

# **Revisiting Customer Delight: Antecedents and Consequences from a Social Comparison Perspective**

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## **Abstract**

Practitioners and researchers alike often argue whether firms should go beyond customer satisfaction to achieve customer delight. However, the questions of what leads to customer delight as well as whether customer delight can indeed drive loyalty remain insufficiently explored. Building on social comparison theory and using data from a laboratory experiment and a field survey with a global banking institution, this research identifies a new path leading to customer delight by showing that customers can derive delight in consumption from an externally-focused comparison (perceived exclusivity) in addition to the internally-focused comparison (perceived surprise) through perceived self-enhancement. Moreover, uncertainty of future service activities strengthens (weakens) the effects of perceived surprise (exclusivity) on customer delight. Finally, customer delight has a positive effect on customers' behavioral intentions and actual spending. Findings of this research should offer important implications and guidance for firms about the ways of delighting their customers.