
Toward the Measurement of the Marketing Culture of a Service Firm

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A 38-item instrument for assessing the marketing culture of a service firm is developed. The scale's reliability, factor structure, and validity are evaluated by analyzing data from four independent samples. The dimensions and items are presented and discussed, and potential applications of the scale are outlined.

Introduction

There is now general agreement among scholars that services marketing is different, and perhaps more difficult to analyze, than goods marketing because of four well-documented features of services. Two related characteristics of services are intangibility (Berry, 1980; Dearden, 1978; Lovelock, 1981; Thomas) and perishability (Bateson, 1977), which mean that services cannot be seen, felt, tasted, or touched in the same manner in which goods can be sensed. Because of these characteristics, services cannot be inventoried, which has important implications for demand and supply. A third unique characteristic of services is inseparability of production and consumption (Booms and Nyquist, 1981; George, 1979; Upah, 1980). Regan (1963) points out that while goods are produced, sold, and then consumed, services are sold, then produced and consumed simultaneously. Because of this inseparability characteristic, it is common for the buyer to participate in producing the service, thereby affecting the performance and quality of the service. Another important characteristic of services is heterogeneity (Berry, 1980; Booms and Bitner, 1981), which entails the inability of a producer to provide consistent service performance and quality.

Although managerial problems have resulted from these unique features, several strategies have been advanced as possible solutions. Among the suggested strategies are the stressing of tangible cues (Booms and Bitner, 1981; George and Berry, 1981), using personal sources for communicating with customers (Donnelly, 1980), creating (Levitt, 1976), "customizing" services (Bell, 1981), and "managing" customers (Lovelock, 1981).

Given these laudable potential solutions to the unique service-marketing problems, there has, on the other hand, been relatively little research focusing on

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organizational environments or climates that are conducive to successfully implementing the proposed solutions. Indeed, a national survey of service firms revealed that many of the suggested strategies are not being widely used (Zeithaml et al., 1985). While one reason for the underutilization may be a lack of awareness of the strategies on the part of service marketers, Parasuraman (1986) has advanced the explanation of the presence of internal constraints and barriers that stand in the way of successful strategy implementation.

There is reason for concern about this situation. The type of work that is demanded by the U.S. economy reflects the dominance of the service sector over the goods-producing sector. The service sector is predicted to account for 80% of the available jobs by 2000 (Collier, 1983). That prediction is a definite indication that the United States must excel in service marketing management. Quinn and Gagnon (1986) caution that U.S. services may end up, like manufacturing, in the same declining market position of losing worldwide market share.

Hence, there is a need for new ideas for solving services marketing problems. Such a need is especially urgent given the dramatic changes occurring in the services sector: increasing deregulation, more intense competition, and rapid fragmentation for markets for many services. The current literature in both services marketing and organizational culture lead to the argument that an appropriate organizational culture is one of the most important ingredients for successfully marketing services. Therefore, the primary purpose of this article is the development of a measure of service firm culture—a measure that transcends different service industries. But first, the concept and importance of organizational culture will be discussed.

Organizational Culture

The idea that organizations have cultures or climates has been acknowledged since Lewin et al.'s (1939) research on social climates. Indeed, most writers who have since used the term *climate* have referred to interpersonal practices or social climate. Although used interchangeably for years (e.g., Katz and Kahn, 1966, 1978), there are some differences between the climate and culture constructs. Not only is culture prominent in academics and business/industry, it is also thought to be a deeper construct than climate has been. Whereas climate researchers have been concerned with the facets of policies that characterize particular organizational phenomena, culture scholars attempt to understand the systems (values and norms) that dictate the policies or activities (Sathe, 1983) and the modes by which the beliefs are communicated and transmitted (Schall, 1983).

In the past decade, the construct of culture has been put forth in the popular (e.g., Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Peters and Waterman, 1982) and scholarly (e.g., Schein, 1985) literatures. Although the empirical literature is sparse, many conceptualizations of culture have been written (Beyer and Trice, 1987; Gardner, 1985; Kilmann and Saxton, 1983; Ray, 1986; Thompson and Wildavsky, 1986). There is an obvious common element running through the various definitions and can be summarized as follows: Organizational culture refers to the unwritten, formally decreed and what actually takes place; it is the pattern of shared values and beliefs that helps individuals understand organizational functioning and, thus, provides the norms for behavior in the organization (Deshpande and Webster, 1989). Thus, organizational culture focuses attention on informal, hidden forces

within a firm – forces that exert a tremendous influence on the behavior and productivity of its employees, perhaps more so than formal, written policies or guidelines (Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Pascale, 1986; Peters and Waterman, 1982; Sathe, 1983; Schneider, 1980).

Importance of Culture. At a basic level, human systems need some “glue,” some central theme or themes around which behavior can coalesce. In the absence of such a thematic element, employees cannot know when to direct their energies, at what to direct their energies, and how to direct their energies. Culture provides this thematic coherence to the behavior of organizational employees when the culture is focused on desired organizational behaviors.

Some researchers mention the importance of culture as a form of control of organizational participants (Gregory, 1983; Wilkins and Ouchi, 1983). Smircich (1983) notes that culture may be a critical key that strategic managers might use to direct the course of their organizations. Some researchers (i.e., Amsa, 1986) feel that a firm’s culture has as much or more influence on corporate effectiveness as the formal structure of jobs, authority, and technical and financial procedures. Organizational culture affects employees’ behavior, a firm’s ability to effectively meet their needs and demands, and the way it copes with the external environment. It establishes the rationale for “do’s and don’t’s” of behavior (Harrison, 1972).

Organizational culture also has significance in terms of employee socialization. Culture emerges out of the interactions that members of a work group have with each other. This process is closely connected to what organizational behaviorists have termed *newcomer socialization* – the period of time during which new organization members come to “learn the ropes,” or know more precisely what is expected of them and what organization membership has to offer (Schneider and Reichers, 1983). Thus, organizational culture is also important to the prospective and new employee. A prospective employee can ask: What does it take to do well in this firm?: How are good people recognized? A strong culture can aid the new employee in the following ways: 1) to better understand one’s place in a culture, since a new employee’s position in the culture has important implications for his or her survival and ability to contribute in the firm; 2) to determine the culture positions of other organization members; 3) to better understand an organization’s cultural norms and values; and 4) to think about what kind of culture one wants to have. Likewise, human resources managers and recruitment personnel can better understand the kinds of people who would flourish (or flounder) in their company’s particular environment. Such an appreciation can help attract needed talent and avoid costly hiring mistakes. Moreover, current employees will show greater pride in and support for an organization whose purpose, direction, and specialness they more clearly understand (Downey, 1987).

Culture and the Service Firm. Several scholars recently have begun to recognize the importance of organizational culture in the management of the marketing function. For example, Weitz et al. (1986) included organizational culture concepts in their development of a model of selling effectiveness. Growing concern for issues of implementation in marketing strategy (Walker and Ruekert, 1987) and the development of a customer orientation within organizations is also raising questions

specifically to organizational culture (Deshpande and Parasuraman, 1986; Webster, 1988).

A few researchers (i.e., Schneider, 1980) have begun an analysis of the linkage between organizational culture and the marketing of services. Given the importance of organizational culture, it is not difficult to understand why culture is particularly important for service firms. The simultaneous delivery and receipt of services in the face-to-face, for-profit service sector brings employees and customers physically, organizationally, and psychologically close. Human resources processes and procedures established for customer-contact employees in service organizations have unintentional consequences because they cannot be hidden from the customer. In other words, there is no room for "quality control" between the employee's behavior and the customer's "purchase." The kind of service culture an organization have "shows" to those who are served. Hence, the nature and quality of the product sold by service firms is much more a function of employee-customer interactions than in the case of goods firms (Parasuraman, 1986).

Measurement Issues

Given the importance of the marketing culture of a service firm, there have not been any published attempts to develop a systematic, efficient measure of the construct. Some researchers (i.e., Johannesson, 1973) have expounded on the difficulties in the measurement of both culture and climate. Indeed, culture researchers, in general, appear to favor more qualitative and/or case study methodologies (Gregory, 1983). Without reliable measures of critical aspects of organizational culture, statements about its importance will continue to be based on speculation, personal observations, and selected case studies.

However, the literature does provide some clues for the development of a reliable measure. As a result of the few attempts to measure the organizational culture firm, the following service facets have been identified:

Employee—courtesy, knowledge, helpful attitude, provision of prompt service (Schneider et al., 1980); efficiency (Chase et al., 1984); provision of prompt service (Chase and Tansik, 1983); speed and verbal skills (Chase, 1981); knowledge of how to sell, overall knowledge of the business, and motivated (Weitz et al., 1986).

Management—employee recognition, goal setting, quality of training program, open-door policy (Chase, 1981).

Previous studies have also shown that culture can be multifaceted. Therefore, researchers should be clear about the kind of culture they wish to assess. The present study specifically regards the measurement of the marketing culture of a service firm. As much of the data were derived from service firm employees, the appropriateness of using employee perceptions will be discussed next.

Perceptions-based Diagnosis

Researchers who have used the perceived environment in the study of organizational behavior have been questioned about their approach. A significant amount of the concern, which focuses on perceptual bias, stems from Costello and Zalkind's (1963) summary of the role of perception. Subsequent attempts to use perceptual

measures in diagnosing firms have been questioned because of assumed subjectivity (Payne and Pugh, 1976).

Based on a review of the theoretical and empirical literature on organizational climate (see Jones and James, 1979, e.g.), the present research proceeded using the assumptions of Schneider (1980) about the role of perception in the study of organizational practices. The assumptions are the following:

1. Member perceptions of practices and procedures of any firm are the primary data necessary in understanding organizational behavior. To conceptualize on organization requires a consideration of human behavior, and human behavior does not exist without perception (Bowers, 1973).
2. People in a work setting tend to have similar perceptions of the practices and procedures that characterize the setting (Holland, 1976).
3. Business firms may have many cultures or subcultures, including that for creativity, leadership, for service, etc. As any one research effort would probably have difficulty focusing on all possible cultures, the effort should be clear about its focus (Schneider, 1975). In the present study, marketing culture in service firm is the focus.

Schneider (1980) contends that consumers would be better served if service firms were structured to meet and satisfy the needs of their employees. The underlying logic of this statement is that employees in service organizations desire to give good service, and, when those desires are made easier by management's support, both employees and consumers are likely to react positively. Therefore, it is important to note that positive outcomes for both customer and employee are a direct function of the same set of organizational dynamics, i.e., the extent to which the firm, through its practices and procedures, demonstrates a marketing culture for services. These two groups share an experience with the same organizational behavior; this suggests that the way customers perceive their treatment when they use the organization's services should be positively related to what employees say about the organization's service practices and procedures. When employees feel their service organization is not customer-oriented, both employees and customers should report the customer has less positive experiences. Indeed, a high positive relationship exists between customer and employee perceptions of customer service (Schneider, 1980).

Methodology

The basic purpose of this article is to describe the development of a multiple-item scale for measuring the marketing culture of a service firm. The basic steps employed in constructing the scale closely parallel procedures recommended in Churchill's (1979) paradigm for developing better measures of marketing constructs. An overview of the steps used in developing the scale is shown in Figure 1.

Exploratory Investigation. An exploratory qualitative study was first undertaken to investigate the concept of service firm culture. This study had the objective of supplementing the literature on service firm culture in order to provide a sound conceptual foundation for investigating the construct. Specifically, in-depth inter-

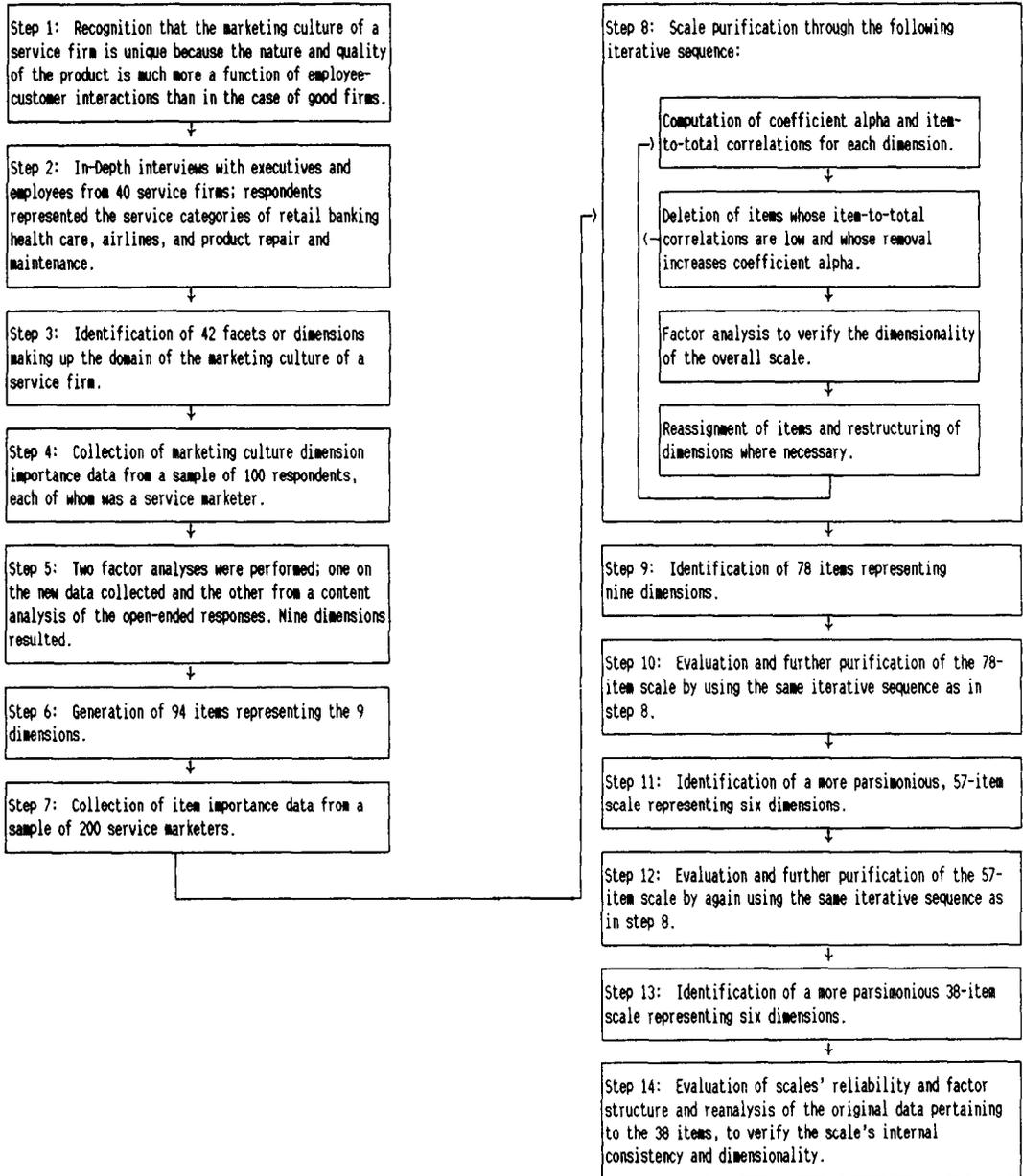


Figure 1. Summary of steps employed in developing the service firm marketing-culture scale.

views with service firm executives and employees were conducted to develop further a conceptual model of service culture. The approach used is consistent with procedures recommended for marketing theory development by several scholars (Deshpande, 1983; Peter and Olson, 1983; Zaltman et al., 1982).

Executives and employees from 40 service firms were interviewed to gain insights into service culture dimensions. Past research in organizational culture and service

culture (i.e., Kilmann and Saxton, 1983; Reynolds, 1986; Schmalensee et al., 1985; Schneider, 1980) was used to develop the open-ended questions regarding a broad range of culture issues (e.g., what the firm must do well in order to succeed, the mission of the organization, how the new employees are trained, etc.). The open-ended questions with the justification of each are in Table 1.

Four service categories were chosen for investigation: retail banking, health care (i.e., health spas), airlines, and product repair and maintenance. While this set of service businesses is not exhaustive, it represents a cross section of industries that vary along key dimensions used to categorize services (Lovelock 1980, 1983). Ten service firms from each industry were randomly selected from a major metropolitan area. The person within the firm was also randomly selected; respondents represented marketing, middle and senior management, and customer relations areas. The field research was conducted by trained data collectors and was completed during a 2-week time period.

Derivation of Dimensions. The responses to the open-ended questions were analyzed, and the elements of service firm culture that appeared to describe the construct were extracted. Comparison of the responses from all interviews revealed that, regardless of the type of service, service firm employees used basically the same criteria in describing culture as did the executives, and that these criteria spanned virtually all aspects of service culture. (Interestingly, Schneider [1980] found a strong positive correlation between customers' and employees' perceptions of service climate.) The criteria fit 42 potentially overlapping dimensions (see Table 2). To reduce redundancy among the dimensions, two factor analyses were performed. The first factor analysis stemmed from a content analysis of the open-ended responses. To complete the second factor analysis, new data were collected. Each of the possible dimensions were listed on a questionnaire, followed by a 7-point scale, ranging from "very important" to "not important." A random sample of 100 service marketers completed the questionnaire. The results of the two factor analyses were similar; nine nonoverlapping dimensions remained.

Generating of the Questionnaire Items. Using the data collected during two stages of this project and previous culture literature, 94 items representing various facets of the service-culture dimensions (approximately 10 items per dimension) were generated to form the initial item pool for the instrument (see Table 3). The resulting 94-item instrument was subjected to data collection and refinement, using the previous work on service quality by Parasuraman et al. (1986) as a guide. This process focused on 1) condensing the instrument by retaining only those items capable of discriminating well across respondents having differing culture perceptions about firms in several service categories, and 2) examining the dimensionality of the scale and establishing the reliabilities of its components.

Data for the instrument refinement were gathered from a sample of 200 randomly selected service marketers in a large metropolitan area that is considered to be among the most representative areas in the United States (Burgoyne Information Services, 1986). Respondents were asked to indicate the importance of each culture item by marking a 7-point scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" = 7 to "Strongly Disagree" = 1.

The 94-item instrument was refined by analyzing pooled data (i.e., data from

Table 1. Open-ended Questions

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1. Make believe this organization is a person. What are the cultural characteristics of this person?
Justification: To reveal the organization's cultural identity.
 2. What are the main rules that everyone has to follow in this organization?
Justification: To tap organizational do's and don'ts in such areas as dress, lifestyle, areas to live in, places to be seen, whom to associate with, whom not to criticize in public, hours of work, what to say and do, and how to deal with others.
 3. What are the most important assumptions that members of the organization share about work, human nature, and human relationships?
Justification: To reveal the important assumptions shared by people in the organization.
 4. What does it take to do well in this organization? How are good people recognized?
Justification: To reveal what kind of person gets ahead in the organization, and how this person is noticed by those higher up. (Is it a fast-track organization for MBAs? For marketing people?)
 5. What does the organization stand for? What is its motto?
Justification: To reveal the organization's highest value.
 6. What does it take to be highly successful in this organization? What kind of person is most respected? What is considered heroic?
Justification: To provide an operational statement of what is most valued in the organization.
 7. Who are the three or four key people in the organization? How did they get to the top?
Justification: To reveal the backgrounds and accomplishments of the key figures in the organizational leadership.
 8. What are the spotlight measures of performance, and the spotlight rewards and punishments?
Justification: To reveal the performance measures most keenly watched and the rewards commanding the greatest attention within the organization.
 9. What is done to help a person along once he or she starts work in this organization?
Justification: To reveal the formal and informal systems used in the socialization, training, and development of newcomers.
 10. What are important strategies and tactics for getting things done in the organization?
Justification: To reveal the informal workings within the organization, as well as the political games that facilitate or hinder one's ability to get things done within the organization.
 11. Which outside groups does the organization pay attention to? Why? How?
Justification: To reveal the extent and nature of the organization's various dependencies. Understanding how the organization manages these dependencies provides insight into the critical workings within the organization.
 12. How does one find out how one is performing in this organization?
Justification: To reveal the quality of superior-subordinate and peer relationships.
 13. What are the ways one finds out what is really going on in the organization?
Justification: To reveal how people communicate with one another in the organization and to reveal the extent to which people trust each other.
 14. What must the organization do particularly well in order to succeed?
Justification: To reveal other critical organizational workings.
 15. How does one go about selling a new idea in this organization? Who are the key individuals and groups one has to persuade?
Justification: To reveal how responsive the organization is to new ideas and to identify powerful individuals and important political camps.

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

- 16. What are the components of customer satisfaction in your organization? What effect(s) do these components have on the ultimate effectiveness of your organization?
Justification: To reveal the effect(s) that customer satisfaction has/have on the ultimate effectiveness of this organization.
 - 17. In what way(s) does your organization encourage creativity?
Justification: To reveal the underlying marketing department focus of the organization.
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all four service categories considered together). Pooling the data was appropriate, as the basic purpose of this stage of data collection and analysis was to develop a concise instrument that would be reliable and meaningful in assessing culture in a variety of service sectors. In other words, the objective was to produce a fairly universal scale whose items and properties would be applicable to a wide range of services. An additional reason for data pooling was that the respondents' description of culture was basically the same for the different types of services.

Purification of the instrument began with the computation of coefficient alpha (Cronbach, 1951), in accordance with Churchill's (1979) recommendation that "coefficient alpha absolutely should be the first measure one calculates to assess the quality of the instrument" (p. 68). Coefficient alpha was computed separately for each of the nine dimensions to ascertain the extent to which items making up each dimension shared a common core.

The values of coefficient alpha ranged from .42 to .79 across the nine dimensions, which suggested that deleting certain items from each dimension would improve the alpha values. The criterion used in deciding whether to delete an item was the item's corrected item-to-total correlation (i.e., correlation between the score on the item and the sum of scores on *all other* items making up the dimension to which

Table 2. Potentially Overlapping Dimensions—Initial Investigation

Empathy	Prompt service
Sympathy	Nice personal appearance
Financial motivation	Repeat business
Hard work	Fairness to customers
Friendliness	Fairness to employees
Quality consciousness	Receptive to ideas
Self-motivation	Provision of incentives
Selling emphasis	Education
Availability	Interpersonal communication
Honesty	Teamwork
Following policies	Employee participation
Against waste	Goal-oriented
Organized	Creative selling
Accuracy	Innovation
Product knowledge	Trend setting
Company knowledge	Readiness to change
Loyal	Aggressiveness
Attention to detail	People-oriented
Handle stress well	Actions consistent with company image
Courtesy	Safety
Efficiency	Facility appearance

Table 3. Items Generated to Measure Each Dimension of Marketing Culture in Service Industries (All Items Pertain to this Particular Firm)**Relationship marketing**

- This firm's employees are expected to treat customers honestly
- Employees like working with people
- Customer loyalty to the company is specifically rewarded
- Work is divided fairly among the employees
- This company emphasizes courtesy to the customer
- Rules of courtesy are not enforced here (-)
- Employees are treated with differing degrees of respect (-)
- This company recognizes one particular group of employees' contributions more than others (-)
- This company favors an across the board increase rather than an individual merit increase (-)
- Employees only work only with customers that use our service often

Selling

- Employees are encouraged to explore new sales techniques
- This company is a leader in its field
- Current successful sales techniques will work now as well as in the future
- High achievers in selling are recognized in this organization
- Selling is the single-most-important task of an employee
- Creative approaches to selling are encouraged
- This company is willing to try new ideas
- This company uses new campaigns to introduce products/services to the market
- This company rewards employees, better than competing companies, with incentives to sell
- Once a product's sales have slowed down, this company does not try to revive it in the marketplace (-)
- The company clearly places a significant interest on selling
- This company is receptive to change

Conscientiousness

- Employees turn in work that is error free
- Employees follow all the organization's rules and regulations
- Employees' work area is well organized
- Accuracy is an important part of my job
- Employees believe everything has its place and should always be there
- Rules are meant to be broke (-)
- Employees believe in doing things right the first time
- Employees are well organized
- Inaccuracy is noticed by superiors
- This company has an approved set of policies and procedures that is available to an employee at any time
- This company issues a policy handbook
- Employees are expected to be familiar with policy rules

Dedication

- Employees are willing to put in extra time to give customers the best possible service
- Employees do more than what is expected of them
- Employees will not take on more responsibility unless they are paid to do so (-)
- Employees only do their best when their supervisor is watching them (-)
- Employees are expected to work hard
- The company gives me little motivation to work (-)
- Good work will be rewarded with higher pay
- Employees are willing to take on new tasks
- Employees are less well acquainted with the company and its services than they should be (-)
- Because of many benefits, employees want to stay with the company

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

Immediate report	
	This company enforces a dress code
	The way I dress for work reflects my company image
	Good communication skills are important in dealing with the customer
	Employees look down at people with less education than themselves (-)
	Employees represent the organization to the individual customer
	Continuing education is encouraged by my company
	Communicating effectively is very important to my job
	This company takes time to acquaint new employees with its operation
	An employee's personality is important in this company
	An employee's ability to be cheerful is important in this company
	Information is shared freely among coworkers
Assertiveness	
	This organization is committed to providing prompt service
	Employees are required to act well under stress
	Employees are eager to assume new tasks
	Employees enjoy going after new accounts
	Employees feel they cannot offer suggestions to coworkers (-)
	Employees approach customers quickly
	Employees answer the phone as quickly as possible
	Employees feel comfortable in giving opinions to higher management
	Employees aggressively pursue new business
	This company places emphasis on not being wasteful
	This company places emphasis on employees' communication skills
Compassion	
	This company allows me time off for personal reasons
	This company treats me like an important part of the organization
	Employees understand the customer's needs for the service the company provides
	Supervisors treat subordinates with less respect than people at their own level or above (-)
	This organization follows a "customer is always right" policy
	My boss takes time out to listen to my personal problems
	This company is considerate of my feelings
	Employers really care about the well-being of employees
	This company has a "family atmosphere"
	Coworkers really care about each other's well-being
	Emphasis is placed on employees to have empathy with customers

the item was assigned). The correlated item-to-total correlations were plotted in descending order for each dimension. Items with very low correlations and/or those whose correlations produced a sharp drop in the plotted pattern were discarded. Recomputation of alpha values for the reduced sets of statements and examination of the new corrected item-to-total correlations led to further deletion of items whose elimination improved the corresponding alpha values. The iterative sequence of computing alphas and item-to-total correlations, followed by deletion of items, was repeated several times and resulted in a set of 78 items, with alpha values ranging from .70 to .84 across the nine dimensions.

Examining the dimensionality of the reduced 78-item scale was the next step in this stage of scale purification and was accomplished by factor analyzing the difference scores on the items. The principal axis factoring procedure (Harman, 1967) was used to extract nine factors, and the resulting solution was rotated orthogonally through oblique rotation. The factor-loading matrix revealed that some items still

had high loadings on more than one factor. After such items were removed from the factor-loading matrix, several factors themselves became meaningless because they had near-zero correlations with the remaining items, thereby suggesting a reduction in the presumed dimensionality of the service-culture domain. Furthermore, the highest loadings of a few of the remaining items were on factors to which they did not "belong" on an a priori basis. In other words, the factor loadings suggested reassignment of some items to dimensions to which they were not originally assigned.

The deletion of some items (and the resultant reduction in the total number of factors, or clusters of items) and the reassignment of others necessitated the re-computation of alphas and item-to-total correlations and the reexamination of the factor structure of the reduced item pool. Several iterations of the sequence of analyses resulted in a final pool of 38 items representing six dimensions. The alpha values and item-to-total correlations pertaining to the 38-item instrument appear in Table 4.

The high alpha values and corrected item-to-total correlations indicated good internal consistency among items within each dimension. Also, the combined reliability for the 38-item scale, computed by using the formula for the reliability of linear combinations (Nunnally, 1978), was quite high (.90).

To evaluate further the reliabilities of the instrument, the component and total reliabilities and the corrected item-to-total correlations were calculated for each of the four subsamples. The reliabilities and item-to-total correlations are consistently high across all subsamples. The total-scale reliability is .84 or better in each of the four cases.

The high reliabilities and relatively consistent factor structures of the measure across the independent samples provide support for its "trait" validity (Campbell, 1960; Peter, 1981). However, although these high reliabilities and internal consistencies are important conditions for a scale's construct validity – the extent to which a scale fully captures the underlying, unobservable construct it is intended to measure – they are not sufficient (Churchill, 1979). The scale must satisfy the basic conceptual criterion of "face" or "content" validity, i.e., does the scale appear to measure what it purports to measure? Do the scale items capture key facets of the unobservable construct being measured? Assessing a scale's content validity is qualitative rather than quantitative, and it involves examining two aspects: 1) the thoroughness with which the construct to be scaled and its domain have been explicated, and 2) the extent to which the scale items represent the construct's domain (Parasuraman et al., 1986). As discussed earlier, the procedures used in developing the instrument satisfy both these evaluative requirements. Hence, the scale can be considered to possess content validity.

Results

The preceding data collection steps and analyses resulted in the identification of six dimensions of the service culture construct and the development of a valid, reliable instrument measuring the construct. Table 5 shows the resulting dimensions and questionnaire items generated to measure the actual culture a service firm possesses. The 7-point scale that would follow each item in the actual instrument could be structured to relate to either the importance of each item or extent to

Table 4. Alphas and Correlations Resulting from Scale Purification

Dimension	No. of Items	Reliability Coefficients (Alphas)	Items	Corrected Item-To-Total Correlations ^a
Service quality	11	.82	Q1 _____	.54
			Q2 _____	.69
			Q3 _____	.71
			Q4 _____	.70
			Q5 _____	.65
			Q6 _____	.71
			Q7 _____	.64
			Q8 _____	.67
			Q9 _____	.62
			Q10 _____	.73
			Q11 _____	.74
Interpersonal relationships	5	.79	Q12 _____	.56
			Q13 _____	.63
			Q14 _____	.57
			Q15 _____	.64
			Q16 _____	.61
Selling task	8	.80	Q17 _____	.58
			Q18 _____	.64
			Q19 _____	.68
			Q20 _____	.61
			Q21 _____	.63
			Q22 _____	.69
			Q23 _____	.68
			Q24 _____	.64
Organization	6	.78	Q25 _____	.64
			Q26 _____	.50
			Q27 _____	.52
			Q28 _____	.55
			Q29 _____	.66
			Q30 _____	.54
Internal communications	5	.84	Q31 _____	.71
			Q32 _____	.70
			Q33 _____	.76
			Q34 _____	.72
			Q35 _____	.74
Innovativeness	3	.72	Q36 _____	.49
			Q37 _____	.61
			Q38 _____	.58
Reliability of linear combination (total-scale reliability)	.90			

^aThe total scores within each dimension did not include scores on the item whose correlation to the total was being computed.

which the particular firm possesses each attribute. The decision as to how the scales would be structured would depend on the service firm manager's reason for utilizing the measure. To measure the kind of marketing culture a firm has, sample members would respond to each item.

Table 5. Measures Used to Capture Construct Dimensions

Dimension	Measure Used
Service quality	<p>Employees acting well under stress</p> <p>Employees' carefully checking work before processing/turning it in</p> <p>Employees' attention to detail</p> <p>For the firm to place emphasis on employees' communication skills</p> <p>The commitment of the firm to provide prompt service</p> <p>The belief of employees that their behavior reflects the firm's image</p> <p>For employees to meet the firm's expectations</p> <p>For employees to work hard</p> <p>For supervisors to be mindful of the inaccuracies of employees</p> <p>The honest treatment of customers by employees</p> <p>The courteous treatment of customers by employees</p>
Interpersonal relationships	<p>For the company to be considerate of employees' feelings</p> <p>For the firm to treat each employee as an important part of the organization</p> <p>For employees to feel comfortable in giving opinions to higher management</p> <p>The enforcement of rules of courtesy</p> <p>That managers/supervisors have an "open-door" policy</p>
Selling task	<p>The encouragement of creative approaches to selling</p> <p>The firm's recognition of high achievers in selling</p> <p>The selling task of employees</p> <p>The encouragement of employees to explore new sales techniques</p> <p>For employees to enjoy pursuing new accounts</p> <p>For the firm to reward employees, better than competing firms, with incentives to sell</p> <p>For employees to aggressively pursue new business</p>
Organization	<p>Each employee to be well organized</p> <p>For careful planning to be characteristic of each employee's daily routine</p> <p>For employees to prioritize work</p> <p>Each employee's work area to be well organized</p> <p>Each employee to manage time well</p> <p>Each employee making a daily plan for the work to be accomplished</p>
Internal communications	<p>For the firm to issue a policy handbook</p> <p>The firm having an approved set of policies and procedures that is available to an employee at any time</p> <p>The training period for new employees</p> <p>That supervisors clearly state what their expectations are of others</p> <p>That each employee understands the mission and general objective of the firm</p>
Innovativeness	<p>For all employees to be receptive to ideas for change</p> <p>The company's willingness to try new ideas</p> <p>The receptiveness of the company to change</p>

The actual instrument would include a 7-point scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree," after each item.

Potential Applications and Directions for Future Research

Given the importance of the culture of any organization and the high level of customer contact in service firms, the effects of culture should not be left to chance. The instrument developed in this study enables one to assess a service firm's marketing culture along each dimension. The instrument can also provide an overall measure of the quality of marketing culture in the form of an average score across

all six dimensions. The instrument scores have several other potential applications as well.

Service firm management might use the instrument to determine if there is a gap between the ideal and the firm's actual service culture. First, service firm managers might determine the importance they place on each dimension and marketing culture item for their particular firm. Then, the service firm managers should continuously communicate to the marketing personnel what they are trying to accomplish. They might also work with operations and systems personnel as well as other nonmarketing employees to gear their thinking and actions toward the type of culture desired by the firm. As a result, a measure of marketing culture can be administered to determine if there is a discrepancy between the ideal culture and the firm's actual service culture.

Second, an instrument measuring the service firm culture might be used to determine if there are significant discrepancies between managers' and employees' perceptions of their firm's service culture. If serious gaps do exist, the detailed nature of the instrument will direct managers on closing the gaps.

Third, a service firm's customers can be segmented into several marketing culture groups, based upon the perceived importance of the various dimensions of the construct. For example, consumers who place a high degree of importance on interpersonal relations may be in one segment, and consumers who place little importance on this dimension may be in another segment. Identification of the distinguishing characteristics of each customer segment may provide the service firm with valuable insights for its marketing and promotional strategies.

Fourth, in the case of a service firm with numerous locations or branches, average marketing culture scores for the individual branches can be used to group the branches into several clusters with varying culture images. A careful examination of the characteristics of branches in the different clusters may uncover key factors that facilitate, or that hinder, the marketing of services.

Furthermore, the service culture instrument may also have a strategic application. Marketing strategy planners might take into account the culture of a firm and check its compatibility with any proposed strategy. A measure of culture is needed so that the planners can discover the nature and extent of linkage between culture and marketing performance. They will also know whether culture modification is feasible and how it can be accomplished. Cultural norms, especially when they are consistent with marketing objectives and strategies, can also serve as useful criteria for evaluation and control of marketing managers. For instance, do the managers' actions fit the norms? Are the results of managerial decisions consistent with cherished corporate values?

Although steps were taken to develop a reliable and valid measure, future research should focus on further evaluating the scale and its psychometric properties. Specifically, the following steps should be taken: 1) collection of additional data regarding the importance of each item, 2) computation of coefficient alpha and item-to-total correlations for each dimension, 3) deletion of items whose item-to-total correlations are low and whose removal increases coefficient alpha, 4) oblique factor analysis to verify the dimensionality of the overall scale, and 5) reassignment of items and restructuring of dimensions where necessary.

Additionally, future research should address the issue of how unique the marketing culture items are for use in a "services-only" environment. Even though the

items generated for this study stemmed from in-depth analyses of service firms, there still may be some overlap in the marketing culture of a goods firm.

Furthermore, future work will center on discovering the relationship between a service firm's marketing culture and its profitability.

Last, further research should also be conducted within specific service industries to test the efficacy of the instrument.

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