From a-maze to amazing: exploring aspects of consumer wellbeing

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Abstract

The telecommunication company NanoConnect reflected declining year-on-year customer satisfaction scores. Based on existing quantitative research results, customer experiences were qualitatively explored and the findings mapped onto selected themes of the system psychodynamic model to describe consumer wellbeing. The model integrates concepts from system psychodynamic theory and positive psychology.

Firstly, the purpose of the research was to gain a deeper understanding of the organisation's declining customer satisfaction scores. Secondly, quantitative data from existing research results were triangulated with the qualitative data of this study to explore the original findings further. Thirdly, the research purpose was to determine whether the system psychodynamic wellness model could be applied to describe consumer wellbeing.

Four main themes emerged, namely Poorly defined brand identity, Perceptions of competitors, Limited customer contact and Limited range of products and services. These themes were integrated with the themes Identity, Hope and Love of the System psychodynamic wellness model.

The unique contribution of the study being reported here includes the application of a psychological wellness framework to the findings of the qualitative customer satisfaction research.

Key phrases
brand research; customer satisfaction; positive psychology; system psychodynamic theory; telecommunication

1.   INTRODUCTION

"How can you be known as the communication company of choice while you cannot communicate with your customers?" This comment was made by an enraged corporate customer during the fieldwork phase of this study. Service quality across all industries in South Africa, with the exception of the automotive industry, was at its lowest levels over the past decade (The Orange Index Report 2012:2). The competitive landscape in the South

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African telecommunications industry has evolved from a monopoly to a battlefield of extreme competition over the last decade. The ability of organisations to adapt to the continuously changing technological environment has become vital to retain customers and gain market share.

NanoConnect is a telecommunication company that provides data services to corporate customers. Services to customers include the secure and reliable provision of wireless network connections between company head offices and their business sites, point-of-sales handheld devices and bank-terminal connections. Recent business challenges include significant fewer loyal customers, high staff turnover and a diminishing market share.

The most recent customer satisfaction results (Customer Loyalty Measurement Report 2011/2012:4) revealed that perceptions of Overall quality of services at the company declined from a Top2Box score of 72% (Excellent/Very good) in 2011 to 63% in 2012 (p < 0.05). In total, eight different dimensions were measured, with three of them primarily contributing to the decline in the perceptions of the overall quality of service at NanoConnect. Perceptions of Most recent contact and Products and services were rated significantly lower than the previous year, while perceptions of Communication were also declining. Nanoconnect planned strategic interventions to improve its business and management practices. The drive to improve the Overall quality of service score in future included a follow-up qualitative research project to explore customer experiences in more depth, focussing on the dimensions Most recent contact, Products and services and Communication.

The research process progressed stepwise from an existing quantitative research project that formed the foundation for further exploration of consumer wellbeing in this study. Research questions can emerge from previous research (Garner & Scott 2013:35) and in this study the organisation wanted to know what the underlying reasons for declining customer satisfaction scores were.

The primary objective of the current study was to gain a deeper understanding of the decline in customer satisfaction scores through a follow-up qualitative research study. Secondary research objectives included the triangulation of the qualitative data with the quantitative data and analysing these findings further with the system psychodynamic (SPD) wellness model (Henning 2009:180) to determine its applicability in a market research context. Concepts from the positive psychology and system psychodynamic theoretical paradigms

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are integrated in this model which is currently applied in organisational development research only.

The research methodology included a card game as a conversational tool to elicit responses from ten corporate customers during face-to-face interviews. Current and ideal experiences as well as suggestions for improvement formed part of the qualitative inquiry to generate insights.

The findings were mapped to selected dimensions of the SPD wellness model (Henning 2009:180). The dimensions Hope, Love and Identity conceptualised customer experiences from a positive psychology and system psychodynamic perspective. The unique contribution of the study being reported here includes the application of a psychological wellness model to the qualitative findings of a customer satisfaction research study. A further contribution is the positive evidence of the value of data triangulation in providing valid and reliable insights, thereby enhancing the trustworthiness of the findings.

The article commences with a theoretical framework, followed by a discussion of the research design, findings, the introduction of the SPD wellness model (Henning 2009:180), conclusions and recommendations.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Two distinct theories formed the framework for this article, namely system psychodynamic theory and positive psychology. Both these theories were merged into the SPD wellness model (Henning 2009:180) that was eventually applied to the findings of the research.

The model was originally constructed as a psychological wellness qualitative diagnostic tool within the organisational development context. Currently, it can be applied as a consulting model on individual, group and organisational level.

Psychological wellbeing seems to fall within a broad field of study that examines quality of life issues. Consumer wellbeing particularly is defined as marketing strategies that 'foresee the future' and provide value to customers (Nienaber 2010:668). According to this definition, marketers should strive to enhance consumers' wellbeing without harming customers and have socially responsible marketing practices.

In this study, the definition of quality-of-life is extended to aspects of customer satisfaction, implying the extent to which customers' expectations are met and how 'well' customers are in terms of their interactions with the company under scrutiny (Nienaber 2010:668).

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Aspects of the theoretical framework will be discussed in short.

2.1 Systems psychodynamics

Systems psychodynamics is theoretically informed by both systems theory as well as psychodynamics, and developed as a result of the Group Relations Training research and experiential learning events performed at the Tavistock Institute in London. It refers to the repertoire of psychological behaviours within and between groups and organisations as well as their related conscious and unconscious motivating forces (Motsoaledi & Cilliers 2012:3). It contains a depth psychology organisational theory and an organisational development consultancy stance. The theory describes various unconscious patterns of work relations. For the purpose of this study, the assumption of boundary management (Henning 2009:73) was relevant and will be described next.

2.1.1 Boundary management

Systems are separated from their environment by boundaries. The boundaries of an organisation or individual can be likened to cell membranes, as it is easy to tell what is inside and what is outside the boundary (Lowman 2002:271). A closed system has rigid, impenetrable boundaries whereas an open system has permeable boundaries between itself and the environment. Three types of boundaries are identified within the system psychodynamic paradigm, namely space, task and time boundaries. These boundaries relate to the purpose of an organisation and differentiate it from competing companies in the industry. Information regarding why the organisation exists, for whom, where, when and how it will do business are contained within these boundaries.

2.1.2 Space boundaries

An organisation provides a space where customer needs can be contained (Henning 2009:74). The organisation needs a strategy that determines the space – that is the type of industry as well as the geographical area – within which the organisation will do business. Nienaber (2010:668) stated that customer needs and wants relate to the selection of an arena where the company wants to compete as well as to providing value to its customers.

2.1.3 Task boundaries

Decision-making and goal setting are important tasks that leaders of an organisation need to make in order to define and to remain within the organisation's task boundary. Organisations must decide which products and services customers' desire, including the

price they are willing to pay. The various functions of a head office and the regional branches are described through task boundaries. Specific roles and functions of the employees are delineated in the organisational structure through clear task boundaries.

2.1.4 Time boundaries

Time boundaries define how long it will take to install or repair a product or service, to deal with a customer's complaint or to answer a call at the helpdesk. Specific timelines, for example, as specified in service level agreements, will create a mutual understanding between the organisation and the customer regarding service expectations.

Without well-defined boundaries, neither the employees nor the customers would know the correct processes or relevant products and neither would therefore be able to manage employee performance or customer expectations. The organisation may even market to the wrong target group and provide irrelevant products and services. Ultimately, the expectations of customers will not be met, their relationship with the brand will be tainted and their loyalty towards the organisation will falter.

The degree of permeability of the space, task and time boundaries determines how 'well' an organisation is, which again influences the wellness of the customers of the organisation, that is, their overall satisfaction with the quality of the services they receive.

Organisations that are considered 'well' can be described as open systems with boundaries that have the necessary flexibility to adapt to sudden changes in the environment. If there are no boundaries in organisations relationships and therefore competitiveness become impossible (Struwig & Cilliers 2012:1). Boundaries that are either too rigid or too permeable will lead to the death of the system as it destroys itself (Bateson 2000). Flexible boundaries of a system are penetrable and allow for greater integration and collaboration with the environment of the system, which ensures constant change and growth for a system (Henning 2009:74).

Both relatively open and relatively closed boundaries are necessary for a well-adjusted organisation, and the two states complement each other. Opposites or paradoxes are central to a psychodynamic perspective (Stacey 2003:155) and there is no energy unless there is a tension of opposites. The same notion is true in the psychology of organisations. In this regard Kets de Vries (2001) referred to 'sick' or 'toxic' organisations. Organisational dysfunctions at NanoConnect and their possible key drivers needed to be exposed first before interventions for future improvements could be established.

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A focus on good adjustment within the system psychodynamic paradigm does not exclude the traditional focus on maladjustment. In the research being reported here, the emphasis was on a holistic understanding of both maladjustment and well adjustment in the organisation. The field of positive psychology was introduced as a way to explore customer experiences.

2.2   Positive psychology

Positive psychology can be defined as a sub-discipline of psychology that scientifically studies the nature, manifestations and ways of enhancing positive subjective experiences linked to strengths and virtues (Snyder & Lopez 2007:4). Psychology is not just about illness or health; it is also about work, education, insight, love, growth and play. This perspective implies an active human (or organisation) that is constantly adapting to the environment to ensure wellness.

As a field of study, positive psychology recognises the importance of learning and it optimistically focuses on the future rather on the past. Positive psychology is concerned with concepts such as love, hope, creativity, values, meaning, self-actualisation and a mature identity (Snyder & Lopez 2007:6).

The research design aimed to apply a positive psychology model to understand current customer experiences with the future expectation to improve services through appropriate strategic interventions.

3.   RESEARCH DESIGN

The research was set within the information technology management domain within various corporate organisations. A qualitative research approach (Glesne 2011:1-25) was the chosen method of inquiry in order to gain a deeper understanding of customer experiences with NanoConnect. Non-mathematical descriptions were collected to provide in-depth descriptions regarding customer perceptions of service quality and to add insight to the existing quantitative data.

The author followed a systems thinking approach to understand the topic under scrutiny. From this perspective, the organisation is perceived as a system that is interconnected with various other subsystems. Context is important where consumers form an interdependent subsystem which interacts with the greater organisational system.

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The author categorised the emerging themes from the data by the drawing of distinctions between meanings, while keeping in mind that 'the map is not the territory' (Bateson 2000:460). The descriptions (maps) that customers formulated of their experiences with the organisation (territory) are their representations of those experiences.

In the same way, the author formulated themes or maps based on customer descriptions, which again are her representations of the raw data. As such, the author becomes part of an observing system, describing descriptions or mapping maps of customer experiences. These findings were integrated with selected dimensions of the system psychodynamic wellness model.

Decision-makers concerned with the information technology functions in various corporate companies within the retail industry study were the participants in the study. These customers of NanoConnect made use of virtual private network (VPN) services and the selected participants were information-rich cases that interacted often with NanoConnect. The study therefore used a multiple, embedded case study. During the data collection and analysis phases, the researcher took up the role of a systems psycho-dynamically informed consultant.

3.1 Sampling

Purposeful sampling fitted the rationale of the study (Fisher 2006:65). Ten South African retail organisations that make use of the Virtual Private network services from Nanoconnect were included in the study. The main information technology decision-makers of the organisations were selected to represent their organisations.

3.2 Data collection method

In total, 10 face-to-face semi-structured interviews with VPN customers were conducted at their offices. Qualitative interviewing begins with an explorative and open mindset to the variety of perspectives and issues that may arise. While you look for patterns in your analyses you do not reduce the multiple interpretations to numbers (Glesne 2011:8). Interview validity comes to rest on the quality of craftsmanship in research, and therefore the quality of the information obtained during an interview is largely dependent on the skill of the interviewer. An experienced interviewer conducted 10 in-depth interviews and used a discussion guide to structure the interview of 1hour 30 minutes with each of the 10 participants.

The main section of the discussion guide was described as 'Laying your cards on the table'. This was used as a conversational tool in which the eight touch points of the original customer loyalty measurement were represented in a pack of eight cards.

Respondents were asked to spontaneously pick any one or more cards from the pack that they would like to comment on when thinking of their interactions with NanoConnect. Current and ideal experiences as well as suggestions for improvement formed part of the qualitative inquiry to generate insights.

The rationale of the exercise was to elicit customer responses regarding the different touch points, with a focus on *Most recent contact*, *Products and services* and *Communication*. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for the purpose of analysis. All participants agreed to have the interviews recorded.

3.3 Data analysis

Content analysis was the chosen method of data analysis. The raw data was explored to identify themes which were categorised into meaningful units of data, because, as Patton (1990:403) explained, "These regularities represent patterns that can be sorted into categories".

The researcher employed strategies of trustworthiness to ensure that the data analysis process was trustworthy, implying it was credible and valid (Glesne 2011:8-9). The triangulation of the quantitative data with the qualitative data enhanced the credibility and validity of the data giving it a sense of authenticity. The interpretation and emerging themes were peer reviewed by a team of experienced market researchers, which further assured the authenticity of the data.

Ethicality was assured by formally contracting the research activities in advance with each participant. All the participants gave their informed consent and took part in the discussions on a voluntary basis. The data was anonymously stored.

4.   FINDINGS

The findings were reported per theme with supporting quotes. The themes were integrated with the three main themes of the SPD wellness model, followed by the conclusions, recommendations, limitations and suggestions for future research.

Four main themes emerged, namely (1) Poorly defined brand image; (2) Limited direct customer interaction; (3) Limited range of products and services and (4) Perceptions of the

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competitive landscape. These themes were integrated with the themes Hope, Love and Identity, the three main themes of the SPD wellness model to explain the findings further.

The data triangulation illustrated how the existing quantitative data are mirrored in the qualitative findings. All 10 participants spontaneously chose the card Products and services as the first priority card to be discussed, and the Communication card as their second priority.

These unprompted choices of participants were assumed to be top-of-the-mind concerns that customers wanted to discuss. This finding was meaningful, as it qualitatively confirmed the results of the quantitative research, where Products and services and Communication both had the strongest correlation with Overall quality of service while both scores also declined from the previous year. The four main themes that emerged from the qualitative data are presented below.

4.1 Theme 1: Limited range of product and services

From a marketing perspective, 'quality refers to the ability of a product to satisfy a customer's needs or requirements. If product features are not what the customer requires, then quality and satisfaction will be negatively affected. The majority of respondents indicated the need for greater variety.

Although the available products and services were satisfactory in terms of their effectiveness, the majority of the respondents expressed a growing need for a greater variety of options, as well as more innovative, advanced and state-of-the-art products and services:

- *We need variety. The more options, the better for us.*
- *Their devices need innovation; they can do much better.*
- *NanoConnect is a little bit behind. Many companies don't work on 3G anymore – they've moved to direct wireless connections which just work better – better speed and more stability.*
- *Be more innovative. NanoConnect is a follower, not a leader.*

Despite perceptions of limited product offerings, all respondents gave positive responses regarding the reliability and availability of products and services:

- *They provide a quick connection between our stores, reliable services – it is rarely down and easy to install.*

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- *We wouldn't be able to operate without them; they handle all the business at hand.*

However, customer satisfaction is dependent on the total product offering, including product range or variety.

4.2   Theme 2: Limited direct customer interaction

All 10 participants indicated the need to have some form of one-on-one interaction with the CEO on a regular basis. There were mentions of the CEO who communicated promptly and directly with customers during the previous year. This had a positive effect, as it made customers feel important and valued:

The CEO speaks in an understandable way. He has drastically improved communication and responds quickly to emails. However, this was not enough to build strong relationships and positive perceptions of communication:

- *Their communication is not that good; we only hear from them when the contract is to be renewed, i.e. every two years. Once everything is signed, they forget about you. I would like to hear from them at least every six months, telling us what they have to offer.*

Regarding instances of direct customer interaction, all the participants indicated positive interactions with service managers and other staff members:

- *We had good experiences. They share knowledge and the service manager understands our business. She always returns my calls and sorts things out brilliantly.*
- *The service manager always responds, understands our business and gets things sorted out.*

The majority of the respondents saw a solid and stable relationship with someone in the organisation as a growing need. Communication via e-mail and SMSs (text messages) were the preferred methods of interaction. A few customers indicated the need for social and marketing events:

- *I would like to have some marketing events such as golf days.*

Opportunities to interact with customers were perceived to be scarce, contributing to less positive perceptions of communication.

4.3   Theme 3: Poorly defined brand image

The majority of the respondents reported a stable one-on-one relationship with someone within the company. However, the organisation had no public visibility. From the results, it

was clear that NanoConnect did not have a brand image amongst its existing customers. It could therefore be expected that potential customers out in the market would have an even lower awareness of the brand. The personality of an organisation is made up of many things, including its name, products and services, pricing structures and the style of its advertising.

During a personification exercise respondents were asked to describe NanoConnect as a person, ascribing personal qualities to the organisation. The majority of the respondents described the organisation as an old male with a limited personality. He knew his job, he was experienced and reasonably sensible, but he was not inventive, not too extravagant, nor outgoing:

- *He is a more mature person; he knows what he has done and knows what he needs to do.*
- *He is not a leading-edge type of guy.*
- *This person is someone who would assist customers no matter how big the problem is, but who is not known for his risk-taking behaviour:*
- *He is risk-averse.*
- *He is not an early adopter and makes use of tried and tested technology.*

This personification revealed that NanoConnect did not have a strong brand personality. For a data-solutions provider in a new market with growing competition, a strong brand image is essential and this will give the organisation a competitive edge. At that stage, NanoConnect would not break through the telecommunication clutter in the market as it did not occupy any strategic position:

- *He is like the Deputy President; he doesn't know where he fits in.*

NanoConnect is a market leader in the provision of data services in South Africa. Despite this, the majority of the respondents mentioned that they were not aware of any advertising campaigns, and this contributed to the weak brand positioning:

- *We have never seen them on any communication channel.*
- *He does not let you know whether he is techno-savvy or not.*
- *They do not communicate about their products e.g. VPN Lite type of products.*

When a product is marketed, mostly through web-based communication or through a service manager, the organisation is often perceived as advertising promises that they cannot deliver:

- *They oversell sometimes, promise more than what can be achieved.*
- *They are chasing cars and praying they won't catch them.*

Through advertising of their products and services, NanoConnect could create hope for their customers. Customers hope to have their business needs fulfilled and hope to increase the profitability of their own businesses (Ogilvy 1983:117).

From a systems perspective, parts of a system are interdependent, and they influence one another reciprocally (Bateson 2000:436). A strong brand image may heighten awareness and loyalty levels not only amongst customers, but also amongst the company's own employees. Corporate advertising can improve the morale of employees. As Ogilvy (1983:117) remarked, "Who wants to work for an outfit that nobody has ever heard of?" Customers were aware of the high turnover of staff members at NanoConnect:

- *They have a high staff turnover; people are moving in and out.*

The brand is perceived to be relationship-led through service managers and business consultants rather than brand-led through a strong brand image, and this creates a risk as it leaves a service vacuum in the mind of the customers.

NanoConnect needs a well-defined brand image if it wants to remain competitive in the fast-growing telecommunications market. While its reputation is mostly positive amongst its customers, perceptions are that it is not a well-recognised brand. A stronger brand identity will prevent NanoConnect from becoming faceless in the mind of current and potential customers, and will contribute to the overall perceptions of quality.

4.4 Theme 4: Perceptions of the competitive landscape

The majority of the respondents viewed the competitors in this market as flexible, vibrant, dynamic and willing to go the extra mile. Competitors were described as young, either male or female, known for taking risks and not as old-fashioned as NanoConnect. This imaginary person's hobby was seen as wireless technology and he was perceived to have a natural flair for and understanding of new technology:

- *He is not as old as NanoConnect; more outgoing and more current.*
- *While competitors were perceived as young, some were perceived as making noises without delivering on expectations yet:*

Competitors in this market focus on building relationships and driving business partnerships that are very personal. Combined with mostly strong brand identities, they seem to be a

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growing threat to NanoConnect, who does not have a positive reputation regarding communication:

▪ *Compared to competitors, NanoConnect's communication about new products is not good.*

The competitive landscape is growing fast and these new businesses are taking up strategic positions to gain market share. Understanding the changing needs and expectations of customers and the ability to adapt are key success factors to the survival and growth of the company.

The findings as described above illustrate the competitive landscape through the customer perceptions of its products and services and the way the organisation communicates with its customers.

The products and services demarcate the identity of any organisation, that is, what their values are what they can provide to their customers. The promises made through advertising and marketing create hope. The quality of customer care is also implied through direct and indirect interactions by sales representatives and mentions of direct involvement in customer concerns by the CEO of NanoConnect.

4.5   The SPD wellness model

The SPD wellness model (Henning 2009:180) is a qualitative diagnostic framework that is currently applied in consulting services to organisations. In total, the model consists of 39 concepts.

For the purpose of this study the findings of the research will be mapped onto the three first-level themes of the model, namely Identity, Hope and Love. Figure 1 below is a graphic presentation of the model, identifying only the three first level themes.

4.5.1 First level analysis, Theme 1: Identity

The theme *Identity* is all about becoming and explains the development of a unique personality and how it is maintained. The identity of an organisation can be compared to a personality as it portrays certain characteristics and a particular image.

From the data, it was clear that NanoConnect lacked an image and a brand identity with which to compete against other brand identities in the industry. Customers relate to a brand identity (Ogilvy 1983:118). A lack of awareness in the market will not lead to the acquisition of new customers and will cause loyal customers to look for other options to provide in their

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needs. A strong sense of brand identity is needed to make customers feel connected to the organisation, which at the time did not seem to be the case at NanoConnect.
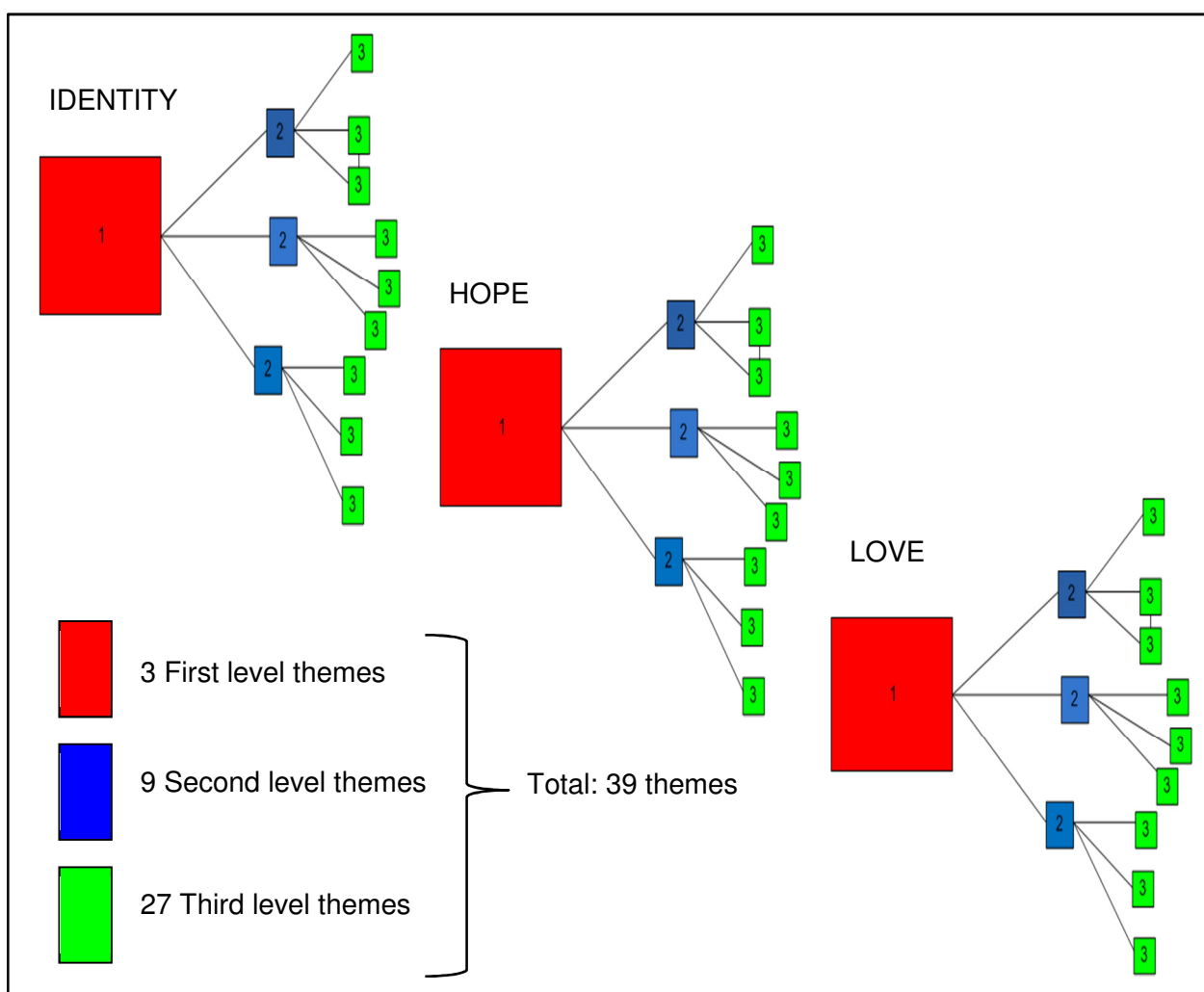

FIGURE 1: System psychodynamic wellness model
Source: Henning 2009:180

4.5.2 First-level analysis, Theme 2: Hope

Hope is described as a prime form of psychological capital in an organisation: "Hopeful thinking can produce benefits in several life arenas, one of the more important of which is work" (Synder & Lopez 2007:428). The search for meaning and direction for the future is relevant to this theme. Advertising and marketing are all about selling hope to customers, and without an integrated communication strategy, NanoConnect does not provide hope. Customers will respond to organisations that make promises (thereby giving them hope) as well as deliver on those advertising promises (Ogilvy 1983:117).

4.5.3 First-level analysis, Theme 3: Love

The theme *Love* illustrates relational aspects and in this study, it refers to the way the organisation care for the needs and expectations of its customers. It describes to what extent NanoConnects' interaction with its customers create value for money. Limited client interaction does not make the customer feel valued and cared for. At the time of the research, personal contact was limited at NanoConnect and could have contributed to the low customer satisfaction scores because customers expected more.

5. DISCUSSION

The purpose of the research was to gain a deeper understanding of the reasons for the decline in customer perceptions of quality of service at NanoConnect. From the qualitative results it is clear why the customer satisfaction scores are declining year on year. The four themes that emerged painted a picture of the underlying customer concerns at NanoConnect.

Customers do not feel valued and cared for; a poorly defined brand identity hinders brand affinity and the lack of an integrated communication strategy to sell hope contributes to low awareness levels of available products and services that could fulfil the business needs of customers. From the quantitative data, three themes were statistically identified as key drivers of the overall quality of service, namely Most recent contact, Products and services, and Communication.

During the qualitative research, the same eight dimensions of the quantitative study were presented in the card exercise. The same three themes, Most recent contact; Products and services, and Communication were spontaneously chosen in the same order by all participants as areas of concern that they would like to discuss during the face-to-face interviews.

This is an interesting finding as it confirms the value of method triangulation, i.e. the quantitative results are validated by the qualitative results. Interventions that address these three key drivers of customer satisfaction should be planned and executed to prevent a further decline and a loss of market share for Nanoconnect regarding their Virtual Private Network customer segment. The qualitative findings were mapped onto the SPD wellness model to describe consumer wellbeing at a higher level of conceptualisation.

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5.1   Practical implications

Based on the findings of the study the implementation of specific intervention strategies was recommended. A lack of communication or poor communication sends a message of being uninvolved and uninterested in the needs and expectations of customers. The identification of an integrated communication strategy would enhance customer perceptions of a brand identity.

The introduction of a variety of products and services, driven by the current technology, would provide more options of advanced products to customers. The improvement of direct customer interaction through more frequent customer contact, courtesy calls and site visits would improve relationships with customers. The establishment of creative sessions and forums can stimulate the renewal of product design and ideas around more caring services towards customers at NanoConnect.

The implication for managers in the organisation is an increased need to adopt a more transformational style to encourage change and innovation amongst their current subordinates. Managers should recognize and reward healthy risk-taking behaviour to encourage a culture of innovation and renewal.

5.2   Limitations of the study

The study focussed on a specific industry; organisation and customer segment and the results cannot be generalised to a different context. Only Virtual Private Network customers were included in the study and the results reflect their perceptions and experiences. The remaining customer segments namely Residential, Business and Global may have different perceptions regarding customer service. In qualitative research it is useful to replace the word 'generalisability' with 'relevance' because the results are relevant to the specific context (Garner & Scott 2013:35).

5.3   Future research opportunities

The research results can be used as baseline information for a future tracking study to monitor progress regarding brand awareness and employee satisfaction in the organisation. Nanoconnect could benefit if the study is replicated amongst the current excluded customer segments towards the value creation for current customers as well as innovative marketing strategies to increase their market share.

Future research could focus on the application of the SPD wellness model to explore employee satisfaction to offer insights into organisational wellbeing from a positive psychology perspective. The model can also be applied in different industries and organisations to qualitatively explore consumer wellbeing.

6. CONCLUSION

The research findings described consumer wellbeing and contributed to a deeper understanding of the reasons behind the decline of customer satisfaction scores at NanoConnect. The unique contribution of the study reported here includes the application of a psychological wellness model to describe consumer wellbeing while illustrating the combined strength of quantitative and qualitative data triangulation.

In the quantitative as well as the qualitative research results, the themes Most recent contact, Products and services, and Communication were identified as the key drivers of overall quality of service at NanoConnect. The quantitative data were confirmed by the qualitative data, triangulating the research findings in a reliable and valid manner.

The SPD wellness model could successfully be applied as a qualitative diagnostic framework to understand consumer wellbeing on a higher level of conceptualisation from the system psychodynamic and positive psychology paradigms. Hope, Identity and Love described customer experiences from the perspective of the wellness model. Future intervention strategies based on the findings of the research have the potential to transform mere customer transactions into positive customer engagements, improving NanoConnect from the maze of concerns towards excellent customer service.

Employee wellbeing was not within the scope of this study but a high employee turn-over rate was mentioned by the some of the customers. From a systems psychodynamic perspective the organisation as a whole is important. A reciprocal relationship exists between employee wellbeing and consumer wellbeing. Employees who associate and engage with the organisations' brand identity contribute to its positive psychological capital, making it a high-hope organisation (Snyder & Lopez 2007:264).

In the fast-changing South African telecommunication market, maintenance of the status quo or failure of change interventions can be equated to organisational suicide. Nanoconnect needs to embrace Identity, Hope and Love which are prime forms of psychological capital in any organisation. If embraced these concepts may become the key drivers of positive organisational culture change and satisfied customers leading to increased market share.

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Psychological capital characterizes a productive work setting where employees care about customers' needs and work towards positive consumer wellbeing, i.e., transforming it from a maze of service complaints to amazing customer service.

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