

Demystifying the impact of self-indulgence and self-control on customer-employee rapport and customer happiness

Abstract

Past research mostly ignores the link between customers' purchase orientations and their engagement with frontline service employees. This paper addresses this gap by using socio-emotional selectivity theory to investigate the effects of customers' self-indulgence/control on their rapport building efforts with frontline service employees and on their own happiness. It also explores the moderating effects of age, gender and shopping day on the impact of self-indulgence/control on happiness. Data from 252 Australian customers shows that self-control has no significant influence on rapport or happiness while rapport and self-indulgence positively affect happiness. Finally, all the moderating effects only find partial support.

Keywords: Self-indulgence, Self-control, Rapport, PLS, Australia.

1. Introduction

Rapport with frontline employees is receiving growing attention from the scholars (Macintosh^a, 2009; Gremler and Gwinner, 2000; Kim and Ok, 2010; Fatima and Mascio, 2018) as it brings positive outcomes for the service firms. Rapport is conceptualized as a two-dimensional construct (Kim and Ok, 2010; Fatima and Mascio, 2018; Macintosh, 2009a) which are enjoyable interaction and personal connection (Gremler and Gwinner, 2000). As frontline employees are often the first and last contact points for the customers (Gwinner et al. 2005; Sok et al., 2018), rapport or positive interactions with them has a major effect on customer emotions, such as happiness. Customer happiness acts as a set guide for customers' current or future buying decisions (Sääksjärvi et al., 2017; Kurtz and Lyubomirsky, 2011; Kesebir and Diener, 2008) and is often suggested by previous scholars as a core construct in a wide range of marketing-related activities (Bagozzi and Nataraajan, 2000; Sääksjärvi et al., 2017; Nataraajan, 2012). While today's firms are encouraging employees focusing on happiness (Barger and Grandey, 2006), it is still now clear to what extent could the rapport with frontline employees influence customers' happiness.

Consumption experience is often a result of multiple choices, conflicting attributes and complex phenomenon (Ramanathan and Williams, 2007). Customers sometimes indulge themselves by giving self-gifts for their long hard-working day or from a sense of deservingness (Mick and Faure, 1998). A related theory on self-gifting behavior by Faure and Mick (1993) based on Weiner's (1986) framework suggests that individuals go through a cognitive-emotion-action process considering the outcomes associated with happiness and sadness. However, customers also often stick to their long-term budget goals and control themselves from purchasing unnecessary items (McCarthy et al., 2017) and can also feel happiness for such self-controlling behavior.

In today's matured phase of relationship marketing, it is not only firms who are calculating relationship benefits with customers and pursuing relevant strategies, customers are also now aware of making or not making a relationship with firms based on their own goals and benefits (Berry, 1995; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002; Dowling 2002; Estell 2002; Danaher et al., 2008). Therefore, customers' decision to involve in rapport building with frontline employees may be affected by their own indulgence or control goals. Unlike impulse buying (Sharma and Sivakumaran, 2004) that prompts individuals from immediate temptation cues, self-indulgence is often planned based on various internal-external motives and situational contexts. Therefore, customers' self-indulgence or self-control may influence their efforts to build rapport with frontline employees and yet, there is hardly any research on this important link. This study addresses the above gap by examining the influence of self-indulgence/control on rapport building behavior of service customers, and thus contributes to both service relationships and consumer psychology literatures.

Individuals also vary in their perceptions and experiences based on their age bracket or gender differences (Badgaiyan and Verma, 2015) as well as situational context such as day of shopping. Thus, this study examines a range of moderators (age, gender, shopping day) as well as investigates mediating role of rapport between self-indulgence or self-control to happiness relationship. Data from 252 Australian customers shows that self-control has no significant influence on rapport or happiness while rapport and self-indulgence positively affect happiness. Finally, there is partial support for the hypothesized moderating effects. The authors discuss the conceptual contribution and managerial implications of these results along with some limitations of the study and directions for future research.

2. Theoretical background and hypotheses

2.1. Rapport and customer happiness

Happiness is described as frequent positive emotions, infrequent negative emotions and often associated with personal experience with joy, contentment and meaningful life (Hellén and Sääksjärvi, 2011). Considering growing attention on social outcomes resulting from marketers' initiatives, firms are now providing more emphasis on customer happiness (De Keyser and Larivière, 2014). While customers' continuous interactions with employees in service encounters have profound impact on their emotional well-being (Anderson et al., 2013), there is little or no research on the relationship between customer experience in service encounters and customer happiness (De Keyser and Larivière, 2014). In fact, experiences can bring more happiness than material possessions (Millar and Thomas, 2009) and therefore, prior investigation on friendliness of frontline employees (or rapport) have found positive influence on customer happiness (De Keyser and Larivière, 2014). Rapport is defined as a 'bonding' or 'enjoyment' in personal interactions between employees and customers (Gremler and Gwinner, 2000) that helps customers feel comfortable (Lloyd and Luk, 2011), enjoyable and ease in decision-making resulting in happiness with the purchase. Numerous positive outcomes of customer-employee rapport are reported in previous studies including customer satisfaction, positive word of mouth, dependency on firm, trust etc. (Macintosh^b, 2009; Fatima and Mascio, 2018). Hence, the quality of rapport with frontline employees may have a direct influence on the level of customer happiness, as follows:

H₁. Customer-employee rapport positively affects customer happiness.

2.2. Rapport and its relation to self-indulgence and self-control

Customers' levels of self-indulgence or self-control goals may influence their approach to rapport building with frontline employees. While there is much literature available on how interpersonal factors influences customers' indulgence decisions (Rook and Fisher, 1995; Xiang et al., 2016; Sharma et al., 2010), a limited research is available on the

extent to which customers' rapport building behavior in service encounters with frontline employees is influenced by their indulgence or control goal. In prior studies, it is suggested that price-sensitive individuals looking for value-based shopping, have less intention to develop relationship with firm (Hillebrand and Bloemer, 2004; Danaher et al., 2008).

However, others argue that customers with higher level of self-control can better regulate emotions, provide optimum emotional expressions with others and have greater interpersonal skills (Tangney et al., 2004). Therefore, the authors hypothesize a positive relationship between self-control and rapport building behavior of service customers. Besides, customers tend to make relationship with firms based on their preferred product category of shopping (Odekerken-Schröder et al., 2003; Danaher et al., 2008). Thus, it is expected that customers indulging themselves with a product from their preferred category (may be movies over leisure park), will be more inclined to build rapport with frontline employees. Therefore,

H₂. Customer self-indulgence positively affects customer-employee rapport.

H₃. Customer self-control positively affects customer-employee rapport.

2.3. Happiness and its relation to self-indulgence and self-control

Individuals vary in their materialistic goals (Millar and Thomas, 2009) and as a result, they have different levels of self-indulgence (or self-control). Arguably, customers with both kinds of goal (indulgence and control goals) can be happier by making (or not making) a purchase (Sääksjärvi et al., 2017). Customers with self-indulgence focus on short-term orientation and do not care about long-term goals to make them instant happy (Hoch and Loewenstein, 1991; Ayadi et al., 2013). However, self-controlled customers can also feel happier thinking about behaving responsibly and being able to avoid negative emotional consequences associated with indulgence such as feeling guilty, shame, fear to fail budget

goals etc. (Kivetz and Keinan 2006; Ramanathan and Williams, 2007; Keinan and Kivetz, 2008). Based on this discussion, the following hypotheses are offered:

H₄. Customer self-indulgence positively affects customer happiness.

H₅. Customer self-control positively affects customer happiness.

2.4. Moderating effects

Consumer psychology literature suggests that customers' self-indulgence coincides with their failure of self-control (Ainslie, 1975; Ramanathan and Williams, 2007; Prelec and Loewenstein, 1991) and thus feeling of indulgence and self-control are mutually exclusive. Considering this mutually exclusive nature of self-indulgence and self-control, this study investigates the moderating effect of gender, age and shopping day on either self-indulgence or self-control to rapport relationship. Early research shows that emotion varies with gender stereotypes (Brinbaum et al., 1980; Shields & Koster, 1989). In interpersonal relationship building, males and females can differ in perception and also can behave differently (LaFrance & Banaji, 1992). Females are conceptualized as more emotional and are better in expressing emotion than males (Fabes & Martin, 1991; Fisher and Dubé, 2005). Several studies report that females are more participative in social interactions and are likely to be more expressive in interpersonal relationship building with their higher emotional intensity (LaFrance & Banaji, 1992; Barrett et al., 1998).

Females also have less self-control over their emotional states than their male counterpart and are more involved in instinctive shopping (Badgaiyan and Verma, 2015; Fabes & Martin, 1991), which may also make them more inclined to self-indulge in marketplace. On the other hand, males usually do not enjoy shopping and tend to limit their information search for purchase, which results in lower possibility to involve in indulgence

related behavior (Mburu, 2010; Foroughi et al., 2013). Females also have higher intention for building interpersonal relationships as well as shopping intention with greater competency on emotional engagement (Jiang and Zhao, 2016; Jiang and Zhao, 2017). Therefore, it is expected that the impact of self-indulgence on rapport with service employees and their own happiness would be greater for females compared to males. Hence, as follows:

H₆. The positive relationships between self-indulgence and a) rapport and b) happiness are moderated by gender in such way that these relationships are stronger for female customers.

Age plays a significant role in customer's understanding of happiness, relationship building approach and intention to indulge in materialistic gains (Cooper et al., 2011; Badgaiyan and Verma, 2015). Drawing the attention on the influence of age differences (Wood, 1998), previous literature suggest that older customers have more self-control than younger customers who are below 35 years due to their greater control over emotion (Bellenger et al., 1978; Badgaiyan and Verma, 2015; Kacen and Lee, 2002). As adults are more aware of self-concept and feel more comfortable with interpersonal, social environment (McCarthy and Hoge, 1982), it is expected that older customers would be more positive in rapport building with frontline employees than younger ones. Based on the social-emotional selectivity theory (Carstensen et al., 1999), previous studies argue that older customers have more control in regulating emotional mechanism and place more value on social interactions (Varela-Neira et al., 2010; Loureiro and Roschk, 2014). Therefore,

H₇. The positive relationships between self-control and a) rapport and b) happiness are moderated by age in such way that these relationship are stronger for older customers.

Finally, shopping day (weekday or weekend) also shapes consumer behavior as customers are generally occupied on weekdays and free on weekends. Time pressure may have impact on customer buying decision as well as their intention to involve in social

interactions with frontline employees. Customers' perceived busy-ness and their concern for time pressure may differ from actual level of busy-ness as customers behave based on their own self-assessment of current work pressure (Gershuny, 1992, 2000, 2005; Kim et al., 2018). Individuals, while considers themselves busy in particular, for work-related pressure, assume it as a symbol of 'good life', perceives busy-ness as favorably and a privilege for them (Gershuny, 2005; Neff, 2006). This positive perception if being busy increases self-importance, exercise self-control and discourages self-indulgence (Kim et al., 2018).

Perceived higher time pressure also induces customers to limit their browsing in purchase and thereby reduce chance to engage in self-indulgence behavior (Kim et al., 2018). While above discussion indicates weekday customers will exert less indulgence (and more self-control) for time pressure, another research stream suggests that hard work gives a self-licensing effect in customers' mind and this may make them more likely to indulge in self-indulgence behavior with less emphasis on self-control (Septianto, 2017). Similarly, pro-social behavior during rapport building with frontline employees may be positive for weekday customers due to their perceived higher self-worth (Bellezza et al., 2017). Hence,

H₈. The relationships between self-indulgence and a) rapport and b) happiness are moderated by shopping day such that these relationships are stronger on the weekdays.

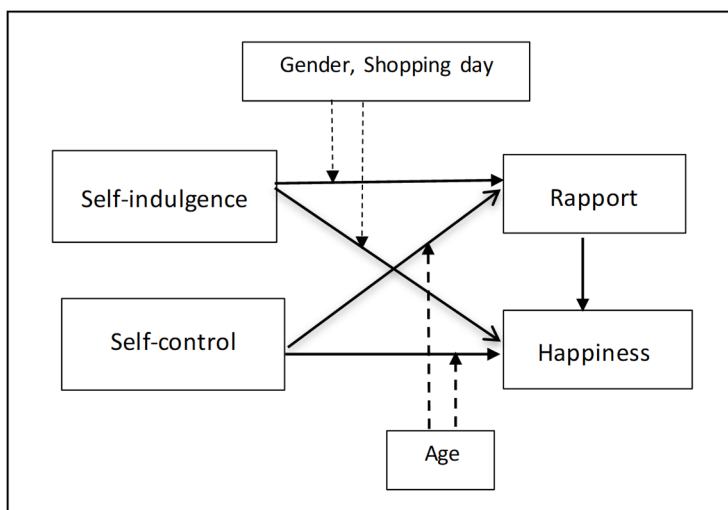


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

Figure 1 summarizes all the hypotheses in a conceptual model.

3. Method

This study uses retail service customers in Australia who have face-to-face interactions with frontline employees during their service encounters because the role of rapport building is more crucial for services and face-to-face service encounters involve greater personal interactions with customers compared to products sales (Fatima et al., 2018; Solomon et al., 1985). This study uses face-to-face interactions because online interactions or self-service technologies require different set of criteria to build rapport and make customers happy for their contextual differences. A survey on 254 participants was conducted using a questionnaire with 5-point Likert scale. No discrimination was made on ethnicity, marital status or working status while choosing respondents and demographic variables such as age, gender and shopping days were recorded. Participants did not receive any monetary or non-monetary benefits to take part in the survey. After missing value treatment and removal of incomplete cases, final sample size was 252, with 71 females (28%) and majority of respondents (around 70%) belong to the 18 to 30 years age-group.

3.1 Measures

In this study, rapport represents individual's personal interactions with the employees in marketplace. Therefore, rapport was measured using five items, including 'related well', 'personal interest on me' 'humor', 'comfortable to interact', 'like to see again' from Gremler and Gwinner (2000) (α value = 0.886). Happiness was measured with four items (participants rate their feelings against each of these 'happy'; 'cheerful'; 'joyful' and 'thrilled' criteria) adopted from a recent study by Petersen et al. (2018) (α value = 0.902). However, the basic

question was same for all these four items; ‘How did you feel while making this purchase’ and then participants were responded on the above four criteria individually. Happiness in this study represents individual’s pleasure with purchasing a service overall, which includes the service itself and interactions with frontlines employees.

In this study, self-indulgence represents a situation when individuals take decision to spend money and indulge themselves in the marketplace. Therefore, self-indulgence was operationalized using four items (α value = 0.755) borrowed from Sharma et al. (2011); namely ‘Enjoy spending’, ‘Indulge myself’, ‘Buy for pleasure’ and ‘Like good things’. Self-control stands for a situation for individuals when they become conscious about spending money and try to follow budget. Hence, three items adapted from Petersen et al. (2018) were used to measure self-control (α value = 0.799), including ‘Monitoring spending behavior’, ‘Consider need before purchase’ and ‘Resist temptation’.

4. Results

The data was analyzed using partial least squares (PLS)-based structural equation modelling (SEM) (Ringle and Sarstedt, 2016; Henseler et al., 2015) as it is suitable with small-sized samples, statistical power and parameter estimation benefits (Hair et al., 2012; Sarstedt et al., 2016). The data was split into subsets based on the demographic variables (age, gender and shopping day) to test their moderating effects. Effect sizes, reliability and validity measures (Henseler et al., 2015) for the models are summarized in Table 1. Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability values met satisfactory cut-off level as well (Nunnally, 1978). However, one scale item ‘like to see again’ of rapport construct was dropped for poor communality value. The square roots of average variance extracted (AVE) values for all the constructs are larger than their correlations with other constructs, which shows discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Discriminant validity was further

confirmed by heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) values (Table 1).

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha				rho_A				Composite Reliability				Average Variance Extracted (AVE)			
Happiness	0.906				0.906				0.934				0.781			
Rapport	0.889				0.895				0.918				0.691			
Self-control	0.756				6.17				0.828				0.715			
Self-indulgence	0.524				0.738				0.787				0.656			
HTMT discriminant validity					Correlations (AVE on diagonal**)											
	Happ	Rapp	Self-control	Self-ind.	Happ	Rapp	Self-cont.	Self-ind.	Happ	Rapp	Self-cont.	Self-ind.	Happ	Rapp	Self-cont.	Self-ind.
Happiness					0.88*											
Rapport	0.34				0.31	0.83*										
Self-control	0.09	0.06			-0.06	0.05	0.85*									
Self-indulgence	0.28	0.18	0.28		0.19	0.15	-0.19	0.81*								
Effect size:	R²				f²											
Happiness	0.121				Happiness				Rapport							
Rapport	0.027				0.09											
Self-control					0.00				0.01							
Self-indulgence					0.02				0.03							

Square root of average variance extracted (AVE) on the diagonal

** Average variance extracted

Table 1: Reliability and validity measures

4.1. Hypotheses testing: Direct effects (H₁ to H₅)

In Table 2, PLS-bootstrapping (Preacher and Hayes, 2004) results (with 95% bias corrected confidence interval) show that self-indulgence is a significant antecedent for rapport and happiness (t -values = 2.13, p -value = 0.04 for rapport and t -values = 2.22, p -value = 0.03 for happiness) and therefore H₁ and H₃ are supported. Similarly, rapport to

happiness is also significant (t -values = 4.72, p -value = 0.00), which supports H₅. However, self-control has no significant effect on either rapport (t -values = 0.79, p -value = 0.43) or happiness (t -value = 0.64, p -value = 0.52). Hence, H₂ and H₄ are not supported.

Hypotheses	Bootstrapping results (95% bias-corrected and accelerated)			Result
	Path coefficient	t-value	p-value	
H ₁ : Self-indulgence to rapport	0.16	2.13	0.04	Supported
H ₂ : Self-control to rapport	0.08	0.79	0.43	Not supported
H ₃ : Self-indulgence to happiness	0.14	2.22	0.03	Supported
H ₄ : Self-control to happiness	-0.05	0.64	0.52	Not Supported
H ₅ : Rapport to happiness	0.29	4.72	0.00	Supported

Table 2: PLS output (H₁ to H₅)

4.2. Hypotheses testing: Moderating effects (H_{6 to 8})

Multi-group analysis (MGA) (Henseler et al., 2016) reveals that women with self-indulgence goals have higher intention towards rapport building with frontline employees (path coefficient difference = 0.39, female sample t -value=3.01 and male sample t -value=0.75) than with males (Table 3). Therefore, H_{6a} is supported. However, gender does not moderate the relationship between self-indulgence and happiness; hence, H_{6b} is not supported. Moreover, age is a significant moderator for self-control and rapport relationship as older customers tend to behave more positively in building rapport than younger customers (path coefficient difference = 0.37, older customer sample t -value=2.26 and younger customer sample t -value=0.61), thus supporting H_{7a}. However, age does not moderate the link between self-control and happiness, therefore H_{7b} is not supported. Finally, shopping day has a significant moderating effect on the self-indulgence to rapport relationship (path

coefficient difference = 0.48, weekday sample t-value = 3.02 and weekend sample t-value = 1.33), supporting H_{8a}. However, shopping day does not moderate the relationship between self-indulgence and rapport, thus H_{8b} is not supported.

<i>Gender as a moderator</i>	<i>Path Coefficient difference</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>t-value Males</i>	<i>t-value Females</i>
H _{6a} : Self-indulgence > Rapport	0.39	0.03	0.75	3.01
H _{6b} : Self-indulgence > Happiness	0.14	0.39	1.43	1.18
<i>Age as a moderator</i>			<i>Old Customers</i>	<i>Young Customers</i>
H _{7a} : Self-control > Rapport	0.37	0.04	2.26	0.61
H _{7b} : Self-control > Happiness	0.00	0.99	0.42	0.52
<i>Shopping day as a moderator</i>			<i>Weekday</i>	<i>Weekend</i>
H _{8a} : Self-indulgence > Rapport	0.48	0.01	3.02	1.33
H _{8b} : Self-indulgence > Happiness	0.28	0.12	1.49	0.81

Table 3: Moderation analysis: Multi-group Analysis (MGA) Output (H₆ to 8)

4.3. Additional analysis-1: Mediation effects of rapport

Four additional mediation models were tested using bootstrapping method (Preacher and Hayes, 2004) to assess the mediation impact of rapport between self-indulgence to happiness and self-control to happiness. However, none of these mediation effects is significant at 95% confidence interval level (see results in Table 4) based on the interpretation of Zhao et al. (2010). Although mediation effects are non-significant, rapport has comparatively greater indirect influence on happiness while self-indulgence is the antecedent (1.72%) than self-control (0.75%).

Hypothesis	Lower value	Upper value	Adjusted R ²	Indirect effect (%)	Mediation (95% confidence interval)
i) Rapport mediates self-indulgence and happiness	-0.019	0.062	0.108	1.72%	Not significant
ii) Rapport mediates self-control and happiness	-0.031	0.044	0.096	0.75%	

Table 4: Additional analysis 1: Bootstrapping output for mediation analysis

4.4. Additional analysis-2: Importance–performance matrix analysis (IPMA)

To check the relative importance and performance of each construct for ‘happiness’, an additional analysis was conducted using the importance–performance matrix (IPMA) (Ringle and Sarstedt, 2016; Schloderer et al., 2014) on both models. Results (Table 5) show that rapport is the most important construct for building happiness (0.29) following self-indulgence (0.13). Self-control is the least important construct for developing happiness (-0.09). In terms of performance criteria, rapport and self-indulgence are well performing (around 65%) while self-control has the minimum value (around 56%).

Constructs	Importance	Performance
Self-indulgence	0.13	65.65
Self-control	-0.09	56.20
Rapport	0.29	65.58

Table 5: Additional analysis 2: IPMA result (Target Construct-Happiness)

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Conceptual contributions

This study extends past research on the different positive outcomes of rapport such as satisfaction, word of mouth, trust, dependency on firm (Macintosh^a, 2009; Gremler and Gwinner, 2000; Kim and Ok, 2010; Fatima and Mascio, 2018), by confirming that rapport also results in customer happiness. Considering the key role of frontline employees in service encounters (Kim and Baker, 2019; Sok et al., 2018), this study re-emphasizes the significance of rapport to make customers happy with the purchase as it brings comfort for the customers (Alison and Sherriff, 2011; Lloyd and Luk, 2011). This study also resolves the dilemma in existing literature on self-controlled customers' intention toward social interactions, by confirming the negative relationship between them. Supporting previous research findings (Hillebrand and Bloemer, 2004; Danaher et al., 2008), it shows that customers with self-control goals hesitate to build good rapport with frontline employees. Perceiving employees as selling agent, these customers like to avoid relationship building as they have original plans for buying less, which prohibits them from enthusiastic rapport building.

Lack of support for H₂ coincides with the previous finding that value-based customers are less likely to build relationship (Hillebrand and Bloemer, 2004; Danaher et al., 2008). However, contradicting previous claim that self-control makes customers happier for avoiding negative consequences (i.e. guilty, shame) (Keinan and Kivetz, 2008; Kivetz and Keinan 2006; Ramanathan and Williams, 2007), this study found non-significant evidence between happiness and self-control relationship (H₄). A possible explanation could be that customers feel deprived as they withhold some of their consumptions and do not feel happy about it. Another reason could be the presence of 'self-indulgence' related questions in the questionnaire. In other words, customers may unconsciously compare the situations between self-indulging and self-controlling in purchase and therefore feel unhappy about self-controlling. Thus, future research on this area can use separate questionnaires with different set of participants to avoid this unintended comparison effect in customers' mind.

This study also shows that customers with self-indulgence goal are more likely to involve in rapport building as they perceive no conflicting goals between firm's employees and their own positive buying orientation. While literature on self-indulgence and self-control are heavily focused on healthy/unhealthy food consumption (Petersen et al., 2018; McCarthy et al., 2017) or other consumer durables (Ayadi et al., 2013), very few attempts were made in previous studies to understand impact of these emotional drives in service context involving face-to-face customer interactions with frontline employees. Therefore, this study is among the first attempts in service relationships as well as consumer psychology literatures that takes into consideration the effects of customers' self-indulgence or self-control goals on their rapport building behavior with frontline service employees.

As rapport building depends on social contexts (Grahe and Bernieri, 2002; Bernieri et al. 1996), this study investigates moderating effect of age and gender on rapport. As females are characterized as frequently being in emotional states and able to easily translate such emotions into behaviors (Fabes & Martin, 1991), this study confirms that females are more open to indulgence related emotions and are positive towards rapport building. Considering expressivity as a subjective cue (Grahe and Bernieri, 2002), this study emphasizes on females' positive rapport building behavior during indulging themselves, as they are more expressive to communicate their emotions than males. Further, significant age differences on self-control and rapport relationship show that due to their skill in controlling emotion, older customers may be more likely to be positive toward rapport building than younger customers.

Considering hedonic indulgence increases individual's enjoyment for fulfilling their unmet needs (Xu & Schwarz, 2009), this study is one of the initial attempts to investigate moderating impact of shopping day on the relationship between self-indulgence and rapport toward frontline employees. This study contributes to the literature by showing that self-

indulgent customers are more likely to be positive in rapport-building on weekdays than on weekends. However, all the moderation hypotheses involving happiness are non-significant. A distinction between rapport and happiness is that rapport building is an action toward frontline employees whereas happiness is a feeling. This study thus can conclude that individuals' rapport building behavior is variable to customers' demographic characteristics (i.e. age, gender) or situational context (i.e. shopping day) but feeling of happiness is a discrete construct, less likely to be influenced by age, gender or shopping day.

5.2. Managerial implications

All firms want to make their customers happy. However, service firms find it particularly challenging as services largely include experiential component and face-to-face interactions (Grove and Fish, 1992; Fatima et al., 2018) Thus, managers should give emphasis on building rapport with customers as findings suggest rapport with frontline employees plays a significant role on customer happiness with purchase. Firms need to be aware that customers with self-indulgence goals will be more likely to make rapport with frontline employees than the customers with self-control goals. Hence, frontline service employees will need to spend less time and effort to build rapport with self-indulgent customers. Thus, separate strategies are required to motivate self-controlled customers for rapport building. Firms can use other strategies for dealing with self-controlled customers by providing training to the frontline employees to assure 'it's alright to buy less', 'mentioning about the importance for budget control' in conversation, not to involve in force selling etc. These initiatives will reduce self-controlled customers' anxiety and will make them more comfortable to build rapport with employees resulting happiness with the purchase.

However, all self-controlled customers are not rigid to make rapport with frontline employees as results show that older customers with self-control goals are more positive

toward rapport building than younger customers. Since older customers have greater control on their emotional expressions (Bellenger et al., 1978; Badgaiyan and Verma, 2015; Kacen and Lee, 2002) and have higher inter-personal skill, frontline employee may find it easier to have a good rapport with them in less time. Similarly, females tend to become more enthusiastic in making positive rapport while they are in indulging mood, hence it may be easier for frontline employees to build rapport with females than males. To make successful relationships with male customers, frontline employees need to be trained to focus on real-life solutions rather than relying on the customers' self-indulgence motive.

Finally, firms need to indicate frontline employees that they may need to take extra efforts to build rapport with customers on weekends than on busy weekdays. Probably, customers have a spillover effect of good manner and office customs in their mind while dealing with frontline employees in service encounters after coming from work, which is absent for weekend shoppers. On weekends, customers are more relaxed and tend to enjoy shopping by engaging in variety seeking behavior, making them more conservative in rapport building with a particular firm's employees.

5.3. Limitations

This study suffers from the limitations of survey research. As cross-sectional survey data fails to explain casual inferences (Ranaweera and Menon, 2013), future research involving experimental or longitudinal design is recommended. Moreover, an individual may have self-indulgence or self-control goals based on his or her mood, type of product, service or purchase method, such as online, face-to-face or self-service technology (Danaher et al., 2008; Allard and White, 2015; Klesse et al., 2015; Kim et al, 2018; Loureiro and Roschk, 2014). Each of these situational variables may have varied impact on rapport building approach and customer happiness and therefore may be investigated in future research.

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