

BUILDING SATISFACTION: HOW INITIAL CUSTOMER JOURNEY EFFORTS SHAPE SERVICE EXPERIENCES

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This study examines how the time invested in the information search and booking stages impacts consumer satisfaction during service experiences in the hospitality sector. Using a process modeling approach, the research explores the paradoxical effect where extended pre-service engagement may elevate consumer expectations, potentially leading to decreased satisfaction during the actual service. Additionally, the study investigates the moderating influence of emotional experiences, revealing that positive emotions during the service can offset the negative impact of prolonged pre-service activities by reinforcing consumer expectations. Data were gathered from 1,000 tourists in Istanbul, Türkiye, capturing their experiences with various hotels and restaurants. The findings highlight the importance of streamlining digital platforms to minimize pre-service effort while emphasizing the role of creating positive emotional experiences to align with and fulfill customer expectations, ultimately enhancing overall satisfaction.

Keywords: Satisfaction, Customer journey, Hospitality services

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