

Review article

## Appreciation: Proposal of a new concept in business discipline

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### Abstract

Most theories of business emphasize the role of confidence, assurance and/or agreement in development of long term relationship between partners. In spite of recognition of appreciation as core of reciprocity its role in continuing relationships has not been well researched. Only a few studies recently have recognized the role of individual appreciation in the buyer-seller connections. The present study is an endeavor to assess the pivotal role played by appreciation in long term relationship building. It is designed to understand appreciation, synthesizing and analyzing several definitions of appreciation. It is also attempted to establish theoretical linkages among appreciation and long term relationship constructs e.g., confidence, assurance, WOM and agreement. Practical implications of appreciation are also discussed.

**Keywords:** Appreciation, Business, Marketing, Consumer connection.

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### 1. Introduction

Marketing scholars hold up the accomplishment of a relational exchange framework as a fund of gaining better firm outcomes and financial performance (e.g., Palmatier et al., 2007, Colgate and Danaher, 2000). According to Morgan and Hunt (1994) "relationship marketing refers to all marketing activities directed towards establishing, developing and maintaining successful relational exchanges". Thus, relational exchange is considered a fundamental part of relationship marketing, in which a relatively high reciprocal dependency between seller and buyer and a major concern for how individual relationships are interrelated in nets and networks.

This enthusiastic approval of relational exchange has been shored up by several practical researches, which have showed that relationship improvement can help the seller throughout the positive effect of the buyer's relationship quality with the vendor to his relationship quality with the company (Bendapudi and Leone, 2002). Above and beyond, relational exchange generates positive seller outcomes (De Wulf et al., 2001) and influences various behaviors and intentions (Geyskens et al., 1998). Recently, Kim and Cha (2002) showed that committed client relationships usually create superior payoffs for the company, for instance favorable interpersonal communication, relationship

satisfaction, recommendation, and attitudinal as well as behavioral loyalty.

Several academics highlight that the exchange is a continuum. One end of the continuum shows the transactional exchange, while the other end indicates the relational exchange (Rackham, 1999). Because of the restricted empirical support, the rising reputation of this center of attention requests research primary about the extreme ends of the continuum, particularly the endpoints of the range and its previous circumstances and results.

Researchers in marketing discipline approve the function of "emotion" in conjunction with the role of cognition in shaping and supporting long term relationships. Customers' affective occurrences have central role in the course of relationship marketing (Bagozzi, 1995; Wong et al., 2003). Positive affect such as pleasure, delight, contentment, as well as optimism have been demonstrated to have considerably imperative task in the growth of the construction and underneath of long term relationships (Barnes, 1997; Liljander and Sirandvik, 1997). On the similar harmony, appreciation, which has been considered as the affective appreciation for the reimbursements acknowledged, escorted by a wish to counter is a favorable affects and a key concept for appreciating the relationships business efficacy (Emmons and

McClough, 2004; Morales, 2005). Even though being affective center of the reciprocity, appreciation had been considered very premature (Smith, 1976), yet this has been significantly disused in psychology research, sociology and business in principally. While investigations in psychology have witnessed its incidence in past 20 years, hitherto, this has been totally neglected and abandoned in business research. Merely a few researches freshly have witnessed and projected the function of consumer appreciation in long term business relationships (Palmatier et al., 2009). Separately from this topic, several academics have diverse estimations concerning magnitude of appreciation. Literature on appreciation has perplexed judgment about appreciation being “emotion”, “cognition” or “conation” or an amalgamation of these dimensions. To fill this gap, we seek to synthesize as well as scrutinize all the obtainable definitions of appreciation from divers documented researches. It is in addition attempted to comprehend and discover theoretical connections between appreciation and diverse relational business concepts. On the basis of relationship among appreciation and an assortment of relational concepts, it is posited that appreciation becomes the foundation of long term business relationships.

#### ✓ *Appreciation*

What precisely is appreciation? Different Dictionaries consider appreciation as “the excellence or situation of being gratified; the appreciation of a proclivity to come back kindness”. The expression appreciation is resulting from the Latin roots gratia, denoting favour and gratus, meaning satisfying. All offshoots from this Latin root have to do with compassion, spaciousness, contributions, and loveliness of benevolent and getting, or receiving something for naught (Pruyer, 1976).

Scholars are hardly ever happy with dictionary definitions. Appreciation has been considered in numerous ways during the past, chiefly in literature of psychology followed by some of its applied fields such as business and sociology. Literature on psychology, sociology and business conceptualize appreciation as an affect, an position, a ethical asset, a custom, a character, or a coping reply (Emmons and McClough, 2003; Fitzgerald, 1998) identified three dimensions of appreciation, (1) A lukewarm intelligence of appreciation for somebody or something, 2) a wisdom of benevolence toward that individual or thing and (3) a temperament to proceed that flows from approval and friendliness. However considering different definitions obtainable in literature, approximately all scholars have agreement about its being affect.

Appreciation represents an affect. It is emotional enjoyment for advantages acknowledged, accompanied by a aspiration to reciprocate (Emmons and McClough, 2004; Morales, 2005). It happens after

individuals get aid, depending on how they understand the circumstances. Particularly, individuals experience appreciation when they recognize that the aid received is (1) precious to them, (2) it has deserved some cost to their supporter and (3) given by the supporter with generous intentions (rather than hidden motives) and (4) given without cause (rather than from role based contract or as per customs).

McCullough et al. (2003) examined information from different investigations to bring to a close that individual experience the emotion of appreciation most again and again as well as stalwartly when they recognize themselves to be recipients of a deliberately rendered advantage. It has a particular act propensity that is ‘to donate to the wellbeing of the supporter in the future’. Undeniably, appreciation affects seem to stimulate individuals to give in return the advantages they have acknowledged by depiction additional advantages. This action tendency is adequately distinct from the accomplishment tendencies related to thanks (Greenberg, 1980; Gray and Emmons, 2001). For instance, individuals who are claimed to illustrate a position in which they experienced appreciation details having experienced extra aspiration to take action bigheartedly headed for their supporters and less longing to pass up the supporter than do individual who are asked to explain a circumstances in which they felt indebted (Gray and Emmons, 2001). Even if, eapast research has bewildering intelligence about appreciation and compulsion and a number of scholars have employed these two concepts interchangeably (Fitzgerald, 1998; Gouldner, 1960) yet, is has been demonstrated practically that appreciation is a different construct from feelings of compulsion or gratitude (Watkins et al., 2006). Compulsion is an emotion of thanks mainly engendered for the reason that normative order and can be perceived unfavorable feelings (Komter, 2004), while, appreciation is a favorable feelings along with aspiration to give back (Emmons, 2004).

## 2. Appreciation and some relationship business concepts

#### ✓ *Appreciation vs confidence*

Confidence is the mainly investigated concept in relationship business literature. It has been considered as a readiness to trust in an exchange partner in whom individual has buoyancy (Moorman et al., 1992). Correspondingly, Morgan and Hunt (1994) have defined confidence as assurance in an exchange partner’s dependability and honesty. Both conceptualisations fall back on Rotter (1967) traditional vision that confidence is a comprehensive bated breath held by a person that the word of another....can be relied on. Both conceptualisations as well draw attention to the significance of confidence. TResearch on trust considers that confidence on the part of the trusting

party consequences of the enterprise conviction that the dependable party is consistent and has elevated truthfulness, which are connected to such qualities as unswerving, experienced, direct, flaxen, liable, supportive and munificent (Dwyer and LaGace, 1986; Rotter, 1967; Anderson and Nauras, 1990).

Appreciation influences the assessment practice of individuals (Algoe et al., 2008). It has been demonstrated that individuals assessment of constancy is extensively influenced by thankfulness which results in advanced levels of confidence towards supporter (Algoe et al., 2008; Dunn and Schweizer, 2005). It has also been considered that individual who belief on partners should fall back on their perception of the trustee's uniqueness (for instance honor or generosity) to build up opportunities about the trustee's auxiliary behaviour. Positive affects like appreciation notably affect these perceptions and amplify confidence (Dunn and Schweizer, 2005). In a research, it was established that persons who depicted a time in the past when they felt appreciative toward somebody afterward showed superior levels of confidence toward a third party as compared to the persons who were solicited to depict a time they felt annoyed, blameworthy, or arrogant (Dunn and Schweizer, 2005). In the sens, appreciation causes one to give individuals credit for their happenings which reassures their favorable social dealings and encourage their pro-social behaviour, this finally results in elevated rank of confidence with the relational partners (Emmons, 2004).

Because feelings affect judgments, people often decide whether they can initially trust someone by examining the feelings they have toward that person (Jones and George, 1998). Algoe et al., (2008) found that gratitude for benefits received increases a receiver's perceptions of the giver, including emotional responses (e.g., liking, closeness, how well the giver "understands" the recipient). Thus, if gratitude increases positive emotional responses, it also should improve perceptions of that person's trustworthiness. Altruistic behavior provides an attributional basis for affect-based trust, because trust is founded on emotional bonds, including when people express genuine care and concern for the welfare of others (McAllister, 1995). These welfare includes providing delivery of a valuable benefit (e.g., relationship marketing activities). Providing value to customers would result in genesis of expectations about favourable futuristic behaviour by the benefactor, hence would increase the level of trust on the benefactor. Evaluations of trustworthiness also depend on expectations about the target's future behaviour (Mayer et al., 1995). Appreciation is a relationship-sustaining emotion with an important impact on maintaining trust in relationship (Young, 2006). Therefore, it is argued that customers in relationship with higher levels of feelings of appreciation would have higher level of trust.

#### ✓ *Appreciation and assurance*

Assurance is vital to relationship business (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). It is considered as an exchange partner supposing that an continuing relationship with another is so essential as to guarantee greatest efforts at preserving it; that is, the committed party deems the relationship is merit working on to make certain that it suffers without letting up. Correspondingly, it has in addition been defined as a continuing aspiration to preserve a valued relationship (Moorman et al., 1992).

Appreciation has also been showed to be a factor in supporting of relationships (Algoe et al., 2008). In case of personal relationships, Brimhall and Butler (2007) find appreciation and religiosity as forecaster of conjugal relationships. The more tvariables elevated will the degree of relationship assurance towards the other relational partner. In parallel with Gruen et al., 2000, assurance is defined as a continuing link, wisdom of existing and unrelenting belonging or affective connection to the situation and its persons. Recently, Joshi (2009) showed that communication practices furthermore support this link. This watercourse of research suggests expressions or behaviours that encourage this felt unison will generate emotional assurance. Supplementary, since emotional assurance necessitates a proclivity to proceed in the future and sustain a relationship (Bolton, 1998), it generates positive souk and citizenship behaviours, making it predominantly pertinent to the chain of effects between expressions of appreciation and future oriented WOM.

Research supposes that there are strapping proofs that assurance can be drawn out by communication, such as expressions of appreciation and give rise to advantages to the expresser. There is also big hypothetical prop up for emotional assurance as a mediator between marketing activities and favornal assessments (Bolton 1998). Bolton (1998) suggests a theoretical model of customer asset management that positions emotional assurance as a mediator between marketing instruments and emotional assessments and supposes that the amalgamation of marketing techniques, emotional assurance and favorable emotional assessments will enhance relationship duration.

#### ✓ *Appreciation and agreement*

Agreement has been seen to be one of the chief keys to accomplishngi firm triumph as well as contuning competitive advantage (Reichheld and Aspinall, 1993). As a consequence, acquiring superior levels of agreement is considered as a key objective for management, because this not simply facilitates to advance permanence in firm proceeds (Reid and Reid, 1993), however also to trim down price kindliness (Lynch and Ariely, 2000) and fashion contact networks

to make possible awareness and the promotion of the services being offered (Oh, 2000). Accordingly, maintaining customers grow to be a more eye-catching approach for company to boost prosperity than capturing new customers (Hsu, 2007).

Agreement is customer's expression of accurate obedience to a company. Variables that conclude agreement are possibility to repurchase merchandise or do commerce once more with an organisation, possibility to suggest a product or an organisation to others and the length or duration of keep on of a customer with a firm. The efforts of a party dedicated to the relationship depends among other things on the perceived level of endeavor of the other party (Anderson and Weitz, 1992). Firm supervise customer agreement by running their affects. According to Allen et al. (1992) affects even perform as a superior forecaster of behaviour than do the cognitive assessment in quite a lot of circumstances.

In situations of client appreciation, the emotional dimension refers to feelings of appreciation activated when individuals identify themselves to be the beneficiary of a calculatedly rendered advantage (Emmons, 2004). This stage is a moderately short term situation and these feelings of appreciation produce an embedded psychological heaviness to revisit the favour Ben-Zeev (2000). When a client gets a supplementary advantage from a vendor, which is of value to the client and the he considers that the advantage offered to him is with some kindhearted intentions and has incurred some cost to the supporter, this produce an aspiration in customer to perform in favour of his supporter. The reason at the rear these proceed is to complete the remained fraction of exchange process. The sense of appreciation, thankfulness and approval develops the inclination to give back in favour of the supporter by showing either favorable evaluation or positive behaviour. This short term state turns out to be the basis of long term relationship. It is argued that the receiver of the advantage behind realizing these one or other variables proceed in return to the supporter. This act of return facilitates to produce a cycle of reciprocity between giving and counter-giving and contributes to the enduring building of a relationship (Bartlet and DeSteno, 2006). Consequently, the arguments emerges reasonable that offering series of favour from both seller to buyer's side and the act of reciprocity from buyer to seller's side generate cycles of thankfulness which ultimately results in a additional loyal client with more buy intention to acquire from existing vendor. There is a slam relation between feelings of appreciation and mutual behavior which is liable for the relational intensification phase, referring to it as a long-lasting equilibrium of debt-in favour of one member (seller) and then in favour of another (buyer). Consequently, it is reasonable to distinguish that sentiment of appreciation based mutual behaviour can

activate a series of relationship cycles which finally would results in a loyal client whichever attitudinal or behavioural.

### ✓ *Appreciation and WOM*

Researchers consider WOM as the vocal person-to-person communication sandwiched between groups for example experts, close, family and friends devoid of commercial reason. It is not simply the contribution to the possible clients relating to a product for sale nevertheless too is the production following his purchasing. Investigation showed that WOM has considerable effect on clients' assessments and proved that it is known as further consistent information supplier than other communication channels by clients (Silverman, 1997). On the other side, every existing customer will increase their experiences to others which perform the output of WOM. It consists of familiar communications directed at other clients about the possession, practice, or uniqueness of particular merchandises and products and heir suppliers. It detains the likelihood that a client will refer a seller favorably to a different potential client. It has been recognized that emotional responses of either valence motivate consumer WOM diffusion (Westbrook, 1987).

It has been noted, before purchases are made, consumers would often have their expectations about the exchange and the experience they encounter during purchase. If the experience they encounter actually during the purchase is below expectation, the customer might sense dissonance. One available strategy for customers who experience discomfort from cognitive dissonance is to seek negative WOM from sources which can reduce the discomfort. However, not all customers feel discomfort.

In situations when the familiarity which the customer runs into throughout shopping is more than customer's outlook, argument of emotional response theory seems reasonable. Consistent with emotional response theory, emotional processes could comprise not only a dominant starting place of human incentive but also a chief effect on information processing and preference (Isen, 1999; Zajonc, 1980). Consequently, marketers are more and more paying attention in understanding the nature of emotion and its involvement to consumer decision making and response to marketing actions (Aaker et al., 1986; Batra and Ray, 1986; Solomon et al., 1985). In an exchange setting, as a client becomes susceptible to getting some advantages (e.g., economic, social, instrumental...), he believes advantages are more than expectations and he must feel thankful to the seller during the encounter. These feelings of appreciation stimulate him to take action in favour of the vendor. It has been considered that emotional responses of either valence (favorable and unfavorable) motivate client WOM diffusion (Westbrook, 1987). Because

appreciation is a favorable behavior, it is anticipated that emotional responses generated because of different relationship business efforts would result in favorable WOM.

### 3. Managerial implication

Appreciation is lively characteristically and transient with regard to time (Emmons, 2004). It happens in beneficiary of advantage at its max out, almost immediately following the effort has done to the receiver. This tendency possibly will putrefy progressively with the passage of time. Consequently, managers must distinguish the timeframe of opportunities that come into view almost immediately after the advantages are offered to the beneficiary to put on extra sales throughout the period. For the duration of this period, appreciation activates the favorably between the clients and augments the quantum of feelings to pay back. These feelings can be detained by managers in long term relational form if acted on time. Consequently, appreciation can aid both parties to accomplish superior level of both attitudinal as well as behavioural loyalty of customer and augmented purchase intention for a given relationship business investment. It in addition promotes the bond between consumer and firm and boosts the level of co operation between them along with rising favorably WOM, emotional assurance and agreement.

In order to uphold the unremitting relations with clients, it is imperative to comprehend as well as assess the cycle time for appreciation so that the chronological motivations with customary intervals can be offered to the customers to sustain the doorsill level of affects of appreciation. It is additional imperative to express all the reserves done to begin, construct and sustain the relationships in terms of particularity of advantages. Being appreciative in conjunction with communication of that to the clients are in addition keys to control awareness of receiver about the supporter. For instance, in one try out it was showed that clients of a luxe retailer who were called and thanked generated an ensuing 65% augment in selling. Whereas, individuals who were thanked as well as told about a sale demonstrated merely a 25% raise in purchases and clients who were not called at all did not prove an augmentation (McCullough et al., 2001).

### 4. Conclusion

As maintained by several researches athwart fields, appreciation comes into view as a key force that affects relationships. It symbolizes the affect central part of reciprocity along with a key energy in improvement and safeguarding of co-operative relational link (Bartlet and DeSteno, 2006; Bonnie and de Waal, 2004; Emmons, 2004; Komter, 2004; Palmatier et al., 2007). Even though, several business scholars have made theoretical explanation in maintain of principle of reciprocity (i.e., appreciation

as being affective base to that) and its role in relationship business (Houston and Gassenheimer, 1987), yet its practical check stays either mistreated or restricted to fledging state (Palmatier et al., 2006, 2009; Palmatier, 2008). Appreciation and its associations with different concepts improve the elucidation of the theory of relationship business. Recently, this area of research has gained significant attention of business researchers. Its supplementary investigation with diverse product category and special phase of relationships and dissimilar age of participants of the gender would develop the elucidation of theory of relationship business.

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