and is closely related with feelings of despair, resignation and powerlessness (Tronvoll 2011). Frustration is regarded as an 'other attribute' emotion, meaning customers direct frustration towards external sources (i.e. the service provider) as opposed to themselves in the wake of service failures (Tronvoll 2011). Feelings of frustration are therefore heightened in contexts where a service provider is perceived to have control over an exchange (Dunn and Dahl 2011). This is echoed throughout the groups as respondents feel frustrated by the imbalance of power within their service relationship.

"Everything's so difficult on a day to day basis. The things annoy you, the bins, the building applications, the facilities not available." Focus group 2, Female

"The people who get elected to council frustrate me. But that's just the way it's going to be." Focus group 4, Male

"It's an unfair decision because they have the final say. It's down to the council making the decision at the end of the day. Where's the fairness in that?" Focus group 1, Female

"If you don't see a council that's a good thing. The less you see of them the better." Focus group 4, Male

Although frustration can trigger more active forms of coping behaviour, a study by Roos, Evardesson and Gustaffsson (2004) finds that within a monopolistic service context, frustration causes the more passive, and arguably, detrimental response of rejection, which is reflected in the findings. Local governments operate like a monopoly in that they have high barriers to exit and entail complicated bureaucratic processes, which makes them more likely to contain 'passive loyals' who remain in a relationship, yet reject the service provider entirely.

Cognitive Customer Disengagement

The main cognitive dimension of CD is distrust, which is defined as a person's "…propensity to attribute sinister intentions to, and a desire to buffer oneself from the effects of another's conduct" (Lewicki et al. 1998 p. 439). Distrust is often accompanied by other cognitive appraisals such as scepticism, a lack of confidence and perceptions of corruption surrounding an organisation (Darke, Ashworth and Main 2010; Benamati and Serva 2007). Pertinent to the nature of the service context, distrust often arises when there is an asymmetry of information between two exchange partners (Singh and Sirdeshmukh 2000). Themes of distrust are echoed throughout the groups.

"I think there's a big issue with trust and council. Their recent antics trying to pass those things under the radar, just does not foster any trust. And actually makes it a bitter experience to actually work with the council." In-depth interview, Female

"The council feels weird, secretive and it doesn't help when they're not transparent. It only hurts them because you just know there's stuff going on and you're not being told about it but it's directly affecting you." In-depth interview, Female

Respondents appear to be distrustful of their service provider and hold little confidence in its ability to offer a valued service experience. They regard their provider to be unresponsive to their needs, which drives perceptions of immoral or unfair behaviour and heightens their disengagement.

Behavioural Dimensions

Neglect emerges as a new and particularly salient concept for exploring behavioural disengagement. Neglect is a behavioural response that occurs when customers alienate themselves from, and allow conditions to worsen within, a failed service relationship

(Lyons and Lowery 1986). It is considered to be a customer's last line of attack against a provider that consistently fails to meet their expectations. Customers who become neglectful often reduce their interactions within a relationship to a purely discrete and transactional nature as a means of self-preservation to avoid further disappointment or disillusionment (Ro 2013). Importantly, neglect entails a stance of non-complain, passive compliance by customers who remain "apathetically silent" in the wake of service failures made (Ro 2013, p. 32).

"It's not worth it. Apathy equals 'not worth your effort'. I know it doesn't really get a result." Focus group 4, Female

"I wouldn't go to the council because I just don't think they would tell me anything." Focus group 2, Female

"You're fighting a losing battle and my time's more precious." Focus group 4, Female

The respondents' tendency to neglect their service provider may be influenced by the monopolistic nature of the context, within which a customer must remain in a service relationship regardless of whether they are positively or negatively engaged (Liljander and Strandvik 1995). Given customers often feel 'trapped' in such environments, the presence of the more passive coping mechanism of neglect may be heightened.

Based on the findings, it appears that CD within a social service manifests through more passive responses of frustration, distrust, neglect and rejection. This may be a result of the highly structured and bureaucratic nature of the sector and its tendency to function as a monopolistic, captive service. Customers are not easily able to compare service providers or switch in the face of disengagement given they are bounded by many restraints (geographic, financial, etc.). In addition, customers do not have an initial choice to 'buy into' their local government, as they are required to pay rates by default. As such, there may be customers entering the relationship who have a negative predisposition towards the sector as a whole. This may increase the proportion of customers who fall into a disengaged segment due to their limited options to firstly avoid the relationship, and secondly, exit in the wake of service failures. Lastly, local governments are perceived to have higher control over an exchange, which further heightens external blame attribution by customers and prolongs their alienation from the relationship.

Negative Customer Engagement

The groups reveal negative CE to be active and emotionally-charged, with many customers harbouring strong negative thoughts, feelings and behaviours towards their service provider. As such, the focal object of negative engagement was the service organisation. Like positive CE, negative CE also adopts a social role in that respondents seek others to support and confirm their negative perceptions and experiences. The following section reports the findings from the focus groups, which reveal negative CE to be directed exclusively at the focal service organisation and to operate through affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions.

Affective Dimensions

The affective dimension of negative engagement is captured by the feelings of anger and hatred respondents hold towards their service provider. Anger is a strongly-held, negative emotion usually grouped with feelings of irritation, disgust and rage (Tronvoll 2011). Like frustration, anger is regarded as an 'other attribute' emotion that is aroused by and directed at the misbehaviour of others (Berkowitz and Harmon-Jones 2004; Tronvoll 2011). Customers can become angry and hostile towards a service provider when their sense of autonomy and efficacy within the relationship is violated (Park, Eisingerich and Park 2013).

"I do hate my council. Yes. They make me angry." Focus group 3, Male

"I feel like it's 'us against them'." In-depth interview, Female

"When I think of council I feel a little bit of anger bubbling up." Focus group 4, Female

"Nobody likes them- they cause stress and headache and nothing is ever straightforward." Focus group 4, Male

The respondents are easily able to identify their feelings of anger and hostility when discussing their service provider. This may be because displays of negative emotion typically have the strongest valence within the non-profit services, whereby directing anger and hate towards an organisation for social or ideological reasons can actually

provide customers with an avenue for social bonding and identification (Luoma-aho 2009).

Cognitive Dimensions

A strong theme of cynicism permeates the respondents' thoughts and beliefs towards their service provider. Whilst cynicism and distrust are related, cynicism is considered to be the more negative, insidious and detrimental cognitive response to a relationship (Helm, 2004). Cynicism is defined as "…a persuasive disbelief in the possibility of good in dealing with others" (Berman 1997, p. 105). Cynicism involves a cognitive appraisal in which customers monitor the discrepancies between their expected outcome of a service exchange and its actual performance. This then sets up a future expectation that they may be taken advantage of in future exchanges (Chylinski and Chu 2010). There is a pattern throughout the groups of respondents' perceiving corruption within their local government. This supports literature on coping and stress which finds when a customers' sense of justice is threatened, an expectation can be established for all future encounters with a service provider to be unfair, corrupt or dishonest (Surachartkumtonkun, Patterson and McColl-Kennedy 2013; Chebat and Slusarczyk 2005).

"We're being ripped off. I think they must be on the take by people. There must be money going under the table." Focus group 1, Female

"I just think they are morons" Focus group 3, Male

"They're not telling us that they took so many hundred thousand off a developer. It's rose coloured. They just put the good stuff there. It's designed like propaganda material." Focus group 1, Female

"Developing anything takes masses of stress, angst and sleepless nights." Focus group 1, Female

For some, the negative experiences they have with their service provider is enough to make them contemplate relocation. This would represent the most detrimental outcome for service organisations as it entails the customer exiting the relationship entirely.

"Your own personal little life is controlled by that Council. You can walk away from the bad restaurant - you can't walk away from your Council." Focus group 4, Female

"So you want to move. At the end of the day you can't fight it anymore, you just want to go." Focus group 1, Female

"You understand they've got due diligence, but there's no flexibility because A to Z says we must do this, even if it then doesn't actually apply to your particular circumstance. That's really hard going when you're trying to progress, live and work it through." Focus group 2, Female

The imbalance of control between customers and their service provider appears to act as a trigger for cynicism, which is similar to the discussion on the affective component of negative CE (anger). The respondent's cynicism has developed through an accumulation of encounters that disappointed, disillusioned or deceived them, which creates a pattern of expectations of their service provider having corrupt and unethical motives.

Behavioural Dimensions

The behavioural dimension of negative CE manifests through collective complaint behaviour and value co-destruction. In the same way that positive CE has a social component through autonomous co-creation, the behavioural manifestation of negative CE also contains a social dimension when respondents seek the reinforcement of others to take action against their service provider. This supports research on public sector organisations by Luoma-aho (2015) that finds negatively engaged customers to display behaviours such as public venting, recruiting others, boycotting an organisation and revenge-seeking behaviour. The desire for customers to seek others' validation is also in line with research by Romani, Grappi and Baggozi (2013), who found anger to prompt more *constructive* punitive actions directed at changing the corporate practices, for example, through demonstrations, e-mail campaigns or temporary boycotts (Romani, Grappi and Baggozi 2013).

"So residents stood up one after the other and spoke about this and including several children who had written their own speeches and stood up at the microphone and read them out and it was absolutely resoundingly thumped on the head." In-depth interview, Female

"They will never succeed because we're too protective and it's just too passionate a cause for the local residents." Focus group 3, Male

"I've been speaking to neighbours and they've complained a lot to the council about this." Focus group 1, Female

"You can ring council and say, "What's happening?" And they'll say, "It's none of your business." Focus group 1, Female

"Oh my gosh. I've written numerous letters to make comments about the service that I've received." Focus group 4, Female

Whilst these behaviours appear to be co-destructive (Juric, Smith and Wilks 2015), it is through such public displays of dissatisfaction that these customers serve as a useful resource for service organisations. This is because they hold a degree of passion and involvement that may be able to be re-energised into positive engagement once the problems causing their negative engagement are addressed. Unlike the disengaged segment who regard such efforts as futile, the negatively engaged segment are motivated to rectify their service failures and grievances, which indicates on some level their anticipation for the relationship to improve in the future (Chandler and Lusch 2015).

Based on the above, it appears that negative CE within a social service encompasses anger, hostility, cynicism, collective complaining and value co-destruction. The emotional contagion of respondents' thoughts, feelings and behaviours caused their negative engagement to spread throughout the service ecosystem, which further damaged the reputation of the focal organisation. A prominent trigger for negative CE was the sense of decreased efficacy and autonomy experienced by these highly involved customers, which caused them to vent their anger on a collective scale. Importantly, these dimensions were based on the relationship customers have with their service provider, yet they spilled over to the service community object as customer sought others to support their views.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this article highlight a number of theoretical and managerial implications. Theoretically this is the first article to offer a characterisation and categorisation of three engagement valences within the one focal service relationship. In line with Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie (2014), the positive, disengaged and negative valences of engagement are explored through the dimensions of affect, cognition and behaviour, with the focus

groups confirming each valence to operate through these three dimensions. The affective dimensions are revealed to include: enjoyment and belongingness (positive CE); frustration and rejection (CD); and anger (negative CE). The cognitive dimensions include: trust and reciprocity (positive CE); distrust (CD); and cynicism (negative CE). Lastly, the behavioural dimensions manifest through: autonomous co-creation (positive CE); neglect (CD); and collective complaining and value co-destruction (negative CE). Exploring these three valences through these dimensions provides a more nuanced framework into the multidimensionality of engagement within a focal service relationship.

This article also reveals the potential for CE to be directed at dual objects within a relationship. These engagement objects, being the service community and the focal service organisation, hold opposing propensities for positive and negative engagement, which conflicts with prior research on engagement objects being mutually enhancing for overall engagement and service value (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas 2015). Positive CE is directed exclusively at customers' service community, whereas negative CE in both its disengaged and active state is directed at the service provider. This new finding supports the ecosystem perspective within service marketing literature that posits a range of interactions both occurring within and outside the customer-provider dyad can serve as platforms for value co-creation, as well as co-destruction (Chandler and Lusch 2015; Jaakkola and Alexander 2014).

Lastly this article answers calls to extend the contextual application of CE by exploring it within a complex and multi-stakeholder social service. Both positive and negative CE adopt a more communal nature in that customers sought to share their positive, and negative service experiences with others. This suggests that within a social service, CE is more of a socially-geared concept compared to commercial services whereby customers may engage for more individual motivations. The exception was CD, which appears to occur on a largely private and individual basis. Disengaged customers demonstrate neglect and in some cases, total rejection of their service provider, which makes them unwilling to voice their disengagement with others in the service ecosystem, including the host organisation. The finding that positive and negative engagement can co-exist within sub aspects of a customers' service ecosystem offers a new direction for research exploring the fluidity of how CE forms within service relationships. The newfound potential for engagement to have a range of valences (positive, disengaged and

negative); and objects (community and brand) aligns with the expanded ecosystem perspective of service research by highlighting the potential for engagement to occur within and beyond the customer-provider dyad (Chandler and Lusch 2015).

Managerial Implications

The qualitative findings of this study also carry number of managerial implications. Firstly, this article highlights the need for management to understand the characteristics of positive, disengaged and negative valences of CE, and how they manifest in relation to dual engagement objects. The conceptual framework displays the dimensions, and subdimensions of each engagement valence, and their respective objects, which provides management with a basis for segmenting their customers and strategising to cater to each engagement type.

The social nature of positive CE suggests service organisations should harness the value that customers autonomously create within their community. Whilst these interactions are perceived by respondents to occur beyond the service provider, host organisations should still be seen play a role in facilitating and rewarding their customers' engagement with others. Fostering autonomous co-creation is particularly relevant within the social context, whereby consumers are often required to play an active role in the creation of service value in order to obtain the maximum benefit of the service offered.

The findings on CD highlight the need for managers to not only be aware of those segments who are visibly positive and negatively engaged, but also the latent, silent segment that may over time be more detrimental to the service relationship. Although largely overlooked, disengaged customers are an important segment to understand given they have been suggested to account for up to two-thirds of disaffected customers (Chebat, Davidow and Codjovi 2005). Disengaged customers are likely to respond to service dysfunction by becoming apathetic, ignoring or denying the severity of the problem or terminating the service relationship entirely. These customers represent a black box to service managers, who must develop a more in-depth understanding of these disengaged customers to devise strategies to restore a sense of positive engagement among this segment before they terminate the relationship, or eventuate into a state of *negative engagement* which is more active in its orientation and challenging to recover. This requires management to firstly identify customers who may be categorised into the

disengaged segment, however, given that these customers are unlikely to complain directly to a provider, a more proactive approach may be needed to explore the reasons driving this disengagement. Once identified, strategies may formulated to isolate and redress the aspects of the service environment to prevent further frustration, distrust and neglect among this segment and to decrease the chances of other customers becoming disengaged.

The strategies concerning the negatively engaged segment should aim to mitigate and contain the effects of customers' anger and cynicism and prevent the further co-destruction of service value. Focusing on containing negative CE is important, as it entailed a common enemy effect whereby customers firstly seek, and then bond with, other consumers who share a disdain for a provider. This can enhance other customers' preconceived notions of cynicism towards the central institution. Many respondents appeared to be in a constant state of battle with their service provider, and the experiential content of negative CE entailed anger and co-destructive behaviours, both of which take more effort and resources on behalf of the customer compared with positive emotions and moods. The emotional contagion of negative CE can greatly damage organisational reputation and may influence those disengaged customers to become more actively engaged. However, this negative segment also provides management with valuable insight into to the major problems or area of service failures within a service relationship. These customers are highly passionate about issues within their service relationship, and are likely to have useful insights into how the service process can be improved in ways that enhance service value for all users.

Lastly, managers need to create strategies to help rectify the ill effect of negative engagement on their customers. This may be achieved by trying to structure the exchanges between service providers and customers in ways more aligned with their interactions in their customer community. Having more transparent, reciprocal and relationally-based encounters within the service process may help provide a personal feel that see customers relating to their provider in a more positive way. This supports recent calls by Blocker and Barrios (2015) for encounters between customers and service organisations to be more aligned with the 'human' experiences customers have in the social networks within their service ecosystem. Providing customers with more

opportunities to engage in sponsored co-creation (i.e. between the customer and the firm) may also enhance feelings of control and efficacy which may in turn help to mitigate customers' anger and cynicism with the failed aspect of the service process.

In summary, this article has provided an expanded framework of CE that explores the multiple valences of engagement and how they manifest towards dual engagement objects. It has achieved this through applying CE within a new social context, which has highlighted the potential for CE to operate across service contexts. The findings of this article highlight the need for literature on engagement to continue towards the ecosystem perspective that considers the broader range of service networks, environments and outcomes that can be involved in the CE process.

LIMITATIONS

The findings of this article need to be considered with several limitations in mind. Firstly, this study represents a qualitative exploration into how different valences of engagement operation within a social sector. Future research could adopt quantitative methods to further test the validity and applicability of the research propositions developed throughout this article. Secondly, future research may explore positive, disengaged and negative valences of CE though different subdimensions within affect, cognition and behaviour to ensure all aspects of CE are represented. In addition, future research may extend the dimensions of affect cognition and behaviour to include spiritual engagement and social engagement. The findings of this article should also be interpreted in light of the overrepresentation of female participants within the focus groups. Lastly, it would be useful for future research to explore the research propositions developed across multiple service contexts, both within the commercial and social sector, in order to test the generalisation or general applicability of these valences of engagement in other service environments.

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ARTICLE 4.3

A multi-valenced perspective on customer engagement; and its impact on consumer well-being within the social service sector.

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Abstract

This study explores how three valences of engagement, namely positive engagement, disengagement and negative engagement operate within the social service sector; and their impact on well-being. A qualitative methodology was employed to uncover how these valences manifested within a focal social service relationship; and to explore the impact of these valences on well-being, an outcome which has yet to feature within in CE research. The study revealed that positive CE is highly reciprocal, social and communal in nature, and strongly enhanced well-being. Customer disengagement was found to be a passive and detached state which precipitated a more active and negative state of NE depending on the prior customer relationship. Negative engagement entailed feelings of anger and contempt; and complaint behaviour; and had a significant and detrimental impact on well-being. Lastly, this model was applied within a social service context, namely local government, a context in which an understanding of customer sentiment and engagement is critical for effective service performance.

1.0 Introduction

Services marketing has moved from a traditional, dyadic view of the service experience towards a more encompassing, 'ecosystem' perspective that considers a broader range of service networks, environments and outcomes (Chandler and Lusch 2014; Anderson et al. 2013). The networks developed among consumers, organisations and the wider society are increasingly important, as these relationships hold the key to enhancing service value and consumer well-being (Chandler and Lusch, 2015; Anderson et al. 2013). These network connections are dynamic; and provide a feedback loop into the future development of the focal relationship, as well as the future propensity for engagement (Chandler and Lusch, 2015). Customer engagement, or CE, operates within this ecosystem perspective, and is considered a multidimensional concept that explores how value is created throughout the range of interactions during customers' service experiences (Chander and Lusch, 2014; Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014). CE contains affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions (Brodie et al., 2013) that manifest through relational connections that evolve in response to stakeholder/actor inputs and exchanges; and how these networks create value outcomes within service relationships.

Despite the advancements made within engagement research, many theoretical gaps remain. Firstly, CE has predominantly been framed in light of its positive manifestations including its favourable cognitive, affective and behavioural brand-related expressions such as repeat purchase behaviour and positive WOM (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). Very limited research has investigated its negative expressions (e.g., Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann, 2015) and its impact on service ecosystem networks. Similarly, limited research has explored related transitory states of dormant and inactive, passive engagement and whether or not this precipitates relationship termination (e.g., Brodie et al. 2013). This is despite the fact that service relationships are not always positive, and that "negative brand relationships are in fact more common than positive relationships" (Fournier and Alvarez, 2012, p.253).

This paper therefore aims to address these gaps in the engagement literature by exploring two negatively-valenced expressions of engagement. The first expression is that of *customer disengagement,* which is defined as a passive, yet slightly negative, orientation towards a service relationship causing customer to neglect a relationship (Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann, 2014). The second valence investigates *negative customer engagement,* which is defined as a goal-directed process of active and persistent expressions of negativity that adversely affects the service relationship and type of value created within the service experience (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). In particular this paper focuses on understanding the nature and outcomes of these relationships (Anderson et al. 2013).

Secondly, CE has almost exclusively been explored within a commercial setting and under a Service-Dominant logic framework. Research to date has largely neglected how CE operates within the context of social services and research is required to advance our knowledge of engagement within service relationships *across* contexts. This paper will firstly examine CE within a social sector setting. Service interactions within this sector have a heightened potential to facilitate/influence well-being outcomes pertaining to consumers' happiness, health, social and community interactions, emotional state and financial/career situation (Anderson et al. 2013; Sirgy et al. 2008).

This study will also apply a transformative service research framework (TSR). TSR is a general theory framework focusing on the role that consumers play in co-creating well-being outcomes throughout all aspects of the service process. This broadened focus

allows the authors to examine engagement within a range of networks, including both the horizontal networks developed between consumer entities; and vertical networks between consumers and service entities (Fennema, 2004). This is because TSR examines how the interactions between consumer entities (individuals, collectives [communities], etc.); and service entities (host organisations, employees, etc.) impact the well-being outcomes of both (Anderson et al. 2013).

The theoretical contributions of this paper are twofold. First it conceptualises three different valences of engagement within a focal service relationship; and secondly it examines how these valences impact a new outcome, consumer wellbeing, an outcome which has not yet been explored within the existing engagement research (Anderson et al. 2013; Brodie et al. 2011).

2.0 Method

This study adopted a discovery orientation, using focus groups to analyse the meanings and normative perceptions of the respondents (Creswell, 2012). Four focus groups of ten citizens were conducted by one of the authors, who used word and image association tasks. The sample included rate-paying citizens of a large, urban municipality within a major Australian capital city, aged between 18-55, from various ethnic backgrounds, split equally male and female. A range of local councils were included in the sample. The authors analysed the data using NVivo 10. This enabled coding and thematic development and allowed the data to be linked to specific ideas identified from literature and transformed into overall themes. It also allowed the authors to categorise the data into two focal relationship types found within local government services, which are the horizontally-based networks developed between consumer entities (C2C); and the vertically-structured networks between consumers and service entities (B2C) (Fennema, 2004). The objective was to explore how positive CE, CD and negative CE manifest within these focal service relationships in a social context; and explore how they influence well-being.

3.0 Findings and Discussion

3.1 Positive customer engagement within social service

Engagement has largely been explored within the commercial context, as such, little is known of its operation in other service environments. The authors were seeking to discover if and how positive CE operated differently within a social sector. The focus

groups revealed positive CE to operate within citizens' *horizontal (C2C)* networks through affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions. This is not surprising, as engagement within social services is largely realised at the collective/ecosystem level rather than between the individual and the organisation exclusively (Anderson et al. 2013). Positive CE was found to operate differently and through new, more socially-orientated concepts within the social sector compared to on traditional constructs such as satisfaction, self-brand connections and involvement.

Cognitive Dimension: Respondents' knowledge and thought-processing regarding their community members involved norms of reciprocity and trust. "*There's a level of respect for the community that you're in and people want to contribute." "I feel safe and trust my neighbourhood."*

Affective dimension: Respondents engaged through affective dimensions revolving altruism, feelings of belongingness and community identification *"We all look out for each other. That's the heartbeat of our community."*

Behvaioural Dimension: Whereas previous research revealed how behavioural expressions of CE manifests through sponsored co-creation, the findings from this study show CE to be more communal and social in nature, as it operated within the wider social and horizontally-based networks outside their direct interactions with service entities (i.e. the host organisation and employees). As such, the citizens' co-creation was largely autonomous (Zwass et al. 2010); and they co-created service value by sharing resources, volunteering ideas and helping others (Kaltcheva et al. 2014). This is a new and important finding, as it shifts the focus of CE towards the more socially-based networks and interactions occurring within customers' service experience "*The community group put money together for a building project. That's the heartbeat of our community." "Once you start meeting people in the community it becomes your community."*

3.2 Relationship between positive customer engagement and well-being

The authors were also interested to discover if positive CE influenced well-being. This is important, as previous literature focuses on commercial-based outcomes such as repeat purchase and brand equity, yet the impact of CE needs to be understood in terms of holistic outcomes such as well-being within the social sector (Anderson et al. 2013; Rosenbaum et al. 2011). The findings revealed that customers' positive CE with their

service experiences enhanced a range of well-being outcomes. This confirms recent research suggesting that collaborative engagement between a variety of service actors – including employees and other customers – can enhance the psychological and social well-being of all stakeholders within the service ecosystem (Ramaswamy and Chopra, 2014). By engaging in altruistic behaviours such as organising social events and collaborating for common projects, customers were able to create value through by being a positive 'citizen' of their service community (Fountain, 2001); which enhanced their well-being by providing a sense of social relatedness, security and belonging (Luoma-aho, 2008). Thus, when customers engaged with other consumer entities throughout their focal service experiences, it provided them with a sense of purpose, pride, self-efficacy and control which in turn enhanced their sense of well-being across a number of life domains including their health, happiness and social and community experiences, all of which are important goals for social services (Anderson et al. 2013). *"I think that's a part of the puzzle of overall wellbeing. I enjoy living here and have established that relationship over ten years and that's nice to know you can trust people." "I got to know people in the area and they organise social events together now I'm a lot happier now. So it's a good social vibe." "Just the general fitness in the area, morale, community spirit. I love it. It sort of gives you sort of tranquil feeling - I think it's peaceful." "It gives you a feeling of connectedness." "When you go into that neighbourhood you feel you're at peace."*

Importantly, and in line with a TSR perspective, the benefit of citizens' positive CE entity extended beyond their individual interactions to enhance the collective sense of goodwill and well-being of the larger community 'ecosystem' as well as the host organisation (Anderson et al. 2013). Thus, the benefits of CE were realised on both an individual and collective level, as they had a ripple effect throughout the service ecosystem and to benefit other citizens, the community at large and the host organisation. *"I think those initiatives are fantastic for residents, but also it brings a lot of people into the area so it's great for business, it's great for goodwill, and it's great fun."*

3.3 Customer disengagement as a precursor to negative engagement within social services

Previous research has focused heavily on exploring positive manifstations of CE at the expense of its more negative expressions. This study offers an expanded view of engagement by examining NE; and introducing CD as a transient state that customers

may pass *before* becoming more negatively engaged within a service relationship (Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann, 2014). The findings revealed a number of respondents were currently experiencing, or had passed through a state of CD within their local government experience. Unlike positive CE which was contained to the horizontal relationship *between* customer entities, CD was found to occur mainly within respondents' vertical relationships with service entities. This finding may have been influenced by the nature of the highly bureaucratic and often forced nature of service relationships within the social service sector (Luoma-aho, 2008), which appeared to increase their sense of resentment, frustration and annoyance in the wake of service failures.

Cognitive dimensions of CD: Respondents were also cynical and distrustful towards their local government (Evanschitzky et al. 2012). *"I think that there's a culture in Councils that is they have power, 'I can abuse it and get away with it'." "I don't see them looking out for people, I don't rely on them."*

Affective dimensions of CD: Respondents appeared disillusioned and frustrated towards their local government (Bowden et al. 2014). *"I've gone to them about the issue and it was difficult, it wasn't enjoyable, it wasn't pleasant, it was a battlefield and the awful thing is it was an expected response from them."* ***Behavioural Dimensions of CD:*** Along with this distinctive negative affective and cognitive disposition towards their service provider, a number of customers also identified as more 'passive offenders' who sought to behaviourally neglect interactions their local government (Yi and Baumgartner, 2004; Goode, 2012). "*We've been through a period of Councils becoming anonymous and losing their community interface." "I had come to be accustomed to having no particularly close relationship with Council." "The red tape prevents you, I think, from getting more involved because everything's so difficult on a day to day basis." "I have no involvement." "A lot of people like myself now are going 'I can't be bothered'."* CD appeared to act as a precursor to NE as it created a cycle of detachment within the citizens' focal service relationships. This is an issue for social services, which are often long-term and require direct inputs form customers in order for customers to gain their maximum benefits i.e., government, welfare and charitable services (Anderson et al. 2013). The respondents' sense of detachment negatively impacted upon their overall perceptions, attitudes and opinions of their service experience, and well-being, which placed them on the 'precipice' of becoming actively negatively engaged given the

magnitude of future service failures is such that triggers a significant, negative emotional reaction leading to NE.

3.4 Negative customer engagement within social services

Not all customers will remain in a dormant state of CD, and given the strong presence of CD within this context, negative manifestations of engagement need to be understood along with their impact on well-being. As with CD, the discussion of negative CE revolved around the *vertical* interactions between customers and service entities, which can include the host organisation, its service processes and employees (Anderson et al. 2013). However, negative CE was more extreme than CD in that it involved premeditated, activated and dedicated expressions of negative thoughts, feelings, and behaviours throughout the service experience (Luoma-aho, Bowden and Naumann, 2015; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014).

Cognitive dimensions of Negative CE: Respondents perceived their local government to be largely redundant and perceived an imbalance of control appeared to heighten responses blame attribution in times of service failures (Luoma-aho, 2009). *"Councils are filled with people too lazy to work for themselves." "Why are they building all the high rises? It's their fault, isn't it?" "It is their fault. They make that decision."*

Affective dimensions of Negative CE: The affective components of anger and contempt were a prominent theme throughout the groups, supporting the finding that displays of negative emotion typically have the strongest valence within non-profit sectors (Luoma-aho, 2009). *"I've just got a flush of anger about it still because I was the one who lost out." "It infuriates the community."*

Behavioural dimensions of Negative CE: Respondents who are negatively engaged may demonstrate a range of service 'misbehaviours' (Gebauer, Fuller and Pezzei, 2013) which included excessive complaining, deliberate service misuse and spreading negative WOM; venting anger and frustration; showing hostility towards the service; and boycotting the host organisation entirely. (Miller, Fournier and Allen, 2012; Gebauer, Fuller and Pezzei, 2013; Luoma-aho, 2009). *"I've worked for years trying to get council to listen. That's how I've developed my annoyance."*

3.5 Relationship between negative customer engagement and well-being

It was apparent that respondents' NE had a detrimental impact on a range of well-being outcomes. The experiential and emotional content of NE entailed anger, frustration and contempt which prompted consumers to display a range of misbehaviours. The stress of

these negative emotions, thoughts and behaviours were not only contained within the direct interactions within this focal negative service relationship, but also 'spilled over' to affect their sense of well-being within other life domains, i.e. community, and social lives (Sirgy et al. 2008). Respondents felt these negative interactions significantly impacted upon their lives, both as a customer; as a collective citizen of community; and in other aspects of their life (e.g. their family). *"There is masses of stress and sleepless nights." "It's a lot of pressure, you don't want to be there fighting all the time. You don't want your kid to be brought up in a very stressful situation." "The local residents feel jaded and we don't feel cared for. The council do not care about our everyday lives here and the increased pressure and stress on all of us."*

In line with a TSR perspective, it was apparent that the impact of citizens' NE was detrimental to the well-being of both the consumer and the service entity. The emotional contagion associated with NE spread within the service ecosystem; which further damaged the reputation of the focal organisation. NE also extended beyond the direct relationship between customers and their local government to impact their individual sense of well-being.

4.0 Implications

This study revealed that firstly, customer engagement can manifest positively, passively and negatively within a focal social service relationship. This represents a new and important contribution to engagement research, as there three states have not been studied concurrently; nor within a social service. Positive CE was inherently communal, and operated through concepts such as reciprocity, trust, altruism, belongingness and helping behaviours. CD was inherently passive, and manifested through concepts such as cynicism, passivity, distrust and relationship neglect. It entailed a higher propensity to eventuate into a more active state of NE, which manifested through anger, frustration, contempt, complaint behaviour and revenge seeking-behaviour.

Secondly, this study diverged from traditional research by applying a TSR framework to the operation of engagement. This highlighted how different valences of engagement manifest within interactions between consumer (e.g. other citizens, communities) and service (e.g. the host organisation) entities. Positive CE was found to be largely contained within the interactions occurring *within* consumer entities; whereas CD and NE were contained to interactions *between* both consumer and service entities. However, all three

valences have the potential to cause a ripple effect that extends beyond their original interactions to other aspects of the service ecosystem. Lastly, it examined the impact of these three engagement valences on well-being of consumer and service entities, revealing positive CE to enhance, and NE to diminish well-being on an individual, collective, organisational and ecosystem level.

In light of this, managers of social services must create strategies that both enhance CE; and decrease CD and NE within the all aspects of service ecosystem. This requires managers to look beyond their direct relationships with customers towards all networks in the service experience. Social services should aim to appear open and willing to co-create with their customers; and in the specific case of local governments, managers should redistribute a sense of community ownership back to the citizens given their ability to autonomously co-create valued community services. However, this may prove challenging as a large proportion of customers were revealed to be to disengaged, meaning they neglect their relationship with the host organisation and thus are not actively engaged in sponsored co-creation. In addition, these disengaged customers, who represented the majority of the customer base, may eventuate into a more active state of NE over time in response to multiple negative service failures. Thus whilst CD is largely passive, if left untreated it may hinder the ability for organisations to deliver valued services through sponsored co-creation, which may exacerbate the cycle of service failure leading to more active states of NE. Thus strategies should revolve on firstly identifying and secondly, trying to re-engage this disengaged segment to minimise the risk of it eventuating into active NE, which may have harmful any spillover effects on the well-being of other customer engagement segments; as well as the service ecosystem as whole.

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Chapter Five

Analysis of the Structural Model and Research Hypotheses

Analysis of the Structural Model and Research Hypothesis

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a qualitative investigation of the theoretical model guiding the inquiry. This chapter reports the results of an empirical estimation, and analysis of the theoretical model. To achieve this, a two-step approach to structural equation modelling is adopted. This approach initially establishes the strength of the measures used in this investigation. It then addresses the hypotheses presented in the study. Three research themes are examined with this approach. The role of involvement as a driver of positive and negative customer engagement is firstly examined. The relationship between positive and negative engagement and the outcome of word-of-mouth is then established. The moderating effect of dual object type on these interrelationships is then examined. Lastly, this model is applied across contrasting service types, being Australian Local Governments and Social Networking Sites to examine the contextually contingent nature of customer engagement. The chapter therefore completes the analysis approach developed in this thesis by empirically examining a multi-construct model of positive and negative customer engagement.

An empirical investigation of the role of involvement as a driver of positive and negative customer engagement, and their effect on word-of-mouth, which additionally takes into consideration the moderating effect of object type on interrelationships between these constructs, has not yet been presented in the literature. The empirical investigation of this model therefore represents a significant contribution to marketing theory and practice. This chapter is presented in the form of one manuscript, which is in its original format and which is currently submitted for journal publication.

This chapter is comprised of the following co- authored article:

1. **TITLE**: Expanding Customer Engagement: Dual Valences, Objects and Contexts.
   AUTHORS: Kay Naumann (60%) Jana Bowden (30%) Mark Gabbott (10%)
   JOURNAL: European Journal of Marketing

   RANKING: A*

   STATUS: Submitted

Article 5.2

Expanding Customer Engagement: Dual Valences, Objects and Contexts

Purpose: This study contributes to the nascent literature on negatively-valenced customer engagement by empirically exploring it in conjunction with positive customer engagement. Both valences are explored through affective, cognitive and behaviour dimensions, and, in relation to the antecedent of involvement and outcome of word-of-mouth (WOM). It also explores how these relationships are moderated by dual objects, being a focal service brand and, a service community. To test the generalisability of each valence, this exploration is applied across contrasting service types, including a social service and social networking sites (SNS).

Methodology: Structural equation modelling is used to analyse 625 dual-focus surveys (1250 responses in total).

Findings: Involvement is a strong driver of positive CE, which positively impacts the outcome of WOM. These relationships are consistent across the dual objects and service types, suggesting the process of positive CE is generalisable across different foci and service contexts. Involvement has a moderately negative impact on negative CE, whereas negative CE acts as a positive driver of WOM. These relationships are revealed to have context specificity, namely, the negative influence of involvement on negative CE is stronger within the social service, compared to SNS. Further, negative CE is a stronger driver of WOM for the 'brand' object in the social service. This suggests that the drivers and outcomes of negative CE are contextually contingent.

Originality: This is the first article to quantitatively measure positive and negative valences of engagement concurrently, and, examine the moderating effect of dual objects across contrasting service types.

Key Words: Customer engagement; negative customer engagement; engagement objects; social services; social networking sites.

Type: Research Paper

Introduction

The customer experience is becoming more dynamic and interactive, and customer engagement remains an important and influential area of research on service relationships. Customer engagement, or CE, is defined as "a psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, co-creative customer experiences with a focal agent/object (e.g., a brand) in focal service relationships" (Brodie *et al.*, 2011, p.260). CE encapsulates the ways in which value is created or diminished when customers interact with multiple service actors in a relationship (Chandler and Lusch, 2015; Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014). The literature favours research on positively engaged customers, who reward organisations with affective commitment, brand equity, trust, self-brand connections, customer retention, loyalty, profitability and positive WOM (Sashi, 2012; van Doorn *et al.*, 2010; Bowden, 2009; Islam and Rahman, 2016a). Yet, service experiences are not always positive, and it has been suggested that within some sectors "negative brand relationships are in fact more common than positive relationships, with an average split across categories of 55%/45% for negative and positive relationships, respectively" (Fournier and Alvarez, 2012, p. 253).

To this end, customers can be *negatively* engaged with a service relationship. Negative CE captures "consumers' unfavorable brand-related thoughts, feelings, and behaviors during focal brand interactions" (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014, p. 63). The nascent literature on negative CE highlights its detrimental impact on brand reputation and value through customers' negative WOM, brand switching, avoidance, rejection and potential retaliation and revenge behaviours (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Lievonen, Luoma-aho and Bowden, 2017). Research on negative CE is limited and there is a pressing need for studies to consider the co-existence of positive and negative valences of CE (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Lievonen, Luoma-aho, Bowden, 2017). This study explores how positive and negative CE operate and co-exist within two types of service relationships.

Additionally, customers can engage with multiple touch points, or 'objects', simultaneously within a relationship (Maslowska, Malthouse and Collinger, 2016; Chandler and Lusch, 2015). Importantly, these objects (e.g. a focal brand, community, other customers, staff, service intermediaries) can exert different influences on the type of engagement experienced (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015, 2016; Schamari and Schaefers, 2015). For example, recent research by Bowden et al. (2017) find positive engagement with an online brand community (OBC) to *enhance*, and

negative CE with the OBC to *detract* from a customer's' engagement with the focal brand. Yet, CE is largely explored in relation to a single object and few studies consider the interplay of multiple objects and how they affect CE valences (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2016, 2015; Sim and Plewa, 2017). This study explores how positive and negative CE manifest towards dual objects, being a focal service organisation, and a service community.

Finally, CE has mainly been explored in commercial and online contexts, and has had limited application in the social services (Bowden, Naumann and Luoma-aho, 2015; Islam and Rahman, 2016b). However, customers interact with a range of service types, including those in the charitable, non-profit and public sectors, and the role of CE should not be neglected within these service types (Hollebeek *et al.*, 2016; Naumann, Bowden and Gabbott, 2017). Further, little is known of whether CE is generalisable across service types, or, best when applied at a context-specific level (Islam and Rahman, 2016b; Calder, Malthouse and Maslowska, 2016). This has left a dearth in the literature on CE conceptualisations that are firstly, applicable to the social services, and secondly, transferable across diverse contexts (Islam and Rahman, 2016b; Bowden, Naumann and Luoma-aho, 2015). To address these gaps, this study examines CE across two contrasting service types: a social service, and, social networking sites (SNS). This will provide further insight into how multiple valences of CE manifest towards dual objects, and, whether CE can be generalisable across different service types, or if its operation is more nuanced at the context-specific level. The remainder of the article is structured as follows: first, a brief overview of existing literature on CE in its positive and negative valences is provided, followed by a discussion on the engagement objects and the service contexts used in this study. The hypothesis development follows, after which the methodology and context is described and the results presented. Lastly, a discussion of the results and the implications arising from this research is provided.

Positive Customer Engagement

Positive CE is defined as "a consumer's positively valenced brand-related cognitive, emotional and behavioural activity during or related to focal consumer/brand interactions", and extends more static measures of relationship quality by capturing the *range* of positive thoughts, feelings and behaviours a customer holds towards a relationship (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie 2014, p. 154). These can generate beneficial outcomes for an organisation such as loyalty, trust, satisfaction, self-brand connections

and affective commitment, and increase a customer's willingness to pay a premium price (Bowden, 2009; Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014; So *et al.*, 2016; Dwvindi *et al.*, 2017). Customers become positively engaged based on a number of factors, including the history of their service interactions, the current valence of their engagement (positive/negative), as well as the anticipated propensity for future engagement (Chandler and Lusch, 2015; Hollebeek *et al.*, 2016).

In their seminal paper, Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie (2014) measure positive CE through 'cognition' 'activation' and 'affection', which capture the knowledge processing, behavioural manifestations and emotional responses involved in CE respectively. This tri-dimensional framework has been adopted in the majority of empirical research on positive CE (e.g. Leckie, Nyadzayo & Johnson, 2016; Vivek *et al.*, 2014). In keeping with recent empirical research, we also frame positive CE to operate through the three dimensions of affect, cognition and behaviour.

The affective component of positive CE includes the feelings of pride, happiness, enjoyment, excitement and positivity customers experience during focal consumer/brand interactions (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2016). These positive emotions are said to be "summative and enduring" and thus develop and transpire over the trajectory of a service relationship as opposed to discrete events (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2016, p.35). The cognitive dimension centres on a customer's positive mental states during and after interacting with engagement objects (Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2016). This can include the level of positive attention, interest and reflection paid to a brand or its service community (Vivek et al. 2014; Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014). The behavioural dimension captures a customer's level of participation, energy and passion towards various engagement objects (Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012). It can also include the time spent using/interacting with an object and the degree to which they share and endorse this to others (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014; Dessart *et al.*, 2016).

Despite the recent advancements made within the literature on CE, further research is needed to clarify its dimensionality and operationalisation (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2016). Positive CE needs to be explored in conjunction with negative engagement valences (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). Further, the majority of studies apply

positive CE in commercial contexts or on online platforms with few studies considering how positive CE manifests within social services, or, how its operation may vary across contexts (Islam and Rahman, 2016b). In addition, positive CE has mostly been examined in relation to one object, usually the focal service brand (Islam and Rahman, 2016b; Hollebeek *et al.,* 2016) and limited research exists on how different object types may moderate the process of positive CE.

Negative Customer Engagement

Negative customer engagement (CE) is defined as "consumers' unfavorable brand-related thoughts, feelings, and behaviors during focal brand interactions" (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014, p. 63). It encapsulates the negative expressions, beliefs and behaviours customers exhibit towards one or many aspects within a service relationship (Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016). Negatively engaged customers can act as 'brand adversaries' who are highly committed to the relationship, yet in ways that detract value from the exchange (Hollebeek and Chen, 2011). Negative CE is a recent and under-researched addition to the engagement literature, with only a handful of conceptual and qualitative works existing (e.g. Lievonen, Luoma-aho, Bowden, 2017; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2015). To date and to the authors' knowledge, no substantial, survey-based research on negative CE exists, and there is a need to develop and test appropriate scales to capture its operation.

Our study adheres to the tri-dimensional framework of negative CE presented by Hollebeek and Chen, (2014), however, we argue that negative CE is not simply the reversal of positive CE, but manifests through its own unique characteristics. Whilst negative CE may share the same driver(s) and dimensions (affect, cognition and behaviour) as positive CE, the way in which these dimensions are measured and operate are ultimately distinct (Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2015; Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016; Dolan et al., 2016a).

Whilst the literature on negative CE is scarce, research on the 'dark side' of service relationships exhibits how negative relationships can fester. For example, Miller, Fournier and Allen (2012) explore the emotional components of *abusive* relationships, which occur when customers feel powerless, under-valued and exploited, and *adversarial* relationships which fester due to value incongruence and a strong hatred of

the product/service brand. Frow et al. (2011) identify ten triggers that antagonise customers, which range from: provider dishonesty, information misuse and privacy invasion; to: unfair customer favouritism, misleading or lock-in contracts and financial exploitation. These triggers represent the more cognitive dimensions of negative CE, as they require evaluative judgement of one's treatment during a failed service encounter (Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann, 2015; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). Importantly, appraisals of unfairness and dissatisfaction can prompt customers to display co-destructive behaviours, such as venting anger and frustration; spreading negative WOM; starting conflicts with members of a brand's online community; and creating alias online accounts to spread brand hatred using multiple profiles as a way of recruiting other members (Gebauer, Fuller and Pezzei, 2013; Smith, 2013).

The above highlights the range of triggers that cause customers to become negatively engaged through affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions. We suggest the affective dimension of negative CE to include feelings of anger and dislike customers hold towards a service relationship. Anger is a strongly-held negative emotion that is aroused by and directed at the misbehaviour of others (Bougie, Pieters and Zeelenberg, 2003). Customers can develop feelings of anger and hostility in response to unfulfilled service expectations and when their sense of autonomy and efficacy is violated (Smith, 2013; Park, Eisingerich and Park 2013). Anger can be particularly detrimental to service organisations as it prompts customers to display punitive actions towards a brand, which aligns with the highly active nature of negative CE (Smith, 2013). For example, Lievonen, Luoma-aho and Bowden's (2017) typology of negative stakeholder engagement features 'Revenge-Seeking' and 'Trolls', who hold extremely strong, negative emotions towards an organisation. For revenge-seekers, these emotions prompt hostile thoughts, malice and brand sabotage, whereas trolls retaliate through spreading sadistic and often false claims about an organisation. However, Lievonen, Luoma-aho and Bowden (2017) find the most detrimental stakeholders are those with *moderately* negative emotions. Dubbed 'Justice-Seeking Hateholders', these customers spread negative but plausible content about an organisation to a wide audience via online discussions, subsequently causing reputational harm (Lievonen, Luoma-aho and Bowden, 2017). This typology suggests that emotional valence may not always be indicative of reputational damage, as the more measured and moderate customers are considered the most detrimental segment compared with extreme anti-brand 'fanatics'.

The cognitive dimension of negative CE is suggested to be the degree of interest and attention paid to negative information about a service brand/community. This is in line with prior research finding negatively engaged customers dedicate higher levels of cognitive processing when reading, evaluating and reacting to negative brand information (Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2015; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). Lastly, we posit the behavioural component of negative CE to manifest through collective complaint and anti-brand activism. Research on negative CE in public sector organisations finds the negatively engaged to display their anger and dislike towards an organisation through public venting, boycotts and protests (Luoma-aho, 2015). This supports research by Romani, Grappi and Baggozi (2013), that finds customers to retaliate through demonstrations, e-mail campaigns or temporary boycotts. In the mainstream CE literature, van Doorn et al. (2010) suggest the behavioural manifestations of negative CE include organising public actions against a firm and spreading negative WOM (e.g. blogging). The behavioural dimension of negative CE is therefore suggested to have a collective element in that customers seek the support and reinforcement of others when complaining against a service/community.

Despite the detrimental nature of negative engagement, the literature surrounding its operation and conceptualisation is sparse and research is needed to conceptualise its nature, hallmarks, processes and implications for service organisations (van Doorn *et al.*, 2010; Hollebeek *et al.*, 2016). This study contributes to the nascent literature on negative CE by exploring it through affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions. In addition, negative CE has not been empirically examined in relation to multiple engagement objects, or, across two opposing service contexts.

Multiple Engagement Objects

Customers engage with a multiplicity of objects within a service relationship, yet, research largely adopts a single-object focus (Sim and Plewa, 2017). This approach is problematic, as may "obscure the relevance of other objects, casting doubt on the validity of the research models" (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2016, p.400). There is a need for research to consider how *multiple* objects can function as mutually enhancing or opposing forces on positive and negative CE valences (Hollebeek *et al.*, 2016; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015, 2016).

A handful of recent studies explore the notion of multiple engagement objects. Brodie et al. (2013) highlight how positive CE can be mutually enhanced between dual objects, finding that customers will first engage with a product or service before discussing these experience with others on social media. Conversely, Lee, Kim and Kim (2011) and Schamari and Shaefers (2015) find object types to differ in their effect on positive CE across customer-created, and brand-managed platforms. Similarly, Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas (2015, 2016) find the interactions customers have with a brand and its community on SNS exert different influences on the affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions of engagement. This supports research by Sim and Plewa (2017) that finds the salience of CE dimensions with dual objects to differ in influence on CE dimensions with the overall service context. For example, they find that affective engagement with the 'service provider' object positively influences cognitive engagement with the overall service context, but has no effect on 'affective' or 'behavioural' engagement with the overall context (Sim and Plewa, 2017).

Whilst the above research provide insights into how the dimensionality of CE can vary in salience across different objects, few studies consider how different objects may influence positive and negative CE concurrently. Bowden et al. (2017) find customers' engagement with online brand communities (OBC) is interrelated with their engagement with the focal brand. Specifically, a 'spillover' effect existed whereby customers' positive CE with their OBC further enhanced their engagement with the brand, yet, their negative CE within the OBC detracted from brand engagement. This highlights the fluidity of CE, as the type of CE experienced in one interaction can spill over to add or detract value from their engagement with other objects (Bowden et al., 2017). Importantly, it reveals that customers may be negatively engaged with an object (i.e. brand community) irrespective of their positive engagement with the service brand overall. Whilst Bowden et al. (2017) make an important contribution to the literature on dual valence and objects, their study is qualitative in nature, and does not observe the moderating effect that object type has on CE valences. As such, this article provides much needed empirical research on how object type can affect positive *and* negative CE across a range of service contexts.

Customer Engagement across contexts

This study compares positive and negative CE across two contexts: a social service, which is operationalised in this article as local governments, and social networking sites (SNS). In doing so, it answers calls for research to test the generalisability of CE across differing service environments (Brodie *et al.,* 2011; Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012). Recently, research on engagement in social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) has gained traction, as organisations are using these platforms to communicate and connect with their customers (Dolan *et al.,* 2016b; Baldus, Voorhees and Calantone, 2015). Social media is defined as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and which allow the creation/exchange of user-generated content" (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). To date, social media has largely been explored in terms of the positive impact it has on customer-brand relationships, as it represents a conduit for mostly hedonic, involving and entertaining customer experiences. However, not all engagement on social media is positive and customers are increasingly turning to online platforms to express their negative brand opinions and experiences. Customers can now express a range of positive and negative reactions to stimuli on platforms like Facebook, which has expanded their 'like' button to include love, laughter, gratitude, surprise, sadness and anger (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2016). Importantly, negative CE can quickly turn viral on online platforms, which can damage an organisation's reputation, customer relationships, financial performance and lead to distrust, switching behaviour and negative WOM and attitudes among customers (Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016; Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2015). As such, understanding how negative engagement operates and how it can be contained is crucial for brands wishing to maintain strong and positive engagement via social media.

The second context is local government services. Customers encounter and use municipal services daily, yet, local governments have "not received research attention in the service literature in proportion to their importance in people's lives… despite the fact that cities have always provided extensive community service systems" (Freund, Spohrer and Messinger, 2013, p. 38). These services include: parks and recreation services; community safety; provision of local healthcare; youth and aged care; art and cultural services; local road maintenance; residential and commercial development services; and sanitary and waste services (Freund, Spohrer and Messinger, 2013). Creating a positively

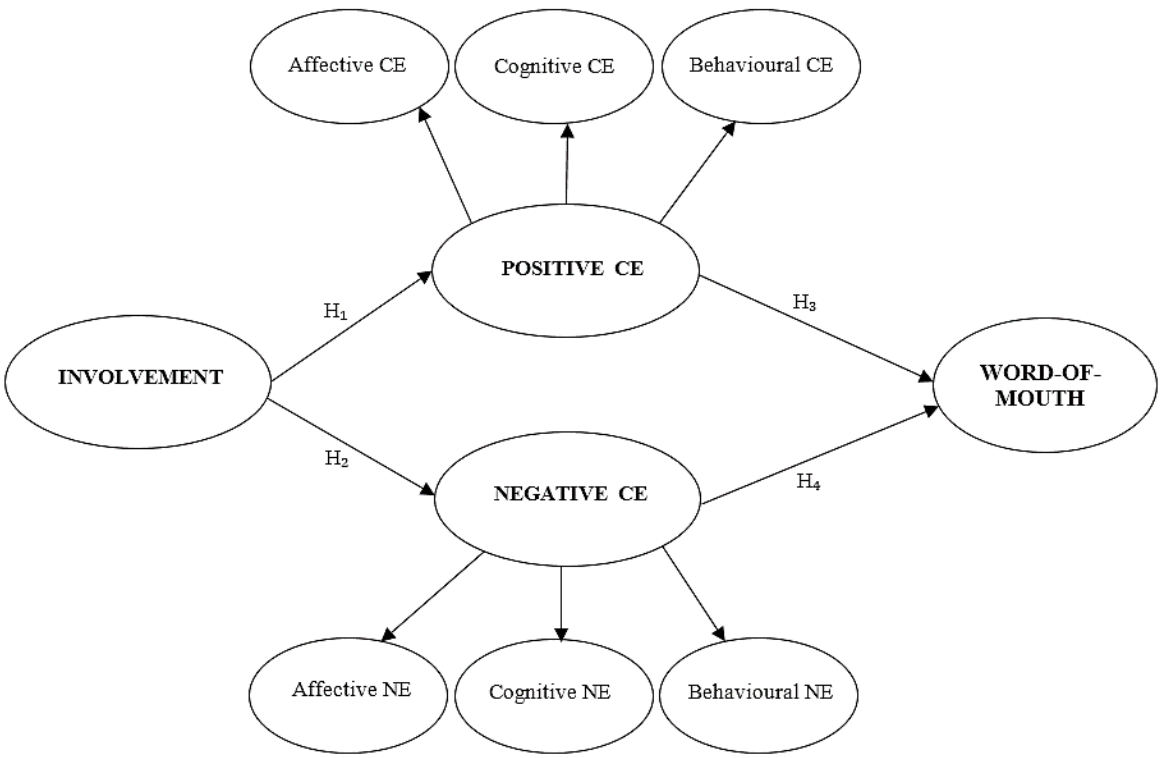
engaged customer base is important, as customers are more likely to be involved in, and supportive of, the planning, strategy and creation of community services (Artist *et al.*, 2012). Fostering positive engagement can also create a culture of shared values, co-production and collaboration, which aids local governments in identifying areas of concern and dissatisfaction with community services (Artist *et al.*, 2012). Conversely, having a negatively engaged customer base can undermine the status, recognition and organisational legitimacy of a local government (Artist *et al.*, 2012; Luoma-aho, 2015). The emotional contagion of negative CE also risks 'spilling over' to affect other customer segments, which can reduce cohesiveness, participation and social capital among a community (Luoma-aho, 2015).

Social media platforms and local governments represent two distinct service types, which is useful for exploring the generalisability of CE (Hollebeek *et al.*, 2016). Whereas social media provides customers with highly customisable, flexible and immediate service experiences, local governments are highly centralised, process-orientated and bureaucratic organisations that provide 'one-to-many' services with little to no customisation (Freund, Spohrer and Messinger, 2013; Kaplan and Haenlien, 2010). Importantly, customers are not afforded the option to buy-into a relationship with their local government, and are unable to easily exit or switch in the face of dissatisfaction (Luoma-aho, 2009). These contrasts may influence the valence of CE experienced within these service types. That is, customers may be more likely to be positively engaged with SNS in light of the motivation for using these platforms, as a recent study by the Keller Fay Group found 89% of CE on social media to be positively valenced, i.e. leaving positive feedback, reviews and 'liking' brand posts (Schamari and Schaefers, 2015). Contrastingly, the high bureaucratic control, barriers to exit and lack of customer-centric attitude in local government services can exacerbate responses of anger, negative WOM and collective complaint behaviour (Luoma-aho, 2009; Freund, Spohrer and Messinger, 2013). As such, the nature of local governments may be especially useful for exploring negative CE.

To date, no studies have quantitatively examined positive and negative CE in relation to dual objects. Within the social service, customers have been found to hold transactionally-based relationships with their governing body (coined vertical networks) and the more communal and social relationships with other members of their residential

community (horizontal networks) (Fennema, 2004). Likewise, SNS (e.g. Facebook) act as the hosting platform that facilitate the creation of online communities (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015, 2016). We posit that these two types of interactions are governed by different dynamics and expectations, and may thus have a moderating effect on the process of positive and negative CE. Further, research is yet to explore the effect of involvement on positive and negative valences of CE concurrently, or, how these two valences drive the outcome of WOM. This paper addresses these gaps by observing involvement in relation to both positive and negative valences of CE, and, examines the effect on both valences on the outcome of WOM. Our research model is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The Process of Positive and Negative Customer Engagement



Hypothesis Development

Involvement as Driver of Positive and Negative Customer Engagement

Involvement has been noted as an important driver of positive and negative CE (Brodie *et al.*, 2011; Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016). Involvement is defined as a customer's "perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interests" (Zaichkowsky 1985, 342). A service relationship must carry a degree of relevance, importance and value to a customer in order for it to be meaningful, and, foster engagement (Islam and Rahman, 2016a). As such, we posit involvement to be a driver of customers' engagement with multi aspects of a service relationship (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016).

Whilst other relational drivers of CE have been explored within commercial service contexts, including involvement, trust, participation, self-brand congruity and flow (Brodie et al., 2011a; Leckie, Nyadzayo & Johnson, 2016; De Vries and Carlton, 2014), little is known of the drivers of CE within a social service setting. However, recent research in online engagement has emphasised the need to focus more on the social determinants of CE (Lee, Kim and Kim, 2011; Verhagen et al., 2015; Hammedi et al., 2015) . For example, social ties, personal identification and hedonic benefits are noted as antecedents of positive CE in online communities (Verhagen et al., 2015; Hammedi et al., 2015). Whilst the more social themes of identity may serve as a relevant driver of *positive* CE within a social media context, and arguably, towards the 'community' object in Local Government context, it may not be a useful predictor of positive, negative an disengaged valences of CE across both object types and service contexts. In particular, a highly social and personal construct like 'identification' may not translate to the forced, bureaucratic nature of local government services (Luoma-aho, 2015). Instead, it is more conceivable for a customer to be cognisant of their involvement with the local government more so than their sense of identity, or, the hedonistic value gained from their service experiences. That is, a positively engaged customer may experience high levels of involvement (Islam & Rahman, 2016; Leckie, Nyadzayo & Johnson, 2016), yet, a disengaged customer may feel less involved with their service provider (Dutot and Mosconi, 2016; Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016). Likewise, a negatively engaged customer may be highly involved, but in a way that their engagement leads to the co-destruction of service value (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Rissanen, Luoma-aho

and Coombs, 2016). Further, involvement has been noted as a driver of all three valences of CE in prior literature, which supports its use in this article as a relevant driver of CE.

Recent research has found involvement to drive positive CE in the context of social media (Islam and Rahman, 2016a; De Vries and Carlton, 2014) mobile phones (Leckie, Nyadzayo and Johnson (2016), electronic tablet devices (Dwivedi et al., 2016), retail store brands (So et al., 2016) and across online and offline contexts (France, Merrilees and Miller, 2016). In light of the above, we suggest involvement to be an antecedent to affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions of positive CE. Prior research finds involvement to positively influence the affective dimension of engagement, which manifests through feelings of happiness, pride and positivity customers feel when engaging with a service brand/community (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014). This is because involved customers are more emotionally bonded with service brands, and thus demonstrate higher affective commitment to a service relationship (Leckie, Nyadzayo & Johnson; 2016; Bowden, 2009). Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie (2014) also find involvement to have the greatest impact on the affective dimension of CE compared with its cognitive and behavioural aspects, suggesting that the degree of relevance and importance a service relationship has to consumers' lives is a strong motivator of positive feelings, pride and happiness towards a service relationship.

Involvement has also been found to drive the cognitive expressions of positive CE, which manifest through a customer's heightened thought processing about brand-related communications (Vivek *et al.*, 2014). Involved customers are more likely to pay attention and devote higher levels of cognitive processing while interpreting and comprehending brand messages, and, are more likely to conduct rigorous information search about favoured brands (Leckie, Nyadzayo & Johnson; 2016; Dwivedi *et al.*, 2016). Lastly, we expect involvement to drive the behavioural dimensions of positive CE, which captures a consumer's enthused participation in a service relationship including their passion towards and daily usage of a service (Vivek *et al.*, 2014). Highly involved customers are more likely to participate in marketing activities such as interacting in online brand communities and co-creating value during service encounters (De Vries and Carlton, 2014; Dwivedi *et al.*, 2016).

To date, no studies quantitatively explore involvement as a driver of negative CE. However, several qualitative studies position negative CE to be driven by high levels of involvement (e.g. Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). This is because customers who are highly involved and invested in a relationship are more likely to have stronger reactions when service failures occur (Lau and Ng, 2001). Highly involved customers often have inflated expectations about service delivery, which if not met, can prompt strong negative emotional reactions (Gebauer, Füller and Pezzei, 2013). Therefore, involvement may drive the affective aspect of negative CE, which manifests through emotions such as hate, contempt, dislike and resentment (Romani, Grappi and Dalli, 2013; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). Further, highly involved customers are more likely to pay attention to negative information about a focal service organisation (Kottasz and Bennett, 2014). Thus, we suggest that highly involved customers will be more likely to demonstrate affective and cognitive dimensions of negative CE, which manifests through the depth of processing of negative information about an engagement object (Kottasz and Bennett, 2014; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). Lastly, high levels of involvement have been found to motivate consumers' destructive behaviours in the response to service failures, such as spreading negative WOM, complaining and warning other customers about a brand through online brand communities (Hennig-Thurau, *et al.*, 2004; Dolan *et al.*, 2016a). Involvement is therefore suggested to drive the behavioural dimensions of negative CE, which operates through collective complaining, boycotting and blogging (Romani *et al.*, 2015; Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2015). In light of the above, we suggest involvement to drive both positive and negative valences of CE, given the increased importance that service relationships, and their community, hold for highly involved and invested consumers.

We propose:

H1: Involvement is a positive driver of positive customer engagement

H2: Involvement is a positive driver of negative customer engagement

Word-of-Mouth as an Outcome of Positive and Negative Customer Engagement

Word-of-mouth (WOM) is defined as "informal, person-to-person communication between a perceived non-commercial communicator and a receiver regarding a brand, a product, an organisation, or a service" (Harrison-Walker, 2001, p. 63). The changing

landscape of the customer experience has expanded WOM beyond physical conversations to encompass electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), which is spread through a range of digital platforms including online communities and social media (Islam and Rahman, 2016a; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). To this end, eWOM is defined as "any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet" (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004, p.39).

Positively engaged customers are more willing to advocate a brand and act as unofficial 'spokespersons' when discussing their positive experiences with others (Pansari and Kumar, 2017; Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012). Customers perceive WOM to be more credible compared to brand initiated communication, and favourable WOM can transform neutral brand attitudes into stronger, more positive ones among customer networks (Harrison-Walker, 2001; Vivek, Beatty and Morgan; 2012). Ensuring credibility is crucial in service relationships, and in particular, complex services whereby perceptions of risk are heightened.

Several recent studies have revealed WOM to be an outcome of positive CE. For example, qualitative research by Vivek, Beatty and Morgan (2012) find positive CE to drive favourable WOM across brand (Apple products) and retail settings. This supports research by Hollebeek and Chen (2014) that finds positively and negatively valenced CE to result in favourable and unfavourable eWOM respectively in virtual brand communities. There is limited quantitative research on the relationship between positive CE and WOM. Although Vivek et al. (2014) establish discriminate validity between their measure of positive CE and WOM, they do not test this relationship. However, a recent study by Islam and Rahman (2016a) finds positive CE, measured through affect, cognition and behaviour, to be a strong driver of favourable WOM within Facebook communities. They find positively engaged customers recommend and say positive things about favoured Facebook communities, and encourage their 'friends' to participate and interact within the community (Islam and Rahman, 2016a).

The literature exploring WOM as an outcome of negative CE is nascent, yet, should be investigated further its consequences can be amplified on online settings (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). Early conceptual work by Juric, Smith and Wilks (2015) suggests negatively engaged customers exhibit negative WOM in response to poor customer

service, dissatisfaction, unethical brand behaviour, and as a way to take vengeance on an organisation. Similarly, van Doorn et al. (2010) suggest customers may voice their negative engagement through blogging, complaints and negative recommendations. Recent research has found negative attitudes towards an organisation and its reputation can prompt negative WOM (Lau and Ng, 2001; Dolan *et al.*, 2016a). As such, feelings of hate, dislike, contempt towards a service/service community may drive WOM. Hollebeek and Chen (2014) found negative CE to be a stronger driver of eWOM compared to positive CE. This supports previous research highlighting the asymmetrical impact of negative versus positive WOM on a range of brand outcomes (e.g. De Matos and Rossi, 2008)

Based on the above, it appears both positive and negative CE may result in WOM. Positively engaged customers may seek to share feelings of happiness and passion about engagement objects, whereas the negatively engaged may be motivated to discuss their negative experiences in order to warn others, vent, or seek revenge on a service organisation/community.

We propose:

H3: Positive customer engagement has a positive effect on WOM

H4: Negative customer engagement has a positive effect on WOM

Method

An online, dual-focus self-administered voluntary survey was distributed to Australian service consumers. A total sample of 625 participants was achieved across the two contexts and the respondent criteria were as follows: approximately equal numbers male and female, aged over between 18 and must live in an Australian local government area, or for the social media sample, must have used either Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter at least once in the past two weeks. Roughly equal quotas were achieved for the two service types, and within each context, equal quotas were achieved for the two objects being observed (due to the questionnaire being repeated per respondent). The social media context experienced a skew towards Facebook as the self-selected platform choice. This skew was somewhat expected, as Facebook is the preferred SNS for customers to engage with brands (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2016). The respondent profile can be seen in Table 1.

Involvement was measured using Zaichkowsky's (1985) bipolar semantic differential scale, which captures the relevance and importance of a brand, object or relationship to the customer. Word-of-mouth was measured using Harrison-Walker's (2001) 'word-of-mouth activity' scales, which measure the frequency with which customers mention and discuss a brand with others. Positive CE was measured using a hybrid of scales from Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie (2014) and Vivek et al. (2014). The affective dimension was captured using Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie's (2014) 'affection' scales, and the cognitive and behavioural dimensions were measured using Vivek et al.'s (2014) 'conscious attention' and 'enthused participation' scales respectively. The scales for negative CE were created from existing scales in related areas of marketing literature. The affective dimension was measured using Romani, Grappi and Dalli's (2013) scales on 'anger' and 'dislike', the cognitive dimension was captured using Kottasz and Bennett's (2014) 'depth of processing' scales, and the behavioural dimension measured using Romani et al.'s (2015) 'anti-brand activism' scale.

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Characteristic	**Total (n=625)**	**Total (n=625)**
Age Total	**625**	**100%**
18-30	188	30.08
31-40	166	26.56
41-50	160	25.6
51-60	46	7.36
61+	65	10.4
Gender Total	**625**	**100%**
Male	297	47.52
Female	328	52.48
Service type Total	**625**	**100%**
Local Government	325	52
Social Media	300	48
Occupier type Total	**325**	**52%**
Home owners	250	40

Renters	75	12
Social Media Platform Total	**300**	**48%**
Facebook	275	44
LinkedIn	13	2.08
Twitter	12	1.92
Usage Frequency	**300**	**48%**
Every day	216	34.56
Once every 2-3 days	35	5.6
At least once a week	5	0.8
Once a month or less	1	0.16
Prefer not to say	43	6.88
Occupier length (Local Govt.): Total	**325**	**52%**
1-5 years	68	10.88
5-10 years	55	8.8
10 + years	202	32.32
Education Total	**625**	**100%**
High school	135	21.6
TAFE/Technical collage	180	28.8
University- Undergraduate	120	19.2
University- Postgraduate	175	28
Other	9	1.44
Prefer not to say	6	0.96

Validation of measures

All measures were subjected to exploratory factor analysis, which was conducted in SPSS 24.0. Cronbach's alpha was examined (Hair *et al.*, 2006) along with average variance extracted. The measures were tested for discriminant validity and all construct pairs passed these tests. The data analysis followed the two-step procedure recommended by Anderson, Gerbing and Hunter (1987) including estimation of the measurement model followed by estimation of the structural model. Additional confirmatory factory analysis was undertaken in AMOS prior to testing the structural model. The measurement model indicated good fit and all items retained served as strong measures for their respective

constructs (x^2 = 352, df = 153, P.000, RSMEA = 0.064, GFI =0.90, CFI = 0.96, IFI = 0.96). An RSMEA under 0.07 is considered to be good model fit by Steiger (2007) and Hooper, Coughlan and Mullen (2008)

Results

The hypothesised relationships in the model were tested using structural equation modeling. Goodness of fit statistics indicated that the reflective, second-order model fitted the data adequately (GFI=0.937, CFI=0.968, IFI= 0.968. RMSEA=0.06). Reflective models are adhere to the conventional wisdom of scale measurement in marketing research (Iacobucci, 2010; Jarvis MacKenzie and Podsakoff, 2003). A reflective model was chosen over a formative method, given the latter can confound problems in model identification, measurement error and prediction error (Iacobucci, 2010; Jarvis MacKenzie and Podsakoff, 2003). This is because formative models measure the observed variable without error, and as such, the, measurement and predictor error contribute to the factor itself (Iacobucci, 2010). As such, formative models are considered a 'step backwards' in term of measurements model development (Iacobucci, 2010, p. 94). Positive and negative CE were modelled as higher-order factors, which is in keeping with recent empirical research (e.g. So et al., 2014 and Kam et al., 2016). Adopting a higher order approach can preserve constructs which has multiple dimensions, secondly, it can reduce the linearity when the constructs' latent variables are unable to be separated. Lastly, a higher-order factor can make the model more parsimonious. The proposed model explained 61% of the variance in the word-of-mouth construct. The affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions for positive and negative CE served as a strong indicators of their respective constructs. For positive CE, the dimensions loaded between 0.7 and 0.8, and for negative CE, between 0.6 and 0.8. The structural path coefficients were all found to be significant. Involvement was found to have a strong positive effect on positive CE (β=0.77, p<0.01, CR 18.156), and a weak negative effect on negative CE (β=-0.126, p<0.01, CR-3.701), supporting Hypothesis 1 and rejecting Hypothesis 2 respectively. Positive CE has a positive and strong effect on word-of-mouth (β=0.730, p<0.01, CR 17.27) supporting Hypothesis 3, and negative CE had a positive and moderate effect on word-of-mouth (β=0.359, p<0.01, CR 12.27) supporting Hypothesis 4. These findings suggest that involvement has a varying effect on the degree to which customers are positively and negatively engaged, yet the effect of either valence of engagement will be positive on word-of-mouth. Taking into

consideration the indirect effects in the model, involvement had the only indirect effect on word-of-mouth (β=0.517). The Squared multiple correlation for structural equation is 0.610.

A second purpose of this paper is to understand the effect that different engagement objects have on the salience of the constructs, and to compare these across the two service contexts. To test the invariance (equal weights) across the service brand and community objects, a multigroup analysis of structural invariance is conducted (Byrne, 2004). An unconstrained baseline model both within and between each context is established. The Chi-square statistic was used to assess measurement invariance, that is, if the chi-squared difference was not significant between the unconstrained and constrained model then measurement invariance was established. The results of the invariance tests are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Fit Indices for Invariance Tests

Model comparison	***df***	**X2**	***df/x2***	**p**	**CFI**	**IFI**	**RMSEA**	**Decision**
Local Government Brand group/ Local Government Community group	12	14.84	0.8	0.250	0.971	0.971	.042	Accept
Social Media Brand group/ Social Media Community group	12	15.22	0.78	0.229	0.979	0.978	.039	Accept
Local Government Brand group/ Social Media Brand group	12	24.66	0.48	0.16	0.967	0.967	.045	Accept
Local Government Community group/ Social Media Community group	12	24.67	0.148	0.16	0.982	0.982	0.36	Accept

Note: Fit indices reported for unconstrained model. *df, x2, df/x2,* p-value reported from measurement weights assuming unconstrained model to be correct.

Measurement invariance was established across all groups. This indicates that the meaning of the latent constructs in the model is similar between the engagement objects within each context and between the same object across contexts.

Having satisfied the conditions necessary at the measurement level we then proceeded to test for structural invariance (Byrne, 2004). The analysis indicated three of the four comparisons were not invariant at the structural model level. The only model to have a non-significant difference (p=0.3866) was within the social media context comparing across the brand and community objects (Table 3b). The results of this analysis are shown in Tables 3a,b,c and d. The analysis indicated that involvement had a consistent effect on

positive and negative CE across the objects *within* each context, yet, the relationship between involvement and negative CE was affected when comparing based on the same object *across* contexts. The relationship between positive and negative CE and WOM was also consistent for each object type *within* each context, but the effect of negative CE on WOM was affected by service type when comparing the brand object only. These findings suggest that in the context of this study, object type only affects the way customers engage with services brands when comparing two different service types.

Table 3a. Structural Invariance Analysis of Constructs across Engagement Objects (Local Government)

Constraint	Weight C1	Weight C2	χ^2 (*df*)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)
1. Fully Unconstrained Model			675.576 (250)	
2. Factor Loadings			687.582 (259)	12.006 (9)
Factor Loadings and equal coefficients for:				
3. Involvement →Positive Customer Engagement	0.809*	0.765*	687.583(260)	.001 (1)
4. Involvement → Negative Customer Engagement	-0.400*	-0.385*	688.214(260)	.632 (1)
5. Positive Customer Engagement → Word-of-mouth	0.732*	0.791*	687.891(260)	.309 (1)
6. Negative Customer Engagement → Word-of-mouth	0.529*	0.250*	690.837(260)	3.255 (1)
Model Fit:	N=325	N=325	N=325	
χ^2 (*df*)	355.721 (125)	319.855 (125)	675.576 (250)	
CFI	0.95	0.96	0.95	
IFI	0.95	0.96	0.95	
GFI	0.90	0.89	0.89	
RMSEA	0.07	0.06	0.05	

Notes: (a) c_1 council brand object; c_2 community object; *p<0.05 N=325 across all cohorts as survey items were repeated for each object per respondent

Table 3b. Structural Invariance Analysis of Constructs across Engagement Objects (Social Networking Sites)

Constraint	Weight C1	Weight C2	χ^2 (*df*)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)
1. Fully Unconstrained Model			587.249 (250)	
2. Factor Loadings			597.259 (259)	10.684 (1)
Factor Loadings and equal coefficients for:				
3. Involvement →Positive Customer Engagement	0.684*	0.681*	597.936 (260)	0.677 (1)
4. Involvement → Negative Customer Engagement	0.08	-0.008	598.833 (260)	0.897 (1)
5. Positive Customer Engagement → Word-of-mouth	0.781*	0.745*	597.957 (260)	0.698 (1)
6. Negative Customer Engagement → Word-of-mouth	0.212*	0.348*	600.205 (260)	2.964 (1)
Model Fit:	N=300	N=300	N=300	
χ^2 (*df*)	316.041 (125)	271.208 (125)	587.249 (250)	
CFI	0.96	0.97	0.96	
IFI	0.96	0.97	0.96	
GFI	0.89	0.90	0.90	
RMSEA	0.07	0.06	0.04	

Notes: (a) c_1 brand object; c_2 community object; *p<0.05 N=300 across all cohorts as survey items were repeated for each object per respondent

Table 3c. Structural Invariance Analysis of Constructs across Contexts (Local Government Brand Object vs. Social Networking Site Brand Object)

	Weight			
Constraint	**C1**	**C2**	χ^2 (*df*)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δ*df*)
1. Fully Unconstrained Model			671.760 (250)	
2. Factor Loadings			692.427 (259)	20.667 (9)
Factor Loadings and equal coefficients for:				
3. Involvement →Positive Customer Engagement	0.809*	0.684*	692.767 (260)	.34 (1)
4. Involvement → Negative Customer Engagement	*-0.400**	*0.08*	*716.464 (260)*	*24.027 (1)***
5. Positive Customer Engagement → Word-of-mouth	0.732*	0.781*	692.865 (260)	0.618 (1)
6. Negative Customer Engagement → Word-of-mouth	*0.529**	*0.212**	*706.400 (260)*	*13.97 (1)***
Model Fit:	N=325	N=300	N=625	
χ^2 (*df*)	355.721 (125)	316.041 (125)	671.760 (250)	
CFI	0.95	0.96	0.95	
IFI	0.95	0.96	0.95	
GFI	0.90	0.89	0.89	
RMSEA	0.07	0.07	0.05	

Notes: (a) c_1 brand object Local Government context; c_2 brand object SNS *p<0.05 **p<0.00

Table 3d. Structural Invariance Analysis of Constructs across Contexts (Local Government Community vs. Social Networking Site Community)

Constraint	Weight C1	Weight C2	χ^2 (*df*)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)
1. Fully Unconstrained Model			591.060 (250)	
2. Factor Loadings			607.361 (259)	16.30 (9)
Factor Loadings and equal coefficients for:				
3. Involvement →Positive Customer Engagement	0.765*	0.681*	607.700 (260)	0.339(1)
4. Involvement → Negative Customer Engagement	*-0.385**	*-0.008*	*615.506 (260)*	*8.45 (1)**
5. Positive Customer Engagement → Word-of-mouth	0.791*	0.745*	609.174 (260)	1.813 (1)
6. Negative Customer Engagement → Word-of-mouth	0.250*	0.348*	607.379 (260)	0.252 (1)
Model Fit:	N=325	N=300	N=625	
χ^2 (*df*)	319.855 (125)	271.208 (125)	591.060 (250)	
CFI	0.96	0.97	0.97	
IFI	0.96	0.97	0.97	
GFI	0.89	0.90	0.90	
RMSEA	0.06	0.06	0.04	

Notes: (a) c_1 community object Local Government context; c_2 community object SNS; *p<0.05

Discussion and Implications

This study offers several new insights into the nature of CE. Firstly, it empirically explores the duality of positive and negative CE and clarifies the dimensions, the antecedent and the consequent factor of both. As such, the findings of this article contribute to the limited empirical literature on positive and negative CE. The results of the overall research model find involvement to be a strong driver of positive CE, which supports prior research finding customers with higher levels of interest and involvement in a relationship to be more positively engaged (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014; So *et al.*, 2016). Involvement is one of the most conceptually relevant antecedents of positive CE, thus, the results of this article provide much needed empirical evidence of its role in motivating positive CE. Marketing academics should be cognisant of how a customer's interest and personal relevance in service interactions can drive strong, positive and engaging customer-provider relationships. Future research may consider how involvement works in conjunction with other complimentary antecedent factors to reinforce a customer's positive engagement, such as category knowledge and participation.

Whilst WOM is conceptually explored as a key outcome of positive CE, empirical evidence to support this relationship is limited. The findings of this article support Islam and Rahman (2016), Hollebeek, and Chen (2014) by revealing positive CE to have a strong, positive impact on WOM, suggesting positively engaged consumers are motivated to discuss and share their service experiences with others. This finding is important, as recent literature considers WOM to be a more significant outcome of engagement compared to constructs such as repeat purchase behaviour, especially, within public and health services (e.g. van Doorn, et al., 2010; Verleye, 2013). Future research should explore whether the WOM resulting from customers' positive engagement has ongoing effects on a service relationship. For example, WOM may exist in a 'feedback' loop to drive and/or reinforce positive CE for new or existing customers. This may be especially important within online platforms, whereby customers act an unofficial 'advocates' and can thus influence perceptions throughout their social networks. To this end, adding a 'social' dimension to the existing tri-dimensional CE framework may better capture the type of engagement experienced during customers' interactions with other

actors in their service ecosystem. This may be particularly important when exploring CE in both a social service and online social networking site whereby customers use their service experiences as a means of validation, connection and social enhancement.

The findings for negative CE are more complex and contribute new insights into its operation. Involvement has a weak, negative effect on negative CE, and negative CE holds a positive relationship with WOM. The finding of involvement as a 'non-driver' of negative CE diverges from existing theoretical assumptions that claim negative CE is displayed by highly involved and invested customers (Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016; Islam and Rahman, 2016). Whilst it is plausible that highly involved customers would be more motivated to display negative CE in response to service failures, the findings of this article suggest involvement is not a relevant driver, and further investigation is needed of antecedents of negative CE. Future research may need to consider additional drivers that encompass aspects of a service interaction that can lead to negative CE, such as time, degree of personal contribution to the service, attachment, irritation and community intimacy (Heinonen, 2016; Palmatier, Kumar and Harmeling, 2017).

Conversely, negative CE has a moderately positive influence on WOM, which supports prior literature claiming negative CE to result in highly active cues (Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016; Islam and Rahman, 2016). This further confounds the finding of involvement as a non-driver of negative CE, as customers evidently experience a degree of emotional, cognitive and behavioural engagement with the service that prompts them to discuss their concerns with others. Regardless, finding negative CE to drive WOM is important, as customers now have more power to influence those in their social network, especially when aided by social media platforms. To this end, future research should also consider whether a feedback loop exists where WOM drives or reinforces negative CE for new and/or existing customers. This is especially important within social media platforms, which can exacerbate dysfunctional and harmful customer behaviours. The overall research model therefore sheds new light on the nuances of positive and negative CE. Whilst previous research has framed these valences as 'two sides of the same coin', this article provides an alternative view that sees positive and negative CE as more unique and individual concepts requiring different drivers, and, outcomes. This aligns with

recent research by Mittal, Han and Westbrook (2018, p.189) that claims "the nature and magnitude of the antecedents and consequences of negative engagement are likely to differ from those associated with positive engagement."

This study also underscores the critical importance of multiple engagement objects by creating a dual-focus scale of positive and negative CE. As per Tables 3a and 3b, the relationship between involvement and positive and negative CE, and their impact on WOM, is consistent across each object when compared *within* each context. Whereas prior qualitative research finds the nature of CE to differ across objects (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015, 2016; Roskruge *et al.,* 2013) our findings reveal positive and negative CE to be more holistic and consistent across each object type. This finding aligns with recent research by Bowden et al. (2017) that finds a 'spillover' between customers' positive/negative CE with online brand communities, and, the focal brand. This suggest that consumers' interactions with different objects may mutually reinforce their positive/negative CE, as consumers view their engagement with each object in light of their aggregate experiences with the service relationship as a whole. Future research may consider a wider range of object types, even extending beyond a dyad to capture customers' engagement with multiple (three, four etc.) objects simultaneously. This may better reflect the dynamic nature of the service ecosystem, which involves customers interacting with several actors within the focal service relationship.

Lastly, this research illuminates the generalisability of CE by cross-examining CE across an offline, social service (Local Government); and online SNS platforms. This provides much needed insight into how situational factors affect the development of positive and negative CE across a range of service types with varied organisational structures and market environments (Hollebeek, Srivastava and Chen, 2016). The operation of positive CE is consistent across both contexts, which suggests the way in which customers develop positive engagement is more generalisable across a range of service types. These findings highlight the salience of involvement as a key driver of positive engagement, suggesting customers' degree of personal relevance and interest in a service category serves as strong motivation behind their engagement. Future research should extend the

contrasting service types used in this study to explore the role of involvement as a motivation behind positive CE across a range of both forced, and 'opt-in' service types.

Conversely, the process of negative CE is revealed to have a context specificity. In the social service, involvement has an inverse effect on negative CE. This may be attributed to the 'choice-constraining' contextual factors present in local governments, which can reduce the level of voluntarism and participation typically associated with CE in commercial contexts (Hollebeek, Srivastava and Chen, 2016). Given the high barriers to exit, local government customers may exist in a 'master-slave' type of relationship whereby they become negatively engaged when they cannot exit due to social, economic or legal barriers (Fournier, Miller and Allen, 2012). As such, negative levels of involvement may exacerbate negative CE within these types of service relationships.

On the other hand, negative CE holds a positive influence on WOM, supporting prior research finding negative CE to result in complaint behaviour and negative recommendations (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2015). This suggest customers will discuss their local government experiences with others despite having negative levels of involvement with the relationship. One explanation for this contrasting result is that directing anger and dissatisfaction towards social services can provide an avenue for social bonding and identification among customers (Luoma-aho 2009). Further, customers are more likely to attribute blame to organisations that have a high degree of control over service design and delivery, such as highly bureaucratic or monopolistic services (Bougie, Pieters and Zeelenberg, 2003). This in turn may heighten customers' willingness to firstly assign blame to their local government, and then discuss their negative service experiences with others.

Within the social media context, involvement has no effect on negative CE for either the brand or community object. These findings may also be attributed to contextual factors surrounding SNS. Namely, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn operate as voluntary 'opt-in' services that allow customers to forge social and professional connections, create and share content, self-brand and discuss shared interests with others (Miller, 2017; Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014). As such, customers may join SNS already having

a positive disposition towards the relationship. This contrasts with the social service, whereby customers are forced into the exchange regardless of whether they perceive a need or want for it. Further, once customers join SNS, the types of interactions they have on these platforms largely revolve around creating and maintaining a sense of belongingness with others as opposed to engaging in oppositional discourse (Miller, 2017; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). This is because customers mainly use SNS to interact with like-minded people, and, seek the approval and reinforcement of others (Miller, 2017). As such, users of SNS often exist in a 'bubble' whereby the content they are exposed to simply reinforces their existing perceptions and attitudes. Therefore, whilst customers may discuss and share content that causes negative emotional, cognitive and behavioural reactions, the function of SNS means that interactions that foster solidarity and belongingness naturally take precedence over ones that spark negative discourse and reactions (Miller, 2017). In light of this, finding involvement to have no effect on negative CE seems plausible as customers are unlikely to become negatively engaged due to heightened involvement on these platforms.

Negative CE has a moderately positive influence on WOM for both objects in the social media context, suggesting that customers are only mildly motivated to discuss their negative thoughts, feelings and behaviours towards these platforms or the communities they host with others. This may also be due to the nature of SNS, which customers use on a personal and autonomous basis. Unlike the social service context, customers have the autonomy to control and limit their exposure to negative experiences whilst using SNS. For example Facebook users can 'hide' pages that cause negative reactions, whereas Twitter users can 'unfollow' accounts. Thus, even when customers encounter distressing or frustrating content whilst using these platforms, their ability to control the duration and exposure to this may lessen their motivation to discuss it with others. This contrasts with the social service context, whereby customers are essentially trapped, and may thus turn to WOM as a way to cope with their negative engagement towards the service relationship.

Managerial Implications

A number of managerial implications can also be drawn from the findings. Firstly, this research provides strategic insight into the drivers and outcomes of positive and negative engagement. The overall findings for positive CE suggest service managers should encourage and reward customers for their involvement not only with the host organisation, but also within customer-managed communities. Although community interactions do not directly involve the host brand, service organisations should still play a role in facilitating and rewarding customers' engagement with others. In turn, service organisations are more likely to be rewarded via customers' advocacy and frequent discussion of their positive brand/community experiences with others. Generating positive WOM is particularly crucial for service organisations, as customers use the recommendations and experiences of others to frame their own expectations. Finding the process of positive CE to be generalisable across diverse service objects and contexts also benefits service managers, who are able to strategise for positive CE in a uniform way across multiple engagement foci, and, draw from a multitude of service contexts when creating their own strategies for fostering a positively engaged customer base.

The overall results for negative CE suggest service managers should aim to lessen and contain this segment to prevent the further co-destruction of service value. Focusing on containing negative CE is important, as it entails strong negative emotions and collective complaint behaviour (e.g. blogging, public activism), which carries the risk of creating a 'contagion effect' onto other customer segments. Service managers should try to re-involve these customers as much as possible in light of the negative relationship between involvement and negative CE. This may be achieved by identifying the negatively engaged segment, and creating an open and transparent dialogue to understand the source of these customers' negative thoughts, feelings and behaviours towards the relationship. Whilst challenging, attempting to involve these customers in positive service encounters is crucial, as negative CE is revealed to be a driver of WOM, and may thus damage organisational reputation and create a negative perception among customers.

Our findings also highlight the need for service managers to monitor and manage the interactions their customers have across multiple touch points in their service relationships. Both positive and negative CE are found to be consistent across the dual

‘brand’ and ‘community’ objects within each service type. Whilst this benefits service firms when positive CE is reinforced between these dual objects, it is also detrimental when the effects of negative CE towards the brand object spill over to diminish their engagement with their community object, and vice versa. Service managers should therefore consider how the multiplicity of objects affect customers’ engagement overall.

Lastly, this study offers strategic insight for managers in two diverse service environments. Within the social service context, service managers should focus on promoting and rewarding involvement to drive positive CE, as positively engaged customers are more likely to be supportive of the planning, strategy and creation of municipal services. Further, positively engaged customers are more likely to spread WOM about their brand/community experiences, which can help reinforce a sense of shared identity, satisfaction and happiness among a municipal area. Conversely, a negatively engaged customer base can undermine the status, recognition and organisational legitimacy of a social service organisation. Service managers should be cognisant of the effect that negative involvement can have on driving negative CE towards both the organisation and community object. Social services should emphasis their role as relevant, useful and important services in order to try and re-involve their negatively engaged customers. This is especially crucial for monopolistic or forced services, as bureaucratic constrictions and regulations can heighten customers’ negative reactions towards a service relationship. Further, negative CE has the strongest effect on WOM for the social service ‘brand’ object, suggesting that customers are highly motivated to discuss their negative experiences with the organisations in this context. As such, social services may be particularly vulnerable to not only harboring a negatively engaged customer base, but also, being exposed to the detrimental effects of these customers’ WOM.

Managers of SNS should be cognisant of the strong effect that positive CE has on WOM for both the host brand, and community object. Strategies should focus on facilitating and encouraging customers’ involvement in online communities not only to maintain their positive engagement, but to also encourage customers to attribute the social bonds and connections they form whilst interacting with these communities to the host brand. Although object type was not found to moderate negative CE within the SNS context, a

stronger relationship was found between negative CE and WOM for the community object. As such, host platforms might consider adopting a greater role in monitoring and observing the nature and valence of customers' interactions and engagement within their communities. Managers of SNS should be especially cognisant of the effect of negative CE and WOM, as the detrimental effect of WOM can be compounded by the ease and speed in which negative information can be disseminated to a wide audience on virtual platforms.

In summary, this study has contributed to several growing areas of the literature by providing a multi-valenced, dual object and cross contextual exploration of CE. Given that no empirical investigations into negative CE exist, this study also represents a major contribution to the nascent literature on negatively-valenced engagement. The findings of this article highlight the need for CE research to continue to progress a more expanded perspective that considers the broader range of service contexts, objects and dimensions involved in the process of CE.

Limitations

The findings of this article should be considered with several limitations in mind. Firstly, this study provides an empirical exploration into positive and negative CE within local government and social media services. Future research could expand the contextual application of CE to cross examine its operation in a wider range of service types. Secondly, future research may explore positive and negative valences of CE in relation to other objects besides brand and community, such as service staff, stakeholders, other types of platforms and so on. Lastly, the process of positive and negative CE may be examined in relation to different antecedent and consequent factors in order to broaden the knowledge on the range of drivers and outcomes of different CE valences.

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Chapter Six

Conclusions, Contributions and Implications

Chapter Six: Integrated Conclusions, Contributions and Implications

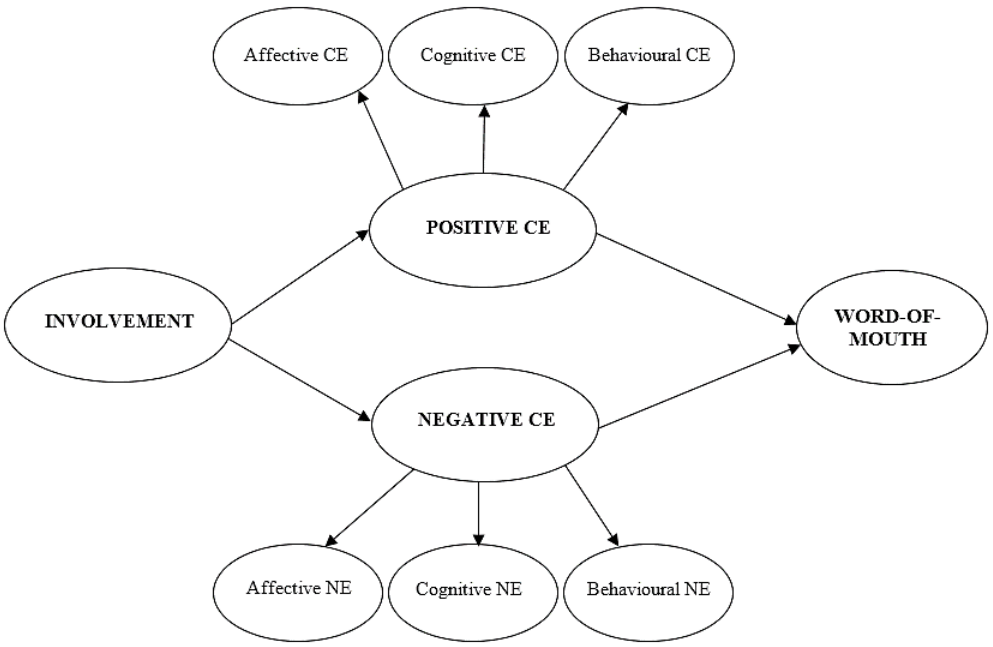
6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reported the analysis and findings of the research model guiding this inquiry. This chapter presents the conclusions, contributions and implications of the research findings. The first section of this chapter reintroduces the three research themes guiding the study and summarises the findings for each based on the qualitative and quantitative stages of investigation. The theoretical and managerial contributions of the study are then discussed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the investigation and presents directions for future research.

6.2 Customer Engagement Valences: The Role of Involvement, Word-of-Mouth and the Moderating Effect of Object Type

This study developed a model of positive and negative CE, and explored their operation through affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions. It also examined the role of involvement as an antecedent factor of both, and, how each valence influenced the outcome of word-of-mouth (WOM). This model was applied across a social service, and Social Networking Sites (SNS). The final model is shown in Figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2 Model for Positive and Negative Customer Engagement



The development of the research model was guided by three interrelated research themes. The first theme uncovered the nature and sub-dimensionality of the cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions of positive, disengaged and negative valences of CE within a social service. The role of involvement as a driver of positive/negative CE, and, the effect of both valences on the outcome of WOM was also explored. The second research theme examined the moderating effect of object type. For each valence, the salience of affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions in relation to a focal service organisation, and, a service community was examined. The third research theme examined the cross-context generalisability of positive/negative CE by exploring their operation within social service, and, within SNS. Collectively, these three research themes form a multi-valenced and multi-construct model of CE that can be applied across multiple service environments.

The development of this research model progressed through four stages. The first stage involved a critical review of the literature. This review commenced with an examination of the CE framework in its neutral valence, and discussed how it developed from its theoretical roots in Relationship Marketing and S-D Logic literature. The reader was introduced to the moderating effect that dual object types, (focal service organisation and service community) may have on the operation of each valence. In addition, the contextual application of CE within a social service, being Australian Local Governments, was discussed. It then examined the conceptualisation and measurement of positive, disengaged and negative valences of CE. Each valence was discussed in terms of its potential affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions. The roles of involvement and WOM as antecedent and outcome factors respectively were also explored.

Based on this critical review, the second and third stages of the research conducted an exploratory, qualitative investigation to build a multi-valenced conceptual model. The second stage sought to identify the nature, operation and characteristics of each valence within a social service. It was concerned with understanding the way in which customers develop and exhibit the three types of engagement. A second theme was to explore how each valence manifested towards different object types. The findings of this research stage were presented in Chapter Three. The third stage conducted a more focused

investigation by seeking to identify the affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions, and sub-dimensions, for each engagement type. It also explored each valence in relation to the focal service organisation, and the service community. The findings of this research stage were presented in Chapter Four.

Informed by the qualitative analysis, the fourth stage of the research inquiry empirically tested the theoretical model guiding the investigation using a two-step approach to structural equation modelling. This approach empirically established the affective cognitive and behavioural dimensions of positive and negative CE identified in the theoretical model, and, explored in the qualitative research. It also examined role of involvement as an antecedent to positive/negative CE and, the effect these valences had on the outcome of WOM. The moderating effect of object type on the relationship between these constructs was then empirically investigated. The empirical testing of the theoretical models guiding this thesis completed the analysis approach adopted in this thesis. The results of the quantitative stage of the research were presented in Chapter Five. The development of the research model represents a significant contribution to marketing theory and practice. It advances the theory on engagement by addressing specific knowledge gaps in the literature, and carries important managerial implications for service providers across a range of environments.

6.3.1 Findings from the Qualitative Phase

Creating a customer base that is not only loyal, but also actively and positively engaged remains a crucial goal for service managers. The literature reviewed for this stage suggested that understanding the triggers, nature and outcomes of positive CE is crucial to the development of strong and engaging service relationships (Brodie et al., 2011; Bowden, 2009a; Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014). Positive engagement has been linked to outcomes such as satisfaction, affective commitment, brand equity, trust, self-brand connections, customer retention, loyalty, and profitability (Sashi, 2012; van Doorn et al., 2010; Bowden, 2009a,b; Gummerus et al., 2012). Fostering positive CE has therefore been viewed as a mechanism by which to achieve enduring and resilient service relationships (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015, 2016; Dolan et al., 2016b;

Dwivedi et al., 2016; Crosby, Evans and Cowles, 1990; Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Despite the importance of CE and its contribution to understanding the nature of service relationships, the literature has been criticised for being disparate and clouded by conceptual ambiguity (Islam and Rahman, 2016b; van Doorn et al., 2010; Hollebeek et al., 2016). Specifically, further research is needed to address and clarify three major gaps: 1) the potential for engagement to have negative valences; 2) the potential for CE to manifest towards *multiple* objects and 3) the contextual nature of CE and its generalisability across different service types (Hollebeek et al., 2016; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; van Doorn et al., 2010; Islam and Rahman, 2016b).

To address these gaps in the literature, and to provide a clearer understanding of the development of multiple-valences of CE which takes into account the effect of dual objects, this study examined CE within a dynamic, multi-stakeholder service environment. The selection of a social service was important, as this sector involves a number of interdependent service actors which allows customers to be engaged with multiple touch points simultaneously (Donovon, 2011; Wright et al., 2012; Anderson et al., 2013). This aligns with current CE literature, which is realising the ability for customers to have *multiple* points of focus, or objects, of engagement (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015, 2016; Lee, Kim and Kim, 2011; Bowden et al., 2017).

The qualitative methodology was designed based on the first two research themes guiding the thesis inquiry. Before the qualitative inquiry commenced, a critical review of the literature on positive, disengaged and negative valences of CE was provided, and the research issues guiding the enquiry were discussed. These issues broadly related to extending the CE framework to include negative manifestations and exploring how it manifests within a new social service context. In addition, consideration was given to how positive/disengaged/negative valences of CE occur in interactions *outside* the customer-provider dyad (e.g. within service communities) (Dolan et al., 2016b; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Chandler and Lusch, 2015; Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014).

Addressing these issues provided a framework from which to conduct the qualitative exploration of CE in a social service. Positive CE was revealed to be directed *exclusively* at the service community object suggesting that customers attribute their positive and engaging service experiences to their local community only. The findings for positive

CE align with recent research on the social and collective nature of engagement (Vivek et al., 2014; Dessert, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2016). Namely, positive CE was characterised by trust and altruism shared between community members, and was highly social and reciprocal in nature. This provided a new insight into the importance customers place on socialising and participating with others in their service community in order to feel positively engaged (Baldus, Voorhees and Calantone, 2015; Vivek et al., 2104). It also highlighted the 'extra-role' behaviours that customers engage in when acting for the benefit of the service organisation or wider service community rather than their own self-interest (Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014; van Doorn et al., 2010). The second phase of the qualitative inquiry confirmed these preliminary findings by identifying the sub-dimensions of affective, cognitive and behavioural aspects of positive CE. The affective dimensions centered on the belonging and enjoyment customers felt when interacting with their community, whereas the cognitive dimensions reflected the norms of trust and reciprocity they established among their community. The behavioural aspect manifested through autonomous co-creation, evidenced by customers' efforts to create service value outside the direct influence of their host organisation. Customers were highly motivated to build connections with others and establish themselves as valued and useful members of their community (Vivek et al., 2014; van Doorn et al., 2010). Collectively, these findings highlighted that positive CE within a social service is governed by more communal themes and is based on the degree to which customers a) feel socially connected, b) can autonomously co-create value with others in their community; and; c) share their stories, experiences and views with others.

On the other hand, the results found CD to be directed exclusively at the service organisation object, suggesting that customers were more likely to detach and neglect the relationship they have with the service organisation compared to the wider service community. Customers became disengaged due to perceived unfairness with the service process, confusion about service protocol and their lack of autonomy in the relationship. The findings align with prior research in that CD manifested through themes of neglect, frustration and detachment (Goode, 2012). Yet, this study revealed a more negative dimensionality of CD which entailed distrust and a negative confirmation bias. As such, CD was found to involve a mix of passive as well more negatively-valenced constructs. The second phase of the qualitative investigation confirmed these findings by uncovering

the affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions of CD. The affective dimensions captured feelings of frustration and rejection felt towards their service organisation, whereas the cognitive dimension operated through distrust, which directly opposed the cognitive 'trust' aspect found for positive CE. Lastly, the behavioural dimension manifested through neglect, which occurred when customers essentially 'gave up' on their service relationship (Dutot and Mosconi, 2016). These findings suggests that although not actively destructive, disengaged customers are possibly more detrimental to a service relationship over time given their reluctance to be involved, voice concerns or take action to rectify problems within a relationship.

The operation of negative CE was more nuanced in that it was directed at the focal service organisation object, but had potential to spill over to negatively affect customers' interactions with others in their community object. This finding partially align with recent research by Bowden et al. (2017) who reveal negative CE with an online brand community can spill over to detract from their engagement with the brand overall. The first stage of the qualitative inquiry found negative CE manifested through anger, collective complaining, and actions focused on redressing the sources of the stress caused by their service organisation. Customers were highly active in demonstrating their negative engagement, and tried to recruit others to share in their anger and disdain for the host organisation. Whilst the focal service organisation object was the cause of their negative CE, it was apparent that the stress of customers' negative CE was affecting their relationships with others in their community, particularly those disengaged customers who were more neglectful of the issues causing dissatisfaction in the community. This suggests that the nature of negative CE is fluid, and capable of moving not only between objects, but may also be interrelated with other valences of CE. It also highlighted how negative CE can have a negative transformational effect on other aspects of customers' lives, as the stress and negative emotions experiences started to detract from their overall well-being (Anderson et al., 2013). These findings were mirrored in the second qualitative phase, which found the affective dimensions to entail anger, the cognitive dimension to manifest through cynicism and the behavioural aspect to involve collective complaining and value-destruction. As such, it appears both positive and negative CE were highly social in nature, in that customers sought to share and reinforce their engagement with others in the community. Whilst this is beneficial for service

organisations when CE is positive, it can be extremely detrimental to organisational reputation when negative CE becomes ‘contagious’ amongst a customer base.

In summary, the qualitative findings have helped clarify the nature and characteristics of positive, disengaged and negative valences of CE within a social service. In particular, it served as a preliminary investigation into CD and negative CE, which have seldom featured in engagement literature (Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Islam and Rahman, 2016b). It also provided new insight into how different engagement objects can act as *opposing* sources of engagement within a focal relationship, a finding which has not previously been explored in the engagement literature.

6.3.2 Findings from the Empirical Model

The findings from the qualitative phase of this thesis informed the empirical investigation. However, the items for CD were not retained in the final model due to a number of reasons explained in *Confirmatory Factor Analysis* section presented in Appendix A. Namely, the literature on CD suggests it manifests through cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions (Khuhro et al., 2017; Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016), however CD was found to load on one factor. This diverges not only from prior literature, but from the findings of the qualitative phase, which showed CD to operate through affective, cognitive and behavioural aspects. As such, including CD in the structural model may have resulted in a loss of explanatory power based on this divergence from the literature. Further research is therefore required to understand the dimensionality of CD, and how it can be quantitatively measured in conjunction with positive and negative CE.

The empirical investigation followed a two-step approach to structural equation modeling. The strength of the scales used to measure involvement, positive/negative CE and WOM were first established (see Appendix A). The interrelationships between the constructs were then established. Multi-group analysis of invariance was then employed to examine the moderating effect of object type. The final research model is presented in Figure 6.2. With the exception of the removal of CD from the final structural model, the

empirical phase tested all three research themes: 1) understanding the operation of positive and negative valences of CE 2) examining the moderating effect of dual engagement objects; and 3) conducting a cross-context application of CE.

The first research theme addressed the operation of positive and negative CE including their affective, cognitive, behavioural dimensions, and, their interrelatedness with involvement and WOM. Empirically addressing these research objectives led to the identification of several important research findings. Firstly, positive and negative CE were conceptualised and measured through their affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions. This contributes to the nascent empirical research on positive CE (Islam and Rahman, 2016b; Leckie, Nyadzayo & Johnson, 2016; Hollebeek et al., 2016) and also represents a major contribution to the literature on negative CE, which has yet to feature quantitative measures. Secondly, positive and negative CE were examined in relation to the driver of involvement, and their effect on WOM. Involvement was found to be a strong, positive driver of positive CE as suggested in the literature (e.g. Brodie et al., 2011; So et al., 2016; Leckie, Nyadzayo & Johnson, 2016). Positive CE was also found to be a strong driver of WOM, supporting prior research by Pansari and Kumar (2017) and Vivek, Beatty and Morgan (2012). This study therefore provided empirical evidence of the relationships between involvement, positive CE and WOM. Conversely, involvement was found to be a weak, negative driver of negative CE, providing a new insight that diverged from prior qualitative research (Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). However, negative CE was found to hold a positive relationship with WOM, which is inline with prior qualitative research by Hollebeek and Chen (2014). As such, this study CE extend prior literature by being the first to quantitatively measure negative CE, identify its affective/cognitive and behaviour dimensions, and examine how it operates in relation to antecedent and consequent factors.

The second objective was to examine the moderating effect of dual engagement objects. This exploration answered calls for research to examine the role that customers' interactions with different actors in the service ecosystem had on the type of engagement experienced (Chandler and Lusch, 2015; Hollebeek et al., 2016; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015, 2016; Brodie et al., 2013). The findings revealed positive and

negative CE to be consistent across the service organisation and service community objects *within* each context. This suggests that within the chosen service contexts, the valence of customers' engagement with their service community and the host service organisation are highly related. This provides an important contribution to the literature, which has yet to reach a consensus on the interrelatedness of focal objects. Whereas some studies find the process of CE to differ across dual objects (e.g. Lee, Kim and Kim, 2011; Schamari & Shaefers, 2015), others find CE valences to be more consistent and 'spill over' across different objects (e.g. Bowden et al., 2017). The results of the empirical stage therefore help clarify the interdependent nature of engagement objects within the social services and on SNS.

Thirdly, the empirical stage uncovered whether the positive and negative CE were generalisable across contrasting service types. Positive CE was consistent across both contexts, which again highlighted its transcending nature, and the universal role that involvement plays as a driver of strong, positive service relationships (Brodie et al., 2011; France, Merrilees and Miller, 2016; Dwivedi et al., 2016). It also illustrated the effect positive CE has on generating WOM across both commercial and social service types. This finding is beneficial for service managers, who are able to create strategies for positive CE in a uniform way across multiple engagement foci, and, service contexts. However, negative CE was contextually contingent, as the role of involvement as a driver of negative CE varied across the service types. The inverse relationship between involvement and negative CE in the social service may be attributed to the choice constraining factors present in monopolistic services, which over time can decrease the level customers' levels of involvement and voluntarism in the relationship (Hollebeek, Srivastava and Chen, 2016). Conversely, involvement had no effect on negative CE in the SNS context. This may be again due to situational factors, as the interactions customers have whilst using SNS are often positively-valenced, as they centre on creating and maintaining a sense of belongingness with others (Miller, 2017; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). As such, it may be unlikely that increased involvement with SNS and the communities they host would drive negative CE. Further, negative CE was a moderately strong driver of WOM within the social service, which supports prior research finding customers more willing to share their anger and dissatisfaction towards an organisation in social, bureaucratic or monopolistic services (Bougie, Pieters and

Zeelenberg, 2003; Luoma-aho, 2009). This contrasted with the SNS relationship, whereby negative CE was a weak driver of WOM. Customers have a high degree of autonomy and customisation over their service encounters on SNS, and as such the propensity for them of them to be exposed to negative experiences and stimuli when using SNS may be lessened. To this end customers may not be as motivated to discuss their negative experiences with others as they are within social service relationships.

Collectively, the empirical phase of this thesis provided a detailed insight into CE that had previously not been presented in the literature. It offered a new operationalisation of positive and negative CE by empirically investigating the dimensions, drivers and outcomes of both. Further, it explored the moderating effect that dual engagement objects had on their operation. Lastly, this phase clarified the generalisability of CE by applying it across two contrasting service types. The theoretical and managerial contributions made by this thesis are summarised next.

6.4 Summary of Contributions to Theory

This thesis makes several important contributions to customer engagement literature based on the three research themes guiding this inquiry. These contributions are summarised next. Several important findings emerged across the qualitative and quantitative phase of this thesis. A meta-analytic review of these notable research findins, their theoretical implications and directions for future research is provided in Table 6.4.

6.4.1 Operation of Positive, Disengaged and Negative Valences of Customer Engagement

The first major contribution to the theory concerns the development of a multi-valenced model of CE including its positive, disengaged and negative valences. The literature on CE has continued to favour research on its positive valences, however, engagement was not introduced to the marketing literature as an exclusively positive concept (Higgins and Scholer, 2009; Pham and Avnet, 2009; Hollebeek et al., 2016). The function of CE is to relax and expand the conventional, linear, and exchange-based perspectives of service

relationships to provide a richer notion of relating to a brand (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015). However, the ability of CE to provide this expanded perspective is hindered if literature continues to frame CE as an exclusively positive concept (Hollebeek et al., 2016; Bowden et al., 2016; Dolan et al, 2016a). This is because customers can engage with service relationships in ways that create negative value for the organisation, the wider service community, and ultimately, the customer (Bowden et al., 2017; Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016; van Doorn et al., 2010). Importantly, customers may not always sit on extreme ends of a positive-to-negative spectrum of CE, but may adopt weaker, *disengaged* state of being detached and neglectful of the relationship (Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann, 2015).

The qualitative findings answers calls for research on disengaged and negative valences of CE by creating a conceptual model of both in conjunction with positive CE to provide a more holistic and encompassing perspective of how customers engage with service relationships (Khuhro et al., 2017; Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; van Doorn et al., 2010). The development of this model extends prior literature by identifying the affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions of each valence, and thus provides a new framework of the multidimensionality of engagement within a focal service relationship.

Empirical research on positive CE is nascent (Leckie, Nyadzayo and Johnson, 2016), and to date, no quantitative measures of negative CE exist. The quantitative findings of the thesis therefore extend prior literature by measuring positive and negative CE through affective cognitive and behavioural dimensions, and in relation to involvement and WOM. This is a significant contribution, given it is the first study, to the author's knowledge, to quantitatively measure negative CE through these dimensions, and, in conjunction with positive CE. This model helped to clarify and confirm the importance of involvement as a key antecedent to creating a positively engaged customer base, and confirmed prior research findings positive CE to have a strong influence on WOM (Leckie, Nyadzayo & Johnson, 2016; So et al., 2017; France, Merrilees and Miller, 2016; Islam and Rahman, 2016a). The finding that involvement served as a negative drive of negative CE is noteworthy, as prior conceptual literature has framed positive and negative CE as 'two sides of the same coin' characterised by high levels of involvement

(Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). Further, negative CE was revealed to only be a moderate driver of WOM, which diverges from prior research suggesting negatively engaged customers to act as brand 'adversaries' who feverishly share their negative perceptions of a service organisation/community with others (Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2015; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Lievonen, Luoma-aho and Bowden, 2017). This study demonstrated that the process of positive and negative CE may be more unique and nuanced, and require distinct drivers and outcomes.

6.4.2 Dual Engagement Objects

The second contribution regards the exploration of dual engagement objects, including the host service organisation, and the service community. Prior research has adopted a single-object approach to measuring CE, yet, this masks the nuanced nature of customers' interactions with multiple aspects of a relationship, and the differing effects they have on CE (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015,2016; Lee, Kim and Kim, 2011; Schamari and Shaefers, 2015). This study extends the literature by positioning CE in a broader service 'ecosystem' that considers the encounters customers have outside the customer-provider dyad (Chandler and Lusch, 2015; Sim and Plewa, 2017). Interestingly, the qualitative and quantitative investigations revealed different findings for the role of dual objects.

The qualitative phase found the engagement objects held opposing propensities for positive, disengaged and negative engagement, which conflicts with prior research on engagement objects being mutually enhancing for overall engagement and service value (Verleye, Gemmel and Rangarajan, 2013; Brodie et al., 2013). Positive CE was directed exclusively at customers' service community, whereas negative CE in both its disengaged and active state was directed at the service provider. This suggests that within the chosen social service, the interactions customers have with the host organisation are more likely to foster and sustain negative valences of CE compared to those they have with the service community. Further, negative CE was found to spill over to detract from customers' positive engagement with others in their community. This supports research by Fournier and Alvarez (2012, p. 254) that finds negative service relationships to "affect

not only the quality of the focal brand engagement, but also the quality of the consumer's life overall". In light of this, it appears that negative CE may not be restricted to its respective object within a service relationship, but may have a more transcending impact on how customers interact with other engagement objects (the service community) and their overall well-being.

The quantitative phase found positive and negative CE to be consistent across the dual objects. Whilst this diverges from the findings of the qualitative phase, and findings from prior qualitative research (Schamari & Shaefers, 2015; Lee, Kim and Lee, 2011), it supports recent research by Bowden et al. (2017) that finds customers' positive and negative CE to be interrelated across different objects (online brand communities, and focal brands). The quantitative phase did not find the process of either positive or negative CE to be moderated by the service organisation and community objects. Instead, the positive and negative CE were mutually reinforced by consumers' interactions with the dual objects, which suggests customers ultimately view their engagement with each object in light of their aggregate experiences with the service relationship as a whole.

6.4.3 Cross-Context Application of Customer Engagement

The third contribution provides important insights into the contextually contingent nature of CE. This was achieved through addressing two research objectives. Firstly, this study applied CE within a new and novel social service. This extends prior research which has mainly applied CE across online platforms, and, within commercial service organisations (Islam and Rahman, 2016b; Hollebeek et al., 2016). Importantly, this study answered calls for research to consider how customers engage within the more mundane experiences they have within a range of service types, including those in the social and public sector (McColl-Kennedy et al., 2015). Customers encounter charitable, non-profit and government organisations often, yet, these service types have been overlooked within the engagement literature (Islam and Rahman, 2016b). By developing a model of CE within a social service, this study has uncovered the characteristics of positive, disengaged and negative CE within a service environment that does not feature the usual contextual factors of commercial services (Hollebeek et al., 2016). For example, it

reflects how choice-constraining factors in ‘forced’ types of service relationships affect the development of positive and negative CE (Hollebeek, Srivastava and Chen, 2016).

The qualitative phase found both positive and negative CE to be highly social and collective in nature, as customers sought to share their experiences with others. This suggests that positive/negative CE are more socially-geared concepts in social services compared to commercial sectors, whereby customers can engage for more self-serving reasons. The qualitative phase also contributes to the nascent literature on CD by applying it within a context more germane to its existence and operation (Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann, 2015; Dutot and Mosconi, 2016). Unlike commercial services, the chosen social service represents a highly bureaucratic, forced and monopolistic exchange, which helps uncover how customers remain in a neglectful and disengaged state in a long-term service relationship (Liljander and Strandvik, 1995; Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann, 2015). The contextual factors surrounding local governments provided a unique perspective into disengagement, revealing it to contain a mix of passive, maladaptive constructs (i.e. neglect and rejection) as well as more active characteristics including distrust and frustration.

Secondly, this study examined the generalisability of CE by applying it across two contrasting services. Prior empirical studies have mainly applied CE at the context-specific level, and there is limited research on how CE operates across different service environments (Islam and Rahman, 2016b). This study directly answer calls for research to account for the influence that context has on the operation of CE (Chandler and Lusch, 2015; Vivek et al., 2014). The process of positive CE was found to be generalisable across the social service and the SNS, suggesting that the relationships between involvement, positive CE and WOM are universal across a wide range of service environments. This finding aligns with the current direction of research, which has progress from context-specific applications of positive CE, to focusing on understanding its generalisable engagement dimensions (Islam and Rahman, 2016b; Brodie et al., 2011; Vivek et al., 2014). Conversely, the process of negative CE was contextually contingent; suggesting that the way in which customers become negatively engaged is influenced by situational factors surrounding the service relationship. The literature on negative CE is significantly more nascent and underdeveloped compared with that on positive CE, and

as such, a focus may need to be kept on understanding its operation at a context-specific level before generalisable dimensions of negative CE can be identified.

Table 6.4 Integrated Findings and Future Research Questions

Integrated Findings	Theoretical Implications	Future Research Questions
The qualitative findings focus on the social and collective nature of positive CE, which is operationalised through themes of trust altruism, reciprocity and belongingness. In particular, the qualitative phase discovers those 'extra-role' behaviours that customers engage in for benefit the wider service community rather than their own self-interest. This is partially reflected in the quantitative phase, which find positive CE to operate through similar constructs of pride (affect), and passion (behaviour). However, the social aspect of positive CE is not fully captured through the quantitative inquiry. These integrated findings present an opportunity to extend the tri-dimensional model of positive CE to	The qualitative phase highlights the importance customers place on socialising with others in order to feel positively engaged. This supports recent research by Baldus, Voorhees and Calantone, (2015) who include 'connecting', 'helping' and 'like-minded' discussion' and 'validation' as key dimensions of positive CE in online communities. Other studies suggest these social ties to be an *antecedent* of positive CE, for example Verhagen et al. (2015) find a sense of belonging, identification and reciprocity can lead to higher levels of engagement. Recent research also claim the hedonic benefits customers experience from helping other others to drive positive CE with a focal brand and its community (Gambetti et al., 2012; Hammedi et al., 2015). The quantitative phase only explores positive CE through affect, cognition and behaviour, which is in line with Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie's (2014) framework. There is an opportunity to leverage the findings of the qualitative phase to include a social dimension that operates through similar themes of reciprocity, altruism and belongingness. However, the literature is conflicted about whether the social dimension should be captured as an addition to tri-	- How can the social dimension of positive CE be captured, and, through what constructs? - Does the social dimension operate as an antecedent to positive CE? - Should the social aspect be added as a 'fourth' dimension to extend the existing tri-dimensional framework of affect/cognition and behaviour? - Should the social aspect of Positive CE be measured as a sub-dimension within affect, cognition and behaviour?

capture its social dimension.	dimensional CE framework (e.g. Vivek et al., 2014; Hollebeek, Srivastava and Chen, 2016), or, if it should be measured as a key CE antecedent (e.g. Verhagen et al. 2015). Alternatively, a sub-dimension could be added within each of the affective/cognitive/behaviour dimensions positive CE to capture their social nature. For example, the quantitative phase measured affect through happiness and pride, but 'belongingness' could be added to capture customers' social ties. Likewise, the cognitive dimension could also include 'reciprocity', and, the behavioural dimension could consider altruistic behaviour, or, autonomous co-creation.	
The qualitative phase does not explicitly test the drivers of negative CE, as it focuses on uncovering its characteristics and dimensionality rather than its process. However, its findings suggest negative CE to result when customers feel powerless, under-valued and exploited in a relationship. Conversely, the quantitative phase explores the *process* of negative CE, including its dimensions, driver, and	The qualitative inquiry finds negative CE to operate through the dimensions of anger (affective), cynicism (cognitive) and collective complaint (behaviour). The verbatim suggests negative CE is driven by the misbehaviour of others; appraisals of distrust and suspicion; and customers' need to share and validate their concerns with others. Importantly, these triggers differ from those of positive CE, which supports research by Mittal, Han and Westbrook (2018) that finds positive and negative CE require unique antecedents and outcomes. The results of the qualitative phase informed the operationalisation of negative CE in the quantitative inquiry (i.e. anger, collective complaint). However, the	- Do positive/negative CE operate at opposite ends of an 'engagement 'spectrum'? - Is there a universal antecedent to positive and negative valences of CE? - Does negative CE require its own unique antecedent factor(s)? - What constructs related to a customers' level of involvement in a service relationship (i.e. time,

outcome, in conjunction with positive CE. Involvement is used as the focal antecedent, as it captures the degree of relevance and importance a service relationship held to a customer, and thus reflects the premeditated, activated and dedicated nature of positive/negative CE. Yet, involvement is not found to be a relevant driver of negative CE. As such, there is a lack of conclusive evidence across the research phases regarding how negative CE is driven, and whether positive/negative CE require the same, or different antecedent factor.	quantitative phase diverges from qualitative findings by using the same antecedent of involvement for both positive and negative CE. This supports Hollebeek and Chen (2014) who conceptualise positive/negative CE to share common drivers, dimensions and outcomes, but operate as two extremes of a positive/negative continuum. Whilst involvement is found to be a strong driver of positive CE, it has a weak negative relationship with negative CE, suggesting it cannot be used as a universal driver for both valences. This supports recent research by Mittal, Han and Westbrook (2018, p. 189) that claims "an asymmetry exists between the negative and the positive aspects of engagement". As such, further research is needed into the drivers of negative CE. The qualitative phase may inform this inquiry, as it notes customers' feelings of exploitation and frustration, and, their need to share and vent with others in their service community to be strong motivators of negative CE. This is in line with recent research that finds irritation, and community intimacy as relevant drivers of negative CE (Heinonen, 2016; Palmatier, Kumar and Harmeling, 2017). Importantly, research is needed to clarify whether positive/negative CE exist at opposite ends	community intimacy, personal contribution) serve as more relevant antecedents to negative CE? - How do constructs that are exclusively negative in valence drive negative CE? (e.g. frustration, irritation)

	of an engagement spectrum or, if they need to be conceptualised as unique processes.	
The qualitative inquiry found positive CE was exclusive to the 'community' object, and negative CE was directed mainly towards the 'brand' object within the social service. However, when negative CE with the brand became extreme it spilled over to detract from the positive CE experienced towards the community. Yet, the quantitative inquiry found no moderating effect of object type for positive/negative CE in the social service or on SNS. That is, positive and negative CE were directed equally at both the focal brand, and, the service community within each service type. The two phases report contrasting results for the potential of object type to affect CE valences. As such, further research is needed into how	Both the qualitative and quantitative findings are partially supported by existing literature. For example, Schamari & Shaefers (2015) and Lee, Kim and Kim (2011) find positive CE to be moderated by object type, partially supporting the results (for positive CE) from the qualitative phase. Further, finding negative CE to detract from other aspects of a service relationship supports Bowden et al. (2017) and Fournier and Alvarez (2012) who find negative engagement to have a more transcending impact on how customers interact with other engagement objects. The quantitative findings are also supported by prior research, e.g., Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas (2015, 2016) find a customer's interaction with other community members, and their interactions with the host brand are mutually sustaining in the creation of positive CE. As such, the literature on object types and their effect on CE is inconclusive and disparate, with some studies reporting object type to moderate CE, and others finding objects to mutually reinforce CE. The spillover effect of negative CE found in the qualitative phase may help explain the findings from quantitative exploration. That is, if the valence of positive/negative CE	- Is the spillover effect between objects exclusive to negative CE as per prior literature and this thesis, or, can positive CE also impact the type of engagement customers' experience with other object types? - What 'tipping' points may exist whereby positive/negative CE will start extend its original object and influence other objects in a relationship? - How can these tipping points be identified and measured? - How might additional service objects (staff, processes, intermediatries etc.) influence positive/negative CE?

object type may moderate CE valences.	is strong enough it may start to impact the experiences customers have with multiple actors in the service ecosystem. This may be because consumers view their engagement with each object in light of their aggregate experiences with the service relationship as a whole.	

6.5 Summary of Contributions to Practice

The findings of this thesis also have a number of significant implications relevant to social services, SNS, and to the services industry in general. Implications for these sectors are summarised next.

6.5.1 Implications for Social Services- Local Governments

Social services form an important part of customers' lives. Customers encounter local government services daily, yet this sector has rarely featured in the services marketing or engagement literature. In Australia, local governments represent a substantial and important service sector, employing approximate 188, 900 staff, generating $15 billion in rates (2013-2014) and spending approximately $34 billion on community services. Collectively council rates contribute 3.4% to the total taxes raised by all levels of government (Fletcher, 2015). Importantly, the nature of local government service delivery is changing, and services now permeate to the social, environmental and cultural aspects of customers' community experiences (Dollery and Johnson, 2005; Local Government Acts Taskforce, 2013). This has placed an onus on local governments to creative active, positive and engaging relationships with their residential base (da Silva and Batista, 2017; Drew, Kortt and Dollery, 2015; Ryan et al., 2015). Maintaining positive community relationships is fundamental to the effective operation of local governments, as it enables councils to be more responsive to their community's needs and can enhance organisational reputation (da Silva and Batista, 2007). Yet, creating and sustaining positive engagement remains an ongoing challenge for local governments (Ryan et al., 2015; Dollery and Johnson, 2005).

Recent structural reforms for the amalgamation of local governments have left many councils facing an uncertain future. The planned amalgamations are based on the rational that larger, consolidated local governments provide more efficient, financially viable and streamlined services. As such, there is a need for local governments to be seen as important, valued and efficient service organisations among their residents (Drew, Kortt and Dollery, 2015). This research directly informs local governments of the factors that

cause residents to be positively and negatively engaged. Further, this thesis research provides opportunities for managers to identify and isolate the sources of positive/negative engagement by exploring how customers interact with two aspects of the service relationship. This enables service managers to have a diagnostic view of whether it is the local government organisation, or, the local community that is the source of positive/negative engagement. To date, such exploration of engagement in local governments from a services marketing perspective has not been conducted. This research therefore provides a more customer-centric perspective of engagement, which local governments can use to provide effective and valued services. In addition, this thesis explores the largely neglected issue of residential disengagement, including the motivations causing a large cohort of ratepayers to exist as silent, but dissatisfied long-term customers of their local government. As such, this multi-valenced exploration of CE has provided a more holistic picture of the range of experiences residents have in their local government area, and, helps create more productive and sustainable local communities.

This research carries also significant national impacts, as it helps inform several Federal and State initiatives. Namely, this research aligns with the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework, which was included as an amendment to the Local Government Act in 2009. The IP&R strives to ensure the sustainability of local local governments through building engaged, connected, and positive community relationships. As part of the IP&R Framework,local governments are required to create a Community Strategic Plan outlining how they will facilitate meaningful collaboration and engagement with communities over a 10 year period. This thesis provides a qualitative and quantitative exploration into the factors that cause residents to become positively engaged with their local government, and the wider community. As such, it offers key insights into the triggers, nature and implications of positive CE, which local governments can incorporate in their strategic plans for engagement.

Being able to firstly identify, and then foster positive CE has flow-on benefits for local governments, as positively engaged customer are more involved in and supportive of the planning, strategy and creation of community services. The strategies for positive CE should focus on encouraging and rewarding customers for their involvement within all

aspects of the service relationship. In particular, customers now expect to be involved in the creation of community services and developments (Herriman, 2011; Grant, Dollery and Kortt, 2011). As such, social service managers should seek to collaborate with their customer base throughout the entirety of the service delivery process where possible. Service managers should create programs, initiatives and events that are 'co-designed' with the community to provide residents with a feeling of ownership and autonomy, and, to help assist in achieving more positive engagement with the host organisation itself. Although customers' community interactions do not always involve the service organisation, service managers should still be cognisant of the autonomous co-creation occurring in the community. Specifically, local governments should play a role in facilitating and rewarding customers' engagement with others. This is crucial, as positive CE was found to increase customers' WOM, which can help reinforce a sense of cohesion, satisfaction and happiness among residential communities.

Although the disengaged segment may be difficult to identify, service managers should still attempt to re-engage, or at the very least, create a dialogue with this 'grey area' of passive and disgruntled customers. Many social services are ongoing and long-term, and maintaining a disengaged segment that is reluctant to be involved, voice their concerns or take action to rectify service failures is of obvious detriment to service organisations in this sector. Disengaged customers are unlikely to approach their local government directly, therefore the onus is on the service organisation to proactively approach these customers and seek to redress the causes of their disengagement. Importantly, disengagement was found to taint the customers' outlook on the future improvement of their relationship with their local government. The strategies to involve and re-engage this segment should therefore be progressive and long-term, as customers are unlikely to quickly reverse their disengagement which for some had developed over the entirety of the relationship. By uncovering how disengagement is triggered, and how it operates through affective, cognitive and behaviour dimensions, this thesis provides service managers with an opportunity to identify and address the factors that cause customers to become disengaged.

Service managers should strategise to re-involve the negatively-engaged segment, as these active and angry customers can undermine the status, recognition and

organisational legitimacy of an organisation. The emotional contagion of negative CE was also found to affect other customer segments, which can reduce cohesiveness, participation and social capital among a community. By focusing specifically on the factors that cause residents to negatively engaged, the results of this research help local governments to identify the sources of community dissatisfaction and ill-being and reduce these via strategies targeted at minimising these negative factors. However, local governments should also recognise the value this highly passionate segment holds for identifying major problems and area of service failures. As such, negative CE may not be exclusively detrimental to the service relationship, as service managers can utilise these customers' knowledge and feedback for service improvements.

Collectively, the findings of this thesis enable local governments to create policies and initiatives to address all three types of engagement within their communities. It also provides practical benchmarks that will assist Local, State and Federal Government bodies to establish policies and practices that lead to more sustainable, cohesive and engaged communities.

6.5.2 Implications for Social Networking Sites

Social media has become ubiquitous in the lives of consumers in the developed world. As of the first quarter of 2017, Facebook had 1.94 billion monthly active users, Twitter had 328 million monthly active users, and of the third quarter of 2016, LinkedIn had 467 million (Statista, 2017). Understanding the way in which customers engage with SNS is crucial for businesses seeking to cultivate positive relationships with their customers via these platforms. To date, social media has largely been explored in terms of the positive impact it has on customer-brand relationships, as it represents a conduit for mostly hedonic, involving and entertaining customer experiences (Miller, 2017). However, not all engagement on social media is positive and customers are increasingly turning to online platforms to discuss their negative brand opinions and experiences (Dolan et al., 2016a; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). Importantly, negative CE can be contagious and quickly turn viral on online platforms, and understanding its triggers, operation, and how

it can be contained is imperative for brands wishing to maintain a favourable reputation and social media presence.

The findings of this thesis offer several insights into the multi-valenced nature of CE with SNS and the communities they host. Managers should be cognisant of the strong effect that involvement had on positive CE towards both the host organisation, and community object. Strategies should focus on facilitating and encouraging customers' involvement in online communities not only to maintain their positive engagement, but to also encourage customers to attribute the social bonds and connections they form whilst interacting with these communities to the facilitating platform. Further, positive CE was revealed to drive WOM across both objects, therefore strategise should focus on facilitating the ease and speed by which customers can provide feedback and discuss their experiences with others. Although object type was not found to moderate negative CE within the SNS context, negative CE was found to have a stronger effect on WOM for the community object compared to the service organisation. As such, platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter might consider adopting a greater role in monitoring and observing the nature and valence of customers' engagement within their communities. Service managers should also be cognisant of the relationship between negative CE and WOM, as the detrimental effect of WOM can be compounded by the ease and speed in which negative information can be disseminated to a wide audience on via SNS.

6.6 Research Limitations

The results and implications of this thesis should be interpreted in light of several limitations. Firstly, the qualitative investigation included respondents from local governments within New South Wales only. As such, this is an incomplete representation of local government customers. Secondly, the constructs selected for investigation in the research model represent a limited selection of constructs that could potentially have been included. The model could have investigated other antecedents and outcomes of positive and negative CE, such as satisfaction, self-brand connections and loyalty. The model could also have investigated other dimensions of both valences in addition to their cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects (i.e. social). The model was however limited to the selected constructs and dimensions in order to achieve parsimony. Additionally, the measures of disengagement were problematic in the structural phase, and the final model does not include all there valences of CE. Finally, the cross-contextual application was between local governments and users of SNS within Australia. This approach may have limited the generalisability of the research findings to other service types, and, to other cultures.

6.7 Implications for Future Research

The findings of this study suggest several important directions for future research. First, the model could be developed and applied within a longitudinal study. This would enable a more accurate investigation of the development of positive, disengaged and negative CE over time and for different customer segments. This is important since the nature of engagement is fluid, and customers may shift between different valences throughout the trajectory of their service relationship. Secondly, further research is needed to clarify the dimensionality of CD, and the factors through which to best quantitatively measure its operation. This is important, as many customers may sit in a 'grey area' of disengagement, especially within a social services such as local governments. As such, future research should aim to uncover the unique antecedents and consequences of this largely unexplored engagement valence. Thirdly, future research should consider extending the tri-dimensional model of CE to incorporate additional the aspect of engagement experienced during customers' interactions with other actors in the in service

ecosystem. This is especially important when exploring CE within social, and, online contexts whereby customers use their brand experiences as a means of validation, connection and social enhancement. As such, future research would be prudent to consider how the interactions customers have with others in their service networks impact on the overall relationship through a dedicated 'social' dimension. Regarding the dimensionality of positive and negative CE explored in the empirical phase of this thesis, future research may consider how involvement works in conjunction with other complimentary drivers to reinforce a customer's positive engagement, such as category knowledge and participation. It should also explore whether the WOM resulting from customers' positive/negative engagement has ongoing effects on a service relationship. For example, WOM may exist in a 'feedback' loop to drive and/or reinforce positive/negative CE for new or existing customers. This may be especially important within online platforms, whereby customers act an unofficial 'advocates' and 'adversaries' of brands, and can thus influence perceptions throughout their social networks. Further empirical research is also needed to clarify the driver(s) of negative CE, as involvement was not found to be a relevant antecedent. Future research may need to consider related drivers that encompass aspects of a service interaction that lead to negative CE, such as time, degree of personal contribution to the service, attachment, irritation and community intimacy. Further, this research should be replicated to explore other objects besides the focal service organisation, and service community. This may include, for example, staff, service processes, different types of online/offline platforms and service intermediaries. Future research may even extend beyond a dyad to capture customers' engagement with multiple (three, four etc.) objects simultaneously. This may better reflect the dynamic nature of the service ecosystem, which sees customers interacting with several actors within the focal service relationship at the same time. Additionally, CE should be examined in different types of social services, such as charitable organisations, non-profit firms and other types of government agencies. This would provide a broader understating of the nature of engagement and enhance the generalisability of the current model. Further, this model could be compared with different types of service contexts besides social services and SNS, to provide a more robust test of the generalisability of CE.

6.9 Conclusion

Overall, this research provides significant contributions to both marketing theory as well as practice. It has highlighting the need for marketing academics and practitioners to move away from 'broad brush' strategies for engagement, and adopt a more nuanced approach that looks at individual aspects of the customers' service experiences, and how these may foster positive, disengaged and negative valences of engagement. Prior to this thesis, a multi-valenced model of CE that considered dual engagement objects had not featured in the literature. Further, this thesis has extended the current contextual application of CE by applying it within new and novel social service. In doing so it has illustrated how customers engage within a dynamic and multi-stakeholder service environment. Lastly, this thesis advanced the knowledge surrounding the generalisability of CE by exploring this model across two contrasting service types. Collectively, this thesis provides considerable insights into the drivers, dimensions and outcomes of positive, disengaged and negative engagement which can by utilised by managers to create more successful and valued service relationships.

Appendix A

Preliminary Data Analysis for the Purification, Confirmation and Validation of Measures

Introduction

This section should be read in conjunction with Chapter Five. This analysis reports the data analysis for the purification, confirmation, and validation of the measures used in this study. Firstly, the research framework is introduced. A preliminary analysis of the data is then performed, which includes an examination of outliers, normality, multicollinearity, method bias and a demographic profile of the survey respondents. Following that, an exploratory factor analysis is used to identify the factor structure of the data and to purify the research scales. The two-step approach to structural equation modelling that is utilised in this research study is then introduced. The first of these steps, the confirmatory factor analysis, is presented and the research measures are examined for their goodness of fit to the data. Structural equation modelling reliability and validity are also examined. This analysis therefore serves to validate the measurement model informing the full structural equation model and subsequent analysis presented in Chapter Five.

Methodological Design

The survey was distributed through a number of methods. The design of the survey, being an online, self-administered voluntary survey to Australian residents remained the same across all samples. The survey was hosted on QUALTICS across three sample groups. The first sample was recruited through an advertisement placed in a weekly staff e-newsletter at a large metropolitan university in Sydney. The second sample was recruited through a local council in South Australia that advertised the survey to their online research panel comprised of residents of that local council area. Recruiting by the staff e-newsletter and the local council panel resulted in a total of 170 completed responses. A market research company was then employed to distribute the survey to Australian residents. By using a research company, this study was provided with access to a large respondent database, which enabled the study to achieve a targeted sample size of 325 participants for the local government context. The same market research company was used to distribute the survey to the social media sample, which resulted in 300 completed responses. The total sample size across both contexts was 625 responses. This sample size was required to validly and reliably test the strength of the constructs across the two service objects. The respondent criteria was as follows: equal numbers male and female, aged 18+ Australian born and must live in a local government area, and for the social media sample, must have used one of the three chosen

social media platforms at least once in the past 2 weeks. All surveys were competed by consumers within Australia.

Within market research literature, self-administered surveys are regarded as important and useful tools for gaining information on a targeted sample (Ranchhod & Zhou, 2001). However, surveys can be subject to low response rates and random sampling error (Fricker & Schonlau, 2002). An online survey was considered the most appropriate method of data collection for this study for a number of reasons. Online surveys are more time and cost efficient compared to mail-out surveys (Fricker & Schonlau, 2002); allow for increased interaction between researchers and respondents; facilitate the transmission and processing of large amounts of data; and enable researchers to easily identify the target participant population (Ranchhod & Zhou, 2001). The survey used in this paper's methodology is comprised of Likert and multi-item scales. These survey designs allow the relationship between dependent and independent variables to be measured with efficiency and precision

Analytical Design

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used to examine the data set obtained through this research (Anderson¸ Gerbing and Hunter, 1987; Arbuckle and Wothke, 1999). This is because SEM enables researchers to test the relationships between observed and latent variables (Hoyle & Panter, 1995), and is therefore suitable for the present study that tests a series of hypotheses on the interrelationships between four constructs and SBC and loyalty. SEM is comprised of two main stages. Firstly, the preliminary data was tested for normality, outliers, multicollinearity and common method bias. These tests ensured that the data was appropriate for further advanced statistical analysis. This stage also produced descriptive statistics that allowed for a clearer understanding of the data and variables and aid in developing a respondent profile. Exploratory factor analysis is then carried out to determine the underlying factor structure of the data set and to verify that the measures used in the survey are measuring the appropriate constructs. Following this, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted which confirmed the initial factor structures and acceptable levels of measurement model fit. The second stage of SEM processing included an analysis of a final structural model, which examines the nature and strength of relationships of interest, identified as the research hypotheses in this proposal. Analysis was performed using two statistical programs; SPSS 21.0 and AMOS. These cater for hypotheses testing with large

data sets and provide an understanding to researchers of the inter-relationships between constructs. These programs therefore produce output that assist in the answering of the research questions outlined within this study.

Preliminary Analysis

The data underwent preliminary analysis involving the following steps: data preparations; analysis of missing data; identification and examination of outliers; assessment of normality; examination of multicollinearity, and an examination of common method bias. Each of these stages will be discussed in the following section.

Data Preparation

The data preparation consisted of two stages. Firstly, the completed questionnaires were case number coded based on order of entry. Following this, the data was coded into SPSS version 24.0 for electronic coding and further statistical analysis.

Missing Data

Within studies, obtaining missing data of up to 10% is generally accepted, as this level is not considered to have any significantly negative effects on the interpretation of the results (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). By using a market research company (QUALTRICS), this study was provided with access to an online panel that enabled the study to achieve a targeted sample size of 155 participants to be added to the existing 170 responses obtained by the council panel and university staff newsletter. The survey was hosted on QUALTRICS across all three sample groups. This allowed the survey responses to be guaranteed, that is, surveys that were partially completed were not recorded and the data exported from all three sample types from QUALTRICS featured no missing data. In light of this, the study experienced no missing data and obtained a total response rate of 325 respondents. The missing data analysis for all four samples is displayed in Tables A1, A2 A3 and A4.

Table A1. Missing Data Analysis – Local Government Brand Object

Item	n	Mean	Count	Missing
I feel very positive when I use this service organisation	325	5.09	0	0
Using this service organisation makes me happy	325	4.70	0	0

I feel good when I use this service organisation	325	4.86	0	0
I'm proud to use this service organisation	325	4.83	0	0
I like to learn more about this service organisation	325	4.89	0	0
I pay a lot of attention to anything about this service organisation	325	4.62	0	0
Anything related to this service organisation grabs my attention	325	4.62	0	0
I am heavily into this service organisation	325	3.54	0	0
I am passionate about this service organisation	325	3.74	0	0
My days would not be the same without this service organisation	325	3.15	0	0
I do not feel anything towards this service organisation	325	3.62	0	0
I feel upset towards this service organisation	325	3.05	0	0
This service organisation disappoints me	325	3.25	0	0
The more the time passes the less I think about this service organisation	325	3.47	0	0
I feel the links between me and this service organisation fading away	325	3.58	0	0
I no longer think about this service organisation	325	3.22	0	0
Complaining about things that go wrong with this service organisation won't change the outcome	325	3.92	0	0
I don't pay attention to any initiative or anything regarding this service organisation	325	3.01	0	0
I have quit caring about this service organisation	325	2.75	0	0
I will passively let the relationship with this service organisation slowly deteriorate	325	2.94	0	0
I sometimes consider letting the relationship with this service organisation die a slow death	325	2.83	0	0
A feeling of contempt	325	2.45	0	0
A feeling of revulsion	325	1.94	0	0
A feeling of hate	325	1.71	0	0
Indignant	325	2.05	0	0
Annoyed	325	2.66	0	0
Resentful	325	2.05	0	0
I spend a lot of time thinking negatively about this service organisation	325	2.38	0	0
I devote a great deal of negative mental effort to considering this service organisation	325	2.14	0	0
I pay very close attention to negative information concerning this service organisation	325	2.91	0	0
I deliberate long and hard about negative information involving this service organisation	325	2.67	0	0

I think in great depth about negative information I see concerning this service organisation	325	2.70	0	0
I have joined on-line anti-brand groups or communities about this service organisation	325	1.66	0	0
I have joined collective movements or groups against this service organisation	325	1.72	0	0
I have picketed against my local council	325	1.60	0	0
I blog against this service organisation	325	1.58	0	0
I participate in boycotting this service organisation	325	1.55		
Unimportant:Important	325	5.27	0	0
Irrelevant:Relevant	325	5.24	0	0
Means nothing to me:Means a lot to me	325	4.66	0	0
Worthless:Valuable	325	5.09	0	0
Boring:Interesting	325	4.42	0	0
Unappealing:Appealing	325	4.39	0	0
Unexciting:Exciting	325	4.08	0	0
Mundane:Fascinating	325	3.99	0	0
Uninvolving:Involving	325	4.68	0	0
I mention this service organisation to others quite frequently	325	3.36	0	0
When I tell others about this service organisation I tend to talk in great detail	325	3.13	0	0
I seldom miss an opportunity to tell others about this service organisation	325	2.77	0	0
I've told more people about this service organisation than I've told about most other service organisations	325	2.77	0	0

Table A2. Missing Data Analysis – Local Government Community Object

Item	n	Mean	Count	Missing
I feel very positive when I use this service community	325	5.03	0	0
Using this service community makes me happy	325	4.97	0	0
I feel good when I use this service community	325	5.22	0	0
I'm proud to use this service community	325	5.06	0	0
I like to learn more about this service community	325	4.90	0	0
I pay a lot of attention to anything about this service community	325	4.98	0	0
Anything related to this service community grabs my attention	325	4.96	0	0
I am heavily into this service community	325	3.94	0	0
I am passionate about this service community	325	4.35	0	0

My days would not be the same without this service community	325	3.73	0	0
I do not feel anything towards this service community	325	2.82	0	0
I feel upset towards this service community	325	2.47	0	0
This service community disappoints me	325	2.67	0	0
The more the time passes the less I think about this service community	325	2.68	0	0
I feel the links between me and this service community fading away	325	2.88	0	0
I no longer think about this service community	325	2.58	0	0
Complaining about things that go wrong with this service community won't change the outcome	325	3.41	0	0
I don't pay attention to any initiative or anything regarding this service community	325	2.63	0	0
I have quit caring about this service community	325	2.34	0	0
I will passively let the relationship with this service community slowly deteriorate	325	2.40	0	0
I sometimes consider letting the relationship with this service community die a slow death	325	2.31	0	0
A feeling of contempt	325	1.94	0	0
A feeling of revulsion	325	1.75	0	0
A feeling of hate	325	1.54	0	0
Indignant	325	1.75	0	0
Annoyed	325	2.26	0	0
Resentful	325	1.73	0	0
I spend a lot of time thinking negatively about this service community	325	2.06	0	0
I devote a great deal of negative mental effort to considering this service community	325	1.90	0	0
I pay very close attention to negative information concerning this service community	325	2.87	0	0
I deliberate long and hard about negative information involving this service community	325	2.63	0	0
I think in great depth about negative information I see concerning this service community	325	2.76	0	0
I have joined on-line anti-brand groups or communities about this service organisation	325	1.49		
I have joined collective movements or groups against this service community	325	1.66	0	0
I have picketed against my local council	325	1.44	0	0
I blog against this service community	325	1.42	0	0
I participate in boycotting this service community	325	1.39	0	0
Unimportant:Important	325	5.42	0	0
Irrelevant:Relevant	325	5.30	0	0

Means nothing to me:Means a lot to me	325	5.11	0	0
Worthless:Valuable	325	5.33	0	0
Boring:Interesting	325	4.82	0	0
Unappealing:Appealing	325	4.87	0	0
Unexciting:Exciting	325	4.51	0	0
Mundane:Fascinating	325	4.50	0	0
Uninvolving:Involving	325	4.78	0	0
I mention this service community to others quite frequently	325	3.87	0	0
When I tell others about this service community I tend to talk in great detail	325	3.59	0	0
I seldom miss an opportunity to tell others about this service community	325	3.31	0	0
I've told more people about this service community than I've told about most other service communities	325	3.41	0	0

Table A3. Missing Data Analysis – Social Media Brand Object

Item	n	Mean	Count	Missing
I feel very positive when I use this service organisation	300	4.96	0	0
Using this service organisation makes me happy	300	4.87	0	0
I feel good when I use this service organisation	300	4.87	0	0
I'm proud to use this service organisation	300	4.50	0	0
I like to learn more about this service organisation	300	4.43	0	0
I pay a lot of attention to anything about this service organisation	300	4.06	0	0
Anything related to this service organisation grabs my attention	300	4.10	0	0
I am heavily into this service organisation	300	4.11	0	0
I am passionate about this service organisation	300	3.79	0	0
My days would not be the same without this service organisation	300	4.16	0	0
I do not feel anything towards this service organisation	300	3.72	0	0
I feel upset towards this service organisation	300	3.04	0	0
This service organisation disappoints me	300	3.23	0	0
The more the time passes the less I think about this service organisation	300	3.78	0	0
I feel the links between me and this service organisation fading away	300	3.74	0	0

I no longer think about this service organisation	300	3.24	0	0
Complaining about things that go wrong with this service organisation won't change the outcome	300	4.61	0	0
I don't pay attention to any initiative or anything regarding this service organisation	300	3.52	0	0
I have quit caring about this service organisation	300	3.34	0	0
I will passively let the relationship with this service organisation slowly deteriorate	300	3.54	0	0
I sometimes consider letting the relationship with this service organisation die a slow death	300	3.54	0	0
A feeling of contempt	300	2.98	0	0
A feeling of revulsion	300	2.63	0	0
A feeling of hate	300	2.38	0	0
Indignant	300	2.55	0	0
Annoyed	300	3.07	0	0
Resentful	300	2.57	0	0
I spend a lot of time thinking negatively about this service organisation	300	2.73	0	0
I devote a great deal of negative mental effort to considering this service organisation	300	2.50	0	0
I pay very close attention to negative information concerning this service organisation	300	2.99	0	0
I deliberate long and hard about negative information involving this service organisation	300	2.68	0	0
I think in great depth about negative information I see concerning this service organisation	300	2.71	0	0
I have joined collective movements or groups against this service organisation	300	2.00	0	0
I blog against this service organisation	300	1.83	0	0
I participate in boycotting this service organisation	300	1.86		
Unimportant:Important	300	4.85	0	0
Irrelevant:Relevant	300	4.94	0	0
Means nothing to me:Means a lot to me	300	4.55	0	0
Worthless:Valuable	300	4.91	0	0
Boring:Interesting	300	4.91	0	0
Unappealing:Appealing	300	4.85	0	0
Unexciting:Exciting	300	4.60	0	0
Mundane:Fascinating	300	4.53	0	0
Uninvolving:Involving	300	4.96	0	0
I mention this service organisation to others quite frequently	300	4.36	0	0
When I tell others about this service organisation I tend to talk in great detail	300	3.45	0	0

I seldom miss an opportunity to tell others about this service organisation	300	3.03	0	0
I've told more people about this service organisation than I've told about most other service organisations	300	3.53	0	0

Table A4. Missing Data Analysis – Social Media Community Object

Item	n	Mean	Count	Missing
I feel very positive when I use this service community	300	5.22	0	0
Using this service community makes me happy	300	5.14	0	0
I feel good when I use this service community	300	5.20	0	0
I'm proud to use this service community	300	5.16	0	0
I like to learn more about this service community	300	4.94	0	0
I pay a lot of attention to anything about this service community	300	5.05	0	0
Anything related to this service community grabs my attention	300	5.09	0	0
I am heavily into this service community	300	4.56	0	0
I am passionate about this service community	300	4.71	0	0
My days would not be the same without this service community	300	3.92	0	0
I do not feel anything towards this service community	300	3.00	0	0
I feel upset towards this service community	300	2.41	0	0
This service community disappoints me	300	2.57	0	0
The more the time passes the less I think about this service community	300	3.02	0	0
I feel the links between me and this service community fading away	300	3.01	0	0
I no longer think about this service community	300	2.86	0	0
Complaining about things that go wrong with this service community won't change the outcome	300	3.36	0	0
I don't pay attention to any initiative or anything regarding this service community	300	2.79	0	0
I have quit caring about this service community	300	2.69	0	0
I will passively let the relationship with this service community slowly deteriorate	300	2.78	0	0
I sometimes consider letting the relationship with this service community die a slow death	300	2.75	0	0
A feeling of contempt	300	2.50	0	0
A feeling of revulsion	300	2.09	0	0
A feeling of hate	300	1.85	0	0
Indignant	300	1.96	0	0

Annoyed	300	2.25	0	0
Resentful	300	1.91	0	0
I spend a lot of time thinking negatively about this service community	300	2.13	0	0
I devote a great deal of negative mental effort to considering this service community	300	2.02	0	0
I pay very close attention to negative information concerning this service community	300	2.59	0	0
I deliberate long and hard about negative information involving this service community	300	2.25	0	0
I think in great depth about negative information I see concerning this service community	300	2.37	0	0
I have joined collective movements or groups against this service community	300	1.79	0	0
I blog against this service community	300	1.72	0	0
I participate in boycotting this service community	300	1.69	0	0
Unimportant:Important	300	5.39	0	0
Irrelevant:Relevant	300	5.47	0	0
Means nothing to me:Means a lot to me	300	5.12	0	0
Worthless:Valuable	300	5.44	0	0
Boring:Interesting	300	5.36	0	0
Unappealing:Appealing	300	5.30	0	0
Unexciting:Exciting	300	5.00	0	0
Mundane:Fascinating	300	4.98	0	0
Uninvolving:Involving	300	5.35	0	0
I mention this service community to others quite frequently	300	4.16	0	0
When I tell others about this service community I tend to talk in great detail	300	3.80	0	0
I seldom miss an opportunity to tell others about this service community	300	3.46	0	0
I've told more people about this service community than I've told about most other service communities	300	3.75	0	0

Normality

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were used to analyse the distribution normality of the data (Field, 2000). The result of the Shapiro-Wilk test revealed that all variables had a non-normal distribution ($p<0.05$). A set of z-tests was then used to examine the skewness and kurtosis of the data. Positive customer engagement is found to be negatively skewed and leptokurtic, customer disengagement is positively skewed and

leptokurtic, negative engagement is found to be positively skewed and leptokurtic, involvement is negatively skewed and leptokurtic, word-of-mouth is slightly positively skewed and leptokurtic. All the variables presented values that exceeded the critical value of +/- 1.96 ($p<0.05$) indicating violations of normality (Hair et al., 2006). Likert scales registering on a positive scale (i.e. with no minus figures) are prone to rejection by both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test (Leung, 2011). Normality was examined using Mardia's coefficient (>1.96) to further investigate distribution of the data. The results of this analysis confirmed significant non-normality of the data. The non-normality in the data was not considered to affect subsequent analysis given then counteracting effect of large sample sizes with regard to non-normality (Hair et al., 2006). The results are displayed in Table A.3.

Table A.3 Tests of Normality

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
POS_CE	.048	325	.064	.989	325	.018
CD_ALL	.064	325	.002	.980	325	.000
NE_ALL	.119	325	.000	.883	325	.000
INVOLVE_ALL	.062	325	.004	.982	325	.000
WOM_ALL	.055	325	.019	.983	325	.001

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The non-normality was not considered to affect subsequent analysis, as this study obtained a large sample size of 325 respondents, which in turn reduced any detrimental effects of non-normality on data analysis (Hair et al., 2006).

Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity was assessed using multiple regression (Hair et al., 2006). During this assessment, emphasis was placed on the variable inflation scores (VIF), which resulted in dataset tolerance scores of >.10 and VIF index statistics of <.10. This revealed that multicollinearity was unproblematic for this study.

Common Method Bias

Harman's single factor test was used to determine any common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). This test detects any bias in the dataset due to factors external to the variables used. All variables were loaded into a single exploratory factor analysis and nine factors emerged from the unrotated factor solution for the council object, and 8 for the community object. As Harman's test suggests, obtaining more than one factor from the unrotated factor solution implies that common method bias will be unproblematic for data analysis (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The percentage variance of the sum of squared loadings was 30.64% for the brand object, and 29.71% for the community object. As both were under the 50% threshold of total variance, common method bias was not considered to be an issue (Harman, 1967).

Respondent profile

The demographic and user profiles of the respondents are displayed in Table A.4. This study was able to obtain approximately even quotas in terms of age and gender, with the exception of the 18-25 sample which accounted for 4% of respondents. The majority of respondents had obtained TAFE, University Undergraduate or Postgraduate qualifications, and had been living in their local government area for more than 10 years.

Table A.4 Respondent Profile

Characteristic	**Total (n=625)**	**Total (n=625)**
Age Total	**625**	**100%**
18-30	188	30.08
31-40	166	26.56
41-50	160	25.6
51-60	46	7.36
60+	65	10.4
Gender Total	**625**	**100%**
Male	297	47.52

Female	328	52.48
Service type Total	**625**	**100%**
Local Government	325	52
Social Media	300	48
Occupier type Total	**325**	**52%**
Home owners	250	40
Renters	75	12
Social Media Platform Total	**300**	**100%**
Facebook	275	44
LinkedIn	13	2.08
Twitter	12	1.92
Usage Frequency	**300**	**48%**
Everyday	216	34.56
Once every 2-3 days	35	5.6
At least once a week	5	0.8
Once a month or less	1	0.16
Prefer not to say/ not asked	43	6.88
Occupier length: Total	**325**	**52%**
1-5 years	68	10.88
5-10 years	55	8.8
10 + years	202	32.32
Education Total	**625**	**100**
High school	135	21.6
TAFE/Technical collage	180	28.8
University- Undergraduate	120	19.2

University- Postgraduate	175	28
Other	9	1.44
Prefer not to say	6	0.96
Survey Sample Size Total	**625**	**100**
Sample 1 (University staff)	50	8
Sample 2 (Local council panel)	163	26.08
Sample 3 (Market research company context Social Media)	257	41.12
Sample 4 (Market research company context Local Government)	155	24.8

Table A.5 Local Government Areas

Local Government	Count	%
Charles Sturt	161	49.54
Sydney	10	3.08
Brisbane	7	2.15
Melbourne	5	1.54
Moreton Bay	5	1.54
Logan	4	1.23
Wanneroo	4	1.23
Adelaide	3	0.92
Bayswater	3	0.92
Blacktown	3	0.92
Blue Mountains	3	0.92
Ipswich	3	0.92
Sunshine Coast	3	0.92
Adelaide Hills	2	0.62
Albury	2	0.62
Banyule	2	0.62
Baulkham Hills	2	0.62
Darebin	2	0.62

Fairfield	2	0.62
Gold Coast	2	0.62
Greater Bendigo	2	0.62
Holroyd	2	0.62
Lake Macquarie	2	0.62
Launceston	2	0.62
Mandurah	2	0.62
Marion	2	0.62
Melton	2	0.62
Monash	2	0.62
Moonee Valley	2	0.62
North Sydney	2	0.62
Parramatta	2	0.62
Redland	2	0.62
Rockdale	2	0.62
Stonnington	2	0.62
Tea Tree Gully	2	0.62
Warringah	2	0.62
Wyndham	2	0.62
Wyong	2	0.62
Alice Springs	1	0.31
Ballarat	1	0.31
Bankstown	1	0.31
Barkly	1	0.31
Boroondara	1	0.31
Break Oâ€™Day	1	0.31
Brimbank	1	0.31
Busselton	1	0.31
Cairns	1	0.31
Campelltown (NSW)	1	0.31
Canada Bay	1	0.31
Capel	1	0.31
Casey	1	0.31
Cockburn	1	0.31

Cooma Monaro	1	0.31
Fraser Coast	1	0.31
Glen Eira	1	0.31
Glenorchy	1	0.31
Greater Geelong	1	0.31
Hawkesbury	1	0.31
Hepburn	1	0.31
Hornsby	1	0.31
Horsham	1	0.31
Hume	1	0.31
Hunters Hill	1	0.31
Hurstville	1	0.31
Joondalup	1	0.31
Junee	1	0.31
Kingston (Vic.)	1	0.31
Ku-ring-gai	1	0.31
Lane Cove	1	0.31
Latrobe (Vic.)	1	0.31
Leeton	1	0.31
Leichhardt	1	0.31
Macedon Ranges	1	0.31
Mackay	1	0.31
Maroondah	1	0.31
Marrickville	1	0.31
Moreland	1	0.31
Mount Gambier	1	0.31
Murray Bridge	1	0.31
Nedlands	1	0.31
Newcastle	1	0.31
Noosa	1	0.31
Northern Grampians	1	0.31
Palmerston	1	0.31
Perth	1	0.31
Playford	1	0.31

Port Phillip	1	0.31
Queanbeyan	1	0.31
Rockhampton	1	0.31
Salisbury	1	0.31
Townsville	1	0.31
Tweed	1	0.31
Upper Lachlan	1	0.31
Wangaratta	1	0.31
Warrnambool	1	0.31
Wellington (Vic.)	1	0.31
Whittlesea	1	0.31
Wodonga	1	0.31
Yorke Peninsula	1	0.31

Exploratory Factor Analysis

To confirm the suitability of the data to an exploratory factor analysis, four preliminary tests were run. Firstly, the Bartlett Test of Sphericity was used to test the overall significance of the correlation matrix. This revealed a significant result ($p<0.05$) confirming the data suitability of the data for factor analysis. Next, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was examined and resulted in a statistic greater than 0.60, therefore rendering the data suitable for factor analysis (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1996). Thirdly, the inter-item correlations were analysed and found to be larger than 0.30 and hence adequate for factor analysis. Lastly, a visual inspection of the anti-image matrix showed the diagonal element of to have cut-off values of above .50 confirming that the data was appropriate for factor analysis (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1996).

A number of methods were employed to assist in the exploratory factor analysis process. These included; the use of principal components factor extraction (Hair et al., 2006); Kaiser's minimum eigenvalue of 1.0 rule (Hair et al. 2006); and the Cartell scree plots and varimax rotation, which assisted in reducing the number of factors to a minimum (Hair et al 2006). Any exclusions of items was decided on the basis of; cross loadings greater than 0.30

on more than one factor; decreases in item-to-total correlations greater than 0.20; display communalities larger than 0.50; and loading on unexpected factors. In addition to these criteria, coefficient alphas were examined and items receiving alpha scores greater than 0.70 were considered a reliable measurement scale (Garver and Mentzer, 1999).

The conceptual model explained in Chapter 2 includes six relational constructs: involvement, positive customer engagement, customer disengagement, negative customer engagement and word-of-mouth. Exploratory factor analysis and scale reliability tests were undertaken to assess the factor structure of the constructs. This was repeated twice for each construct totalling 12 exploratory factor analysis across the two engagement objects. The internal consistency of each measure was also assessed and variable groupings where made based on correlations between each item. The results of each constructs' analysis across the brand and community object are presented in the following section.

EFA Positive Customer Engagement

Positive CE was measured using 10 items taken from CE scales developed by Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie (2014) and Vivek et al. (2014). The affective dimension of positive CE used the 4 items from Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie's (2014) 'Affection' scale. The cognitive dimension was measured using 3 items from Vivek et al. (2014) 'Cognitive Processing' scale and the behavioural dimensions of positive CE was measured by 3 items from Vivek et al. (2014) 'Enthused Participation' scale.

Local Government Brand Object

The 10 items were factor analysed using the principal components method of factor extraction. This analysis resulted in the extraction of three factors that accounted for 80.68% of the variance extracted. The first rotated factor accounted for 56.80% of the variance (eigenvalue 5.68>1.0), the second rotated factor accounted for 16.61% of the variance (eigenvalue 1.66>1.0) and the third accounted for 7.27 (eigenvalue 0.72<1.0). The results can be seen in Table A.6.1. The factor structure supports a three factor sub-structure for positive CE, which is consistent with CE research (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014; Vivek et al., 2014). Positive CE was represented by an affective, cognitive and behavioural dimension.

Close inspection of the factor solution led to the deletion of the item *I like to learn more about my Local Government* due to high cross loading, and the item *I am heavily into my Local Government* as it loaded on an unexpected factor. The impact of deleting these items from the analysis is presented in brackets in Table A.6.1. Removal of these items resulted in an increase in the variance explained (85.91%). The first rotated factor now accounts for 59.29% of the variance extracted (eigenvalue 4.74>1.0) the second rotated factor accounts for 17.75% of variance (eigenvalue 1.66>1.0) and the third factor accounts for 8.85% (eigenvalue 0.70<1.0). Analysis of coefficient alpha also provided strong to moderate support for the internal consistency of the three subfactor scales with alpha values of 0.933 for CE affect, 0.904 for CE cognition and 0.766 for CE behaviour.

Although the item *I am passionate about my Local Government* had a cross loading above 0.3 and slightly low factor loadings for the 'behaviour' dimension it was considered central to the meaning of the scale, and to the investigation and was subsequently retained for further analysis. Additionally, a number of items has decreases in I-total figures of more than 0.2, yet these items were retained for further analysis.

Table A.6.1 EFA for Positive Customer Engagement (Brand)

Scale Items	**Factor 1 Loading**	**Factor 2 Loading**	**Factor 3 Loading**	**I-Total**	**Mean**	**SD**
I feel very positive when I use my Local Government services	.813			.661 (.692)	5.09	1.24
Using my Local Government services makes me happy	.883			.733 (.772)	4.7	1.258
I feel good when I use my Local Government services	.902			.721 (.758)	4.86	1.228
I'm proud to use my Local Government services	.873			.697 (.733)	4.83	1.317
I like to learn more about my Local Government	*.363*	*.548*		*.608*	*4.89*	*1.286*
I pay a lot of attention to anything about my Local Government		.909		.66 (.596)	4.62	1.395
Anything related to my Local Government grabs my attention		.914		.664 (.604)	4.62	1.46
I am heavily into my Local Government		*.714*	*.519*	*.715*	*3.54*	*1.462*
I am passionate about my Local Government	.308	.578	.620	.778 (.731)	3.74	1.437

My days would not be the same without my Local Government	.311		.869	.585	3.15	1.484

Notes: I-Total refers to item-to-total correlations. Factor loadings reported are the varimax rotated component matrix results. Items removed from the analysis are shown in italics. Figures in brackets reflect the final factor analysis results.

Local Community Object

The 10 items were factor analysed using the principal components method of factor extraction. This analysis resulted in the extraction of three factors that accounted for 82.88% of the variance extracted. The first rotated factor accounted for 65.55% of the variance (eigenvalue 6.55>1.0), the second rotated factor accounted for 10.95% of the variance (eigenvalue 1.09>1.0) and the third accounted for 6.37 (eigenvalue 0.63<1.0). The results can be seen in Table A.6.2. The factor structure supports a three factor sub-structure for positive CE, which is consistent with CE research (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014; Vivek et al., 2014). Positive CE was represented by an affective, cognitive and behavioural dimension.

Close inspection of the factor solution led to the deletion of the item *I like to learn more about my local community* due to high cross loading. The item *I am heavily into my local community* was deleted in order to maintain consistency across the scales for council and community object. The impact of deleting these items from the analysis is presented in brackets in Table A.7.2. Removal of these items resulted in an increase in the variance explained (86.43%). The first rotated factor now accounts for 66.95% of the variance extracted (eigenvalue 5.35>1.0) the second rotated factor accounts for 12.13% of variance (eigenvalue 0.97<1.0) and the third factor accounts for 7.33% (eigenvalue 0.58<1.0). Analysis of coefficient alpha also provided strong to moderate support for the internal consistency of the three sub factor scales with alpha values of 0.929 for CE affect, 0.893 for CE cognition and 0.842 for CE behaviour.

Although the item *I am passionate about my Local Government* had a cross loading above 0.3 and slightly low factor loadings for the 'behaviour' dimension it was considered central to the meaning of the scale, and to the investigation and was subsequently retained for further analysis. Additionally, a number of items has decreases in I-total figures of more than 0.2, yet these items were retained for further analysis.

Table A.6.2 EFA for Positive Customer Engagement (Community)

Scale Items	Factor 1 Loading	Factor 2 Loading	Factor 3 Loading	I-Total	Mean	SD
I feel very positive when I am in my local community	.870 (.874)			.745 (.764)	5.03	1.275
My local community makes me happy	.881 (.890)			.737 (.749)	4.97	1.345
I feel good when I engage with others in my local community	.729 (.727)	.329 (.348)	.333 (.325)	.782 (.789)	5.22	1.230
I'm proud of my local community	.815 (.822)	(.319)		.805 (.817)	5.06	1.358
I like to learn more about my local community	*.534*		*.543*	*.734*	*4.90*	*1.361*
I pay a lot of attention to anything about my local community			.866 (.885)	.740 (.712)	4.98	1.345
Anything related to my local community grabs my attention		.331 (.323)	.801 (.841)	.761 (.750)	4.96	1.365
I am heavily into my local community		*.770*	*.437*	*.766 (.734)*	*3.94*	*1.527*
I am passionate about my local community	.336 (.345)	.727 (.528)	.459 (.665)	.820 (.790)	4.35	1.481
My days would not be the same without my local community	.305	.864 (.902)		.699 (.665)	3.73	1.626

Notes: I-Total refers to item-to-total correlations. Factor loadings reported are the varimax rotated component matrix results. Items removed from the analysis are shown in italics. Figures in brackets reflect the final factor analysis results.

Social Media Brand Object

The 10 items were factor analysed using the principal components method of factor extraction. This analysis resulted in the extraction of three factors that accounted for 82.54% of the variance extracted. The first rotated factor accounted for 65.26% of the variance (eigenvalue 6.52>1.0), the second rotated factor accounted for 11.05% of the variance (eigenvalue 1.10>1.0) and the third accounted for 6.13 (eigenvalue 0.61<1.0). The results can be seen in Table A.6.3. The factor structure supports a three factor sub-structure for positive CE, which is consistent with CE research (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014; Vivek et al., 2014). Positive CE was represented by an affective, cognitive and behavioural dimension.

Close inspection of the factor solution led to the deletion of the item *I like to learn more about my social media brand* due to high cross loading. The item *I am heavily into my social*

media brand was deleted in order to maintain consistency across the scales for council and community object. The impact of deleting these items from the analysis is presented in brackets in Table A.7.3. Removal of these items resulted in an increase in the variance explained (86.61%). The first rotated factor now accounts for 66.98% of the variance extracted (eigenvalue 5.35>1.0) the second rotated factor accounts for 12.87% of variance (eigenvalue 1.03>1.0) and the third factor accounts for 6.76% (eigenvalue 0.54<1.0). Analysis of coefficient alpha also provided strong to moderate support for the internal consistency of the three sub factor scales with alpha values of 0.929 for CE affect, 0.903 for CE cognition and 0.745 for CE behaviour.

Although the item *I am passionate about my social media brand* had a cross loading above 0.3 and slightly low factor loadings for the 'behaviour' dimension it was considered central to the meaning of the scale, and to the investigation and was subsequently retained for further analysis.

Table A.6.3 EFA for Positive Engagement (Social Media Brand)

Scale Items	Factor 1 Loading	Factor 2 Loading	Factor 3 Loading	I-Total	Mean	SD
I feel very positive when I use my social media brand	.837 (.855)			.756 (.764)	4.96	1.29
Using my social media brand makes me happy	.882 (.891)			.758 (.772)	4.87	1.36
I feel good when I use my social media brand	.881 (.893)			.763 (.779)	4.87	1.28
I'm proud to use my social media brand	.660 (693)	.506 (.498)		.782 (.775)	4.5	1.43
I like to learn more about my social media brand	*.429*	*.765*		*.685*	*4.43*	*1.56*
I pay a lot of attention to anything about my social media brand		.744 (.854)	.482	.787 (.763)	4.06	1.47
Anything related to my social media brand grabs my attention		.759 (.881)	.426	.777 (.759)	4.1	1.54
I am heavily into my social media brand	*.317*	*.491*	*.673*	*.781*	*4.11*	*1.68*
I am passionate about my social media brand		.382 (.428)	.520 (.731)	.843 (.815)	3.79	1.59
My days would not be the same without my social media brand		(.340)	.867 (.908)	.619 (.600)	4.16	1.71

Notes: I-Total refers to item-to-total correlations. Factor loadings reported are the varimax rotated component matrix results. Items removed from the analysis are shown in italics. Figures in brackets reflect the final factor analysis results.

Social Media Community Object

The 10 items were factor analysed using the principal components method of factor extraction. This analysis resulted in the extraction of three factors that accounted for 85.76% of the variance extracted. The first rotated factor accounted for 72.41% of the variance (eigenvalue 7.24>1.0), the second rotated factor accounted for 8.30% of the variance (eigenvalue 0.83<1.0) and the third accounted for 5.05 (eigenvalue 0.05<1.0). The results can be seen in Table A.6.4. The factor structure supports a three factor sub-structure for positive CE, which is consistent with CE research (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014; Vivek et al., 2014). Positive CE was represented by an affective, cognitive and behavioural dimension.

Close inspection of the factor solution led to the deletion of the item *I like to learn more about my online community* and *I am heavily into my online community* due to high cross factor loading. The impact of deleting these items from the analysis is presented in brackets in Table A.7.4. Removal of these items resulted in an increase in the variance explained (89.32%). The first rotated factor now accounts for 73.79% of the variance extracted (eigenvalue 5.90>1.0) the second rotated factor accounts for 9.38% of variance (eigenvalue 0.75<1.0) and the third factor accounts for 6.15% (eigenvalue 0.49<1.0). Analysis of coefficient alpha also provided strong to moderate support for the internal consistency of the three sub factor scales with alpha values of 0.952 for CE affect, 0.920 for CE cognition and 0.843 for CE behaviour.

Although the item *I am passionate about my online community* had a cross loading above 0.3 and slightly low factor loadings for the 'behaviour' dimension it was considered central to the meaning of the scale, and to the investigation and was subsequently retained for further analysis.

Table A.6.4 EFA for Positive Engagement (Social Media Community)

Scale Items	Factor 1 Loading	Factor 2 Loading	Factor 3 Loading	I-Total	Mean	SD
I feel very positive when I use my online community	.810 (.818)	.347 (.350)		.833 (.836)	5.22	1.260

Using my online community makes me happy	.862 (.870)			.822 (.836)	5.14	1.322
I feel good when I use my online community	.870 (.878)			.825 (.837)	5.20	1.264
I'm proud to use my online community	.772 (.779)	.359 (.372)	.326	.833 (.840)	5.16	1.385
I like to learn more about my online community	*.510*	*.497*	*.397*	*.767*	*4.94*	*1.426*
I pay a lot of attention to anything about my online community	.365	.816 (.829)	.340	.822 (.807)	5.05	1.456
Anything related to my online community grabs my attention	.361	.819 (.843)	.312	.803 (798)	5.09	1.429
I am heavily into my online community	*.372*	*.458*	*.705*	*.832*	*4.56*	*1.615*
I am passionate about my online community	.451 (.475)	.457 (.488)	.666 (.613)	.869 (.843)	4.71	1.585
My days would not be the same without my online community			.884 (.903)	.706 (.674)	3.92	1.753

Notes: I-Total refers to item-to-total correlations. Factor loadings reported are the varimax rotated component matrix results. Items removed from the analysis are shown in italics. Figures in brackets reflect the final factor analysis results.

EFA Negative Customer Engagement

Negative CE was measured using 16 items taken from scales developed Romani, Grappi and Dalli (2013), Kottasz and Bennett (2015) and Romani, Grappi, Zarantonello and Bagozzi (2015). The 6 items for the affective dimension were adapted from 'Anger' and 'Dislike' scales developed by Romani, Grappi and Dalli (2013), the 5 items for the cognitive dimension were adapted from scales 'Depth of processing' scales by Kottasz and Bennett (2015) and the 5 items for the behavioural component of negative CE were adapted from Romani, Grappi, Zarantonello and Bagozzi's (2015) 'Anti-brand activism' scale.

Local Government Brand Object

These 16 items were factor analysed using the principal components method of factor extraction. This analysis resulted in the extraction of three factors that accounted for 79.37% of the variance extracted. The first rotated factor accounted for 56.98% of the variance (eigenvalue 8.96>1.0), the second rotated factor accounted for 12.88% of the variance

(eigenvalue 2.06>1.0) and the third factor accounted for 10.46% of the variance (eigenvalue 1.67>1.0). The results can be seen in Table A.7.1. The factor structure supports a three factor sub-structure for negative CE which captures 'affect', 'cognition' and 'behaviour'.

Close inspection of the factor solution led to the deletion of the *I spend a lot of time thinking negatively about my local government* and *I devote a great deal of negative mental effort to considering my local government* items due to high cross loadings and decreases in item-to-total correlations greater than 0.20. The impact of deleting these items from the analysis is presented in brackets in Table A.7.1. Removal of these items resulted in an increase in the variance explained (81.91%). The first rotated factor accounted for 56.15% of the variance extracted (eigenvalue 7.862>1.0) the second rotated factor accounted for 14.72% of variance (eigenvalue 2.06>1.0) and the third factor accounted for 11.02% of the variance (eigenvalue 1.54>1.0). Analysis of coefficient alpha also provided support for the internal consistency of the two sub factor scales with alpha values of 0.946 for negative CE affect, 0.909 for negative CE cognition and 0.950 for negative CE behaviour.

Although the items *I deliberate long and hard about negative information involving my local government* and *I think in great depth about negative information I see concerning my local government* had decreases in item-to-total correlations slightly greater than 0.20 they were considered central to the meaning of the scale, and to the investigation and was subsequently retained for further analysis. Additionally, the item *A feeling of hate* was retained despite its cross loadings of 0.30 and higher due to its meaning to the scale.

Table A.7.1 EFA for Negative Customer Engagement (Brand)

Scale items	**Factor 1 Loading**	**Factor 2 Loading**	**Factor 3 Loading**	**I-Total**	**Mean**	**SD**
A feeling of contempt	.842 (.845)			.700 (.714)	2.45	1.518
A feeling of revulsion	.829 (.837)			.755 (.764)	1.94	1.344
A feeling of hate	.772 (.782)	.345 (.351)		.796 (.799)	1.71	1.162
Indignant	.828 (.833)			.747 (.763)	2.05	1.308
Annoyed	.787 (.794)			.687 (.691)	2.66	1.550
Resentful	.863 (.870)			.726 (.734)	2.05	1.416

I spend a lot of time thinking negatively about my local government	*.386*	*.416*	*.586*	.750	2.38	1.382
I devote a great deal of negative mental effort to considering my local government	*.322*	*.366*	*.682*	.732	2.14	1.286
I pay very close attention to negative information concerning my local government			.800 (802)	.645 (.621)	2.91	1.579
I deliberate long and hard about negative information involving my local government			.902 (.908)	.647 (.619)	2.67	1.418
I think in great depth about negative information I see concerning my local government			.865 (.884)	.647 (.627)	2.70	1.448
I have joined on-line anti brand groups of communities about my local government		.841 (.848)		.646 (.641)	1.66	1.129
I have joined collective movements or groups against my local government		.841 (.849)		.684 (.684)	1.72	1.240
I have picketed against my local government		.879 (884)		.672 (.677)	1.60	1.133
I blog against my local government		.840 (.847)		.715 (.708)	1.58	1.053
I participate in boycotting my local government		.900 (.907)		.736 (.737)	1.55	1.028

Notes: I-Total refers to item-to-total correlations. Factor loadings reported are the varimax rotated component matrix results. Items removed from the analysis are shown in italics. Figures in brackets reflect the final factor analysis results.

Local Community Object

These 16 items were factor analysed using the principal components method of factor extraction. This analysis resulted in the extraction of three factors that accounted for 79.37% of the variance extracted. The first rotated factor accounted for 46.39% of the variance (eigenvalue 7.42>1.0), the second rotated factor accounted for 18.46% of the variance (eigenvalue 2.95>1.0) and the third factor accounted for 12.98% of the variance (eigenvalue 2.08>1.0). The results can be seen in Table A.7.2. The factor structure supports a three factor sub-structure for negative CE which captures ‘affect’, ‘cognition’ and ‘behaviour’.

Close inspection of the factor solution led to the deletion of the *I spend a lot of time thinking negatively about my local community* and *I devote a great deal of negative mental effort to considering my local community* items due to high cross loadings. The impact of deleting these items from the analysis is presented in brackets in Table A.7.2. Removal of these items resulted in an increase in the variance explained (81.91%). The first rotated factor accounted for 56.15% of the variance extracted (eigenvalue 7.862>1.0) the second rotated factor accounted for 14.72% of variance (eigenvalue 2.06>1.0) and the third factor accounted for

11.02% of the variance (eigenvalue 1.54>1.0). Analysis of coefficient alpha also provided support for the internal consistency of the two sub factor scales with alpha values of 0.946 for negative CE affect, 0.909 for negative CE cognition and 0.950 for negative CE behaviour.

A number of the negative CE items had decreases in item-to-total correlations greater than 0.20. However, these items were they were considered central to the meaning of the scale, and to the investigation and was subsequently retained for further analysis. The decision to retain these items was compounded by the Chronbach Alpha scores of each of the three NE dimensions which were all above 0.90. Inspection of the 'Chronbach's alpha if item deleted' for each of the items in question also resulted in a lower Alpha (<0.90) and thus the items were retained.

Table A.7.2 EFA for Negative Customer Engagement (Community)

Scale items	**Factor 1 Loading**	**Factor 2 Loading**	**Factor 3 Loading**	**I-Total**	**Mean**	**SD**
A feeling of contempt	.821 (.829)			.619 (.620)	1.94	1.296
A feeling of revulsion	.888 (.892)			.716 (.711)	1.75	1.216
A feeling of hate	.857 (.861)			.680 (.676)	1.54	1.081
Indignant	.877 (.882)			.705 (.703)	1.75	1.214
Annoyed	.787 (.790)			.635 (.700)	2.26	1.396
Resentful	.881 (.882)			.707 (.518)	1.73	1.145
I spend a lot of time thinking negatively about my local community	*.547*	*.314*	*.448*	.710	2.06	1.216
I devote a great deal of negative mental effort to considering my local community	*.522*	*.308*	*.526*	.733	1.90	1.192
I pay very close attention to negative information concerning my local community			.865 (.875)	.531 (.517)	2.87	1.676
I deliberate long and hard about negative information involving my local community			.917 (.922)	.595 (.581)	2.63	1.559
I think in great depth about negative information I see concerning my local community			.920 (.930)	.584 (.573)	2.76	1.606
I have joined on-line anti brand groups of communities about my local government		.825 (.830)		.590 (.586)	1.49	.925

I have joined collective movements or groups against my local community		.807 (.813)		.476 (.489)	1.66	1.224
I have picketed against my local community		.945 (.948)		.547 (.553)	1.44	.879
I blog against my local community		.904 (.906)		.549 (.545)	1.42	.803
I participate in boycotting my local community		.930 (.932)		.506 (.509)	1.39	.796

Notes: I-Total refers to item-to-total correlations. Factor loadings reported are the varimax rotated component matrix results. Items removed from the analysis are shown in italics. Figures in brackets reflect the final factor analysis results.

Social Media Brand Object

These 16 items were factor analysed using the principal components method of factor extraction. This analysis resulted in the extraction of three factors that accounted for 79.37% of the variance extracted. The first rotated factor accounted for 56.98% of the variance (eigenvalue 8.96>1.0), the second rotated factor accounted for 12.88% of the variance (eigenvalue 2.06>1.0) and the third factor accounted for 10.46% of the variance (eigenvalue 1.67>1.0). The results can be seen in Table A.7.3. The factor structure supports a three factor sub-structure for negative CE which captures ‘affect’, ‘cognition’ and ‘behaviour’.

Close inspection of the factor solution led to the deletion of the *I spend a lot of time thinking negatively about my social media brand* and *I devote a great deal of negative mental effort to considering my social media brand* items due to high cross loadings and decreases in item-to-total correlations greater than 0.20. The impact of deleting these items from the analysis is presented in brackets in Table A.7.3. Removal of these items resulted in an increase in the variance explained (81.91%). The first rotated factor accounted for 56.15% of the variance extracted (eigenvalue 7.862>1.0) the second rotated factor accounted for 14.72% of variance (eigenvalue 2.06>1.0) and the third factor accounted for 11.02% of the variance (eigenvalue 1.54>1.0). Analysis of coefficient alpha also provided support for the internal consistency of the two sub factor scales with alpha values of 0.946 for negative CE affect, 0.909 for negative CE cognition and 0.950 for negative CE behaviour.

Although the items *I deliberate long and hard about negative information involving my social media brand* and *I think in great depth about negative information I see concerning my social media brand* had decreases in item-to-total correlations slightly greater than 0.20 they were considered central to the meaning of the scale, and to the investigation and was

subsequently retained for further analysis. Additionally, the item *A feeling of hate* was retained despite its cross loadings of 0.30 and higher due to its meaning to the scale.

Table A.7.3 EFA for Negative Customer Engagement (Social Media Brand)

Scale items	Factor 1 Loading	Factor 2 Loading	Factor 3 Loading	I-Total	Mean	SD
A feeling of contempt	.842 (.845)			.700 (.714)	2.45	1.518
A feeling of revulsion	.829 (.837)			.755 (.764)	1.94	1.344
A feeling of hate	.772 (.782)	.345 (.351)		.796 (.799)	1.71	1.162
Indignant	.828 (.833)			.747 (.763)	2.05	1.308
Annoyed	.787 (.794)			.687 (.691)	2.66	1.550
Resentful	.863 (.870)			.726 (.734)	2.05	1.416
I spend a lot of time thinking negatively about my social media brand	*.386*	*.416*	*.586*	.750	2.38	1.382
I devote a great deal of negative mental effort to considering my social media brand	*.322*	*.366*	*.682*	.732	2.14	1.286
I pay very close attention to negative information concerning my social media brand			.800 (802)	.645 (.621)	2.91	1.579
I deliberate long and hard about negative information involving my social media brand			.902 (.908)	.647 (.619)	2.67	1.418
I think in great depth about negative information I see concerning my social media brand			.865 (.884)	.647 (.627)	2.70	1.448
I have joined on-line anti brand groups of communities about my social media brand		.841 (.848)		.646 (.641)	1.66	1.129
I have joined collective movements or groups against my social media brand		.841 (.849)		.684 (.684)	1.72	1.240
I have picketed against my social media brand		.879 (884)		.672 (.677)	1.60	1.133
I blog against my social media brand		.840 (.847)		.715 (.708)	1.58	1.053
I participate in boycotting my social media brand		.900 (.907)		.736 (.737)	1.55	1.028

Notes: I-Total refers to item-to-total correlations. Factor loadings reported are the varimax rotated component matrix results. Items removed from the analysis are shown in italics. Figures in brackets reflect the final factor analysis results.

Social Media Community Object

These 16 items were factor analysed using the principal components method of factor extraction. This analysis resulted in the extraction of three factors that accounted for 79.37% of the variance extracted. The first rotated factor accounted for 46.39% of the variance (eigenvalue 7.42>1.0), the second rotated factor accounted for 18.46% of the variance (eigenvalue 2.95>1.0) and the third factor accounted for 12.98% of the variance (eigenvalue 2.08>1.0). The results can be seen in Table A.7.4. The factor structure supports a three factor sub-structure for negative CE which captures 'affect', 'cognition' and 'behaviour'.

Close inspection of the factor solution led to the deletion of the *I spend a lot of time thinking negatively about my online community* and *I devote a great deal of negative mental effort to considering my online community* items due to high cross loadings. The impact of deleting these items from the analysis is presented in brackets in Table A.7.4. Removal of these items resulted in an increase in the variance explained (81.91%). The first rotated factor accounted for 56.15% of the variance extracted (eigenvalue 7.862>1.0) the second rotated factor accounted for 14.72% of variance (eigenvalue 2.06>1.0) and the third factor accounted for 11.02% of the variance (eigenvalue 1.54>1.0). Analysis of coefficient alpha also provided support for the internal consistency of the two sub factor scales with alpha values of 0.946 for negative CE affect, 0.909 for negative CE cognition and 0.950 for negative CE behaviour.

A number of the negative CE items had decreases in item-to-total correlations greater than 0.20. However, these items were they were considered central to the meaning of the scale, and to the investigation and was subsequently retained for further analysis. The decision to retain these items was compounded by the Chronbach Alpha scores of each of the three NE dimensions which were all above 0.90. Inspection of the 'Chronbach's alpha if item deleted' for each of the items in question also resulted in a lower Alpha (<0.90) and thus the items were retained.

Table A.7.4 EFA for Negative Customer Engagement (Social Media Community)

Scale items	Factor 1 Loading	Factor 2 Loading	Factor 3 Loading	I-Total	Mean	SD
A feeling of contempt	.821 (.829)			.619 (.620)	1.94	1.296

A feeling of revulsion	.888 (.892)			.716 (.711)	1.75	1.216
A feeling of hate	.857 (.861)			.680 (.676)	1.54	1.081
Indignant	.877 (.882)			.705 (.703)	1.75	1.214
Annoyed	.787 (.790)			.635 (.700)	2.26	1.396
Resentful	.881 (.882)			.707 (.518)	1.73	1.145
I spend a lot of time thinking negatively about my online community	*.547*	*.314*	*.448*	.710	2.06	1.216
I devote a great deal of negative mental effort to considering my online community	*.522*	*.308*	*.526*	.733	1.90	1.192
I pay very close attention to negative information concerning my online community			.865 (.875)	.531 (.517)	2.87	1.676
I deliberate long and hard about negative information involving my online community			.917 (.922)	.595 (.581)	2.63	1.559
I think in great depth about negative information I see concerning my local community			.920 (.930)	.584 (.573)	2.76	1.606
I have joined on-line anti brand groups of communities about my online community		.825 (.830)		.590 (.586)	1.49	.925
I have joined collective movements or groups against my online community		.807 (.813)		.476 (.489)	1.66	1.224
I have picketed against my online community		.945 (.948)		.547 (.553)	1.44	.879
I blog against my online community		.904 (.906)		.549 (.545)	1.42	.803
I participate in boycotting my online community		.930 (.932)		.506 (.509)	1.39	.796

Notes: I-Total refers to item-to-total correlations. Factor loadings reported are the varimax rotated component matrix results. Items removed from the analysis are shown in italics. Figures in brackets reflect the final factor analysis results.

EFA Customer Disengagement

Customer disengagement was measured using 11 items taken from scales developed Mai and Conti (2007) and Ping (1993). The affective dimension of CD used 3 items from Mai and Conti's (2007) 'Attitudes before relationship ending' scale. The cognitive dimension was measured using 4 items from Mai and Conti's (2007) 'Brand detachment' scale, and the behavioural dimensions were measured using Ping's (1993) 'Neglect' scale.

Local Government Brand Object

The 11 items were factor analysed using the principal components method of factor extraction. This analysis resulted in the extraction of one factor that accounted for 58.77% of the variance extracted eigenvalue 6.46>1.0). Analysis of the coefficient alpha values for this scale supported its internal consistency and reliability (alpha = 0.928). The results can be seen in Table A.8.1.

Close inspection of the factor solution led to the deletion of the: *I feel upset towards my Local Government; My Local Government disappoints me* due to low communalities, and the item *Complaining about things that go wrong with my Local Government won't change the outcome* due to low communalities and factor loadings. The impact of deleting these items from the analysis is presented in brackets in Table A.8.1. Removal of these items resulted in an increase in the variance explained to 66.86% (eigenvalue 5.349>1.0) and the alpha= 0.929.

Table A.8.1 EFA for Customer Disengagement (Brand)

Scale Items	Factor 1 Loading	I-Total	Mean	SD
I do not feel anything towards my Local Government	.682 (.740)	.601 (.666)	*3.62*	*1.439*
I feel upset towards my Local Government	*.641*	*.597*	*3.05*	*1.416*
My Local Government disappoints me	*.678*	*.630*	*3.25*	*1.603*
The more the time passes the less I think about my Local Government	.769 (.767)	.712 (.699)	*3.47*	*1.378*
I feel the links between me and my Local Government fading away	.798 (.766)	.751 (.695)	*3.58*	*1.394*
I no longer think about my Local Government	.824 (.858)	.765 (.807)	3.22	1.327
Complaining about things that go wrong with my Local Government won't change the outcome	*.700 (.668)*	*.645 (.595)*	*3.92*	*1.687*
I don' t pay attention to any initiative or anything regarding my Local Government	.772 (.809)	.705 (.744)	3.01	1.383
I have quit caring about my Local Government and will let conditions get worse	.851 (.862)	.799 (.806)	2.75	1.397
I will passively let the relationship with my Local Government slowly deteriorate	.837 (.870)	.777 (.819)	2.94	1.365
I sometimes consider letting the relationship with my Local Government die a slow death	.844 (.858)	.788 (.801)	2.83	1.463

Notes: I Total refers to item-to-total correlations. Factor loadings reported are the varimax rotated component matrix results. Items removed from the analysis are shown in italics. Figures in brackets reflect the final factor analysis results.

Local Community Object

These 11 items were factor analysed using the principal components method of factor extraction. This analysis resulted in one factor (eigenvalue 7.079>1.0) accounting for 64.35% of the variance extracted. The factor pattern that emerged from this analysis indicated a 1 factor solution. Analysis of the coefficient alpha values for this scale supported its internal consistency and reliability (alpha = 0.943). The results can be seen in Table A.8.2.

Close inspection of the factor solution led to the deletion of the: *I feel upset towards my local community; My local community disappoints me* due to due to low communalities, and the item *Complaining about things that go wrong with my local community won't change the outcome* due to low communalities and low factor loadings. The impact of deleting these items from the analysis is presented in brackets in Table A.8.2. Removal of these items resulted in an increase in the variance explained to 72.97% (eigenvalue 5.838>1.0) and the alpha= 0.947.

Table A.8.2 EFA for Customer Disengagement (Community)

Scale Items	Factor Loading	I-Total	Mean	SD
I do not feel anything towards my local community	.795 (.809)	.740 (.752)	2.82	1.400
I feel upset towards my local community	*.719*	*.673*	*2.47*	*1.273*
My local community disappoints me	*.739*	*.692*	*2.67*	*1.498*
The more the time passes the less I think about my local community	.817 (.806)	.772 (.749)	2.68	1.404
I feel the links between me and my local community fading away	.848 (.833)	.807 (.779)	2.88	1.419
I no longer think about my local community	.853 (.879)	.807 (.840)	2.58	1.302
Complaining about things that go wrong with my local community won't change the outcome	*.593*	*.538*	*3.41*	*1.722*
I don’ t pay attention to any initiative or anything regarding my local community	.754 (.786)	.698 (.724)	2.63	1.305
I have quit caring about my local community and will let conditions get worse	.893 (.909)	.852 (.871)	2.34	1.264
I will passively let the relationship with my local community slowly deteriorate	.890 (.914)	.843 (.876)	2.40	1.310
I sometimes consider letting the relationship with my local community die a slow death	.872 (.887)	.822 (.842)	2.31	1.293

Notes: I Total refers to item-to-total correlations. Factor loadings reported are the varimax rotated component matrix results. Items removed from the analysis are shown in italics. Figures in brackets reflect the final factor analysis results.

Social Media Brand Object

The 11 items were factor analysed using the principal components method of factor extraction. This analysis resulted in the extraction of one factor that accounted for 63.17% of the variance extracted eigenvalue 6.94>1.0). Analysis of the coefficient alpha values for this scale supported its internal consistency and reliability (alpha = 0.940). The results can be seen in Table A.8.3.

Close inspection of the factor solution led to the deletion of the *Complaining about things that go wrong with my social media brand won't change the outcome* due to low communalities and factor loadings. The items *I feel upset towards my social media brand;* and *My social media brand disappoints me* were removed to maintain consistency of the scale across the social media and local government contexts. The impact of deleting these items from the analysis is presented in brackets in Table A.8.3. Removal of these items resulted in an increase in the variance explained to 68.85% (eigenvalue 5.50>1.0) and the alpha= 0.934.

Table A.8.3 EFA for Customer Disengagement (Social Media Brand)

Scale Items	**Factor 1 Loading**	**I-Total**	**Mean**	**SD**
I do not feel anything towards my Social media brand	.667 (.683)	.608 (.608)	3.72	1.493
I feel upset towards my Social media brand	*.774*	*.721*	*3.04*	*1.473*
My Social media brand disappoints me	*.816*	*.771*	*3.23*	*1.542*
The more the time passes the less I think about my Social media brand	.830 (.839)	.785 (.786)	3.78	1.527
I feel the links between me and my Social media brand fading away	.859 (.869)	.816 (.818)	3.74	1.566
I no longer think about my Social media brand	.829 (.850)	.779 (.797)	3.24	1.486
Complaining about things that go wrong with my Social media brand won't change the outcome	*.577*	*.518*	*4.61*	*1.633*
I don' t pay attention to any initiative or anything regarding my Social media brand	.761 (.755)	.713 (.687)	3.52	1.399
I have quit caring about my Social media brand and will let conditions get worse	.868 (.886)	.826 (838)	3.34	1.414

I will passively let the relationship with my Social media brand slowly deteriorate	.881 (.895)	.841 (.850)	3.54	1.417
I sometimes consider letting the relationship with my Social media brand die a slow death	.828 (.840)	.776 (.777)	3.54	1.589

Notes: I Total refers to item-to-total correlations. Factor loadings reported are the varimax rotated component matrix results. Items removed from the analysis are shown in italics. Figures in brackets reflect the final factor analysis results.

Social Media Community Object

These 11 items were factor analysed using the principal components method of factor extraction. This analysis resulted in one factor (eigenvalue 8.35>1.0) accounting for 75.92% of the variance extracted. The factor pattern that emerged from this analysis indicated a 1 factor solution. Analysis of the coefficient alpha values for this scale supported its internal consistency and reliability (alpha = 0.968). The results can be seen in Table A.8.4.

The items: *I feel upset towards my online community; My online community disappoints me* due to due to low communalities, and *Complaining about things that go wrong with my online community won't change the outcome* were removed to maintain consistency of the scale across the social media and local government contexts. The impact of deleting these items from the analysis is presented in brackets in Table A.8.4. Removal of these items resulted in an increase in the variance explained to 81.73% (eigenvalue 6.53>1.0) and the alpha= 0.968.

Table A.8.4 EFA for Customer Disengagement (Online Community)

Scale Items	Factor Loading	I-Total	Mean	SD
I do not feel anything towards my online community	.819 (.830)	0.780 (.783)	3.00	1.603
I feel upset towards my online community	*.824*	*.789*	*2.41*	*1.542*
My online community disappoints me	*.838*	*.805*	*2.57*	*1.687*
The more the time passes the less I think about my online community	.865 (.863)	.835 (.823)	3.02	1.721
I feel the links between me and my online community fading away	.927 (.924)	.907 (.899)	3.01	1.722
I no longer think about my online community	.921 (.937)	.899 (.915)	2.86	1.665
Complaining about things that go wrong with my online community won't change the outcome	*.755*	*.712*	*3.36*	*1.938*
I don’ t pay attention to any initiative or anything regarding my online community	.878 (.888)	.850 (.853)	2.79	1.554

I have quit caring about my online community and will let conditions get worse	.914 (.932)	.890 (.908)	2.69	1.565
I will passively let the relationship with my online community slowly deteriorate	.927 (.946)	.905 (.925)	2.78	1.688
I sometimes consider letting the relationship with my online community die a slow death	.900 (.907)	.873 (.875)	2.75	1.646

Notes: I Total refers to item-to-total correlations. Factor loadings reported are the varimax rotated component matrix results. Items removed from the analysis are shown in italics. Figures in brackets reflect the final factor analysis results.

EFA Involvement

Involvement was conceptualised as a 9-item bi-polar adjective scale rank as per the approach of Zaichkowsky (1985).

Local Government Brand Object

These 9 items were factor analysed using the principal components method of factor extraction. Prior to item deletion this analysis resulted in one factor (eigenvalue 6.23>1.0) accounting for 69.21% of the variance extracted. The factor pattern that emerged from this analysis indicated a 1 factor solution. Analysis of the coefficient alpha values for this scale supported its internal consistency and reliability (alpha = 0.944). The results can be seen in Table A.9.1.

Table A.9.1 EFA for Involvement (Brand)

Scale Items	Factor Loading	I-Total	Mean	SD
Unimportant:Important	.784	.732	5.27	1.420
Irrelevant:Relevant	.780	.726	5.24	1.445
Means nothing to me:Means a lot to me	.826	.777	4.66	1.375
Worthless:Valuable	.817	.768	5.09	1.433
Boring:Interesting	.874	.831	4.42	1.502
Unappealing:Appealing	.890	.852	4.39	1.467
Unexciting:Exciting	.865	.819	4.08	1.430
Mundane:Fascinating	.831	.777	3.99	1.420
Uninvolving:Involving	.813	.761	4.68	1.441

Notes: I Total refers to item-to-total correlations. Factor loadings reported are the varimax rotated component matrix results.

Local Community Object

These 9 items were factor analysed using the principal components method of factor extraction. Prior to item deletion this analysis resulted in one factor (eigenvalue 6.87>1.0) accounting for 76.41% of the variance extracted. The factor pattern that emerged from this analysis indicated a 1 factor solution. Analysis of the coefficient alpha values for this scale supported its internal consistency and reliability (alpha = 0.961). The results can be seen in Table A.9.2.

Table A.9.2 EFA for Involvement (Community)

Scale Items	Factor Loading	I-Total	Mean	SD
Unimportant:Important	.846	.803	5.42	1.420
Irrelevant:Relevant	.868	.830	5.30	1.472
Means nothing to me:Means a lot to me	.846	.804	5.11	1.441
Worthless:Valuable	.885	.851	5.33	1.379
Boring:Interesting	.917	.891	4.82	1.626
Unappealing:Appealing	.913	.887	4.87	1.542
Unexciting:Exciting	.896	.867	4.51	1.508
Mundane:Fascinating	.875	.840	4.50	1.504
Not needed:Needed	.817	.771	4.78	1.437
Uninvolving:Involving	.846	.803	5.42	1.420

Notes: I Total refers to item-to-total correlations. Factor loadings reported are the varimax rotated component matrix results.

Social Media - Brand Object

These 9 items were factor analysed using the principal components method of factor extraction. Prior to item deletion this analysis resulted in one factor (eigenvalue 6.826>1.0) accounting for 77.63% of the variance extracted. The factor pattern that emerged from this analysis indicated a 1 factor solution. Analysis of the coefficient alpha values for this scale supported its internal consistency and reliability (alpha = 0.945). The results can be seen in Table A.9.3.

Table A.9.3 EFA for Involvement (Social Media – Brand)

Scale Items	Factor Loadings	I-Total	Mean	SD
Unimportant:Important	.812	.761	4.85	1.406

Irrelevant:Relevant	.782	.725	4.94	1.411
Means nothing to me:Means a lot to me	.807	.754	4.55	1.407
Worthless:Valuable	.830	.781	4.91	1.413
Boring:Interesting	.836	.786	4.91	1.552
Unappealing:Appealing	.877	.838	4.85	1.399
Unexciting:Exciting	.863	.819	4.60	1.494
Mundane:Fascinating	.886	.849	4.53	1.493
Uninvolving:Involving	.814	.761	4.96	1.469

Notes: I Total refers to item-to-total correlations.

Social Media - Community Object

These 9 items were factor analysed using the principal components method of factor extraction. Prior to item deletion this analysis resulted in one factor (eigenvalue 6.82>1.0) accounting for 75.80% of the variance extracted. The factor pattern that emerged from this analysis indicated a 1 factor solution. Analysis of the coefficient alpha values for this scale supported its internal consistency and reliability (alpha = 0.960). The results can be seen in Table A.9.4.

Table A.9.4 EFA for Involvement (Social Media- Community)

Scale Items	**Factor Loadings**	**I-Total**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Factor ladings post deletion**	**I-Total post deletion**
Unimportant:Important	.852	.811	5.39	1.498	0.852	0.811
Irrelevant:Relevant	.861	.822	5.47	1.429	0.861	0.822
Means nothing to me:Means a lot to me	.876	.840	5.12	1.450	0.876	0.840
Worthless:Valuable	.879	.843	5.44	1.405	0.879	0.843
Boring:Interesting	.882	.847	5.36	1.498	0.882	0.847
Unappealing:Appealing	.907	.879	5.30	1.432	0.907	0.879
Unexciting:Exciting	.860	.822	5.00	1.487	0.860	0.822
Mundane:Fascinating	.876	.841	4.98	1.529	0.876	0.841
Uninvolving:Involving	.841	.798	5.35	1.376	0.841	0.798

Notes: I-Total refers to item-to-total correlations. *item deleted

EFA for Word-of-Mouth

Word-of-mouth was measured using 4 items adapted from Harrison-Walker (2001).

Local Government Brand Object

These 4 items were factor analysed using the principal components method of factor extraction. This analysis resulted in one factor (eigenvalue 3.209>1.0) accounting for 80.21% of the variance extracted. The factor pattern that emerged from this analysis indicated a single factor solution. Analysis of the coefficient alpha values for this scale supported its internal consistency and reliability (alpha = 0.918). The results can be seen in Table A.10.1.

Table A.10.1 EFA for Word-of-Mouth (Brand)

Scale Items	Factor Loading	I-Total	Mean	SD
I mention my local government to others quite frequently	.856	.751	3.36	1.588
When I tell others about local government I tend to talk about it in great detail	.917	.846	3.13	1.523
I seldom miss an opportunity to tell others about my local government	.910	.831	2.77	1.471
I've told more people about my local government than I've told about most other service organisations	.899	.812	2.77	1.517

Notes: I-Total refers to item-to-total correlations. Factor loadings reported are the varimax rotated component matrix results.

Local Community Object

These 4 items were factor analysed using the principal components method of factor extraction. This analysis resulted in one factor (eigenvalue 3.523>1.0) accounting for 88.07% of the variance extracted. The factor pattern that emerged from this analysis indicated a single factor solution. Analysis of the coefficient alpha values for this scale supported its internal consistency and reliability (alpha = 0.955). The results can be seen in Table A.10.2.

Table A.10.2 EFA for Word-of-Mouth (Community)

Scale Items	Factor Loading	I-Total	Mean	SD
I mention my local community to others quite frequently	.928	.872	3.87	1.662

When I tell others about local community I tend to talk about it in great detail	.951	.911	3.59	1.556
I seldom miss an opportunity to tell others about my local community	.943	.897	3.31	1.537
I've told more people about my local community than I've told about most other communities I belong to	.931	.876	3.41	1.628

Notes: I-Total refers to item-to-total correlations. Factor loadings reported are the varimax rotated component matrix results.

Social Media Brand Object

These 4 items were factor analysed using the principal components method of factor extraction. This analysis resulted in one factor (eigenvalue 3.10>1.0) accounting for 77.63% of the variance extracted. The factor pattern that emerged from this analysis indicated a single factor solution. Analysis of the coefficient alpha values for this scale supported its internal consistency and reliability (alpha = 0.903). The results can be seen in Table A.10.3.

Table A.10.3 EFA for Word-of-Mouth (Social Media Brand)

Scale Items	Factor Loading	I-Total	Mean	SD
I mention my social media brand to others quite frequently	.825	.700	4.36	1.598
When I tell others about my social media brand I tend to talk about it in great detail	.937	.874	3.45	1.646
I seldom miss an opportunity to tell others about my social media brand	.894	.801	3.03	1.706
I've told more people about my social media brand than I've told about most other service organisations	.864	.758	3.53	1.884

Notes: I-Total refers to item-to-total correlations. Factor loadings reported are the varimax rotated component matrix results.

Social Media - Community Object

These 4 items were factor analysed using the principal components method of factor extraction. This analysis resulted in one factor (eigenvalue 3.36>1.0) accounting for 84.03% of the variance extracted. The factor pattern that emerged from this analysis indicated a single factor solution. Analysis of the coefficient alpha values for this scale supported its internal consistency and reliability (alpha = 0.937). The results can be seen in Table A.10.4.

Table A.10.4 EFA for Word-of-Mouth (Community)

Scale Items	Factor Loading	I-Total	Mean	SD
I mention my online community to others quite frequently	.891	.810	4.16	1.713
When I tell others about online community I tend to talk about it in great detail	.936	.880	3.80	1.718
I seldom miss an opportunity to tell others about my online community	.926	.865	3.46	1.669
I've told more people about my online community than I've told about most other communities I belong to	.913	.844	3.75	1.842

Notes: I-Total refers to item-to-total correlations. Factor loadings reported are the varimax rotated component matrix results.

The exploratory factor analyses presented thus far provide an assessment of the underlying dimensionality of the measures used in this study (Polit, 1996). This assisted in model specification and provided the foundation for further assessment of the measurement and structural models for structural equation modelling (Gerbing and Hamilton, 1996).

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

The research model guiding this enquiry was examined using structural equation modelling (Arbuckle and Wothke, 1999). A two-step approach to analysis was employed following Anderson, Gerbing and Hunter (1987). This involved the specification, and evaluation of a confirmatory factor analysis (Garver and Mentzer, 1999), followed by assessment of the structural relationships between the latent constructs (Anderson and Gerbing, 1999). The model estimation and evaluation process is briefly discussed. This chapter reports the first step of the two-step approach, assessment of the measurement model (Anderson, Gerbing and Hunter, 1987). The structural model and research hypotheses were forwarded and examined in Chapter five.

Model Estimation

A partial disaggregation approach was adopted in this study. This approach reduces random error, increases the stability of estimates, and minimises information loss typically associated with aggregate approaches, whilst maintaining a multiple indicator approach to estimation (Garver and Mentzer, 1999; Bagozzi and Heatherton, 1994). Items representing each of the constructs were arbitrarily assigned to form a composite indicator of each construct (Bagozzi and Heatherton 1994; Sweeney, Soutar and Johnson 1999). Each composite indicator was assigned between one and two items. Several items were delete throughout the model estimation, evaluation and assessment phase to improve model fit. The deletions were based on the observed modification indices and no more than 20% of the total items in the model were removed. The 21 composite indicators and their original items are shown in Table A11.

Table A.11 Composite Indicators & Original Items

Composite Indicator	Measurement Item
Indicator 1	I feel very positive when I use this service organisation
	Using this service organisation makes me happy
Indicator 2	I feel good when I use this service organisation
	I'm proud to use this service organisation
Indicator 3	I pay a lot of attention to anything about this service organisation
Indicator 4	Anything related to this service organisation grabs my attention
Indicator 5	I am passionate about this service organisation
Indicator 6	My days would not be the same without this service organisation
Indicator 7	A feeling of contempt
	A feeling of revulsion
Indicator 8	A feeling of hate
	Indignant
Indicator 9	Annoyed
	Resentful

Indicator 10	I pay very close attention to negative information concerning this service organisation
	I deliberate long and hard about negative information involving this service organisation
Indicator 11	I think in great depth about negative information I see concerning this service organisation
Indicator 12	I have joined collective movements or groups against this service organisation
Indicator 13	I blog against this service organisation
	I participate in boycotting this service organisation
Indicator 14	I do not feel anything towards this service organisation
	The more the time passes the less I think about this service organisation
Indicator 15	I feel the links between me and this service organisation fading away
	I no longer think about this service organisation
Indicator 16	I will passively let the relationship with this service organisation slowly deteriorate
	I sometimes consider letting the relationship with this service organisation die a slow death
Indicator 17	Boring:Interesting
	Unexciting:Exciting
Indicator 18	Unappealing:Appealing
Indicator 19	Mundane:Fascinating
	Uninvolving:Involving
Indicator 20	I mention this service organisation to others quite frequently
	When I tell others about this service organisation I tend to talk in great detail
Indicator 21	I seldom miss an opportunity to tell others about this service organisation
	I've told more people about this service organisation than I've told about most other service organisations

Model Evaluation

Multiple indices were used to examine and assess fit of the measurement model (Hoyle and Panter, 1995). Absolute fit was examined using the Chi-square statistic, goodness-of-fit (GFI), and the root mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) indices. Reliance on the Chi-square statistic is not recommended for large samples >200 (Hair et al., 1998), or for samples which contain violations of normality (Baumgartner and Homburg, 1996) due to sensitivity of the test statistic. RMSEA and GFI provide a greater degree of robustness

and were therefore relied on in this study as primary measures of fit (Hoyle and Panter, 1995). Incremental fit indices including the type 2 incremental fit index (IFI), and type 3 comparative fit index (CFI) were also used based on their robustness to sample size. The criterion values used in analysis of the measurement model are as follows: Chi-square p>0.05, GFI >0.90, IFI >0.90, CFI >0.90 (Hoyle and Panter, 1995; Garver and Mentzer, 1999). Acceptable fit of the measurement model was determined if: standardised residuals <2.58 (Hair et al., 1998), and if parameter estimates were statistically significant, based on a +/- 1.645 critical ratio value, and path coefficients >0.50 (Garver and Mentzer, 1999; Bagozzi and Yi, 1988; Hair et al., 1998).

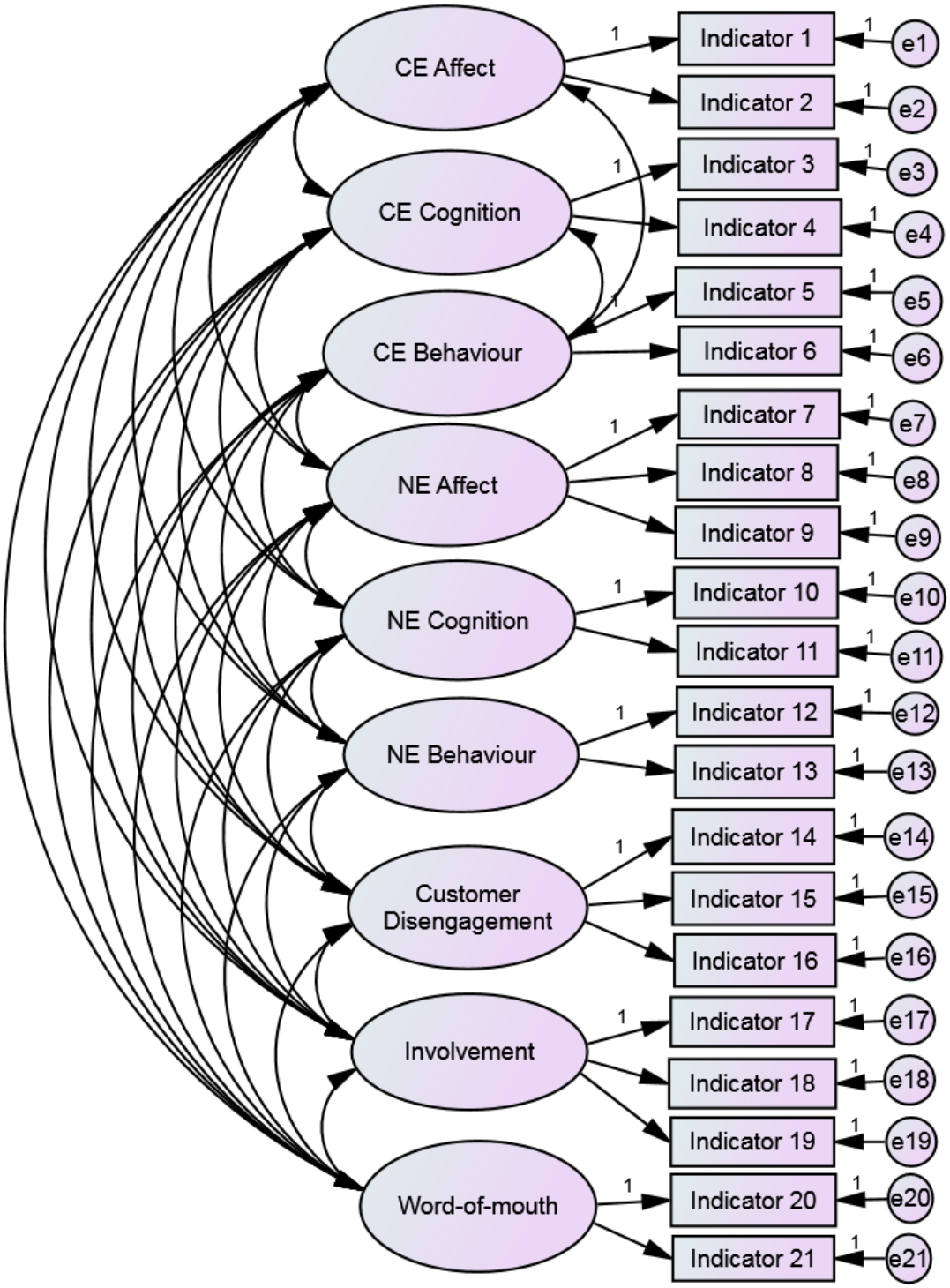
Assessment of the Measurement Model

A measurement model was developed in order to firstly, stipulate the hypothesised relationships between the latent constructs, and the observed indicators and to secondly, assess the ability of the indicators to serve as measures of those constructs (Polit, 1996; Joreskog and Sorbom, 1993).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The conceptual model developed for analysis in this study puts forward 6 constructs capturing positive customer engagement, customer disengagement, negative customer engagement, involvement and WOM. The exploratory factor analysis presented in this section found that these five constructs were described by 9 factors Analysis of the Cronbach alphas for each of these factors structures established the moderate to strong reliability of those factors. Based on these findings, a single measurement model was constructed in which the composite indicators reflected each of the 9 factors. Each of the indicators was constrained to its respective construct. A confirmatory factor analysis was then used to further establish the strength of these measures. This model is shown in Figure A1. The CFA-model was tested across each of the four samples (local government brand object, local government community object, social media brand object and social media community object), with each sample resulting in good model fit.

Figure A1. Measurement Model



As can be seen in Table A12a, b, c, d, the model fit indices for this measurement model indicated that the synthesised model fitted the data well. The GFI, IFI, CFI indices exceeded the >.90 criterion for acceptable model fit. The RMSEA index also exhibited acceptable fit across all four sample types (<0.08). The measurement model fitted the data well.

Table A.12.a Fit Indices for the Relational Constructs- Local Government (Brand Object)

Model Fit for Constructs: CFA Model in Figure A.1	**Goodness-of-Fit Indices**						
	χ^2	*df*	***P***	**RMSEA**	**GFI**	**CFI**	**IFI**
Sample (n = 325)	352.811	153	.000	.064	.90	.96	.96

Table A.12.b Fit Indices for the Relational Constructs- Local Government (Community Object)

Model Fit for Constructs: CFA Model in Figure A.1	**Goodness-of-Fit Indices**						
	χ^2	*df*	***P***	**RMSEA**	**GFI**	**CFI**	**IFI**
Sample (n = 325)	297.98	153	.000	.053	.91	.97	.97

Table A.12.c Fit Indices for the Relational Constructs- Social Media (Brand Object)

Model Fit for Constructs: CFA Model in Figure A.1	**Goodness-of-Fit Indices**						
	χ^2	*df*	***P***	**RMSEA**	**GFI**	**CFI**	**IFI**
Sample (n = 300)	333.63	154	.000	.062	.90	.96	.96

Table A.12.d Fit Indices for the Relational Constructs- Social Media (Community Object)

Model Fit for Constructs: CFA Model in Figure A.1	Goodness-of-Fit Indices						
	χ^2	*df*	***P***	**RMSEA**	**GFI**	**CFI**	**IFI**
Sample (n = 300)	252.18	153	.000	.047	.92	.98	.98

Parameter estimates were examined in addition to the goodness-of-fit indices in order to further establish the strength of the indicators as measures of their constructs. All parameter estimates were significant at the p<0.05 level and well above the +/- 1.645 criterion value. All parameter estimates exceeded the 0.50 criterion except for Indicator 4 (0.40). The results are presented in Tables A.13.a and b.

Table A.13.a Parameter Estimates and Critical Ratio Values for the Relational Constructs - Local Government Context

Composite Indicators and Latent Constructs CFA Model Model shown in Figure A.1	Parameter Estimate Brand Object	CR value Brand Object	Parameter Estimate Community Object	CR value Community Object
CE Affect				
Indicator 1	0.902	23.79	0.971	26.87
Indicator 2	0.97	n/a	0.904	n/a
CE Cognition				
Indicator 3	0.894	21.26	0.923	21.3
Indicator 4	0.923	n/a	0.874	n/a
CE Behaviour				
Indicator 5	0.682	12.49	0.8	18.12
Indicator 6	0.91	n/a	0.912	n/a
NE Affect				
Indicator 7	0.875	25.19	0.886	23.13
Indicator 8	0.949	22.81	0.916	21.12
Indicator 9	0.89	n/a	0.866	n/a
NE Cognition				

Indicator 10	0.891	17.97	0.926	16.33
Indicator 11	0.94	n/a	0.959	n/a
NE Behaviour				
Indicator 12	0.942	17.28	0.9	8.42
Indicator 13	0.865	n/a	0.761	n/a
Customer Disengagement				
Indicator 14	0.814	17.56	0.86	23.32
Indicator 15	0.862	16.68	0.906	21.08
Indicator 16	0.845	n/a	0.888	n/a
Involvement				
Indicator 17	0.943	n/a	0.965	n/a
Indicator 18	0.893	17.74	0.904	24.51
Indicator 19	0.9	28.86	0.977	34.53
Word-of-mouth				
Indicator 20	0.908	28.2	0.927	33.36
Indicator 21	0.904	n/a	0.919	n/a

Note: The parameter estimates reported are the standardised regression weights. CRvalue is the critical ratio of the unstandardised regression weights. N/A means 'not applicable' as the parameter was constrained for model identification.

Table A.13.b Parameter Estimates and Critical Ratio Values for the Relational Constructs- Social Media Context

Composite Indicators and Latent Constructs **CFA Model** **Model shown in Figure A.1**	**Parameter Estimate** **Brand Object**	**CR value** **Brand Object**	**Parameter Estimate** **Community Object**	**CR value** **Community Object**
CE Affect				
Indicator 1	0.971	25.11	0.958	32.67
Indicator 2	0.908	n/a	0.949	n/a
CE Cognition				
Indicator 3	0.903	23.19	0.916	24.99
Indicator 4	0.912	n/a	0.929	n/a
CE Behaviour				
Indicator 5	0.669	13.22	0.8	17.55
Indicator 6	0.888	n/a	0.911	n/a
NE Affect				
Indicator 7	0.912	29.62	0.959	39.27
Indicator 8	0.964	23.59	0.968	23.69

Indicator 9	0.877	n/a	0.841	n/a
NE Cognition				
Indicator 10	0.889	18.8	0.911	25.75
Indicator 11	0.937	n/a	0.981	n/a
NE Behaviour				
Indicator 12	0.983	22.61	0.968	42.17
Indicator 13	0.877	n/a	0.978	n/a
Customer Disengagement				
Indicator 14	0.876	18.82	0.911	29.47
Indicator 15	0.875	16.44	0.955	24.58
Indicator 16	0.814	n/a	0.894	n/a
Involvement				
Indicator 17	0.912	n/a	0.939	n/a
Indicator 18	0.899	26.26	0.941	23.42
Indicator 19	0.936	24.663	0.914	27.24
Word-of-mouth				
Indicator 20	0.888	18.8	0.904	29.76
Indicator 21	0.894	n/a	0.933	n/a

Note: The parameter estimates reported are the standardised regression weights. CRvalue is the critical ratio of the unstandardised regression weights. N/A means 'not applicable' as the parameter was constrained for model identification.

The results of this confirmatory factor analysis confirm the results of the exploratory factor analysis, however, the CD construct was removed for a number of reasons. The literature on CD suggests it manifests through cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions (Khuhro et al., 2017; Rissanen, Luoma-aho and Coombs, 2016), however the EFA found CD to load on one factor. Multiple items capturing the affective and cognitive dimensions of CD were also removed due to poor factor loadings. Including CD the in structural model will result in a loss of explanatory power based on this divergence from the literature. CD was retained for the CFA and the preliminary structural phase for interest. In addition, the inclusion of CD within the structural model was unable to achieve adequate model fit. The inclusion of CD in the structural model resulted in GFI: .891 IFI: .940 CFI:.939 RMSEA: .081, while the removal resulted in a model fit of GFI:.937 CFI: .968 IFI: .968 RMSEA: .064. As such, it can be concluded that the remaining indicators used in this study serve as strong measures of their respective constructs. Confirmation of the remaining relational constructs was established.

Measurement Invariance

Measurement invariance testing was undertaken to ensure the model was applicable across all four sample groups. Multigroup analysis of the CFA models was conducted by testing measurement invariance of the unconstrained model between all four samples groups, and then testing a model with constrained parameters. The Chi-square statistic was used to assess measurement invariance, that is, if the chi-squared difference was not significant between the unconstrained and constrained model then measurement invariance was established. The results of the invariance tests are presented in Table A.14.

Table A.14. Fit Indices for Invariance tests

Model comparison	*df*	X2	*df/x2*	p	CFI	IFI	RMSEA	Decision
Local Government Brand group/ Local Government Community group	12	14.84	0.8	0.250	0.971	0.971	.042	Accept
Social Media Brand group/ Social Media Community group	12	15.22	0.78	0.229	0.979	0.978	.039	Accept
Local Government Brand group/ Social Media Brand group	12	24.66	0.48	0.16	0.967	0.967	.045	Accept
Local Government Community group/ Social Media Community group	12	24.67	0.148	0.16	0.982	0.982	0.36	Accept

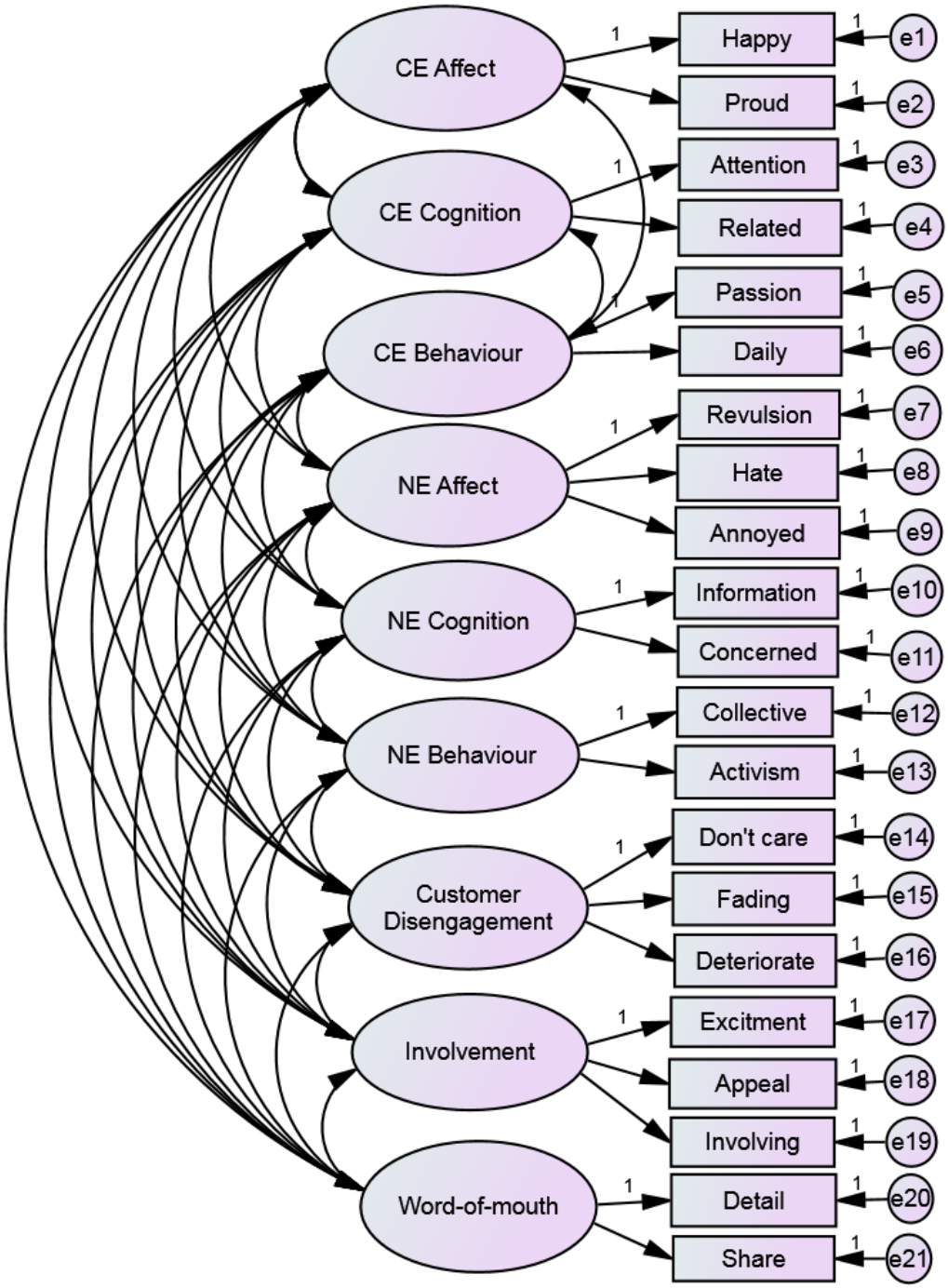
Note: Fit indices reported for unconstrained model. *df, x2, df/x2,* p-value reported from measurement weights assuming unconstrained model to be correct.

Measurement invariance was established across all of the groups. This indicates that the meaning of the latent constructs in the model is similar between the engagement objects within each context and between the same object across contexts.

Structural Equation Modelling Reliability and Validity Measures

Assessments of reliability and validity via structural equation modelling were conducted to assess the psychometric properties of the measurement scales used in the study. These statistics were generated on the partially disaggregate measurement scales. The partially disaggregate model is shown in Figure A2.

Figure A2. Partially Disaggregated Measurement Model



Structural Equation Modelling Reliability

Coefficient alphas were reported as an index of *scale reliability* in the exploratory factor analyses. This section reports structural equation modelling reliability and validity in order to provide additional rigour (Garver and Mentzer, 1999). *Item reliability* was examined via the squared multiple correlations for each item and its latent construct. Squared multiple correlations indicate acceptable fit if >.50 (Bollen 1989; Hair et al. 1998). The squared multiple correlations are presented in Table A.15. One item (CE Behaviour Construct, item 'Daily') was identified as having low squared multiple correlations across the LG Brand and the SM Brand samples, indicating that this variable had relatively lower explanatory power in predicting its respective latent construct in these contexts.

Table A.15 Squared Multiple Correlations for Measurement Items

Measurement Item and Latent Constructs Model shown in Fig. A.2	LG Brand object	LG Community object	SM Brand object	SM Community object
CE Affect				
Happy	0.94	0.81	0.82	0.90
Proud	0.81	0.94	0.94	0.91
CE Cognition				
Attention	0.85	0.76	0.83	0.86
Related	0.79	0.85	0.81	0.84
CE Behaviour				
Passion	0.82	0.83	0.78	0.83
Daily	*0.46*	0.64	*0.44*	0.64
NE Affect				
Revulsion	0.79	0.75	0.76	0.70
Hate	0.9	0.83	0.92	0.93
Annoyed	0.76	0.78	0.83	0.91
NE Cognition				
Information	0.88	0.92	0.87	0.96
Concerned	0.79	0.85	0.79	0.83
NE Behaviour				0.95
Collective	0.74	0.57	0.77	0.93
Activism	0.88	0.81	0.96	0.96
Customer Disengagement				
Nothing	0.71	0.78	0.66	0.8
Fading	0.74	0.82	0.76	0.91
Deteriorate	0.66	0.73	0.76	0.83
Involvement				
Excitement	0.88	0.93	0.87	0.88
Appeal	0.81	0.86	0.81	0.81

Involving	0.82	0.84	0.82	0.87
Word-of-mouth				
Detail	0.80	0.95	0.79	0.83
Tell others	0.79	0.81	0.78	0.88

Note: LG= Local Government, SM = Social Media.

Scale reliability was then assessed using Fornell and Larcker's (1981) formula for construct reliability in order to measure the internal consistency of each of the scales used to measure the latent constructs. Fornell and Larcker's (1981) formula for construct reliability is as follows: $C_{REL}=(\Sigma\lambda)^2/[(\Sigma\lambda)^2+\Sigma(1-\lambda_j^2)]$. Table A.16 presents the results of this analysis. All scales except for the CE Behaviour scale for LG brand object (0.782) and SM brand object (0.760), exceed the criterion value of 0.80 recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981). The scales used to measure CE Affect, CE Cognition, CE Behaviour in the LG and SM community object, NE Affect, NE Cognition, NE Behaviour, CD, Involvement and WOM were therefore found to exhibit internal consistency and reliability.

To provide further evidence of reliability, average variance extracted was also calculated according to Fornell and Larcker's (1981) formula: $AVE_{VE}=\Sigma\lambda^2/[\Sigma\lambda^2+\Sigma(1-\lambda_j^2)]$. All scales exceeded the 0.50 criterion value for scale reliability (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), indicating that for all nine scales the amount of variance captured by the construct was greater than the proportion of variance due to measurement error.

Table A.16 SEM Scale Reliability

SEM Scale Reliability for Constructs	**LG Brand**		**LG Community**		**SM Brand**		**SM Community**	
	C-REL	AVE	C-REL	AVE	C-REL	AVE	C-REL	AVE
CE Affect	0.935	0.877	0.936	0.936	0.938	0.884	0.952	0.909
CE Cognition	0.904	0.826	0.894	0.894	0.903	0.824	0.920	0.851
CE Behaviour	0.782	0.647	0.847	0.847	0.760	0.618	0.847	0.735
NE Affect	0.931	0.819	0.919	0.919	0.942	0.843	0.946	0.855
NE Cognition	0.912	0.839	0.941	0.941	0.910	0.834	0.945	0.896
NE Behaviour	0.900	0.818	0.819	0.819	0.929	0.868	0.973	0.947
Customer Disengagement	0.878	0.707	0.915	0.915	0.891	0.732	0.943	0.847

Involvement	0.942	0.844	0.956	0.878	0.940	0.839	0.947	0.856
Word-of-Mouth	0.891	0.804	0.939	0.886	0.885	0.794	0.925	0.860

Note: LG= Local Government, SM = Social Media.

Structural Equation Modelling Validity

Convergent validity was established for seven of the eight scales used in this study. CE Affect, CE Cognition, CE Behaviour, NE Affect, NE Cognition, NE Behaviour, CD, Involvement and WOM had parameter estimates above the 0.50 criterion, and displayed significance at the +/- 1.645, p>0.05 level as per Table A.13.a and b. In addition, the average variance extracted estimates demonstrated that the measurement scales accounted for a greater proportion of explained variance than measurement error as the AVE statistics were above the >0.50 criterion value as per table A.16. The fit indices for the measurement model across all four samples were also found to be acceptable as per tables A12.a,b,c and d. Convergent validity of the scales was therefore established for CE Affect, CE Cognition, CE Behaviour, NE Affect, NE Cognition, NE Behaviour, CD, Involvement and WOM. The CE behaviour scale used in this study is problematic given its low variance extraction and low construct reliability for the LG brand and SM brand contexts. The results pertaining to CE Behaviour in this study should therefore be interpreted with caution.

Discriminant validity was also examined according to Fornell and Larcker's (1981) stringent tests to establish separation between latent constructs. Discriminant validity was established for all latent constructs across all four samples. The results of this analysis are presented in Table A.17.

Table A.17 Discriminant Validity of Construct Pairs

	INVOLVEMENT	CE AFFECT	CE COGNITION	CE BEHAVIOUR	NE AFFECT	NE COGNITION	NE BEHAVIOUR	CD	WOM
INVOLVEMENT	**0.928**								
CE AFFECT	0.642	**0.939**							
CE COGNITION	0.502	0.598	**0.916**						
CE BEHAVIOUR	0.631	0.666	0.787	**0.814**					
NE AFFECT	-0.194	-0.229	-0.030	0.016	**0.914**				
NE COGNITION	-0.083	-0.044	0.210	0.088	0.530	**0.816**			
NE BEHAVIOUR	0.005	0.026	0.167	0.222	0.672	0.590	**0.784**		
CD	-0.511	-0.522	-0.448	-0.381	0.567	0.353	0.469	**0.886**	
WOM	0.521	0.499	0.580	0.644	0.177	0.284	0.338	-0.299	**0.916**

Notes: The calculated values of the squared structural path coefficients between all possible pairs of constructs are presented in the upper triangle of the matrix. The average variance extracted is shown on the diagonal (shaded). Discriminant validity was established for all construct pairs since the average variance extracted was greater than the squared structural path coefficient. AVE figures are rounded up to the nearest tenth.

Appendix B

Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics

Reviewers' Comments

From: ian.phau@cbs.curtin.edu.au

To: kay.naumann@mq.edu.au

CC:

Subject: Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics - Decision on Manuscript ID APJML-08-2016-0144

Body: 29-Oct-2016

Dear Miss Naumann:

Manuscript ID APJML-08-2016-0144 entitled "A multi-valenced perspective on customer engagement within a social service" which you submitted to the Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics, has been reviewed. The comments of the reviewer(s) are included at the bottom of this letter.

The reviewer(s) have recommended some revisions to your manuscript. Therefore, I invite you to respond to the reviewer(s)' comments and revise your manuscript.

To revise your manuscript, log into https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/apjml and enter your Author Centre, where you will find your manuscript title listed under "Manuscripts with Decisions." Under "Actions," click on "Create a Revision." Your manuscript number has been appended to denote a revision.

You will be unable to make your revisions on the originally submitted version of the manuscript. Instead, revise your manuscript using a word processing program and save it on your computer. Please also highlight the changes to your manuscript within the document by using the track changes mode in MS Word or by using bold or coloured text.Once the revised manuscript is prepared, you can upload it and submit it through your Author Centre.

When submitting your revised manuscript, you will be able to respond to the comments made by the reviewer(s) in the space provided. You can use this space to document any changes you make to the original manuscript. In order to expedite the processing of the revised manuscript, please be as specific as possible in your response to the reviewer(s).

IMPORTANT: Your original files are available to you when you upload your revised manuscript. Please delete any redundant files before completing the submission.

Because we are trying to facilitate timely publication of manuscripts submitted to the Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics, your revised manuscript should be uploaded as soon as possible. If it is not possible for you to submit your revision in a reasonable amount of time, we may have to consider your paper as a new submission.

Please note that Emerald requires you to clear permission to re-use any material not created by you. If there are permissions outstanding, please upload these when you submit your revision. Emerald is unable to publish your paper with permissions outstanding.

Once again, thank you for submitting your manuscript to the Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics and I look forward to receiving your revision.

Yours Sincerely,
Prof. Ian Phau
Editor, Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics
ian.phau@cbs.curtin.edu.au, apjmleditor@gmail.com

Reviewer(s)' Comments to Author:
Reviewer: 1

Recommendation: Reject

Comments:
The paper is desk reject since it suffers from serious limitations of originality and systematic applications of methodology of qualitative research.

Additional Questions:
1. Originality: Does the paper contain new and significant information adequate to justify publication?: No, the paper does not contain new ans significant information. It is based on the precept that defines the model for consumer decision making since ages which has been validated with quantitative data and has been generalised world over.

2. Relationship to Literature: Does the paper demonstrate an adequate understanding of the relevant literature in the field and cite an appropriate range of literature sources? Is any significant work ignored?: To an extent is has tried to bring existing / latest literature to the fore. However, animal based marketing theories propounded after many experimental studies / research have been ignored. Such literature forms the backbone of such qualitative research which has not been found in this paper.

3. Methodology: Is the paper's argument built on an appropriate base of theory, concepts, or other ideas? Has the research or equivalent intellectual work on which the paper is based been well designed? Are the methods employed appropriate?: A simple quantitative study would have been more apt. The use of exploratory study aimed to provide insights into totally new variables is futile since theses variables are not new at all as there are conceptual studies that have well established all the variables (positive / negative) that are instrumental in creating brand loyalty or otherwise.

4. Results: Are results presented clearly and analysed appropriately? Do the conclusions adequately tie together the other elements of the paper?: There are not being analysed since all the steps / methodology of qualitative research have not been followed systematically. The data labels do not form part of the study. Questions and cross-questions leading to a case study formation of the each of the focus group under broad and specific criteria do not form part of the study.

5. Implications for research, practice and/or society: Does the paper identify clearly any implications for research, practice and/or society? Does the paper bridge the gap between theory and practice? How can the research be used in practice (economic and commercial impact), in teaching, to influence public policy, in research (contributing to the body of knowledge)? What is the impact upon society (influencing public attitudes, affecting quality of life)? Are these implications consistent with the findings and conclusions of the paper?: With all its limitations, it has tried to provide certain well-established outcomes, superficially though, through qualitative framework which surprising is absent!

6. Quality of Communication: Does the paper clearly express its case, measured against the technical language of the field and the expected knowledge of the journal's readership? Has attention been paid to the clarity of expression and readability, such as sentence structure, jargon use, acronyms, etc.: The language and the constructs used are not clearly defined or operationalised and hence needs requires fundamental changes.

Reviewer: 2

Recommendation: Major Revision

Comments:

As above

Additional Questions:
1. Originality: Does the paper contain new and significant information adequate to justify publication?: The study investigates the constructs of customer positive customer engagement, disengagement, and negative engagement in a social service (local government service) in Australia. In this sense, it is original both in uncovering different types of engagement and their associated customer behaviors in a not-for-profit sector, while current literature tends to focus on the positive side of engagement in commercial environments.

2. Relationship to Literature: Does the paper demonstrate an adequate understanding of the relevant literature in the field and cite an appropriate range of literature sources? Is any significant work ignored?: The literature on customer disengagement and negative CE is nascent, so this exploratory study attempts to provide a framework to understand these types of engagement. Generally, a number of relevant citations are used to adequately support the arguments of authors.

3. Methodology: Is the paper's argument built on an appropriate base of theory, concepts, or other ideas? Has the research or equivalent intellectual work on which the paper is based been well designed? Are the methods employed appropriate?: Focus groups is relied upon as major approach, and the data analyzed using NVivo 10. The authors discuss theoretical justification of how reliability and validity were achieved, however the source of data collection needs to be discussed and justified in a more convincing way.

For example, the profile of respondents and the local areas involved in the focus groups are not discussed to demonstrate 'transferability' (although the concept is discussed in depth at page 14), particularly that primary data is collected solely from focus groups. Table 1 (which is stated in text to provide respondents and local areas' profiles) is missing.

The authors state that "total of four focus groups is conducted" (Abstract and page 12 , line 53). However, their subsequent analysis refers to Focus group 5 at pages 17, 18 and 23 and group 6 at page 22. This is quite disconcerting, leading to loss of trust in findings.

4. Results: Are results presented clearly and analysed appropriately? Do the conclusions adequately tie together the other elements of the paper?: The analysis of data from the focus groups and the resulting propositions are competently undertaken and well justified.

However, the conceptual model developed is questionable as it does not logically derive from the analysis, particularly as regards the relationships depicted among the three constructs.

First of all, to me, talking of valence implies a quantification of the strength of a common physical property or attribute (from its scientific usage). This tends to suggest that the three discussed valences of CE constitute a continuum, with positive CE on the extreme right, Disengagement somewhere on center, and negative CE at LHS of the spectrum. The authors seem to suggest similarly in many instances:

♣ "…sitting on the precipice of becoming potentially more deeply negatively engaged. Customer (p6, line 23)"; and
♣ Negative CE is more extreme than disengagement (page 24)
♣ 'spectrum approach to engagement' at page 32 line 1, p 33 line 17.
♣ "Subsequently, this disengaged segment can remain invisible to service providers who only become aware of these customers when they terminate the relationship, or, display more active forms of negative engagement. p6, line 48)".
♣ If disengaged customers are left unattended, their potential negativity may quickly begin to dominate and precipitate more entrenched, negative forms of

engagement (p35, line 34)-

However, the authors do not explicitly discuss this, although it would seem central to their exploratory work. Instead, at page 20 first paragraph, they seem to state a contradictory stance: 'disengagement as a process in which customers detach from the relationship that may or may not precede the potential further development into an active state of negative engagement'.

This ambiguity in conceptualization of the three constructs is reflected in the conceptual model which shows that all three valences of CE are mutually correlated with each other (double sided arrows linking all 3 CE valences). Since, this model summarizes the main contribution of the paper, it needs to be revisited to unambiguously clarify whether the three variables are three different constructs or different valences of a common construct.

5. Implications for research, practice and/or society: Does the paper identify clearly any implications for research, practice and/or society? Does the paper bridge the gap between theory and practice? How can the research be used in practice (economic and commercial impact), in teaching, to influence public policy, in research (contributing to the body of knowledge)? What is the impact upon society (influencing public attitudes, affecting quality of life)? Are these implications consistent with the findings and conclusions of the paper?: Generally well discussed, but will need to be revised depending on how the 3 types of engagement are conceptualized (e.g. spectrum? Or 3 different constructs?).

6. Quality of Communication: Does the paper clearly express its case, measured against the technical language of the field and the expected knowledge of the journal's readership? Has attention been paid to the clarity of expression and readability, such as sentence structure, jargon use, acronyms, etc.: The paper is very well written, and ideas expressed clearly through proficient use of language.

Nonetheless, there remains a number of misspelt words that distracts the reader. For example, the paper seems to show a lack of proof reading (e.g. Valence is misspelt throughout the text at six instances (as valance) while it is correctly spelt in title; existed (page 16, line 39); Proposition 1 seems to have missed the word value before co-creation), an incomplete sentence: which… p24 line 54, it, p 25 line 10, etc. These should be carefully checked and adjusted.

Some references (e.g. Zhang, Kandampully and Bilgihan, 2015, are missing)

Date Sent: 29-Oct-2016

Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics <onbehalfof+APJMLEDITOR+googlemail.com@manuscriptcentral.com>

Tue 30/05, 10:24

Kay Naumann;
Jana Bowden-Everson;
Mark Gabbott

29-May-2017

Dear Miss Naumann:

Your revised manuscript entitled "Exploring Customer Engagement Valences in the Social Services" has been successfully submitted online and is presently being given full consideration for publication in the Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics.

Your manuscript ID is APJML-08-2016-0144.R1.

Please mention the above manuscript ID in all future correspondence or when calling the office for questions. If there are any changes in your street address or e-mail address, please log in to ScholarOne Manuscripts athttps://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/apjml and edit your user information as appropriate.

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Thank you for submitting your manuscript to the Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics.

Yours Sincerely,
Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics Editorial Office

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at http://www.emeraldinsight.com/1355-5855.htm

Appendix C

Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice

Reviewers' Comments

From: onbehalfof+editor+jmtp-online.org@manuscriptcentral.com <onbehalfof+editor+jmtp-online.org@manuscriptcentral.com> on behalf of Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice <onbehalfof+editor+jmtp-online.org@manuscriptcentral.com>

Sent: Thursday, November 3, 2016 1:43:04 PM

To: Jana Bowden-Everson

Subject: Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice - Decision on Manuscript ID MMTP-16-08-0992

02-Nov-2016

Dear Dr Bowden,

A Multi-Valenced Perspective on Consumer Engagement within a Social Service

The reviews are complete for the above referenced manuscript. Three experienced reviewers with focal interest in your topic provided feedback.

The reviewers and I commend you on a strong manuscript. With that said, two reviewers provided some comments regarding the limited nature of the in-depth interview, and provide some feedback as to how to best handle it.

Based on the above, I would like to conditionally accept the paper for JMTP. I would like to ask you to address the remaining point above as best as possible, and to very carefully proof the manuscript to correct remaining typographical and grammatical errors. Please submit the revised manuscript along with a response detailing how you have handled the remaining reviewer comment.

Again, please submit a carefully edited final document for consideration. I would like to hear your decision whether or not you plan to complete the remaining changes by email within one week to editor@jmtp-online.org. If you do, you will need to get the manuscript back into the review process within two weeks, so that we can meet publisher's deadlines to potentially include the paper in Volume 25, Issue 2 of the journal.

I look forward to hearing back from you, and thanks for considering JMTP as an outlet for your work.

Sincerely,
Karen Flaherty, Editor

Reviewer(s)' Comments to Author:

Reviewer: 1
Comments to the Author
Dear Author(s),

I enjoyed reading this paper, and appreciate the efforts that you have put into this revision. I wish you the best of luck as you move forward with this research.

Reviewer: 2
Comments to the Author
Authors,
It is quite obvious that the authors have spent considerable time developing this research. The literature review is strong and the need for the research well established. That said there are some minor issues with the manuscript that I think could be easily remedied. I wish you luck in your further work.

The main issue is the limited connection to the service literature. Specifically, so little is known about the focal service that the reader is forced to operate with a level of faith that is uncomfortable. Please describe the service in detail so the reader is comfortable with how these phenomena are manifesting and in what context. The social service context is actually a difficult context to develop in this way because this is a “captive service” so consumer responses may be extreme but not result in termination because the consumer has nowhere else to go. Please describe how this has been taken into consideration. Or, please describe how this context is beneficial for the development of understanding about negative customer engagement that can be tested in other contexts. In fact, this is actually helpful in that consumers are able to express the full range of emotions and behaviors yet they cannot leave so this offers a full range of possibility for knowledge development on the negative end of the spectrum. As a researcher in this space I think the authors can go either way; just give the details so the reader does not have to guess.

The other issue is the limited amount of data. While the authors provide support for the limited data collection this support is quite dated. Personally, the impact of the research and depth of literature review and rigor in the analysis overcome this issue. However, if possible find recent support for this amount of data to make other readers more

comfortable.

Overall, I think this manuscript is well developed and I wish you the best of luck moving this forward!

Reviewer: 3

Comments to the Author
I commend you for presenting a well-thought out manuscript on an often overlooked subject: negative customer engagement in a social services setting. I found you paper enjoyable to read. I think you've hit on an area that is in need of more inquiry - the dimensionality of the consumer engagement construct in services marketing.

I will keep my comments brief here.

First (minor note), there are some typos throughout. Please proof carefully (e.g., on page 6, line 1, you are missing the word "is" at the top of the page). Also, page 10, line 24, what does this mean? "The respondent profile is 35-60, of various ethnicities" (?).

Second, and more importantly, you mention that you had four focus groups and one depth interview. I did NOT see where you addressed the single depth interview. Honestly, that seems a bit strange to me. What was this single depth-interview? Who was it with? (etc., etc.)

Third, your sample leaned towards older women (86% women, aged 45-60 [68%]). Could you address this issue in more detail? How could this have impacted your results?

Overall, I like you work and I hope you will continue your efforts on this paper.

All the best

Appendix D

European Journal of Marketing Correspondence

European Journal of Marketing - Manuscript ID EJM-07-2017-0464

European Journal of Marketing <onbehalfof+Leif.Brandes+wbs.ac.uk@manuscriptcentral.com>

Sun 16/07, 11:20
Kay Naumann;
Jana Bowden-Everson;
mark.gabbott@adelaide.edu.au

15-Jul-2017

Dear Miss Naumann,

Your manuscript entitled "Expanding Customer Engagement: Dual Valences, Objects and Contexts" has been successfully submitted online and is presently being given full consideration for publication in the European Journal of Marketing.

Your manuscript ID is EJM-07-2017-0464.

Please mention the above manuscript ID in all future correspondence or when calling the office for questions. If there are any changes in your street address or e-mail address, please log in to Manuscript Central at https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ejm and edit your user information as appropriate.

You can also view the status of your manuscript at any time by checking your Author Centre after logging in to https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ejm.

Thank you for submitting your manuscript to the European Journal of Marketing.

Yours sincerely,

Leif Brandes
Editorial Manager, European Journal of Marketing

P.S. Don't forget, you can read the journal online at http://www.emeraldinsight.com/0309-0566.htm

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From: **Nikola Balnave** <nikki.balnave@mq.edu.au>
Date: Fri, May 13, 2016 at 3:34 PM
Subject: Approved - 5201600333
To: Jana Bowden-Everson <jana.bowden-everson@mq.edu.au>
Cc: "kay.naumann@students.mq.edu.au" <kay.naumann@students.mq.edu.au>, FBE Ethics <fbe-ethics@mq.edu.au>

Dear Dr Bowden,

RE: 'Customer Engagement within the Social Services' (Ref: 5201600333)

The above application was reviewed by the Faculty of Business & Economics Human Research Ethics Sub Committee. Approval of the above application is granted, effective 13/05/2016. This email constitutes ethical approval only.

This research meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). The National Statement is available at the following web site:

http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/e72.pdf.

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Dr Jana Bowden

Miss Kay Naumann

NB. STUDENTS: IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP A COPY OF THIS APPROVAL EMAIL TO SUBMIT WITH YOUR THESIS.

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).

2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports.

Progress Report 1 Due: 13th Mayr 2017
Progress Report 2 Due: 13th May 2018
Progress Report 3 Due: 13th May 2019
Progress Report 4 Due: 13th May 2020
Final Report Due: 13th May 2021

NB. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to

submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:
http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

5. Please notify the Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University. This information is available at the following websites:

http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/
http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/policy

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide the Macquarie University's Research Grants Management Assistant with a copy of this email as soon as possible. Internal and External funding agencies will not be informed that you have approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Management Assistant has received a copy of this email.

If you need to provide a hard copy letter of approval to an external organisation as evidence that you have approval, please do not hesitate to contact the FBE Ethics Committee Secretariat, via fbe-ethics@mq.edu.au or 9850 4826.

Please retain a copy of this email as this is your official notification of ethics approval.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Nikola Balnave
Chair, Faculty of Business and Economics Ethics Sub-Committee

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Amendment Approved Sept2014 - 5201400639

FE

FBE Ethics (Owner Yanru Ouyang)

Reply

Wed 03/09/2014, 12:52

Jana Bowden-Everson;
David Gray;
Kay Naumann

This message was sent with high importance.

Dear Ms Bowden-Everson,

Re: Project entitled: 'The dual roles of Customer Engagement and Disengagement; and the moderating effect of Network Type within Local Government Services.'
Reference No.: 5201400639

Thank you for your recent correspondence. The following amendments have been approved:
* The recruitment of the participants for the focus groups will now be done through an independant market research company.
* The incentive for the respondents participation will also change from $20 Cole Myer group gift card to $80 cash, which respondents will receive upon completion of the 1.5hour focus group.
* The recruitment company that will be employed is Qualitative Recruitment Australia (QRA).
* The sample size and profile will remain the same.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the FBE Ethics Secretariat on 9850 4826 or at the following email fbe-ethics@mq.edu.au.

Yours sincerely,

Parmod Chand
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