

## **Toward a general framework of consumer satisfaction with public services**

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**Purpose** – To introduce a comprehensive framework for assessing consumer satisfaction with public services that integrates key variables as determinants and consequences, considers three contextual factors (the market regime, the relevance of the service for individuals and groups, and the nature of the service), and includes concepts of the Service Dominant Logic.

**Methodology/approach** – We use a conceptual approach that involves literature analysis on public services and consumer satisfaction from journals of marketing and public administration and collects information from governments and institutes to identify key variables for the framework. We discuss the variables vis-à-vis the SD Logic and develop research propositions.

**Findings** – Based on this framework, researchers and public managers can design sub-models for specific services. This is in line with a more flexible approach to assessing satisfaction that has been suggested by Fournier and Mick (1999).

**Research implications** – Satisfaction with public services have been an under-researched area from an academic perspective and it will benefit from advances in marketing perspectives. The proposed framework helps to structure meaningful analyses offering a broader perspective than existing models such as the adaptation of the Customer Satisfaction Index to government agencies (Bryant and Van Amburg, 2000) or the satisfaction sub-model of the Citizens' First program (Erin Research Inc., 2000). These two models represent good benchmarking tools among public services/agencies and across time, but they need to be modified in order to account for particular features of services and their specific environments (Erin Research Inc., 2003; Kyris, 1999).

**Practical implications** – Researchers and consultants can use the framework to design their consumer satisfaction studies. The paper helps readers to identify the kind of consumer satisfaction they should assess in each specific situation, as well as the variables they should study as determinants and consequences of consumer satisfaction.

**Originality/value** – The proposed framework brings together the best characteristics of existing proposals in the literature and the SD Logic, and includes concepts that are unique to the public sector. Among its key features is its use of measures of a) rationalization, b) fair/optimal service comparisons, c) welfare, d) equality, and e) general interest.

**Key words:** Public services, Consumer satisfaction, General framework, SD Logic, Propositions.

**Paper type** – Conceptual paper