KELLEY SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Managing closing time to enhance manager, employee, and customer satisfaction

Stephanie M. Noble [a],*, Carol L. Esmark [b], Christy Ashley [c]

[a] Haslam College of Business, The University of Tennessee, 310 Stokely Management Center, Knoxville, TN 37996-0530, U.S.A.
[b] College of Business, Mississippi State University, 324 McCool Hall, Mississippi State, MS 39762, U.S.A.
[c] College of Business, East Carolina University, Mail Stop 503, Greenville, NC 27858, U.S.A.

Abstract   Closing time for a retailer or service provider represents a time when a store is in transition from an open domain to a closed domain. During this time, employees' tasks change from primarily serving customers to managing their closing time activities while concurrently serving customers. As such, shoppers are impacted by employee actions and closing time duties, often in a negative way. We found through our research that customers act with retaliatory, territorial behaviors, and employees report stress and annoyance over closing time practices, yet managers consistently say no problems exist with their closing time practices. In this article, we outline three key problems retailers face in their closing time practices and offer guidance on how to overcome these obstacles.
© 2014 Kelley School of Business, Indiana University. Published by Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

1. Closing time: The misconception

Ah, closing time. Are there two sweeter words known to man or beast?
            — Penguins of Madagascar (2009)

While some stores are open 24 hours, the majority of retailers still close their doors at the end of the day. One would think stores have mastered closing time issues from the customers', employees', and managers' perspectives. However, our extensive research shows this is not the case; in fact, it's far from it. We find that customers act with retaliatory, territorial behaviors, and employees report stress and annoyance over closing time practices, yet managers consistently say no problems exist in their closing time practices. There is a disconnect between customers, employees, and managers on what closing time means and what the appropriate actions for each party should be, but knowledge about how to effectively manage closing time remains scant.

To learn more, we used a multitude of methodologies over the last several years. These methods included critical incident technique interviews with customers and employees of various retailers—to

* Corresponding author
  E-mail addresses: snoble@utk.edu (S.M. Noble),
c.esmark@mstate.edu (C.L. Esmark), ashleyc@ecu.edu (C. Ashley)

understand closing time experiences from their perspectives—interviews with managers and their respective employees, the use of mystery shoppers in stores to identify actual closing time practices, and surveys of customers leaving stores around closing time. Our results show that employees use several types of cues—productive, personal, audio-visual, withdrawal, hostility, and blocking—to alert the shopper to closing time. Consequently, the shopper may feel like an intruder and respond through possible acts of retaliation, abandonment, accession, and negative word-of-mouth in attempts to establish territoriality. Further details of our study and results are reported in an article in the March 2014 issue of the *Journal of Retailing* (Ashley & Noble, 2013).

Generally speaking, employee behaviors before and during closing time have a significant impact on shoppers. Shoppers feel intrusion from the employee and become territorial as they face blockades from inventory or employees. In response, shoppers often act out in retaliatory ways, such as purposely making messes for the employees to clean up, getting in an employee's way during cleaning activities, and shopping slower than needed to prove a point and assert their right to be in the store. Customers who are more loyal to a store are more likely to retaliate, presumably because they feel more territorial (i.e., entitled to be in the store) and feel they have more rights to shop later because they have given so much money to the store.

Our research shows both shopper and employee confusion about what closing time means. The customer may believe closing time means they are allowed to enter the store until the time posted on the sign—sometimes even after—and are allowed to shop past the posted time. There is also uncertainty surrounding how long a reasonable amount of time is to remain in the store after the posted closing sign. This seems to be especially true in retailers that have ambiguity around their closing times, such as restaurants that post 'last seating' times, but not times the restaurant officially closes.

If closing time is ambiguous, employees may believe closing time is the time to clock out, which in our research usually equated to a few minutes after the posted closing time. Therefore, when customers remain in the store as closing time approaches, employees feel the need to send customers cues to let them know the store is closing and it is time to leave. Some of these cues include cleaning around the customer, restocking, making announcements that the store is closing, shutting down lights and registers, and closing down areas of the store. In some cases, managers may close early (e.g., when it is slow) or stay open later (e.g., to serve a special

customer or reach a sales quota), which also increases customer confusion about appropriate closing time shopping behavior.

As customers and employees battle over whether shoppers should still be allowed in the store, both parties exhibit territorial behaviors. Consequently, managers have their own struggles as closing time approaches. They want to deliver exceptional customer service, even at closing time, but have to be careful to avoid overtime and disgruntled employees. So, they may ask or allow employees to do their closing time duties before the store officially closes.

While managers and supervisors may know what is ideal, they are largely unaware of the real situations employees and shoppers face as they battle over who has the right to occupy the store territory at day's end. In our research, managers consistently said they handle closing time efficiently and effectively, have trained employees to manage customers during this time, and believe employees put the customer first. However, when talking with employees, customers, and our mystery shoppers, these beliefs are far from what actually occurs around closing time.

Overall, we found from this research that three key problems exist with respect to closing time: (1) an unclear definition of closing time, (2) a lack of employee training on appropriate closing time practices, and (3) a lack of service level enforcement near closing time. We offer suggestions on how to address these challenges to more effectively manage closing time.

2. Problem #1: Unclear definition of closing time

> *It bugs the living daylights out of me when a restaurant says it is open until 10 p.m. and I come in at 9:30 and am told the kitchen is closing and has a limited selection or has already closed.*
>
> — Restaurant customer

Shoppers and employees do not always see eye to eye about what the posted closing time means. The customer may believe the closing time represents the last minute a shopper is allowed into the store. One shopper says, "If you look at the sign on the door, it gives a time of 6 p.m. as closing time, so this is the latest time of entry," asserting his belief that the time stated on the sign is not the time he needs to leave the store, but rather the latest he can enter into the store. Customers may take the issuance of closing time cues more personally when there is more ambiguity about closing time, as is often the

case in a restaurant context. For example, is closing time the last time a customer can be seated, served, or finish and pay for their meal? As a result, customers may attribute the behaviors to an individual's decision versus corporate policy, which can increase the likelihood the customer retaliates in a way that could hurt store profitability.

Smaller businesses and individually owned non-chain stores must be extra careful of the last minute shopper, especially for their loyal customers. For example, one man was going on a market trip Sunday and planned to pick up two suits from the cleaners on Saturday afternoon. Knowing the cleaners closed at 5:30, he left his business early in what he thought was time enough to get there. Slow moving traffic caused him to arrive at 5:40. The door was locked but he felt he was in luck when he saw the owner's car in the driveway and someone moving in the back of the shop. Though he kept loudly knocking on the door and calling to the owner, there was no response. He made the market trip without those suits, vowing never to trade with that cleaners again. In other words, he attributed the lack of service to the owner's decision not to breach the posted closing time, and he boycotts the business as a result of this decision.

Employees, however, may see a different meaning of closing time. They believe the posted time is the last transaction time and shoppers should not be in the store after this. One grocery store employee said:

> When it was closing time, all the staff used to vanish so the manager wouldn't see them and then they could clock out. . . .It used to annoy me as some staff could go, but others had to wait behind for the customer to check out. They still wandered around even though they were told we were closed and they needed to go to the checkouts. In the end, sometimes we had to escort them to the checkouts and they moaned at us!

In addition to staying past closing time, the employees reported they were often left with additional work due to messes made by last minute shoppers, which frustrated them.

Managers may be more in favor of letting the shopper in, seeing profitable transactions from more open minutes and higher service levels. Managers respond to the closing time issue with ''sales are sales and that should always be the goal'' (Restaurant manager) and that employees should ''stay overtime and provide service until customers are fulfilled and content. If closing is at 9:00 and customers are shopping, business should be business; customers can be in the fitting rooms until they are

fully served'' (Retail consultant). Some also see this ambiguity in closing time as beneficial, stating their role as a service provider is important in consideration of loyalty and long-term customer profitability. One retail clothing supervisor reported that letting last minute shoppers in is a matter of being helpful in order to be profitable:

> You don't know whether they have had a chance to shop, yet they really needed to get in when they could. They may have just finished work and rushed to the shop. To be successful we need to find the customers exactly what they are looking for, make sure they are happy, and in return achieve and maintain our sales targets. Whether it is early or closing time, I believe the customer service they receive should be of a high standard, even if it makes me late. All in all, I'd rather our store be successful and stay running than to lose my job for poor customer service or to see the store closing for lack of sales.

Most managers and supervisors see any business as profit and want to make an additional sale, thus using the unclear closing time definition to their advantage. However, the ambiguity of closing time could be perceived as unfair by the stakeholders involved if closing time practices are modified to sooner or later depending upon the manager's needs. The perceptions of unfairness are relevant to both the shopper who feels undervalued and will not return when closing time is earlier than expected and the employee who feels mistreated and disrespected when closing time is later than anticipated. The perceptions of unfairness could result in retaliation (Gregoire & Fisher, 2008), with shoppers moving slower, making a mess, complaining, or not returning to the store for future shopping trips; alternatively, it could result in employees milking the clock, giving poor customer service, or not finishing their duties. None of the managers interviewed addressed the discrepancy in the definition of closing time: Is it considered to be the last person in or the last transaction time? Employees and shoppers alike are left without clear expectations about the store's closing time boundary.

2.1. Clarify postings

To remedy the problem of an unclear definition of closing time, managers should state clearly on their storefront sign what closing times are and what they mean. The saying 'good fences make good neighbors' applies to other boundaries as well: clarity can help prevent conflict. Ambiguity about appropriate shopping behavior can prompt frontline employees

to issue hostile cues that may alienate shoppers (Ashley & Noble, 2013). So, in the context of closing time, preventing conflict around the closing time boundary helps protect the retailer's bottom line.

If the last admittance time is different from the last transaction time, post and specify both times. This is definitely needed in restaurant situations in which last seating hours are posted but the deadline for the last transaction is not. Out of all the industries we studied, restaurant employees seemed the most unhappy with closing time practices. Customers who are unsure about what closing time means may buy less to rush out of the retailer, which hurts profitability. In the context of restaurants, a customer may skip an after dinner drink or dessert to expedite his/her departure because of cues issued by employees, even if the restaurant is still open.

2.2. Display clocks with accurate time

In addition to clarifying the actual closing time meanings, store managers should display clocks with the accurate time. Shoppers and employees have the accurate time via their phones and mobile technology, so the store should operate using the same system. Employees should be clocking in and out using the same satellite time in which shoppers are allowed to be in the store. A small clock with the official time should be posted by the door and storefront sign so the responsibility of reporting actual time to a shopper does not fall on the employee and cause dissatisfaction to the shopper. When the storefront sign clarifying closing time is accompanied with a clock displaying official satellite time, the shopper is left with no ambiguity or reason to place blame on the store/employees, and any negative feelings should dissipate.

2.3. Give rationale for closing time

Store managers should give a rationale for the specified closing time. For example: "Last entry at 10:00; Last transaction occurs at 10:15 p.m. Thank you for being considerate to our hard-working employees." The explanation and reminder of employees' personal time will help to lessen any frustration on the part of the late shopper. In the same way, if the store policy is to use a PA announcement to signify the nearing of closing time, communicate that employees are still there to help but are working to prepare the store for shoppers when the store reopens. Shoppers are much more understanding if they are informed and understand the justification for employee actions.

2.4. Set expectations when possible

One restaurant manager we spoke with said he set expectations when making reservations. For example, if a customer wanted a 5:30 reservation, he or she was told there was another reservation at 7:30 and asked whether this would be acceptable—whether there was another reservation at 7:30 or not. This set the expectation that the customer would have the table for approximately 2 hours and other guests would have rights to the table after that 2-hour time span. This same philosophy can be used around closing time when guests enter restaurants at last seating times. They could be told: "We have seating available to you, but the last transaction is at [state time]. Does this work for you?" This sets the expectations for closing time and gives customers a choice, which has been shown to lead to more desirable outcomes (Hui & Bateson, 1991; Reinders, Dabholkar, & Frambach, 2008).

2.5. Be consistent

The ambiguity of closing time might allow a manager to give special treatment or make exceptions for particular shoppers, resulting in potential delight for the last minute customer. However, the costs associated with making exceptions may be confusion, increased payroll expenditures, and disgruntled employees, which may result in employee turnover and higher recruitment costs. Furthermore, although providing special exceptions to closing time may increase revenues and profits on a given day, the firm might suffer in the long run if the special treatment raises customer expectations and those expectations cannot be consistently met—such as in the dry cleaner example previously noted. Customers are generally more aware of a loss of expected service than the gain of an unanticipated service, so they may be less satisfied overall if special treatment is provided and then withdrawn (Wagner, Hennig-Thurau, & Rudolph, 2009).

The lack of consistent closing time practices could also cause dissatisfaction to shoppers who did not receive preferential treatment by shopping later than posted times (Varela-Neira, Vazquez-Casielles, & Iglesias, 2010). For example, if a manager lets one shopper in 5 minutes after closing, the shopper who arrives 6 minutes after closing would expect to be allowed in as well. There has to be a cutoff time at some point. To avoid dissatisfaction with shoppers and employees, the manager should adhere to the posted closing time.

3. Problem #2: Inadequate employee training on appropriate closing time practices

There is no specific training on how to deal with last minute shoppers.

— Pharmacy manager

Employees consistently admitted training was lacking as regards closing time etiquette. They are instructed to tidy up and organize before the store closes, but are not given much instruction on how to multitask closing time duties and customer service. Without training, closing time conduct is left up to past experience, learned behavior, and experimentation. One grocery store employee explained how closing time is a process of trial and error:

> The managers don't usually bring up policy. It's just assumed that we know how to deal with last minute shoppers. . . .The game is to get the customer what they want and get them out of the store ASAP while making them feel like they've had a pleasant shopping experience. They don't teach you how to do this; you just kind of learn what works and what doesn't.

Customers who shop during the store's last minutes report often feeling rushed and neglected. According to a pharmacy customer:

> The employees seemed like cleaning up and counting the register were much more important. I feel like they didn't care if I got what I wanted or not. I felt neglected even though I wanted something small. They couldn't even step away from cleaning up for 1 minute to grab the batteries behind the counter. After waiting for a little while, I just left without buying. I lost confidence in buying there. If they couldn't help with such a small purchase, I'd be afraid to go in there if I really needed help with something. I avoid shopping close to a store's closing time because I don't want to experience lack of service like this. It's aggravating.

Managers often believed they had trained employees adequately, but holes existed in their training policy. One grocery store head manager said a company-wide policy was implemented that stopped closing time PA announcements due to customer complaints. Yet, when asked if this policy was shown to employees during their training, she said the policy is not in writing or in a training manual. Managers in her store knew the policy, but it was questionable whether other stores were adhering to the policy: employees stated that some stores made PA announcements and some did not. These employees heard rumors of customers complaining, but were never informed or debriefed on why PA announcements had stopped. Without clear training, employee behaviors may not be in line with the store's goals or mission.

3.1. Recognize training problems

The first step in dealing with any problem is to recognize there is one. Throughout our research, we were amazed at the disconnect between managers and their employees regarding problems around closing time. Perhaps managers saw problems as failures on their part and thus did not want to acknowledge them. Whatever the reason, managers need to realize training is inadequate or non-existent.

We found a few managers who acknowledged closing time was an issue, as illustrated by the two quotes below; however, these managers were scarce. Once managers recognize the problem, they can understand the need to train their employees.

> Our night grocery crew is not as thoroughly trained as they should be. (Grocery store manager)

> The procedure for closing time is learned. [Employees] learn the process from whichever manager they work under. There is not a consistent or specific policy. (Pharmacy manager)

3.2. Train employees

The solution to this problem is simple: train employees. A manager should not assume an employee knows the store's policy. Rather, he or she should tell the employee what is expected and have this material readily available in print for reference. Closing time policy and culture is different from store to store and across industry. An employee coming from one store might have a very different approach to closing time than what is expected from his or her new store. Train employees on what closing time means, what closing time practices are acceptable, and how to assist remaining shoppers out of the store after final transaction times.

3.3. Be mindful of when the front door gets locked

We heard numerous stories of employees shutting the doors before posted closing times. As one example, a shopper reported to us:

> Store hours are posted as "until 9 p.m." I went to the store one evening, knowing I was pushing

the closing time, but according to my cell phone's digital clock and the clock in my car––both of which I believe to be correct—I had 5 minutes until closing time. I parked close to the door, jumped out of the car, and when I got to the door an employee was blocking the door and said, "Sorry, we're closed." I said, "The door here says you're open until 9 p.m." The employee answered, "The store's clocks say 9 p.m." I got back in my car and my clock's display showed 8:56.

As a result, the shopper says he will not return, as he was not able to enter the store. Train employees to understand that unhappy customers post on blogs and spread negative word-of-mouth. If closing time signage was clearer, then allowing the customer to enter the store at 9 p.m., knowing the last transaction needs to occur at 9:15 p.m., would not be such an issue with the employee.

4. Problem #3: Lack of service level enforcement or checks in place near closing time

> *If a manager is not on the floor, there is no way to ensure policy is fulfilled.*
>
> — Retail consultant

Poor customer service can have devastating consequences when a customer does not feel the situation has been remedied. Many customers said they do not shop at a store where they had a bad closing time experience, and several of those experiences involved inaction on the part of the manager:

> The manager did nothing, which showed why the store employees think they can get away with such disregard for customer service. (Retail shopper)

> My wife got locked in a department store after hours. She was trying on clothes and everyone was gone when she got out. She called the store manager the next day and they just laughed about it. (Department store customer's husband)

Employees at closing are often left unsupervised, meaning no negative recourse. As employees are not specifically trained, they often see what they can get away with or do things they know they probably should not. A high-end restaurant employee makes her presence more known to customers in her section past closing time as ways to clue a customer that it is time to leave—for example, by blowing out candles in other sections, clearing off surrounding tables and removing linens, sweeping the patio,

clearing things off the table more frequently, or repeatedly coming by to refill waters or coffee. The manager of this restaurant said all these behaviors were frowned upon, yet employees reported using these tactics all the time without fear of consequences. In addition, the employees noted that the manager would often turn the music, lights, and air conditioning up and down to make lingering customers aware the restaurant was closed. Without a doubt, it is hard to reprimand employees when managers are not following procedures.

Managers realize part of the problem is less supervision due to lower staff count in the evening hours:

> We are much more short-handed in the later hours, and the checklist just gets longer for the closing manager on duty. We are always there around closing time to ensure customer and employee safety rules, but we are usually busy with reports and not focusing on employees and how they interact with the customers. (Grocery store manager)

As a manager gets ready for closing time, employees are neither trained nor supervised. Employees will test what they can get away with and find no consequences to poor customer service as managers participate in bad habits, ignore complaints, and work off the floor:

> Associates mimic their fellow associates' bad habits because they see no negative recourse. (Retail consultant)

> You learn how to handle the situation by seeing what you can get away with from both the customer and the manager. (High end restaurant employee)

4.1. Be on the floor at closing time

One way to remedy the problem is to have a manager or supervisor always on duty at closing: "Work out a schedule between an assistant store manager, operations, security, alternate department managers, or an individual associate to monitor closures" (Retail manager). Employees should be informed during training what will occur if they do not follow policy, and corrective action should be taken if necessary. A manager needs to observe employee behavior to enforce prescribed policies. Furthermore, a manager who is on the floor has an opportunity to observe and prevent sabotage from customers and employees.

The manager on duty also needs to follow the store rules and set an example for employees. If closing time behavior is mostly learned by

observation, employees will look to a manager first for appropriate conduct. If a manager shifts his/her focus to closing out registers, performing security checks for departing employees, or other back-office responsibilities, it may send an unintended message to frontline employees that other responsibilities are more important than serving customers who shop near closing time.

Managers who are on the floor can help provide service in a way that may expedite the shoppers' trips, which may encourage other employees to do so as well. Managers can also break up clusters of employees who may be tempted to socialize when there are fewer customers in the store and personal time is approaching. Visible managers can also identify opportunities to reward employees who go beyond expectations when interacting with a shopper at closing time, as rewarding positive behavior will be more beneficial than punishing negative behavior.

4.2. Utilize secret shoppers

It may not be feasible for a manager to supervise every employee at closing time, yet employees may be less likely to misbehave in front of the boss. In order to discipline or reward employees, additional checks are needed to monitor behavior. Many companies now coordinate secret shoppers to get a clear depiction of what employees do when the supervisor is not looking. Arranging for a secret shopper is a relatively inexpensive way to determine if employees are truly giving excellent customer service at closing time. Secret shoppers can also be used to monitor managers and help enforce corporate policy if, for example, retailers are not allowed to start closing time activities before a certain time.

4.3. Compensate employees

Employees should be fairly compensated for their work. Because federal and state laws prohibit employers from forcing hourly employees to work hours that are not recorded or paid, payroll enforcement may preempt service level enforcement as closing time approaches. In fact, some restaurants ask employees to clock out before finishing closing time duties not completed during their shift (e.g., rolling silverware, refilling condiments, or restocking service stations). This practice could result in employees who proactively spend time doing closing duties while on the clock, in turn lowering service levels to patrons dining at that time. Likewise, if an employee is asked to work on closing time tasks at a lower hourly wage (e.g., in the absence of tips or commission), s/he may be motivated to complete the tasks during a higher wage period.

In other retail contexts, corporate policies that penalize managers who do not meet payroll budgets and/or pay overtime have created a culture in which employees may be asked to work without compensation. For example, over a decade ago, Walmart faced a series of lawsuits from former hourly employees who had been asked to work or stay after they punched out because the assigned tasks were not completed during their shifts. Walmart managers interviewed at the time reported that they faced demotions or dismissals if they did not keep payroll costs below the target set by corporate. Salaried employees could complete the work themselves by putting in 75+ hours or lean on employees to pitch in with unpaid labor (Greenhouse, 2002). Even if the employee is being paid the same hourly wage to complete the task, it is possible that money earned has diminishing returns, so the money earned at the end of the shift is valued less than money earned at the beginning of the shift.

Practices that limit employee compensation and the policies that provoke them may result in employees who 'take back' time they feel is owed to them by looking for opportunities to retaliate against the firm, such as lowering service levels, abusing time, and stealing goods—which results in higher shrinkage rates. Or, employees may start shirking customer-facing duties earlier than prescribed in the shift in favor of performing closing tasks so they can leave at the end of their shifts. Employees may also do things to make customers feel less welcome.

These behaviors can result in costly territorial responses by customers, such as leaving the store without finishing the shopping trip, retaliating against the store by making a mess or engaging in negative word-of-mouth that deters other shoppers, or refusing to return to the store (Ashley & Noble, 2013). Therefore, in addition to potential fines and lawsuits, practices designed to minimize operating costs can actually result in behaviors that have a negative impact on firm profits.

The costs and lost revenue should be understood and compared to slightly higher payroll costs that may be allocated to employees who are specifically assigned and adequately compensated to do closing time tasks. In the same way, employees who may be experiencing diminishing marginal returns from money earned at the end of the shift might be motivated with the potential for monetary or nonmonetary incentives given on a variable reinforcement schedule dependent on whether closing time tasks are done on time and as prescribed. Finally, managers should communicate with corporate decision makers to resolve conflicts between payroll allocations and service expectations.

One high-end restaurant performs closing duties in such a way that patrons do not even realize it is closing time: servers are not allowed to perform any closing time duties until the last diner leaves. Employees are informed of this practice and know the expectations. While this strategy is not practical for every restaurant or store, it is an effective strategy for the image the restaurant wants maintained, and the prices in the restaurant provide an adequate margin to compensate higher service levels. The important implication is to set expectations for both the customer and employee and follow consistent practices.

5. Concluding comments

Most managers believe they do not have a problem regarding closing time. However, many employees and shoppers disagree, as there is confusion to the closing time meaning and incongruent expectations. Stores need to clarify closing times and be consistent with the policies in place.

Shoppers are impacted by employee actions and closing time duties. Many employees and shoppers have conflicting definitions of what closing time means. In addition, some employees are not adequately trained and are not reprimanded when expectations are not met. Yet, employee behaviors around closing time can negatively affect current profits and future sales. However, managers can easily remedy the situation by clarifying the closing time definition via displaying signs, training employees with specific expectations regarding shoppers at closing time, placing checks to monitor employee behavior, and using corrective action when necessary. Proactive communications about closing time through signage, announcements, training, and managerial guidance, can help safeguard customer loyalty and increase profits.

References

Ashley, C., & Noble, S. M. (2013). It's closing time: Territorial behaviors from customers in response to front line employees. *Journal of Retailing, 90*(1), 74–92.

Greenhouse, S. (2002, June 25). Suits say Wal-Mart forces workers to toil off the clock. *New York Times*. Retrieved June 22, 2014, from http://www.nytimes.com/2002/06/25/us/suits-say-wal-mart-forces-workers-to-toil-off-the-clock.html

Gregoire, Y., & Fisher, R. (2008). Customer betrayal and retaliation: When your best customers become your worst enemies. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 36*(2), 247–261.

Hui, M. K., & Bateson, J. E. G. (1991). Perceived control and the effects of crowding and consumer choice on the service experience. *Journal of Consumer Research, 18*(2), 174–184.

Reinders, M., Dabholkar, P. A., & Frambach, R. T. (2008). Consequences of forcing consumers to use technology-based self-service. *Journal of Services Research, 11*(2), 107–123.

Varela-Neira, C., Vazquez-Casielles, R., & Iglesias, V. (2010). Lack of preferential treatment: Effects on dissatisfaction after a service failure. *Journal of Service Management, 21*(1), 45–68.

Wagner, T., Hennig-Thurau, T., & Rudolph, T. (2009). Does customer demotion jeopardize loyalty? *Journal of Marketing, 73*(3), 69–85.